

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: PAC15/29

(SP 0280 0180)

**11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr & Mrs Forbes

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PAC 15/29

March 2015

Summary

Site name: 11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

Grid reference: SP 0280 0180

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11th March 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: PAC 15/29

Area of site: 8m²

Summary of results: Whilst the evaluation did not reveal any archaeological features, fragments of Roman pottery were recovered from the layer immediately above the natural geology

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course.

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website:
www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 31.03.15 Steve Preston ✓ 31.03.15

11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 15/29

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (SP 0280 1080) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Forbes of 11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester.

A planning application to construct a single storey extension to the rear of the property has been made to Cotswold District Council. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by the development a field observation has been proposed in the form of machine trenching at this time the results of which would determine if further mitigation is required.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Charles Parry of Gloucestershire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter on the 11th March 2015 and the site code is PAC 15/29. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the Corinium Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the rear garden of 11 Purley Avenue which lies on the south side of the road which itself lies on the eastern side of Cirencester (Fig. 1). The site is generally flat and consists of a grass lawn and gravelled areas and a patio, the underlying geology is shown as being on the edge of alluvial deposits and first terrace deposits (BGS 1998) with clayey sand being recorded in the trenches and the site lies at 107.5m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site derives stems from its location within the historic Roman and later city of Cirencester (*Corinivm Dobvnnorvm*). It was the largest and one of the richest towns of Roman Britain after

London and became capital of *Britannia Prima* after the province was subdivided. The development site is located *c.* 750m to the north-east of the amphitheatre which still survives, towards the centre of the Roman town, and in the general vicinity of the Forum (Wacher 1995, fig 136). The Avenue, which is located at the western end of Purley Avenue, crosses the forum. Recent work in the town has tended to be on a small scale but continues to throw up new evidence (Holbrook 2006, 99)

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the evaluation will be to determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of this project are;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site and if so at what depth.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

Methodology

Two trenches 1.6m long and 1.6m wide were to be dug, one in the location of the proposed development and the other to just outside of it using a Kubota type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features are certainly or probably present or where the archaeological potential is uncertain, the stripped areas will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools.

Results

The two trenches were dug as intended, although trench 2 was moved due to a layer of concrete which the machine could not break due to its small size. The trenches measured 1.6m in length and were 1.20m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4 and pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned S - N and was 1.6m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil, 0.06m light yellow grey clay (made ground) (51), 0.28m dark brown grey silty sand made ground (52), 0.12m dark brown grey silty sand with gravel (53) and 0.48m very dark brown black sandy clay (54) from which

fragments of animal bone and pottery were recovered which overlay natural geology consisting of light yellow brown clayey sand.

Trench 2 (Figs 3, 4 and pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned S - N and was 1.6m long and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of gravel, 0.07m tarmac makeup, 0.08m light yellow grey clay (made ground) (51), 0.23m dark brown grey silty sand made ground (52), 0.17m dark brown grey silty sand with gravel (53) and 0.50m very dark brown black sandy clay (54) overlaying natural geology consisting of light yellow brown clayey sand.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The evaluation resulted in the recovery of two sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 31 g from Trench 1 (54). The pieces, both essentially unstratified, include one piece of Wiltshire grey sandy ware and one base-sherd of Oxfordshire red-slipped ware although the slip has been eroded off. The pottery is entirely compatible with that to be expected from a Roman town such as Cirencester.

Catalogue

1. Base-sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware. Wt. 14 g. Date: mid 3rd-4th century AD.
2. Bodysherd of moderately fine grey sandy ware probably from North Wiltshire. Wt. 17 g. Date: 2nd-3rd century AD.

Conclusion

The evaluation did not reveal the presence of any archaeological deposits with the strata revealed comprising modern made ground layers overlying the natural geology. A few sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the lowest levels in Trench 1.

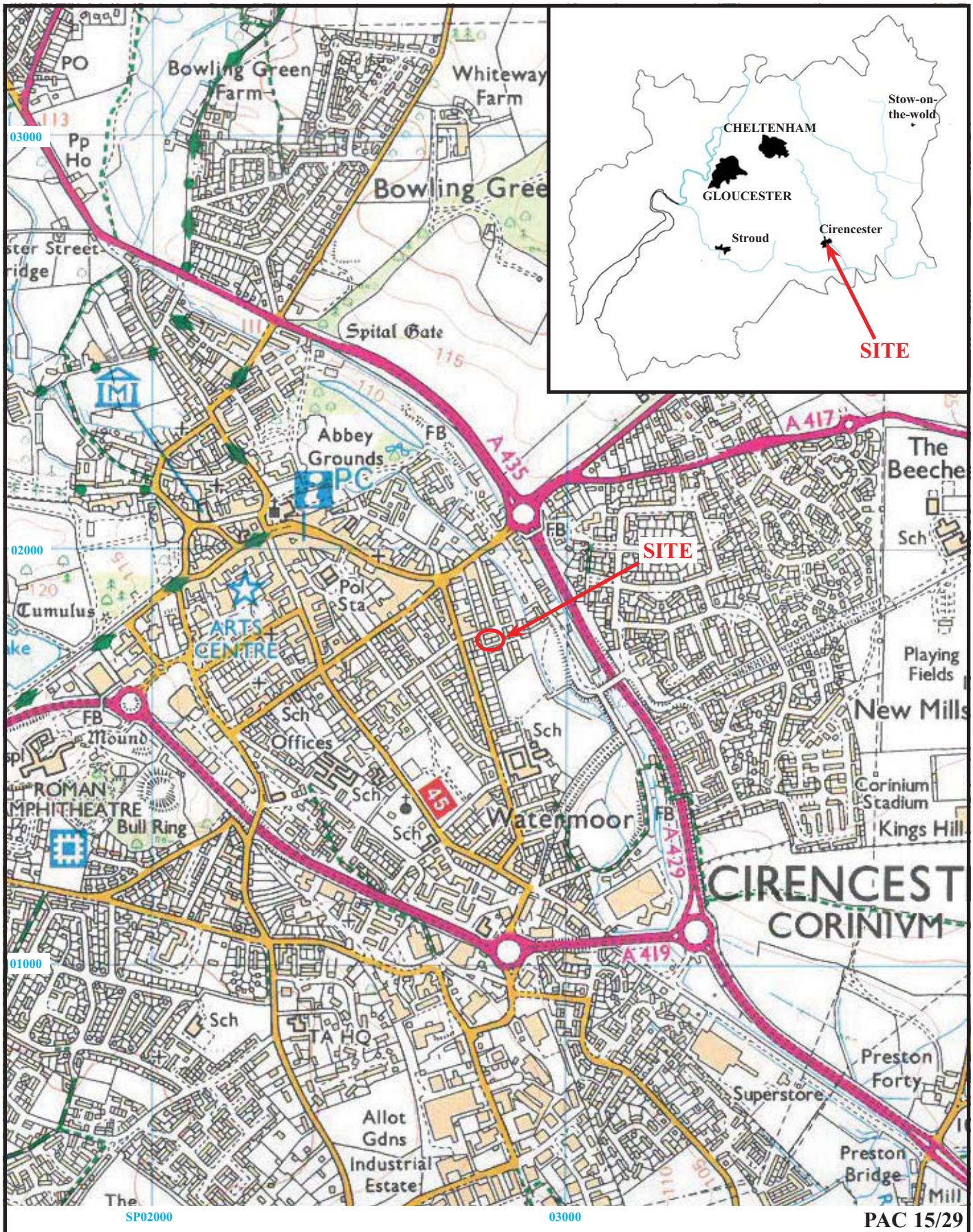
References

- BGS, 1998, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 235, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Holbrook, N, 2006, 'The Roman period', in N Holbrook and J Jurica (eds) *Twenty-five years of Archaeology in Gloucestershire: a review of new discoveries and new thinking in Gloucestershire, south Gloucestershire and Bristol*, Cirencester, 97–131
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Wacher, J S, 1995, *The Towns of Roman Britain* (2nd edn), London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	1.6	1.6	1.2	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.22m light yellow grey clay; 0.22-0.50m dark brown grey silty sand; 0.50-0.62m dark brown grey silty sand with gravel; 0.62-1.10m very dark brown black sandy clay; 1.10m+ yellow brown clayey sand (natural geology). [Pl. 1]
2	1.6	1.6	1.2	0-0.05m gravel; 0.05-0.12m tarmac makeup; 0.12-0.20m light yellow grey clay; 0.20-0.43m dark brown grey silty sand; 0.43-0.60m dark brown grey silty sand with gravel; 0.60-1.10m very dark brown black sandy clay; 1.10m+ yellow brown clayey sand (natural geology). [Pl. 2]



**11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Cirencester and Gloucestershire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 169 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880



PAC 15/29

**11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Purley Avenue.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale 1:1250





PAC 15/29

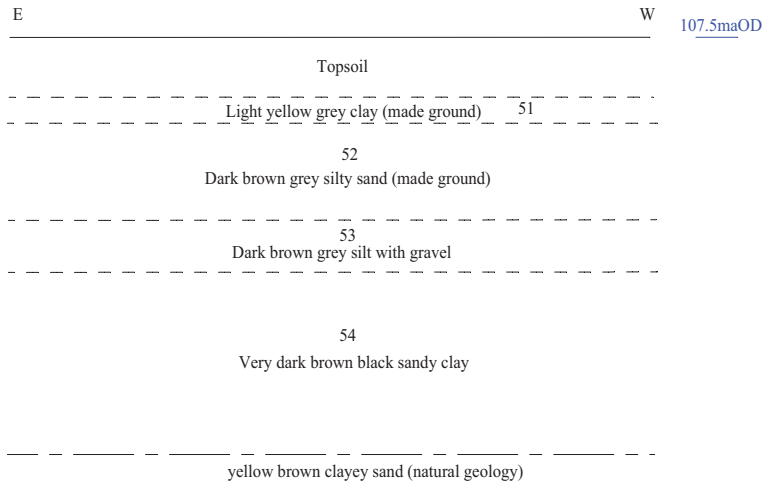


**11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation**

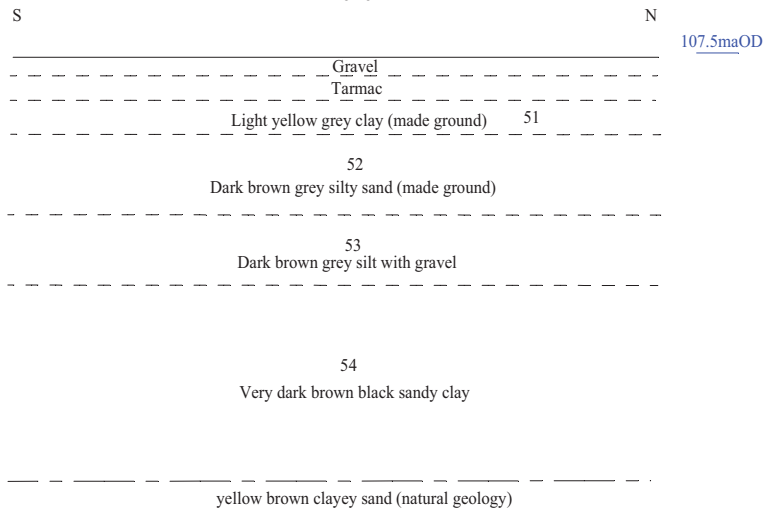
Figure 3. Location of trenches.



Trench 1



Trench 2



PAC 15/29

11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Sections.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking south, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking west, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

PAC 15/29

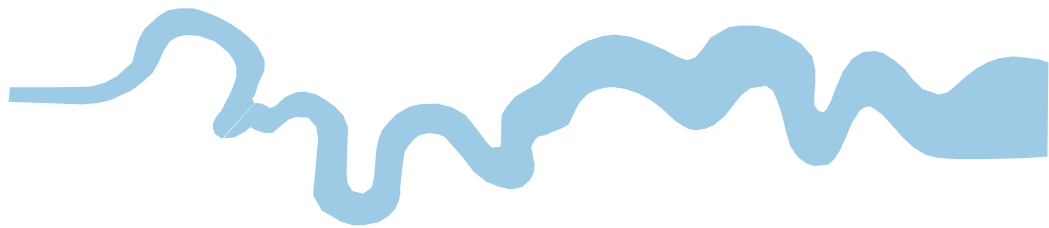
11 Purley Avenue, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**