41 VICTORIA ROAD, CIRENCESTER, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

NGR: ST 027 017

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

November 2016
Report No. 1168

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

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 13th October 2016 by Foundations Archaeology on land at 41 Victoria Road, Cirencester (NGR: SP 027 017). The work was commissioned by Chris Hoxey and Clare Wood.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single test pit to enable an assessment of archaeological potential, prior to the determination of a development planning application.

The archaeological evaluation identified the presence of probable late Roman demolition evidence at a depth of 0.19m (107.46m OD) from the Modern ground surface. However, the most archaeologically significant deposit present within the evaluated area was probable Roman floor surface (110). This was present at a depth of 0.7m (106.96m OD) below the Modern ground surface. As this layer appeared to be a demonstrably Roman deposit, it was left unexcavated as per the Methodology (Paragraph 4.1).

The presence of Roman demolition material in the form of deposit (105), along with a quantity of Roman CBM and a small fragment of painted wall plaster would strongly suggest the presence of a Roman building within the near vicinity. It is possible that surface (110) was an element of this structure.

The evaluation provided a modest assemblage of Roman, Medieval, Post-medieval and Modern pottery, along with Roman CBM and painted wall plaster, a Roman coin dated to between 337 and 361 AD, a fragment of clay smoking pipe, glass, animal bone, oyster shell and vitrified material.

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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 *c*. 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.

Patina

The outermost layer of an artefact, which may differ in colour, texture, luster, or substance from the inner part of the artefact due to physical, biological, or chemical alteration due to environmental conditions. The amount of patination is sometimes used as a very rough indication of age; the longer the exposure the deeper is the patination.

Post-medieval

The period from *c*. AD 1500 onwards.

Romano-British

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 13th October 2016 by Foundations Archaeology on land at 41 Victoria Road, Cirencester (NGR: SP 027 017). The work was commissioned by Chris Hoxey and Clare Wood in response to a condition, which required a programme of archaeological works in advance of the determination of a planning application for a proposed rear extension.

1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2016). 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 The site of the proposed development is to the rear of 41 Victoria Road, as shown in Figure 2. At the time of the fieldwork the proposed development site comprised a paved area.

2.2 The underlying geology is recorded as *Forest Marble Formation – Mudstone*, with superficial geological deposits recorded as *River Terrace Deposits, 1 - Gravel* (BGS Online viewer).

2.3 The site is situated at the northern extent of Insula XI, within the Roman town, although it is not located within the area designated as a Scheduled Monument. Previous investigations within this part of the town have indicated that a Roman road is likely to be located within very close proximity of the proposed development works (Darvill, T. & Gerrard, C. 1994. Cirencester: Town and Landscape).

2.4 The remains of a Roman building have been identified at 16 Victoria Road and a Roman inscribed alter has been found at 22 Victoria Road. An evaluation at 20 Victoria Road by Foundations Archaeology in 2012, also revealed Roman layers at a depth of 0.93m (107.76m OD) below the Modern ground level. Numerous other Roman finds and deposits are recorded within the general vicinity of the site.

2.5 The site therefore contained the potential for evidence of Roman activity. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits.

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3.2 These aims were achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives:

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;

iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;

v) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 A single 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, other significant archaeological deposits, or to the top of natural ground, whichever was encountered sooner. 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 first archaeologically significant deposit present within the test pit was (105), which appeared to be a Roman demolition layer, which was present 0.19m (107.46m OD) from the Modern ground surface. This layer was fully hand cleaned and a quantity of Roman CBM and pottery was visible across the surface. The northwestern edge of surface (105) had been cut away by late Post-medieval cut [103]. It was possible, therefore to remove the fill of this feature to examine deeper deposits without significantly impacting upon Roman layer (105).

5.3 Probable floor surface (110) present at 0.7m (106.96m OD) below the Modern ground surface, represented the stratigraphically earliest deposit within the test

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pit. This context was not excavated, as it represented demonstrable Roman deposits, but was exposed across the reduced half of the test pit and carefully hand cleaned. A small amount of Roman pottery and CBM was visible within the stone matrix of this layer.

5.4 Probable Roman floor surface (110) was sealed beneath a number of layers (107), (108) and (109). No dating evidence was present in the two lowest layers ((108) and (109)), but a total of seven sherds of Roman pottery and four sherds of Post-medieval pottery were recovered from within layer (107). However, the Post-medieval material consisted of relatively small sherds, with an average sherd size of 7.75g and were found near the surface of (107), where the layer had been cut by late Post-medieval feature [103]. In comparison, the Roman material from this layer had an average sherd size of 27g. As the matrix of (107) was very soft in nature and had been cut by late Post-medieval feature [103], it is likely that the Post-medieval material was intrusive and a Roman date can be attributed to layer (107) with some degree of confidence.

5.5 Probable alluvial layer (107) was in turn sealed by layer (106), which contained four sherds of Roman pottery, two fragments of Roman CBM and a small fragment of painted wall plaster. This was directly sealed by Roman demolition layer (105), which was in turn sealed by layer (102). Layer (102) was a loose dark grey brown silty clay, which contained predominately Roman material, as well as a copper alloy *Nummus* of Constantius II (337-61 AD), which was found directly on top of Roman demolition layer (105). A small quantity of Medieval and Post-medieval pottery was also present within this layer. Layer (102) had been cut by late Post-medieval/Modern cut [103]. Layer (102) and cut [103] were then in turn sealed by former topsoil (100) and patio surface (101).

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The archaeological evaluation has identified the presence of probable late Roman demolition evidence at a depth of 0.19m (107.46m OD) from the Modern ground surface. However, the most archaeologically significant deposit present within the evaluated area was probable Roman floor surface (110). This was present at a depth of 0.7m (106.96m OD) below the Modern ground surface. As this layer appeared to be a demonstrably Roman deposit, it was left unexcavated, as per the Methodology (Paragraph 4.1).

6.2 The presence of Roman demolition material in the form of (105), along with a quantity of Roman CBM and a small fragment of painted wall plaster would strongly suggest the presence of a Roman building within the near vicinity. It is possible that surface (110) was an element of this structure.

6.3 The evaluation provided a modest assemblage of Roman, Medieval, Post-medieval and Modern pottery, along with Roman CBM and painted wall plaster, a Roman coin dated to between 337 and 361 AD, a fragment of clay smoking pipe, glass, animal bone, oyster shell and vitrified material.

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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.

Foundations Archaeology. 2016. *41 Victoria Road, Cirencester: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation.* Unpublished.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Charles Parry and Toby Catchpole of Gloucestershire County Council, as well as Clare Wood and Chris Hoxey for their assistance during the course of the project.

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APPENDIX 1: The Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Test Pit 1: 1.5 by 1.5m		
100	1.5+	1.5+	0.05	Former topsoil?: Black clay silt, rare charcoal, no artefactual evidence present.	[103],104, 105, 106	101
101	1.5+	1.5+	0.05-0.09	Patio stone flags and hardcore.	100	N/A
102	1.5+	Upto 1.4	0.07	Layer: Loose dark grey brown silty clay, with occasional small stone inclusions and rare charcoal. Contained predominately Roman material, with a small quantity of Medieval and Post-medieval pottery. Small find of copper alloy Nummus of Constantius II (337-61).	105, 106	[103], 100
[103]	1.4+	0.45+	0.46	Cut: Steeply sided flat based cut. Contained (104).	102, 105, 106,107,108,109	100, 104
104	1.4+	0.45+	0.46	Fill of [103]: Dark grey silty clay, contained frequent limestone inclusions and occasional charcoal flecks. Frequent late Post-medieval/Modern material present (sample retained) as well as a large fragment of industrial waste and residual Roman CBM.	103	100
105	1.5+	1.1+	0.07	Layer: Compact surface of greenish beige clay with very frequent small to medium limestone fragments, frequent fragments of Roman CBM and pottery and rare large lumps of charcoal. Very small sample excavated to establish date. **Late Roman demolition(?) layer.**	106	102, [103]
106	1.5+	0.8+	0.05-0.18	Layer: Compact dark grey silty clay, with frequent limestone inclusions and rare charcoal flecks. Contained four sherds of Roman pottery, two fragments of Roman CBM and a small fragment of painted wall plaster. **Roman layer.**	107	[103], 102, 105
107	1.5+	0.8+	0.12-0.16	Layer: Sticky/soft dark grey clay silt, with frequent limestone inclusions and rare charcoal flecks. Contained seven sherds of Roman pottery as well as four intrusive Post-medieval sherds. Possible alluvial layer? **Roman layer**.	108	[103], 106
108	1.5+	0.8+	0.06-0.10	Layer: Gritty green beige clay with frequent limestone inclusions and rare charcoal flecks. No artefactual finds were present within this context. Possible alluvial layer? **Roman layer?**	109	[103], 107
109	1.5+	0.8+	0.11-0.16	Layer: Soft dark grey clay silt, with rare small stone inclusions and occasional charcoal flecks. Alluvial layer. **Roman layer?**	110	[103], 108
110	1.5+	0.8+	?	Surface? Compact stone surface with dark grey silty clay matrix. Unexcavated. Fragments of Roman CBM and pottery were visible within the surface. **Roman floor surface?**	N/A	109

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APPENDIX 2: The Pottery

By Jane Timby

Summary

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a modest assemblage of 42 sherds of pottery weighing 541 g dating to the Roman, late medieval and post-medieval periods. Accompanying the pottery are 10 fragments (411 g) of ceramic building material. The assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by count and weight for the recorded contexts. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.

Pottery was recovered from just five contexts. The overall quality of the assemblage is typical of rubbish material with an overall average sherd weight of 12.9 g.

Roman

Most of the assemblage (65%) comprises sherds of Roman date. The group is quite diverse with examples of imported continental fine ware and amphorae, regional British imports and local wares. Imported fine ware comprises two sherds of Central Gaulish samian from Lezoux (LEZ SA). Both sherds are from cup forms, one a Dragendorff type 27; the other type 33. The amphorae include a sherd of Gallic wine amphora (GAL AM) and two sherds of a Baetican type from Southern Spain, probably a Haltern type 70 used for transporting fish-sauce.

Regional imports include sherds of Dorset black burnished ware (DOR BB1) from Poole Harbour; Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (OXF RS), including a 4th-century bowl, Young (1977) type C75; Midlands late Roman shelly ware (ROB SH) and a possible sherd of Severn Valley ware (SVW OX). Local wares are largely from the North Wiltshire industries accompanied by two sherds of Savernake ware (SAV GT). Chronologically the material spans the 1st through to the later 4th century.

Medieval and post-medieval wares

One sherd of medieval date and seven of post-medieval / modern date are present. The medieval piece from cxt (102) is a sherd of Minety ware from North Wiltshire. The post-medieval wares include one sherd of German stoneware, modern flower-pot and industrial glazed white earthenware.

Ceramic building material (CBM)

Ten fragments of CBM were recovered all fragments of Roman roofing tile with both tegulae and imbrices.

Potential for further work

Roman wares or Roman CBM featured in all the contexts excavated indicating a relative-high level of re-deposition. Contexts 102, 104 and 107 have a post-medieval

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terminus post quem, whilst on the basis of the pottery present, context 106 appears to date to the late Roman period and context 105 to the 2nd century AD.

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. The small size of the group precludes the usefulness of further work.

References

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

Young, C J, 1977, *The Roman pottery industry of the Oxford region*, BAR 43, Oxford

Context	Fabric code	Description	Form	Wt	No	Date
102	BWSY	black sandy ware		4	1	Roman
102	CBM	ceramic building material	tegula	127	2	Roman
102	DORBB1*	Dorset black burnished ware		25	3	C2-C4
102	GALAM*	Gallic amphora		68	1	C1-C3
102	LEZSA*	Lezoux samian	Drag. Cup 27	2	1	C2
102	MEDMIN	Minety ware		5	1	Medieval
102	NWILRE	N Wilts grey ware		61	4	C2-C4
102	NWILRE	N Wilts grey ware		6	2	C2-C4
102	NWILRE?	N Wilts grey ware		1	1	Roman
102	OXFRS*	Oxon colour-coated ware	bowl Young tye C75	12	1	late Roman
102	OXIDF	fine oxidised		2	1	Roman
102	PMCHINA	industrial earthenware		5	1	p-med/mod
102	PMGSW	post-med German stoneware		4	1	post-med
102	SAVGT*	Savernake ware		7	1	C1-C2
104	CBM	ceramic building material	imbrex	102	1	Roman
104	PMFP	post-medieval flower pot		8	1	Pmed/mod
105	CBM	ceramic building material	tegula	151	5	Roman
105	DORBB1*	Dorset black burnished ware		29	3	C2-C4
105	GY	misc grey		2	1	Roman
105	LEZSA*	Lezoux samian	Drag. Cup 33	17	1	C2
105	NWILCC	N Wilts colour-coat		2	1	C2
105	NWILRE	N Wilts grey ware		8	1	C2-C4
106	CBM	ceramic building material		31	2	Roman
106	GYMIC	grey micaceous ware		15	1	late Roman
106	NWILRE	N Wilts grey ware		4	1	C2-C4
106	OXF RS*	Oxon colour-coated ware		2	1	late Roman
106	ROBSH*	late Roman shelly ware		5	1	late C4
107	BATAM*	Baetican amphora	Haltern 70	88	2	C1-C2
107	GY	misc grey		11	2	Roman
107	NWILCC	N Wilts colour-coat	base	39	1	C2-C4
107	PMED	pmed		31	4	Pmed/mod
107	SAVGT*	Savernake ware		35	1	C1-C2
107	SVWOX?*	Severn Valley ware		16	1	C2-C4
TOTAL				**921**	**51**	

* National Roman fabric codes

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APPENDIX 3: Animal Bone and Miscellaneous Finds

Context	Species	Element	Comments
102	Bos	Scapular Fragment	
	Sus	Canine	
	Ovis	M3	not yet fully developed = from a juvenile
	Unknown		Unidentified fragment
	Ostreidae	Shell	
105	Bos	Talus	
107	Bos	Proximal Phalanx	

Bos = Cattle. Sus = Pig/Boar. Ovis = Sheep. Ostreidae = Oyster shell

Context	Miscellaneous
102	1 Roman Coin.#
104	1 large piece of industrial waste. 6 fragments of vessel glass with signs of patination. 1 intact Modern glass bottle. 1 fragment of clay pipe.
105	1 handmade iron nail.
106	1 fragment painted wall plaster.

Copper alloy *Nummus* of Constantius II (337-61)
Obverse - CONSTANTI-VS P F AVG
Rosette diademed, draped and cuirassed bust facing right
Reverse- VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN
Two Victories standing face-to-face, each holding a wreath and palm
Exergue - //star [..]LG
Coin struck 346-8 at Lyon (uncertain *officina*)

Reference – RIC VIII Lyon 43

RIC VIII = Kent (1981)

Coin is a very common type and is not a significant numismatic find, especially in Cirencester where coins of this date and type are found on most excavations.

Bibliography
Kent, J.P.C. 1981 *The Roman Imperial Coinage Volume VIII: The Family of Constantine I AD 337-364* London: Spink

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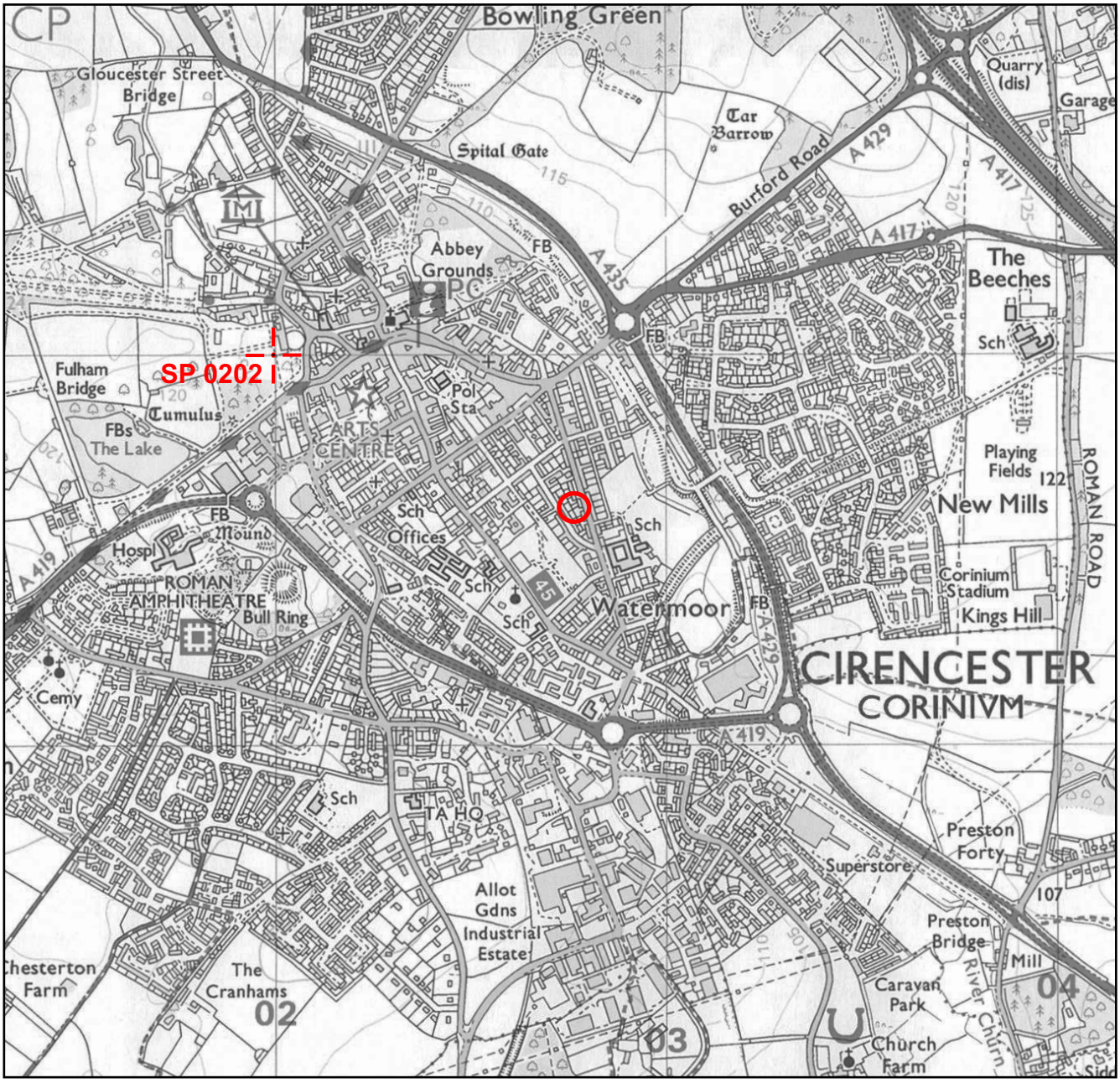

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Accession Code:

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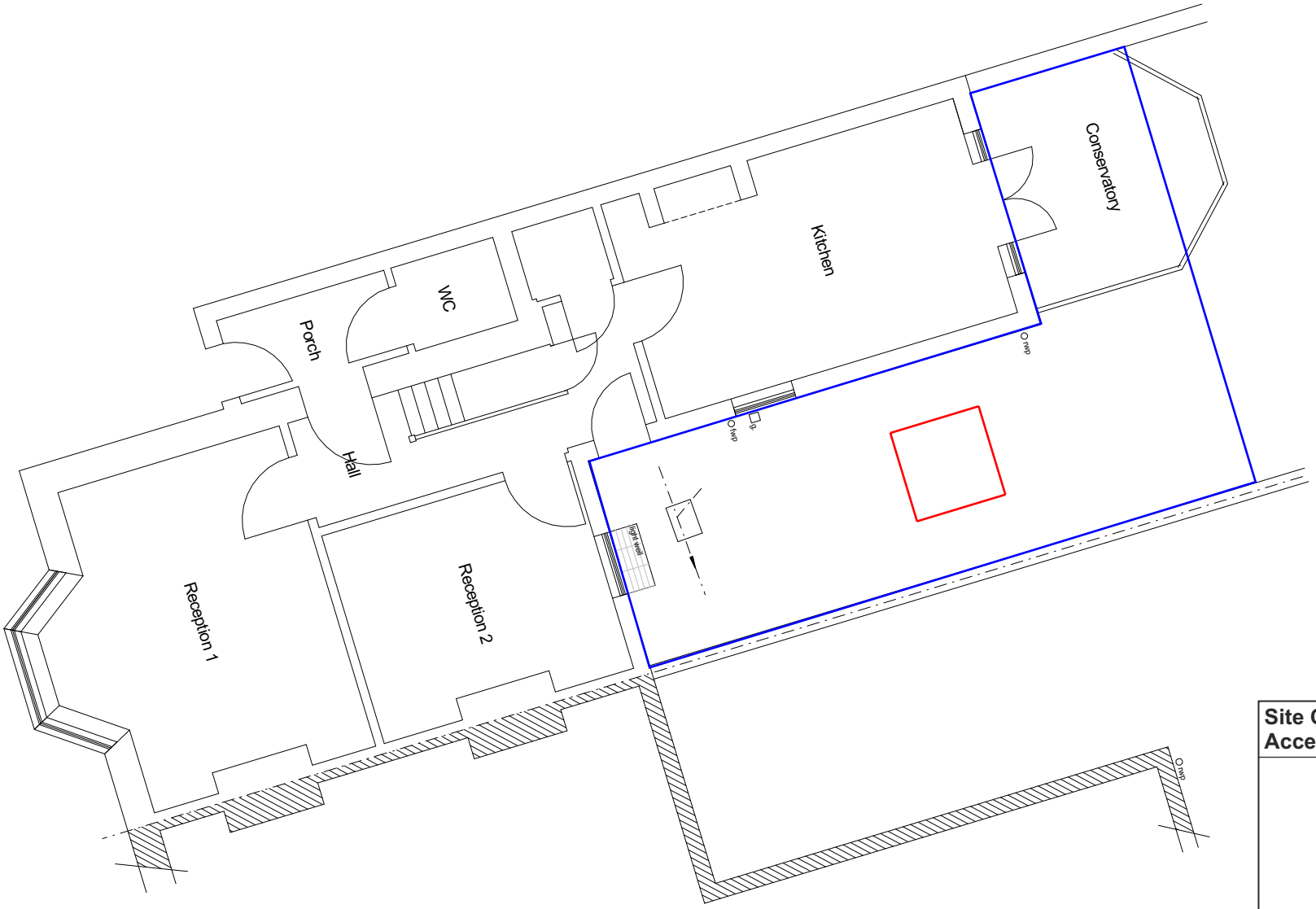
Site Location

FIGURE 1: Site Location



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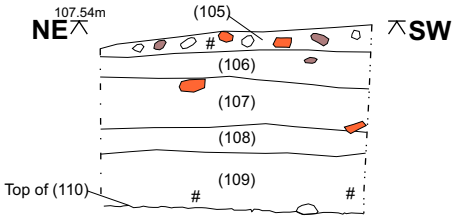
AREA OF REAR EXTENSION

TEST PIT LOCATION

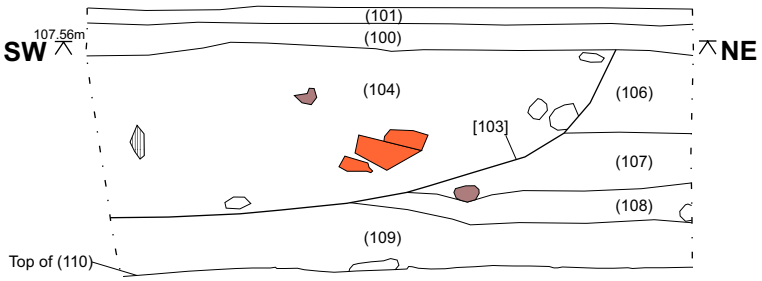
0m 4m

FIGURE 2: Test Pit Location

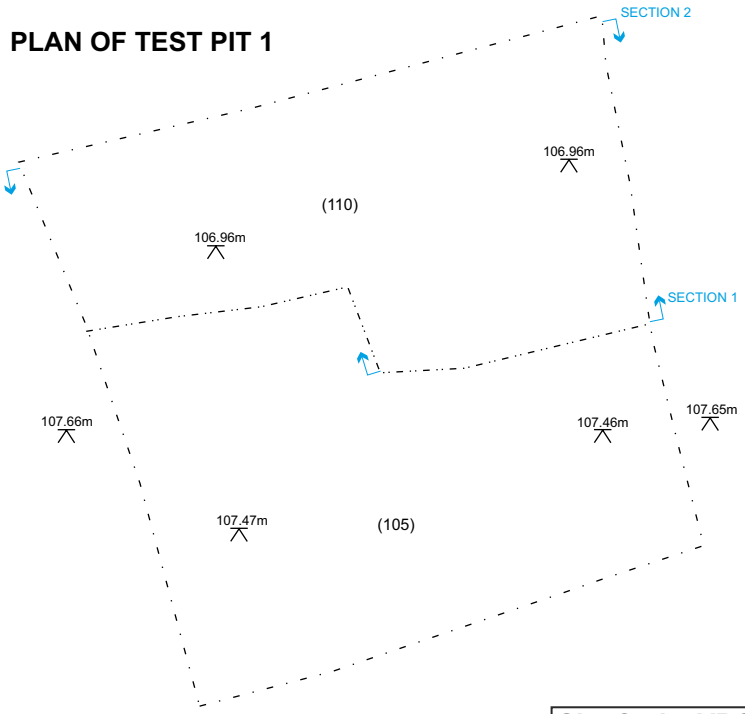
SECTION 1: NORTHWEST FACING SECTION OF TEST PIT



SECTION 2: SOUTHEAST FACING SECTION OF TEST PIT



PLAN OF TEST PIT 1



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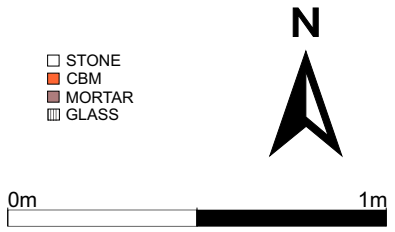
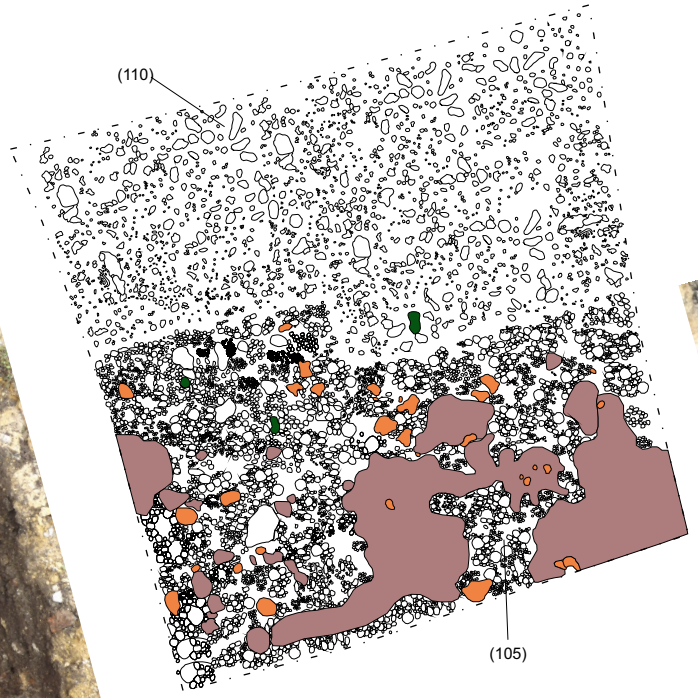


FIGURE 3: Plan and Sections

DETAILED PLAN OF TEST PIT 1



OVERHEAD SHOT SHOWING DETAIL OF (110)

OVERHEAD SHOT SHOWING DETAIL OF (105)

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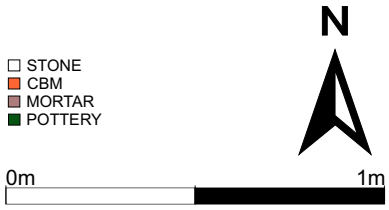

FIGURE 4: Detailed Plan and Photographs of (105) and (110)