

**1 CITY BANK ROAD,  
CIRENCESTER,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

**NGR: SP 0293 0119**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



February 2019  
Report No. 1283



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**

# 1 CITY BANK ROAD, CIRENCESTER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

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## SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between the 23rd and 25th January 2019 at 1 City Bank Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 0293 0119). The project was commissioned by Philip Reynolds of PB Property.

The archaeological evaluation has identified the presence of well stratified Roman layers within this location, with layer (1008) probably representing a Roman demolition layer or collapsed wall. The top of deposit (1008) is situated at a height of between 105.00m and 105.08m AOD and is present approximately 0.95 to 1m below the Modern ground level.

No material was recovered below the Modern driveway which could be demonstrably dated to later than the 3rd century AD. The overall quality of the pottery assemblage was very good, with moderately large, well preserved sherds which suggested relatively undisturbed deposits. No evidence was encountered within the test pit which could be confidently attributed to the former railway embankment known within the vicinity. It would seem likely that the area of the test pit was just outside the footprint of the previous embankment, which was supported from an examination of early OS maps (Figure 5).

The presence of wall plaster within layers (1005-7), would suggest that there was previously a Roman building within the vicinity, possibly associated with probable demolition layer (1008), it is interesting to note that no wall plaster or CBM was found beneath this probable demolition layer.

## GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

### Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

### Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

### OS

Ordnance Survey.

### Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

### Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

### Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

### Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 1 City Bank Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 0293 0119). The project was commissioned by Philip Reynolds of PB Property.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2019). The WSI was prepared in accordance with the standard brief issued by Gloucestershire County Council, the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists - CIfA (2014).

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a new residential dwelling to the southwest of No 1 and 3 City Bank Road, Cirencester.
- 2.2 The site is situated at the southern extent of *Insula IX*, close to Silchester Gate, and part of the site is within the area designated as a Scheduled Monument for the Roman town of *Corinium*. Previous investigations within this part of the town have indicated that Roman walls, mosaic/tessellated pavements and roads are likely to be located within very close proximity of the proposed development works (Darvill and Gerrard, 1994).
- 2.3 Scheduled Monument Consent has been obtained for this work by the developer (Case No S00210442).
- 2.4 The remains of a Roman building are present at 16 Victoria Road and a Roman inscribed alter was found at 22 Victoria Road. An evaluation at 20 Victoria Road by Foundations Archaeology in 2012, revealed Roman layers at a depth of 0.93m (107.76m OD) below the Modern ground level, whilst recent evaluation works at 41 Victoria Road revealed the presence of probable late Roman demolition evidence at a depth of 0.19m (107.46m OD) from the Modern ground, as well as a probable Roman floor surface (110), at a depth of 0.7m (106.96m OD) below Modern ground.
- 2.5 An archaeological evaluation, undertaken less than 200m to the northwest at 81 Watermoor Road, by Foundations Archaeology in 2008, identified the presence of well-preserved archaeological remains within the site. These included three walls, stone rubble deposits, painted wall plaster fragments, decorated ceramic box-flue tile fragments and pottery datable to the Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. It is almost certain that the structural remains date to the Roman period and represent urban, probably high status, settlement activity. Foundations Archaeology have just completed a limited excavation on this site (report pending), which revealed more detail of the walls on the site and have confirmed that the structures are Roman in date.

- 2.6 In 2003, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an evaluation, followed by an excavation and watching brief in 2004 at the former Foresters Arms, 10 Queens Street, which revealed Roman remains 0.17m below the Modern ground surface. However, investigations closer to the study area have indicated that significant Romano-British deposits are most likely to be at a depth of between 1.1 to 1.2m below modern ground levels.
- 2.7 The underlying geology is recorded as *Forest Marble Formation – Mudstone*, with superficial geological deposits recorded as *River Terrace Deposits, 1 - Gravel* (BGS Online viewer).
- 2.8 The site therefore contains the potential for evidence of Roman activity. This will not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

### 3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn, this will allow reasonable planning/mitigation decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the development.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) To determine, as far as reasonably practicable, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
  - ii) To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains.
  - iii) To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features encountered.
  - iv) To assess the impact of previous land use on the site, including the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion.
  - v) To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable that archaeological implications of the proposed development to be assessed.
  - vi) To inform formulation of a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains.

- vii) To produce a site archive for deposition with Corinium Museum and to provide information for accession to the Gloucestershire County Council HER.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A 1.5m by 1.5m test pit was excavated within the footprint of the proposed extension, as shown in Figure 2. The test pit was hand-excavated by archaeologists to the top of demonstrable Roman deposits or other significant archaeological deposits. Spoil heaps were visually scanned for artefacts.
- 4.2 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all contexts identified in the course of the project is listed in Appendix 1, along with a report on the recovered pottery in Appendix 2 and a list of animal bone and miscellaneous finds in Appendix 3. A summary discussion is given below:
- 5.2 The test pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.59m (104.42m AOD) below the Modern ground surface level. Deposit (1010) was stratigraphically the earliest layer encountered and contained first century or later Roman pottery, animal bone and charcoal flecks. This was sealed by substantial layer (1009) which was over 0.5m thick and contained sixteen sherds of late 1<sup>st</sup> to early second century pottery and frequent charcoal flecks.
- 5.3 Layer (1009) was sealed by a deposit of frequent large limestone fragments (1008), which were associated with a mortar-like deposit of sandy gravel. The stones did not appear to be ordered and were not bonded together, therefore the layer was most likely a collapsed wall or Roman demolition layer. A single sherd of late first to early second century pottery was recovered from this layer.
- 5.4 Probable demolition layer (1008) was sealed by layer (1007), which contained a large quantity of early-mid second century or slightly earlier Roman pottery with one possible 3rd century piece present, as well as a fragment of wall plaster, animal bone, oyster shell and frequent inclusions of charcoal. This was sealed by a number of layers (1003-1006 and 1011), the majority of which contained second century Roman pottery and CBM, along with wall plaster from layers (1005) and (1006). A Roman coin was recovered from layer (1004). These were sealed by layer (1002), which may possibly be a former topsoil, a single fragment of probable Roman CBM and animal bone was recovered from this layer, which was in turn sealed by the Modern gravel cement driveway layer (1001).



## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation has identified the presence of well stratified Roman layers within this location, with layer (1008) probably representing a Roman demolition layer or collapsed wall. The top of deposit (1008) is situated at a height of between 105.00m and 105.08m AOD and is present approximately 0.95 to 1m below the Modern ground level.
- 6.2 No material was recovered below the Modern driveway which could be demonstrably dated to later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The overall quality of the pottery assemblage was very good, with moderately large, well preserved sherds which suggested relatively undisturbed deposits. No evidence was encountered within the test pit which could be confidently attributed to the former railway embankment known within the vicinity. It would seem likely that the area of the test pit was just outside the footprint of the previous embankment, which was supported from an examination of early OS maps (Figure 5).
- 6.3 The presence of wall plaster within layers (1005-7), would suggest that there was previously a Roman building within the vicinity, possibly associated with probable demolition layer (1008), it is interesting to note that no wall plaster or CBM was found beneath this probable demolition layer.
- 6.4 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Corinium Museum in Cirencester. A short note will be submitted for publication in the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society and an OASIS form and the digital archive will also be submitted to ADS.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished.

Darvill, T. and Gerrard, C. 1994. *Cirencester: Town and Landscape*. Cirencester: Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Foundations Archaeology. 2019. *1 City Bank Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Barge and Amanda Gardham of Historic England, Charles Parry and Toby Catchpole of Gloucestershire County Council and our client Philip Reynolds for their help during the course of this project.

## APPENDIX 1: The Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TEST PIT: 1.5m long by 1.5m wide. Natural not encountered. Test Pit excavated to depth of 104.42m AOD from Modern surface level of 106.01m AOD.		
1001	23	14.60	0.13	Modern driveway: Light yellowish grey, indurated stony cement with frequent small and medium sized sub-angular stone.	1002	n/a
1002	1.5+	1.5+	0.10	Remnant topsoil: dark greyish black, soft sandy clay with occasional small sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. Probable Roman CBM, animal bone and rare quantities of charcoal from this layer.	1003	1001
1003	1.5+	1.5+	0.17	Layer: light greyish green, soft sandy clay with occasional small sub-angular stones. Second century Roman pottery and animal bone from this layer. No charcoal present.	1011	1002
1004	1.5+	1.5+	0.17	Layer: light greyish green, soft sandy clay with occasional small rounded stones. Second century Roman pottery, animal bone, oyster shell, probable Roman CBM and occasional quantities of charcoal from this layer. Roman coin small find /1\ also from this layer.	1005	1011
1005	1.5+	1.5+	0.14	Layer: mid grey, loose clayey sand with occasional large angular limestones. Animal bone, Roman <i>imbrex</i> and CBM, second century Roman pottery, a probable Roman glass fragment and Roman wall plaster fragments were recovered from this layer. No charcoal present.	1006	1004
1006	1.5+	1.5+	0.06	Layer: light orangish yellow, firm sandy gravel with frequent small rounded stones. Frequent CBM present, early second century Roman pottery and Roman wall plaster fragments were recovered from this layer. No charcoal present.	1007	1005
1007	1.5+	1.5+	0.14	Layer: mid grey, loose silty clay with rare small angular stones. Animal bone, oyster shell, third century Roman pottery, a fragment of wall plaster and probable Roman CBM were recovered from this layer. It also contained with frequent flecks of charcoal.	1008	1006
1008	1.5+	1.5+	0.19	Layer? Collapsed wall/demolition layer?: light yellowish cream, compact sandy gravel with frequent large sub-angular limestones. Single sherd of late first-early second century Roman pottery from this layer. Layer of limestones covered by mortar-like layer of sandy gravel. Possibly a collapsed wall, or Roman demolition layer? Interestingly, all dating evidence recovered from within or below this layer is late first to early second century, no later evidence was present.	1009	1007
1009	1.5+	1.5+	0.55	Layer: mid reddish brown, firm silty clay with occasional small angular stones. A total of sixteen sherds of late first to early second century Roman pottery recovered, along with frequent inclusions of charcoal from this layer.	1010	1008
1010	1.5+	1.5+	0.04+	Layer: light blueish grey, loose sandy clayey silt with occasional small angular stones. A total of eight sherds of late first to early second century Roman pottery recovered, along with occasional fragments of charcoal from this layer.	?	1009
1011	1.5+	1.5+	0.04	Layer: light greyish green, friable gravel layer with frequent small and medium sized rounded stones. No finds or charcoal from this layer.	1004	1003

## APPENDIX 2: The Pottery

By Jane Timby

### Summary

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a modest assemblage of 84 sherds of pottery weighing 2136 g dating to the Roman period. Accompanying the pottery are 25 fragments (2816 g) of Roman ceramic building material. The assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by count and weight for the recorded contexts. Traded, named, Roman wares are coded following the National Roman fabric reference series (Tomber and Dore 1998 / <http://romanpotterystudy.org/nrfrc/base/index.php>). Other local wares are coded more generically according to firing colour and surface finish. The resulting data is summarized in Tables 1-2.

Pottery was recovered from just eight contexts with three unstratified sherds. The overall quality of the assemblage is very good with moderately large, well preserved sherds giving an overall average sherd weight of 25.4 g suggesting relatively undisturbed deposits. The figure is slightly biased through the presence of several amphora sherds.

### Roman

The pottery assemblage includes sherds from continental, regional and local sources. The continental wares are represented by eight sherds of Central Gaulish samian (LEZ SA2) and 13 sherds of Baetican amphora (BAT AM), whilst the regional wares comprise Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) and South-west black burnished ware (SOW BB1). Of note amongst the samian are two sherds from decorated bowls from (1006) one showing a rivet repair hole whilst the other shows the figure of Hercules. More local are sherds of grey, oxidised and white-slipped ware probably all from the North Wiltshire industries. Most of the wares are typical of the early-mid second century or slightly; earlier with one possible 3<sup>rd</sup> century piece from cxt (1007). There is no late Roman material present.

### Ceramic building material (CBM)

In total 25 fragments of CBM were recovered from six contexts. Where identifiable, on the basis of a flange or curved profile, most pieces appear to be Roman roofing tile with fragments of both *tegulae* and *imbrices* present. There is one example of a brick with a thickness of 40 mm from (1006).

### Potential for further work

The pottery indicates activity at this location from the Flavian period possibly into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century with the focus of material dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The profile of the assemblage is entirely that to be expected from a substantial settlement such as Cirencester which was receiving a wide variety of pottery from various sources including a notable number of imports. The small size of the group precludes the usefulness of further work but the chronological profile is perhaps of interest.

## References

Tomber, R, and Dore, J, 1998 *The National Roman fabric reference collection: a handbook*, Museum of London / English Heritage/ British Museum

Cxt	Samian	amph	BB1	Nwilts	Grog	Tot No	Tot Wt	Date
1003	0	1	1	2	0	4	167	C2
1004	5	0	2	6	0	13	154	C2
1005	0	0	2	9	0	11	95	C2
1006	2	2	0	7	0	11	282	early C2
1007	0	9	5	3	0	17	1091	C3
1008	0	0	0	1	0	1	13	late C1 - eC2
1009	0	1	0	15	0	16	199	late C1 - eC2
1010	0	0	0	7	1	8	86	lateC1+
us	1	0	0	2	0	3	49	C2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>2136</b>	

Table 1

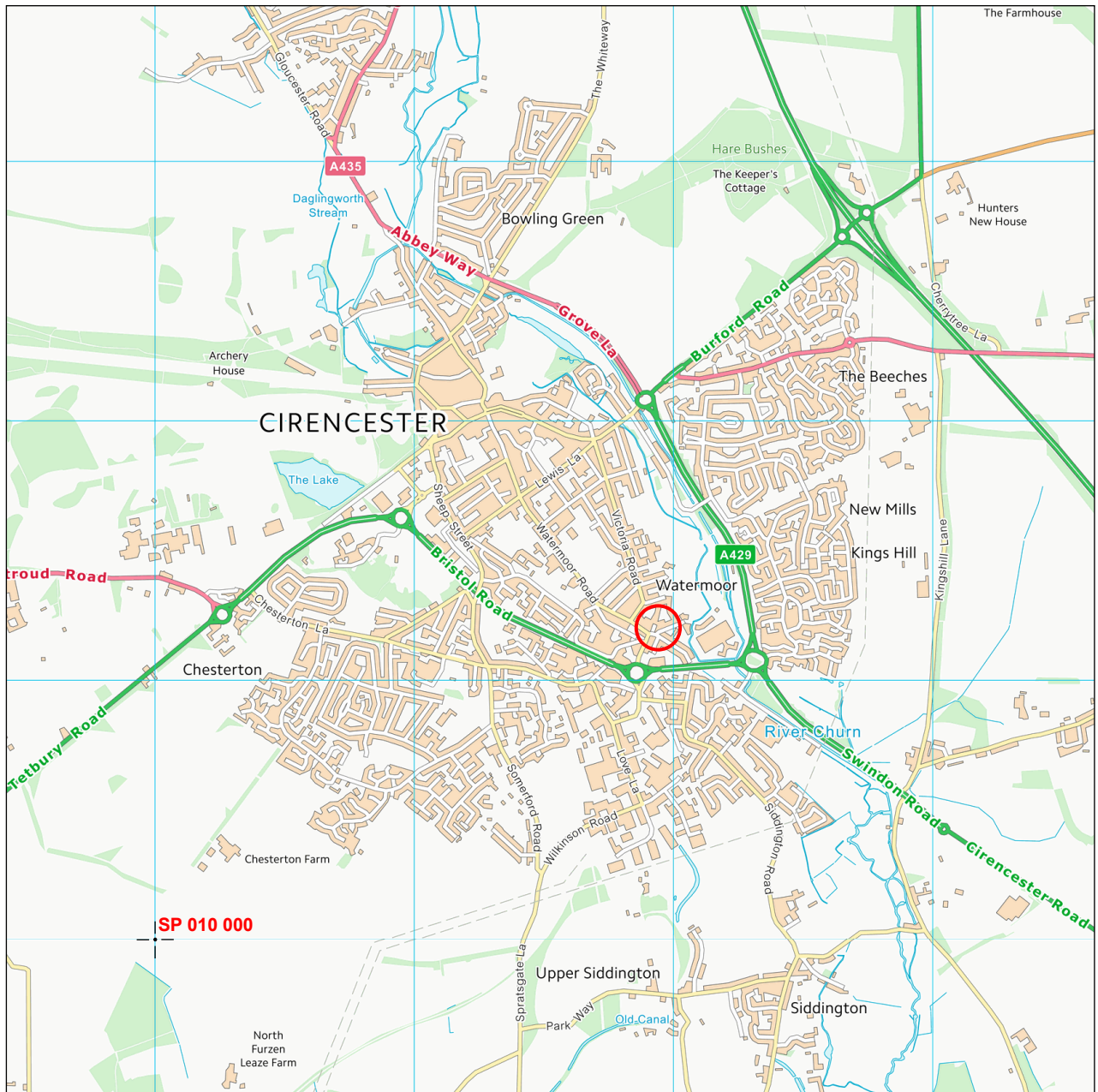
Cxt	Material	form	Wt	No	Comment
1002	CBM	frag	34	1	
1003	CBM	teg	108	1	
1003	CBM	frag	119	5	
1004	CBM	imb	168	1	
1004	CBM	frag	368	1	concentric scoring
1004	CBM	frag	44	1	
1005	CBM	frag	344	3	
1006	CBM	brick	956	1	t=40
1006	CBM	frag	658	10	
1007	CBM	frag	17	1	
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,816</b>	<b>25</b>	

Table 2

### APPENDIX 3: Animal Bone and Miscellaneous Finds

CXT NO.	BONE	GLASS	PLASTER	OYSTER SHELL	METAL
(1002)	19 (258g)				
(1003)	1 (63g)				
(1004)	7 (68g)			6 (106g)	#1 (9g, coin)
(1005)	3 (13g)	1 (4g)	2 (90g)		
(1006)	2 (8g)		10 (464g)		
(1007)	5 (58g)		1 (20g)	1 (14g)	
(1010)	1 (6g)				
U/S	1 (13g)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

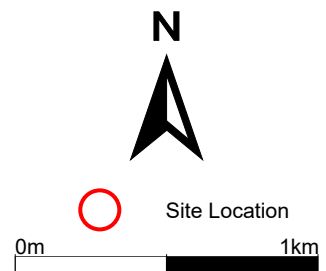
# Copper alloy Roman coin



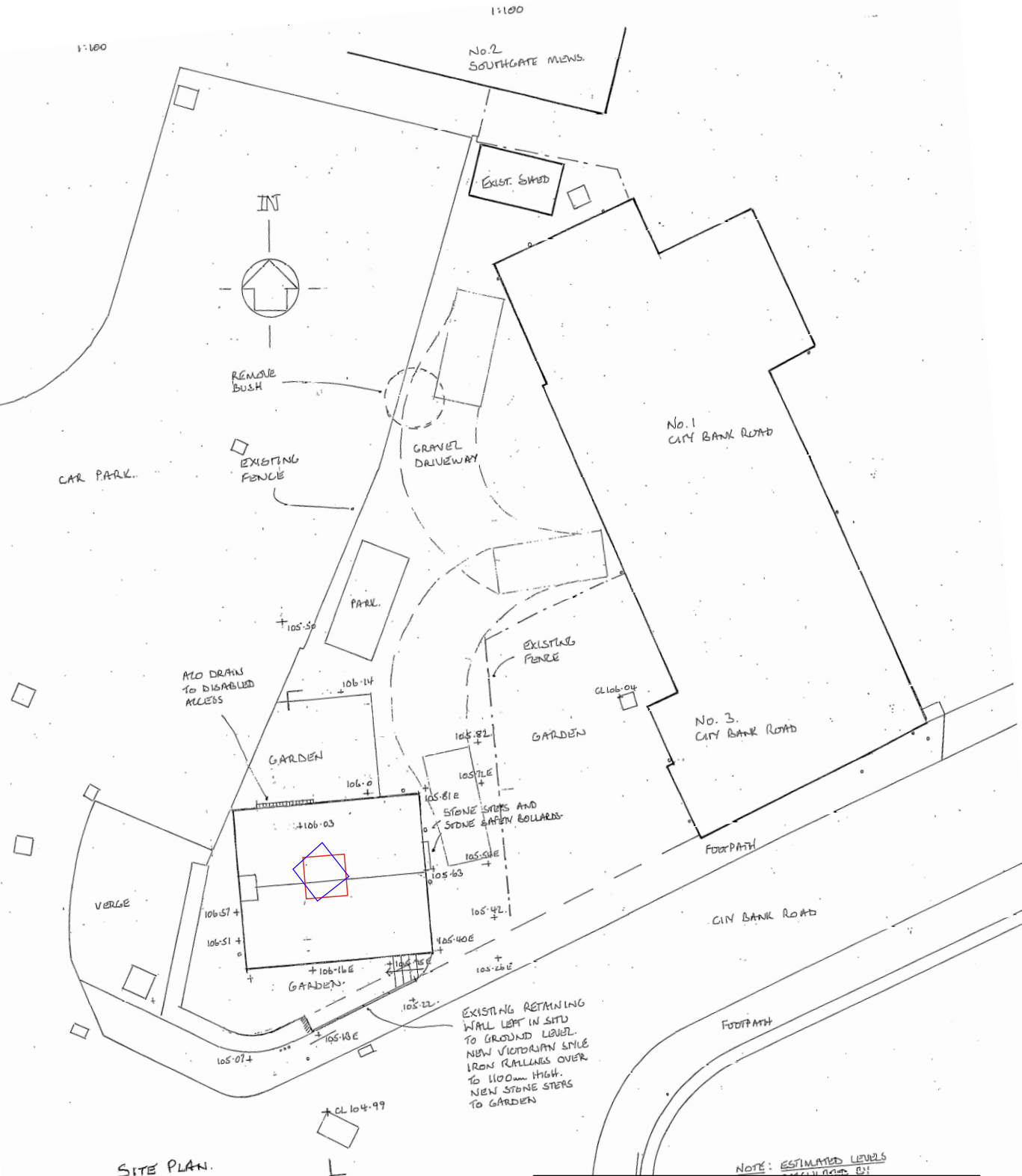
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 Ordnance Survey Licence 100015722

**Site Code: CBC18**

**Accession Code:**



**FIGURE 1: Site Location**



SITE PLAN. 1:100



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**Site Code: CBC18**  
**Accession Code:**

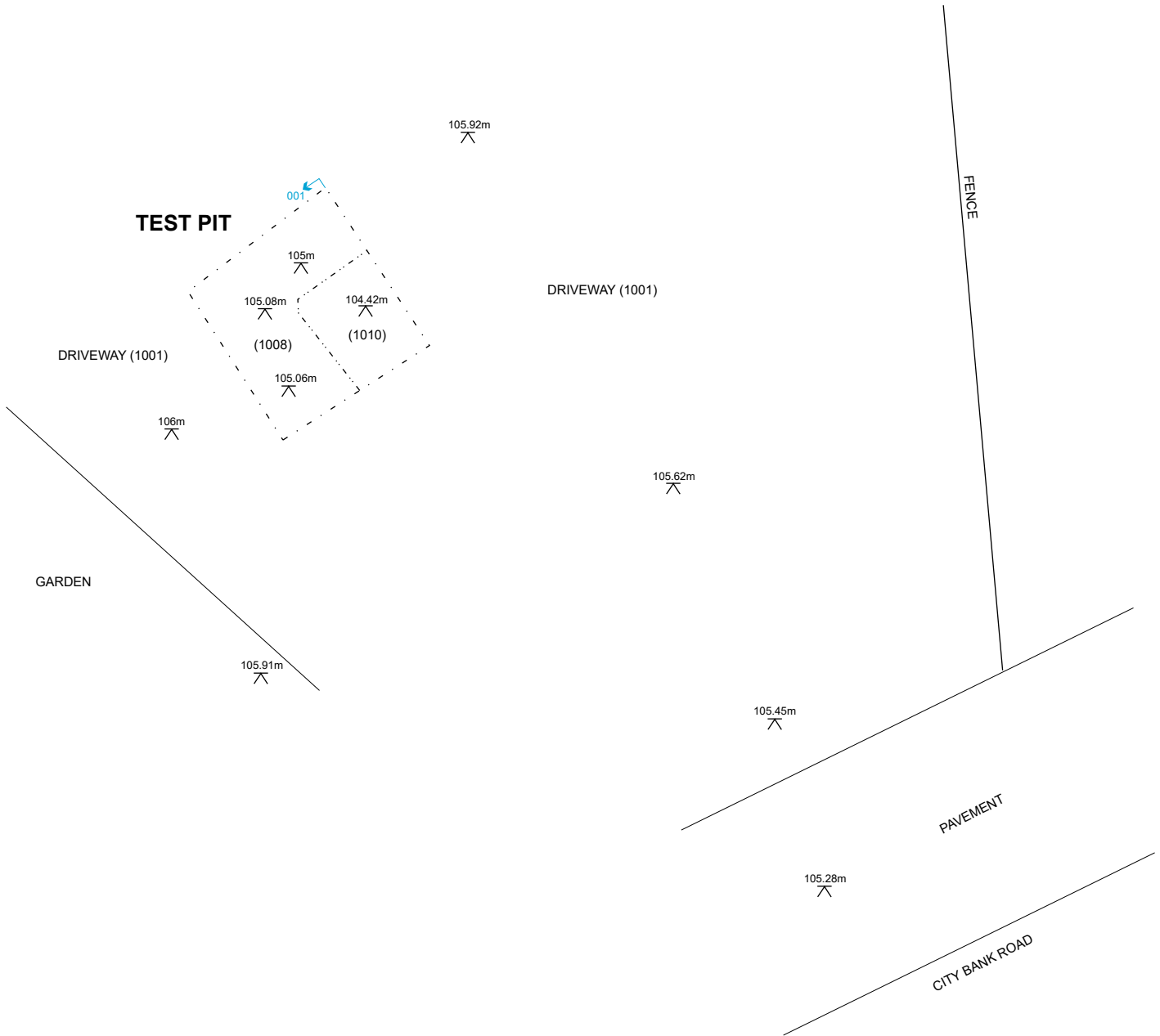
N

Proposed Test Pit

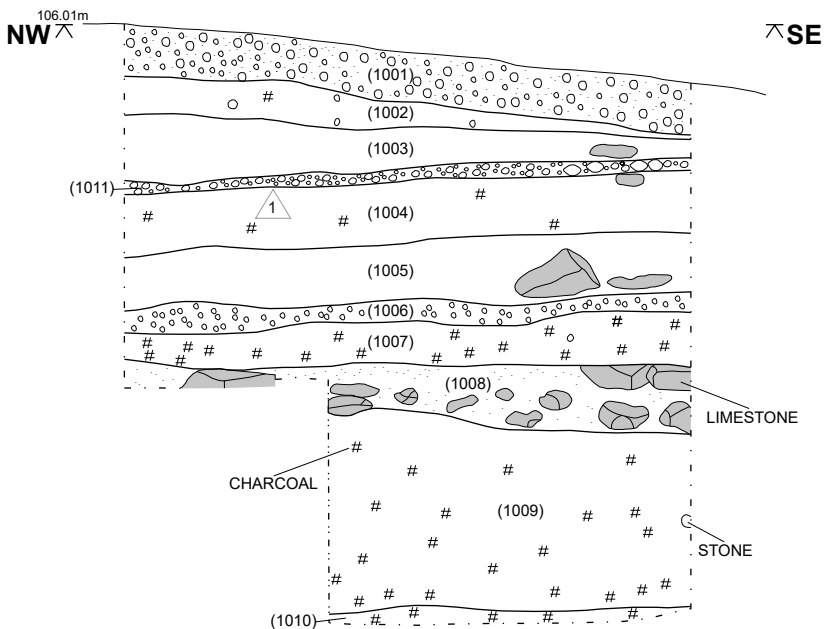
Final Test Pit

0m 10m

**FIGURE 2: Test Pit Location**



**SEC 001: SOUTHWEST FACING SECTION**



Site Code: CBC18  
 Accession Code:

N

0m 2m  
 Plan

0m 1m  
 Section

**FIGURE 3: Test Pit Plan and Section**





PLATE 1: Test Pit, Section 001,  
Southwest Facing Section.



PLATE 2: Plan View of Test Pit, Facing Northeast.



PLATE 3: Oblique View of Test Pit, Facing North.



PLATE 4: View of Test Pit from Driveway towards  
City Bank Road, Facing Southeast.

Site Code: CBC18  
Accession Code:

**FIGURE 4: Photographs**

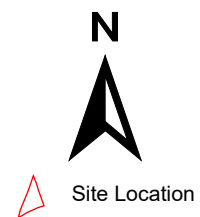


Not to Scale

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**Site Code: CBC18**

**Accession Code:**



**FIGURE 5: Extract from 1901 OS Map**