

**Archaeological Evaluations at
Bath Lane, Leicester
SK 580 045**

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For Living in the City Ltd.

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Archaeological Evaluations at Bath Lane, Leicester SK 580 045

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on the site of the former Merlin Works, Bath Lane, Leicester (SK 580 045). The work was carried out in response to a proposal for residential development on the site by Living in the City Ltd.

A desk-based assessment carried out in 2002 showed that the proposed site lies within Roman and medieval Leicester and identified the potential of the area for buried archaeological remains. Work to the north and south of the site had recorded the presence of the western side of the Roman town wall defences as rampart deposits and the robbed out foundations of the wall, making it likely that the defences ran through the proposed development. SMR entries of tessellated pavements and structural remains also suggested the presence of high status buildings on the site. This was confirmed in 2003 when the first phase of evaluations on the northern part of the site identified Roman structural remains as well as some possible medieval riverside structures.

The 2005 evaluations were located to look at areas not evaluated by the initial investigations due to the presence of standing buildings. These confirmed the presence of the western Roman defences in a trench at the south of the site. These comprised over a metre of rampart material including a turf-built structure at the eastern end, and the medieval robber trench for the Roman wall. No wall foundations were recorded and it seems likely that all of the stone was removed by the later robbing. The probable top of robber trench deposits was also noted in a trench further north, although the presence of water prevented it from being investigated. This combined with the SMR records of wall sightings on the site suggest that the wall ran northwards before turning slightly east to join up with the northernmost section.

A second mortared stone wall was recorded to the west of the town defences. This is probably the same wall recorded during the previous evaluations to the north and remains undated although the deposits on either side contained medieval and later pottery.

Evidence was also uncovered for a substantial Roman building in the form of a series of stone walls and floors, including a mortared slot and post-hole structure that may have been a doorway with a threshold. This combined with the results from the previous evaluations, the SMR entries and another excavation from the 1960's on the site suggests the presence of high quality Roman buildings east of the town wall. Although dating is difficult, they are likely to belong to the earlier Roman period and may well have been partially demolished to make way for the town defences. Although truncated in parts, the archaeological deposits were well preserved, particularly along the eastern edge. This may be due to the old line of Bath Lane overlying and

preserving the deposits, protecting them from robbing and truncation by later building.

A small machine-dug test-pit to the north revealed a substantial layer of stone that may have been deliberately laid with a surface. The pottery from this layer was mainly medieval and post-medieval. The animal bone remains from the layer were mainly sheep metapodia and horn cores, possibly representing hornworking and tanning waste.

The archive will be deposited with Leicester City Museums Service under Accession No. A6.2001.

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation comprising trial trenching was undertaken during January - February 2005 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). The proposed development site lies on the site of the former Merlin Works, west of Bath Lane, Leicester, SK580 045 (Fig 1).

The fieldwork was undertaken in response to a proposed application for redevelopment of the site by Living in the City Ltd. The desk-based assessment (Meek, 2002), indicated that there were likely to be important archaeological deposits within the site and fieldwork was therefore required by the City Archaeologist, Leicester City Museum Service as adviser to the planning authority. An initial phase of evaluation was undertaken during April – May 2003 by ULAS on the central and northern areas of the site (Gnanaratnam, 2003). This report details evaluations on the southern area of the site, previously occupied by buildings.

The excavations were intended to provide a preliminary indication of the character and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site, in order that the Planning Authority could assess the potential impact of the development on such remains.

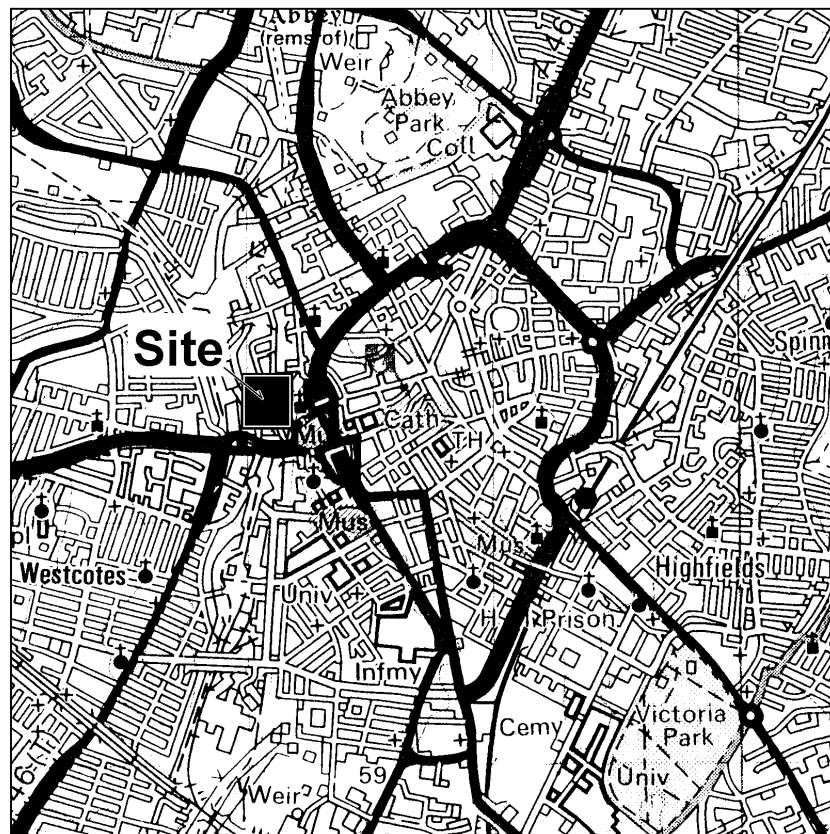


Figure 1 – Location plan showing site. Scale 1:2500.

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2. Site location, geology and topography

The proposed development area lies within Abbey Ward, in the western part of the historic town core. The site is located on the western side of Bath Lane, opposite the junction with Welles Street, and is bounded to the west by the canalised River Soar (Fig. 2). It comprises *c.* 0.54 ha of land and was previously occupied by buildings belonging to the Merlin Dye works. These buildings have now been demolished in advance of the archaeological work.

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain (Sheet 156) shows the site, lying on Mercia Mudstone overlain by river terrace sands and gravels. Bath Lane lies at around 56m OD; however the site is approximately 1m lower than the road at around 55m OD.

3. Archaeological and historical background

Numerous archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the vicinity of the proposed development area. A full historical and archaeological background is available in the desk-based assessment (Meek 2002).

The Leicestershire SMR shows that the site lies within a significant area of archaeological interest comprising the western edge and waterfront of the prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval town. The main findings are summarised below.

Late Iron Age/Roman

Iron Age occupation dating to around the late first century BC has been identified on the eastern banks of the River Soar. A fragment of a late Iron Age coin mould was recovered during the previous evaluations in the northern part of the site.

Town defences

The projected line of the western defences of the Roman and medieval town lies within the site. Previous work immediately to the south at Westbridge Wharf (Cooper 2004) identified dumps of earth and clay used to reclaim the low-lying land close to the river. The evaluations to the north also produced evidence for levelling and terracing during the later 1st century. A rampart of turves was then built probably during the later 2nd century with the insertion of a stone wall at some point later. A 30m length of the Roman stone wall defences (up to 3m wide) was also uncovered to the south along with a lime kiln, and eight skeletons from outside the town wall (Cooper 2004). Work immediately north of the site by Birmingham Archaeology in 2001 identified what are almost certainly the foundations of the town wall in a robber trench (Laurence Jones pers. com.). The location of these two sightings of the wall indicates that the defences ran through the proposed development site although there must be a turn at some point within the site in order to join the two.

There have been other sightings of the wall within the development site. - A stanchion hole excavated for Russell's foundry in 1962 revealed a substantial wall on a north-south alignment, 2.44m below ground level (LC96). A 1.32m length of the east face was exposed with a 20° kink in it.

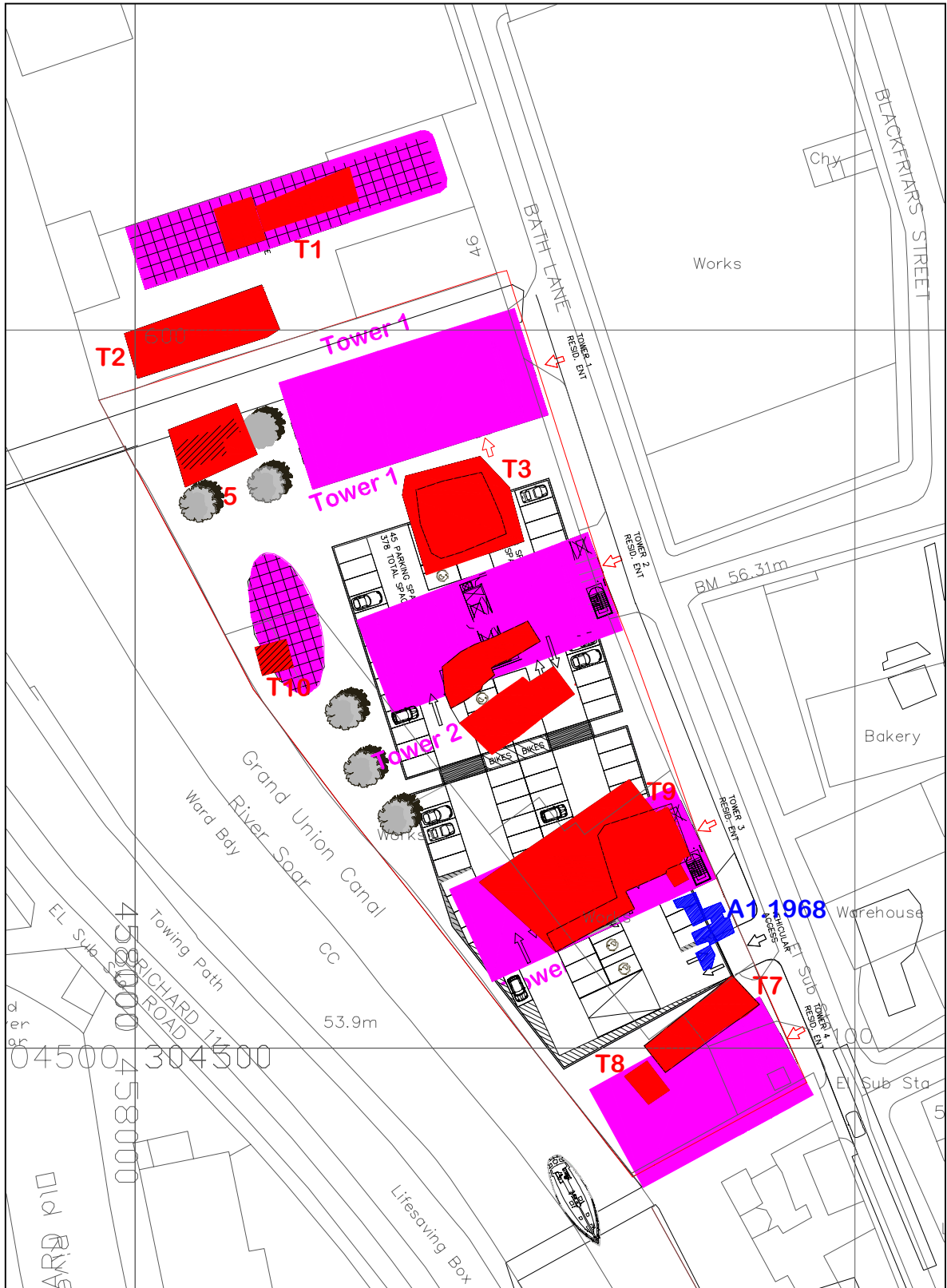


Figure 2 Evaluation trenches (red) overlaid on the development plans. Towers and buildings in magenta..

North of this two sections of wall were recorded (LC94). In 1951 a wall was reported 9.14m east of the river at a depth of 2.74m and at least 0.61m wide but with no faces exposed. A second section of wall at least 1.37m thick and 1.83m high with one face visible was seen in 1953, 15.24m east of the river and roughly parallel to it.

Roman occupation

The SMR records a number of finds on the site suggesting it was once occupied by relatively high status Roman buildings.

Two fine mosaics and a fragment of a third pavement were found in 1754 approximately 32m from the river (LC98). In 1885 another tessellated pavement was found beneath Messers Kimpson and Howell in Sarah Street, now Bath Lane.

In 1968, excavations were undertaken beneath the former Baths Office block on the Bath Lane frontage (Fig 2, A1. 1968). The excavations encountered Roman deposits immediately beneath the cellar floors. These deposits included early Roman material within pits and post-holes, ditches and a Roman lime kiln. Above this were the remains of timber buildings. After demolition these were followed by stone built structures on a different alignment, followed by further rebuilding. The walls appear to have been robbed out in the 13th century or later.

A substantial mortared granite wall *c.* 1m wide was recorded in 1978 at Russell's Factory. Adjacent to the wall was a mortared floor with two tesserae pressed into the surface (LC99).

In addition to these findings, the 2003 evaluations on the central and northern areas of the site recorded a number of Roman structural remains including at least one substantial stone built Roman building.

Post Roman to Post Medieval

Documentary evidence suggests that after the Roman period, there is little occupation on the site until the later post-medieval period. Some of the Roman buildings on the site appear to have been robbed of their stone during the 12th and 13th centuries. At least some of the town defences appeared to survive into the later post-medieval period (probably till about the 16th century), when the remaining wall was robbed of the stone leaving only the foundations (Cooper 2004).

However the SMR records a number of medieval and other artefacts from the Russell's premises (LC736), and a very fine bronze bowl and decorated knife (LC737). Part of a possibly medieval river channel was also uncovered on site during the 2003 evaluations with wattle structures, suggesting that there might have been some river front activity during the later medieval period.

There is little evidence for post-medieval building on the site until the 19th century. Documentary sources suggest that during the 18th century the site was part of a garden area where the people of Leicester could go to walk and look at the views across the river. In the 19th century the river was canalised and the waterfront began to be industrialised.

The previous work to the south produced numerous sheep metapodia and cattle horn cores, suggesting that this area was used for tanning and hornworking.

Modern disturbance

From the 19th century onwards the area has been the subject of fairly intensive industrial workings. The site has been further landscaped during modern times with the straightening of Bath Lane in the later 19th century and raising of the ground level west of it, suggesting potential for the preservation of archaeological deposits on the eastern part of the site.

There has been substantial disturbance on the site from modern industrial buildings. In the south-east corner lies the electricity substation, although this is built on a platform and may preserve archaeological deposits. From the late 19th century onwards, the southern part of the site was occupied by the public baths.

Up until recently the southern part of the site was covered by several large buildings, which were demolished prior to archaeological work starting.

4. Project Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives as outlined in the Project Design Specification (ULAS 08/12/2004) were as follows:

General Aims

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits within the previously unevaluated area.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works within the previously unevaluated area.
- To sample excavate and record any exposed archaeological deposits within the previously unevaluated area.
- To produce an archive and report of the results.
- To facilitate the preparation of a mitigation strategy to preserve and/or manage the archaeological remains within the context of the proposed development area as a whole and with reference to an agreed programme of research objectives.
- To incorporate the results of the initial stage of evaluation into the site report to give an overall indication of the potential archaeological resource within the site area as a whole.

5. Methodology

Two trenches and one larger area were positioned to look at those areas previously unavailable due to the presence of buildings (approximately 2422sq m). These are shown in Fig. 2 (T07-T10).

Trenches 7 and 8 were located within the footprint of the southernmost tower (Tower 4). These trenches aimed to locate the line of the western town defences identified at Westbridge Wharf to the south. Trench 9 was a large area located to cover as much of the proposed footprint of Tower 3 (with the exception of the western edge close to the river front). The aim of this trench was to give a clear idea of the archaeological issues faced in this area.

Trench 10 was located on the western edge of the site within the footprint of a proposed retail unit, in order to identify the depth of archaeological waterlogged deposits (as identified in Trenches 2 and 5 of the previous evaluation).

Concrete and modern building intrusions were removed using a hydraulic breaker and a small, toothed bucket on a 360° excavator. The trenches were then excavated using a large flat-bladed bucket to the top of archaeological deposits under archaeological supervision.

Archaeological deposits were hand cleaned, recorded and sample excavated to look at the stratigraphic and chronological sequence. All plans were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and levels were tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum.

6. Results

A summary of Trenches 1 – 6 has been included here. Full details of these trenches can be found in the previous evaluation report (Gnanaratnam, 2003).

2003 Evaluations

Trench 1

Trench 1 contained some evidence for Roman structural activity including a mortar floor, and deposits containing crushed mortar and Roman tile. Redeposited alluvial clay in the eastern part of the trench probably represents dumping to raise the ground level. There appears to be a single floor level with demolition debris over the top. Much of this area was later truncated by cut features of medieval date.

Trench 2

This trench also contained Roman structural deposits. These comprised a substantial mortar and stone built wall (1.37m thick) running north-west – south-east. There were also at least three phases of yellow-brown mortar floors. A patch of Roman tiles, possibly a wall foundation was also noted. Clays and gravel were redeposited over the floors, possibly to raise the ground level. The floors are sealed by deposits containing pottery of early – mid 2nd century date. The wall was robbed during the early medieval period (probably by the 13th century).

A channel was recorded at the western end behind, and on a similar alignment to the stone wall (Fig. 8). The upper channel fills comprised dump deposits probably medieval in date, with further channel deposits sealing these layers. A wattle panel base was found within the channel.

Other medieval features include a north-south aligned ditch (12th – 13th century) and number of smaller gullies running north-south.

Trench 3

The earliest phases of Trench 3 comprised a number of dump deposits. These were followed by a laid gravel surface. Above this lay a number of walls and several sequences of floor levels including the remnants of a tessellated floor surface. The walls of this stone built building were up to 1.5m thick, which could suggest a second story. Pottery from these levels dates to the late 1st - early 2nd century. The walls were later robbed out during the medieval period.

Trench 4

The archaeology within this trench appeared to consist of medieval dump deposits containing pottery from the 12th – 16th century. A fragment of an Iron Age coin mould was also recovered from these deposits (presumably redeposited). A rough pathway and a possible structure were located to the east of the trench.

Trench 5

A rough surface (probably medieval) was seen in the east of the trench sloping down to the west, with dump deposits over the top of it. The channel located in Trench 2 was also seen in the west of this trench. A collapsed wattle panel running north - south was recorded, possibly part of a structure such as a fish weir or similar. Again dump deposits were noted over the top of the channel.

Trench 6

The earliest deposits within this trench were dumps possibly representing levelling of the ground. Structural deposits were then built, including a tile and a stone wall. A possible robber trench may represent a third wall. At the west end a series of dumps are likely to be medieval in date. There are also two undated floors (probably medieval). A large pit containing animal bones was recorded. The bones contained numerous sheep metapodials consistent with hide processing.

2005 Evaluations

Trench 7

Trench 7 was a 15 x 5m trench within the vicinity of Tower 4. Although it was originally intended to run as far west as the river would allow, the presence of a large brick and concrete base prevented further excavation to the west and a test-pit was excavated on the other side (Figure 2, T8).

The eastern edge of the trench came down onto the light orange-brown sandy deposits of the town wall rampart within 0.4m of the concrete surface (approximately 54.55m OD). This sandy deposit contained darker lenses interpreted as turf lines (Plate 1, Fig 3 (503))

Beneath this were a series of silty clayey layers also interpreted as rampart deposits. These were mainly fairly clean silty clays.



Plate 1
T7: Rampart deposits,
showing turf lines
(bottom right).

A 1m depth of modern brick wall (519) was removed to provide a window into the rampart deposits at the eastern end (Plate 2). Both the north and south facing sections of Trench 7 showed a thin layer of crushed mortar (528) near the base of the trench. Deposits beneath this were of a different composition with common mortar and brick fragments (523/558). A red sandy clay layer (560) beneath (558) produced three tesserae, found together. An ashy, charcoal layer (507) just above produced two sherds of Roman pottery. These lower deposits are still likely to be rampart deposits but may perhaps be associated with the demolition of buildings from nearby. At the western end of the trench, removal of the upper fills of the robber trench revealed some of the deeper rampart deposits (down to a depth of 52.4m OD). This layer included a red sandy clay deposit (577). A similar red clay was seen in several auger holes located along the centre of the trench, and this context may be the same layer as (560), suggesting that the rampart layers are sloping to the west. Augering was conducted down to depths of around 51.7m OD. This encountered a number of silty sandy brown clays with charcoal, with no indication of natural alluvium or gravel.



Plate 2:
T7, looking east. The modern cut through the rampart deposits has been removed. The red clay layer (560) containing the tesserae is clearly visible in the lower section.

A straight sided trench was seen cutting through the rampart deposits. The fill contained mortar and brick fragments (Fig. 3, (525)), and it is probably a modern cut.

At the western end of the trench two cuts were noted through the rampart deposits. The first has a sloping edge (Plate 3, Fig. 3, [532]). The second cut had an almost vertical edge, with an undercut lower down [547]. The upper fills of this cut comprised brown and orange-brown sandy clay with stone and mortar fragments. Beneath these fills were dark grey-brown sandy clay deposits, also mixed with fragments of mortar and brick. This is interpreted as the medieval robber trench for the town wall. The undercutting may be due to the construction of the wall as a stepped structure, requiring the robber trench to widen out as it got deeper (L. Cooper pers. com.). Animal bones, two sherds of Roman white ware, a piece of tegula and a sherd of mid-13th century pottery were recovered from the fill of the robber trench.



Plate 3: Robber trench for the town wall, north facing section.

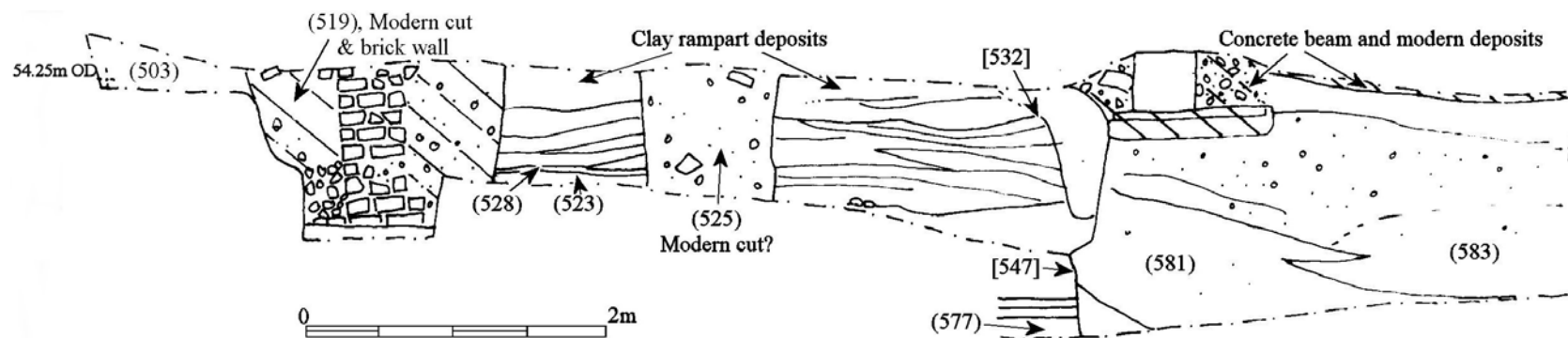


Figure 3 T7: North facing section of trench. Scale 1:50

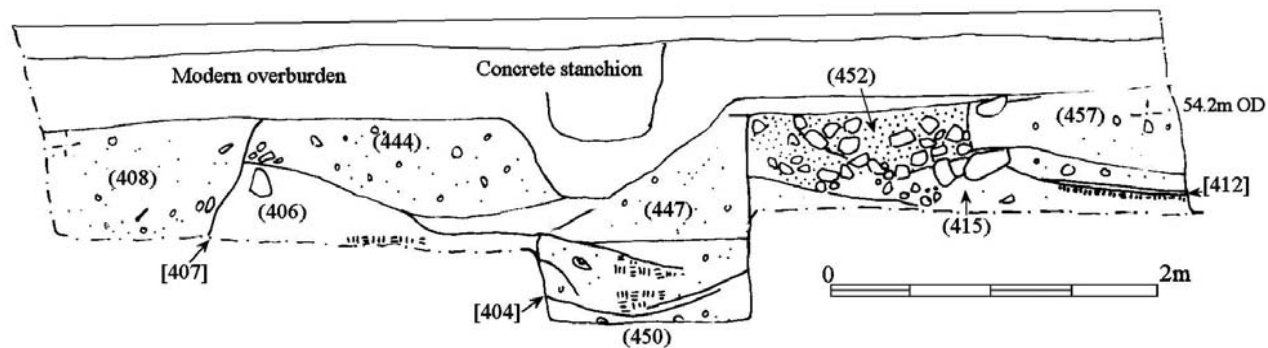


Figure 4 T9: East facing section of trench. Scale 1:50

The sloping upper cut is thought to be part of the actual construction cut for the Roman wall, cutting through the earlier rampart deposits. This cut was seen to be much wider during the evaluations at Westbridge wharf (approximately 1m wide as opposed to 0.6m wide in T7). However the top of this cut in Trench 7 is 0.45m lower than the Westbridge Wharf cut and may just be truncated.

The western edge of both cuts was not visible in the trench due to modern truncation including the foundations for part of the public baths.

The foundations of the stone wall were not seen within the trench, despite excavating up to 2.2 m of the fill of the robber trench. (down to approximately 52.49m OD). It was not possible to go any further down within the narrow confines of Trench 7 due to health and safety issues including ground water flooding.

Trench 8

Trench 7 was shortened by the presence of a large brick and concrete base at the west end of the trench. A large test-pit was therefore machine excavated on the other side of this truncation to look at the depths of archaeological deposits close to the river. At around 2.5m deep (approximately 52.7m OD), this encountered a solidly built stone wall (Plate 4, (400)). This wall was 0.9m wide and approximately 2.3m of its length was exposed. The west facing elevation of the wall was faced and the mortar appeared to have been smeared over the stone (Plate 5). The east facing elevation (back) of the wall appeared to be of a much rougher construction.



Plate 4 (left): T08, wall 400 in plan.

Plate 5 (above): T08, wall 400 detail of west facing section.

No cut was visible for the wall. On the east side was a light green-grey silty (401). This produced a sherd of mid-13th century splashed ware and three Roman tile fragments (two imbrex, one tegula). On the west side of the wall was a grey and orange sandy clay (402). Only a small amount of this deposit was uncovered (most of it being under water), but it contained numerous pebbles, slate fragments and animal bone. This also contained two sherds of Midland Purple ware (later medieval) and a fragment of Roman tile.

Trench 9

This area was excavated with some difficulty due to the presence of large ring beams across the entire eastern area of the trench. Trench 09 was located to cover as much of Tower 3 as possible to provide an insight into the character of the archaeology beneath. The western end uncovered part of the old public bath house structure (shown on the 19th century Goads Insurance plans, Meek 2002) including the circular remnants of the white tile surfaces of the base of the baths. The foundations for this building were very substantial and machining was halted at approx 1.5 – 2m deep (53.2m OD) with brick and concrete foundations still going down. A narrow (1.5m) trench was excavated along the southern edge of trench 09 inbetween the foundations (Fig 2). This revealed a grey silty clay at approximately 53.2m OD that were similar to the deposits seen within the robber trench of the town wall (L cooper pers com).

At the eastern end of the trench there was *c.* 0.6m of concrete and overburden (Fig 4). Beneath this at around 54.4m OD was a layer of dark brown soil with mixed brick, mortar and clay (Fig. 4, (444)/(457)). A later pit (post medieval/medieval) was seen in the north-east corner (Figs 4 and 5, [407]/(408)). Beneath the dark soil deposits were mid brown sandy silty clay layers containing fragments of brick/tile and mortar ((406)/(415)). Layer (415) produced two sherds of Roman pottery including an early-mid third century sherd of Nene Valley Colour coat. A possible wall or collapsed wall was also visible (452). About 2m to the west of the section a cellar wall was encountered and the remaining deposits had been truncated (archaeology was visible at a depth of around 53.63m OD). Approximately 10m of Roman archaeology was visible in the eastern part of the trench; the remainder was truncated by the brickwork and foundations for the public baths.

A substantial Roman wall was noted running east- west down the centre of the trench (Fig. 5, (419)). This had been robbed out to the east of the cellar wall (Figure 4 [404], Plate 6). West of the cellar wall, the wall was visible as stone foundations approximately 0.9-1m thick, mortared together. A modern cut truncating the wall to the west was excavated revealing the structure to be 0.8m deep, with smaller unbonded stones in the base and larger heavily mortared stones on top. (Plate 6). A possible cut for the wall was noted on the south side of the wall. Beneath this was a silty brown clay – coincided with the rubble foundation top and base of mortared wall. This clay may have been redeposited alluvium used as a levelling layer. It is possible that the wall noted in the west facing section (452) might be adjoining it at right angles. Otherwise this could represent part of the wall that had collapsed.

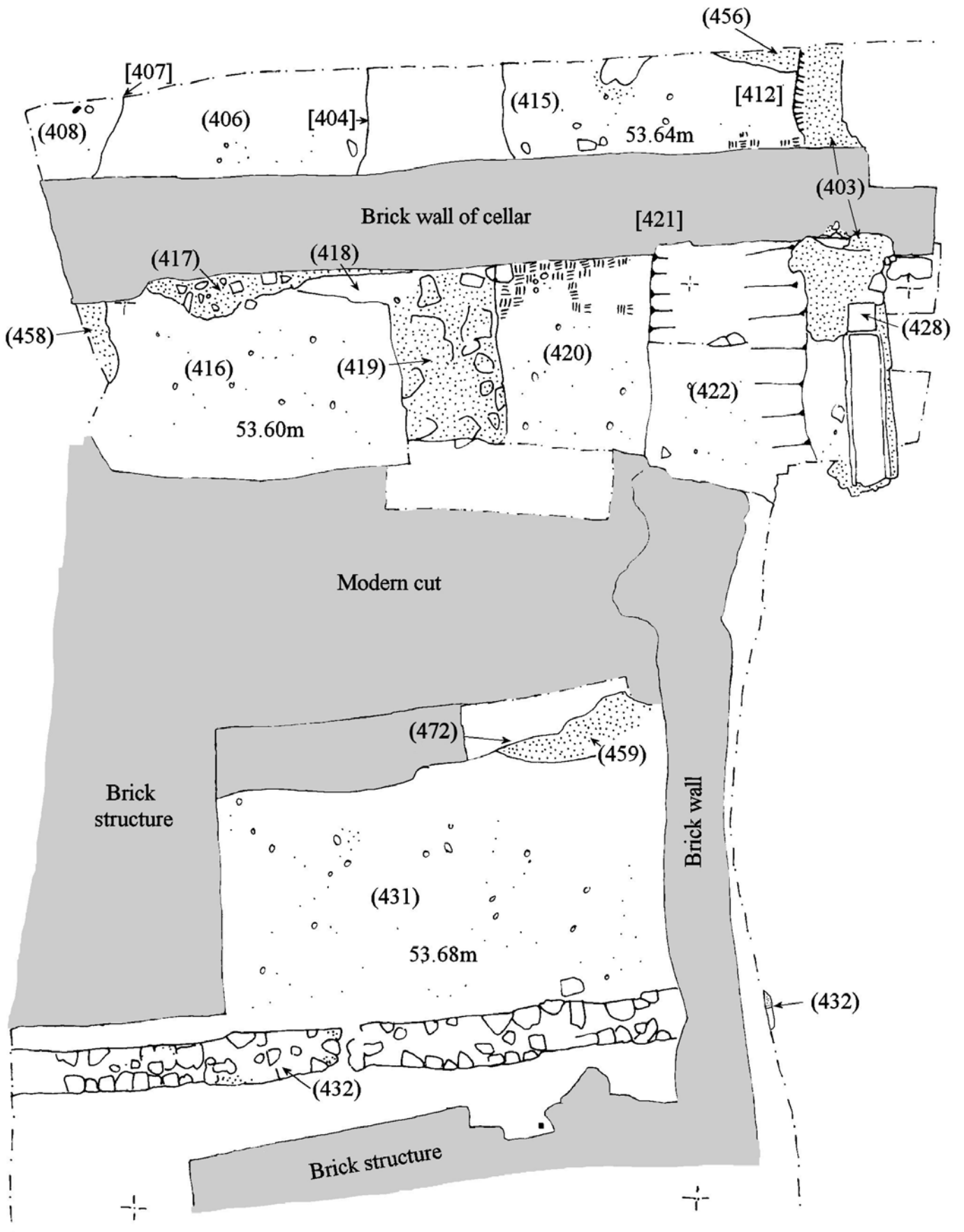


Figure 5 T9: Plan of features.

To the north of wall (419) was a mortar rich fill (418) and a spread of wall plaster (417) running at roughly 90 degrees from the wall (Fig. 5). Unfortunately this was truncated by the modern cellar wall and impossible to determine if this was the remnant of another wall associated with (419).



Plate 6:
T09: Wall (419) exposed
in the foreground with
the robber trench [404]
behind the cellar wall.
Wall (452) is visible in
the section (right).

Excavation of the western side of the modern truncation showed more probable wall foundations in section (Figs 5 and 6, (472)), on the same alignment as, and probably the continuation of wall (419) to the west (Figs 5 and 6). Over the top of these wall foundations was a possible mortared floor surface (459). This appeared to continue beneath (431), although its extent is unknown. Layer 431 produced a sherd of Black burnished ware (mid – late 2nd century). Surface (459) definitely lies over the top of the wall, indicating at least two phases of building. Two other patches of surfaces of similar type were uncovered, (456) and (458). Although all three lie at a similar height, it is impossible to tell if they are in fact part of the same surface or to determine their relationship.

A second smaller wall (Fig. 5, (432)), running at right angles to (419), and utilising similar materials was noted to the west of the trench. This was a much narrower structure (approximately 0.5m wide) with small stones mortared together. This wall was truncated by a modern brick wall to the south but was visible in section. From this it could be seen to be approximately 0.4-5m deep with red clay at the base with no visible cut.

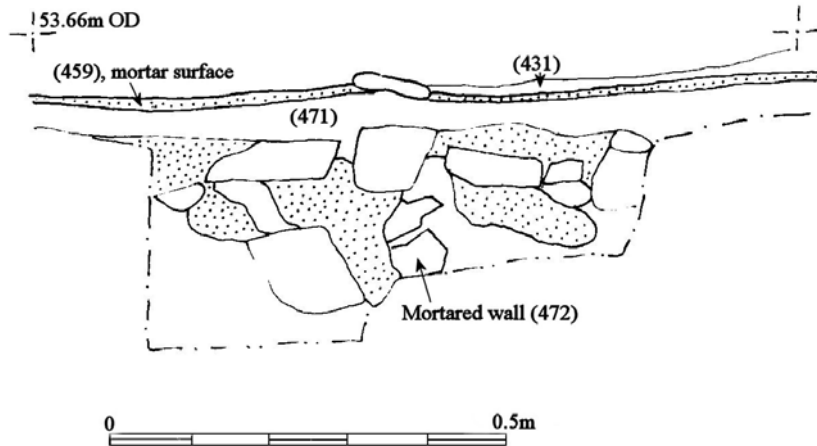


Figure 6
East facing section
of (472) and (459).
Scale 1:10

Another stone-built structure was recorded in the south-east corner of the trench running parallel with (419), (Fig. 5 (403), Plate 7). This was a mortared stone wall running east – west, approximately 0.6m wide, and 0.4m deep. A flat mortared surface sat on top of the wall with a narrow ledge on the north, south and east sides; the west end had been truncated by modern structures. To the east the wall widened out to approximately 0.9m wide with a square posthole (428), within it.



Plate 7
T9: (left), structure
(403) being
excavated and
(below) post-hole
(428), partially
excavated.



The fill of this feature had a darker clayey fill around the outside and packed into the corners suggesting a post (Plate 7). The fill contained 22 sherds of Roman tile including imbrex, tegula and wall tile and five sherds of pottery, mainly 1st to 2nd century. A small fragment of Saxon ware (late 5th – 6th century) was also recovered from this fill. East of the cellar wall, the foundations had been robbed out and only the very base of the wall was still visible. Mortar surface (456), in the west-facing section appeared to be over the top of the wall but the presence of the robber trench made it difficult to establish a relationship.

The stratigraphy on either side of the structure comprised identical layers indicating that the wall had been cut through them. One of these lower layers (423) produced four sherds of Roman pottery dating from the late 1st to early 3rd century. A layer appeared to have accumulated over the top of this structure (425/426), after it had gone out of use. This contained numerous mortar fragments and some burnt deposits, and appeared to be a dump. This contained two sherds of Roman pottery and two fragments of Roman tile

The clay layers to either side of the walls (Fig. 5 (416)/(420)) were similar to (406) and (415), brown sandy-clay with mortar, red clay and charcoal flecks. Both structures (419) and (403) had evidence for a construction cut – these layers are most likely therefore to pre-date the structure and are probably levelling layers for the building. Layer (416) produced three sherds of Roman pottery including a late 1st/early 2nd century piece of Samien.

The sections through the modern truncations recorded archaeological deposits to a depth of 0.54m (approx 53.02m OD). Augering produced dark brown silty clay alluvial deposits similar to those seen beneath wall (419). At approximately 0.7m down (52.25m OD) a sandy gravel (probably natural) was encountered. An auger hole in the robber trench for 419 recorded the dark grey silt in the base of the trench as continuing for 0.4m before giving way to orange sands and gravels at approximately 52.6m OD. This suggests that the natural gravels slopes to the south and west down to the rivers. Above this lies alluvial clay, probably redeposited

Trench 10

Trench 10 was a small machine dug test-pit intended to evaluate the potential of waterlogged deposits close to the river (Fig. 2). This produced approximately 2m of modern building debris above a mid-brown clay silt full of animal bones (Fig. 7, (485)). Three sherds of medieval pottery (14th – 16th century) were recovered from this layer. At around 3m below ground level a level layer of stone was uncovered (486). Although unbonded it was well compacted. A sherd of 17th – 18th century pottery was recovered from this layer. Beneath this was compacted stone rubble with some roman building debris in a dark grey silt (487).

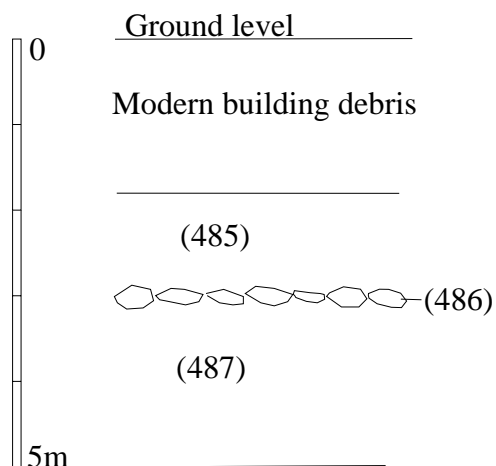


Figure 7:
T10, South facing
sketch section.

7. Discussion

General character of deposits

The development area appears to be sat on a natural gravel prominence. The depth of the gravels varies considerably (although higher to the east) and it appears that the area has been that has been made more useable by dumping and terracing. Two very different types of archaeology exist on the site. To east of the site are structural Roman buildings, partially preserved by Bath Lane. Where they are not truncated by modern foundations and structures these are generally in good condition,. To the west the land slopes down towards the river and there are earlier river channel deposits with possible medieval revetment and wattling and later post-medieval industry. Between the two areas lies the town wall and ramparts although the exact line is unknown.

Iron Age

The only indication of Iron Age archaeology came from the residual coin mould recovered from the later deposits in T04. However, the evaluations stopped at the upper archaeological deposits and only a small amount of the lower stratigraphy was exposed. Earlier features may well lie beneath the Roman archaeology.

Roman structural deposits (Fig. 8)

Trenches 1, 2, 3, and 9 all contained Roman structural remains. These appear to have built upon a series of dumps used to level the ground for building. There is quite a difference in height between the building levels (see table below).

Trench No	1	2	3	9
Height	53.43m	52.63	53.34	53.64

Trench 9 has the highest levels of deposits – this may represent better preservation of later phases. Trench 2 lies furthest west and might indicate the use of terracing. This would include partially cutting into the river valley slope and then levelling up other parts with the resulting material. This would have the effect of partially destroying earlier activity from the Iron Age or early Roman within the cutting but also sealing other deposits beneath the resulting material. The dating of these structures is difficult. The pottery recovered is mainly early 1st – mid second century, with a few later sherds in Trench 9. However these are mainly from exposed layers and could easily be residual.

The structure in T09 is particularly well-preserved where it survives, with walls remaining unrobbed west of the cellar wall. It is possible that the presence of the old Bath Lane may have prevented access for robbing.

Although not confirmed it seems likely that the walls and floors uncovered belong to the same structure. The mortared slot (403) may have held a wooden beam, perhaps for a threshold, which combined with the square post-hole might indicate a doorway of some kind.

Excavations in 1968 close to the Bath Lane frontage between T7 and T9 (Clay and Mellor 1968) found Roman deposits immediately beneath cellar floors. These

included early Roman material from pits and post-holes, ditches, a Roman lime kiln. Above these lay the remains of timber buildings. Following their demolition stone buildings with several phases of rebuilding were erected on a different alignment. The walls appear to have been robbed out during the 13th century. Given the proximity to Trench 09, the structures recorded here may be part of the same building or series of buildings.

The SMR records two fine mosaics (LC98) found on the site in 1754 along with a fragment of a third pavement round about the location of Trench 3. In 1885 a tessellated pavement was also found beneath Messers Kimpson and Howell in Sarah Street, now Bath Lane. To the south-east of Trench 2, a substantial mortared granite wall around 1m wide with a mortared floor with 2 tesserae pressed into the surface was found (LC99).

These observations along with painted mortar and suggestions of tessellated floors from the evaluations suggest that there were buildings of a fairly high status present in this area from the 1st – 2nd centuries onwards. Whether these buildings continued after the third century is as yet unknown. Some appear to have been demolished, perhaps to make way for the town ramparts in the late 2nd century.

Human bone in Trench 9 came from a modern context, and could be of any date. However, Roman burials were recorded during the Westbridge Wharf excavations (although on the western side of the wall), and although no burials were recorded, some human bone was recovered from the excavations in 1968. It seems likely that the bone found so far on the site is residual. However it may well have come from disturbed Roman or earlier deposits within the area.

Evidence was also uncovered for a substantial Roman building in the form of a series of stone walls and floors, including a mortared slot and post-hole structure that may have been a doorway with a threshold. This combined with the results from the previous evaluations, the SMR entries and another excavation from the 1960's on the site suggests the presence of high quality Roman buildings east of the town wall. Although dating is difficult, they are likely to belong to the earlier Roman period and may well have been partially demolished to make way for the town defences. Although truncated in parts, the archaeological deposits were well preserved, particularly along the eastern edge. This may be due to the old line of Bath Lane overlying and preserving the deposits, protecting them from robbing and truncation by later building.

A small machine-dug test-pit to the north revealed a substantial layer of stone that may have been deliberately laid with a surface. The pottery from this layer was mainly medieval and post-medieval. The animal bone remains from the layer were mainly sheep metapodia and horn cores, possibly representing hornworking and tanning waste.

The Town defences (Fig. 8)

Trench 7 confirmed the presence of the western Roman defence on the site. These comprised over a metre of rampart material including a turf-built structure at the eastern end, and the medieval robber trench for the Roman wall. No wall foundations were recorded despite excavating nearly 1.2m of Robber trench material down to a depth of 52.49m. Either the excavations failed to go deep enough to hit the wall or it had been totally robbed out in this particular area. The top of the Westbridge wharf wall just to the south lay at approximately 52.8m, and so this trench should have been deep enough to uncover any foundations. However, it should be noted that the excavations to the far north recorded the top of the wall at 51.1m OD; the depth obviously varied across the length. There were several areas of wall at Westbridge wharf that had been completely robbed away (Lynden Cooper pers. comm.).

The rampart was represented by a sandy deposit at the eastern end of Trench 7, containing darker lines interpreted as the remnants of layers of turfs. The deposits west of this appear to be mainly layers of redeposited alluvium that may have been used to fill in the bulk of the rampart between the turf walls. The westernmost turf wall was probably truncated by the insertion of the later stone wall. There appears to be a substantial depth of deposits (approximately 2m), sloping westward towards the river. The presence of building materials within the lower layers might suggest the presence of demolished Roman structures either very close or possibly even beneath these deposits.

The fill of the robber trench may well have been recorded in the central part of Trench 9 to the north. It is also possible that the terrace recorded in Trench 1 represents the line of the robber trench. This combined with the SMR records of wall sightings on the site suggest that the wall ran northwards before turning slightly east to join up with the northernmost section.

The second mortared wall recorded to the west of the town defences in Trench 8 remains a bit of a mystery. It is well-built and faced on the western edge. This is probably the same wall recorded during the previous evaluations to the north close to the river in Trench 2. This wall was slightly wider than the wall from Trench 8, but is too narrow and too close to the river to be the Town defences. The wall remains undated. The previous evaluation suggested that it could be Roman. However the deposits on either side of the wall in Trench 8 contain medieval and post-medieval pottery and it could just as easily be a later construction. The presence of this wall however does help to sort out some of the confusion regarding the location of other known sightings of the wall.

Two walls were recorded on the SMR, north of T08 in 1951 and 1953. The 1951 wall was 9m from the river, while the 1953 wall (which appears to be much wider) was 15m from the river. This correspond with the distances of the western wall in Trench 8 and the robber trench in Trench 7 (9.5m and 16m respectively).

North of Trench 7, a substantial wall was recorded 2.44m below ground level (LC96). A 1.32m length of the east face was exposed with a 20° kink in it. North of this two sections of wall were recorded (LC94). In 1951 a wall was recorded 9.14m east of the river at a depth of 2.74m and at least 0.61m wide but with no faces exposed. A second section of wall at least 1.37m thick and 1.83m high with one face visible was

seen in 1953, 15.24m east of the river and roughly parallel to it. Unfortunately the exact locations of these sightings are uncertain.

Late Roman/Saxon

The ceramic assemblages from both evaluations show an absence of later Roman pottery from the site. Mostly the dates seem to fall within the 1st to 2nd centuries with some pottery types that could range into the third century from the structures in Trench 9. Third century deposits were also noted in the 1968 excavations. It is possible that the majority of the buildings were cleared to make way for the ramparts. There is evidence from elsewhere in Leicester that earlier Roman activity immediately outside the line of the later defences ceased around the same time as the construction of these defences (Cooper 1996, 12, Finn 2004, 62). However there is some evidence of later activity here and some buildings may have remained in use. The Saxon pottery although only a single sherd, might suggest that there was some activity here in the 5th – 6th centuries.

Medieval (Fig. 7)

Neither of the evaluations produced much evidence for medieval settlement; this is consistent with the documentary evidence indicating few buildings on the site until the post-medieval period (Meek, 2002, 12-15). Along the eastern side medieval activity appears for the most part to be confined to the presence of pits and small ditches, along with the robbing out of the Roman structures. Some of the robbing appears to be 12th – 13th century in date. This is consistent with other sites in the area (Clay and Mellor, 1985, 1-28), and may indicate a need for building stone at this time for major building schemes (Gnanaratnam, 2003, 27).

However, the SMR also records a number of medieval artefacts from the site including artefacts from the Russell's premises (LC736), a late 12th century decorated bronze bowl and a fine knife (LC737), indicating some activity going on during this period. It may be that the medieval deposits lay at a higher level and have been truncated by later development.

A possible channel was seen in Trenches 2 and 5. The dumping on top of this channel contained 12th – 13th century pottery suggesting that this could be medieval in date. A possible rough wall stood to the east of this channel and wattling was found in both trenches. This might indicate possible medieval riverside activity – perhaps utilisation of the river with fish traps and weirs. The Records of the Borough of Leicester note that the burgesses and tenants of Leicester used the river north of West Bridge to wash hides and wool fells (RBL 1327-1509). They also mention a town dump on the banks of the River Soar in 1508 (RBL ii, 290-1).

Given that the westernmost wall has deposits on either side that appear to be medieval or later, it is possible that the wall is of a similar date. It could be related to medieval riverside activity, perhaps some kind of bank revetment for the river.

Post-medieval

Early maps show no buildings on the area until around early 19th century. The site was part of a formal garden (Bath Gardens in the 18th century). The gardens were sold off in 1797, as 'available land to build wharves.' This suggests that the land use

changed with the area being taken over for more industrial activity during the 19th century (Field Johnson, nd).

The stone surface and rubble seen in Trench 10 close to the river had pottery dating from the 14th to the 18th century. Although this dating is not secure as it came from the machine bucket, it does suggest a post-medieval date for this possible structure. From the small section excavated it is not possible to suggest a function; it could possibly be associated with river wharf structures or flood alleviation. Quantities of horncores and sheep metacarples were recorded from the test-pit, suggesting the presence of late industrial activity such as tanning and hornworking.

It is also possible that the westernmost wall could belong to this period. The silt on the west of the wall closest to the river produced two sherds of later medieval Midland Purple ware. This coupled with the animal bone and horn cores from this deposit suggests some industrial activity here, possibly associated with the wall.

8. Potential Impact

There has been substantial disturbance on the site from modern industrial buildings. In the south-east corner lies the electricity substation, although this is built on a platform and may preserve archaeological deposits. West of this a deep well was uncovered, and there are substantial concrete foundations and brick stanchion bases in the south-west corner.

Within trench 9, the base of the old swimming baths was uncovered. This contains deep brick and concrete foundations to a depth of at least 2m below existing ground level (approximately 53mOD).

However, there is still substantial amounts of Roman and later archaeology on the site. Along the eastern side of the site there appears to have been a series of high status Roman buildings. These have been preserved by the old line of Bath Lane. Further west the line of the Roman defences have been identified. Beyond these lie a second undated wall. Medieval deposits is restricted mainly to pits, dumps, and robbing of earlier walls although the artefacts recorded from the SMR suggest some activity to the north. To the west the land drops down towards the river and is possibly terraced. Medieval and later deposits possibly associated with industrial activity such as tanning and horn working are recorded along the riverside.

Tower 1

Tower 1 is unevaluated. It is therefore difficult to predict what archaeology might be encountered in this area. However, the immediate area contains Roman structural activity (Trenches 1, 2, 3) and it seems very likely that this tower will contain similar deposits. It is also possible that the Roman town wall will run through this area.

Tower 2

Tower 2 contains most of Trench 6, which produced evidence for a possible Roman building. This coupled with the Roman structural deposits in Trench 3, suggest that further similar deposits will be encountered in this area.

Tower 3

Most of Tower 3 has been removed of overburden. The eastern side contains the remains of a well-preserved Roman building. To the west the site has been truncated by the foundations for the public swimming baths. However, the possible fill of the robber trench for the town wall has been identified and there may well be Roman deposits beneath the modern truncation. It seems likely that the westernmost wall will run through the western area of this Tower.

Tower 4

Tower 4 is likely to contain more evidence of the rampart and the Roman town wall, as well as the second westernmost wall. No buildings are expected to be encountered in this area. It is possible that further excavation of the medieval and later layers on either side of the western wall might reveal a function and date for this structure.

Other buildings

The retail unit to the west of Tower 2 was evaluated by Trench 10. This produced possible later industrial/riverside activity. However these deposits are likely to be quite deep and waterlogged.

Car parks

Any ground disturbance for the car parks is likely to encounter archaeological deposits particularly to the east.



Figure 8: Roman/possible Roman deposits (red, above left), and medieval/possible medieval deposits (green/blue above right) on the site. Buildings outlined in magenta.

9. Conclusions

- Evaluations on the former Merlin Works, Bath Lane have revealed evidence for stratified post-medieval, medieval and Roman and Iron Age deposits.
- The site has been truncated by modern development; however there is still substantial Roman and later archaeology preserved on the site, particularly along the eastern edge, where the old line of Bath Lane appears to have preserved much of the Roman deposits.
- No pre-Roman deposits were noted. However, the presence of an Iron Age coin mould indicates some earlier activity here and deposits may well lie beneath existing layers.
- The Roman town wall and rampart was recorded running across the site. Although the wall has been identified in the south of the site and immediately north of the site, its exact line across most of the site is not known.
- Roman structural deposits, probably representing high status buildings were identified across the eastern side of the site. These include some several building phases and are likely to be high status and early in date.
- Although most of the pottery is early some 3rd century pottery and a single sherd of Saxon pottery might indicate possible later activity in this area.
- Medieval activity was noted on the site. Although no structural deposits were recorded, the SMR records the presence of high status artefacts from the northern area. A possible medieval river channel and associated structures suggest some riverside activity to the north.
- Evidence for medieval activity comprises mainly soil dumping and robbing of earlier structures. However, despite the lack of structures there is some indication of activities associated with industries such as hornworking and tanning.
- There is also the possibility of medieval riverside structures within a possible medieval channel.
- Post-medieval industrial and riverside activity is also likely to exist close to the river's edge.

10. Archive

A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives' (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicester City Museums Service within six months of the completion of fieldwork. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

The Archive consists of site notes and indices, colour slides, digital prints and archive records and boxes of finds. It will be deposited under the accession no A6.2001.

The archive contains:

- Trench Recording Sheets
- Summary Context Sheets
- Contexts sheets
- Drawing Records
- A3 Drawing Sheets
- Photo Records
- Digital photos
- EDM files
- Specialist Reports

11. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted to a relevant local journal for publication in due course.

12. Acknowledgements

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Appendix I: Roman Finds**Phase 1 (Trenches 1-6)****Romano-British Pottery Nicholas J, Cooper**

An assemblage of 82 sherds weighing 1.589kg was retrieved with an average sherd weight of 19g. The stratified assemblage has been identified by fabric and form according to the established county and national type series (Pollard 1994, Tomber and Dore 1998 see summary appended below) and quantified by sherd count and weight. The majority comes from Roman contexts with the remainder residual within Medieval and later features (see full tabulated catalogue below). The assemblage composition is summarized by fabric in the table below.

A6.2003 Bath Lane Roman Pottery fabric Summary

Fabric	%sherds	sherds	weight	av.sherdwt
Samian	5	4	53	13.25
C2 NV	1	1	45	45
Amphor	1	1	116	116
BB1	6	5	74	14.8
WhiteW	13	11	143	13
GreyW	29	24	255	10.625
OxidW	1	1	2	2
CalGrit	43	34	893	26.26471
Sandyw	1	1	8	8
Totals	100	82	1589	19.37805

The fabrics and forms indicate that this is an early Roman assemblage dating to the later first and second century AD. The assemblage is dominated by utilitarian grey wares and large storage jars in calcite (shell) tempered fabrics. Imports comprise samian tableware and an olive oil amphora from southern Spain. The presence of samian indicates a later 1st century date for (56) and probably an early second century date for (60). The occurrence of Black Burnished Ware (BB1) would indicate a date in the second century (post AD120) at least, for context (206). Otherwise, the pottery is not closely dateable except to say that there is nothing to indicate a date after *c.* AD200 for any of the Roman contexts and it could be argued probably nothing after *c.* AD 150. The only exception is the occurrence of a bead and flanged bowl in Lower Nene valley colour-coated ware dating the fourth century (Howe, Perrin and Mackreth 1980, no.79) from (55) which is in any case residual in a medieval context. Overall the group has most in common with the Phase 1 groups from Causeway Lane (Clark 1999, 112) dating to the mid 1st to mid 2nd century as well more generally the material excavated previously in Bath Lane (Clamp 1985), although the present group seems to lack the pre-conquest element so prevalent in the latter assemblage.

A6 2003 Bath Lane (Merlin Works) Romano-British Pottery N.Cooper 11/7/03

Context fabric	NRFRC	Form	Type	Décor	Sherds	Weight	TPQ	MEDpot?
2 GW		Jar		3	1	12	E.2nd+	
2 GW		misc			5	46		
2 CG1		jar		vertcomb	3	70		
25 CG1		jar		vertcomb	1	8	mid-l.1st+	
26 CG1		jar			4	116	mid-l.1st+	
26 GW		misc			2	22	E.2nd+	
29 WW		flagon			1	1	L.1st+	
29 GW		misc			1	10		
29 CG1		jar		vertcomb	2	40		
37 CG1		jar		vertcomb	1	38		
38 Samian	CG?	bowl	Dr.37		1	6	E.2nd+	1100-1250
38 WW		flagon			4	42		
38 CG1		jarstor	hookbead		1	44	check	
38 CG1		Jar	misc	vertcomb	3	60		
41 Owmica		misc			1	2	L.1st+	12th/13th
46 CG1		jar		vertcomb	2	34	mid-l.1st+	12th/13th
50 GW		misc			1	12	mid-l.1st+	
51 GW		misc			1	14	mid-l.1st+	
51 CG1		jarstor	neckbead		1	70	mid-l.1st+	
51 CG1		jarstor			7	206		
53 CG1		jar			1	4	mid-l.1st+	13th
54 WW		flagon?			1	3	mid-l.1st+	
55 C2nv		bowl	HPM79		1	45	4thcent	12th/13th
56 GW5		bowl	hammerh		1	5	Check	
57 Samian	SG	cup	Dr27g		1	19	1stcent	
59 GW		jar	beaded		1	6	mid-l.1st+	
59 CG1		jar			1	12		
60 Samian	SG	bowl	dec?29		1	2	mid-l.1st+	
60 Samian	CG	dish	18/31		1	26	e-mid2nd+	
60 GW		misc			4	24		
60 GW9		misc			1	24		
60 CG1		jar			3	12		
140 CG1		jar			1	5	mid-l.1st+	12th/13th
157 WW		flagon	handle		1	42	mid-l.1st+	18th
206 BB1	sedbb1	bowl	type39	ac.lattice	4	70	120+	joining
213 GW5		misc			4	48	mid-l.1st+	fabref

236 WW5	verwh	flagon		1	30 L.1st+
242 GW		jar	neckless	1	12 mid-l.1st+
263 CG1		jar	vertcomb	1	14 mid-l.1st+
266 BB1	sedbb1			1	4 120+
272 WW		flagon	handle	1	18 mid-l.1st+
280 AM9A	batamph	amphora	Dr20hand	1	116 mid-l.1st+
282 WW2		flagon		1	4 coinmould
282 WW5?	verwh	flagon		1	3 mid-l.1st+
282 SW1	belgic	misc		1	8 mid-l.1st+
283 CG1		jar	vertcomb	1	24 mid-l.1st+ 12th/13th
284 CG1		jarstor	beaded	1	136 mid-l.1st+ Med
345 GW		carin	bowl	1	20 mid.1st+
				82	1589 AvShWt 19.4g

Other ceramic finds: Late Iron Age ceramic ‘coin’ mould

By far the most significant find from the evaluation is a fragment of a flat slab of heavily vitrified clay from (282) with rows of circular impressions of uniform width and depth. The context dates to the mid or later first century. The fragment measures 60mm by 40mm and the slab is 22mm thick. There are the remains of ten mould impressions arranged in three rows, with only the central row containing complete impressions. Each impression is 8-9mm in width and 10mm deep.

This is only second time that such moulds have been discovered in Leicester, and this example is the largest fragment so far. Previously, three, smaller fragments came from earlier excavations to the east of Bath Lane in 1977 (Clay and Mellor 1985, site 2, 69 and fig.39.18 and 19 where detailed discussion of the background and function of these moulds can be found). In these previous examples the width of the impressions was somewhat larger at 14mm. The greatest degree of vitrification on the present example occurs on the upper surface, around the mouths of the impressions, which is in contrast to those previously found, where it occurred on the underside.

The assumption has always been that these mould were used for producing blanks of metal of fixed weight, which were then removed and struck with stamped dies to produce coins during the Late pre-Roman Iron Age. Their occurrence at the major Late Iron Age oppida (tribal centres) at Verulamium (St Albans), Camulodunum (Colchester) and Bagendon (nr Cirencester) supported this idea and suggested they indicated the location of mints for the relevant tribal dynasty. Within the Corieltavian tribal territory such moulds have only been otherwise found at Old Sleaford in Lincolnshire, suggesting the existence of a separate tribal centre there.

However, referring to Verulamium, where near complete examples have been found, Rosalind Niblett is more cautious, suggesting that while coin blanks could have been produced using them, they may have been more generally used for the measuring out of fixed weights of metal (Niblett 2001, 43 and plate 20).

Roman Glass

Two fragments of glass were retrieved, both from Roman contexts, dating to the later first or early second century. The first, from (26), is a corner fragment from the base of a moulded square bottle in blue-green glass. Such vessels were common during this period (e.g. Allen 1998 fig.22.3). The second from (280) is flat, in light green tinged glass. The underside is pitted, suggesting that it is from a pane of cast window glass (Allen 1998 fig.43).

Object of Iron

A single nail stem fragment came from (41). The context is medieval but the nail is probably Roman.

Coins

Two coins were recovered.

Roman

A single late Roman coin was recovered from (221) in Trench 3. No other artefactual dating evidence appears to come from the context. The coin is poorly preserved with most of the legend either illegible or missing on both obverse and reverse.

Diam.19mm

Obv. Head facing right, double braid around head. Rev. Standing figure holding standard. Possibly issue of Gratian (AD367-83) (Casey 1980, Pl.15.3).

Late Medieval Jetton?

A single jetton(?) came from (288), again with no other artefactual evidence from it.

Both sides depict shields, one bearing a fleur de lys, the other stars. Legend not legible. Diameter: 23mm

The Roman Tile

Cont No.	Wt. g.	unc.	Teg.	Imb.	Flue.	Wall	Other.	Description
46	825	2	1	1	2	1		Shell tempered flue
58	575	0	3	0	1	1		
55	100	0	2	0	0	1		Wt 55mm
50	1500	0	2	1	1	2		Ft combed, Wt 52mm
59	1125	0	1	0	0	2		Wt 45mm
38	800	0	2	0	0	3		1W 1T burnt
53	1450	1	1	2	1	1		Wt 50mm
29	40	3	0	0	0	2		Wt reduced grey
51	1500	0	1	0	0	3		
159	650	0	1	1	0	1		1T reduced grey
52	575	0	1	0	0	1		
279	150	0	2	0	0	0		
267	50	0	1	0	0	1		Wt 45mm
157	10	0	1	0	0	1	1	Ft incised
158	54	1	0	0	0	0		
55	5	1	0	0	0	0		
60	250	5	0	1	0	1		Wt 45mm reduced dark grey
55	150	2	2	0	0	0		
286	100	0	1	0	0	0		
37	75	2	0	0	0	0		1 reduced grey
2	1800	0	3	1	0	0		
26	850	2	2	0	0	3		2Wt 1uc reduced grey
26	100	1	1	1	0	1		1Wt reduced grey

2	2400	11	10	1	0	10		8redT 1 gT 3rWt 7gWT
26	2500	0	4	2	0	4		3rT 1gT 1rWt 3gWt
12	5	1	0	0	0	0		
Totals	17639	32	42	11	5	39		
336	11000	0	0	0	0	1		270 x 50 x 415 mm (weight includes some op sig)
336	12000	0	0	0	0	1		275 x 55 x 400 mm (weight includes some op sig)
Totals	40639	32	42	11	5	41		

The assemblage consisted of a total of 40.639kg of tile, which included two almost complete tiles taken as a sample of feature (336). Excluding these there was a total of around 17.639kg. The tile broke down into an almost equal distribution of tegulae and wall tiles. This may be due to the presence of stone built structures on the area, and consequently wall tiles being used as levelling and bonding courses.

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Phase 2 (Trenches 7-10)**Romano-British Pottery - Elizabeth Johnson.**

A total of 24 sherds weighing 431g of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the site. The material was classified using the Leicestershire Fabric Series (Pollard 1994) and quantified by sherd count and weight as shown in the table below.

The grey wares and calcite-gritted fabrics are most likely locally made. The white wares, oxidised ware and white slipped ware are most likely Mancetter-Hartshill products dating from the 2nd century onwards (Pollard 1986: 4-5). The Black Burnished Ware industry generally starts c.AD120 and the examples here are all early forms within a mid-2nd to possibly early 3rd century date range (Gillam 1968: 71; Holbrook & Bidwell 1991: 112). The sandy ware and mica dusted ware are earlier fabrics, usually dating from the 1st century to the early 2nd century (Pollard 1994: 114). The sherd of Samian is South Gaulish which also dates from the late 1st century to c.AD110 (Webster 1996: 3; 35). The latest dateable fabric is the Nene Valley colour-coated indented/folded beaker, which is likely to date from the early 3rd century (Howe *et al* 1980: 18).

Context	Fabric/Ware	No. of Sherds	Weight (g)	Comments
410	AM: Amphora	1	167	Mid 1st-mid 3rdC date range.
410	WW: White Ware	1	11	Possibly a lid form c.2ndC.
415	GW: Grey Ware	1	4	
415	C2NV: Nene Valley Colour-Coat	1	5	Early-mid 3rdC.
416	GW: Grey Ware	1	16	
416	WW: White Ware	1	16	
416	Samian (South Gaulish).	1	15	Drag.18/31 bowl, late 1st-early 2ndC.
423	CG: Calcite-gritted	1	25	
423	BB1: Black Burnished Ware	2	18	Mid 2nd-early 3rdC
423	MD: Mica Dusted	1	23	Late 1st-early 2ndC
426	OW: Oxidised Ware	1	7	
426	GW: Grey Ware	1	3	
428	SW: Sandy Ware	1	3	Late 1st-early 2ndC "transitional" fabric.
428	CG: Calcite-gritted	2	28	
428	BB1: Black Burnished Ware	1	6	Early-late 2ndC.
428	AM: Amphora	1	6	Dressel 20 as above.
430	WS: White Slipped Ware	1	17	2ndC+
431	BB1: Black Burnished Ware	1	9	Mid-late 2ndC.
507	CG: Calcite-gritted	2	4	
581	WW: White Ware	1	15	
583	WW: White Ware	1	36	

Roman Building Materials: Tiles

A total of 32 fragments weighing 2.316kg of ceramic building materials were recovered from the site. The material was classified by tile type and quantified by fragment count and weight as shown in the table below. Tile types represented include flanged *tegula* and curved *imbrex* for roof covering, and wall tile used for general construction. No flue tiles (*tubulus*) used for heating systems were identifiable from the fragments recovered. This may suggest the buildings were not heated using hypocaust systems.

Context	Form	No. of Sherds	Weight (g)
401	Imbrex	2	215
401	Tegula	1	786
402	Unc. CBM	1	1
410	Tegula	1	141
410	Imbrex	1	96
424	Imbrex	1	49
426	Unc. CBM	2	8
428	Imbrex	3	162
428	Tegula	3	201
428	Wall tile	5	409
428	Unc. CBM	11	121
583	Tegula	1	127

Roman objects of personal adornment

Two objects, a bone hairpin and the fragmentary remains of a brooch came from (528) and (428) respectively and indicate a date in the second half of the first century or later. The hairpin is an example of the commonest type found in Leicester dating to the later first and second century. The brooch dates to the period of the conquest dating to the c. 45-60 AD.

Context	Material	Type	Description
428	Bone	Hairpin	Crummy Type 2. L. 123mm tip broken
528	Cu Alloy	Brooch	Hod Hill Type, hinged pin and bow fragments.

Roman iron fitting

Context	Material	Type	Description
426	Iron	Fitting	Rectangular strip 160mm x 22mm

Building material

Context	Material	Type	Description
428	Mortar	Op. sig/lime	10 small lumps unfaced
402	Stone	Tessara	1 grey sandstone 20mm sq
560	Stone	Tesserae	3 grey sandstone 20mm sq

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Appendix 2: Post-Roman finds**Phase 1 (Trenches 1-6)****The Post-Roman Pottery and Ridge Tile D. Sawday**

All the post Roman pottery, forty sherds weighing nine hundred and forty four grams, and the ridge tile, one fragment weighing seven grams, which had been recovered during the evaluation, was examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999). The late Saxon and medieval pottery is detailed below (table 1), the remaining pottery is late 18th, 19th or 20th century in date.

Fabric/Ware	Sherd Nos.	Weight Grams	Av. Sherd Weight
Late Saxon/Early Medieval			
ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	2	74	
ST1 – Very Fine Stamford ware	4	8	
PM – Potters Marston	20	570	
SP3 - Splashed Ware 3	1	70	
RS – Reduced Sandy ware	1	45	
Sub Total	28	767	27.3
Medieval			
CC1 – Chilvers Coton ware 1	7	152	
Sub Total	7	152	21.7
Late Medieval/Early Post Medieval			
MS3 – Medieval Sandy ware 3	1	11	
TG – Tudor Green/Surrey White ware	1	1	
Sub Total	3	12	4.0
Totals	37	931	

Table 1: The late Saxon and medieval pottery totals by fabric sherd numbers and weight (grams).

The pottery spans the period from the mid 11th or 12th century to the 15th century, the late Saxon Stamford ware, the early medieval Potters Marston ware and the medieval Chilvers Coton ware being the most common pottery types present. The ridge tile fragment is in an unclassified Medieval Sandy ware, dating to the 13th or 14th century.

The pottery evidently represents several episodes of rubbish deposition in the vicinity of the river during the late Saxon and medieval period. The range of pottery fabrics is typical of that found in Leicester at this time.

<i>Context</i>	Fabric/ware	Sherd nos.	Weight grams	Comments
<i>POTTER Y</i>				
38	PM – Potters Marston	3	18	Includes a rouletted jug neck, 12th – 13th C.
38	SP3 – Splashed ware 3	1	70	Glazed jug body, 1100-1250.
40	CC1 – Chilvers Coton ware 1	1	38	Internally glazed, 13th C.+
41	PM	1	17	12th – 13th C.
46	PM	1	70	Collared, externally slashed, cp/stj rim, sooted, 12th C.
48	PM	4	62	Upright, collared cp/stj rim, 12th C.
52	PM	2	32	One sooted ext., 12th – 13th C.
53	PM	3	48	Two sooted ext., 12th – 13th C.
53	CC1	6	114	Green glazed, 13th C.+
55	PM	3	57	Min. one vessel, two sooted ext., 12th – 13th C.
140	PM	1	16	Sooted ext., 12th – 13th C.
157	EA9 – Pearl ware	1	1	Painted over glaze
157	EA10 – White Earthenware	1	7	Modern
157	SW5	1	5	
217	ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	1		Glazed, jar, Kilmurry form 4/5, 12th C., (Kilmurry 1980).
264	ST2	1	2	Glazed, 1050 – 1200
265	ST1 – Very Fine Stamford ware	4	8	Joins, glazed, 1150 - 1250
267	RS – Reduced Sandy ware	1	45	Concave base fragment, sooted, coarse quartz & calcite inclusions, ?12th – 13th C.
276	MS3 – Medieval Sandy ware 3	1	11	
276	TG – Tudor Green/Surrey White ware	1	1	1400 – 1550+
283	PM	1	20	Cp/stj rim, sooted, 12th – 13th C.
310	PM	1	230	Strap jug handle, thumbled down sides, rouletted neck, 13th C.
<i>RIDGE TILE</i>				
281	MS – Medieval Sandy ware	1	7	13th – 14th C.
<i>CLAY PIPE</i>				
157	China clay	1		Stem with broken heel, applied bird dec. on the side of the surviving fragment of bowl, later 18th – 19th C.

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Phase 2 (Trenches 7-10)**The Post-Roman Pottery and Ridge Tile D. Sawday**

The post Roman pottery, ten sherds, weighing two hundred and seventy eight grams, was examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999).

Of particular note was the fragment of early Saxon pottery from context 428. An unusual bowl form in the local Leicester Splashed ware, fabric SP3, which probably dates to the mid thirteenth century, was found in context 401.

Whilst the significance of the early Saxon pottery is uncertain at this stage, it apparently represents the first material dating to the early Saxon period from this part of the town. The rest of medieval and later pottery may simply have been redeposited here, by the river, as rubbish from elsewhere in the town, over a long period to time.

Site/Parish: The Merlin Works, Bath Lane, Leicester Accession No/ Doc Ref: A6 2003/bathlane2 Material: pottery Site Type: town, NW quarter	Submitter: V. Price Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Id: 18.02.05 Method of Recovery: evaluation
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Context	Fabric/ware	Sherd nos.	Weight grams	Comments
401	SP3 – Splashed ware 3	1	36	Carinated bowl, unusual form, similar in Stanion/ Lyveden type ware, (McCarthy & Brooks 1988, fig.172.1034), ? mid 13 th C.
402	MP – Midland Purple ware	2	158	Later medieval
410	EA8 – Cream ware	1	12	Later 18 th C+
428	SX- Saxon ware	1	2	Oxidised, granite tempered, late 5 th – 6 th C.
U/S 485	MS3 – Medieval Sandy ware 3	1	10	14 th C+
U/S 485	MB – Midland Blackware	2	12	16 th C +
U/S 468	EA2 – Earthenware 2	1	40	17 th /18 th C+
581	NO1 – Nottingham ware 1	1	8	Mid 13 th C. +

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Appendix 3: Animal Bone

A Brief Summary of the Bones from Trial Trenching at Merlin Works, Bath Lane Leicester - Jennifer Browning

Introduction

A small bone assemblage was recovered during trial trenching at Merlin Works, Bath Lane in early 2005. A total of 68 fragments were recovered. The archaeological work during which the bones were recovered was an evaluation, designed to assess the presence/absence of archaeological deposits. As a consequence there is a strong likelihood of further work; therefore statistical analysis of the bones at this stage would not provide useful information. However, the assemblage can be used to provide indications as to the preservation, nature and variety of species that may be identified during further excavation.

Results

Bone was recovered by hand from 14 deposits, provisionally dating from the early Roman period to the 19th century. The fragments were identified using archaeological and modern comparative skeletal material from the reference collection at Leicester University. Table 1 shows the number of fragments recorded from features of each period. It was not possible to judge how much residual Roman material may have been present in later contexts. However, in common with many urban sites, residuality is likely to be an issue at Merlin Works.

Period	Contexts	No. of fragments
<i>Roman?</i>	415	1
<i>Early Roman</i>	423, 579, 468	14
<i>Roman/Post Roman</i>	426, 428, 430	11
<i>mid.13th</i>	401, 583, 581	5
<i>Late medieval</i>	402	8
<i>Late 17th-early 18th</i>	485, 486	26
<i>18th-19th</i>	410	3
Total		68

Table 1: Number of bone fragments recorded from features of each period.

	Human	Cattle	Sheep/goat	Pig	Horse	Dog	Goose	Domestic fowl
<i>Roman?</i>							1	
<i>Early Roman</i>		3	1					1
<i>Roman/post Roman</i>				1			3	
<i>mid 13th century</i>			1	1				
<i>late medieval</i>								
<i>late 17th-early 18th century</i>		3	16		1	2		
<i>18th-19th</i>	1	1						
	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>

Table 2: Number of identified bones. NB A number of non-diagnostic cattle and sheep-sized fragments were also recovered.

The remains of cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse, dog, goose and domestic fowl were identified. The material was not greatly fragmented and bones were generally in good condition with well-preserved surfaces, enabling examination for butchery, pathology and gnawing damage.

Discussion

The species range observed amongst the Roman and medieval material (cattle, sheep/goat, pig, domestic fowl and goose) suggests that it represents general domestic waste and this conclusion is supported by the presence of occasional butchery marks and gnawing.

The 17th-18th century material is of a more particular composition. Of the 26 bone fragments, 16 were sheep/goat; the majority were metapodials and horncores (which had been severed from the skull). These bones were also particularly well-preserved, perhaps suggesting that they derive from waterlogged deposits. Cattle and horse metapodials were also recovered. One possibility is that these bones were the result of primary butchery. However, the presence of large quantities of metapodials and horncores is usually taken to signify waste from processing of the carcass for industrial purposes. The heads and feet were often left in the hide after it was removed from the carcass by the butcher (Serjeantson 1989, 136). An assemblage largely comprising cattle and sheep skull fragments, horncores and metapodials were recovered during recent trial trenching and excavations on the adjacent plot at Bath Lane (Finn 2002 and Cooper forthcoming). These findings hint that there were large dumps of tanners and hornworking waste by the river. The Records of the Borough of Leicester refer to a town dump on the banks of the Soar in 1508 (RBL ii, 290-1 and 380) and there are numerous mentions of the 'common dunghill' near the West Bridge (RBL vi, 25, 83, 131). The Borough Records also note that in 1399 'the burgesses and tenants of the town of Leicester were wont to have easement from old time to put their hides and wool-fells in the water of the Soar at the bridge which is called West Bridge up to the north bridge' (RBL 1327-1509).

Two fragments of dog bone were also recovered. The tibia of a large specimen suggested a stature of 65.7cm (based on Harcourt 1974). By contrast, the second bone (radius) was very small and calculations indicate a shoulder height of 31cm. Dog bones were also identified amongst the post-medieval 'craft' assemblage from the adjacent plot at Bath Lane (Browning 2002).

A single human femur was recovered from a late context (410), dating to the 19th century. However Roman graves were discovered during the excavation of the adjacent plot of land and it seems possible that this bone originated from a disturbed burial, disinterred and relocated during later activity.

Although only a small quantity of bone was recovered from the site during this evaluative phase of work, the preservation and nature of the remains suggests that excavation will yield a useful and informative assemblage with remains from the Roman period to the post-medieval period represented.

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Rec	Period	Cont	Fragments	Species	Bone	L/R	Part	Fusion	Butch	Gnaw	Teeth	Notes
	1lm/epm	485	2sh-size		ribs		mostly complete					
	2lm/epm	485	1bos		throacic		spine					
	3lm/epm	485	2c-size		skull		fragments					
	4lm/epm	485	1dog		tibia	l	complete	ff				gl=22.5
	5lm/epm	485	1s/g		metac		complete	ff				
	6lm/epm	485	1s/g		metac		complete	fu				
	7lm/epm	485	1s/g		metac		dst missing	pf				
	8lm/epm	485	1s/g		metat		complete	ff				
	9lm/epm	485	1s/g		metat		prox missing	df				
	10lm/epm	485	2s/g		metat		dst missing	pf				
	11lm/epm	485	4s/g		horncores		mostly complete		chopped from skull			probably sheep.
	12lm/epm	485	1cf dog		radius	l	complete	ff				v. small gl=9.8
	13lm/epm	485	2sheep		horncores		mostly complete		both chopped near base			
	14lm/epm	485	1s/g		mandible	r	asc. ramus missing				adult dentition	
	15lm/epm	485	1horse		metat		complete	ff				
	16lm/epm	485	2bos		metat		complete	ff				
	17lm/epm	486	1s/g		metac		complete	ff				
	18lm/epm	486	1s/g		metac		complete	fu				
	19mid 13th	401	1s/g		tibia		distal & shaft	df				
	20mid 13th	401	1c-size		rib		shaft frg					
	21early R	423	3c-size		shaft fragment							
	22early R	423	1sh-size		rib		shaft frg					
	23early R	423	1c-size		rib		shaft frg					
	24early R	423	2bos		skull		frg					
	25early R	423	1bos		pelvis	l	acetabulum					
	26early R	423	1sh-size		tibia		shaft only					
	27late med	402	1sheep		horncore		complete		chopped nr base			
	28late med	402	1s/g		metat		complete	ff				
	29late med	402	1s/g		metac		distal frg	df				
	30late med	402	1horse		tibia		distal frg	df				

31late med	402	1s/g	pelvis	acetab & ishium	f	illium chopped- removed
32late med	402	1sh-size	rib	shaft frg		
33late med	402	1s/g	radius	shaft frg		
34late med	402	1bos	pelvis	pubis		
35R/Post R	430	2c-size	shaft fragment			1gnawed
36R/Post R	430	1sh-size	shaft fragment			
37early R	579	1s/g	metac	distal missing		
38R/Post R	426	1c-size	shaft fragment			
39mid 13th	583	2c-size	rib	shaft frg		1 cut mark
40early R	468	1sh-size	rib	shaft frg		
41early R	468	1sh-size	vertebra			
42R/Post R	428	2sh-size	shaft fragment			
43R/Post R	428	1pig	skull	fragment		
44R/Post R	428	1unident	fragment			
45R/Post R	428	1goose	coracoid			
46R/Post R	428	1goose	scapula			
47R/Post R	428	1goose	femur		pf	
48?Roman	415	1goose	coracoid			
			tarso-			
49early R	468	1?dom fowl	metatarsus		df	
50early R	468	1un bird	tibiotarsus		pf	
51mid 13th	581	1pig	tibia	shaft only		
5218th/19th	410	1human	femur	r prox and shaft	pf	
5318th/19th	410	1sh-size	rib	frg		
5418th/19th	410	1bos	humerus	dist frg		

Appendix 4: Other Finds

Phase 1 (Trenches 1-6)

The Painted Wall Plaster

Cont no	Tr	Wt	Frag	Desc	Features
41		10	1	Abr (abraided)	OS (orange sandy mortar)
53		25	3	W (White)	LYM (Light yellow mortar)
156		250	5	1 W 1W maroon stripe 13mm w 3 W	WM (white mortar) WM LYM
159		1525	1	W	WM high lime, mortar has imprint of rubble
159		3375	74	14W W blue flecks overpaint, reddish brown stripe Dark grey 6 Pinkish red 1 with mid yellow stripe 3mm wide Dark orange Pale yellow, splashes of red, pale green, dark yellow 5-10mm Very pale greenish, splashes of red, light green 5-10mm 2 Dark yellow with orange over painting 3 Yellow with orange over-painting and corner of pinkish red panel, 30mm+ x 40mm+ corner defined by white stripes 3-4mm wide, at corner is white blob 14mm x 18mm abr (it is possible that it is yellow with orange splashes Light yellow with light green over-painting, white stripe 5mm wide Dark grey 15 pale green with over painted lines 5mm wide in reddish grey, forming 'squiggles' and broader abr area 15mm wide 3 light yellow green 7 mid to dark green, occ. traces of over painting in reddish grey/ purple Dark maroon 3 Dark maroon, white border abraded pale brown Abr Yellow with green over-painting and white area – pattern not clear Maroon, light blue-grey stripe 6mm, light yellow stripe 11mm, graduated light green stripe 5mm, pale grey Mid green, dark purple grey stripe 15mm, off white Pale grey Abraded ?maroon? 10 pale greenish with traces of maroon over-painting	LYM GM (grey mortar) GM B (brown mortar) B B B B B OS B B B WM WM YM (Yellow mortar) B B OS WM WM WM B
253		400	13	12W reddish grey stain	WM 1mm thick intonaco WM
261		175	5	3W dark purple grey R 30mm+W stripe 18mm B 4mm+	LYM YM YM
268		10	1	Pale pink abr	OS
279		10	1	W	LYM
283		125	3	W	YM
Total		5905	107		

The evaluation yielded 107 fragments of painted wall plaster, weighing 5.905kg. The bulk came from context (159), which was essentially a dump of wall plaster. This deposit was of interest not only for the quantity of material but for the variety of the fragments. These included pale green plaster with hints of over painted designs, which could foliate in form, on analogy with comparable work as well as a variety of geometrical devices, probably of polychrome panels and borders. The dump occurs

next to a substantial Roman building and it is possible that the deposit derives from the same building.

The writings of Vitruvius (VII, iii, 2) suggest that the Romans were able to vary the types and quantities of sand aggregate, to produce light stable mortars specifically for use on ceilings. Although none of the fragments have the reed impressions typical of ceiling plaster, many fragments are based on a whitish, very light mortar that is suitable for such purposes. This could suggest that the dump includes plaster from both walls and possibly ceilings, although this is conjectural.

The Tesserae

Cont. No	Tr	Wt	Lg	Md	Sm	GL	CL	GM	CM	GS	CS	O	Descr
US	3	75		4	3			4	1	1			White ls x 1 dark grey ls x1
12	1	10	0	1		0	0	1					
158	3	175	8	0		6	2	0					
213	3	275	11	0		9	2	0					
221	3	10	0	1		0	0	1					
280	4	25	1	0		1	0	0					
284	4	10	1	0		0	1	0					
Totals		580	21	6	3	16	5	6					

Key

Lg -	Large tesserae	CM -	Ceramic medium tess
Md -	Medium tesserae	GS -	Grey Limestone small tess
Sm -	Small tesserae	CS -	Ceramic small tess.
GL -	Grey limestone large tess	O -	Other material
CL -	Ceramic large tess.	LBr -	Light brown Limestone tess.
GM -	Grey Limestone medium tess.		

The assemblage consisted of 30 *tesserae*, of which 21 were large, 6 medium and 3 small, the last two categories perhaps being employed in mosaic work. The larger *tesserae* would be employed in plain grey or red floors.

The bulk came from trench 3 where a fragment of flooring survived although the *tesserae* themselves had been lost. It is likely that the recovered large grey limestone derived from this floor.

The three small tesserae are likely to derive from a mosaic but whether it was on or near the site is impossible to say.

Phase 2 (Trenches 7-10)

Glass

Context	Material	Type	Description
428	Glass	Vessel glass	2 x milky white 1 x blue green

Worked Flint

Single example from (428)

Shell

Four examples of marine oyster were retrieved; two from (426), one from (415) and an unstratified one from (485). A land snail shell came from (428).

Coal or Shale

Single fragments came from (410) and (428).