

**7 SHEEP STREET,  
CIRENCESTER,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**NGR: SP 0208 0188**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Report No. 562  
October 2007  
Author: A. Hood



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**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with  
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Date 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007

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## **CONTENTS**

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 CONCLUSIONS
- 7 REFERENCES
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Site Plan
- Figure 3: Trench 1, Plan and Section
- Figure 4: Trench 1, Photographs

## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in October 2007 by Foundations Archaeology at 7 Sheep Street, Cirencester (NGR: SP 0208 0188). The work was commissioned by Mr Charlie von Bock.

The evaluation involved the excavation of a test pit in the area of the proposed development to enable an assessment of the archaeological remains prior to the determination of planning application.

The archaeological evaluation identified stone-built archaeological deposits, which represented either the remains of a wall with an associated rubble deposit or an area of hard-standing delimited by a kerb.

The archaeological deposits are undated, however, the complete lack of Roman artefacts, along with the frequent occurrence of unabraded Medieval pottery sherds within the investigation area suggests that they are more likely to date to the Medieval 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.

### *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

### *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.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In October 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation at 7 Sheep Street, Cirencester (NGR: SP 0208 0188). The work was commissioned by Mr Charlie von Bock in response to a planning condition from Cotswold District Council, which required a programme of archaeological works in advance of the determination of a planning application (07/00798/FUL) for a sun room extension at the rear of the property. Although it is understood that the application has been withdrawn pending a new application.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2007). The WSI was prepared in accordance with the brief issued by Gloucestershire County Council, the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001) and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological Evaluation: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological evaluation and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The site is located in the rear garden of 7 Sheep Street, in the centre of Cirencester.
- 2.2 The site lies in an area of known archaeological potential within the occupation area of the Roman town and is thus in an area of archaeological significance, although the area is not included within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Cirencester Roman town (GC 361). The site lies immediately inside the walls of the town, sections of which have been identified at the junction of Sheep Street and Tetbury Road and on the western side of Sheep Street. The remains of Roman buildings with mosaic pavements and areas of street metalling are known from both the south and east of the site (Darvill & Gerrard 1994).
- 2.3 The site lies outside the perceived extent of the Anglo-Saxon settlement, but does fall within the perceived limits of the Medieval town.
- 2.4 The archaeological potential of the site may therefore be perceived as high for deposits and features of Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval date. This did not prejudice the evaluation work against the recovery of finds or features of other dates.

### 3 AIMS

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

3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations Archaeology 2007).

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.

### 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 A 1.5m x 1.5m test pit was excavated by hand in the area of the proposed development. Due to the occurrence of a modern inspection hatch the trench location was slightly amended. The final trench location is shown in Figure 2.

### 5 RESULTS

5.1 **Trench 1** (1.5m x 1.5m) was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.32m (110.15m OD) from the modern ground surface.

5.2 Feature (104) was 1.50m long, 0.34m wide, at least 0.14m in depth and represented the earliest deposit within the trench. It consisted of a west-south-west – east-north-east aligned linear dry-stone setting, at least two courses in depth and one course wide. Context (104) comprised limestone blocks, up to 0.34m long, 0.24m wide, 0.10m thick, which were of irregular size and had been shaped on their north face. Stone setting (104) extended beyond the west and east limits of excavation and was overlaid by context (103). Context (104) was not excavated.

5.3 Feature (105) was 1.50m long, 0.56m wide and consisted of a layer of stone rubble, which occurred immediately to the south of stone setting (104). Layer (105) extended beyond the west, south and east limits of excavation and was overlaid by fill (103). Context (105) was not excavated.

5.4 Context (103), up to 0.43m thick, comprised a mid grey soft clay silt, which contained rare charcoal flecks and occasional small stones. Context (103) yielded numerous unabraded Medieval and Post-medieval pottery sherds. Fill (103) was overlaid by context (102), up to 0.60m thick, which consisted of a

light grey clay silt. Fill (102) contained frequent glazed ceramics, including china ware sherds and occasional charcoal flecks. Fill (102) was overlaid by topsoil (101), up to 0.26m thick, which consisted of a dark brown clay silt. Frequent modern artefacts were present within context (101). Contexts (101) and (102) were cut by a modern service trench at the northwest corner of the trench.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Features (104) and (105) were clearly associated. In the absence of further investigation it remains unclear if they represent the remains of a wall with an associated rubble deposit or an area of hard-standing delimited by a kerb.
- 6.2 Features (104) and (105) are at present undated. However, they were directly overlaid by a Post-medieval layer, which contained frequent unabraded Medieval artefacts. In light of the complete absence of Roman artefactual material from within the trench, it is more likely that features (104) and (105) date to the Medieval period and represent Medieval structural activity in this part of the town.
- 6.3 A small well preserved finds assemblage was recovered from layer (103). This comprised 18 sherds of Medieval pottery consisting of 17 sherds of Minety (North Wiltshire/South Cotswolds) ware weighing 525g and a single sherd of Brill Boarstall ware weighing 3g. Three sherds of Red Glazed Earthenware weighing 163g and probably originating from the Ashton Keynes kilns were also recovered from this layer. The Medieval pottery has a date range of mid 12<sup>th</sup>-mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, while the Red Glazed Earthenware dates between the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.4 The evaluation has identified significant and well preserved archaeological deposits at a minimum depth of 0.80m below modern ground surface.
- 6.5 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 will also be submitted to ADS.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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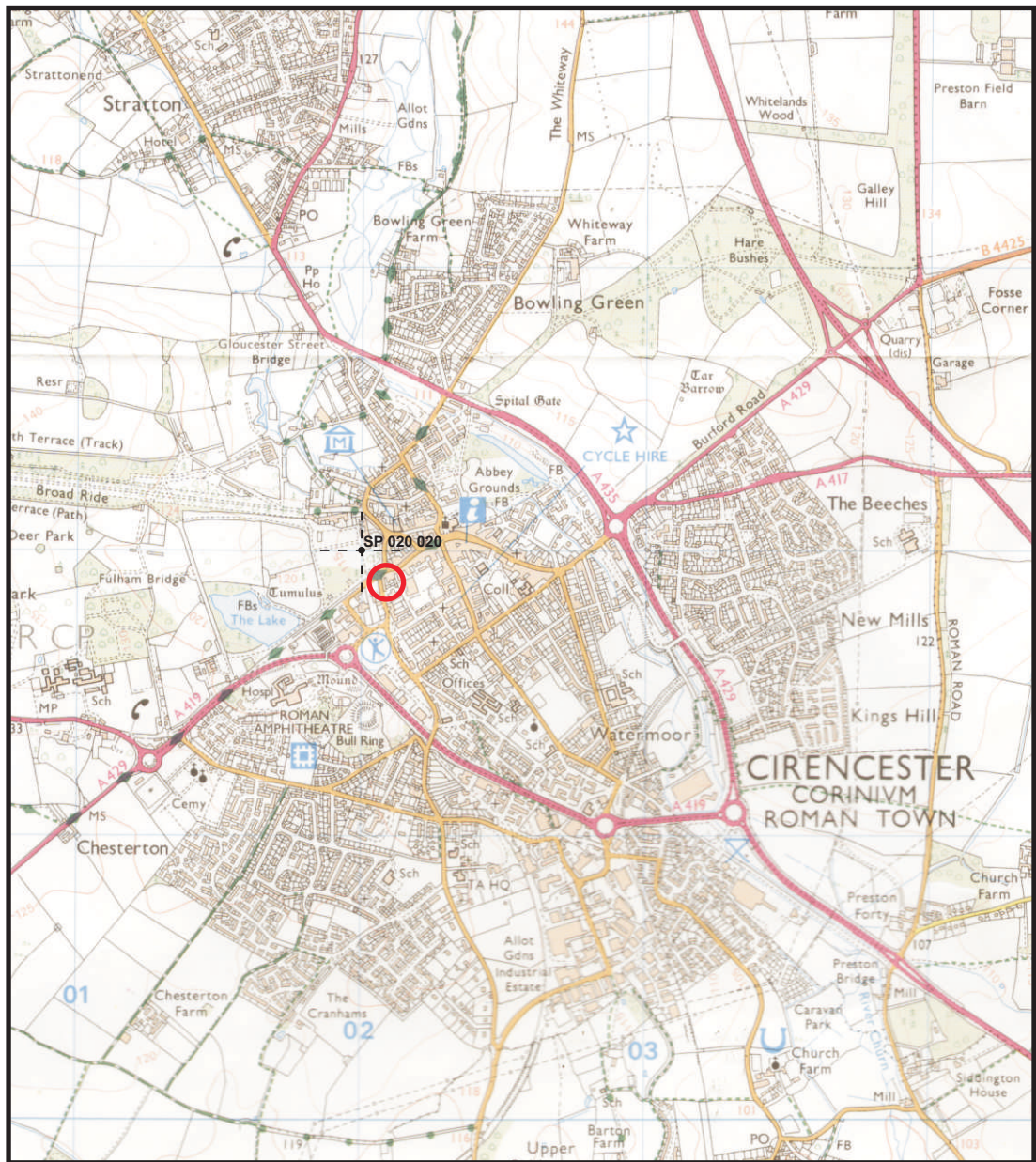
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## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Charlie von Bock and Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council for their assistance during the course of this project.



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**FIGURE 1: Site Location**

SHEEP STREET

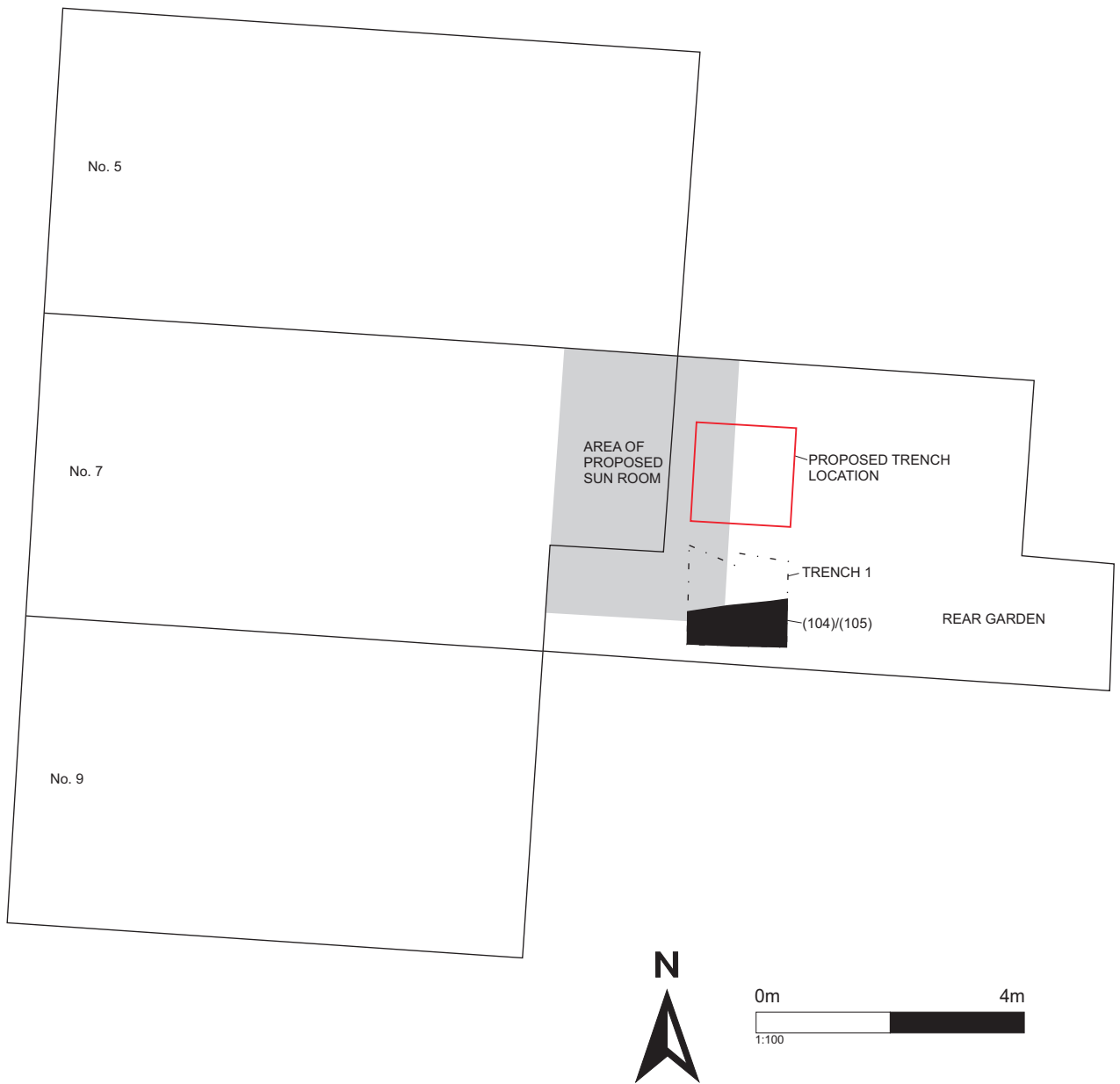
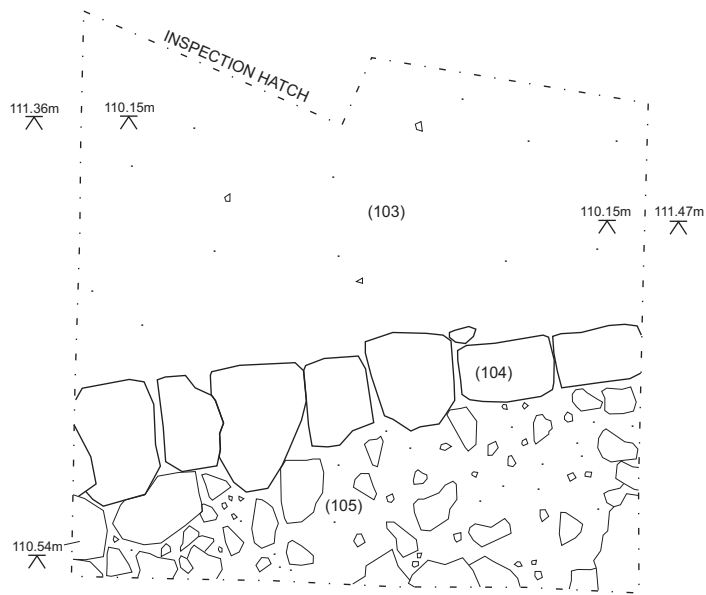
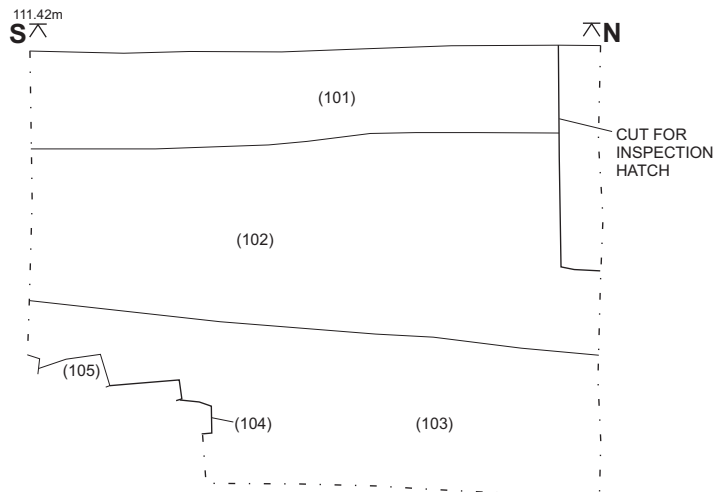


FIGURE 2: Site Plan

### TRENCH 1 PLAN



### EAST FACING SECTION TRENCH 1



**FIGURE 3: Trench 1, Plan and Section**



TRENCH 1, LOOKING WEST



TRENCH 1, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

**FIGURE 4: Trench 1, Photographs**