

**116-7 MOULSHAM STREET
CHELMSFORD
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

MARCH 2013

**116-7 MOULSHAM STREET
CHELMSFORD
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

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Document Ref.:	2076 Rep
Report Issue Date:	March 2013
Circulation:	Client
	ECC Place Services
	Essex Historic Environment Record

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**116-7 MOULSHAM STREET
CHELMSFORD
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Client: Glen Eldridge Architects

NGR: TL 7035 0585

Planning Ref: CHL/01375/08

Oasis No: 128744

Dates of Fieldwork: 11th and 12th April 2012

SUMMARY

A trench-based evaluation was carried out at 116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford in advance of the construction of a proposed extension to the existing building. Two evaluation trenches, totalling 27m in length, were excavated across the c. 250 square metre new building footprint.

The site is located next to Moulsham Street, which is part of the former Roman road from London to Colchester, laying to the south-west of a 1st century AD Roman fort and fort annexe. The fort was short-lived and the area was subsumed within a Roman town, Caesaromagus, which grew to its maximum extent in the mid 2nd century. Occupation within the town continued into the early 5th century though the settlement was in decline in the 3rd and 4th centuries. In the later 2nd century the core of the town was enclosed within earthwork defences which were located some 500m north-east of the site.

An annotation on the second edition Ordnance Survey in the area of the site reads 'urns found here A.D 1844'. Evidence of extra-mural settlement has been found extending in a south-westerly direction along Moulsham Street from the Roman town. Further evidence of occupation has been discovered to the north-east of the site, at the corner of Queen Street and Moulsham Street, and at 145-145A Moulsham Street, where Roman refuse pits and a ditch were found. An archaeological evaluation in Anchor Street, also to the north-east of the site, identified a backyard area off the Roman road containing gullies, pits and associated finds.

The site was situated to the south-west of the medieval town and is unlikely to have been developed during that period. The first edition Ordnance Survey shows the site formed part

of an orchard during the late 19th century. The current building was erected between 1912 and 1924.

In the centre of the trench 1 was a small oval post-hole from which a rim sherd from a necked jar of 2nd or 3rd century date was recovered. At the north-east end of the trench was a large pit, over 2m long and in excess of 0.74m deep, that produced a variety of finds including 32 sherds of Roman pottery, the latest of which is likely to have been current in the early to mid 4th century. No archaeological remains were noted in Trench 2.

No evidence for Medieval or early Post-medieval activity was noted during the evaluation, reinforcing the suggestion that settlement did not extend this far out from the historic core of the town in those periods.

Although only two archaeological features were uncovered, their comparatively late Roman date is interesting in that they cannot be associated with the fort to the northeast, which had long since gone out of use and the site been redeveloped by the time the pottery was deposited in the two features. Secondly, deposition of the pottery, and therefore activity on the site, would appear to have occurred at a date somewhere in the early to mid – 4th century, a period when the town was held to be in decline. However, care must be taken in extrapolating too heavily based on so few features and it is obviously unclear how far this activity extends into the surrounding area or what its full nature was.

No cremations were encountered during the evaluation; however, this may be a reflection of the small area investigated and the imprecise nature of antiquarian references to the discovery of an urn, or indeed the misattribution of domestic pottery as a burial urn, rather than a genuine absence of remains in the vicinity. Certainly, were cremations present in this area then they would have to predate the activity noted in the evaluation, as cremation had fallen out of use as a burial rite in Roman Britain by this period.

Given that in-situ Roman remains have been uncovered it is clear that the development will have some degree of impact upon the archaeological record and where a design solution cannot be implemented to preserve the threatened remains in-situ further work may be required to ensure their preservation by record.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching carried out at 116-117 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, in advance of development. The archaeological work was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Glen Eldridge Architects.
- 1.2 A planning application for the construction of an extension to the nursing home at 116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex was submitted to Chelmsford Borough Council in 2008 (CHL/01375/08). As the site is located within an area of significant archaeological potential the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM), in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Chelmsford Borough Council, recommended that a full archaeological condition be placed on any grant of planning consent, based upon guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (subsequently replaced by PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and, as of March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by ECC FAU (2012) in response to a design brief originally produced in 2009 by Teresa O'Connor of ECC HEM (2009).
- 1.4 Copies of this report will be supplied to Glen Eldridge Architects, ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Chelmsford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology

- 2.1.1 116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford (NGR TL 7035 0585) is sited at the corner of Moulsham Street and Southborough Road, to the south of Chelmsford town centre (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by Southborough Road to the north-east, Moulsham Street to the south-east and residential properties to the west and north-west. The site is currently occupied by a nursing home comprising a structure along the south-eastern border of the plot. The remainder of the land is in use as a garden and car park. The site slopes from north-west to south-east and the area to the immediate rear of the existing building has been significantly terraced.

2.1.2 The site is situated on gently rising ground on the south side of the river Can. The underlying superficial geology consists of head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel overlying clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation at depth.

2.2 Archaeology and History

2.2.1 This archaeological and historical background is based on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) held by Essex County Council at County Hall, Chelmsford.

2.2.2 The site is located next to Moulsham street which is part of the former Roman road from London to Colchester. The site is located c. 640m to the south-west of the position of a 1st century Roman fort and c. 450m from the fort annexe. The fort was short-lived and the area was subsumed within a Roman town which grew to its maximum extent in the mid 2nd century. Occupation within the town continued into the early 5th century though the settlement was in decline in the 3rd and 4th centuries. In the later 2nd century the core of the town was enclosed within earthwork defences which were located some 500m north-east of the site (Medlycott 1998).

2.2.3 An annotation on the second edition Ordnance Survey, in the area of the site, reads 'urns found here A.D 1844' (EHER 5928). This would indicate a possible Roman cremation cemetery at the site. Current theories indicate that the Roman settlement extended beyond its bounds at several periods during its history. Evidence of extra-mural settlement has been found extending in a south-westerly direction along Moulsham Street from the Roman town. Evidence of occupation has been discovered to the north-east of the site at the corner of Queen Street and Moulsham Street (EHER 17221) and at 145-145A Moulsham Street (EHER 46303) where Roman refuse pits and a ditch were found. An archaeological trial trenching evaluation in Anchor Street, also to the north-east of the site, identified a backyard area off the Roman road containing gullies, pits and associated finds (Germany 2009).

2.2.4 The site was situated to the south-west of the medieval town and is unlikely to have been developed during the period. The first edition Ordnance Survey shows the site formed part of an orchard during the late 19th century. Any surviving archaeological

features are therefore likely to have been affected by root disturbance. The current building was erected between 1912 and 1924.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aim of the archaeological excavation was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that would be destroyed by the construction of the new extension. The location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological remains within the proposed development area would be established.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In the event that significant discoveries were made the report would seek to identify appropriate research objectives for any future work, in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). As no remains of major significance were encountered the results of the project are unlikely to contribute to any of the research objectives.

3.2.2 The specific objectives of the evaluation were to investigate:

- Any evidence of Roman settlement
- The relationship of any Roman activity onsite to that of the Roman fort
- Whether a Roman cremation cemetery was present on the site
- Any evidence of medieval or post-medieval settlement related to Moulsham Street.

4.0 METHOD

4.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by a machine fitted with a flat-bladed bucket – the location of the trenches is shown in Figure 1. Trench 1 was orientated north-east/south-west and measured 15m in length. Trench 2 was V-shaped in plan with one 6.6m long arm orientated roughly north/south and the other 5.4m long arm orientated north-west/south-east. Both trenches were 1.6m wide and located within the c. 250 sq. m. footprint of the new extension. Trench location was restricted by the area of terracing to the immediate north-west of the building, which reduced the area available for evaluation to c. 190 sq. m., and the presence of a large tree stump to the west of Trench 1. Also, a gap

was left between the trenches to allow emergency access to the back of the nursing home.

- 4.2 Potential archaeological features were cleaned and hand excavated. ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout. ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and all work was carried out in accordance with IfA by-laws and guidelines (IfA 2010; 2008) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

- 5.1 Trench depths ranged from 0.80m (Trench 1) to 0.65m (Trench 2). The overburden in Trench 1 consisted of 0.50m of dark grey clay silt topsoil overlying 0.30m of lighter greyish brown subsoil. In Trench 2, 0.15m of gravel and make-up deposits overlay 0.40m of buried topsoil with 0.10m of lighter subsoil below. Natural orange clay silt was exposed in the base of both trenches.

- 5.2 Two Roman features were identified along with a few modern features and disturbances. Detailed context information is presented in Appendix 1.

5.3 Trench 1 (Fig. 1, Plate 1)

- 5.3.1 In the centre of the trench was a small oval post-hole (4), 0.32m wide and 0.15m deep (Fig. 1, Plate 2) and filled with mid brownish grey clay silt (3) from which one pottery rim sherd from a necked jar of 2nd or 3rd century date was recovered. At the north-east end of the trench was a large pit (6) over 2m long and in excess of 0.74m deep (Fig. 1, Plate 3). It was filled with mid to dark greyish brown clay silt with gravel inclusions (5) and contained a variety of finds of Roman date including pottery, the latest of which is likely to have been current in the early to mid 4th century, and roof tile. For safety reasons it was not possible to bottom the pit which was over 1.40m deep from the top of the trench.

- 5.3.2 At the south-west end of the trench was a well-defined pit (2) over 0.72m long and 0.21m. No finds were recovered but the pit clearly cut through the subsoil and its fill had a loose topsoil-like quality suggesting that it was probably of fairly recent origin. In the centre of the trench was a square pit (not numbered) that also cut through the

subsoil and which was clearly of modern date as it contained 19th/20th century glazed pot along with lumps of coal and mortar.

5.4 Trench 2 (Fig. 1, Plate 4)

5.4.1 No archaeological features were present other than two modern brick on concrete foundation pads at the south end of trench.

6.0 FINDS

6.1 Finds were recovered from two stratified contexts (3 & 5), both in Trench 1. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described below.

6.2 Roman Pottery by Stephen Benfield

6.2.1 A total of thirty-three sherds of Roman pottery, together weighing 549 g, was recovered from two contexts (3 & 5) located in one trench (Trench 1). The average sherd weight is 16.6 g and the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE) is 0.74.

6.2.2 The pottery was recorded using the Essex Roman fabric and form type series (Going 1987) with the addition of Black surface wares (Fabric BSW) as a coarse ware fabric group (Martin 2003). The number of sherds, weight and EVE were recorded for each fabric and are listed in Table 1. The pottery is listed and described by context in Appendix 2

Table 1 Roman pottery by fabric type

Fabric	Description	No	Wt(g)	EVE
BSW	Black surface wares	11	146	0.35
2	Nene Valley colour-coat	1	7	0.10
41	Black-burnished 2	1	11	-
44	Storage jar fabrics	2	97	-
47	Sandy grey wares	15	221	0.11
48	Rettendon wares	3	67	0.18
	<i>Totals</i>	33	549	0.74

6.2.3 The pottery was recovered from two contexts: the fill (5) of pit 6 and the fill (3) of post hole 4. Both are located in Trench 1. The vast majority of the pottery (32 sherds weighing 510 g, Eve 0.64) was recovered from the pit with just one sherd (weight 39

- g, EVE 0.10) recovered from the post hole. The condition of the pottery is generally fair to good.
- 6.2.4 The pottery from the pit fill (5) represents a number of vessels in several different fabrics. A few vessels are represented by more than one sherd although there are no clear joining sherds. Some sherds are abraded, most clearly noticed on the surfaces, although some of the latest dated sherds (Fabric 48) in a good condition. Overall, this suggests that much of the pottery from the pit had some previous (although not necessarily significant) depositional history.
- 6.2.5 Significant abrasion was noted on the sherd from the post-hole fill (3) as much of the original black surface is missing which suggests it may have been old when it entered the context.
- 6.2.6 Almost all of the pottery consists of coarse wares which are most probably of local production. One fine ware sherd (Fabric 2) is from the Nene Valley potteries (Cambridgeshire). The coarse wares include a sherd from an open bowl or deep dish in Black Burnished 2 (Fabric 41) which is possibly a product of a regionally significant industry and Colchester may be a likely source. Also, there are several sherds which contain some crushed flint-temper and can be identified as Rettendon ware (Fabric 48). As well as Rettendon this fabric was produced at a number of sites in Essex, notably Sandon, Inworth and Moulsham Street in Chelmsford, (Going 1987, 10) and it is essentially a local coarse ware.
- 6.2.7 The latest closely dated pottery from the pit (5) is a sherd from a Nene Valley lidded-bowl (C18) and sherds of Rettendon ware (Fabric 48) which include a hook rim jar (G24 2.1/1.2). The lidded-bowl can be dated at Chelmsford to the period of the mid 3rd to early-mid 4th century. Rettendon wares are current from the late 3rd century to the mid-late 4th century, but have also been found in quantity in some late 4th century contexts (Martin 2003, 136). However, this fabric appears to be most characteristic of assemblages dating to the early -mid 4th century at Chelmsford (Going 1987, 10). Some of the pottery is probably residual in this context but is not closely dated, although none suggest a date necessarily earlier than the 2nd century.
- 6.2.8 The rim sherd (Fabric BSW) from the post hole (3) is not identified to a particular numbered form type and is not closely dated. It is from a necked jar with an undercut bead rim and with a groove around the body girth. The characteristics of the sherd

suggest a 2nd or 3rd century date, although the surface of the sherd is quite abraded and it may have been of some age when it entered the context. A possibly similar jar with a girth groove was recovered from a cremation burial at Great Dunmow dated to the Hadrianic-Antonine period (Wickenden 1988, fig 18, no. 74).

6.2.9 The small group of pottery from the pit (5) can be dated to the late 3rd-early 4th century. There is one fine ware sherd which is from a Nene Valley colour-coat lidded-bowl. The rest of the sherds are coarse wares including Black-Burnished 2 and several sherds of Late Roman Rettendon ware which include a rim sherd from a hook-rim jar. Some abraded sherds from this context are probably residual pieces, but while not closely dated most probably date to the 2nd century or later.

6.2.10 A single jar rim in Black surface ware recovered from the post hole (3) is not closely dated, but the form suggests a 2nd or 3rd century date. As the surfaces of this sherd are abraded it was probably of some age when it entered this context.

6.3 Other Finds

6.3.1 The ceramic building material assemblage consisted of 10 fragments, weighing 1390 grams, and was all recovered from the single fill (5) of pit 6. Two pieces of imbrex are present, average thickness 22mm, along with five featureless fragments of tile (average thickness 20mm) and three pieces of brick, ranging in thickness between 32 and 40mm. All of the material is in a typical brick-red fabric with occasional patches of surface oxidisation noted on a number of the tile fragments.

6.3.2 A total of nine fragments of animal bone, weighing 22 grams and comprising seven pieces of bone and two fragments of cattle tooth, were also recovered from context 5. The material is very worn and abraded and not readily identifiable due to the small size and condition of the pieces but is on balance, as with the tooth fragments, likely to be cattle bone.

6.3.3 A single iron nail was also recovered from context 5.

7.0 DISCUSSION

7.1 No evidence for Medieval or early Post-medieval activity was noted during the evaluation, reinforcing the suggestion that settlement did not extend this far out from the historic core of the town in those periods.

- 7.2 Although only two archaeological features were uncovered, their comparatively late Roman date is interesting in that they cannot be associated with the fort to the northeast, which had long since gone out of use and the site been redeveloped by the time the pottery was deposited in the two features. Secondly, deposition of the pottery, and therefore activity on the site, would appear to have occurred at a date somewhere in the early to mid – 4th century, a period when the town was held to be in decline. However, care must be taken in extrapolating too heavily based on so few features and it is obviously unclear how far this activity extends into the surrounding area or what its full nature was.
- 7.3 No cremations were encountered during the evaluation; however, this may be a reflection of the small area investigated and the imprecise nature of antiquarian references to the discovery of an urn, or indeed the misattribution of domestic pottery as a burial urn, rather than a genuine absence of remains in the vicinity. Certainly, were cremations present in this area then they would have to predate the activity noted in the evaluation, as cremation had fallen out of use as a burial rite in Roman Britain by this period.
- 7.4 Given that in-situ Roman remains have been uncovered it is clear that the development will have some degree of impact upon the archaeological record and where a design solution cannot be implemented to preserve the threatened remains in-situ further work may be required to ensure their preservation by record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ECC FAU would like to thank Glen Eldridge Architects for commissioning the work on behalf of the property owner, Nicola Gardener. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. The report was prepared by Trevor Ennis with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The Roman pottery report was prepared by Stephen Benfield. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Alison Bennett of ECC HEM.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Type	Description	Period
1	Fill of 2	Dark grey clay silt, rare small flint inclusions	Modern
2	Pit	Rounded end, 0.72m+ x 0.66m x 0.21m deep	Modern
3	Fill of 4	Mid brownish grey clay silt, rare charcoal flecks	Roman
4	Post-hole	Oval, 0.30m + x 0.32m x 0.15m deep	Roman
5	Fill of 6	Mid to dark greyish brown clay silt with common gravel inclusions, occasional flecks of brick/tile and charcoal	Roman
6	Pit	2m+ long x 1.6m+ wide x 0.74m+ deep	Roman

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Roman pottery

Trench	Ctxt type	Context	Fabric	Type	No	Wt(g)	Eve	Abr	Description/notes	Form	Period	Spot date	Illust
1	Post hole fill	3	BSW	r	1	39	0.10	*	Necked jar (less likely a bowl) with undercut bead rim and groove at girth, back surface almost abraded away (see Wickenden 1988, fig 18 no 74 dated Hadrianic-Antonine)	Jar	Rom	2-3C?	
1	Pit fill	5	BSW	b	5	48	0	*	Misc body sherds, some with slightly abraded surfaces		Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	BSW	r	1	16	0.09	*	Bead rim jar	jar	Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	BSW	r	1	10	0.06	*	Everted rim with slightly beaded, flat edge	Jar/bowl	Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	BSW	r	1	13	0.10		Jar with bifid rim	jar	Rom	2/3-4C?	
1	Pit fill	5	BSW	ba, b	2	20	0		Sherds in sandy brownish-red fabric and black surface, from an open bowl form, similar to BB2, but slightly coarse unburnished surfaces	bowl	Rom	M2-3/4C?	
1	Pit fill	5	2	r	1	7	0.10		Rim sherd prob from a 'Castor box' bowl, cream fabric, red-brown cc	C18	Rom	M3-M4C	
1	Pit fill	5	41	b	1	11	0		brownish-red	bowl	Rom	M2-3/4C	

Trench	Ctxt type	Context	Fabric	Type	No	Wt(g)	Eve	Abr	Description/notes	Form	Period	Spot date	Illust
									sandy fabric and burnished black surface, from an open bowl form				
1	Pit fill	5	44	b	2	97	0		SV, two thick sherds, grey fabric, some dark grog/organic temper		Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	47	r	2	14	0.11		SV rim edge, prob from a jar		Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	47	b	11	156	0	*	Misc body sherds, some with slightly abraded surfaces		Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	47	ba	2	51	0				Rom	Rom	
1	Pit fill	5	48	r, b	2	58	0.18		Rim sherd from large jar with undercut rim, SV body sherd, grey surfaces, red fabric core, sparse inclusions of medium size flint, poss calcified by the firing, and milky quartz	G241.2/2.1	Rom	L3-M/L4C	
1	Pit fill	5	48	b	1	9	0		body sherd, dark grey surfaces, red fabric core, sparse inclusions of medium size flint, poss calcified by the firing, and milky quartz		Rom	L3-M/L4C	

APPENDIX 3: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: 116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford

Site Code:

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (1 to 6)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 1 x A4 Plan/Section Sheet
- 3.6 2 Trench Record Sheets
- 3.7 Trench location plan
- 3.8 Photographic Register
- 3.9 Site Photographic Record (1 set of colour prints, colour contact prints + 1 digital images on CD)
- 3.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

4. Finds

- 34 sherds of pottery
- 1 Fe object (nail)
- 9 pieces animal bone
- 10 pieces brick and tile

Note

All records in file. All the finds currently occupy less than one box – recommendations for discard may be made at archiving stage by the receiving museum

**APPENDIX 4: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD
SUMMARY SHEET**

Site name/Address: 116-117 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0JN	
Parish: Chelmsford	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 7035 0585	Site Code: TBC
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Group: Trevor Ennis /Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 11 th – 12 th April 2012	Size of Area Investigated: 43.2 sqm within 250 sqm extension
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Chelmsford	Funding source: Client
Further Seasons Anticipated?: Yes	Related HER Nos
Final Report: Essex Archaeology and History	
Periods Represented: Roman	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: <i>A trench-based evaluation was carried out at 116-7 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford in advance of the construction of a proposed extension to the existing building. Two evaluation trenches, totalling 27m in length, were excavated across the c. 250 square metre new building footprint.</i></p> <p><i>The site is located next to Moulsham Street, which is part of the former Roman road from London to Colchester, laying to the south-west of a 1st century AD Roman fort and fort annexe. The fort was short-lived and the area was subsumed within a Roman town, Caesaromagus, which grew to its maximum extent in the mid 2nd century. Occupation within the town continued into the early 5th century though the settlement was in decline in the 3rd and 4th centuries. In the later 2nd century the core of the town was enclosed within earthwork defences which were located some 500m north-east of the site.</i></p> <p><i>An annotation on the second edition Ordnance Survey in the area of the site reads 'urns found here A.D 1844'. Evidence of extra-mural settlement has been found extending in a south-westerly direction along Moulsham Street from the Roman town. Further evidence of occupation has been discovered to the north-east of the site, at the corner of Queen Street and Moulsham Street, and at 145-145A Moulsham Street, where Roman refuse pits and a ditch were found. An archaeological evaluation in Anchor Street, also to the north-east of the site, identified a backyard area off the Roman road containing gullies, pits and associated finds.</i></p> <p><i>The site was situated to the south-west of the medieval town and is unlikely to have been developed during that period. The first edition Ordnance Survey shows the site formed part of an orchard during the late 19th century. The current building was erected between 1912 and 1924.</i></p> <p><i>In the centre of the trench 1 was a small oval post-hole from which a rim sherd from a necked jar of 2nd or</i></p>	

3rd century date was recovered. At the north-east end of the trench was a large pit, over 2m long and in excess of 0.74m deep, that produced a variety of finds including 32 sherds of Roman pottery, the latest of which is likely to have been current in the early to mid 4th century. No archaeological remains were noted in Trench 2.

No evidence for Medieval or early Post-medieval activity was noted during the evaluation, reinforcing the suggestion that settlement did not extend this far out from the historic core of the town in those periods.

Although only two archaeological features were uncovered, their comparatively late Roman date is interesting in that they cannot be associated with the fort to the northeast, which had long since gone out of use and the site been redeveloped by the time the pottery was deposited in the two features. Secondly, deposition of the pottery, and therefore activity on the site, would appear to have occurred at a date somewhere in the early to mid – 4th century, a period when the town was held to be in decline. However, care must be taken in extrapolating too heavily based on so few features and it is obviously unclear how far this activity extends into the surrounding area or what its full nature was.

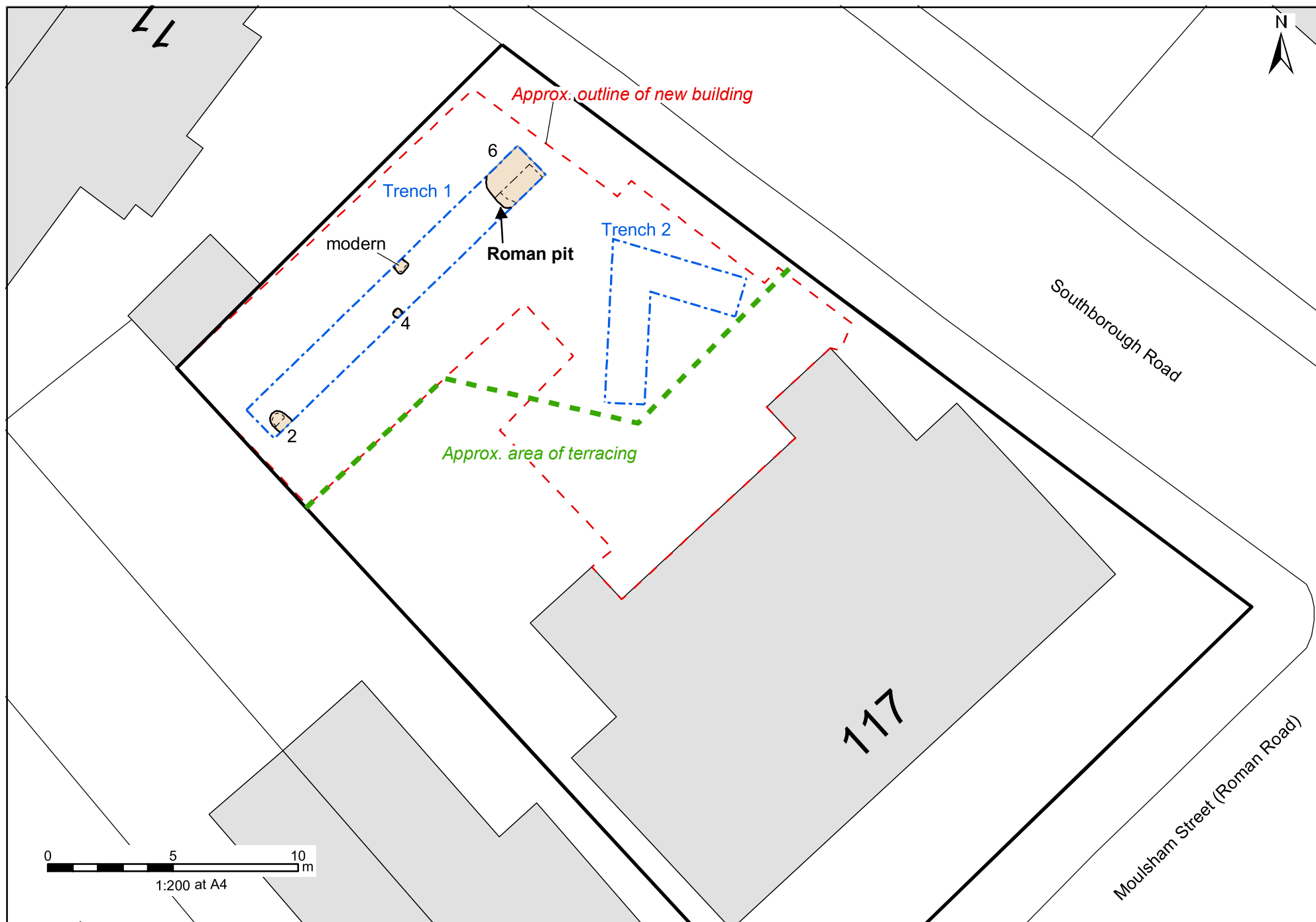
No cremations were encountered during the evaluation; however, this may be a reflection of the small area investigated and the imprecise nature of antiquarian references to the discovery of an urn, or indeed the misattribution of domestic pottery as a burial urn, rather than a genuine absence of remains in the vicinity. Certainly, were cremations present in this area then they would have to predate the activity noted in the evaluation, as cremation had fallen out of use as a burial rite in Roman Britain by this period.

Given that in-situ Roman remains have been uncovered it is clear that the development will have some degree of impact upon the archaeological record and where a design solution cannot be implemented to preserve the threatened remains in-situ further work may be required to ensure their preservation by record.

Previous Summaries/Reports: None

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Date of Summary: March 2013



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Fig.1. Location of evaluation trenches and Roman pit



Plate 1 Trench 1 looking SW (1m scale)



Plate 2 Post-hole 4 looking SE (0.5m scale)



Plate 3 Pit 6 looking SE (1m scale)



Plate 4 Trench 2 looking SE (1m scale)