

**5 CHURCH STREET,  
CIRENCESTER,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

**NGR: SP 027 013**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

June 2015  
Report No. 1060



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES**

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**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2008)

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## **SUMMARY**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of rear single and two storey extensions at 5 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 027 013). The work was commissioned by Mr Mason Richens.

The stratigraphy of the site varied and was dependent on whether the footings were excavated within the previous extension's footings or within the back garden area.

Deposits (103) and (104) were present within the garden area and most likely represented intact Roman deposits. These were present at a minimum depth of 0.8m (106.5m AOD) below the Modern ground level. Even though the layers only yielded a small quantity of dateable material, the character of these deposits was similar to deposits of Roman demolition debris observed elsewhere in Cirencester and can therefore be confidently given a Roman date.

Therefore any future groundworks required within the vicinity of the site have the potential to impact upon possible undisturbed Roman stratigraphy if excavated to a depth greater than 106.5m AOD (0.8m below Modern ground level).

## **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.

### *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.

### *Roman*

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On the 30th June 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of rear single and two storey extensions at 5 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 027 013). The work was commissioned by Mr Mason Richens.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Foundations Archaeology (2014), which complied with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the standard conditions from the Gloucestershire Archaeology Service.
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The project involved the construction of a rear extension to 5 Church Street, Cirencester. Planning permission for the work had been granted by Cotswold District Council under reference 14/00938/FUL. The permission included a condition requiring a programme of archaeological recording.
- 2.2 The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and is situated within the defences of the Roman town of Corinium, north of Silchester Gate. It has been suggested that, although Church Street lies outside the main centre of the town, it may be within the location of an annexe to the early Roman fort. Although it is not located within the area designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.3 Previous archaeological works in the area have revealed metalling for a northwest-southeast orientated Roman Road at 28 Church Street, residual Roman building material including roof tile, brick, wall plaster and glass at 30 Church Street and a Roman inhumation burial with associated pottery (GHER 8996) on Church Road itself. An evaluation in May 2003 carried out by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeological Service at 29 Church Street revealed undated deposits, which were either sealed by or cut by Post-medieval contexts. Health and safety concerns prevented further excavation into these unknown deposits, which were located at a depth of between 0.92 and 1.22m below the Modern ground surface. A watching brief was carried out at 29 Church Street in 2004 by Foundations Archaeology (Foundations, 2004). It was a condition of planning that the proposed development be excavated within 750mm of the Modern ground level in order to avoid impacting on possible undisturbed Roman stratigraphy revealed by the earlier evaluation. The watching brief demonstrated that no Roman horizons were disturbed and all excavated deposits dated to the Victorian/Modern period. A further evaluation at No.20 Church Street in 2008,

noted a Roman floor surface of irregular shaped limestone blocks with flat upper surfaces and 'buried soil horizon' of post-Roman date (GHER 32426 and 32427).

- 2.4 The archaeological potential of the site was therefore perceived as high for deposits and features of Roman date. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

### **AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring 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.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the objectives as stated below.
- i) to define and identify the nature of the 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.

### **METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The groundworks comprised the removal of the footings for the existing extension and then the excavation of additional footings for the new extension (Figure 2).
- 4.2 All excavation was undertaken by hand, under constant archaeological observation. Where potential archaeological features or deposits were present, they were manually investigated and, if necessary, recorded in accordance with the WSI. Spoil tips were scanned for unstratified finds. All recovered archaeological artefacts were allocated a context reference number and retained. Modern artefacts were noted and discarded.

## 5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The footings for the new extension were excavated to a depth of between 1m to 1.25m deep, with an average width of 0.8m. The natural substrates were not revealed in any of the footing trenches.
- 5.2 The stratigraphy of the site varied and was dependent on whether the footings were excavated within the previous extension's footings or within the back garden area.
- 5.3 The earliest deposit present within the area of previous extension was a grey black silty clay (102), which contained frequent gravel inclusions and occasional fragments of limestone along with occasional to frequent charcoal flecks. This deposit was present at a minimum of 0.6m from the Modern ground level. No dating evidence was present within this layer. This was sealed by a dark brown/black silty clay topsoil (101), which was between 0.6-0.9m thick and contained fragments of late Post-medieval/Modern chinaware, CBM and a fragment of clay pipe. A small sample of the CBM was retained. A small bronze Roman coin (struck between AD 353-360) was recovered from the spoil from this area.
- 5.4 The earliest deposit present within the garden area was a yellow beige sandy clay (104), this was only present at the base of the footings. Deposit (104) contained frequent small stones and occasional charcoal flecks. A fragment of probable Roman tile was recovered from this context. This was sealed by a yellow-beige sandy clay/pea-grit (103), up to 0.25m thick, which contained frequent limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. Contained within this deposit were two sherds of Roman greyware and a fragment of probable Roman CBM. This was in turn sealed by topsoil (101).
- 5.5 There was no evidence of deposit (102) outside of the area of the previous footings. Although this context was undated, it is likely to represent the backfill/disturbance created during the construction of the previous extension.
- 5.6 Deposits (103) and (104) most likely represented Roman deposits, which were present at a minimum depth of 0.8m below the Modern ground level (approximately 106.5m AOD). Even though the layers only yielded a small quantity of dateable material the character of these deposits was similar to deposits of Roman demolition debris observed elsewhere in Cirencester and can therefore be confidently given a Roman date.
- 5.7 Therefore any future groundworks required within the vicinity of the site have the potential to impact upon possible undisturbed Roman stratigraphy if excavated to a depth greater than 106.5m AOD (0.8m below Modern ground level).



- 5.8 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank the client Mr Mason Richens, Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council and the on-site groundworkers for their help and co-operation during the project.

**APPENDIX 1: The Pottery**

(101)

Two fragments of cbm (5g), probably Post-medieval/Modern in date.

(103)

1 sherd (31g) of Roman North Wilts greyware and 1 small sherd (2g) of Roman greyware. One fragment of cbm (4g), probably of Roman date.

(104)

1 fragment of tile (135g), probably of Roman date.

The Roman pottery is restricted to two sherds of greyware from the same context; both sherds are from long-lived industries and cannot be given a precise date beyond AD 43-AD410.

**APPENDIX 2: The Animal Bone**

(104)

Fragment of a Bos Taurus (cattle) adult left rib (26g). No evidence of butchery marks present.

### **APPENDIX 3: The Miscellaneous Finds**

Unstratified

Coin

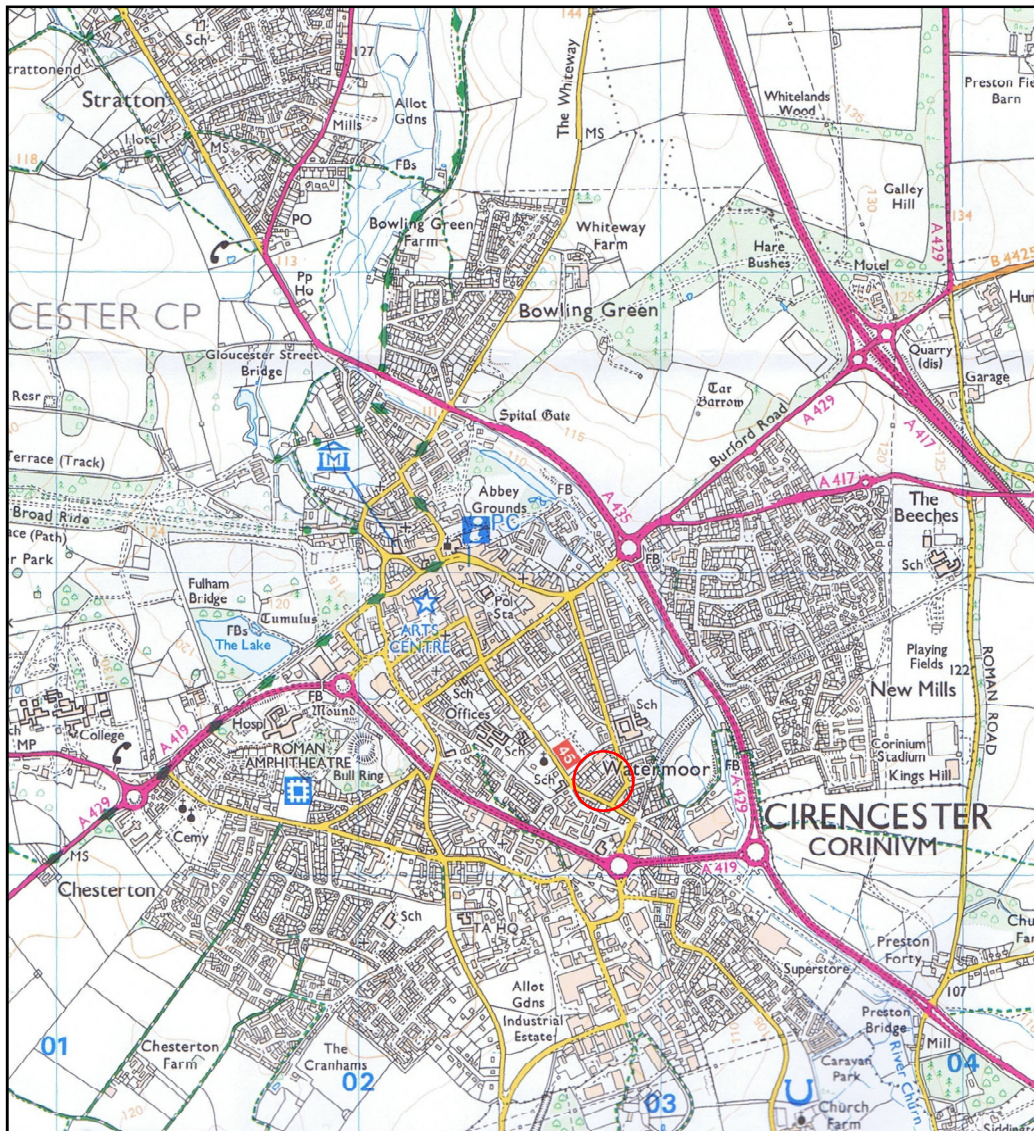
A *nummus* or low value bronze coin of Julian II Caesar or Constantius II of uncertain mint which was struck between AD 353-360.

The obverse shows a diademed bust facing right.

The Reverse shows the Emperor standing facing holding a globe and spear. The legend reads SPES REIPVBLICE which translates as "Hope of the republic/state"

(101)

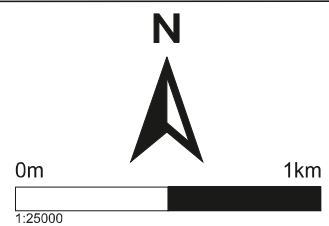
Fragment of late Post-medieval/early Modern clay-pipe



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**Site Code: CSC14**

**Accession Code:**



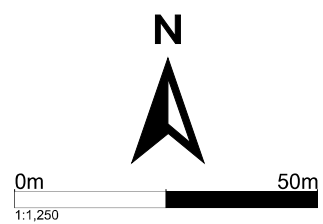
**FIGURE 1: Site Location**



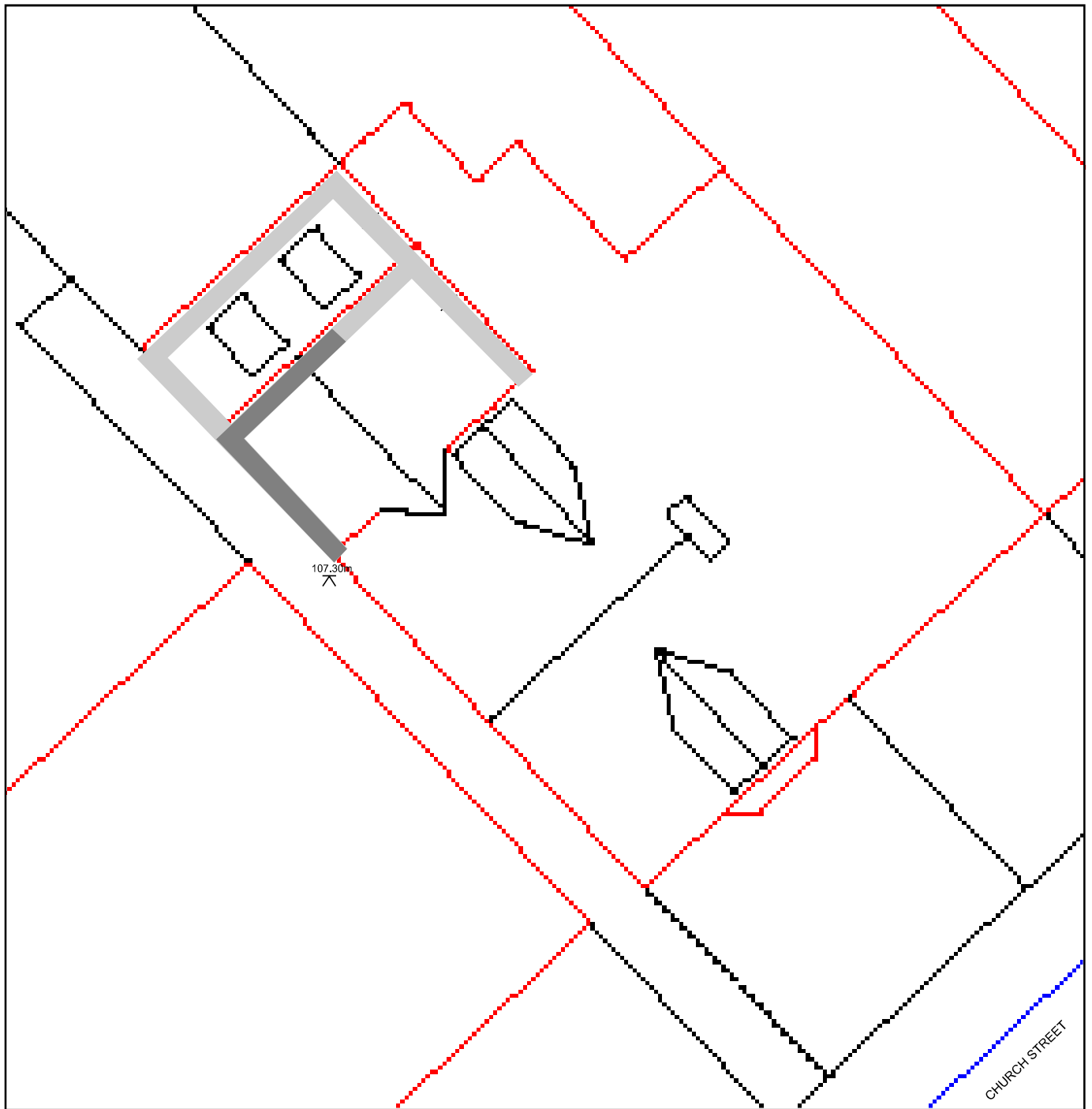
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**FIGURE 2: Watching Brief Location**



Site Code: CSC14  
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-  PREVIOUS GARDEN AREA
-  PREVIOUS FOOTINGS



**FIGURE 3: Watched Area**