

**5 QUERNS ROAD,
CIRENCESTER,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR: 402342 201454

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

February 2024
Report No. 1623

Author A. Hood BSc MCIfA



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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Author: A. Hood BSc MCIFA

Date: 19th February 2024

Approved: R. King BA MCIFA

QA Checked: T. Michaels BSc MCIFA

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SUMMARY

On 8th and 9th November 2023 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at 5 Querns Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: 402342 201454). The project was commissioned by the landowner Martin Rigley.

The archaeological works comprised the monitoring and recording of an area of ground reduction and the subsequent excavation of a foundation trench, both of which were associated with the construction of a single storey extension to the front of 5 Querns Road.

The watching brief identified the presence of blue grey clay silt, the top of which was present at a depth of 0.95m (108.55m aOD) below the Modern ground level. The clay silt was directly overlain by Modern soil and rubble. No archaeological features or finds were present to a maximum excavation depth of 1.30m (108.20m aOD) below the Modern ground. However, it should be noted that the groundworks did not necessarily reveal the entire extent of stratified deposits.

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 AD 1066 and 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. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, which can be sub-divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,000 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,000 BC to c. 2,500 BC; *Copper Age (Chalcolithic)* – c. 2,500 BC to 2,200 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,200 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Foundations Archaeology on 8th and 9th November 2023 at 5 Querns Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: 402342 201454). The project was commissioned by the landowner Martin Rigley.
- 1.2 The watching brief was conducted in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI (2023) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 1.3 The Cifa code of conduct was adhered to throughout.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission (Reference **23/01394/FUL**) was granted for the construction of a single storey front extension to 5 Querns Road, Cirencester. A condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission.
- 2.2 The study area is situated within Cirencester town centre. The site comprised the front garden of 5 Querns Road, which is located immediately off, and to the southwest of the road.
- 2.3 The topography within and around the site is generally flat, at around 109-110m aOD. The underlying geology is recorded as *Forest Marble Formation* – mudstone, with no overlying superficial deposits recorded (BGS Online Viewer). At the commencement of fieldwork the site area consisted of stone paving and gravel.
- 2.4 The site is situated close to the line of the Roman town walls, near to Bath Gate, although it is not located within the area designated as a Scheduled Monument. Previous investigations within this part of the town have indicated that Roman roads, Roman mosaics and Roman walls are likely to be located within very close proximity of the current development works (Darvill, T. & Gerrard, C. 1994. *Cirencester: Town and Landscape*). The site lies outside the extent of the post-Roman towns, until the Post-medieval period (*ibid.*).
- 2.5 An evaluation was carried out at No. 6 Querns Road by Cotswold Archaeology in 2009. The works identified material from an earthwork bank, which was interpreted as the rampart for the Roman town defences. This was present at a depth of 0.74m (109.09maOD) below the current ground level and was sealed by post-Roman deposits. ‘Dark-earths’ were present in the second trench at a depth of 1m (108.61m aOD), which were sealed by Post-medieval make-up deposits.

5 Querns Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief

- 2.6 An earlier evaluation by Cotswold Archaeological Trust in 1992, directly south of the study area at Burgess' Yard, Querns Road, identified deposits and features which indicated intense Roman occupation and activity. Features included a rampart, a building, street and occupation surfaces and a hearth. Limited Medieval activity was also identified.
- 2.7 A watching brief by Cotswold Archaeology in 2002 at 33 Querns Lane identified the remains of a late Roman building complex, with possibly two phases of construction.
- 2.8 The site therefore contained the potential for evidence of Roman and later activity, most likely related to the defences for the Roman town. This did not prejudice the works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits, as well as to ensure that significant archaeological remains were identified and appropriately mitigated.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
 - To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - To attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - Where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
 - To produce a site archive for deposition with *Corinium* Museum and to provide information for accession to the Gloucestershire County Council HER.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All groundworks that had the potential to impact upon archaeological deposits were undertaken whilst under the constant observation of an archaeologist.
- 4.2 Where machine excavation was required, this was used only for the removal of non-significant overburden. Plant comprised a tracked 360° mini-digger, which was mostly equipped with a toothless grading bucket; although, it was necessary to utilise a toothed bucket, where Modern rubble deposits were present.

- 4.3 All archaeological excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with the approved WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The front garden, which was rectangular in plan and measured approximately 8m long by 3.5m wide, and was reduced by an average depth of 0.30m (109.20m aOD) below the Modern ground level – *Photograph 1*. The ground reduction resulted in the entire removal of the Modern garden gravel and stone paving, beneath which, was revealed a variable loose brown soil (1001), up to 0.25m in depth, which contained occasional Modern detritus. A single Modern service trench was visible cut through layer (1001). No archaeological features or finds were revealed during this phase of work.



Photograph 1 – ground reduction

- 5.2 Subsequent to the ground reduction, a single foundation trench, which measured up to 11.60m long by 0.80m wide, was excavated to an average depth of 1.0m below the reduced level (108.20m aOD) – *Photograph 2*. The lowest revealed deposit consisted of a blue grey firm clay silt (1002), up to 0.35m thick, which was devoid of finds, or other anthropogenic indicators, such as charcoal flecks. Deposit (1002) was overlain by mixed soil, concrete and stone rubble (1003), up to 0.60m thick, which contained occasional Modern detritus, including fragments of asphalt. Deposit (1003) was subsequently overlain by the remnant base of (1001), up to 0.05m thick. No archaeological features or finds were revealed during this phase of work.



Photograph 2 – representative section of foundation trench

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief identified the presence of blue grey clay silt, the top of which was present at a depth of 0.95m (108.55m aOD) below the Modern ground level. The clay silt was directly overlain by Modern soil and rubble. No archaeological features or finds were present to a maximum excavation depth of 1.30m (108.20m aOD) below the Modern ground. However, it should be noted that the groundworks did not necessarily reveal the entire extent of stratified deposits.
- 6.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but it will be deposited with *Corinium* Museum, in due course. A digital report/archive will also be submitted to OASIS/ADS. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal.

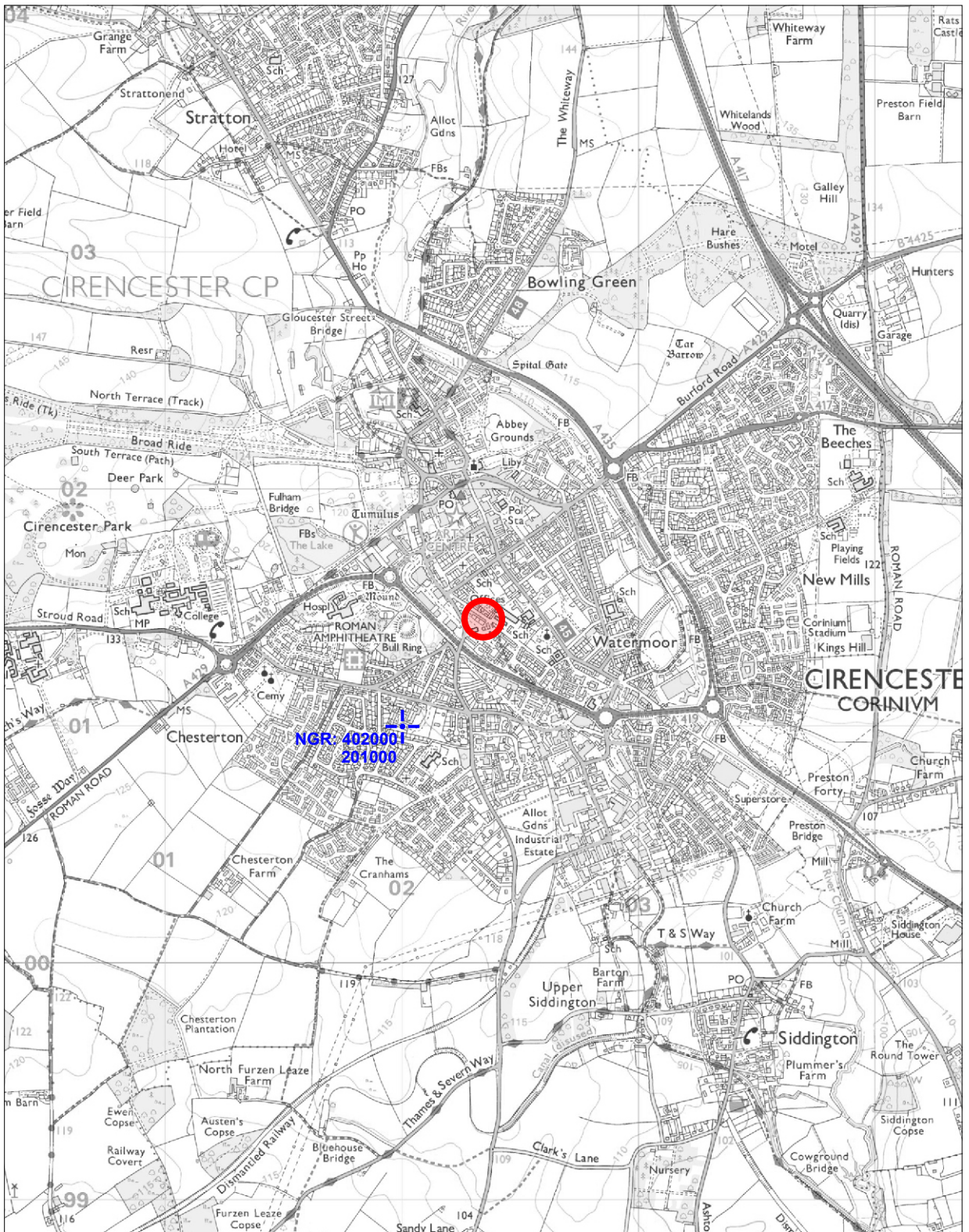
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Accession Code: tbc

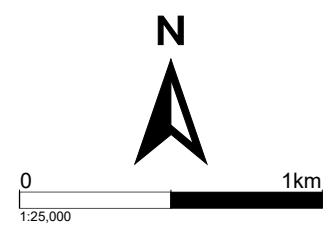
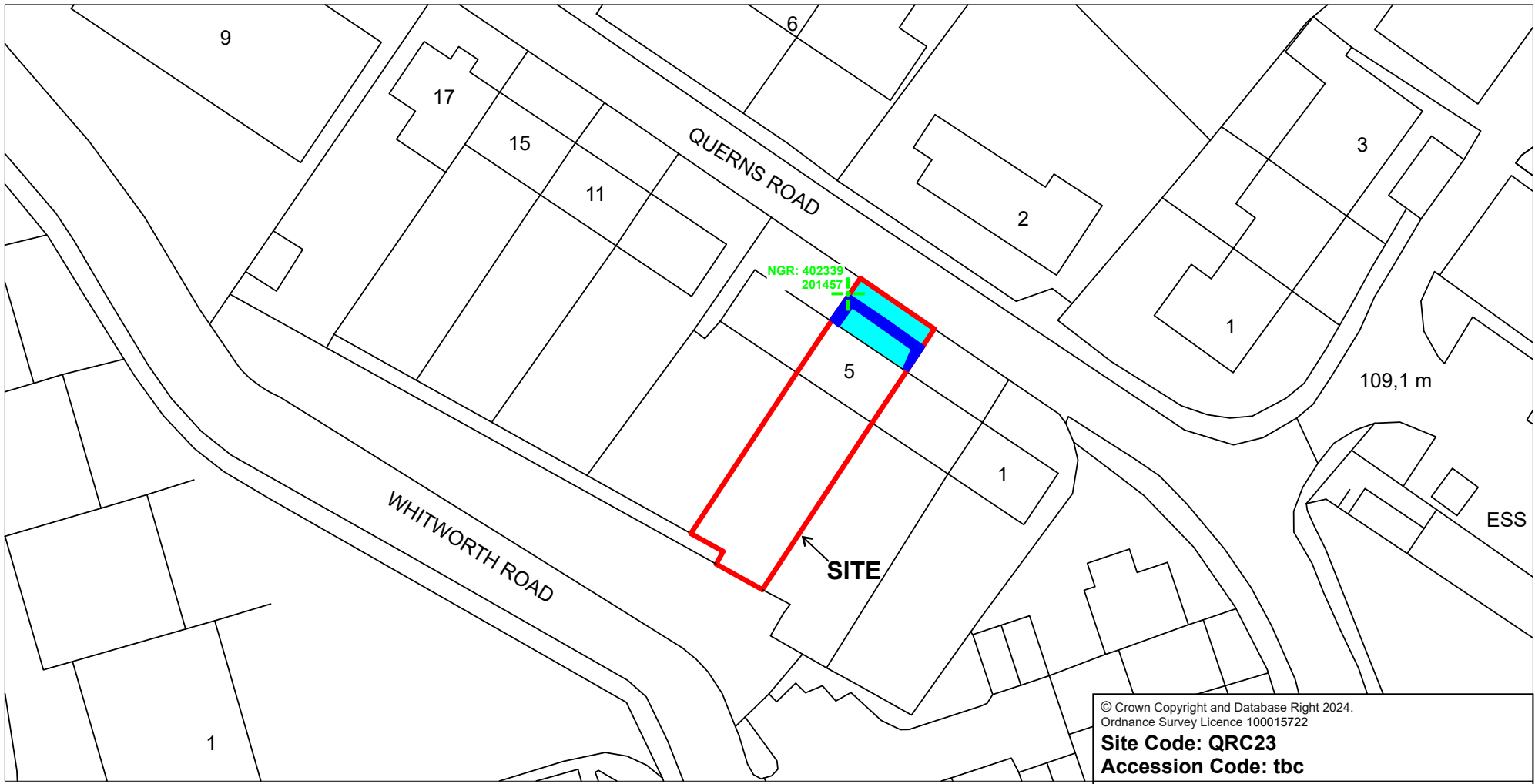


FIGURE 1: Site Location



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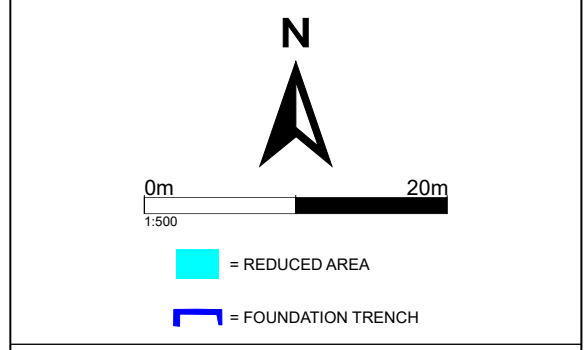


FIGURE 2: Site Plan