

**35 ASHCROFT ROAD
CIRENCESTER
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR: SP 0220 0174

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 491

June 2006

Quality Assurance

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Author

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CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 SITE LOCATION
- 3 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 4 AIMS
- 5 METHODOLOGY
- 6 RESULTS
- 7 CONCLUSION
- 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Area Location
- Figure 3: Site Plan

Summary

In January 2006 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at 35 Ashcroft Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 0220 0174). The watching brief involved the archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the construction of a utility room extension to the existing building.

A previous archaeological investigation at 35 Ashcroft Road identified significant archaeological deposits including walls/foundations and ceramic mosaic *tesserae*, all dating to the Roman period (Foundations Archaeology 2000).

The current groundworks penetrated to a maximum depth of 0.69m. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the investigated area.

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 the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* 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.

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards.

Romano-British/Roman

Term used to describe the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

Tessera

A small ceramic cube or block associated with mosaics of the Roman period.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January 2006 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at 35 Ashcroft Road, Cirencester (NGR: SP 0220 0174). The work was commissioned by Ms K. Groves in response to a condition of planning permission (Application Ref: CT.7875/A).
- 1.2 The watching brief was concerned with an area of land immediately adjacent to 35 Ashcroft Road (Fig. 3), where a utility room extension was to be constructed. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region) and the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2005).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 No. 35 Ashcroft Road (NGR: SP 0220 0174) is located in the centre of Cirencester, within the area of *Corinium Roman Town*. The site is situated at a height of *circa* 110m OD.
- 2.2 The utility room extension is located at the north east of the house building, south of Ashcroft Road.

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The town of Cirencester lies in southeast Gloucestershire towards the southern end of the Cotswold Hills. The geology within the town perimeter is predominately Quaternary gravels (Darvill & Gerrard 1994).
- 3.2 Cirencester is widely recognised as being of archaeological and historical importance, with extensive archaeological remains.
- 3.3 Cirencester was an important Roman town, which is believed to have become a provincial capital or *civitas*.
- 3.4 A previous archaeological watching brief at 35 Ashcroft Road (immediately south of the current investigation area) identified significant archaeological deposits including walls/foundations and ceramic mosaic *tesserae*, all dating to the Roman period (Foundations Archaeology 2000).

4 AIMS

4.1 The aims of the watching brief 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.

4.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations Archaeology 2005).

i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 The layout of the groundworks, which consisted of a single foundation footing trench, is shown in Figure 3. The footing trench was excavated manually, under constant archaeological supervision.

6 RESULTS

6.1 **Trench 1** was 3.70m long and 3.20m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.69m from the modern ground surface.

6.2 Context (105), at least 0.05m thick, formed the lowest encountered deposit within the excavation area. This layer consisted of a dark brown/black clay silt. Fill (105) was sealed by context (104), up to 0.05m thick, which comprised a layer of 19th/20th century broken slate roof tiles. Layer (104) was, in turn, overlaid by fill (103), up to 0.30m thick, which consisted of a mid brown clay silt. This context contained frequent stone, brick and rubble. Fill (103) was sealed by context (102), up to 0.25m thick, which comprised a light beige sand bedding layer. Layer (102) was overlaid by concrete paving slabs (101), up to 0.04m thick. No archaeological deposits or features were present within the investigated area.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The footing trench was relatively shallow (up to 0.69m in depth) and did not impact upon archaeological features or deposits. No residual archaeological artefacts were present within the excavated area.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

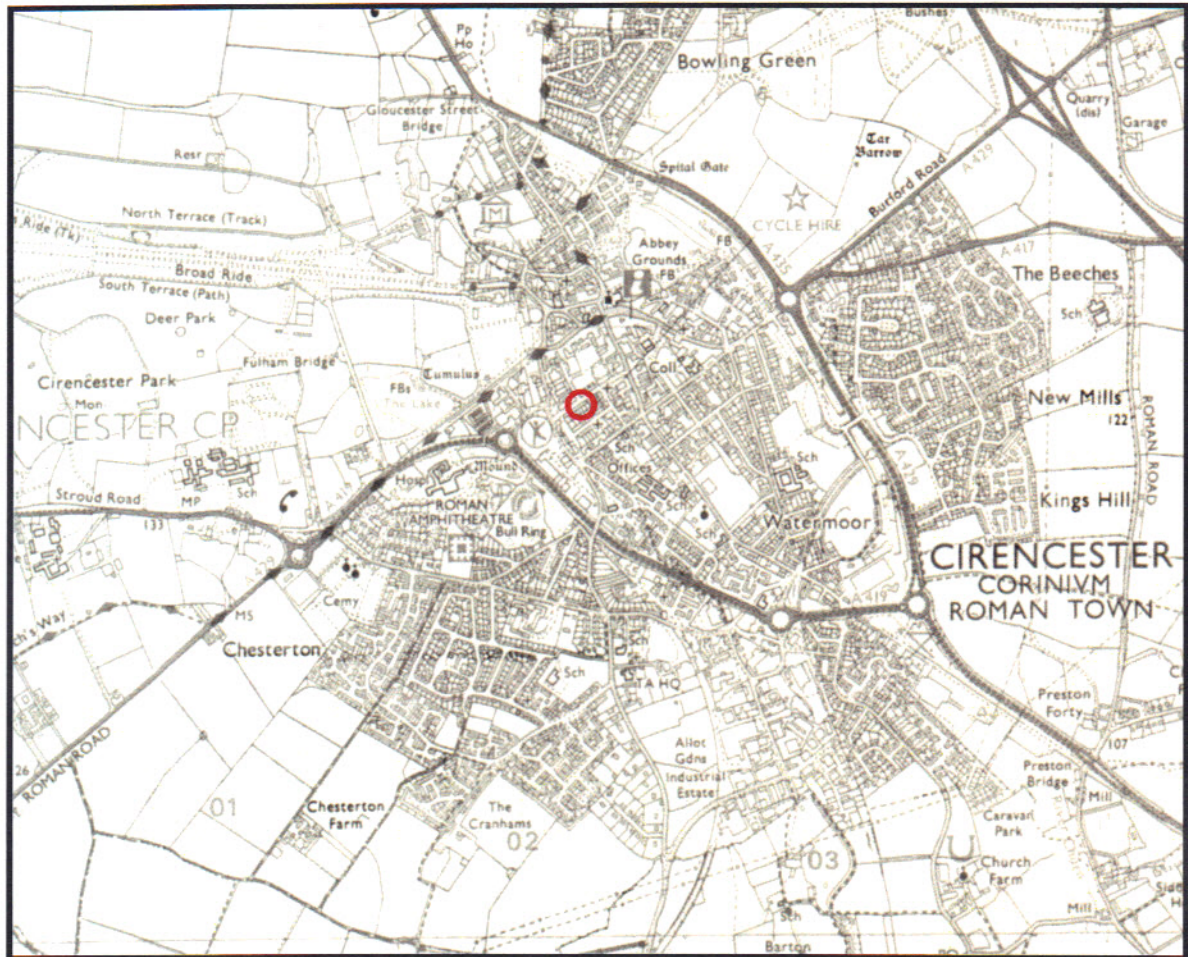
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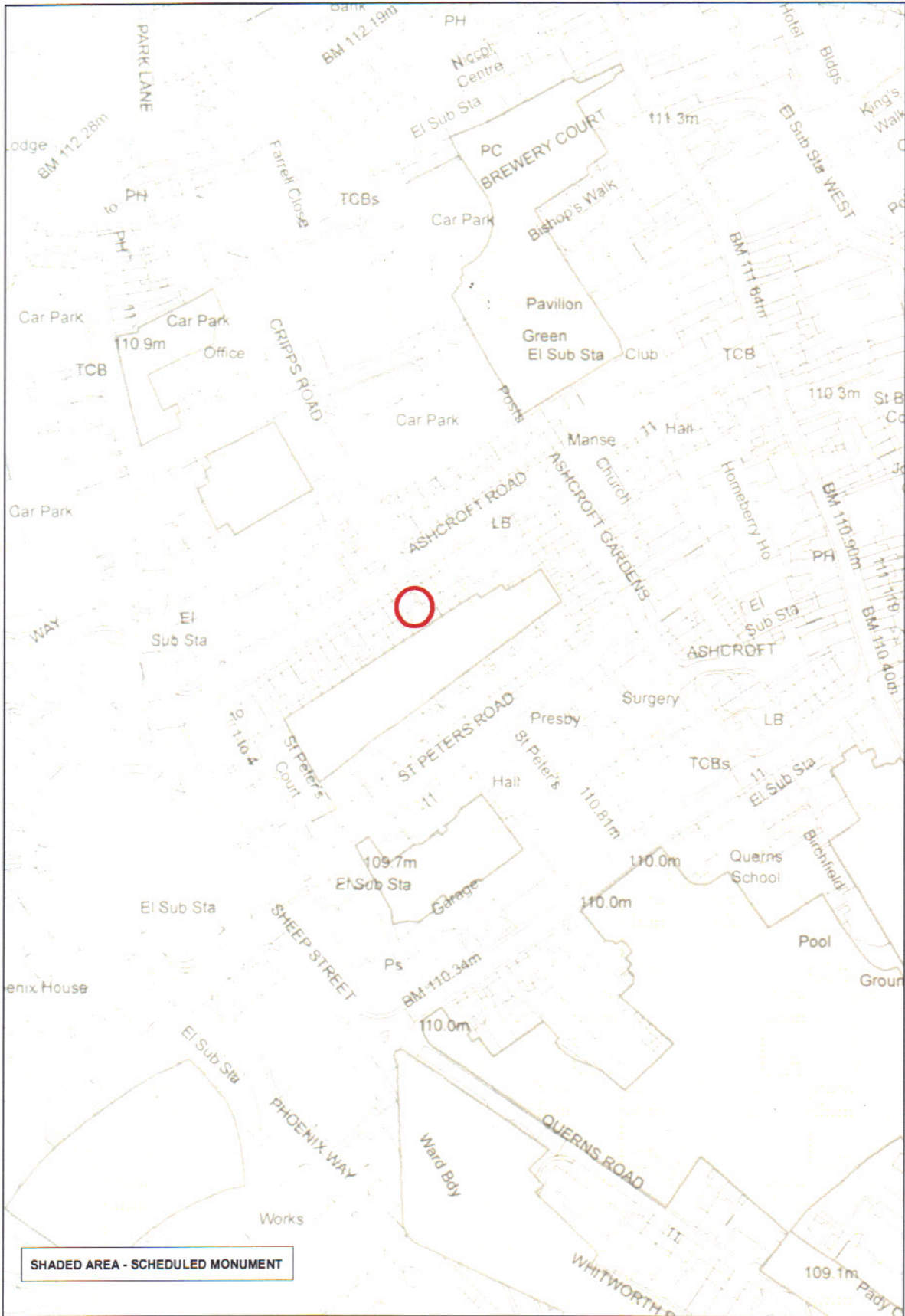
9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location



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FIGURE 2: Area Location

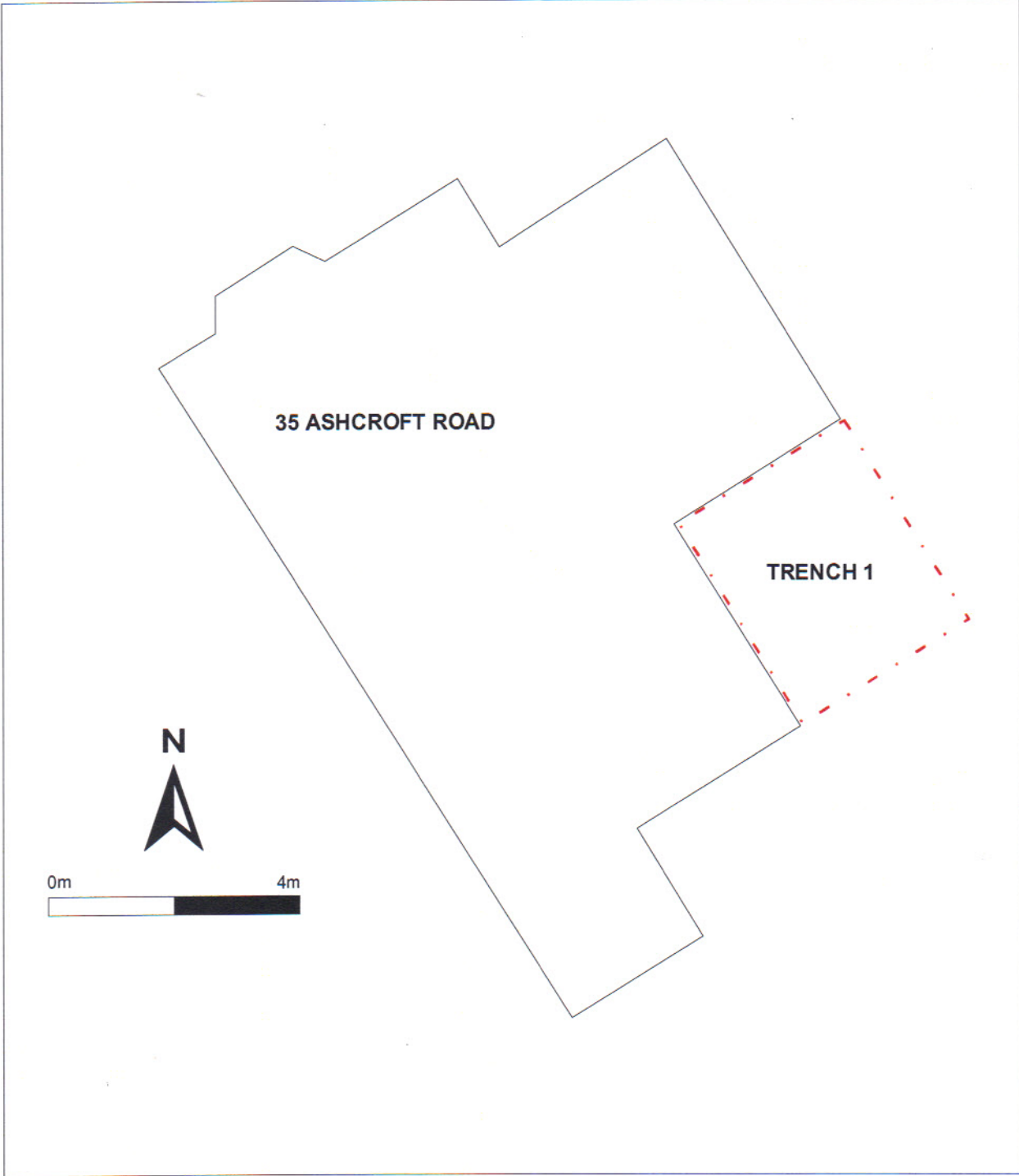


FIGURE 3: Site Plan