

**MANOR COTTAGE
BAGENDON
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR: SP 0120 0640

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

October 2005

Report No. 467

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Manor Cottage, Bagendon, Gloucestershire

Grid Reference: SP 0120 0640

Site Activity: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date: August 20th – 22nd September 2005 – 3 days on site

Project Manager: Roy King BA MIFA

Site Supervisor: Matt Simmonds, Briege Williams

Site Code: MCB05

Summary of Results:

Between 20th and 22nd September 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at Manor Cottage, Bagendon, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 0120 0640) during the construction of a new dwelling with attached double garage. The work was commissioned by Courtyard Designs, Worcestershire in response to a condition of planning permission placed by Gloucestershire County Council in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) (Application Ref: CT.5250/G).

The three probable ditches revealed during the course of the watching brief were all aligned north-south and have all been securely dated to the 2nd half of the 1st century AD. The ditches therefore relate to the initial Roman post-conquest period possibly before the Bagendon *oppidum* was superseded by the new civitas capital at Cirencester. The role of the ditches is unclear within the 1st century Romano-British landscape but clearly belong to the 200ha *oppidum* complex probably as field or property boundaries.

The precise dating of the occupation at Bagendon is one that has received much attention. Whilst there is clear evidence of pre-conquest occupation within the area of the dyke system it also appears to continue after the conquest. The occupants of the group of sites that seem to be part of the Bagendon complex were of sufficient status to draw in a variety of continental imports and this is reflected in the small collection recovered here. The presence of some probably Wiltshire grey and black sandy wares and quite Romanised forms in Severn Valley ware, along with the preponderance of Savernake-type ware, would suggest that most of the contexts excavated here belong to the post-conquest period.

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

CBM

Ceramic Building Material

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500

Post-medieval

The period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards

Roman

The period from AD 43 to AD 410

Saxon

The period from *circa* AD 410 to AD 1066

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 20th August and 22nd September 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at Manor Cottage, Bagendon, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 0120 0640) during the construction of a new dwelling with attached double garage (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Courtyard Designs, Worcestershire in response to a condition of planning permission (Application Ref: CT.5250/G).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2005), which was based upon a brief issued by the Senior Archaeological Officer of Gloucestershire County Council. The watching brief was also 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 archaeological policies of the local Planning Authority.
- 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 The study area (Fig. 2) is located to the south of Manor Cottage, Bagendon in an area currently utilised as back garden.

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site is located within the extensive area of Iron Age activity known as the Bagendon *oppidum*. This area covers approximately 200ha and is thought to represent the tribal capital of the Dobunni prior to the Roman occupation, surviving until the foundation of Cirencester (Corinium Dobunorum) as the new civitas capital.
- 3.2 The works therefore had the potential to reveal significant archaeological deposits, finds or features, predominantly associated with the Iron Age and Roman periods. This in no way prejudiced the works against the discovery the discovery of finds or features relating to other periods.

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.
- i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits within the site area, 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 watching brief involved the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling with an attached double garage. The area had been extensively landscaped since the 1960s to create a level platform for a concrete driveway and greenhouse, the modern concrete raised driveway and greenhouse foundations were removed and strip foundations were then cut using a mini-digger equipped with a toothless bucket, these were 0.30m – 0.45m wide and up to 1.50m deep.
- 5.2 All ground works within the study area were observed by an archaeologist. When features or deposits of potential archaeological significance were noted, they were closely examined, defined, manually excavated (where appropriate) and recorded in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations Archaeology 2005).
- 5.3 All spoil tips were scanned for unstratified finds.

6 RESULTS

- 6.1 Three probable ditches of Roman date and one tree throw were revealed during the course of the watching brief. The ditches were cut into the natural substrate which was limestone brash which in the northeast corner of the site lay at a depth of 1.40m below the modern ground level. The ditches and later cut were sealed by layers (101) and (102). Layer (102) was a dark grey silty clay containing moderate small stones, was 0.10m thick and overlay layer (101). Layer (101) was friable mid-brown clay sand containing moderate small angular stones and had a thickness of 0.16m. In the northeast corner of the site 1960s and more recent levelling had truncated natural to a level which had removed, where observed, all archaeology. The area was subsequently built back up with layer (126) a *circa* 0.74m thick layer of introduced material to provide a platform for a raised driveway. The southwest corner of the study area was reduced in height to provide a level platform for a greenhouse. As part of the new build the driveway and greenhouse were removed. Layer (125)

a 0.10m thick turf layer sealed (126) and was present throughout the site. Introduced topsoil layer (124) was also site wide and sealed (125), in the northeast part of the study area the deposit was 0.54m thick and in the south *circa* 0.30m.

- 6.2 **Ditch [104]** (Figures 3 and 4) was located in the southwest corner of the site and ran on a north-south alignment; the part observed appears to be the northern terminal of the ditch although it may be that the feature represents the northern half of a large pit. The feature's cut was broad, "U" shaped with a steeply angled western side and a slightly irregular flat base. The top of the western side was truncated by tree throw/pit [112]. The cut was 3.80m wide by 1.14m deep. A 1.0m long section of the ditch was observed running across the strip trench for the foundations of the new dwelling. Fill (105) a 0.40m thick friable mid-brown sandy clay deposit with charcoal fleck and small angular limestone fragments was the basal fill of the ditch. Fill (106) overlay (105) and was a thin 0.06m thick lens of light brown sand. Fill (109) 0.22m thick deposit of orange brown silty clay containing occasional flat stones also overlay (105). Fill (108) overlay (106) and (109) and was a 0.16m thick deposit of brownish grey silty sand with white flecks, occasional charcoal and flat stones. Deposit (108) was overlain by fill (107) a 0.20m thick layer of mid-brown silty clay with charcoal flecks. Fill (110) overlay (107) and was a 0.20m thick deposit of mid-greyish brown silty clay with pockets of charcoal and occasional flat stones. The top fill of the ditch (111) was 0.50m thick friable brown sandy clay with frequent flat stones. Contexts (105), (110) and (111) contained dateable pottery, ditch cut [104] also had pottery assigned to it. All the pottery from the ditch has been dated to the 2nd half of the first century AD.
- 6.3 **Ditch [114]** (Figures 3 and 4) was located in the southeast corner of the study area immediately to the west of ditch [119] and ran on a north-south alignment. Ditch cut [114] had steeply angled sides and a concave base and was 1.20m wide by 0.85m deep. A 1.0m long section of the ditch was observed running across the strip trench for the foundations of the new dwelling. Deposit (115) was the ditch's base fill and was a 0.14m thick semi-friable mid-brownish grey silty clay with frequent flat angular stones. Fill (116) overlay (115) and was a 0.20m thick loose mid-grey sandy silt with charcoal inclusions. Fill (117) overlay (116) and was a 0.42m thick mid-brownish grey sandy silt with frequent flat angular stone inclusions. Layer (118) spread across the top of ditches [114] and [119] and may be part of the 20th century site wide levelling event. The deposit was a 0.34m thick layer of loose mid-brown sandy silt. Contexts (115) and (116) contained dateable pottery. All the pottery recovered from the ditch has been dated to the 2nd half of the 1st century AD.
- 6.4 **Ditch [119]** (Figures 3 and 4) was located in the southeast corner of the study area immediately to the east of ditch [114] and ran on a north south alignment. The part observed appears to be the southern terminal end of the ditch. The cut had steeply angled sides and a flat base and was 1.10m wide by 0.40m deep. The ditch terminal was observed within the strip trench for the foundations of the new dwelling. Deposit (120) was the ditch's base fill and was a 0.14m thick loose brow sandy silt with occasional flat angular stones

and charcoal flecks. Fill (121) overlay (120) and was a 0.20m thick semi-friable mid-grey silty clay with charcoal inclusions. Fill (122) overlay (121) and was a 0.10m thick loose mid-brown sandy clay. Deposit (123) was the top fill of the ditch and lay under layer (118). The deposit was loose mid-greyish brown sandy silt with a thickness of 0.12m. Contexts (121) and (122) contained dateable pottery. All the pottery recovered from the ditch has been dated to the 1st century AD.

- 6.5 **Tree throw/pit [112]** (Figs. 3 and 4) truncated the western side of ditch [104]. The cut was not fully observed but that part which could be seen had an irregular stepped eastern side with a flat base and measured, where seen, 1.0m wide by 0.50m deep. The fill (113) of the cut was beige silty clay with frequent flat stones and much root disturbance. No finds were recovered from the feature.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In general ground conditions were amenable to archaeological investigation and interpretation.
- 7.2 No evidence for the Iron-Age was recovered during the course of the watching brief.
- 7.3 The three ditches revealed during the course of the watching brief were all aligned north-south and have all been securely dated to the 2nd half of the first century AD. The ditches therefore relate to the initial Roman post-conquest period possibly before the Bagendon *oppidum* was superseded by the new civitas capital at Cirencester. The role of the ditches is unclear within the 1st century Romano-British landscape but clearly belong to the 200ha *oppidum* complex probably as field or property boundaries.
- 7.4 The precise dating of the occupation at Bagendon is one that has received much attention. Whilst there is clear evidence of pre-conquest occupation within the area of the dyke system it also appears to continue after the conquest. The occupants of the group of sites that seem to be part of the Bagendon complex were of sufficient status to draw in a variety of continental imports and this is reflected in the small artefactual collection recovered during the watching brief. The presence of some probably Wiltshire grey and black sandy wares and quite Romanised forms in Severn Valley ware, along with the preponderance of Savernake-type ware, would suggest that most of the contexts excavated here belong to the post-conquest period.
- 7.5 The current works have confirmed that the site has significant archaeological potential to inform on the immediate post-conquest period in the Bagendon complex area and the Romanisation of the native population.

9 NATURE OF THE RECORD

9.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Context Sheets
Plans
sections
General Site Photographs

9.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were comprised those set out in a standard Foundations Archaeology specification. In summary, the following excavation methods were utilised: observation of all substantial groundworks associated with the construction of the new dwelling. The ground works were undertaken by contractors using a mini-digger fitted with a (toothless) ditching bucket. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the specification (ibid.) and Foundations Archaeology *Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual)*. All site records are available in the site archive.

9.3 Following the completion of the Watching Brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with Appendix 3 of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

9.4 The archive will be deposited with the Corinium Museum. An OASIS form will also be compiled and submitted and a note of the results published in the annual roundup of the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeology Society*.

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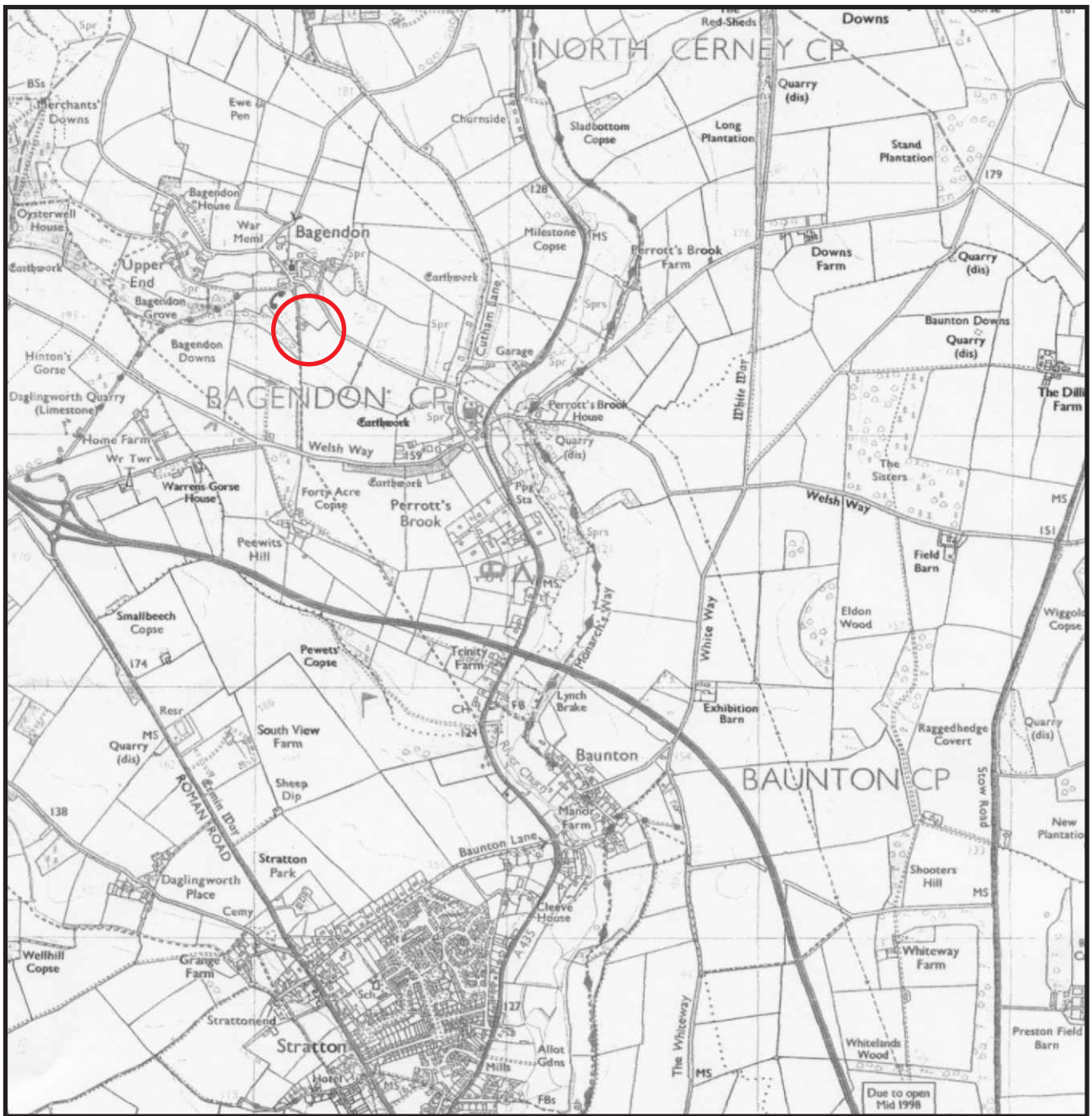
11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Ursula Mason of Courtyard Designs; Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council for their assistance in the completion of this project.

Appendix 1: The Pottery

Dr Jane Timby

- 1 The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 213 sherds of pottery weighing 4395g and a single fragment of fired clay. The material all belongs to a single episode of occupation dating to the second half of the 1st century AD and was recovered from eight defined contexts.
- 2 The assemblage comprises a mixture of continental imports, regional imports and local wares. Grey ware grog-tempered jars in the fabric usually ascribed to the Savernake kilns dominate the group. This is also a feature particularly noticeable amongst the material published by Clifford (1961).
- 3 Continental imports in the present assemblage include one sherd of worn Arretine, two sherds of South Gaulish samian, five sherds of white ware butt beaker (Camulodunom type 113) from North Gaul and three sherds of amphora. One sherd of the latter has a black sand fabric suggesting it is probably a Dressel 2-4 from Campania, Italy; the other two, both unfeathered bodysherds, are unrecognised at present.
- 4 Regional imports include a single sherd of Durotrigian black sandy ware. There are also some British copies of butt beakers of unknown source.
- 5 Local wares include sherds of Severn Valley ware and a vesicular fabric, probably an early variant of this industry and a small number of Romanised sherds probably from Wiltshire. The Severn Valley wares include bowls and beakers.
- 6 There are a number of handmade native wares, most notably 10 sherds of Palaeozoic limestone-tempered ware from the Malvern/Herefordshire area (MAL RE B) (Peacock 1968, fabric B), several very fragmented sherds of calcite-tempered ware probably from a similar source and some grog-tempered ware.
- 7 Other sherds of unknown source include a flagon strap handle in a grey ware, a finely micaceous ware with sparse grog and a black sandy ware probably from a source in Wiltshire and documented from deposits in Cirencester from the Neronian period.
- 8 Any material recovered from the Bagendon complex is of interest as the site is an important one, which is still not completely understood.



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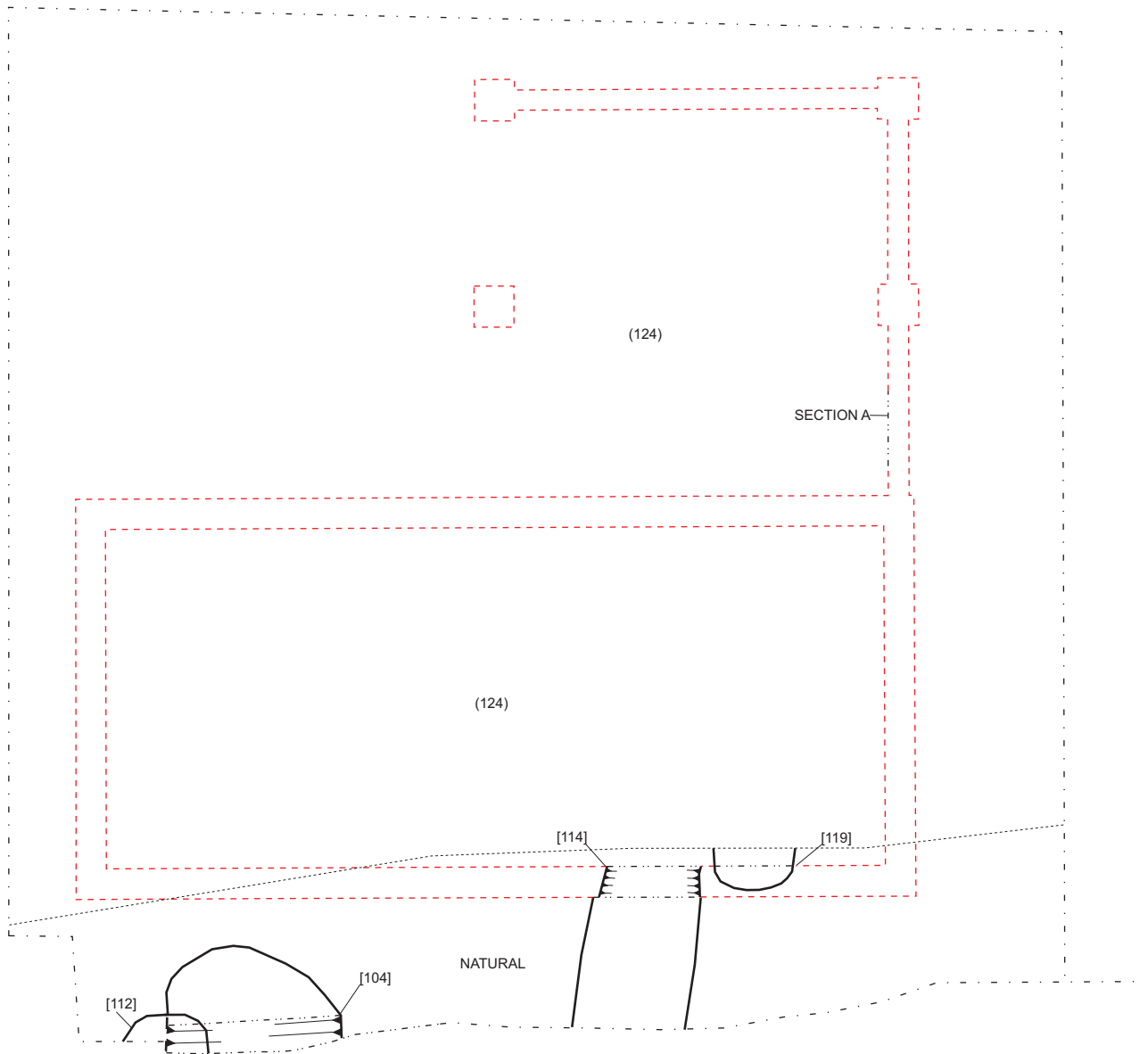
FIGURE 1: Site Location



KEY	
- - -	DEMOLISHED BUILDING
—	PROPOSED BUILDING
—	BOUNDARY



FIGURE 2: Site Plan

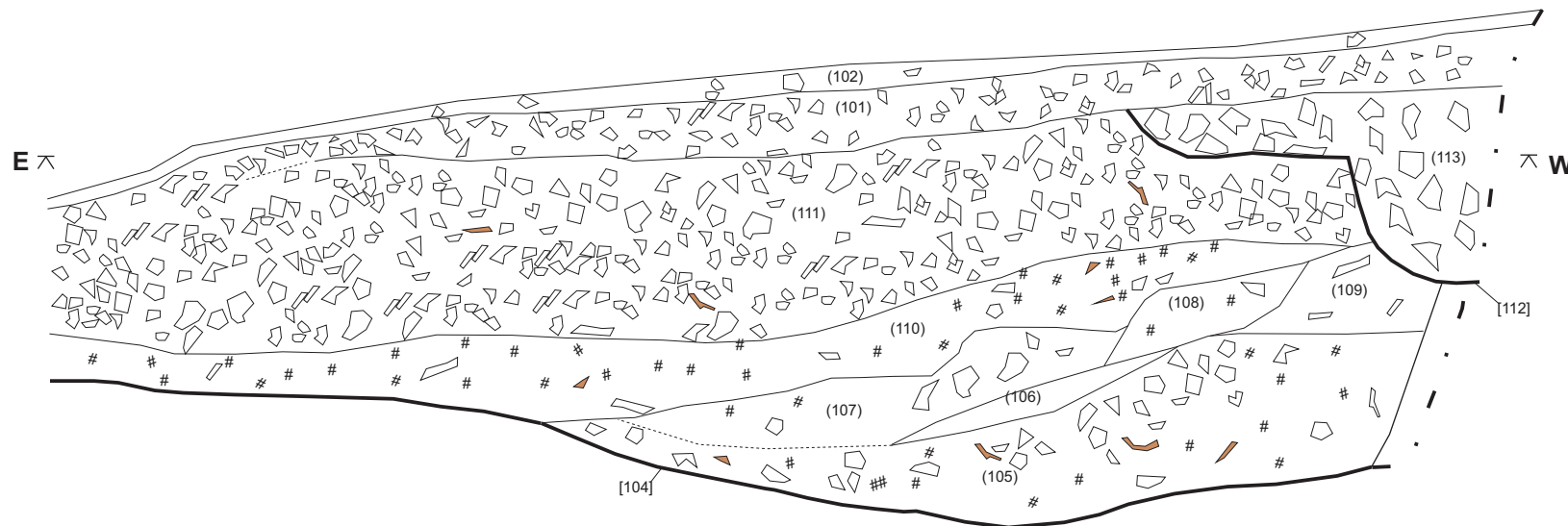


KEY	
- -	LIMIT OF EXCAVATION
- - -	FOUNDATION TRENCH

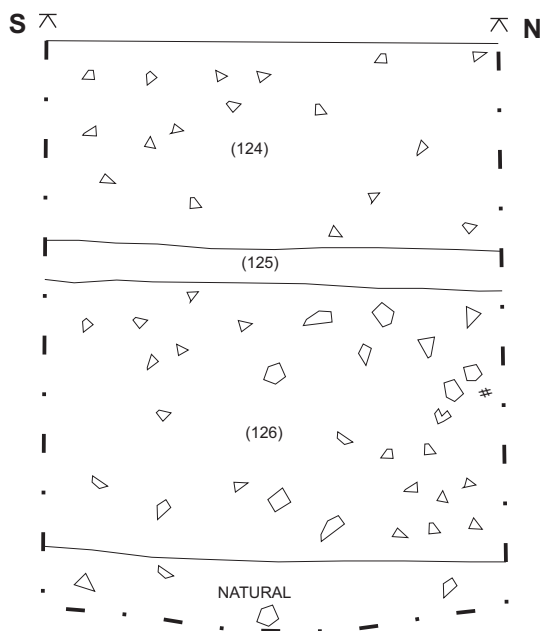


FIGURE 3: Trench Plan

NORTH FACING SECTION OF [104] AND [112]



SECTION A EAST FACING



SOUTH FACING SECTION OF [114] AND [119]

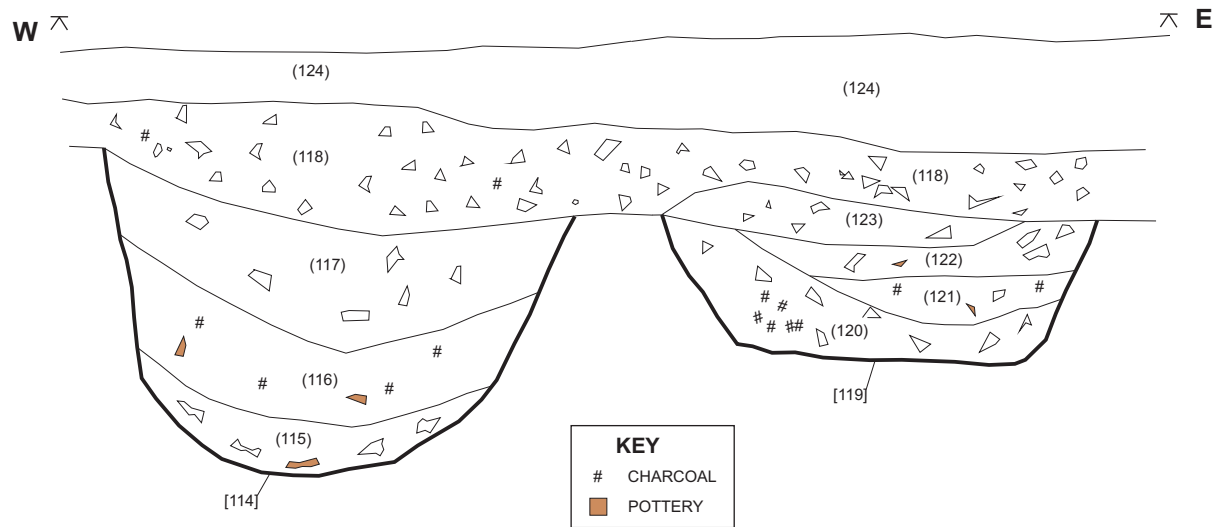


FIGURE 4: Sections