

**Metchley Roman Fort,
Birmingham**

**Excavations May 2005
(Area 20)**

Post-Excavation Assessment

**Metchley Roman Fort, Birmingham, Excavations May 2005
(Area 20)
Post-Excavation Assessment**

By Alex Jones

With contributions by C Jane Evans, James Greig, Erica Macey-Bracken and Roger White

For further information please contact:

Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**METCHLEY ROMAN FORT, BIRMINGHAM, EXCAVATIONS MAY 2005
(AREA 20)**

POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT

Contents

1.0	Summary
2.0	Introduction
3.0	Results
4.0	Assessments
5.0	Updated project design
6.0	Publication synopsis
7.0	Task list
8.0	Acknowledgements
9.0	References

Tables (within text)

1	Quantification of paper archive
2	Quantification of finds archive
3	Summary of the pottery by class
4	Summary of the pottery by context
5	Charred plant remains assessment

Figures

1	Location and extent of Metchley Roman fort
2	Metchley Roman fort: phasing and location of Area 20 excavation
3	Simplified plan of Phase 1A features
4	Simplified plan of Phase 1B features
5	Simplified plan of Phase 2B features, and B22, Phase 5

Plates

1	General view, pre-excavation, view west
2	General view, post-excavation, view north
3	Phase 1A pit 4165
4	Phase 1A pit 4004
5	Phase 1B beam-slot B6/4230
6	Phase 2B beam-slot B4 in Structure 4
7	Phase 2B pit 4125 and beam-slot B12

**METCHLEY ROMAN FORT, BIRMINGHAM, EXCAVATIONS MAY 2005
(AREA 20)
POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT**

1.0: SUMMARY

An area excavation was undertaken in May 2005 within the left side of the central range of Metchley Roman fort, Birmingham (centred on NGR SP 045836, Area 20) in advance of a car park and public transport interchange associated with a new hospital development. The fieldwork was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on instruction from University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust. The area investigated was formerly occupied by a building 'the Blue Box' and was not available for evaluation, although the surrounding areas were proved by trial-trenching to have been scoured-down by modern landscaping. Other investigations within the fort's central range have included a recent excavation in the left side of the central range (Area 18), and small-scale testing by test-pitting and trial-trenches within the right side of this part of the fort.

The earliest features identified in the Area 20 excavation were up to five pits (Phase 1A). These were cut by two timber-framed buildings (Phase 1B, Structures 1 and 3), forming part of the first formal fort layout. Part of the eastern wall of the *praetentura* (headquarters) building (Structure 1), along with two internal divisions was recorded in the extreme west of the excavated area. This building was separated from the *praetorium* (commanding officer's house) by a gravelled trackway, approximately 5m wide. Part of the western side of the *praetorium* was identified within Area 20, including evidence for later re-arrangement. Prior to the use of the complex as a military stores depot (Phase 2B) the Phase 1B buildings were levelled, preparatory to the layout of three irregular buildings. One (Structure 2) adjoined the former location of Structure 1, the second (Structure 4), divided internally into at least three rooms, occupied the area of disused Structure 2. A later, more irregular timber-framed building (Structure 6), an oven and pitting were also recorded adjoining Structure 4. The Phase 2B timber-framed buildings and associated features comprised the latest suite of Roman activity. Later features comprised a post-medieval ditch, following the fort alignment, and disturbances associated with the footings of the 'Blue Box' building.

This report describes the results of the May 2005 excavation and provides proposals to bring the results to publication.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

2.1: Background

The Roman fort complex at Metchley was first identified from cartographic sources and antiquarian descriptions, and more recently by extensive trial-trenching and excavation. The fort defences, still surviving as above-ground earthworks in the 18th century were mapped and described in detail at that time (Jones 2001, 10-12). The Roman date of the earthworks was only confirmed in the 1930s when limited slit-

trenches were cut in advance of an earlier hospital development (St Joseph and Shotton 1937).

Large-scale investigations were directed by Trevor Rowley within the fort interior during 1967-9 (Jones 2001). Rowley's excavations identified timber-framed buildings including barrack-blocks, a granary, store building and a workshop associated with the earliest, Claudian fort (Phase 1). Excavations in the 1960s, and latterly in 1998-9 identified Neronian (Phase 2A) annexes added to the northern, eastern and southern sides of the Phase 1 fort (Jones 2005). Deliberate clearance of the Phase 1 buildings was followed as a single operation by the construction of temporary structures, and fenced compounds associated with a military stores depot (Jones 2001, 43-54). Subsequently, after a period of abandonment, the fort was re-occupied, and a smaller fort of Flavian date (Phase 3) was laid out within the interior of the Phase 1-2 fort. After the abandonment of the Phase 3 fort later in the 1st century, continued, if not continuous Roman activity was recorded through the 2nd century, either small-scale military or civilian in nature. This latest suite of Roman activity (Phase 4) may be associated with a possible *mansio* or *mutatio* on or near the site, serving traffic on routes leading to Wall, Droitwich and Alcester, although occupation by a specialist military force is also a possibility. Metchley lay within an early post-medieval hunting park until piecemeal enclosure in the later 18th century. The fort defences continued to be visible as upstanding earthworks in places until the 1960s.

2.2: May 2005 (Area 20) fieldwork

This report describes the results of excavation within the left side of the central range of Metchley Roman fort (Birmingham SMR no. 2005, Jones 2001, centred on NGR SP 045836, designated Area 20 within the sequence of Metchley investigations, Figs. 1-2). It provides proposals to being the results to publication in accordance with the Management of Archaeology Projects 2 (English Heritage). The excavation was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on instruction from University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust, in advance of a roadscheme associated with a new hospital development.

The area investigated formerly comprised the footprint of the 'Blue Box' building. This was of prefabricated construction, resting on a concrete slab which was raised above the surrounding ground-level, particularly in the southeastern corner, where the greatest potential for archaeological survival was anticipated. Surrounding areas of car parking were proved by trial-trenching to have been scoured-out by modern downcutting, and other areas surrounding the building were not accessible because of high voltage electric cables.

The first stage of archaeological appraisal comprised a desk-based assessment (Jones 1999) which also included other areas within and adjoining the fort complex. Trial-trenching to the west of the building (Trench B1, Jones 1999b) identified a truncated subsoil horizon, but no features, or possible features of archaeological interest. The strategy for the Area 20 excavation was set down in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2004), approved by Birmingham City Council.

2.3: Aims

The aims of the May 2005 excavation were to:

- 1) Define the layout and function of Phase 1 buildings, including evidence of re-arrangement/ change in function.
- 2) Define the layout and function of structures associated with the Phase 2B military stores depot.
- 3) Define the layout and function of the Phase 3 buildings.
- 4) Provide details of the features and deposits associated with the latest civilian/ military activity.
- 5) Provide details of the economy and environment of the military complex.
- 6) Contribute towards an understanding of the chronology of the complex.
- 7) Contribute towards an understanding of the pattern of military supply.

2.4: Methodology

Archaeological monitoring was maintained during removal of the concrete floor slab from the demolished 'Blue Box' building, to ensure that demolition clearance did not penetrate below-ground archaeological deposits. The area initially chosen for excavation measured 10m by 15m, and was located in the southeastern corner of the building, where the floor level was considerably higher than the surrounding ground level. Here archaeological survival was predicted to be highest. The area chosen for excavation was then stripped of topsoil and overburden by a 360 degree excavator working under archaeological supervision (Plate 1). Following the identification of well-preserved Roman military structural features it was decided to extend the area for investigation to include the majority of the footprint of the demolished building. A total area measuring 20.5m by 15.5m was hand-excavated (approximately 308 square metres). The machined subsoil surface was hand-cleaned as necessary to define features, or possible features, of archaeological interest. Structural features were tested to establish stratigraphic relationships, and discrete lengths of beam-slots and other features were also hand-excavated (Plate 2). Post-medieval features were tested sufficient to confirm their date, and to establish their character and extent.

Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and feature cuts, plans (at 1:20) and sections (at 1:20) and monochrome and colour slide photography. Konstruct numbers (prefixed 'B') have been allocated in post-excavation to facilitate the identification and analysis of related feature cuts.

Subject to permission from the landowner it is proposed to deposit the archive with Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

3.0: RESULTS

3.1: Phasing

Phase 1A: Pre-fort activity; possible construction camp or marching camp (AD 40s).

Phase 1B: First fort on site, defended by double ditches, and enclosing approximately 4ha (AD 40s-50s). May include some remodelling of the layouts of the Phase 1B original structures. Contemporary with vicus on western side of the fort.

Phase 1C: western annexe, represented by re-cut palisade trench; contemporary with Phase 1B or Phase 2A.

Phase 2A: first use of northern, eastern and southern annexes; possibly also relates to remodelling of internal Phase 1B fort buildings (AD 50s-60s).

Phase 2B: clearance of the earlier internal fort buildings followed as part of the same operation by the layout of irregular buildings and compounds (AD 50s-60s). Area to the west of fort used for livestock compounds. Phase followed by the first Roman abandonment of the site. Phases 2A and 2B cannot be related.

Phase 3: Re-occupation of the site, with the layout of rectangular, single-ditched fort enclosing 2.6ha within the Phase 1 fort, with re-cutting of the earlier fort ditches to provide additional defence (AD 60s-80s). Continued use of eastern and southern annexes.

Phase 4: Later Roman military or civilian activity (late 1st century-2nd century), includes cutting of defences and internal features, some following different alignments to those of the preceding phases.

Phase 5: All post-Roman activity.

For simplicity in the following account it will be assumed that the fort is orientated north-south, although the drawings remain labelled with compass north.

The subsoil was an orange-brown clay-silt, 4002.

3.2: Phase 1A, pre-formal fort layout features (Fig 3)

Description

The earliest suite of Roman military features comprised three pits and spreads of burnt material. Two other pits may also be attributable to this phase.

The three pits, 4220, 4033, 4165 (Plate 3), were positioned at an average separation of approximately 3.5m, possibly forming a roughly west-east alignment, Structure 5, roughly parallel with the *Via Principalis* of the later, Phase 1B fort. There was no evidence for the continuation of this alignment to the east of the easternmost excavated pit, 4165, within the area investigated; the projected westward continuation of this line lay outside the area excavated.

4165 was oval in plan, measuring a maximum of 1.9m in diameter, and 0.6m in depth. Its backfills comprised sand-silt, containing fragments of daub and flecks of charcoal. 4033 was distinguished by containing a post-pipe, 4035, measuring 0.3m in diameter, but the pit was backfilled with similar material. Little of the westernmost pit of this group, 4220, survived later, Phase 2B disturbance. The three backfilled Phase 1A pits, 4220, 4033, and 4165, were cut by Phase 1B beam-slots (see below).

Two other pits, 4004 (Plate 4) and 4094, may also be attributable to this phase on the basis of their morphological similarity with the Phase 1A pits. 4004 and 4096, however, could not be related to the ground plan formed by Structure 5, nor could they be related stratigraphically to any later features. 4094 was oval in plan, with its long axis aligned northwest-southeast. It measured a maximum of 1.1m in diameter, and 0.3m in depth, and contained a post-pipe, 4096, measuring 0.25m in diameter. It was approximately 7m north of 4033. 4096 was backfilled with grey-brown sand-silt,

containing quantities of daub, also recorded in 4165 and 4033. Finally, 4004 was a rectangular post-pit, its long axis aligned east-west. It contained a post-pipe, 4011, positioned eccentrically on its eastern edge. 4004 was backfilled with dark grey-brown silt-sand.

Also possibly attributable to this phase is a spread of burnt material, 4090 (not illustrated) in the extreme south of the excavated area, sealed by Phase 1B layer 4027 (see below). Further Phase 1A layers (not illustrated) comprising orange-red silt-clay, 4146, and black-grey silt-clay, 4148, were cut by Phase 1B beam-slot B5, and may be attributable to Phase 1A.

Dating evidence

The following Phase 1A features or layers contained pre-Flavian pottery: 4004 (fills 4003 and 4005); 4033 (4030 and 4032); 4094 (4093); layers 4146 and 4148.

Interpretation

Structure 5, comprising three pits, 4165, 4033 and 4220, clearly pre-dates the layout of beam-slots, B5, B7 and B23, which are interpreted as belonging to the earliest formal fort layout (Phase 1B, see below). 4004 and 4094 can only be attributed to this phase on the basis of their morphological similarity to 4033, as well as the lack of any other similar features which can be attributed to later phases. As noted above, 4165, 4033 and 4220 form an east-west alignment, which may define the northern side of a building whose other sides lay outside the area investigated.

There is increasing evidence from other excavations in the central range and *praetentura* for activity which may pre-date the first formal layout of the fort. In particular, this comprises the ovens pre-dating Phase 1B structures in Area 12 (Jones in preparation a), and the irregular small ditched features pre-dating the Phase 1B rampart in Area 14 (Jones in preparation b). Care is required in the interpretation of the former, since it is possible that the early ovens in Area 12 were cut by a later Phase 1B building, not one belonging to the first formal military layout. In the Area 12 and Area 14 excavations, the early features were attributed to a marching camp or construction camp, and the Area 20 features may be placed within a similar context. If their attribution to Phase 1A is correct, the three, or possibly five pits from Area 20 are significant in representing the first evidence of an internal structure, however poorly-defined, from this earliest Roman phase.

The Phase 1A spreads of burnt material, including charcoal and burnt clay may be the remains of an oven, itself located outside the excavated area. Other ovens attributed to Phase 1A were located in Area 12 (Jones in preparation a).

3.3: Phase 1B, first fort layout, right side of the central range

Description

Phase 1B represents the first overall layout of timber-framed buildings, defined by beam-slots and internal floor-surfaces, within the right side of the central range. Parts of two timber-framed buildings, Structures 1 and 3, were recognised, together with

associated internal features. The buildings were separated by an internal road, 4186, surfaced with pebbles.

The Phase 1B features were cut into the backfilled Phase 1A features, and into the subsoil, 4002.

Part of the north-south aligned eastern beam-slot, B1, of Structure 1 was recorded within the excavated area; the other external walls lay outside the area investigated. B1 was recorded for a length of 12m. It measured an average of 0.45m in width, and 0.15m in depth, becoming shallower in the north of the area excavated, which was generally more truncated by modern downcutting. B1 was backfilled with light grey-brown sand-silt, containing charcoal flecks and daub fragments. It was joined by two east-west aligned internal walls, B26-B27, each only recorded for a maximum length of 0.5m. They defined the northern and southern walls respectively of a room measuring 7m north-south. No further details of the internal arrangement of the building could be recorded.

A pebble surface, 4186, measuring 5m in width, separated Structures 1 and 3. It probably formed an internal road between the two contemporary buildings.

To the east of the pebble surface was the principal timber-framed building excavated, Structure 3, represented by beam-slots, pebble floor surfaces, and possible evidence of later re-arrangement, and re-use. The original western wall of this building, aligned north-south, B5, was cut through Phase 1A layers 4090, 4146, and 4148 (not illustrated, and into the subsoil. B5 was recorded for a length of 16.5m, and the total excavated length of this side of the building was 21.5m. The northern terminal of B5 was round-ended, and was cut by a post-hole, 4287. Other post-holes, 4022 and 4179, were cut along its length. B5 measured an average of 0.4m in width and 0.15m in depth, and was backfilled with dark brown silt-clay, flecked with charcoal. The other outer walls of the building lay outside the area excavated.

Excavation provided details of the internal arrangements along part of the western side of the building. Three rooms, R1-R3, were identified within the original layout of the extreme western side of the building, only one of which, R1, was fully defined at excavation. Room R1 adjoined the western wall, B5, and measured 4.1m by 10.6m internally, with its long axis aligned north-south. The western, B5, southern, B6, and eastern, B7, sides of the room were identified, but the northern side, B14, may have been part of a later re-arrangement, described below. The northern end of the eastern beam-slot, B7, ended in a rounded terminal, like its western counterpart, B5. The northern beam-slot ends along the eastern and western sides of R1 may have been terminated inside the line of the contemporary northern wall, for stability. The contemporary northern side of this wall was not recorded at excavation; it was probably dug-away by a later re-arrangement, B14, dug following the same general alignment. A post-hole, 4258, was recorded at the southeastern angle of this room. The room was surfaced with small pebbles, 4066. A short, east-west aligned sub wall, B7a, joined the eastern side of the room. The full length of B7a could not be established because of later, Roman, disturbance. The internal beam-slots of R1 measured an average of 0.3m in width, and 0.15m in depth, a similar size to that of external beam-slot B5.

The southern wall, B6 (Plate 5), of Room B1 was continued for a distance of 2.6m beyond the western wall of the building, B5, an arrangement contemporary with the original layout of the building. It was not clear if this beam-slot was continued further to the west, to join the eastern wall, B1, of the adjoining Structure 1. A post-hole, 4236, was cut along the external length of this beam-slot. To the south of B6 there was no surviving evidence for the internal arrangement of this part of the building, and this area, Room R2, could have formed part of a large room or corridor space. The only contemporary deposit within R2 was a layer of grey-brown silt-sand, 4027 (not illustrated), located in the extreme south of the area investigated, sealing Phase 1A deposit 4090.

A further room, R3, was defined by B7 on its eastern side, and by B16 on its southern and eastern sides. The long axis of R3 was north-south, and it measured 1.2m by 4.5m internally was recorded to the east of R1. The junction between B7 and B16 was defined by a post-hole, 4092. The eastern wall of R3 was slightly misaligned with the western side of the room and the remainder of the building - which may suggest that the room was a later addition to the building. To the east of R3 was the rounded western terminal of a broad beam-slot, B24, which terminated 0.3m to the west of B16. This intervening space may have defined a small entry-gap. The only other feature identified in the excavated eastern part of the building was a north-south beam-slot, B21, recorded for a length of 3m in an area truncated by later Roman and modern activity. It may have defined the eastern side of a room, R5, measuring 4.3m in width, a similar width to R1 to the west. The southern terminal of B21 was approximately flush with the inside face of the southern side of Room R1, B6, but no trace of an eastward continuation of the latter could be defined. The internal area between B7 and B21 was surfaced with a clay floor, 4290. B21 contained a stake-hole, 4302.

In the north of the excavated part of the building, an L-shaped beam-slot, B14, defined part of the western side of the building, and also the western and southern sides of a further room, R4, to the north of R1. As excavated, the room measured a minimum of 5m square; neither its eastern or western limits could be identified. The southwestern corner of R4 was notably irregular in plan. B14 adjoined the northern terminals of B5 and B7, which it probably respected. Beam-slot B14 measured an average of 0.3m in width and 0.18m in depth, and was backfilled with grey-brown sand-silt. The excavated southwestern part of R4 was surfaced with rounded pebbles, 4077.

Four features cut in the north of Room R1 may belong to the later Phase 1B use of the building. The largest of these features was a roughly rectangular pit, 4100, with rounded corners. It was cut into stub wall B7a, and the floor surface, 4066. The pit respected the eastern and northern walls of the building, which probably remained in use. The pit was flat-based, and mostly vertically-sided, with the exception of its southwestern corner which was more gently-sloping. It was probably originally lined with timber planking. The pit measured a maximum of 2.3m in width, and 0.6m in depth. It was backfilled with dark brown-black sand-silt, flecked with charcoal, 4099, sealed by yellow-brown sand-silts, 4097-8. Adjoining the pit were a small pit, 4198, a post-hole, 4172, and a stake-hole, 4174, all of which were cut into floor surface, 4066.

Dating evidence

The following Phase 1B features or layers contained pre-Flavian pottery: B5 (fills 4021, 4036, 4056, 4060, 4144, 4213); B14 (4025, 4075); layer 4027; 4100 (4097, 4099); 4125 (4126, 4127); B7 (4155); B1 (4167, 4171); 4172 (4173); B6 (4184, 4230); B24 (4191); B25 (4192); 4198 (4195); B6 (4202, 4204).

Interpretation

Only part of the eastern wall, B1, of Structure 1 was located within the excavated area. The overall arrangement or function of this building cannot be confidently interpreted from the limited structural details provided by excavation. The location of the eastern outer wall of this building within the central range, may, however, be significant. It is located approximately 66m to the west of the eastern rampart tail, one third of the overall width of the central range, measured from the eastern and western rampart tails. It was usual to locate the *principia* within the central third of the central range (Johnson 1983, fig 19), facing towards the front gate. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, B1 may be interpreted as the eastern wall of the *principia*, a building not previously located at Metchley. Usually, the entrance to a *principia* adjoined the front gate, in the south of the building at Metchley. *Principia* generally contained a central courtyard, surrounded by colonnaded ambularies and small rooms (eg Johnson 1983, fig 98). B26 and B27 represent internal divisions within the eastern range of the building, assuming that it conformed to the usual military plan. Johnson (1983, 104) notes that *principia* varied from 60m by 45m to 14m by 11m, with an average of 30 by 25m. The overall size of the Metchley *principia* is not known. If it lay closer to the smaller size range, then Structure 1 is unlikely to have been the *principia*, unless it was located towards the right side of the central range.

The location of the western excavated part of Structure 3 within the western part of the easternmost third of the central range suggests that it may be interpreted as the *praetorium*, although its full size, or full details of its internal arrangement could not be established. These buildings often occupied the easternmost third of the central range. Because of limited excavation it is not known if this building extended over a full one third of the total width of the central range, in which case it would be 66m in width (measured east-west), larger than the *praetoria* illustrated by Johnson (1983, fig. 101: average of 25m in width). The *praetorium* usually included the living quarters of the commander, his household, his immediate staff and their domestic servants. It may have also included accommodation for official guests. The building usually comprised four ranges of rooms arranged around a central courtyard, in the manner of a domestic house.

The excavated part of Structure 3 comprised part of the western side of the *praetorium* which contained one room, R1 and a further possible room, R5 within the original layout of the building. It is possible that R1 could have been formerly subdivided, but that this division could have been scoured-out by later, Phase 2B activity. The absence of north and south walls in R5 could indicate that this space formed part of the western side of the ambulatory which surrounded the central courtyard, which could have been itself located to the east of the easternmost excavated wall of the building, B21. This interpretation may be contradicted by the positioning of the southern terminal of B21, apparently flush with the projected northern edge of east-

west aligned B6. This may suggest that R5 was itself a room, its southern side flush with the southern wall of adjoining Room R1, although neither its northern or southern walls could be recognised at excavation. For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that all the buildings excavated in Area 20 were single-storey. This will need to be verified by a full search of published examples, and also by comparison of the beam-slot widths and depths, to establish evidence for the increased weight loading of a two storey building.

The projected centreline of the east-west aligned *Via Principalis* lies approximately 15m to the south of the excavated area. Accordingly, the excavated part of Structure 3 (and Structure 1) may have been located mid-way along its western wall. The main entrance to the *praetorium* would have been off this road. If Structure 3 conformed to the normal military plan, the excavated part of the building could have included rooms adjoining the vestibule, and used for reception, or to house a porter (Johnson 1983, 134).

The function of Room R3 is not known, although its misalignment with the remainder of the building suggests that it may be a later addition, possibly carved out of the western ambulatory. The small size of the room could indicate that it was used for storage. As noted above, an entry-gap could have been retained between the western terminal of B24 and the eastern side of B16, although further details of the layout of this part of the building interior could not be recovered because of modern disturbance.

The features cut in the north of R1 indicate a change of use, whilst this part of the building was still in use. 4100, originally lined with timber planking may have been used for storage, possibly even for security. There is increasing evidence for re-arrangement of the original timber-framed buildings within the *retentura*, and the *praetentura* (Jones 2001, Jones in preparation a and b). This could have been a response to a change in composition or number of the garrison, or the assumption of a specialist function, for example storage, possibly contemporary with the layout of annexes on the northern (Jones 2001), eastern and southern sides (Jones 2005) of the fort in Phase 2A. In particular, excavation within the left *retentura* (Jones 2001, R2, fig. 11) identified the reduction in number of *contubernia* within barrack-block Structure 3.1, and its replacement with rooms converted for storage, containing circular pits.

In Area 20, the layout of B14 of Room R4 in relation to the northern terminals of B5 and B7 in Room R1 suggest that R14 was a later re-arrangement of the building, whilst Room R1 continued in use. This arrangement would have created two semi-independent structural units; the southern represented by Rooms R1, R2, R3, and presumably R5. A similar re-arrangement was seen at Rocester (Esmonde Cleary and Ferris 1996, fig. 6) where a unified barrack-block was later reduced in size, and one end converted for use as a kitchen during the continued use of the remainder of the *contubernia*. The rounded northern terminal of B7 suggests that it was not cut back to the south of its original terminal, to allow the insertion of the east-west aligned length of B14. Thus, it may be assumed that the excavated length of B14 replaced an original internal division located in a similar position, and following the same alignment, although no trace could be found of such an earlier arrangement. The irregular offset between the angle of B14 and the northern terminal of B5 may be distinguished from

the more common arrangement whereby two contemporary beam-slots do not join, an arrangement adopted for stability to ensure that the beam-slot ends do not break down (eg Jones in preparation a).

3.4: Phase 2B

Description

The latest suite of Roman activity may be attributed to Phase 2B. This comprised the clearance of Phase 1B buildings, and the layout of three irregular buildings, Structures 2, 4 and 6, defined by beam-slots, mostly irregular in plan. The Phase 2B structures followed the approximate positions of the former buildings. The survival of Phase 2B features and deposits was concentrated in the south and west of the area excavated. It may be presumed that the greater modern truncation in the north of the area excavated had in particular scoured-out any features belonging to this phase. The lack of Phase 2B features within the northeast of the excavated area may be due to this truncation.

The Phase 2B features were cut through the backfilled Phase 1B features, and into the subsoil.

A length of the presumed eastern side of Structure 2 was excavated; the remaining sides of this building lay outside the area excavated. This discontinuous wall adjoined the same side of Phase 1B Structure 1, which it may have respected. The eastern wall of Structure 2 was represented by two beam-slots, B10 and B12, separated by an entry-gap measuring 8m in width, and were cut into Phase 1B surface 4186. B12 contained a post-hole, 4132. Subsequent to its original construction, the entry-gap was partly 'closed' by a beam-slot, B11, measuring 5.5m in length. The southern end of B11 was slightly misaligned with B12, but its northern end was cut outside the line of northern excavated beam-slot, B10. The Structure 2 beam-slots measured an average of 0.4m in width and 0.15m in depth, and were backfilled with grey-brown, or grey-black sand-silt, flecked with charcoal. No associated features could be identified within the small excavated part of the building interior.

The larger excavated Phase 2B building, Structure 4, was located only 0.3m to the east of Structure 2. Structure 4 was cut through the backfilled beam-slots and internal floor surfaces of Phase 1B Structure 3, and into the subsoil. The northern end of Structure 4 lay within the area excavated. The northern side of the building, measuring a total of 12m in length, was defined by two beam-slots, B3 and B17, separated by an offset equivalent to their width. The northern end of the western side of the building was defined by a beam-slot, B13, recorded for a total length of 2m. The northern end of the eastern side of the building was formed by an irregular beam-slot, B19. This was continued for a distance of 2m beyond the north side of the building, where it was truncated by a modern disturbance. B19 contained a post-hole, 4294.

The northern excavated part of the building was divided into three rooms, R1-R3. Room R1 in the west of the building measured 5m (east-west) by 4m (north-south). The southern sides of Rooms R1 and R3, B23 and B18, respectively, followed the position and alignment of internal wall B6 of Phase 1B Structure 3. B23 contained post-holes, 4201 and 4249, cut along its length. Entry-gaps, each measuring 1.8m in

width were recorded in the northwestern and southeastern corners of R1. A post-hole, 4272, located outside the northwestern entrance could have been associated. The southeastern entry-gap was partly 'closed' by a beam-slot, B28, cut diagonally across the entrance. Room R2 to the east measured 3.4m (east-west), but its southern side was not recognised at excavation. The dividing wall, B15 between R1 and R2 was terminated short of the northern wall of the building, B3, an arrangement to increase the stability of this part of the building. The wall between R2 and R3, B4 (Plate 6), joined the northern wall of the building, B3. In the south of the room was an oven and a pit. The pit, 4275, was surrounded by three stake-holes, 4273, 4277 and 4279. An oval oven, 4102, to the east, was surrounded by an arc of stake-holes (for simplicity not individually numbered on the plan). Room R3, in the east of the building measured 3m (east-west) and 3.6m (north-south). An entry-gap measuring 0.4m in width was recorded in the northeastern corner of the room.

The outer walls and internal divisions of Structure 4 measured an average of 0.2m in width, and 0.1m in width. They were backfilled with grey-brown sand-silt, flecked with charcoal. Some of the Structure 4 beam-slots had stake-holes cut along their length.

Part of the northern and eastern sides of Structure 6 were located towards the south of the excavated area. The northern side of the building was represented by two beam-slots, B2 and B25, separated by an offset measuring 1.3m in width. The two rounded beam-slot terminals overlapped by 0.5m. B25 was cut into the backfills of Phase 1B beam-slot B24. B2 contained a post-hole, 4068. The irregular eastern side of the building, B20, was cut into the backfills of the eastern beam-slot, B19 of Phase 2B Structure 4 which had presumably gone out of use. No other details of this building could be identified. The northern beam-slots, B2 and B25 measured up to 0.6m in width, and 0.2m in depth. The Structure 6 beam-slots were backfilled with grey-brown silt-clay-sand.

A later sub-phase of Phase 2B activity was represented by a number of pits cut within Structures 2 and 4, presumably after their abandonment. A single pit, 4159, was cut within the interior of Structure 2. Two pits, 4081 and 4125 (Plate 7), were cut into the disused western wall, B13, of Structure 4. The latter was also cut into backfilled Phase 1A pit 4220 (see above). The internal division between R1 and R2 in Structure 4, B15, was cut by a further pit, 4222. Finally, a pit, 4041, and a shallow scoop, 4014, were cut into the disused southern wall, B18, and the eastern wall, B19, of Room R3. 4041 was vertically sided, with a flat base, and was probably originally lined with timber planking. After backfilling it was cut by a large post-hole, 4070. This was positioned approximately flush with the western terminal of B25 in Structure 6, and could have been associated.

A further focus of Phase 2B activity was located within the interior of disused Structure 4, in the south of the excavated area. This comprised a group of intercutting oval ovens, 4057, 4055, and 4090, associated with stake-holes, 4059, 4085, 4087, 4089 and 4183. Associated with this oven group were spreads of burnt material, 4012, 4150 and 4151 (not illustrated). 4012 sealed Phase 1B layer 4027.

Finds and dating evidence

The following Phase 2B features or layers contained pre-Flavian pottery: 4014 (fill 4013); 4041 (4039, 4040); B9 (4058, 4084); 4081 (4078, 4079); B8 (4101, 4111); B12 (4131); B11 (4135, 4259); B2 (4246).

Interpretation

No Area 20 features could be confidently attributed to Phase 2A which relates to the construction of annexes on three sides of the fort. As noted above, some of the later Phase 1B, or early Phase 2B features may possibly belong to this phase of activity.

The other excavated buildings attributed to the Phase 2B stores depot in the former *retentura* and the *praetentura* areas comprise a combined store/grooms quarters, a store building, together with a ditched compound (Jones 2001). It is more difficult to ascribe a function to the excavated Phase 2B buildings in Area 20. It is notable that elements of all three Area 20 buildings appear to respect at least parts of their Phase 1B predecessors. A similar pattern has been noted elsewhere within the fort interior (e.g. the *retentura*, Jones 2001, compare figs 11 and 17), there interpreted as evidence for the clearance of the Phase 1B buildings having been part of the same operation as the construction of the Phase 2B structures, both taking place under military control. Although the layouts of the Phase 2B buildings may have partly reflected the arrangement and positioning of their predecessors, this is not an argument that the functions remained the same. Whilst the *praetentura* and *praetorium* of the Phase 1B fort may have been designed to deal with the needs of a garrison of around a thousand, different accommodation may have been required for the presumably much smaller group of military specialists who manned the Phase 2B military stores depot. It is also notable that Structures 2 and 4 are located only 0.3m apart, possibly as part of the same layout, although the more irregular building, Structure 4 could have been laid out following the construction of the apparently more regular Structure 2. This cannot be proven. 4081 cut the northwestern angle of Structure 4, presumably after it went out of use. The positioning of this pit apparently respecting the southern end of B11 and the northern end of B12 of Structure 2 could indicate that this structure continued in use after the building to the east, Structure 4, went out of use, although this cannot be proven.

One possibility is that Structure 4 was the northern end of a barrack-block. If this interpretation was correct Rooms R1 and R2 could form the *contubernia*, and Room 3 the verandah. This interpretation could fit the offset recorded between the suggested *contubernia* and the verandah; the latter possibly a later addition, as well as the continuation of the possible outer wall of the verandah, B19, also presumably a later addition, and extending beyond the northern side of the building.

Too little of the overall layout of Structure 6 was identified to permit an interpretation of its function. It is possible that the northern and eastern beam-slots provided no more than a wind-break to the industrial activity undertaken within the interior of abandoned Structure 4. Structure 6 could be associated with 4041 which certainly marks the abandonment of internal wall B18 within Structure 4. 4014 appeared to respect the southern excavated end of B19 (Structure 6), which might have been associated.

The evidence from Area 20 suggests that more than one sub-phase of Phase 2B activity is represented. Excavation in the left *retentura* (Jones 2001, 50, Areas 3-4) provided evidence for separate 'episodes' of Phase 2B activity, comprising in turn the layout of a number of irregular, timber-framed buildings, succeeded by hearths, followed by wattle fences, the latter not found in Area 20. In Area 20, as in the left *retentura*, the abandonment of timber-framed buildings was followed by the cutting of other features, in the *retentura* associated with industrial activity, in Area 20 of less certain attribution, except 4041, which was vertically-sided. An alternative interpretation of pits 4125 and 4081, cut at the wall junctions, is that they were robber pits, intended to recover structural timbers, although other pits - 4225, 4041, as well as scoop 4014 - were not so located.

The beam-slots attributed to this phase in Area 20, although irregular in plan, were cut to a fairly regular profile. Elsewhere in the fort, the Phase 2B beam-slots were characterised by irregularity both in plan and profile (e.g. Structure 2.2, Jones 2001, 50-52). It is possible that more 'care' was taken over the layout of 'official' buildings within the central range in comparison with the peripheral and temporary structures associated with storage located elsewhere in the fort interior, although it is not clear if the Phase 2B military stores depot was 'zoned' in a such a standard Roman military manner. Alternatively, it is even possible that they represent the remains of an earlier (Phase 2A), or later (Phase 3) rebuilding.

The stake-holes associated with 4102 defined the individual supports of an oval clay or turf dome around the oven (e.g. Jones 2001, 52). 4041 was vertically-sided, probably originally lined with planking, and may have been used for storage.

No evidence has been found of post Phase 2B Roman activity, and all the pottery collected was of pre-Flavian date. The presence of Phase 3 and Phase 4 features within the fort interior is patchy, and it is not possible to say if modern truncation has removed features belonging to these later Roman phases.

3.5: Phase 5: Post-Roman activity

Description and interpretation

The main post-Roman feature was an east-west aligned ditch, B22, recorded for a total length of 12.5m. The ditch measured a maximum of 1.7m in width and 0.4m in depth, and was cut to a U-shaped profile. This feature, although backfilled with a quantity of post-medieval pottery was cut following the Roman military alignment, and may represent a re-cut of a Roman roadside ditch, dug a distance to the north of, but parallel to, the *Via Principalis*, which was not identified within the excavated area. The continuation of both Phase 1B B5, and Phase 2B B4 to the south of B22 indicates that both the *Via Principalis* and its northern flanking ditch lay to the south of the area excavated. The westward continuation of this ditched feature, which also contained post-medieval pottery, was excavated in Area 18, within the fort's central range. B22, and its excavated westward continuation may be interpreted as part of the northern ditch surrounding the post-medieval hunting lodge (cf, Jones 2001, fig. 4A, Sparry map of 1718).

The other post-medieval features identified comprised disturbances, mainly foundation pits dug along the centre of the demolished Blue Box building. An area of modern disturbance was also located in the extreme southeast of the area investigated. The backfilled Phase 1A-2B and Phase 5 features were sealed by a dark grey-brown silt-sand-clay, 4001, recorded below the topsoil, 4000.

4.0: ASSESSMENTS

4.1: Quantifications

Tables 1-2 present quantifications of the paper records and finds archive.

TABLE 1: Quantification of paper archive

<i>Record type</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Contexts/ feature cuts	307
Drawings (plans and sections)	130
Photographs (monochrome print and colour slide)	6 films
Administration	1 file
Environmental	1 file
Survey data	1 file

TABLE 2: Quantification of finds archive

<i>Finds category</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Copper alloy objects	3
Iron objects	18 nails and 6 other iron items
Glass objects	4
Fired clay	143
Coarse pottery	234
Mortaria	1
Samian	19
Amphora	77

4.2: Stratigraphic data

The preservation of archaeological features and deposits varied across the area excavated. Most of the features excavated were cut into the natural subsoil. In addition, overall deposits including pebble yard surfaces and floors and a clay floor, were identified. Phase 1A-1B features were identified over much of the area excavated. By contrast, Phase 2B features were not recognised in the north and northeast of the area investigated. Similarly, the preservation of north-south beam-slots diminished in the north of the excavated area. Previous trial-trenching (Jones 1999b) established that the natural subsoil had been scoured-down by modern landscaping in the north of Area 20.

The preservation of archaeological features and deposits reflected the floor level of the demolished 'Blue Box' building. The floor level in the northeastern corner of the demolished building approximated to the surrounding ground level, and here archaeological survival was limited. In contrast, in the southeastern angle of the former building the floor level was raised over 0.7m above the surrounding ground

level, and the survival of archaeological features and deposits was correspondingly good. The northwestern corner of the former building could not be excavated because it adjoined a live high voltage electricity cable. Within the excavated area there were a line of disturbances relating to pits dug to retain columns within the demolished building.

4.3: Assessments

4.3.1: Armour fragment by Dr Roger White

This elegant S-shaped copper alloy casting is one half of a double hook that was used to join the shoulder pieces of a chain mail shirt (*lorica hamata*). The object will require x-ray, and conservation. A brief report will be produced for publication. Few items of military apparel have been recovered from the site.

4.3.2: Copper alloy objects by Erica Macey-Bracken

Non-pottery finds from the site included fired clay, slag, glass, tile, charcoal, iron, copper alloy and stone. The assemblage was fragmentary, with many items showing signs of abrasion, which was particularly obvious with the fired clay finds.

Fired clay comprised the largest part of the assemblage, with 143 pieces weighing 2092g being recovered. An initial rapid scan of the material suggested that no pieces of kiln or oven furniture were present, but a closer inspection of the material may reveal diagnostic fragments.

Metal finds included 18 iron nails and six unidentified pieces of iron, which will require an x-ray to see whether identification is possible. Two copper alloy items were also recovered; a key and an armour junction (White above).

Four pieces of glass were also recovered from the site. The most identifiable piece was a fragment of a blue-green folded rim; of the type commonly found on 1st–2nd century jugs and bottles (Price and Cottam 1998, 22–23). The remainder of the glass assemblage consisted of a fragment of glass slag and a small undiagnostic chip of dark green glass.

A brief summary and catalogue of the copper alloy, and glass finds will be prepared, together with a catalogue and summary of any significant iron objects revealed by x-ray.

4.3.2: Pottery by C Jane Evans

The Roman pottery was all hand collected, rapidly-scanned, spot-dated and quantified by count and weight (g). A total of 331 sherds weighing approximately 7.6kg was found, recovered from 51 contexts (Table 3). Most contexts produced only handfuls of pottery, the largest groups coming from layers 4081 (fills 4078 and 4079), 4100 (4097) and 4198 (4195).

Condition, range and variety

Most of the pottery was very fragmentary and badly abraded, though the assemblage included a number of substantial fragments of amphorae. Excluding amphorae, the average sherd weight was 7g, while the average sherd weight for amphorae was 22g.

The bulk of the pottery comprised coarsewares (Table 4), produced locally or at other regional centres. Fabrics included a range of reduced and oxidised sandy wares, organic tempered Severn Valley ware, and a single sherd of handmade Malvernian ware. One sherd in a more unusual, highly micaceous fabric was noted, which may require petrological analysis. A single mortarium fragment was recovered, probably locally produced. Imported wares included the amphorae, mainly Dressel 20, South Gaulish samian, and a single sherd of Lyon colour coated ware.

The assemblage included nine rims, coarseware forms comprising jars, bowls and a lid.

Table 3: Summary of pottery by class

<i>Pottery class</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>% Qty</i>
Coarsewares	234	71
Samian	19	6
Mortaria	1	<1
Amphora	77	23

Dating

The samian, amphorae and mortaria will provide the best dating evidence for the assemblage, once analysed by the appropriate specialists. The samian was, however, very fragmentary and no stamps or decorated sherds were present. The amphorae included a rim (layer 4001), of a type dated to the mid 1st century (Peacock and Williams 1986, fig. 65. 8, 9), and a handle 4198 (fill 4195), which may provide additional dating. Feature 4004 (fill 4003) produced a highly abraded base from a Lyon colour coated ware cup or beaker. This ware was widely distributed between c AD 40-70, and in Britain is predominantly found on pre-Flavian sites (Tyers 1996, 150). The coarseware forms were not closely datable, but are similar to vessels found elsewhere at Metchley (eg Green *et al* 2001). They are consistent with a pre-Flavian date. A pre-Flavian date is also supported by the absence of Flavian-Trajanic rusticated jars, found elsewhere at Metchley. Spot dating for individual contexts is not provided as all are consistent with this date range.

Statement of potential

This assemblage, coming from the right side of the central range, including parts of the *principia* and the *praetorium*, a more high status area of the fort, will provide further useful data with which to assess patterns of pottery use and deposition at Metchley fort and *vicus*. Along with analysis of the other finds, this will enhance understanding of both the chronological development of the site, and the way in which areas of the site were used. Publication will add to the growing corpus of accessible data for Metchley which, because of the importance of this Roman site, will contribute to regional and national studies.

It is recommended that the Romano-British assemblage is fully analysed and a report produced for publication. Specialist reports should be commissioned for amphorae, samian and mortaria. The pottery will need to be recorded in detail using the Birmingham Archaeology pottery recording system, and the Metchley fabric and form type series housed at Birmingham Archaeology. Approximately nine diagnostic sherds will require illustration.

Storage and curation

The pottery will remain stable through time and poses no long-term storage problems.

TABLE 4: Summary of the pottery by context

<i>Konstruk- cut/ Context</i>	<i>Ox</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Malv</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Mortaria</i>	<i>Samian</i>	<i>Amphora</i>	<i>Total</i>
-/4000	2								2
-/4001						1	2	3	6
4004/4003	1				1			9	11
4004/4003	2	1							3
B22/4005	2						1	3	6
4014/4013	7	3		1			1	2	14
4014/4013		3							3
B5/4021	1								1
B14/4025	1								1
-/4027	1							10	11
4033/4030	5	1					1	1	8
4033/4032	4								4
B5/4036		1							1
4041/4039		6					2		8
4041/4040	6	2							8
B5/4056	5	1						1	7
B9/4058	2	1		1					4
B5/4060	1								1
B14/4075		1							1
B14/4075								7	7
4081/4078	9	11					1	8	29
4081/4079	16	3	1					6	26
B9/4084	1								1
4094/4093	4								4
4100/4097	18	4		1			5	4	32
4100/4099		2		1					3
B8/4101	9								9
B8/4111	1								1
4125/4126	1							3	4

4125/4127	1								1
B12/4131	2	4						2	8
B11/4135	3	2						3	8
B5/4144	2								2
-/4146								6	6
-/4148								1	1
B7/4155						1		0	1
B1/4167	9								9
B1/4171				3					3
4172/4173		2							2
B6/4184	1								1
B6/4184	2								2
B24/4191						1		0	1
B25/4192				1		1			2
4198/4195	24					2		8	34
B6/4202	3								3
B6/4204						1			1
B5/4213	5								5
B6/4230	3								3
B2/4246	3								3
B11/4259	18			1					19
Total	175	48	1	9	1	1	19	77	331

4.3.3: Charred plant remains by James Greig

Summary

Most of the samples consisted of charcoal only, but nine (406, 407, 408, 417, 424, 426, 428, 441 and 446) also had some charred cereals or weed seeds which would merit further investigation.

Samples

The samples had already been processed to float off the lighter material such as charcoal, and the non-floating residues were also assessed.

Laboratory work

Plant macrofossils

A sample (or in some cases several) from each of the flots of about 10 ml each, to cover the petri dish which was used to spread out the material, was examined under a stereo microscope for significant remains, such as charred rain and weed seeds. The residues were mostly examined by eye, and the main contents noted. The results are given in Table 5 below

Results

The results of this assessment are listed in Table 5, below. Most of the samples consisted of charcoal, and those with larger lumps that could be useful for identification have been noted. The flots were usually around 200 ml; ones much larger or smaller have been noted.

Nine samples (406, 407, 408, 417, 424, 426, 428, 441 and 446) also had some charred cereals or weed seeds which could merit further investigation. These are given in bold print in Table 5.

The material appears to have resulted from the burning of wood, probably for heating and cooking, and the occasional remains of burnt bone and charred grain could be from domestic waste.

TABLE 5: Charred plant remains assessment

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Konstruk/cut</i>	<i>Layer</i>	<i>Details</i>
400	4004	4003	230 ml charcoal
"	4004	4003	Residue; burnt clay, iron, stone
401	4004	4005	Charcoal
402	4011	4010	Charcoal
"	4011	4010	Charcoal, stone
403	4014	4013	earthy charcoal, 1 wheat
"	4014	4013	Residue; burnt clay, burnt bone fragment
404	B2/ 4024	4023	Charcoal; 2 wheat, burnt bone
"	B2/ 4024	4023	burnt clay, stone, lumps perhaps iron corrosion
405	B14/ 4025	4025	large flot; charcoal
"	B14/ 4025	4025	Residue; burnt clay, potsherd, stone
406	-	4027	Charcoal, wheat, vetch
"	-	4027	Residue; burnt clay
407	B5/ 4037	4036	large flot; charcoal, 1 <i>Triticum</i> (wheat)
"	B5/ 4037	4036	Residue; burnt clay, burnt bone
408	4033	4030	220 ml flot, charcoal incl. large pieces, 3 <i>Hordeum</i> (barley)
"	4033	4030	Residue; burnt bone, burnt clay
409	4033	4032	large flot; charcoal
"	4033	4032	Residue; charcoal, ? iron corrosion
"	4033	4032	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, iron corrosion
410	4035	4034	Charcoal, 1 frg <i>Corylus</i> hazel nutshell
"	4035	4034	burnt clay, potsherd, stone
"	4035	4034	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, iron corrosion
411	B10/ 4049	4048	Charcoal
412	4041	4040	Charcoal; including large pieces
"	4041	4040	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, burnt bone, corroded iron
"	4041	4040	Residue; burnt clay, burnt bone, iron corrosion, charcoal
413	4041	4039	Charcoal; fragments of charred <i>Crataegus</i> (hawthorn) berry
"	4041	4039	Residue; burnt clay, potsherd, ? iron corrosion
414	4081	4078	Charcoal
"	4081	4078	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, iron corrosion
415	4081	4079	Charcoal, incl large pieces
"	4081	4079	Residue; burnt clay, potsherd, stone, charcoal, burnt bone
"	4081	4079	Residue; potsherd, charcoal
416	B13/ 4083	4082	Charcoal, 1 fragment of coal
"	B13/ 4083	4082	Residue; burnt bone, corroded iron, stony material
417	4041	4069	fine charcoal; <i>Vicia</i>, <i>Rumex</i> (3 samples)
417	4041	4069	two further samples, with lumps of burnt clay and charcoal
418	4041	4072	large charcoal
"	4041	4072	Residue; charcoal and burnt clay
419	B14/ 4076	4075	Charcoal
"	B14/ 4076	4075	Residue; potsherd
420	B9/ 4085	4084	Charcoal, including large pieces
421	B9/ -	4090	Charcoal
422	4094	4093	Charcoal
"	4094	4093	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal
423	B8/ 4102	4101	Charcoal
"	B8/ 4102	4101	Residue; potsherd, stony material
424	4125	4126	large flot, charcoal a few <i>Hordeum</i> (barley)
"	4125	4126	burnt clay, stone
425	4125	4128	very large flot ca 1000 ml, nothing seen in 3 x 10 ml
"	4125	4128	stony material, fragments of burnt bone
426	B12/ 4130	4131	Charcoal; wheat and barley
"	B12/ 4130	4131	Residue, gravel
427	4100	4097	large flot, charcoal a few <i>Hordeum</i> barley and <i>Vicia</i> (vetch)
"	4100	4097	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, corroded iron

Sample	Konstruk/cut	Layer	Details
428	4100	4099	large flot; charcoal, 1 wheat
"	4100	4099	Residue; charcoal, stones
429	4110	4109	-
430	B8/ 4140	4139	Charcoal
431	B2/ 4065	4064	Charcoal, coal fragment
"	B2/ 4065	4064	Residue; burnt clay, potsherd
432	B11/ 4136	4135	Charcoal
"	B11/ 4136	4135	Residue; potsherd, stony material
433	-	4146	Charcoal; coal fragment
"	-	4146	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal, potsherd
434	4165	4160	Charcoal, some ? modern plant parts
435	4165	4161	very small flot; a little charcoal
436	4165	4163	Charcoal
"	4165	4163	Residue; burnt clay, stone
437	4159	4156	large flot, charcoal
"	4159	4156	Residue; charcoal, 1 potsherd
438	4159	4158	Charcoal, large pieces; bone fragment
"	4159	4158	Residue; charcoal
439	B1/ 4170	4171	Charcoal, coal, slaggy material
"	B1/ 4170	4171	Residue: potsherd, stony material
440	B9/ 4177	4176	Charcoal, a few possible weed seeds
"	B9/ 4177	4176	Residue; stony material
441	B24/ 4189	4192	Smallish flot; charcoal, 3 wheat 1 barley
"	B24/ 4189	4192	Residue; iron corrosion, potsherd, charcoal
442	4198	4195	140 ml flot, charcoal
442	4198	4195	? flot, small amount charcoal
"	4198	4195	Residue; charcoal, burnt bone
442A	4165	4163	small flot, 10 ml; charcoal
"	4165	4163	small amount charcoal
443	4188	4200	Charcoal
"	4188	4200	Residue; burnt clay
444	B6/ 4229	4230	Charcoal; 3 ? cereals, 1 uncharred wild raspberry, probably modern
"	B6/ 4229	4230	2 residues; potsherd, charcoal
445	B4/ 4245	4244	small flot, a few scraps of charcoal and some modern plant remains such as catkins and bud scales
446	4165	4163	small flot; fine stems, perhaps of grasses, seeds of grasses and <i>Chenopodium</i> , 1 wheat. Very different from the other samples
"	4165	4163	Residue; burnt clay, charcoal
447	B19/ 4292	4291	small flot; charcoal sand and stones
"	B19/ 4292	4291	Residue; pieces of charcoal
448	B21/ 4296	4295	small flot; charcoal sand and stones; 1 wheat
"	B21/ 4296	4295	Residue; charcoal
449	B20/ 4018	4017	roots, probably modern, charcoal, 1 wheat
"	B20/ 4018	4017	burnt clay
"	B20/ 4018	4017	Residue; burnt clay, corroded iron

5.0: UPDATED PROJECT DESIGN

5.1: General

The following research themes may be highlighted:

- 1) Pre-formal fort layout pits. At least three, possibly as many as five pits may be attributed to Phase 1A, which pre-dates the formal layout of the fort (Phase 1B). These features include part of one side of a building, Structure 5. These features

could be associated with a construction camp or other very early Roman military occupation of the Metchley site. Other internal features, notably in Areas 12 (Jones in preparation a) and Area 14 (Jones in preparation b) similarly pre-dated the formal fort layout. An alternative interpretation is that the Phase 1A features represented the first formal military layout, in which case the Phase 1B features would define a re-arrangement of the internal buildings, possibly during later Phase 1B, when the garrison was being reduced in number, changed in composition, or both. It is also possible that the Phase 1A features could represent a construction phase of activity at a time when other parts of the fort were complete. The dating evidence is not sufficiently precise to resolve this question. Further parallels for this early activity, from earlier excavations at Metchley (eg Areas 3-4, directed by Rowley, Jones 2001), and from other Roman military complexes.

- 2) Layout of right side of central range. Area 20 is one of two recent excavations within the central range, and the only excavation within its right side. Although no complete ground-plans of buildings were recovered it is important to compare the evidence from Area 20 with other excavations within the central ranges of 1st century AD forts, to compare and contrast the layouts. Parallels should be sought for the partly-excavated *praetorium*, to provide an understanding of the possible use of the excavated part of the building, and the comparative evidence.
- 3) Overall fort layout. The Area 20 excavation has placed parts of the *principia* and *praetorium* within the fort interior, contributing towards an understanding of the overall layout of the fort in both Phases 1B and the Phase 2B military stores depot. The Metchley evidence should be considered in relation to the contemporary sites.
- 4) Process of transition between late Phase 1B/2A fort and Phase 2B military stores depot. Apparent similarities have been noted between the ground-plans of the pre-Phase 2B layouts and the Phase 2B buildings in Area 20 as well as elsewhere in the fort interior (eg Areas 3-4, Jones 2001, 44-48). It has been suggested that the process of dismantling of the early buildings was part of the same operation as the layout of the Phase 2B structures. The evidence from Area 20 needs detailed consideration to answer this question. It is also possible that Structure 1 (Phase 1B) and Structure 3 (Phase 2B) could at least in part be contemporary.
- 5) Layout of the Phase 2B fort. The Area 20 has provided further details of the layout of the Phase 2B military stores depot. This evidence should be considered in detail to contribute towards an understanding of the overall contemporary layout, and the functions of the structures found in Area 20.
- 6) Dating evidence. Although the pottery assemblage is small overall, the majority derives from well-stratified contexts and could help to date the overall sequence. This assemblage, in particular the samian pottery, should be studied in detail to clarify the phasing chronology.
- 7) Central range pottery assemblages. Although the group of Area 20 pottery is small, it should be compared from other central range pottery groups from Metchley (Area 18, left side of central range), and with other groups of pottery

from the *retentura* and *praetentura*, to elucidate any differences, particularly in status and forms present.

8) Central range charred plant remains. A total of 49 samples were assessed by Greig (above). These samples provide the opportunity for comparison with the charred plant remains from other parts of the fort interior, in particular those from the extensive 2005 excavations in the fort interior (Area 18).

5.2: Updated project design

The project design can be re-focussed to the following themes:

- 1) The evidence for, and interpretation of, the pre-Phase 1B layout features.
- 2) Details of the layout of the left side of the central range.
- 3) Contribution towards an understanding of the overall fort layout.
- 4) Further analysis of the process of transition between Phases 1B and 2B.
- 5) Further appreciation of the Phase 2B military stores depot overall layout.
- 6) Further refinement of the dating sequence.
- 7) Study of the pottery from Area 20 in comparison with assemblages from other parts of the fort interior.
- 8) Comparison of the charred plant remains from Area 20 with those from the remainder of the fort interior.

6.0: PUBLICATION SYNOPSIS

It is proposed to publish the results of the excavation as part of a monograph, probably in the *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*.

The provisional title of the monograph will be:

Roman Birmingham 5, Metchley Roman fort, excavations within the fort interior, 2003 and 2005, and synthesis and conclusion of all excavations (1963-2005)

The monograph will be in three parts:

Part 1, relating to excavations in the *praetentura*, 2003 (Area 12/12a: draft now complete)

Part 2, relating to excavations in the central range, 2005 (Area 20), and

Part 3, synthesis and overview of all excavations at Metchley Roman fort, from 1963-2005

The layout of the text and the lengths of the individual contributions relating to the Area 14 (July-August 2004 excavation) only will be as follows:

Text

Summary (1,000 words)

Introduction and methodology, the site, phasing and context (1,500 words)

Results (8,000 words)

Description and interpretation of the evidence by phase

Finds

Copper alloy, iron, stone, glass objects (500 words)

The pottery, coarse and fine wares (5,000 words)

Environmental evidence

Charcoal identification (1,500 words)

Charred plant remains (1,500 words)

Discussion (6,000 words)

Integrated discussion of the Area 14 excavation results

Conclusion (500 words)

Appendix: Roman pottery fabric series

TOTAL 25,500 words

Illustrations

- 1 Location of area investigated
- 2 Metchley forts phasing
- 3 Archaeological investigations 1999-2001 and 2004: areas investigated
- 4 Simplified plan of Phase 1A features
- 5 Phase 1A sections
- 6 Simplified plan of Phase 1B features
- 7 Phase 1B sections
- 8 Simplified plan of Phase 2B features
- 9 Detailed plan of Phase 2B features
- 10 Phase 2B sections
- 11 Small finds
- 12 Pottery

10 plates and 12 tables

TOTAL, APPROX. 38 PAGES

An overview of the evidence from Area 20 and other fort excavations will be published separately to the Area 20 site report.

7.0: TASK LIST

The task numbers below give the initials of the individual responsible for the completion of the task, and the number of days allotted.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Initials</i>	<i>No. of days</i>
1	Stratigraphic analysis	AEJ	0.5
2	Project management	AEJ	0.5

3	Coarse ware pottery recording	CJE	2
4	Samian spot-dating/report	FW	-
5	Amphora spot-dating/report	DW	-
6	Mortaria spot-dating/report	KH	-
7	Small finds: copper alloy objects	EM	0.5
8	Small finds: armour fragment	RW	0.5
9	Charcoal identification and report	RG	-
10	Charred plant remains report	JG	-
11	Coarse ware pottery report	CJE	3
12	Project management	AEJ	1
13	Draft section roughouts	AEJ	1
14	Sections/small finds/ pottery drawings	ND	3
15	Write revised narrative/discussion	AEJ	1
16	Edit/integrate specialist texts	AEJ	1
17	Correct drawings	ND	0.5
18	Edit	Editor	1
19	Liaison with Bham Warws AS	AEJ	1
20	Prepare/deposit archive	-	-

Completion date: 30 March 2006 for first draft

KEY:

AEJ = Alex Jones, author/editor/project manager; CJE = C Jane Evans pottery specialist; FW = Felicity Wild; DW = David Williams, amphora; KH = Kay Hartley, mortaria; EM = Erica Macey, small finds; RW = Roger White, armour fragment report author; RG = Rowena Gale, charcoal identification; JG = James Greig, charred plant remains; ND = Nigel Dodds, illustrator.

8.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was sponsored by the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust, and we are particularly grateful to Alf Towers of the Trust for his assistance. The fieldwork was monitored by Dr. Mike Hodder for Birmingham City Council. The excavation was supervised by Bob Burrows. Finds processing was supervised by Erica Macey. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

9.0: REFERENCES

Birmingham Archaeology 2005 *Written Scheme of Investigation, Excavation at the Blue Box Building.*

Green, S, Dickinson, B, Evans, J, Hancocks, A, Hartley, B, Hartley, K, Pengelly, H and Williams, D, 2001 Pottery (Areas 1-6) in Jones, A E, 2001, 90-7.

Hartley, K, 2001 'Mortaria (Areas 2-4)', in Jones, A E, 2001, 98-101.

Johnson, A, 1983 *Roman Forts*, Batsford.

Jones, A E, 1999a *University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust, Archaeological Assessment 1999, Metchley Roman forts*, BUFAU report no 617.04.

Jones, A E, 199b University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust, Archaeological Evaluation 1999, Areas A-B, BUFAU report no 617.02.

Jones, A E, 2001 Roman Birmingham 1, Metchley Roman Forts, Excavations 1963-4, 1967-9 and 1997, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 105.

Jones, A E, 2005 Roman Birmingham 2, Metchley Roman Forts, Excavations 1998-9 and 2002, The Annexes and Other Investigations, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*.

Jones, A E, in preparation a Excavations in *Praetentura*, Metchley Roman Forts, 2003, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*.

Jones, A E, in preparation b The western defences and western extra-mural activity, in Roman Birmingham 3, Excavations at Metchley Roman forts 1999-2001 and 2004, *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*.

Peacock, D P S, and Williams D F, 1986 *Amphorae and the Roman Economy: an Introductory Guide*, Longman Archaeology Series.

Tyers, P, 1996 *Roman pottery in Britain*, Batsford.

Peacock, D P S, and Williams D F, 1986 *Amphorae and the Roman Economy: an Introductory Guide*, Longman Archaeology Series.

St Joseph, J K, and Shotton, F W, 1937 'The Roman camps at Metchley, Birmingham', *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, 58, 68-83.