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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF A ROMAN VILLA AT WOOTTON FIELDS, NORTHAMPTON JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999 ASSESSMENT REPORT AND UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN

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SCHEDULE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

A previously unknown Roman villa was located during monitoring of groundworks on a new housing development. The exposed building remains were cleaned and planned before they were backfilled for long-term preservation. An adjacent area containing cut features of both Iron Age and Roman date was excavated prior to road construction.

A roundhouse ring gully and a scatter of pits are dated from the mid-first century BC to the mid-first century AD. They suggest that there may have been continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age.

The main villa building was probably a simple strip building with front and rear corridors. A room at the northern end contained a channelled hypocaust and had been decorated with painted wall plaster. At the opposite end a pillared hypocaust had supported the opus signinum floor of a hot room, but the remainder of this small bath suite was not exposed. The pottery and coins spanned the later first to fourth centuries, but second and third century material predominated. The size of the building and the paucity of domestic and personal items suggests that the villa was not of exceptionally high status.

Geophysical survey and limited excavation demonstrated that the main building stood within a 70m square ditched enclosure with a number of phases of recutting; the earliest including a timber palisade. A series of hearths and ovens/furnaces to the immediate north of the villa represent a final phase of industrial usage following the abandonment of at least parts of the main building. Some inhumation burials of uncertain date were recovered to both the north and west of the main building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Wootton Fields development

A block of farm land to the immediate east of the village of Wootton, Northampton, and lying to the south of the town, had planning permission for a housing development by David Wilson Homes Ltd (NGR SP 766 563, Fig 1). This was one of a series of housing developments that are progressively infilling a substantial block of land lying to the south and east of Wootton and bounded to the south-west by the M1 motorway. Other Iron Age and Roman sites are known within this area and several have been subject to archaeological investigation during 1999 by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in advance of a housing development at Courtenhall, Northampton.

1.2 The circumstances of the excavation

Construction work at Wootton Fields began in January 1999 with a provision for intermittent archaeological monitoring.

The field containing the Roman villa was a 18.5ha pasture field (OS No.6524) immediately east of the village and north of the Quinton Road (Fig 1). The initial site works involved the construction of a haul road for the transport of quarried clay from the northern to the southern end of the development area. Dennis Jackson monitored this work on behalf of Northamptonshire Heritage, under the volunteer network scheme. In late January 1999 the exposed remains of stone walls, along with a scatter of Roman building material and pottery, was observed following the removal of topsoil along part of the haul road.

The initial archaeological requirement was for emergency cleaning and recording of the exposed remains to determine more fully the nature and extent of the building. Monitoring of further topsoil stripping was carried out by Dennis Jackson and staff from Northamptonshire Heritage, while some initial cleaning was carried out by Roy Friendship-Taylor, the excavator of the nearby Piddington Roman villa.

At the same time, work was also under way further to the north on topsoil stripping along the line of the main estate road. This was to run closely to the west of the haul road and so was liable to expose further archaeological deposits. As a result, Northamptonshire Archaeology was initially asked to undertake the role of coordinating the cleaning of the remains exposed on the haul road and the salvage excavation of any associated remains along the line of the estate road.

The initial work by Northamptonshire Archaeology was funded by the County Council, while the later process of recording, geophysical survey, further salvage excavation and the preparation of the assessment report has been funded by English Heritage. All work was carried out with the cooperation of the developer, David Wilson Homes Ltd, and the contractors working on their behalf, who supplied heavy plant for soil removal.

The exposed remains were cleaned over the weekend of 30-31 January 1999 by a team of volunteers recruited at short notice by Northamptonshire Heritage, as detailed below in the acknowledgements (Plate 1). Further cleaning and recording was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Plates 2 & 3), together with the monitoring of the covering and backfilling of the exposed building in the haul road area.

At the time of writing, there is an agreement in principal that the area encompassing the part of the villa precinct to the east of the estate road will be preserved as an open space within the housing development. A smaller part of the villa precinct lies to the west of the estate road and Northamptonshire Heritage are in discussion with the developer as to the appropriate response to the archaeology in this area.

1.3 Topography and geology

The site lies on the southern slope of an east-west ridge that reaches 100-110m aOD. The ridge is straddled by the present village, with the valley of the River Nene to the north (Fig 1). The villa lies at 86m and 87m aOD on the south-east facing slope of a small but deeply incised valley containing a short tributary stream which runs south-west into Wootton Brook. The brook feeds into the River Nene to the north-west.

The underlying geology comprises Northampton Sand on the higher ground with Upper Lias Clays on the lower lying ground to the south and east (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England & Wales), Solid and Drift, Sheet 202, 1969). In excavation the villa was seen to sit on Northampton Sand comprising shattered small ironstone pieces in a matrix of red brown sand. There was an area of tenacious yellow clays to the immediate south of the villa precinct.

1.4 The archaeological background

At the time of development the field containing the villa was under pasture, and the well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks of the former medieval field system indicate that there had been little or no ploughing of this field for several centuries. It is probably for this reason that there had been no chance recoveries of surface finds. Nothing was noted during fieldwalking in the early 1970s by David Hall while preparaing the Wootton Parish Survey, although two new Romano-British sites, including a villa, were found elsewhere in the parish (Hall 1976).

However, a nearby site was located in 1966 by Dennis Jackson during a watching brief along the course of a major gas pipe line which runs to the south of the villa. He noted the presence of burnt stone, roofing tiles and ditches together with Roman pottery and a coin of Constantius II, 356-61AD (BNFAS 1966, 14; BNFAS 1971, 19 and RCHME 1985, fiche 424, Wootton Site 6). The site location was given as SP 766562, placing it within 50m of the villa precinct, but comparison to the mapped location of the gas pipe suggests that a location at SP 766561 would be more appropriate.

In 1988, as part of the initial preparation of a scheme for development of this land, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit to test for the presence of Roman buildings in this vicinity (Cadman 1988). Six trenches were excavated, with a total length of 155m. In five trenches there were no archaeological features, but the sixth contained a series of ditches that produced a small assemblage finds including tegulae, imbrex and possibly box flue tile, and pottery ranging in date from later 1st to the 4th century AD (Fig 3, trench 6). It was concluded that this material was most likely to come from a Roman building lying on the Northampton Sands geology to the north, where the villa was eventually found, but it was not possible to test this hypothesis at the time.

1.5 The archaeological context

The villa at Wootton fields had extensive views to the east across the adjacent stream valley and beyond this to the lower lying ground along the valley containing Wootton Brook. Two other major Roman sites overlook this valley to the immediate south-east, and another lies to the north-west.

A Roman settlement to the south of the village of Quinton lies at the head of the next tributary stream to the east, 3km from Wootton Fields villa. It was partially excavated in the 1970s and produced evidence for two main periods of occupation (Friendship-Taylor 1974 and 1979). The first period was dated to between the mid-first and the late-second centuries AD, and comprised `Belgic' roundhouses superseded by rectangular stone buildings. Following an apparent century of desertion, there was further occupation, represented by a well and a circular stone building, from the late third century and probably continuing into the fifth century AD.

Piddington Roman villa lies 5km to the south-east of Wootton Fields villa, on high ground between tributary streams on the southern flank of Wootton Brook; it has been extensively excavated over the past two decades or more by the Upper Nene Archaeological Society (Friendship-Taylor 1989, CA 1996). A late Iron Age settlement preceded the first stone structure, a simple strip building constructed in the later 1st century AD. A separate wing was added, and by the end of the 2nd century the two ranges had been

linked to form a true winged corridor villa. There were further modifications through the 3rd century, but in the 4th century there was a decline and much of the building fell out of use, being reduced to a largely derelict squat in the later 4th century.

There was also a second Roman villa within the parish of Wootton, it lay at the western end of this elongated parish, 3.5km north-west of Wootton Fields villa and to the south-west of Hunsbury Iron Age hillfort, overlooking the Wootton Brook near its confluence with the River Nene. The site was partially

excavated between 1973 and 1981 by the Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit but the results have not been fully published (RCHME 1985, 39, plate 3 and fiche fig 38).

Several other minor sites of Roman date are also known along the valley of Wootton Brook, largely from finds of Roman material recovered either by chance or during fieldwalking. Of particular interest is a hoard of 634 coins in a pot found in a stone pit in 1842. The coins range in date from Gallienus (253-68AD) to Numerianus (283-4AD). The find spot was at c SP 758562, placing it on the north bank of Wootton Brook immediately east of the A508 road and some 800m west of the villa.

Finally, as already mentioned, other nearby Iron Age and Roman sites have been subject to archaeological investigation during 1999 by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in advance of a housing development at Courtenhall, Northampton.

1.6 Acknowledgements

The initial weekend of cleaning was carried out by a volunteer work force that included a majority of the individuals and groups that have been active in archaeology in Northamptonshire over recent decades. It was therefore a unique event in which all sections of the archaeological community played a significant part and worked together to achieve a common aim.

Particular thanks are due to the site developer, David Wilson Homes Ltd, for agreeing to a disruption in their work schedule to provide time for the completion of the cleaning and recording. The representatives of the on-site contractors were always of assistance, particularly Alan Hames, the Resident Engineer, of Bradgate Development Services Ltd, and Victoria McKeown, the Site Agent for Bowmer and Kirkland. The assistance provided included the re-routing of a lorry haul road, the provision of earth moving machinery for both the excavation and also for the later reburial of the villa remains, and for the moving of the large, displaced floor slabs from the bath suite.

Within the County Council, Northamptonshire Heritage in its role as curator was responsible both for the discovery and for negotiating with the developer to provide time to carry out the investigation. Northamptonshire Archaeology, as the local contracting organisation, provided tools and equipment, and a team to supervise the initial cleaning and recording.

The work force on the initial weekend included some other professional archaeologists, but was largely made up of local independent and amateur archaeologists. Individual thanks are due to Sandy Kidd and Glenn Foard of Northamptonshire Heritage for initiating the whole operation, and to Greg Phillips for his help on site in the first few days. Particular thanks are due to Roy Friendship Taylor and the other members of the Upper Nene Archaeological Society, and to those who came all the way from St. Albans. In addition, the help and advice provided by David Neal was particularly welcome. Other local archaeologists who assisted included Charmian and Paul Woodfield, and Gill Johnson. Martin Tingle helped both during the initial weekend and through the subsequent week of recording and excavation.

Dennis Jackson, who had been responsible for the initial discovery, assisted with the excavation of the Iron Age features, and has provided the report on the Iron Age pottery. Michael Webster and Alex Thorne of Northamptonshire Archaeology worked as volunteers on the initial weekend.

English Heritage must also be thanked for responding rapidly in providing financial support to Northamptonshire Archaeology for the site recording, geophysical survey and sample excavation, and for the preparation of the site archive and an assessment report.

2 THE EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE VILLA

2.1 Aims and objectives

Following the work conducted over the initial weekend a series of objectives were defined to provide a minimum record of the exposed archaeology and a broader context for the villa, and to inform discussions with interested parties in relation to the longer term future of these remains.

Given the nature of the discovery of the villa and the need for a rapid response, a formal brief was not prepared by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO), but the objectives, as stated below, were prepared in consultation with the CAO. To fulfil these objectives Northamptonshire Archaeology applied to English Heritage for archaeology grant funding.

The objectives, as stated in the grant application, were as follows:

1) Recording of exposed archaeological remains

   To compile a drawn plan of the remains exposed within the haul road, with additional cleaning to define areas of stratigraphic complexity or areas not initially cleaned. In addition, to carry out limited sample excavation of the flue and stoke hole area of the channelled hypocaust, and a nearby stone-lined drain, to recover stratified dating evidence.

2) Recording and sample excavation of the estate road service area

   The supervision of machine stripping of an additional 3.5m wide strip along the estate road corridor area, adjacent to the area excavated on the initial weekend, followed by recording and sampling of any exposed Roman and Iron Age features.

3) Geophysical survey of the villa environs

   To carry out detailed geophysical survey, using both resistivity and magnetometer techniques, to establish the extent of the villa and, if possible, the Iron Age activity, with geophysical scanning beyond this to determine the presence of any outlying structures.

4) Post-excavation consolidation and assessment

   The consolidation of the archaeological archive and the preparation of an assessment report in line with the recommendations of MAP2.

2.2 Geophysical Survey Peter Masters

2.2.1 Introduction

Detailed geophysical survey, using both magnetometer and resistivity techniques, was carried out in order to define the extent of the archaeological features directly associated with the Roman villa and the Iron Age occupation.

By the commencement of survey work the haul road and much of the estate road had already been stripped, and much of the area between them, and also areas to both the west and the east, was occupied by spoil heaps. The survey was therefore necessarily largely limited to areas to the west and east which had not been disturbed by construction work, although it was possible to extend the survey area partly across the construction zone at the northern end of the villa precinct (Fig 2). The area investigated spanned 185m east-west by 120m north-south.

2.2.2 Magnetometer survey

The magnetometer survey was carried out using two Geoscan Research FM36 Fluxgate Gradiometers. A total of 34 grids, each measuring 20m x 20m (total area 1.36ha), was surveyed in fields on either side of the haul and estate roads. Parallel traverses were made from south to north at walking pace, with individual readings taken at 0.25m intervals using a sample trigger for the rapid recording of data. The sensor alignment or balance was checked upon the completion of survey within each grid square and tilt error was maintained below +/-2nT per +/- 20 degree tilt.

2.2.3 Results

The data were analysed using the computer program Geoplot 2.01 and Geoplot for Windows (Beta v3.0). Low magnetism is represented as white and high magnetism as black in the resultant plot (Fig 2). The data were processed using zero mean functions to correct the unevenness of the plots in order to give a smoother graphical appearance. The data were also despiked, thereby reducing extreme readings sometimes caused by stray iron fragments and spurious effects due to the inherent magnetism of soils. Further numerical smoothing of the data was carried out using a low pass filter in order to reduce background noise levels and highlight features of archaeological significance.

The features located by the survey include the villa precinct ditch, a previously unknown pit alignment and a sparse scatter of curvilinear anomalies in the western area, and linear anomalies on the lower lying ground to the east. These will be described and discussed within the overall account of the archaeological evidence.

2.2.4 Resistivity survey

A Geoscan Research RM15 resistance meter with a Twin Electrode configuration in a mobile probe spacing of 0.5m was used to survey a total of 9 grids, each 10m x 20m (0.18 ha), with readings taken at 1m intervals. Zig-zag traverses were made from south to north and vice-versa at walking pace.

Resistivity survey was carried out on the narrow berms between the haul road and the spoil heaps, the areas immediately adjacent to the villa building, in order to detect further walls. The survey produced no significant results. The resultant plots are retained in archive.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

3.1 The Chronological Sequence

The excavation and survey work has identified three major periods of activity, as follows:

1) Iron Age settlement: (mid-1st century BC to mid-1st century AD)

A single pit containing scored ware attested to middle Iron Age occupation, but most of the evidence related to the late Iron Age. A roundhouse ring gully and associated lengths of minor ditch were later superseded by a group of shallow pits. This activity lay to the west of the main villa building, but a scatter of undated pits and a ditch to the immediate east of the villa suggest that the Iron Age activity probably continued beneath it. This occupation was potentially a direct precursor for the development of the villa.

In addition, geophysical survey located a probable pit alignment to the west of the excavated areas.

2) The Roman Villa: (late 1st century to 4th century AD)

A simple strip building was aligned north-south and stood within a near square, ditched enclosure. The ditch had been recut more than once and, in its earlier use, there was an internal timber palisade.

The building construction phases could not be resolved given the limited nature of the investigation. The extant structure comprised a strip building 29m long by 9m wide, with front and rear corridors given a total width 14.5m. A single room at the northern end of the range was provided with a channelled hypocaust, and it had been decorated with painted wall plaster. To the south of this there were probable remnants of cross walls indicating the presence of a further 3 rooms, but no floors or other internal features had survived.

Fragments of tufa and pieces of a broken-up *opus signinum* floor from the northern end of the site suggest that an early bath suite may have formed a northern wing. This was probably replaced by the southern bath suite, of which a single room, containing a pillared hypocaust, was located. An in-situ *opus signinum* floor had been removed from this room during the machine stripping of the topsoil and was recovered from the spoil heaps.

A series of hearths and ovens/furnaces lay to the immediate north of the building, and they appear to represent a final phase of industrial usage following the abandonment of at least parts of the main building, as evidenced by the presence of a small hearth in the northern room.

Some inhumation burials of uncertain date were recovered to both the north and west of the main building.

3) The medieval field system

There were well preserved earthworks of the ridge and furrow field system. The presence of a headland to the immediate north of the villa, and the absence of ridge and furrow directly over the building indicates that the field layout had respected its location. This may suggest that the building had still been at least partially standing during the use of the field system. It is therefore possible that through the medieval period it was a ruin that was periodically utilised as a convenient stone quarry, and this may account for most of the evident robbing of the walls.

3.2 The Iron Age Settlement

Features of Iron Age date were excavated along the line of the estate road to the west of the main villa building (Fig 4). Some pits to the east of the villa building, which were not excavated, may also be of the same date.

The earliest feature may be an isolated oval pit towards the southern end of the estate road (Fig 5,17). It was up to 1.35m in diameter by 0.30m deep. It contained most of the scored ware sherds recovered from the site, and this may suggest a middle Iron Age date for this feature.

To its north there was a broad curvilinear feature (19), c 3.0m wide, with an upper fill of stone-free, light brown sandy loam. A section was excavated to a depth of 0.30m, but at this level the water table was encountered and the feature was not bottomed. It is undated but seems most likely to have been a ditch of Iron Age date. It may be the same as a ditch further to the east that ran under, and terminated to the east of, the villa (Figs 4 and 6).

Soil stripping to natural along the estate road to the south of the villa precinct was observed, and no ditches crossed the line of the estate road. There is therefore no evidence to indicate that ditches 19 and 146 formed the northern arm of a large ditched enclosure.

The main focus of Iron Age activity comprised the eastern half of a roundhouse ring ditch, other associated ditches, and a scatter of pits, at least some of which post-dated the roundhouse (Fig 5). The roundhouse ditch was 0.25-0.45m deep, and had been recut once (5, 23, 9 and 10). It enclosed an area 10.60m in diameter, but no structural evidence for a building had survived. The 2.50m wide entrance causeway faced slightly south of east. The ditch terminal fill was grey and rich in comminuted charcoal and contained burnt cobbles, measuring 150-200mm, and some pottery. Pit 8 lay within the roundhouse, but might be contemporary with the later pits. It was sub-square in plan and vertical-sided, 0.70m diameter by 0.45m deep, and was filled with grey soils containing burnt cobbles. Lengths of shallow linear or curvilinear ditch lay to the south (11, 13/24 and 15), north (4) and east (28 and 25) of the roundhouse, and activity clearly continued beyond the eastern limit of excavation.

A small group of five circular pits (6, 7, 26, 27 and 38) represent a later phase of activity; they cut both the roundhouse ditch and the ditches to its north and east. They ranged from 1.0m to 2.1m in diameter and up to 0.40m deep. They were filled with brown loam containing little in the way of stone or other inclusions. Two were extensively excavated (7 and 26), and both produced good assemblages.

The roundhouse, the linear ditches and the pits are all dated to the late Iron Age by pottery assemblages containing globular bowls with burnished surfaces (see below). In addition, ditch 28 produced a single sherd of "belgic" wheel-thrown pottery, while a few further residual sherds came from later features. The Iron Age activity may therefore be dated to between the middle of the 1st century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD. Some of the features listed above did produce the odd sherd of Roman pottery from surface cleaning, but in all instances this seemed most likely to derive from later contamination.

The scatter of pits to the east of the villa were not excavated (Fig 6). They are therefore undated, but the lack of evident occupation debris in their exposed fills suggests an Iron Age date. A complete upper stone from a beehive quern was recovered from pit 145.

Further features of possible Iron Age date were located by geophysical survey. A curvilinear ditch cut by the northern arm of villa precinct ditch, and further similar ditches to the west of this, may relate to the

late Iron Age settlement (Figs 1 and 2). In addition, there is a probable pit alignment running south-west to north-east. The southern part, beyond the villa precinct, was very clearly defined, while its continuation within the precinct was less clear. The geophysical survey also suggests a possible continuation to the north beyond the villa precinct. No pits were observed on the exposed length of the estate road in this area, but they may have been missed in a patchy natural background of shattered ironstone and sands.

3.3 The Roman Villa

3.3.1 The villa enclosure

A combination of geophysical survey and excavation defined the ditch system forming the villa precinct. It was a near square, but slightly trapezoidal, enclosure measuring 67-80m N-S by 73m E-W (Figs 1-3). The ditch was seen in three places: at the northern and southern ends of the haul road, and at the southern end of the estate road. The machine stripping of the relevant area at the northern end of the estate road was not observed.

The ditch was partially excavated in a machine cut section at the southern end of the estate road, where it was cut through tenacious clay natural (Figs 5 and 7, and Plate 11). It was excavated to a depth of 1.0m, the level of the water table.

There was at least a three-phase sequence. The earliest ditch (Fig 7, 33) lay on the southern, outer, side and was in excess of 3.0m wide. The secondary and upper fills were brown to light grey brown clayey silts with few inclusions. There was a probable recut (also numbered 33) with a light grey brown secondary fill and a brown clayey upper fill. No finds, building or other occupation debris was present in these ditch fills.

The early ditches were probably broadly contemporary with a length of steep-sided, linear slot, up to 0.90m deep by 0.50m wide, filled with light brown clayey silt containing some pieces of limestone and ironstone (32). This slot may well have held a timber palisade set within the line of the contemporary ditch, but no evidence for the former presence of timbers was recovered in the short length excavated.

The palisade slot had been partly cut away by the final recut, a V-shaped ditch, 3.6m wide and probably c 1.5m deep (31). The secondary fill was a light grey brown clayey silt with few inclusions apart from the occasional fragment of ceramic tile, and this was overlain by a distinctive black layer comprising charcoal and burnt soils, evidently tipped from the inner edge of the ditch. Above this there was a brown clayey silt with gravel, and then a more substantial layer of blackened soils rich in comminuted charcoal, again tipped from the inner edge of the ditch. These layers of burnt debris may well have derived from the furnace room of the bath suite, which would have stood to the north-east.

The final fill was a dark grey clayey loam containing patchy deposits of mortar and quantities of building debris, particularly ceramic roof tile pieces and fragments of limestone and ironstone. This material probably came from the demolition of the villa. The south-eastern corner of the precinct ditch lay within the haul road, and here the exposed fills also contained quantities of building debris.

The northern arm of the ditch within the haul road was not excavated, but on the surface of the ironstone natural it appeared to comprise a ditch only 1.5m wide (Fig 4, 159). The exposed fill was a greyish brown sandy loam containing some ironstone chips and the occasional fragment of limestone, but no building debris. A second ditch lay 11.5m to the north, and this was 2.0-2.5m wide. It lay just beyond the northern

limit of the geophysical survey, and its extent was therefore not established. An inhumation burial (156) of unknown date had been inserted into the upper ditch fill.

3.3.2 The villa building

The walls

Virtually all of the standing walls had been levelled in antiquity, so what typically survived were either the wall foundations or the backfill of the robber trenches.

The principal lengths of wall foundation exposed comprised the main eastern wall of the villa (Fig 6, 118/149), the parallel outer wall of the eastern corridor (120), and a short length of the southern wall adjacent to Room 2. In addition, lengths of probable external boundary walls lay to the north-east of the main building (133 and 136).

The foundations of all these walls comprised slabs of mixed ironstone and limestone typically set transversely to the wall line and steeply pitched, although occasional squarer blocks had been flat laid. The outer stones were typically larger and more regularly laid than the core and, with the exception of the outer wall of the eastern corridor, they were set in a sandy mortar. Machine stripping for the haul road had frequently damaged the wall foundations when the machine bucket had occasionally caught and lifted pitched foundation stones, which had inevitably also lifted adjacent stones.

The single length of surviving standing wall lay on the western side of Room 1 (130 and Plate 4). The basal course was 0.93m wide and the second course was inset on the western side by 0.10m. It was faced in flat-laid, squared blocks of mixed ironstone and limestone, typically 200-400mm long and 100-120mm thick. The core was of irregular small fragments of ironstone and limestone, often steeply pitched, and bonded with a cream coloured lime mortar.

To the south of Room 1 and in the exposed part of the western corridor, the standing wall had been robbed. The robber trench fill was exposed but not excavated, although the foundations presumably still survived below this. The fill typically comprised small chips ironstone and limestone in a matrix containing decayed mortar. The limits were often poorly defined, and the definition of the original wall lines was particularly uncertain to the south of room 1.

The building plan

The villa appears to have comprised a simple strip building, aligned near north-south, but with front and rear corridors. There may originally have been a separate or abutting north range, probably a bath suite, while in a later arrangement a new bath suite probably formed an abutting southern wing aligned east-west. However, there is no doubt that much complexity of construction and development has not been seen as a result of the partial exposure of the building and the limited investigation of, in particular, the northern end of room 1 and the industrial area beyond this.

The core of the building comprised a single range 29.0m long by 9.0m wide (internal dimensions of 27.0m by 7.0m). Eastern and western corridors, each c 2.0m wide internally, increased the overall width to 14.5m, while the addition of the bath suite at the southern end gave an overall length of 33.5m.

The main range comprised a northern room (1), containing a channelled hypocaust, and possibly three further rooms; a narrow corridor (room 3), a slightly broader room (4), and an end room (5) perhaps 11m

long and associated with an eastern entrance porch attached to the adjacent corridor. At the southern end of the range there was a small room containing a pillared hypocaust that had supported an *opus signinum* floor (room 2). This hot room presumably formed the eastern end of a small bath suite, but the remainder was not exposed.

Room 1

This room was rectangular, c. 8.5m long by 6.8m wide. The wall at the northern end had been totally robbed, and was presumably more shallowly founded than the west wall, but its former location was defined by the stone-lined drain which had probably run along the outer wall face.

The room contained a channelled hypocaust system based on a central west-east flue with an opening through the western wall. It was well preserved across the south-western quarter of the room, and largely

lost to the north (Plates 5 and 6).

The hypocaust system was formed by a series of rectangular and triangular piers faced along the channels with up to four surviving courses of flat-laid medium fragments of roughly squared limestone and ironstone, and with fills comprising mixed soil, mortar and smaller fragments and pieces of ironstone and limestone. The main flue was 0.45m wide by 0.35m deep, and immediately inside the western wall the faces of the lining stones were discoloured red by intense heating. However, a box section to the west into the presumed stokehole reached natural without finding any trace of burnt debris, and it must be assumed that the stokehole deposits had been removed by later activity, possibly at the addition of the western corridor. The side flues were typically 0.25m wide by 0.20-0.25 deep.

During cleaning and in the limited excavation of the fill of the flues, fragments of painted wall plaster and fragments from an *opus signinum* floor 20mm thick, were recovered. No *tessarae* were recovered from this room or elsewhere on the site.

When the room fell into disuse the piers of the hypocaust system in the northern half of the room were at least partially removed and there was a layer of demolition debris comprising mixed mortar and small fragments of stone and ceramic tile. This material also partly concealed the stone-lined drain (Plate 4), indicating both that the northern wall of room 1 had been removed, and that the drain had fallen into disuse. Deposits relating to the final stage of industrial activity overlay this demolition layer, and are discussed below.

Rooms 3-5

Between rooms 1 and 2 it was difficult to determine the nature of the room arrangement. Any floor levels had been lost, and all that remained were ill-defined areas of mixed soils that represented the extent of both robbed walls and the fills of cut features. The most likely interpretation is that there had been three rooms in this area.

Room 3
This lay to the immediate south of room 1. At only c 1.5m wide internally it would have to have been either a corridor, presumably providing access between the front and rear corridors, or a narrow ante-chamber to room 1.

Room 4
This room would have been c 3.0m wide internally. A concentration of small fragments of ironstone

appeared to be within the fill of a narrow linear feature, 0.40 wide (124), running obliquely across the south-western corner of the room. This was perhaps a drain or the fill of an earlier gully.

Room 5
The southernmost room was either 11.0m long or evidence for a partition dividing it into two chambers had been totally lost. If a porch or flight of steps had been attached to the eastern corridor (see below), it may have formed the entrance hall and main public room of the villa. Two irregular concentrations of stone against the external face of the wall foundation may have been bases for columns or piers flanking an elaborate doorway.

To the north two linear settings of small ironstone pieces, set 0.25m apart (123), may have been a drain but, as with the similar feature in Room 4, it might relate to an earlier phase of activity.

To the south the exposed natural was overlain by a remnant layer or deposit comprising ceramic tile fragments and small pieces of broken-up *opus signinum* in a matrix of brown loam mixed with pale cream mortar (125). It was uncertain whether its curving shape was genuine, or whether it was merely a remnant

of a formerly more extensive deposit perhaps associated with either the construction or the demolition of the adjacent bath suite.

The eastern corridor

The whole of the eastern corridor lay within the exposed area, although the wall foundations were lost at the northernmost end. It was 2.0m wide internally and lay across ground just beginning to fall away to the east, so that the narrower outer wall foundations were more deeply founded than the broader inner wall of the main building.

Towards the south the footings were offset to the east by 1.2m for a length of c 4.0m. This presumably formed a rectangular porch, with a 2.0m wide opening, probably the main eastern access to the villa.

The western corridor

Only the northern end of a western corridor was located. The northern and western walls were defined by a robber trench; it was not excavated. Most of the corridor lay beyond the stripped area.

The northern range?

The industrial use of the northern area appears to post-date the demise of Room 1 (see above), and as a result of the extent of this later activity there was little to indicate the earlier usage of the area. However, some clue may be gained from layers to the north-west of Room 1 which pre-dated the oven/furnace (140), and also by the presence of a stone-lined drain (115) running along the northern side of the main building.

A disordered scatter of fragments and blocks of ironstone and limestone continued beyond the limit of excavation. It overlay an extensive but patchy layer of orange brown sandy mortar containing chips and small fragments of ironstone. The rubble was clearly building debris, and contained at least two large pieces from squared tufa blocks. In addition, a piece of *opus signinum* from a broken up floor came from a pit within the road corridor to the west (Fig 4, 2). These pieces all lay at the opposite end of the building from the southern bath suite, and they may therefore denote the former presence of a bath suite forming a northern range.

The stone-lined drain running across the full width of the main building had clearly served the area to the west, and so may have been associated with a northern bath suite (Plate 4). A short length was excavated, showing the drain to be 0.45m wide by 0.25m deep, and lined with two courses of flat-laid limestone slabs. A primary fill of fine silty loam was overlain by a mixed fill containing building debris of mortar, fragments of limestone and ironstone, and pieces of both ceramic and slate roof tile. To the east the drain ran towards the probable terminal of a substantial ditch, lying to the south of wall 136, but the detail of this area was not determined due to the confusion of building rubble filling the ditch terminal.

Room 2

The presence of a bath suite forming a southern range was denoted by a rectangular chamber (Room 2) containing the pillared hypocaust of a hot room which had been floored with *opus signinum*.

At sub-floor level the room measured c 3.4m N-S by 2.2m E-W. The northern and western walls were quite well preserved, but the eastern and southern walls had been largely lost (Plate 7). Three rows of four pilae tiles survived in-situ. Above this part of the floor had been in-situ but was pulled out by the mechanical

excavator prior to the recognition of its significance (it had been assumed to be a concrete floor of recent date). The remains of the floor were later recovered from the spoil heaps; it comprised large ceramic tiles, 580mm square x 60mm thick, supporting an *opus signinum* floor 100mm thick with a 40mm deep quarter-square moulding (Plate 8). Large quantities of box flue tile fragments were scattered in the machine disturbed soils in and around this room, and a sample was retained.

The stokehole was not recovered, but it may have lain to the south where the ground level had been truncated by later activity.

3.3.3 The industrial area

Beyond the north-eastern corner of the main building two length of wall were located. A N-S length of wall foundation in pitched limestone, but badly disturbed in machine stripping (Fig 6, 133), continued the line of the eastern wall of the main building. There were no other associated walls and it is presumed to have been an eastern boundary wall, although it may have been a levelled remnant of the eastern wall of the postulated early phase northern wing. A further length of pitched stone wall foundation ran off at an oblique angle to the east (136). It is presumed to be a boundary wall set on the northern edge of a large drainage ditch.

Cleaning of the area to the immediate north of the villa building revealed a complex palimpsest of features and layers that could not be fully understood in plan alone. However, from the presence of areas of reddened and blackened soils and stones, often rich with comminuted charcoal, it was evident that there had been at least four large-scale ovens/furnaces or hearths in this area.

The only clearly defined feature was a square masonry base, measuring 1.70m by 1.55m (137). It was faced in rough-hewn limestone and ironstone, with a core of mixed stone rubble bonded with an orange brown sandy mortar. At least three courses survived; the lowest visible course was offset. The northern corner had been cut away by a later feature.

To the south-east there was a circular oven/furnace, c 1.2m in diameter, with a stoke-hole to the west (138, Plate 9). The chamber had been lined with flat-laid limestone slabs set in a clay matrix, and these had been scorched bright red. The fill of the stoke-hole contained much comminuted charcoal.

To the north-west there was probably a further circular oven/furnace (140). Only a short length of a lining of flat-laid limestone slabs was exposed, and the rest of its extent was defined by a layer of charcoal rich, burnt soil covering an area up to 2.8m in diameter. A third oven/furnace may have lain to the north-east, where an oval area of dark grey soils was bounded to the south by a scatter of burnt limestone slabs (143).

To the south-west there was a surface of large, flat-laid limestone slabs with heavily worn surfaces (139, Plate 10), measuring approximately 3.0m by 2.0m. The southern edge was clearly defined, but to the north it was obscured by a layer of dark grey, fine silty clays and patches of reddened soil.

The date of this activity relative to the main villa building has not been firmly established, but there is evidence that use of the area continued after the abandonment of Room 1 (see above). It is therefore possible that this industrial activity represents a final phase of use, or reuse, following either the abandonment of the villa as a main residence, or at least a major refurbishment that had involved the removal of Room 1.

A layer of dark, charcoal rich soil across the northern half of Room 1 covered both the drain and the backfilled flues of the hypocaust. Within this area there was a small hearth, 0.50-0.60 diameter, comprising hardened and blackened soils and fine grey ash. It contained small flecks of copper alloy and part of a crucible was also found in this area, indicating that copper alloy casting was being carried. Small quantities of iron slag recovered around the north-east corner of the building also suggest that iron working was also being carried out.

3.3.4 Other ditches and pits

A number of ditches and pits of Roman date lay to the west, within the estate road (Fig 5). A linear ditch (12/20) ran along the western edge of the area for at least 55m, but at an oblique angle to both the villa building. It was 1.70m wide and in excess of 0.40m deep. The upper fill was variable, but in places there were concentrations of building debris, particularly roof tile fragments, and deposits of oyster shells, the latter perhaps suggesting that this was occupation debris and not final demolition debris. To the north the ditch probably returned eastward, and there were other minor ditches in this area (1 and 3). There was also a large circular pit (2), 2.80m in diameter by 0.45m deep. It contained a substantial deposit of occupation debris including, pottery, animal bone, oyster shell and even fragments of *opus signinum* from a broken-up floor, already cited as possible evidence for the presence of a demolished northern bath suite.

A substantial ditch, up to 4.0m wide, ran right across the estate road (40/22). During machine excavation the uppermost fills were seen to be of recent origin. It had therefore evidently survived as an earthwork, and was initially presumed to be a recent field boundary. However, geophysical survey showed that to the west it ran into the precinct ditch, while the eastern end bifurcated into smaller ditches containing Roman pottery. This ditch may therefore be more likely to be a substantial ditch of Roman date, and was perhaps associated with the postulated northern bath suite, perhaps for water supply rather than drainage as it lay upslope of the villa.

3.3.5 Inhumation burials

Inhumation burials were present in three specific locations; the industrial area to the immediate north of the villa building; over the ditches at the northern end of the villa precinct; and to the west of the villa building alongside the estate road.

Two inhumation burials were identified during cleaning of the northern industrial area, in both instances the exposed bones were covered over and the burials were left in the ground (Fig 6). Both were probably adults, and they appeared to be extended and supine burials. One was aligned W-E (141), only the feet were uncovered, and the other S-N (142), only the skull was exposed. In both instances a grave cut could only be vaguely discerned against the complex background stratigraphy, and it is possible that there are further burials in this area. They seem most likely to be no earlier than late Roman in date, but this has not been determined.

Two inhumations had been partially exposed and damaged during soil stripping at the northern end of the site. They were both fully excavated and lifted as this area lay at the limit of the area of agreed preservation (Fig 4). Both were aligned roughly N-S; one was late adolescent (156) and the other an adult (157). Both had been interred prone, face down.

At least a further three inhumations lay at the eastern edge of the estate road corridor, all apparently aligned W-E (Fig 4). An adult skull was pulled from the trench section during machine stripping (36), but no further human bones could be seen either in the section or on the spoil heap. It is unlikely that the remainder of the burial was removed without recognition, so the skull either belonged with a W-E burial still largely in-situ or was a detached skull. Further to the south humerii and shoulder blades were recognised in the trench side a couple of weeks after completion of the excavation. They indicate the presence of two adjacent supine inhumations aligned W-E (160 and 161), and the surviving remains have been left in-situ. Their skulls may have been removed by machine excavation but, given the time delay before their recognition and evident collapse or disturbance of the trench face in this area, it is possible that someone had removed them in the intervening period.

3.4 The medieval field system

A general survey of the medieval field system and the arrangement of the ridge and furrow, was compiled by David Hall (1973). This shows a junction of N-S and W-E headlands between Hall's field 1 and field 5 lying at approximately the location of the villa.

Unfortunately, by the time the presence of the villa had been recognised much damage had been done to the ridge and furrow earthworks, so it was not possible to produce a full survey in the area of the villa precinct. However, the surviving areas to the immediate west and east of the haul and estate road corridor were both sketch plotted and plotted from the geophysical survey results.

To the west of the villa precinct the furrows were aligned N-S. They were also aligned N-S to the east, but here there was a headland to the north against an adjoining system of E-W furrows. The western end of this headland had been lost, but it clearly lay within the northern part of the villa precinct. It was also noted by Dennis Jackson that in the area of the villa itself there as an extensive area of level ground, and this was later still evident in the undisturbed area to the immediate west of the exposed villa building.

It would therefore appear that there was a roughly square area devoid of ridge and furrow earthworks located over the villa and at the junction of two field systems. This implies that the medieval field system had respected the presence of the villa. One possibility is that at the formation of the field system the villa still survived, at least partially, as an upstanding ruin. If so, then much of the evident extensive robbing of the walls may have occurred during the medieval period, with the stone probably going to the houses and farms of the present village and parish. This would also explain why ditch 22/40 on the estate road appeared to be Roman in date whilst possibly surviving in earthwork until relatively recently.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 **The Iron Age pottery** Dennis Jackson

A total of 101 sherds (weighing 3.89kg) of later middle Iron Age or late Iron Age pottery was recovered from pits and ditches (14 contexts) located to the west of the Roman villa. With the exception of one sherd all the pottery was handmade. The pottery has been analysed in accordance with the recently published guidelines (PCRG 1997).

4.1.1 Fabrics

Virtually all of the sherds contained shell and there is no clear distinction between some of the fabrics listed below:-

TABLE 1: Quantification of the fabrics

Code	Description	Number	Weight (g)	% by weight
SH.1	Rare or sparse amounts of fine shell	58	1675	43.0
SH.2	Medium shell	14	615	15.8
SH.3	Moderate amounts of coarse shell	7	578	14.9
SH.4	Pounded medium shell (1 vessel)	5	42	1.0
SH.5	Shell and various stone grits	4	216	5.5
IO/SH	Ironstone grits and shell	13	774	19.8

Sparse grog occurs in a few sherds in association with fine shell, but it is not the dominant inclusion often found in assemblages of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery. The same is true of quartz, where although the pottery at Wootton is generally hard, the quartz may have occurred naturally in the clay. The site at Wootton is in an area where clay is readily available for pottery production.

4.1.2 Forms

No profiles can be reconstructed and most of the 15 rim sherds in the assemblage are too small to reliably estimate the diameter of the vessels. The most numerous sherds are from thick walled jars, with rim sherds that derive from bipartite vessels with interned upper walls or concave necks. There are rim sherds from three globular bowls, a form common in the later middle Iron Age assemblages at the nearby hillfort at Hunsbury (Fell 1936), as well as at other local sites of this period at Hardingstone (Woods 1969) and Moulton Park (Williams 1974).

A small rim sherd from context 28 is the only example of wheel-turned pottery from the Iron Age features. It is from a carinated bowl or beaker and similar in form to a rim sherd found at Aldwincle, also in association with hand made pottery (Jackson 1977, Fig 14,79).

4.1.3 Decoration and surface finish

Scoring of middle Iron Age type occurs on the surface of roughly 10% of the material, but this all derived from a single vessel from an isolated pit well to the south of the roundhouse.

Two rim sherds have highly burnished surfaces, and similar examples occur at Hunsbury and amongst late Iron Age pottery at Wakerley (Jackson and Ambrose 1978 fig 36,20) and Towcester (Lambrick 1980 fig 22,1).

The wheel-thrown sherd referred to above has two parallel lines on the neck, and this is the only example of decoration on the pottery apart from scoring.

4.1.4 Discussion

The assemblage from Wootton can be compared to material from Hardingstone, a site only 1 km to the north, and to that from Moulton Park. On both of these sites however, pottery of this type was succeeded by "belgic" wheel made pottery, and it is uncertain if hand made pottery continued in use at Wootton until the Roman period, or if there may have been a period of abandonment. Because of this, it is not possible to date the Iron Age pottery from Wootton any closer than somewhere between the middle of the 1st century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD.

4.2 The Romano British pottery Tora Hylton

A total of 404 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing nearly 10kg, was recovered from 30 separate contexts. Much of it was fragmented, weathered and abraded. The majority was collected during cleaning, and cannot be assigned to closely defined contexts, although much of this was clearly within extensive soil layers containing demolition debris. Small quantities came from the excavation of short lengths of the flue, stoke hole and drain associated with room 1, and further quantities came from the excavation of pits and lengths of ditch in the road corridor to the west of the building.

The assemblage spans the first to fourth centuries, but with second and third centuriy material predominating. It has been recorded on a computer-base system, which includes sherd count and weight by fabric type; and was analyzed using the major classifications defined by E. MacRobert for Ashton Roman Town (unpublished).

4.2.1 Fabrics and Forms

The major fabric groupings can be summarised as follows:

Fabric A	Grogged-tempered wares.
Fabric B	Shell-tempered wares.
Fabric C	Sandy greywares.
Fabric D	Sandy oxidised wares.
Fabric E	Mortaria

The assemblage comprises local and non-local table wares (bowls, dishes, flagon, cups, beakers) and kitchen wares (storage/cooking vessels, colander and mortaria), together with a small quantity of Samian.

4.2.2 Chronology

Early Roman Pottery

The earliest fabric type is soft grog-tempered ware, displaying features associated with Gallo-Belgic type wares of the 1st century AD. Small fragments were recovered as residual finds in Roman contexts, and the only identifiable form is a rim fragment from a butt-beaker decorated with cordons. A further sherd was recovered from a feature of Iron Age date, as discussed above. Together they support the argument for the probable continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age onward.

Early shell-gritted forms are represented by a single channel-rimmed jar decorated with oblique incisions on the rim and a selection of body sherds decorated with fine horizontal rilling on the exterior surface.

Late 1st and early 2nd century material is represented by a small number of undiagnostic hard-fired grog-tempered wares, these may be from storage jars. Twelve sherds of samian span the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Identifiable forms include, hemispherical bowls (Dr. 37, Webster 1996, 47), a dish decorated with a barbotine motif of trailed leaves (Dr. 36, ibid 1996, 46) and a series of cups (Dr.27, Dr.33 and Dr.33A, ibid 1996, 38 & 45).

Later Roman Pottery

The majority of diagnostic pottery can be assigned to this period. Greyware forms predominate and are mainly represented by necked and neckless jars, together with a body sherd from a poppy-head beaker. Locally manufactured Nene Valley Grey Wares include, a shallow bowl with a plain up-right rim, `dog dishes' and a bowl with rounded rim (Howe et all (nd), fig 2, 17).

There are two sherds of soft-pink-grogged ware. This fabric tends to be abundant in west Northamptonshire, north Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire, and dates from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Black-burnished type ware is represented by a `dog dish' and flanged bowls; all display vestiges of a burnished motif.

Other diagnostic pieces include a small selection of local and non-local colour coated wares. Local wares manufactured in the Nene Valley include, a folded beaker (Howe et al, fig 5, 52) and a shallow dish with plain rim (Ibid, fig 7, 87) of fourth century date. There are 13 sherds of non-local colour-coated wares from the Oxford region. Two pieces represent samian copies of Dragondorf types 31 (Young 45 fig 58) and Dr. 38 (Young 1977), while other forms include a necked jar (Young type C18, fig 54) and a flanged bowl with upright rim (Young type C51, fig 390). In addition two fragments of mortaria (Youngs C97/C98, ?C100) may also be provenanced to the Oxford kilns.

FABRIC TYPES	CONTEXT NUMBER																							
	GULLY		PIT		PIT		PIT		DITCH		GULLY		DITCH		DITCH		LAYER		DITCH		DITCH		PIT	
	1		2		7		8		12/20		13		16		18		21		22		27		155	
ROMAN POTTERY	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Amphorae			1	358					1	60														
Black B. ware									1	21														
Greyware	16	157	12	348			1	145	9	288	3	55			2	34	1	17	3	116				
Grog-tempered									1	45					1	46								
Mortaria			1	12																				
Nene Valley C.C.			3	33					1	37			1	1					1	24				
Oxford Ware C.C.			6	164					2	49														
Oxidised sandy			1	7																	1	30		
Samian			2	42																				
Shell-gritted			7	444	1	6			5	62	1	23	1	10	7	217	1	32	3	292			1	39
Soft-pink grog							1	324							1	95			2	55				
Unidentified																								
Total	16	157	33	1408	1	6	2	469	20	562	4	78	2	11	11	392	2	49	9	487	1	30	1	39

FABRIC	CLEANING EAST CORRIDOR		CLEANING INDUSTRIAL AREA N. OF BUILDING		CLEANING NORTH-EAST DITCH		ROOM 1 - FLUES STOKE HOLE AND DRAIN		BURIAL		CLEANING OVER VILLA BUILDING		UNSTRATIFIED		OVER ALL TOTAL*	
	100/110		101/105/107/108		102/109		112/113/114/115		156		104/111/ROOMS 1&2		U/S			
ROMAN POTTERY	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Amphorae															2	418
Black B. ware			1	40	1	7					1	11	6	249	10	328
Greyware	11	142	15	505	35	665	15	182			49	766	13	274	185	3694
Grog-tempered	5	228	2	25	7	125	5	219			11	597	3	101	35	1386
Mortaria											1	40	2	63	4	115
Nene Valley C.C.			5	104	2	13	4	124					1	25	18	361
Oxford Ware C.C.							2	9			3	23			13	245
Oxidised sandy	1	15			2	16	3	96			2	7			10	171
Samian	1	2			4	19			1	3	3	50	1	15	12	131
Shell-gritted	10	132	13	225	17	342	9	197	3	8	17	338	10	188	106	2555
Soft-pink grog															4	474
Unidentified					2	7									2	7
Total	28	519	36	899	70	1194	38	827	4	11	87	1832	36	915	401	9885

* Not including 3 sherds of post-medieval pottery weighing 105gm.

3.3 **Roman building materials** Tora Hylton and Andy Chapman

In total 28 kg of fragmented tile was retrieved. Much of it comprises large identifiable pieces that display very little sign of abrasion and ware, and smaller fragments were generally discarded on site. In addition, most of the tile and *opus signinum* floor of Room 2, which had been pulled out by machine excavation prior to the recognition of the villa, was also recovered. A small quantity of *opus signinum* was also recovered from Room 1, along with some fragments of painted wall plaster

The assemblage has been briefly scanned to determine fabric, and tile types have been identified by the presence of unique features: the upright flange on a *tegula*; the curvature of an *imbrex* and the combed keying lines and perforations of box flue tiles.

Fabrics

Three main fabric types were observed, although there may be other slight variations:

1) Shell-tempered fabrics containing abundant crushed fossil shell and fired to a pale buff colour; this type is predominant. A similar fabric has been recorded at Quinton (Friendship-Taylor 1979, 121ff). Friendship-Taylor suggest that it displays similarities to the material produced at the Harrold Kilns in Bedfordshire (Brown 1974, 9).

2) Sandy fabrics with varying quantities of fine-medium sand, which are generally orange in colour. A small amount has a distinct grey core.

3) Grog-tempered, soft with sparse inclusions, fired to a buff/pink colour with dark-light grey core. This fabric displays similarities to soft-pink-grog type fabrics and resembles Milton Keynes Fabric type five (Zeepvat, 1987, 120) and Quintons Fabric type d (Friendship-Taylor 1979, 123).

Roof tile and slate

A total of 81 fragments, weighing 12.73kg, are identified as ceramic roof tile, represented by *tegulae* (41 fragments) and *imbrices* (40 fragments). There are no complete examples and it is not possible to obtain any dimensions. Examples of tegulae manufactured from all three fabric types are present. The exterior surfaces on 10 fragments of roof tile are coated in a maroon/red coloured wash/paint; this occurs only on sand tempered *tegulae* and *imbrices* fired to a pale colour. Three pieces of *tegulae* contain nail holes towards their edge, perforated before firing.

One fragment of *imbrex* is decorated with a combed wavey-line motif.

Fragments of roofing slate in a fine grained sandstone were recovered from the excavated area in the western corridor at the opening of the hypocaust flue into room 1. The larger fragments indicate minimum dimensions of 400mm square by 25mm thick, with a single central perforation; in one example there is a fragment of an iron nail within the perforation.

Hypocaust tile

The majority of box flue tile (*tubulus*) were retrieved from the demolition debris in and around the pillared hypocaust in Room 2 (Broderibb 1979, 148).

A total of 32 fragments, weighing 8.57kg were recovered. They are all in a shell-tempered fabric, fired to a pale buff colour. It is not possible to obtain full dimensions, although two fragments provided a depth measurement of c.120-130mm. Fourteen pieces were furnished with `oval' side apertures that have been

manufactured by hand rather that cut with a knife. Combed keying lines were found on 20 fragments; the patterns produced vary. There are no examples that have been roller stamped.

Structural tile

Tile of this type is associated with the construction of floor supports in hypocaust systems. Three displaced *pilae* tiles from room 2 were retrieved. There are two complete examples, one sand tempered, measuring 180x175x30mm and with a signature in the form of a triple-lined cross, and a shell tempered example, which is slightly bigger, measuring 210x220x32mm.

The surviving part of the pillared hypocaust in room 2 comprised three rows of four *pilae*. Two rows comprised columns standing 3 pilae high, 140mm, formed from tiles 30mm thick and 215mm square. These were set on larger base tiles, also 30mm thick but 290mm square. The base tiles were set on a mortar bed and there was 25-30mm of pink mortar between the tiles. The northernmost row was of the same build but the *pilae* were rectangular, being made up of columns of single and half tiles.

In addition, a rectangular base tile with square *pilae* tiles still attached was recovered from spoil in the vicinity of Room 2. The base tile measures 370mm x 250mm and is extensively decorated with a range of incised graffiti (Fig 8). The principal group comprises several animal figures of various sizes. The largest appears to be a red deer, and the smaller running animals may also be deer. The other graffiti comprise an oval enclosing a row of dots, and a possible crude phallus.

CONTEXT	TILE TYPES: NUMBER/WEIGHT										TOTAL
	TEGULA		IMBREX		BOX FLUE		PILAE/BRICK		UNCERTAIN		
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
2	3	618	6	444							1062
8	1	414									414
12	2	665							1	88	753
14	1	490									490
18	2	442	2	230			2	582	4	135	1389
20	2	130	2	291					3	148	569
21	6	851	4	341					5	206	1398
100			3	311							311
101	3	601	3	315							916
102	1	236							2	79	315
104	3	230	3	224					4	136	590
105	9	1099	15	1331	3	239			11	380	3049
107									1	65	65
109					2	95					95
110	2	62									62
111	3	238							2	192	430
115	2	506	1	437							943
Room 1			2	279					2	243	522
Room 2					26	7941	3	4816			12,757
U/S	1	1467	1	474	1	291					2232
TOTAL	41	8049	40	4677	32	8566	5	5398	33	1672	28,362

The painted wall plaster

A small quantity of painted wall plaster was recovered from the fills of the channelled hypocaust in Room 1. The pieces are predominantly white or red, although there is a single piece in yellow and two small fragments in black, but there is insufficient to reconstruct the decorative scheme. Some fragments in mottled red over a white background suggest the presence of marble effect dado. In the few pieces with bordering colours, red beside white or yellow, the borders are all distinctly curved, and there are no pieces indicating the presence of line and stripe frameworks for rectilinear panels. The decorative scheme would therefore appear to have comprised large-scale figurative images

3.4 Other finds Tora Hylton

In total there are 48 individually recorded finds in six material types. They include items recovered during cleaning and also from a metal detector survey across both the site and the associated spoil. The paucity of metal items on the site is highlighted by the low recovery rate from the metal detector survey.

The assemblage includes a considerable number of iron nails, together with a small number of coins, and a small number of other items including tools (knife), household equipment (quernstone and glass tablewares) and jewellery (bracelet). The presence of copper alloy nodules and lead driblets (the latter coming from the industrial area to the north), together with a base fragment from a crucible demonstrate the presence of small-scale metal working.

MATERIAL	NUMBER
Copper alloy	14
Iron	15
lead	7
Glass	10
Ceramic (crucible)	1
Stone (quern)	1

Copper alloy

Copper alloy objects worthy of note include, fragments from a bracelet (ribbon strip type) and a hook which may have originated as part of a steelyard. A similar example is known from Richborough (Bush-Fox 1949, plate XXXVIII, 133). The coins are catalogued below.

Iron

With the exception of a single knife blade fragment, the entire assemblage comprises nails (19 examples) and rod fragments (2 pieces). The nails vary in length from 43-90mm; one may have been used as a door stud.

Lead

Identifiable objects include a conical weight, and a post-medieval musket ball. The rest of the assemblage

comprises off-cuts from sheet metal suggesting that fabrication took place on the site, while molten driblets indicate occasional melting.

Glass

There are 14 fragments of vessel glass and a single fragment of window glass. There are ten individual vessels including mould blown bowls and jars, fragments of handles from jugs and bowls and body sherds from bottles (?square). Decorative techniques include cut decoration set just below the rim (pers comm I. Meadows) and mould blown and drawn striations.

Quernstone

A complete upper stone from a beehive quern was recovered from the surface of an unexcavated, and undated pit (145).

3.5 **The Coins** Ian Meadows

A total of eight coins were recovered. Five were found during cleaning, but only three are from stratified contexts, and a further two were recovered by metal detector survey of the dumped spoil from both machine stripping and hand excavation. They are listed below chronologically, with the exception of one mid-late 2nd century sesterius, the entire collection dates to the late 3rd and early 4th century.

Marcus Aurelius, Sestertius, (illeg), (161-180)
Small find (SF) 17, Context 14,

Barbarous radiate AE3 based on Tetricus I (270-273)
SF 31, unstratified, metal detector find

Barbarous radiate AE3 c.275
SF 45, unstratified

Allectus, AE Quinarius, LAETITIA AUG, Galley, Clausentum mint (QC in ex.), (293-296)
SF 44, unstratified

Constantine I, Follis, SOL INVICTO COMITII, Trier mint (308-330)
SF 14, Context 18,

Constantine I, AE3, GLORIA EXCECITUS, 2 soldiers 2 standards, Trier mint (330-335)
SF 15, Context 104,

House of Constantine AE3 (illeg) (first half fourth century)
SF 46, unstratified

AE4 House of Constantine
SF 32, unstratified, metal detector find

3.6 **The faunal and environmental evidence**

Small quantities of animal bone were collected during the site cleaning. In total it amounts to less than a single archive box. No soil samples were taken.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL AND PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

4.1 The stratigraphic record

Given the limited nature of the work undertaken a comprehensive summary of the site stratigraphy was prepared and is presented as part of this assessment report. The site archive contains little additional stratigraphic data that would repay further analysis.

It is therefore suggested that the present assessment report text would provide the basis for any text for publication, and that no further analysis is required.

4.2 The Iron Age Pottery

The small assemblage of Iron Age pottery has been fully reported. No further analysis is required, but approximately 6 vessels need to be illustrated to accompany this report.

4.3 The Roman pottery

The Roman pottery has been fully catalogued and there is a summary of the ceramic chronology. No further analysis is required, but the assemblage should be reviewed to provide an overview set within its local and regional context. Some illustration will be required.

4.4 The Finds

The site has produced a small assemblage of finds, and much of this material is from cleaning contexts. There are no items of either particularly intrinsic interest or capable of enhancing the broader understanding of the site.

4.5 The Building materials

The site has produced a range of building materials. As with the pottery, it will be appropriate to review these materials, including the small quantity of painted wall plaster, to set them within their local and regional context.

4.6 The faunal evidence

Given that the majority of the small quantity of faunal remains is unstratified, no further analysis is proposed.

4.7 The human remains

Two complete inhumation burials and some partial skeletal material were recovered. This small group of undated human contains minimal potential for enhancing the broader understanding of the site.

It is proposed that they should be submitted for specialist assessment to determine their basic palaeopathology; sex, age at death, and any pathological traits of intrinsic interest.

5 REPORTING AND ARCHIVE

5.1 Reporting

A report will be prepared for publication in Northamptonshire Archaeology, the journal of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society.

5.2 Report Synopsis

1 Introduction

1.1 The circumstances of the excavation, including acknowledgements
1.2 Topography and geology
1.3 The archaeological context

2 The excavation and recording of the villa

2.1 Aims and objectives
2.2 Geophysical survey
2.3 The site chronology
2.4 The Iron Age settlement
2.5 The Roman villa
2.6 The medieval field system

3 The finds

3.1	The Iron Age pottery	Dennis Jackson
3.2	The Roman pottery	Tora Hylton
3.3	The Roman building materials	Tora Hylton
3.4	Other finds	Tora Hylton
3.5	The Coins	Ian Meadows

4 Discussion

Illustration schedule

Fig 1: Wootton Fields Roman villa, site location
Fig 2: Wootton Fields Roman villa, geophysical survey results
Fig 3: The villa precinct, including interpretation of geophysical survey
Fig 4: The excavated areas of the estate and haul roads
Fig 5: Iron Age and Roman features in the estate road trench
Fig 6: The Roman villa in the haul road trench
Fig 8: Section across the precinct ditch
Fig 9: Room 1, sections across hypocaust channels and drains
Fig 10: The Iron Age pottery
Fig 11: The Roman pottery
Fig 12: Ceramic tile with graffiti

5.3 The site archive

A microfilm copy of the site archive and the site narrative will be made to RCHME standards and submitted to the National Archaeological Record.

The site archive will comprise all written, drawn and photographic records, and all material finds recovered from the excavation. The site archive will be accompanied by the research archive, which will comprise the text, tabulated data, original drawings and all other records generated in the analysis of the site archive. The site archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 of the English Heritage procedural document, Management of Archaeological Projects (1991).

The archive will be fully catalogued and deposited in an appropriate local institution, in a format agreed with that institution.

6 METHODS, RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

6.1 Work completed

Consolidation of site archive
Finds processing
Preparation of draft site narrative
Publication quality site plans
Iron Age pottery report
Quantification of Roman pottery
Quantification of Roman building materials and other finds

6.2 Proposed work

TASKS	COSTINGS
Roman pottery review	£350.00
Roman building materials review	£350.00
Painted wall plaster assessment	£ 90.00
Human bone analysis	£150.00
Editing of site narrative	£325.00
Illustrations	£300.00
Integration of report	£325.00
Editing and proof reading	£175.00
Preparation of archive	£200.00
Materials	£ 75.00
Administration	£250.00
Publication grant (20 pages at £14.50/page)	£290.00
Archiving cost	£220.00
TOTAL COST	**£ 3,100.00**

6.3 Key Personnel

Andy Chapman	Senior Project Officer, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Tora Hylton	Finds Manager, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Prof. R Ling	Manchester University
Trevor Anderson	Consultant Osteo-Archaeologist
Mark Roughley	Illustrator, Northamptonshire Archaeology

6.4 Timetable

It is anticipated that all stages of work will be completed between May and July 2000, so that the finalised report will be submitted for inclusion in volume 29 of Northamptonshire Archaeology (note: Volume 28 is due for publication in May)

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Northamptonshire Archaeology
a service of Northamptonshire County Council
Environment Directorate March 2000

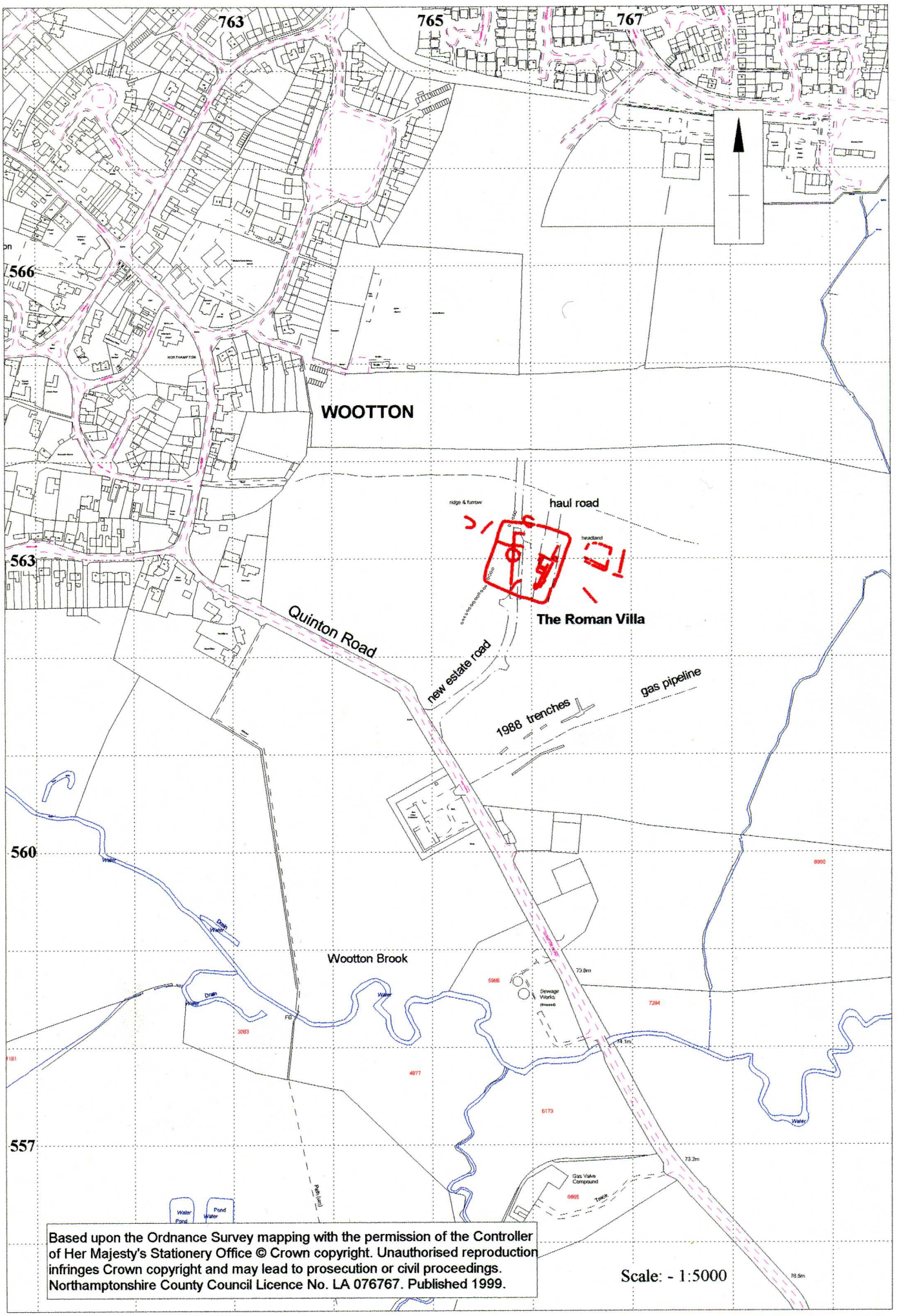

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Fig. 1 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, Site Location

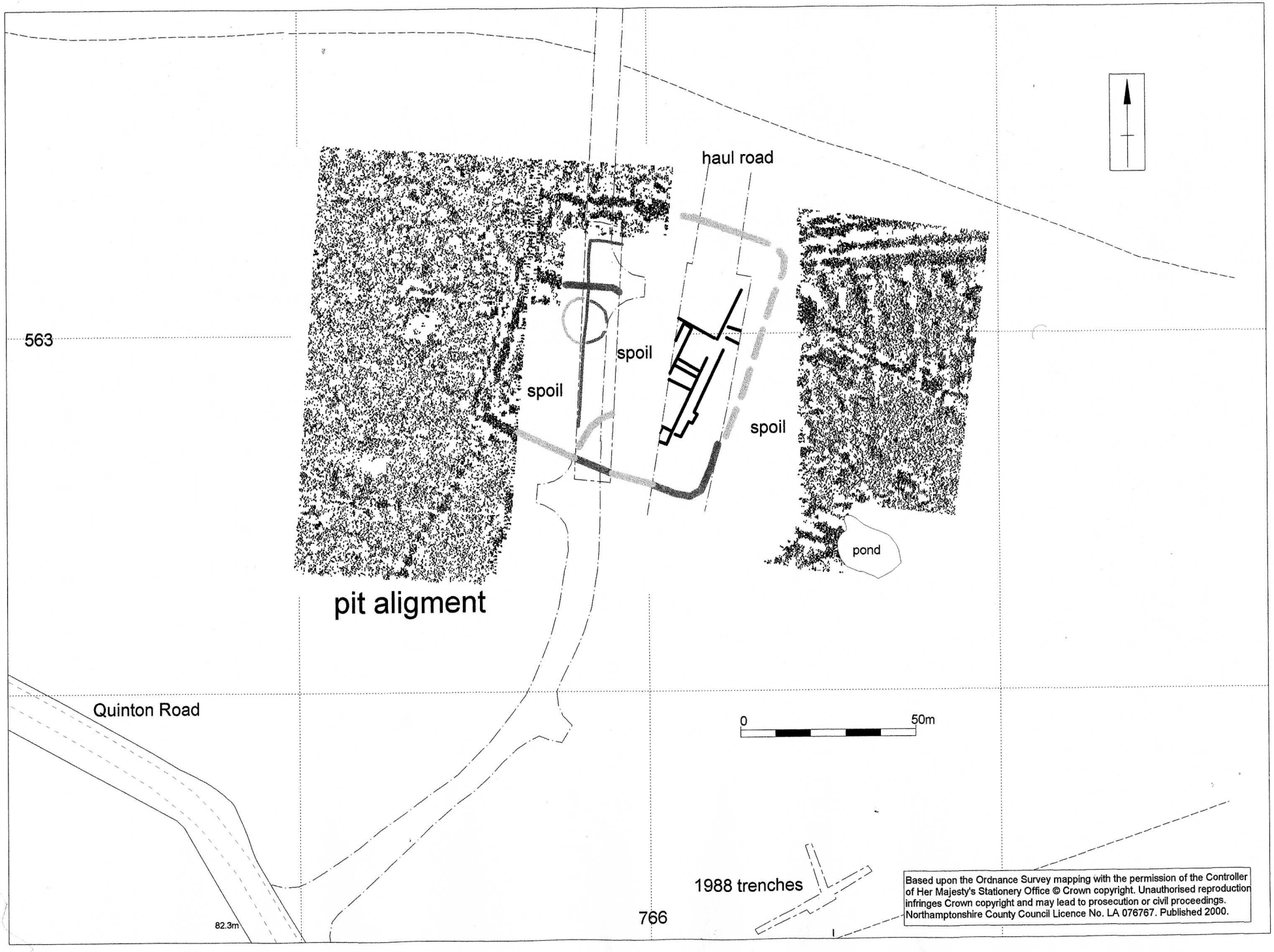


Fig. 2 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, Geophysical survey

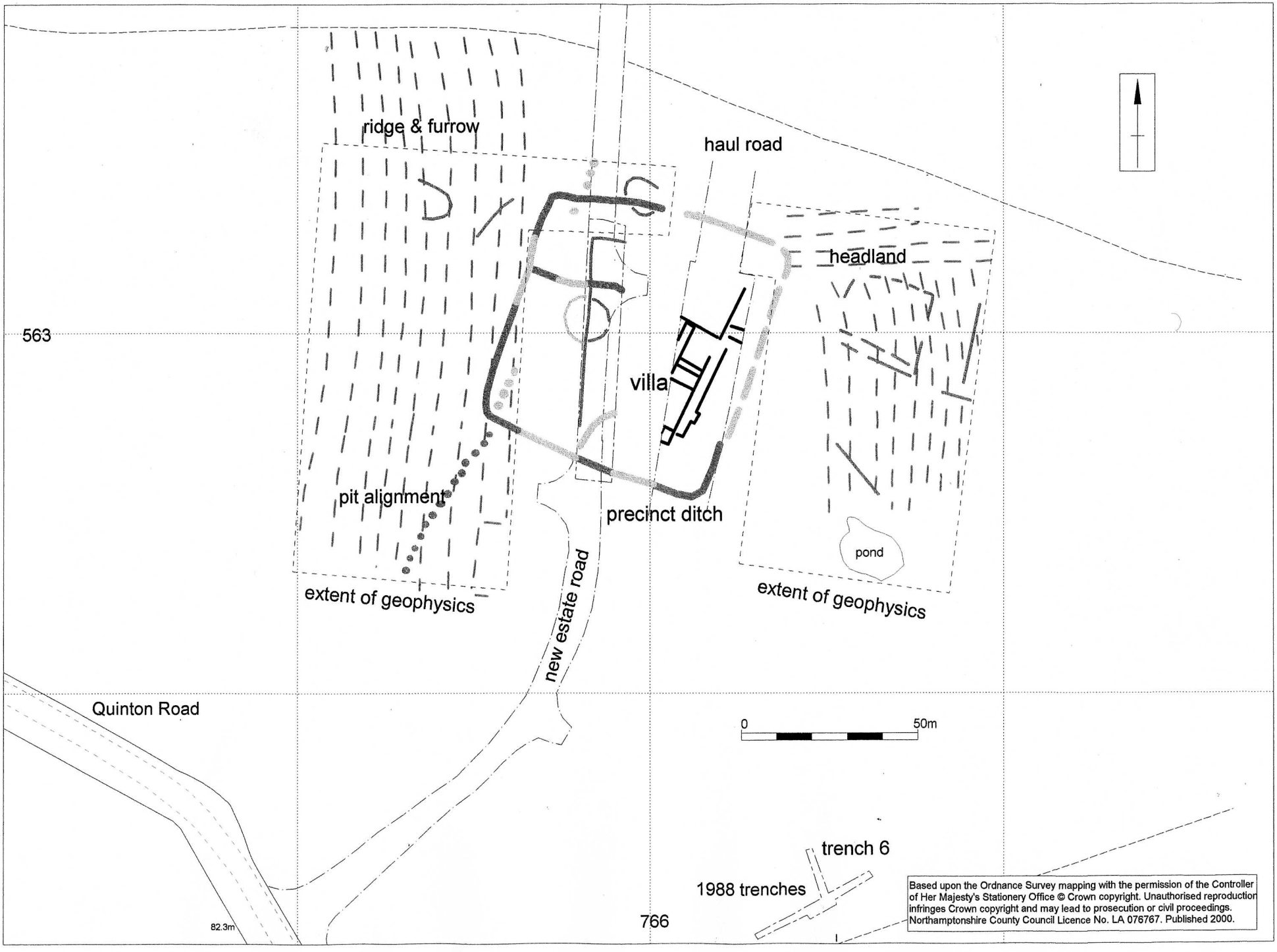


Fig. 3 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, The villa precinct

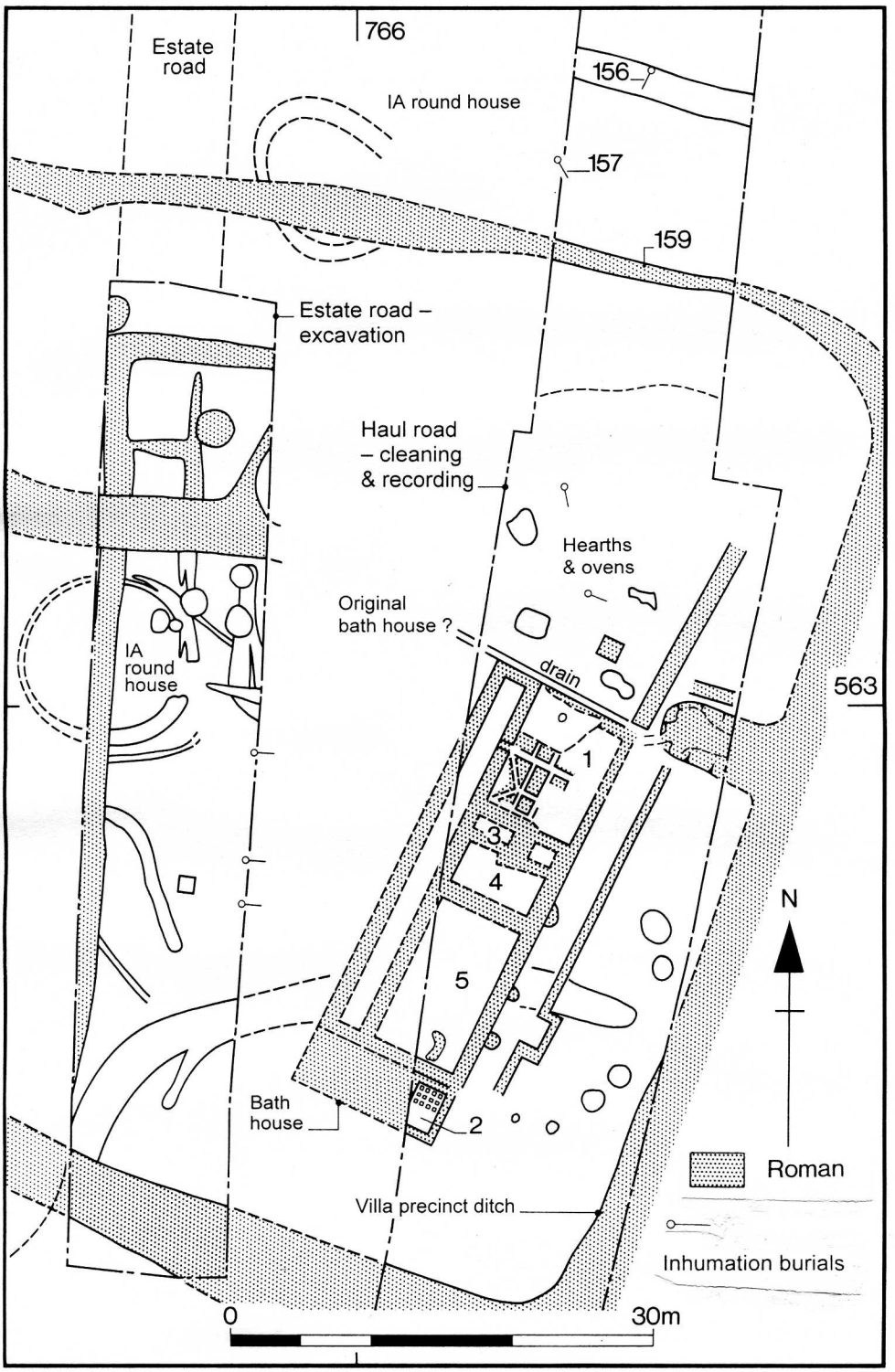
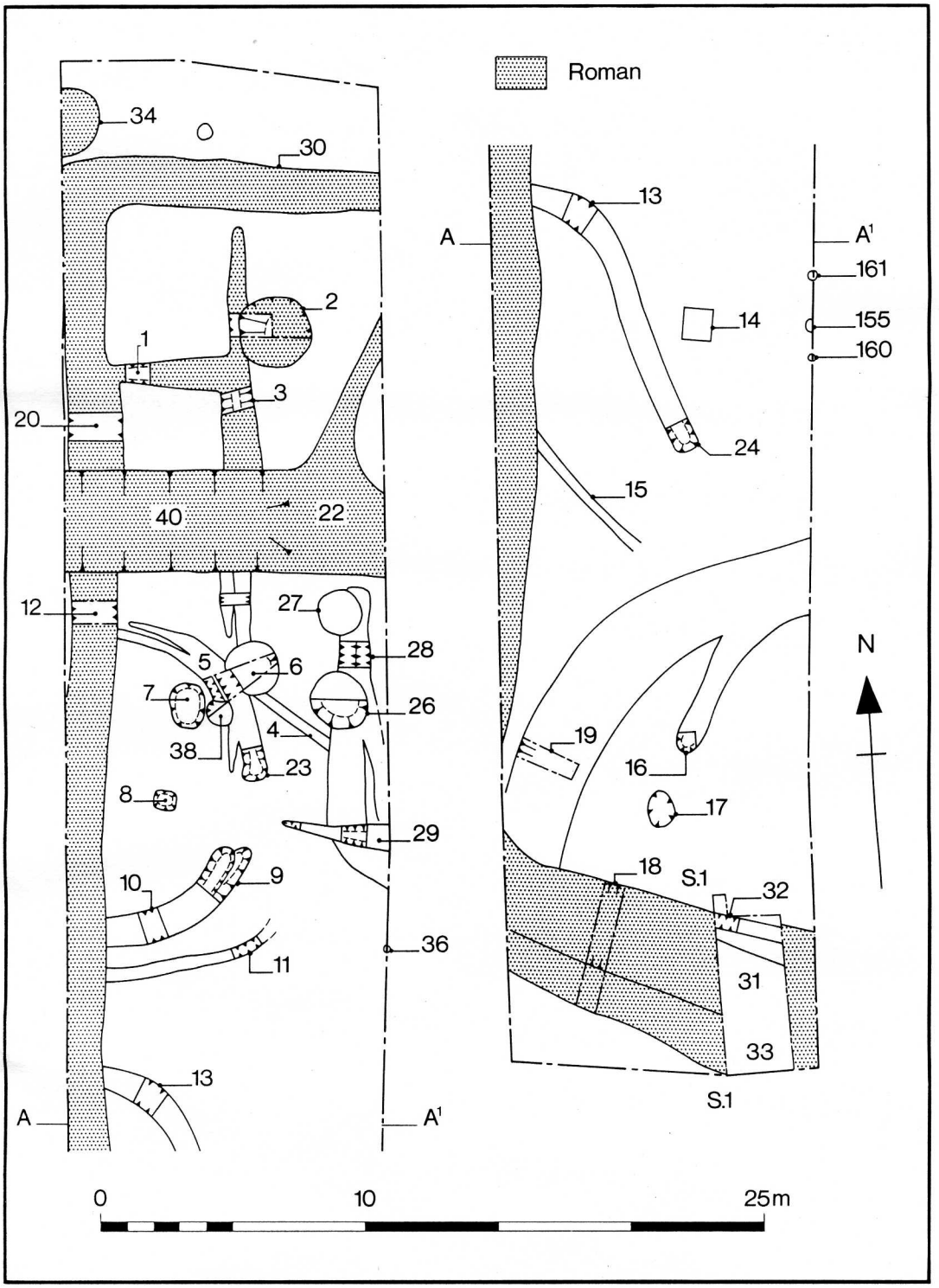

766
Estate road
156
IA round house
157
159
Estate road – excavation
Haul road – cleaning & recording
Hearths & ovens
Original bath house ?
drain
IA round house
563
1
3
4
5
2
Bath house
N
Roman
Villa precinct ditch
Inhumation burials
0
30m

Fig.4


Roman
34
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2
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3
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26
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38
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36
11
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A
A¹
13
A
A¹
161
14
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Fig.5

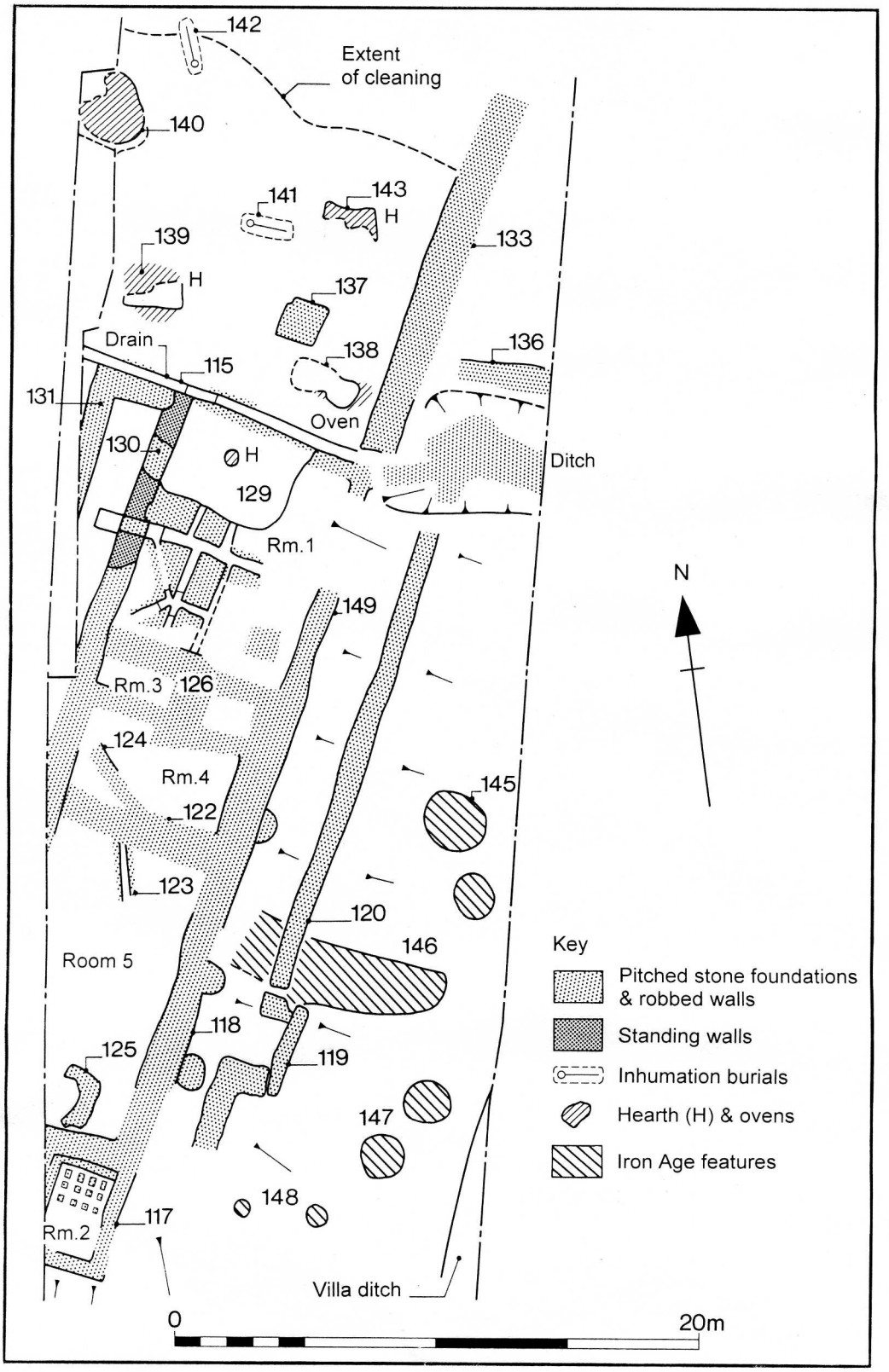
142
Extent
of cleaning
140
141
143
H
139
H
133
137
Drain
115
138
136
131
Oven
130
H
Ditch
129
Rm.1
149
Rm.3
126
124
Rm.4
122
145
123
120
146
Room 5
118
125
119
147
148
Rm.2
117
Villa ditch
0
20m
N
Key
Pitched stone foundations & robbed walls
Standing walls
Inhumation burials
Hearth (H) & ovens
Iron Age features

Fig.6

Section 1

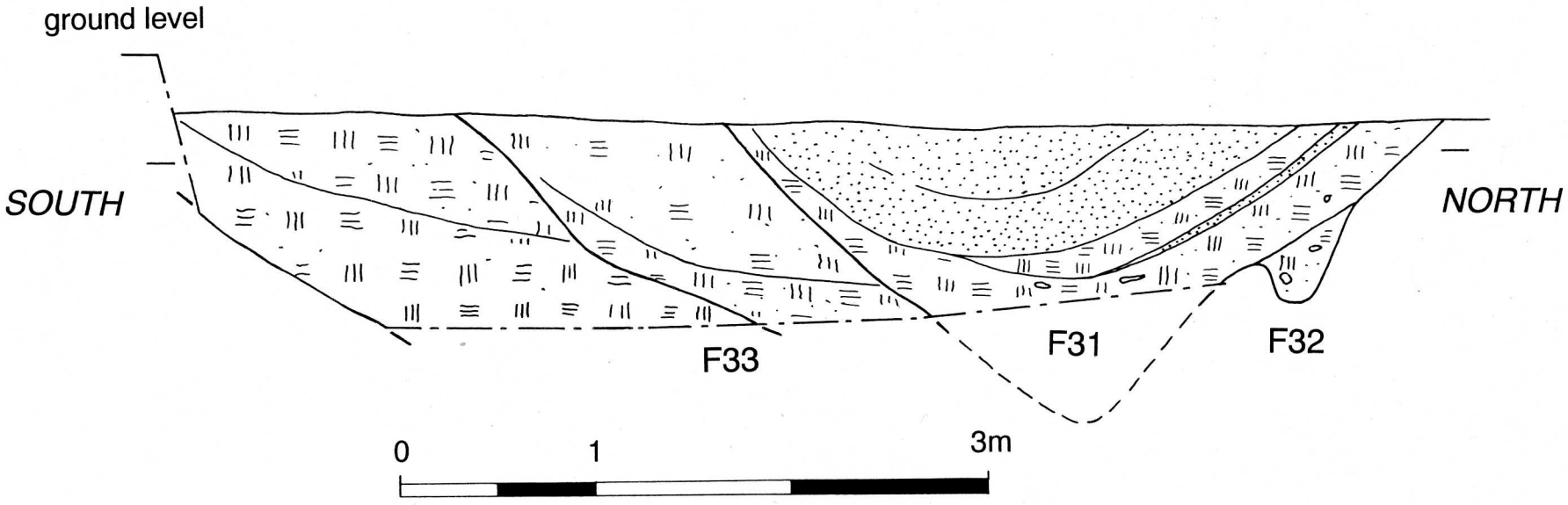

Fig. 7

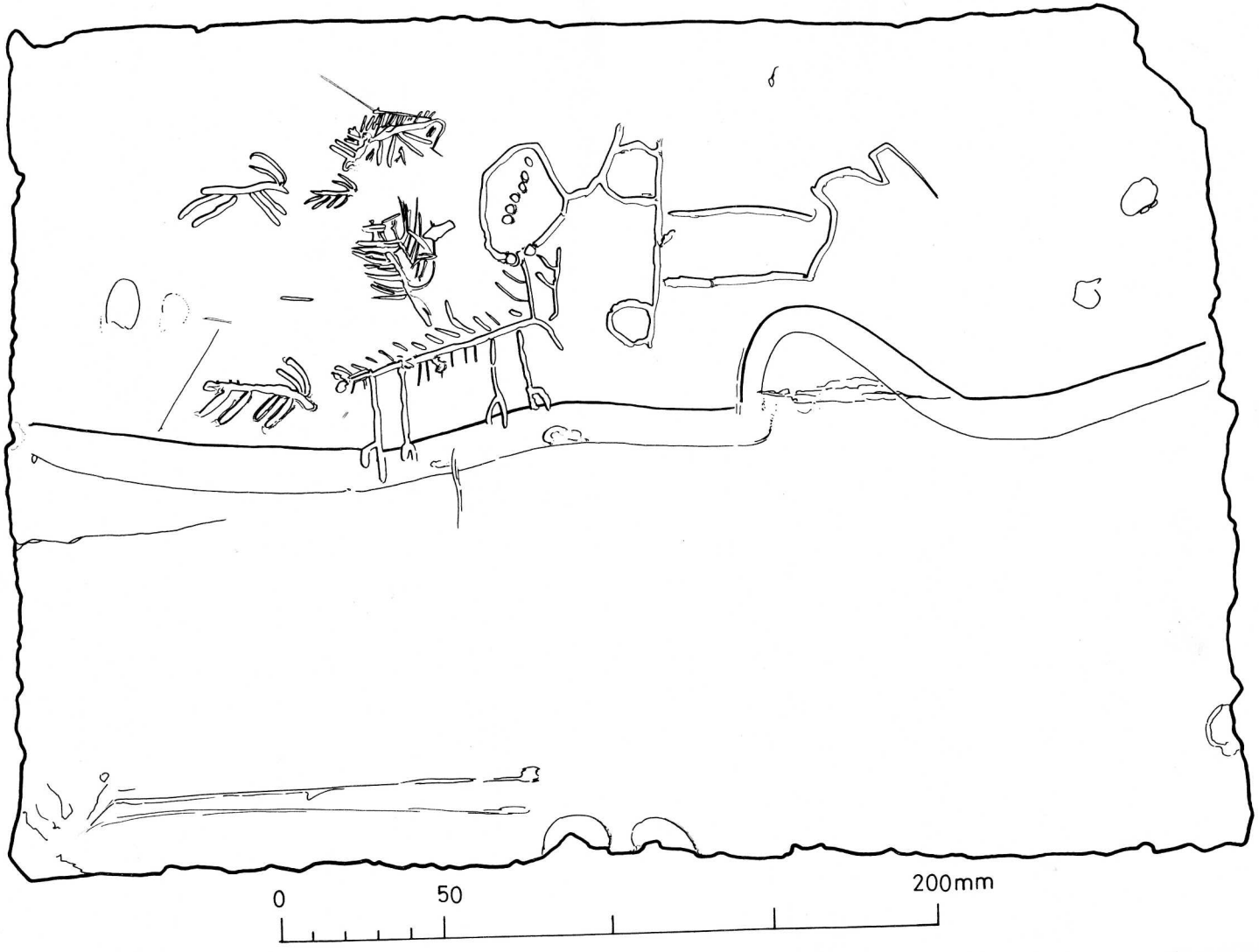

Fig. 8

Plate 1: Volunteers at work cleaning the villa looking south

Plate 2: General view looking north, with the pillared hypocaust of the bath house in the foreground

Plate 3: General view of Room 1 under cleaning

Plate 4: Wall 131, Room 1, drain 115 top left

Plate 5: Room 1, the channelled hypocaust Looking east

Plate 6: Room 1, the chanelled hypocaust looking north

Plate 7: The pillared hypocaust, Room 2; looking north-east

Plate 8: The *opus signinum* floor from Room 2, recovered from spoil heap

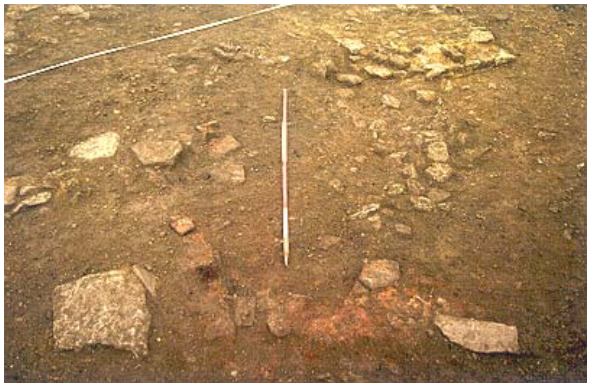

Plate 9: Oven 138, looking west

Plate 10: hearth 139, looking west

Plate 11: Section across precinct ditch, estate road trench early ditch left, palisade slot to right

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

March 2000

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF A ROMAN VILLA AT WOOTTON FIELDS, NORTHAMPTON JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999 ASSESSMENT REPORT AND UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF

A ROMAN VILLA AT WOOTTON FIELDS, NORTHAMPTON

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999

ASSESSMENT REPORT AND UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN

Project Manager:	Steve Parry MA MIFA
Fieldwork and text:	Andy Chapman BSc
Illustrations:	Alex Thorne
GIS plans:	Andy Chapman and Peter Masters
Iron Age pottery:	Dennis Jackson
Roman pottery:	Tora Hylton
Other finds:	Tora Hylton and Andy Chapman
Coins:	Ian Meadows

SCHEDULE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF

A ROMAN VILLA AT WOOTTON FIELDS, NORTHAMPTON

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999

ASSESSMENT REPORT AND UPDATED RESEARCH DESIGN

Andy Chapman

with contributions by
Dennis Jackson, Peter Masters, Ian Meadows
Tora Hylton, Mark Roughley, and Alex Thorne

ABSTRACT

A previously unknown Roman villa was located during monitoring of groundworks on a new housing development. The exposed building remains were cleaned and planned before they were backfilled for long-term preservation. An adjacent area containing cut features of both Iron Age and Roman date was excavated prior to road construction.

A roundhouse ring gully and a scatter of pits are dated from the mid-first century BC to the mid-first century AD. They suggest that there may have been continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age.

The main villa building was probably a simple strip building with front and rear corridors. A room at the northern end contained a channelled hypocaust and had been decorated with painted wall plaster. At the opposite end a pillared hypocaust had supported the opus signinum floor of a hot room, but the remainder of this small bath suite was not exposed. The pottery and coins spanned the later first to fourth centuries, but second and third century material predominated. The size of the building and the paucity of domestic and personal items suggests that the villa was not of exceptionally high status.

Geophysical survey and limited excavation demonstrated that the main building stood within a 70m square ditched enclosure with a number of phases of recutting; the earliest including a timber palisade. A series of hearths and ovens/furnaces to the immediate north of the villa represent a final phase of industrial usage following the abandonment of at least parts of the main building. Some inhumation burials of uncertain date were recovered to both the north and west of the main building.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Wootton Fields development

A block of farm land to the immediate east of the village of Wootton, Northampton, and lying to the south of the town, had planning permission for a housing development by David Wilson Homes Ltd (NGR SP 766 563, Fig 1). This was one of a series of housing developments that are progressively infilling a substantial block of land lying to the south and east of Wootton and bounded to the south-west by the M1 motorway. Other Iron Age and Roman sites are known within this area and several have been subject to archaeological investigation during 1999 by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in advance of a housing development at Courtenhall, Northampton.

1.2 The circumstances of the excavation

Construction work at Wootton Fields began in January 1999 with a provision for intermittent archaeological monitoring.

The field containing the Roman villa was a 18.5ha pasture field (OS No.6524) immediately east of the village and north of the Quinton Road (Fig 1). The initial site works involved the construction of a haul road for the transport of quarried clay from the northern to the southern end of the development area. Dennis Jackson monitored this work on behalf of Northamptonshire Heritage, under the volunteer network scheme. In late January 1999 the exposed remains of stone walls, along with a scatter of Roman building material and pottery, was observed following the removal of topsoil along part of the haul road.

The initial archaeological requirement was for emergency cleaning and recording of the exposed remains to determine more fully the nature and extent of the building. Monitoring of further topsoil stripping was carried out by Dennis Jackson and staff from Northamptonshire Heritage, while some initial cleaning was carried out by Roy Friendship-Taylor, the excavator of the nearby Piddington Roman villa.

At the same time, work was also under way further to the north on topsoil stripping along the line of the main estate road. This was to run closely to the west of the haul road and so was liable to expose further archaeological deposits. As a result, Northamptonshire Archaeology was initially asked to undertake the role of coordinating the cleaning of the remains exposed on the haul road and the salvage excavation of any associated remains along the line of the estate road.

The initial work by Northamptonshire Archaeology was funded by the County Council, while the later process of recording, geophysical survey, further salvage excavation and the preparation of the assessment report has been funded by English Heritage. All work was carried out with the cooperation of the developer, David Wilson Homes Ltd, and the contractors working on their behalf, who supplied heavy plant for soil removal.

The exposed remains were cleaned over the weekend of 30-31 January 1999 by a team of volunteers recruited at short notice by Northamptonshire Heritage, as detailed below in the acknowledgements (Plate 1). Further cleaning and recording was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Plates 2 & 3), together with the monitoring of the covering and backfilling of the exposed building in the haul road area.

At the time of writing, there is an agreement in principal that the area encompassing the part of the villa precinct to the east of the estate road will be preserved as an open space within the housing development. A smaller part of the villa precinct lies to the west of the estate road and Northamptonshire Heritage are in discussion with the developer as to the appropriate response to the archaeology in this area.

1.3 Topography and geology

The site lies on the southern slope of an east-west ridge that reaches 100-110m aOD. The ridge is straddled by the present village, with the valley of the River Nene to the north (Fig 1). The villa lies at 86m and 87m aOD on the south-east facing slope of a small but deeply incised valley containing a short tributary stream which runs south-west into Wootton Brook. The brook feeds into the River Nene to the north-west.

The underlying geology comprises Northampton Sand on the higher ground with Upper Lias Clays on the lower lying ground to the south and east (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England & Wales), Solid and Drift, Sheet 202, 1969). In excavation the villa was seen to sit on Northampton Sand comprising shattered small ironstone pieces in a matrix of red brown sand. There was an area of tenacious yellow clays to the immediate south of the villa precinct.

1.4 The archaeological background

At the time of development the field containing the villa was under pasture, and the well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks of the former medieval field system indicate that there had been little or no ploughing of this field for several centuries. It is probably for this reason that there had been no chance recoveries of surface finds. Nothing was noted during fieldwalking in the early 1970s by David Hall while preparaing the Wootton Parish Survey, although two new Romano-British sites, including a villa, were found elsewhere in the parish (Hall 1976).

However, a nearby site was located in 1966 by Dennis Jackson during a watching brief along the course of a major gas pipe line which runs to the south of the villa. He noted the presence of burnt stone, roofing tiles and ditches together with Roman pottery and a coin of Constantius II, 356-61AD (BNFAS 1966, 14; BNFAS 1971, 19 and RCHME 1985, fiche 424, Wootton Site 6). The site location was given as SP 766562, placing it within 50m of the villa precinct, but comparison to the mapped location of the gas pipe suggests that a location at SP 766561 would be more appropriate.

In 1988, as part of the initial preparation of a scheme for development of this land, an archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit to test for the presence of Roman buildings in this vicinity (Cadman 1988). Six trenches were excavated, with a total length of 155m. In five trenches there were no archaeological features, but the sixth contained a series of ditches that produced a small assemblage finds including tegulae, imbrex and possibly box flue tile, and pottery ranging in date from later 1st to the 4th century AD (Fig 3, trench 6). It was concluded that this material was most likely to come from a Roman building lying on the Northampton Sands geology to the north, where the villa was eventually found, but it was not possible to test this hypothesis at the time.

1.5 The archaeological context

The villa at Wootton fields had extensive views to the east across the adjacent stream valley and beyond this to the lower lying ground along the valley containing Wootton Brook. Two other major Roman sites overlook this valley to the immediate south-east, and another lies to the north-west.

A Roman settlement to the south of the village of Quinton lies at the head of the next tributary stream to the east, 3km from Wootton Fields villa. It was partially excavated in the 1970s and produced evidence for two main periods of occupation (Friendship-Taylor 1974 and 1979). The first period was dated to between the mid-first and the late-second centuries AD, and comprised `Belgic' roundhouses superseded by rectangular stone buildings. Following an apparent century of desertion, there was further occupation, represented by a well and a circular stone building, from the late third century and probably continuing into the fifth century AD.

Piddington Roman villa lies 5km to the south-east of Wootton Fields villa, on high ground between tributary streams on the southern flank of Wootton Brook; it has been extensively excavated over the past two decades or more by the Upper Nene Archaeological Society (Friendship-Taylor 1989, CA 1996). A late Iron Age settlement preceded the first stone structure, a simple strip building constructed in the later 1st century AD. A separate wing was added, and by the end of the 2nd century the two ranges had been

linked to form a true winged corridor villa. There were further modifications through the 3rd century, but in the 4th century there was a decline and much of the building fell out of use, being reduced to a largely derelict squat in the later 4th century.

There was also a second Roman villa within the parish of Wootton, it lay at the western end of this elongated parish, 3.5km north-west of Wootton Fields villa and to the south-west of Hunsbury Iron Age hillfort, overlooking the Wootton Brook near its confluence with the River Nene. The site was partially

excavated between 1973 and 1981 by the Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit but the results have not been fully published (RCHME 1985, 39, plate 3 and fiche fig 38).

Several other minor sites of Roman date are also known along the valley of Wootton Brook, largely from finds of Roman material recovered either by chance or during fieldwalking. Of particular interest is a hoard of 634 coins in a pot found in a stone pit in 1842. The coins range in date from Gallienus (253-68AD) to Numerianus (283-4AD). The find spot was at c SP 758562, placing it on the north bank of Wootton Brook immediately east of the A508 road and some 800m west of the villa.

Finally, as already mentioned, other nearby Iron Age and Roman sites have been subject to archaeological investigation during 1999 by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in advance of a housing development at Courtenhall, Northampton.

1.6 Acknowledgements

The initial weekend of cleaning was carried out by a volunteer work force that included a majority of the individuals and groups that have been active in archaeology in Northamptonshire over recent decades. It was therefore a unique event in which all sections of the archaeological community played a significant part and worked together to achieve a common aim.

Particular thanks are due to the site developer, David Wilson Homes Ltd, for agreeing to a disruption in their work schedule to provide time for the completion of the cleaning and recording. The representatives of the on-site contractors were always of assistance, particularly Alan Hames, the Resident Engineer, of Bradgate Development Services Ltd, and Victoria McKeown, the Site Agent for Bowmer and Kirkland. The assistance provided included the re-routing of a lorry haul road, the provision of earth moving machinery for both the excavation and also for the later reburial of the villa remains, and for the moving of the large, displaced floor slabs from the bath suite.

Within the County Council, Northamptonshire Heritage in its role as curator was responsible both for the discovery and for negotiating with the developer to provide time to carry out the investigation. Northamptonshire Archaeology, as the local contracting organisation, provided tools and equipment, and a team to supervise the initial cleaning and recording.

The work force on the initial weekend included some other professional archaeologists, but was largely made up of local independent and amateur archaeologists. Individual thanks are due to Sandy Kidd and Glenn Foard of Northamptonshire Heritage for initiating the whole operation, and to Greg Phillips for his help on site in the first few days. Particular thanks are due to Roy Friendship Taylor and the other members of the Upper Nene Archaeological Society, and to those who came all the way from St. Albans. In addition, the help and advice provided by David Neal was particularly welcome. Other local archaeologists who assisted included Charmian and Paul Woodfield, and Gill Johnson. Martin Tingle helped both during the initial weekend and through the subsequent week of recording and excavation.

Dennis Jackson, who had been responsible for the initial discovery, assisted with the excavation of the Iron Age features, and has provided the report on the Iron Age pottery. Michael Webster and Alex Thorne of Northamptonshire Archaeology worked as volunteers on the initial weekend.

English Heritage must also be thanked for responding rapidly in providing financial support to Northamptonshire Archaeology for the site recording, geophysical survey and sample excavation, and for the preparation of the site archive and an assessment report.

2 THE EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE VILLA

2.1 Aims and objectives

Following the work conducted over the initial weekend a series of objectives were defined to provide a minimum record of the exposed archaeology and a broader context for the villa, and to inform discussions with interested parties in relation to the longer term future of these remains.

Given the nature of the discovery of the villa and the need for a rapid response, a formal brief was not prepared by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO), but the objectives, as stated below, were prepared in consultation with the CAO. To fulfil these objectives Northamptonshire Archaeology applied to English Heritage for archaeology grant funding.

The objectives, as stated in the grant application, were as follows:

1) Recording of exposed archaeological remains

   To compile a drawn plan of the remains exposed within the haul road, with additional cleaning to define areas of stratigraphic complexity or areas not initially cleaned. In addition, to carry out limited sample excavation of the flue and stoke hole area of the channelled hypocaust, and a nearby stone-lined drain, to recover stratified dating evidence.

2) Recording and sample excavation of the estate road service area

   The supervision of machine stripping of an additional 3.5m wide strip along the estate road corridor area, adjacent to the area excavated on the initial weekend, followed by recording and sampling of any exposed Roman and Iron Age features.

3) Geophysical survey of the villa environs

   To carry out detailed geophysical survey, using both resistivity and magnetometer techniques, to establish the extent of the villa and, if possible, the Iron Age activity, with geophysical scanning beyond this to determine the presence of any outlying structures.

4) Post-excavation consolidation and assessment

   The consolidation of the archaeological archive and the preparation of an assessment report in line with the recommendations of MAP2.

2.2 Geophysical Survey Peter Masters

2.2.1 Introduction

Detailed geophysical survey, using both magnetometer and resistivity techniques, was carried out in order to define the extent of the archaeological features directly associated with the Roman villa and the Iron Age occupation.

By the commencement of survey work the haul road and much of the estate road had already been stripped, and much of the area between them, and also areas to both the west and the east, was occupied by spoil heaps. The survey was therefore necessarily largely limited to areas to the west and east which had not been disturbed by construction work, although it was possible to extend the survey area partly across the construction zone at the northern end of the villa precinct (Fig 2). The area investigated spanned 185m east-west by 120m north-south.

2.2.2 Magnetometer survey

The magnetometer survey was carried out using two Geoscan Research FM36 Fluxgate Gradiometers. A total of 34 grids, each measuring 20m x 20m (total area 1.36ha), was surveyed in fields on either side of the haul and estate roads. Parallel traverses were made from south to north at walking pace, with individual readings taken at 0.25m intervals using a sample trigger for the rapid recording of data. The sensor alignment or balance was checked upon the completion of survey within each grid square and tilt error was maintained below +/-2nT per +/- 20 degree tilt.

2.2.3 Results

The data were analysed using the computer program Geoplot 2.01 and Geoplot for Windows (Beta v3.0). Low magnetism is represented as white and high magnetism as black in the resultant plot (Fig 2). The data were processed using zero mean functions to correct the unevenness of the plots in order to give a smoother graphical appearance. The data were also despiked, thereby reducing extreme readings sometimes caused by stray iron fragments and spurious effects due to the inherent magnetism of soils. Further numerical smoothing of the data was carried out using a low pass filter in order to reduce background noise levels and highlight features of archaeological significance.

The features located by the survey include the villa precinct ditch, a previously unknown pit alignment and a sparse scatter of curvilinear anomalies in the western area, and linear anomalies on the lower lying ground to the east. These will be described and discussed within the overall account of the archaeological evidence.

2.2.4 Resistivity survey

A Geoscan Research RM15 resistance meter with a Twin Electrode configuration in a mobile probe spacing of 0.5m was used to survey a total of 9 grids, each 10m x 20m (0.18 ha), with readings taken at 1m intervals. Zig-zag traverses were made from south to north and vice-versa at walking pace.

Resistivity survey was carried out on the narrow berms between the haul road and the spoil heaps, the areas immediately adjacent to the villa building, in order to detect further walls. The survey produced no significant results. The resultant plots are retained in archive.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

3.1 The Chronological Sequence

The excavation and survey work has identified three major periods of activity, as follows:

1) Iron Age settlement: (mid-1st century BC to mid-1st century AD)

A single pit containing scored ware attested to middle Iron Age occupation, but most of the evidence related to the late Iron Age. A roundhouse ring gully and associated lengths of minor ditch were later superseded by a group of shallow pits. This activity lay to the west of the main villa building, but a scatter of undated pits and a ditch to the immediate east of the villa suggest that the Iron Age activity probably continued beneath it. This occupation was potentially a direct precursor for the development of the villa.

In addition, geophysical survey located a probable pit alignment to the west of the excavated areas.

2) The Roman Villa: (late 1st century to 4th century AD)

A simple strip building was aligned north-south and stood within a near square, ditched enclosure. The ditch had been recut more than once and, in its earlier use, there was an internal timber palisade.

The building construction phases could not be resolved given the limited nature of the investigation. The extant structure comprised a strip building 29m long by 9m wide, with front and rear corridors given a total width 14.5m. A single room at the northern end of the range was provided with a channelled hypocaust, and it had been decorated with painted wall plaster. To the south of this there were probable remnants of cross walls indicating the presence of a further 3 rooms, but no floors or other internal features had survived.

Fragments of tufa and pieces of a broken-up *opus signinum* floor from the northern end of the site suggest that an early bath suite may have formed a northern wing. This was probably replaced by the southern bath suite, of which a single room, containing a pillared hypocaust, was located. An in-situ *opus signinum* floor had been removed from this room during the machine stripping of the topsoil and was recovered from the spoil heaps.

A series of hearths and ovens/furnaces lay to the immediate north of the building, and they appear to represent a final phase of industrial usage following the abandonment of at least parts of the main building, as evidenced by the presence of a small hearth in the northern room.

Some inhumation burials of uncertain date were recovered to both the north and west of the main building.

3) The medieval field system

There were well preserved earthworks of the ridge and furrow field system. The presence of a headland to the immediate north of the villa, and the absence of ridge and furrow directly over the building indicates that the field layout had respected its location. This may suggest that the building had still been at least partially standing during the use of the field system. It is therefore possible that through the medieval period it was a ruin that was periodically utilised as a convenient stone quarry, and this may account for most of the evident robbing of the walls.

3.2 The Iron Age Settlement

Features of Iron Age date were excavated along the line of the estate road to the west of the main villa building (Fig 4). Some pits to the east of the villa building, which were not excavated, may also be of the same date.

The earliest feature may be an isolated oval pit towards the southern end of the estate road (Fig 5,17). It was up to 1.35m in diameter by 0.30m deep. It contained most of the scored ware sherds recovered from the site, and this may suggest a middle Iron Age date for this feature.

To its north there was a broad curvilinear feature (19), c 3.0m wide, with an upper fill of stone-free, light brown sandy loam. A section was excavated to a depth of 0.30m, but at this level the water table was encountered and the feature was not bottomed. It is undated but seems most likely to have been a ditch of Iron Age date. It may be the same as a ditch further to the east that ran under, and terminated to the east of, the villa (Figs 4 and 6).

Soil stripping to natural along the estate road to the south of the villa precinct was observed, and no ditches crossed the line of the estate road. There is therefore no evidence to indicate that ditches 19 and 146 formed the northern arm of a large ditched enclosure.

The main focus of Iron Age activity comprised the eastern half of a roundhouse ring ditch, other associated ditches, and a scatter of pits, at least some of which post-dated the roundhouse (Fig 5). The roundhouse ditch was 0.25-0.45m deep, and had been recut once (5, 23, 9 and 10). It enclosed an area 10.60m in diameter, but no structural evidence for a building had survived. The 2.50m wide entrance causeway faced slightly south of east. The ditch terminal fill was grey and rich in comminuted charcoal and contained burnt cobbles, measuring 150-200mm, and some pottery. Pit 8 lay within the roundhouse, but might be contemporary with the later pits. It was sub-square in plan and vertical-sided, 0.70m diameter by 0.45m deep, and was filled with grey soils containing burnt cobbles. Lengths of shallow linear or curvilinear ditch lay to the south (11, 13/24 and 15), north (4) and east (28 and 25) of the roundhouse, and activity clearly continued beyond the eastern limit of excavation.

A small group of five circular pits (6, 7, 26, 27 and 38) represent a later phase of activity; they cut both the roundhouse ditch and the ditches to its north and east. They ranged from 1.0m to 2.1m in diameter and up to 0.40m deep. They were filled with brown loam containing little in the way of stone or other inclusions. Two were extensively excavated (7 and 26), and both produced good assemblages.

The roundhouse, the linear ditches and the pits are all dated to the late Iron Age by pottery assemblages containing globular bowls with burnished surfaces (see below). In addition, ditch 28 produced a single sherd of "belgic" wheel-thrown pottery, while a few further residual sherds came from later features. The Iron Age activity may therefore be dated to between the middle of the 1st century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD. Some of the features listed above did produce the odd sherd of Roman pottery from surface cleaning, but in all instances this seemed most likely to derive from later contamination.

The scatter of pits to the east of the villa were not excavated (Fig 6). They are therefore undated, but the lack of evident occupation debris in their exposed fills suggests an Iron Age date. A complete upper stone from a beehive quern was recovered from pit 145.

Further features of possible Iron Age date were located by geophysical survey. A curvilinear ditch cut by the northern arm of villa precinct ditch, and further similar ditches to the west of this, may relate to the

late Iron Age settlement (Figs 1 and 2). In addition, there is a probable pit alignment running south-west to north-east. The southern part, beyond the villa precinct, was very clearly defined, while its continuation within the precinct was less clear. The geophysical survey also suggests a possible continuation to the north beyond the villa precinct. No pits were observed on the exposed length of the estate road in this area, but they may have been missed in a patchy natural background of shattered ironstone and sands.

3.3 The Roman Villa

3.3.1 The villa enclosure

A combination of geophysical survey and excavation defined the ditch system forming the villa precinct. It was a near square, but slightly trapezoidal, enclosure measuring 67-80m N-S by 73m E-W (Figs 1-3). The ditch was seen in three places: at the northern and southern ends of the haul road, and at the southern end of the estate road. The machine stripping of the relevant area at the northern end of the estate road was not observed.

The ditch was partially excavated in a machine cut section at the southern end of the estate road, where it was cut through tenacious clay natural (Figs 5 and 7, and Plate 11). It was excavated to a depth of 1.0m, the level of the water table.

There was at least a three-phase sequence. The earliest ditch (Fig 7, 33) lay on the southern, outer, side and was in excess of 3.0m wide. The secondary and upper fills were brown to light grey brown clayey silts with few inclusions. There was a probable recut (also numbered 33) with a light grey brown secondary fill and a brown clayey upper fill. No finds, building or other occupation debris was present in these ditch fills.

The early ditches were probably broadly contemporary with a length of steep-sided, linear slot, up to 0.90m deep by 0.50m wide, filled with light brown clayey silt containing some pieces of limestone and ironstone (32). This slot may well have held a timber palisade set within the line of the contemporary ditch, but no evidence for the former presence of timbers was recovered in the short length excavated.

The palisade slot had been partly cut away by the final recut, a V-shaped ditch, 3.6m wide and probably c 1.5m deep (31). The secondary fill was a light grey brown clayey silt with few inclusions apart from the occasional fragment of ceramic tile, and this was overlain by a distinctive black layer comprising charcoal and burnt soils, evidently tipped from the inner edge of the ditch. Above this there was a brown clayey silt with gravel, and then a more substantial layer of blackened soils rich in comminuted charcoal, again tipped from the inner edge of the ditch. These layers of burnt debris may well have derived from the furnace room of the bath suite, which would have stood to the north-east.

The final fill was a dark grey clayey loam containing patchy deposits of mortar and quantities of building debris, particularly ceramic roof tile pieces and fragments of limestone and ironstone. This material probably came from the demolition of the villa. The south-eastern corner of the precinct ditch lay within the haul road, and here the exposed fills also contained quantities of building debris.

The northern arm of the ditch within the haul road was not excavated, but on the surface of the ironstone natural it appeared to comprise a ditch only 1.5m wide (Fig 4, 159). The exposed fill was a greyish brown sandy loam containing some ironstone chips and the occasional fragment of limestone, but no building debris. A second ditch lay 11.5m to the north, and this was 2.0-2.5m wide. It lay just beyond the northern

limit of the geophysical survey, and its extent was therefore not established. An inhumation burial (156) of unknown date had been inserted into the upper ditch fill.

3.3.2 The villa building

The walls

Virtually all of the standing walls had been levelled in antiquity, so what typically survived were either the wall foundations or the backfill of the robber trenches.

The principal lengths of wall foundation exposed comprised the main eastern wall of the villa (Fig 6, 118/149), the parallel outer wall of the eastern corridor (120), and a short length of the southern wall adjacent to Room 2. In addition, lengths of probable external boundary walls lay to the north-east of the main building (133 and 136).

The foundations of all these walls comprised slabs of mixed ironstone and limestone typically set transversely to the wall line and steeply pitched, although occasional squarer blocks had been flat laid. The outer stones were typically larger and more regularly laid than the core and, with the exception of the outer wall of the eastern corridor, they were set in a sandy mortar. Machine stripping for the haul road had frequently damaged the wall foundations when the machine bucket had occasionally caught and lifted pitched foundation stones, which had inevitably also lifted adjacent stones.

The single length of surviving standing wall lay on the western side of Room 1 (130 and Plate 4). The basal course was 0.93m wide and the second course was inset on the western side by 0.10m. It was faced in flat-laid, squared blocks of mixed ironstone and limestone, typically 200-400mm long and 100-120mm thick. The core was of irregular small fragments of ironstone and limestone, often steeply pitched, and bonded with a cream coloured lime mortar.

To the south of Room 1 and in the exposed part of the western corridor, the standing wall had been robbed. The robber trench fill was exposed but not excavated, although the foundations presumably still survived below this. The fill typically comprised small chips ironstone and limestone in a matrix containing decayed mortar. The limits were often poorly defined, and the definition of the original wall lines was particularly uncertain to the south of room 1.

The building plan

The villa appears to have comprised a simple strip building, aligned near north-south, but with front and rear corridors. There may originally have been a separate or abutting north range, probably a bath suite, while in a later arrangement a new bath suite probably formed an abutting southern wing aligned east-west. However, there is no doubt that much complexity of construction and development has not been seen as a result of the partial exposure of the building and the limited investigation of, in particular, the northern end of room 1 and the industrial area beyond this.

The core of the building comprised a single range 29.0m long by 9.0m wide (internal dimensions of 27.0m by 7.0m). Eastern and western corridors, each c 2.0m wide internally, increased the overall width to 14.5m, while the addition of the bath suite at the southern end gave an overall length of 33.5m.

The main range comprised a northern room (1), containing a channelled hypocaust, and possibly three further rooms; a narrow corridor (room 3), a slightly broader room (4), and an end room (5) perhaps 11m

long and associated with an eastern entrance porch attached to the adjacent corridor. At the southern end of the range there was a small room containing a pillared hypocaust that had supported an *opus signinum* floor (room 2). This hot room presumably formed the eastern end of a small bath suite, but the remainder was not exposed.

Room 1

This room was rectangular, c. 8.5m long by 6.8m wide. The wall at the northern end had been totally robbed, and was presumably more shallowly founded than the west wall, but its former location was defined by the stone-lined drain which had probably run along the outer wall face.

The room contained a channelled hypocaust system based on a central west-east flue with an opening through the western wall. It was well preserved across the south-western quarter of the room, and largely

lost to the north (Plates 5 and 6).

The hypocaust system was formed by a series of rectangular and triangular piers faced along the channels with up to four surviving courses of flat-laid medium fragments of roughly squared limestone and ironstone, and with fills comprising mixed soil, mortar and smaller fragments and pieces of ironstone and limestone. The main flue was 0.45m wide by 0.35m deep, and immediately inside the western wall the faces of the lining stones were discoloured red by intense heating. However, a box section to the west into the presumed stokehole reached natural without finding any trace of burnt debris, and it must be assumed that the stokehole deposits had been removed by later activity, possibly at the addition of the western corridor. The side flues were typically 0.25m wide by 0.20-0.25 deep.

During cleaning and in the limited excavation of the fill of the flues, fragments of painted wall plaster and fragments from an *opus signinum* floor 20mm thick, were recovered. No *tessarae* were recovered from this room or elsewhere on the site.

When the room fell into disuse the piers of the hypocaust system in the northern half of the room were at least partially removed and there was a layer of demolition debris comprising mixed mortar and small fragments of stone and ceramic tile. This material also partly concealed the stone-lined drain (Plate 4), indicating both that the northern wall of room 1 had been removed, and that the drain had fallen into disuse. Deposits relating to the final stage of industrial activity overlay this demolition layer, and are discussed below.

Rooms 3-5

Between rooms 1 and 2 it was difficult to determine the nature of the room arrangement. Any floor levels had been lost, and all that remained were ill-defined areas of mixed soils that represented the extent of both robbed walls and the fills of cut features. The most likely interpretation is that there had been three rooms in this area.

Room 3
This lay to the immediate south of room 1. At only c 1.5m wide internally it would have to have been either a corridor, presumably providing access between the front and rear corridors, or a narrow ante-chamber to room 1.

Room 4
This room would have been c 3.0m wide internally. A concentration of small fragments of ironstone

appeared to be within the fill of a narrow linear feature, 0.40 wide (124), running obliquely across the south-western corner of the room. This was perhaps a drain or the fill of an earlier gully.

Room 5
The southernmost room was either 11.0m long or evidence for a partition dividing it into two chambers had been totally lost. If a porch or flight of steps had been attached to the eastern corridor (see below), it may have formed the entrance hall and main public room of the villa. Two irregular concentrations of stone against the external face of the wall foundation may have been bases for columns or piers flanking an elaborate doorway.

To the north two linear settings of small ironstone pieces, set 0.25m apart (123), may have been a drain but, as with the similar feature in Room 4, it might relate to an earlier phase of activity.

To the south the exposed natural was overlain by a remnant layer or deposit comprising ceramic tile fragments and small pieces of broken-up *opus signinum* in a matrix of brown loam mixed with pale cream mortar (125). It was uncertain whether its curving shape was genuine, or whether it was merely a remnant

of a formerly more extensive deposit perhaps associated with either the construction or the demolition of the adjacent bath suite.

The eastern corridor

The whole of the eastern corridor lay within the exposed area, although the wall foundations were lost at the northernmost end. It was 2.0m wide internally and lay across ground just beginning to fall away to the east, so that the narrower outer wall foundations were more deeply founded than the broader inner wall of the main building.

Towards the south the footings were offset to the east by 1.2m for a length of c 4.0m. This presumably formed a rectangular porch, with a 2.0m wide opening, probably the main eastern access to the villa.

The western corridor

Only the northern end of a western corridor was located. The northern and western walls were defined by a robber trench; it was not excavated. Most of the corridor lay beyond the stripped area.

The northern range?

The industrial use of the northern area appears to post-date the demise of Room 1 (see above), and as a result of the extent of this later activity there was little to indicate the earlier usage of the area. However, some clue may be gained from layers to the north-west of Room 1 which pre-dated the oven/furnace (140), and also by the presence of a stone-lined drain (115) running along the northern side of the main building.

A disordered scatter of fragments and blocks of ironstone and limestone continued beyond the limit of excavation. It overlay an extensive but patchy layer of orange brown sandy mortar containing chips and small fragments of ironstone. The rubble was clearly building debris, and contained at least two large pieces from squared tufa blocks. In addition, a piece of *opus signinum* from a broken up floor came from a pit within the road corridor to the west (Fig 4, 2). These pieces all lay at the opposite end of the building from the southern bath suite, and they may therefore denote the former presence of a bath suite forming a northern range.

The stone-lined drain running across the full width of the main building had clearly served the area to the west, and so may have been associated with a northern bath suite (Plate 4). A short length was excavated, showing the drain to be 0.45m wide by 0.25m deep, and lined with two courses of flat-laid limestone slabs. A primary fill of fine silty loam was overlain by a mixed fill containing building debris of mortar, fragments of limestone and ironstone, and pieces of both ceramic and slate roof tile. To the east the drain ran towards the probable terminal of a substantial ditch, lying to the south of wall 136, but the detail of this area was not determined due to the confusion of building rubble filling the ditch terminal.

Room 2

The presence of a bath suite forming a southern range was denoted by a rectangular chamber (Room 2) containing the pillared hypocaust of a hot room which had been floored with *opus signinum*.

At sub-floor level the room measured c 3.4m N-S by 2.2m E-W. The northern and western walls were quite well preserved, but the eastern and southern walls had been largely lost (Plate 7). Three rows of four pilae tiles survived in-situ. Above this part of the floor had been in-situ but was pulled out by the mechanical

excavator prior to the recognition of its significance (it had been assumed to be a concrete floor of recent date). The remains of the floor were later recovered from the spoil heaps; it comprised large ceramic tiles, 580mm square x 60mm thick, supporting an *opus signinum* floor 100mm thick with a 40mm deep quarter-square moulding (Plate 8). Large quantities of box flue tile fragments were scattered in the machine disturbed soils in and around this room, and a sample was retained.

The stokehole was not recovered, but it may have lain to the south where the ground level had been truncated by later activity.

3.3.3 The industrial area

Beyond the north-eastern corner of the main building two length of wall were located. A N-S length of wall foundation in pitched limestone, but badly disturbed in machine stripping (Fig 6, 133), continued the line of the eastern wall of the main building. There were no other associated walls and it is presumed to have been an eastern boundary wall, although it may have been a levelled remnant of the eastern wall of the postulated early phase northern wing. A further length of pitched stone wall foundation ran off at an oblique angle to the east (136). It is presumed to be a boundary wall set on the northern edge of a large drainage ditch.

Cleaning of the area to the immediate north of the villa building revealed a complex palimpsest of features and layers that could not be fully understood in plan alone. However, from the presence of areas of reddened and blackened soils and stones, often rich with comminuted charcoal, it was evident that there had been at least four large-scale ovens/furnaces or hearths in this area.

The only clearly defined feature was a square masonry base, measuring 1.70m by 1.55m (137). It was faced in rough-hewn limestone and ironstone, with a core of mixed stone rubble bonded with an orange brown sandy mortar. At least three courses survived; the lowest visible course was offset. The northern corner had been cut away by a later feature.

To the south-east there was a circular oven/furnace, c 1.2m in diameter, with a stoke-hole to the west (138, Plate 9). The chamber had been lined with flat-laid limestone slabs set in a clay matrix, and these had been scorched bright red. The fill of the stoke-hole contained much comminuted charcoal.

To the north-west there was probably a further circular oven/furnace (140). Only a short length of a lining of flat-laid limestone slabs was exposed, and the rest of its extent was defined by a layer of charcoal rich, burnt soil covering an area up to 2.8m in diameter. A third oven/furnace may have lain to the north-east, where an oval area of dark grey soils was bounded to the south by a scatter of burnt limestone slabs (143).

To the south-west there was a surface of large, flat-laid limestone slabs with heavily worn surfaces (139, Plate 10), measuring approximately 3.0m by 2.0m. The southern edge was clearly defined, but to the north it was obscured by a layer of dark grey, fine silty clays and patches of reddened soil.

The date of this activity relative to the main villa building has not been firmly established, but there is evidence that use of the area continued after the abandonment of Room 1 (see above). It is therefore possible that this industrial activity represents a final phase of use, or reuse, following either the abandonment of the villa as a main residence, or at least a major refurbishment that had involved the removal of Room 1.

A layer of dark, charcoal rich soil across the northern half of Room 1 covered both the drain and the backfilled flues of the hypocaust. Within this area there was a small hearth, 0.50-0.60 diameter, comprising hardened and blackened soils and fine grey ash. It contained small flecks of copper alloy and part of a crucible was also found in this area, indicating that copper alloy casting was being carried. Small quantities of iron slag recovered around the north-east corner of the building also suggest that iron working was also being carried out.

3.3.4 Other ditches and pits

A number of ditches and pits of Roman date lay to the west, within the estate road (Fig 5). A linear ditch (12/20) ran along the western edge of the area for at least 55m, but at an oblique angle to both the villa building. It was 1.70m wide and in excess of 0.40m deep. The upper fill was variable, but in places there were concentrations of building debris, particularly roof tile fragments, and deposits of oyster shells, the latter perhaps suggesting that this was occupation debris and not final demolition debris. To the north the ditch probably returned eastward, and there were other minor ditches in this area (1 and 3). There was also a large circular pit (2), 2.80m in diameter by 0.45m deep. It contained a substantial deposit of occupation debris including, pottery, animal bone, oyster shell and even fragments of *opus signinum* from a broken-up floor, already cited as possible evidence for the presence of a demolished northern bath suite.

A substantial ditch, up to 4.0m wide, ran right across the estate road (40/22). During machine excavation the uppermost fills were seen to be of recent origin. It had therefore evidently survived as an earthwork, and was initially presumed to be a recent field boundary. However, geophysical survey showed that to the west it ran into the precinct ditch, while the eastern end bifurcated into smaller ditches containing Roman pottery. This ditch may therefore be more likely to be a substantial ditch of Roman date, and was perhaps associated with the postulated northern bath suite, perhaps for water supply rather than drainage as it lay upslope of the villa.

3.3.5 Inhumation burials

Inhumation burials were present in three specific locations; the industrial area to the immediate north of the villa building; over the ditches at the northern end of the villa precinct; and to the west of the villa building alongside the estate road.

Two inhumation burials were identified during cleaning of the northern industrial area, in both instances the exposed bones were covered over and the burials were left in the ground (Fig 6). Both were probably adults, and they appeared to be extended and supine burials. One was aligned W-E (141), only the feet were uncovered, and the other S-N (142), only the skull was exposed. In both instances a grave cut could only be vaguely discerned against the complex background stratigraphy, and it is possible that there are further burials in this area. They seem most likely to be no earlier than late Roman in date, but this has not been determined.

Two inhumations had been partially exposed and damaged during soil stripping at the northern end of the site. They were both fully excavated and lifted as this area lay at the limit of the area of agreed preservation (Fig 4). Both were aligned roughly N-S; one was late adolescent (156) and the other an adult (157). Both had been interred prone, face down.

At least a further three inhumations lay at the eastern edge of the estate road corridor, all apparently aligned W-E (Fig 4). An adult skull was pulled from the trench section during machine stripping (36), but no further human bones could be seen either in the section or on the spoil heap. It is unlikely that the remainder of the burial was removed without recognition, so the skull either belonged with a W-E burial still largely in-situ or was a detached skull. Further to the south humerii and shoulder blades were recognised in the trench side a couple of weeks after completion of the excavation. They indicate the presence of two adjacent supine inhumations aligned W-E (160 and 161), and the surviving remains have been left in-situ. Their skulls may have been removed by machine excavation but, given the time delay before their recognition and evident collapse or disturbance of the trench face in this area, it is possible that someone had removed them in the intervening period.

3.4 The medieval field system

A general survey of the medieval field system and the arrangement of the ridge and furrow, was compiled by David Hall (1973). This shows a junction of N-S and W-E headlands between Hall's field 1 and field 5 lying at approximately the location of the villa.

Unfortunately, by the time the presence of the villa had been recognised much damage had been done to the ridge and furrow earthworks, so it was not possible to produce a full survey in the area of the villa precinct. However, the surviving areas to the immediate west and east of the haul and estate road corridor were both sketch plotted and plotted from the geophysical survey results.

To the west of the villa precinct the furrows were aligned N-S. They were also aligned N-S to the east, but here there was a headland to the north against an adjoining system of E-W furrows. The western end of this headland had been lost, but it clearly lay within the northern part of the villa precinct. It was also noted by Dennis Jackson that in the area of the villa itself there as an extensive area of level ground, and this was later still evident in the undisturbed area to the immediate west of the exposed villa building.

It would therefore appear that there was a roughly square area devoid of ridge and furrow earthworks located over the villa and at the junction of two field systems. This implies that the medieval field system had respected the presence of the villa. One possibility is that at the formation of the field system the villa still survived, at least partially, as an upstanding ruin. If so, then much of the evident extensive robbing of the walls may have occurred during the medieval period, with the stone probably going to the houses and farms of the present village and parish. This would also explain why ditch 22/40 on the estate road appeared to be Roman in date whilst possibly surviving in earthwork until relatively recently.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 **The Iron Age pottery** Dennis Jackson

A total of 101 sherds (weighing 3.89kg) of later middle Iron Age or late Iron Age pottery was recovered from pits and ditches (14 contexts) located to the west of the Roman villa. With the exception of one sherd all the pottery was handmade. The pottery has been analysed in accordance with the recently published guidelines (PCRG 1997).

4.1.1 Fabrics

Virtually all of the sherds contained shell and there is no clear distinction between some of the fabrics listed below:-

TABLE 1: Quantification of the fabrics

Code	Description	Number	Weight (g)	% by weight
SH.1	Rare or sparse amounts of fine shell	58	1675	43.0
SH.2	Medium shell	14	615	15.8
SH.3	Moderate amounts of coarse shell	7	578	14.9
SH.4	Pounded medium shell (1 vessel)	5	42	1.0
SH.5	Shell and various stone grits	4	216	5.5
IO/SH	Ironstone grits and shell	13	774	19.8

Sparse grog occurs in a few sherds in association with fine shell, but it is not the dominant inclusion often found in assemblages of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery. The same is true of quartz, where although the pottery at Wootton is generally hard, the quartz may have occurred naturally in the clay. The site at Wootton is in an area where clay is readily available for pottery production.

4.1.2 Forms

No profiles can be reconstructed and most of the 15 rim sherds in the assemblage are too small to reliably estimate the diameter of the vessels. The most numerous sherds are from thick walled jars, with rim sherds that derive from bipartite vessels with interned upper walls or concave necks. There are rim sherds from three globular bowls, a form common in the later middle Iron Age assemblages at the nearby hillfort at Hunsbury (Fell 1936), as well as at other local sites of this period at Hardingstone (Woods 1969) and Moulton Park (Williams 1974).

A small rim sherd from context 28 is the only example of wheel-turned pottery from the Iron Age features. It is from a carinated bowl or beaker and similar in form to a rim sherd found at Aldwincle, also in association with hand made pottery (Jackson 1977, Fig 14,79).

4.1.3 Decoration and surface finish

Scoring of middle Iron Age type occurs on the surface of roughly 10% of the material, but this all derived from a single vessel from an isolated pit well to the south of the roundhouse.

Two rim sherds have highly burnished surfaces, and similar examples occur at Hunsbury and amongst late Iron Age pottery at Wakerley (Jackson and Ambrose 1978 fig 36,20) and Towcester (Lambrick 1980 fig 22,1).

The wheel-thrown sherd referred to above has two parallel lines on the neck, and this is the only example of decoration on the pottery apart from scoring.

4.1.4 Discussion

The assemblage from Wootton can be compared to material from Hardingstone, a site only 1 km to the north, and to that from Moulton Park. On both of these sites however, pottery of this type was succeeded by "belgic" wheel made pottery, and it is uncertain if hand made pottery continued in use at Wootton until the Roman period, or if there may have been a period of abandonment. Because of this, it is not possible to date the Iron Age pottery from Wootton any closer than somewhere between the middle of the 1st century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD.

4.2 The Romano British pottery Tora Hylton

A total of 404 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing nearly 10kg, was recovered from 30 separate contexts. Much of it was fragmented, weathered and abraded. The majority was collected during cleaning, and cannot be assigned to closely defined contexts, although much of this was clearly within extensive soil layers containing demolition debris. Small quantities came from the excavation of short lengths of the flue, stoke hole and drain associated with room 1, and further quantities came from the excavation of pits and lengths of ditch in the road corridor to the west of the building.

The assemblage spans the first to fourth centuries, but with second and third centuriy material predominating. It has been recorded on a computer-base system, which includes sherd count and weight by fabric type; and was analyzed using the major classifications defined by E. MacRobert for Ashton Roman Town (unpublished).

4.2.1 Fabrics and Forms

The major fabric groupings can be summarised as follows:

Fabric A	Grogged-tempered wares.
Fabric B	Shell-tempered wares.
Fabric C	Sandy greywares.
Fabric D	Sandy oxidised wares.
Fabric E	Mortaria

The assemblage comprises local and non-local table wares (bowls, dishes, flagon, cups, beakers) and kitchen wares (storage/cooking vessels, colander and mortaria), together with a small quantity of Samian.

4.2.2 Chronology

Early Roman Pottery

The earliest fabric type is soft grog-tempered ware, displaying features associated with Gallo-Belgic type wares of the 1st century AD. Small fragments were recovered as residual finds in Roman contexts, and the only identifiable form is a rim fragment from a butt-beaker decorated with cordons. A further sherd was recovered from a feature of Iron Age date, as discussed above. Together they support the argument for the probable continuity of occupation from the late Iron Age onward.

Early shell-gritted forms are represented by a single channel-rimmed jar decorated with oblique incisions on the rim and a selection of body sherds decorated with fine horizontal rilling on the exterior surface.

Late 1st and early 2nd century material is represented by a small number of undiagnostic hard-fired grog-tempered wares, these may be from storage jars. Twelve sherds of samian span the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Identifiable forms include, hemispherical bowls (Dr. 37, Webster 1996, 47), a dish decorated with a barbotine motif of trailed leaves (Dr. 36, ibid 1996, 46) and a series of cups (Dr.27, Dr.33 and Dr.33A, ibid 1996, 38 & 45).

Later Roman Pottery

The majority of diagnostic pottery can be assigned to this period. Greyware forms predominate and are mainly represented by necked and neckless jars, together with a body sherd from a poppy-head beaker. Locally manufactured Nene Valley Grey Wares include, a shallow bowl with a plain up-right rim, `dog dishes' and a bowl with rounded rim (Howe et all (nd), fig 2, 17).

There are two sherds of soft-pink-grogged ware. This fabric tends to be abundant in west Northamptonshire, north Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire, and dates from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Black-burnished type ware is represented by a `dog dish' and flanged bowls; all display vestiges of a burnished motif.

Other diagnostic pieces include a small selection of local and non-local colour coated wares. Local wares manufactured in the Nene Valley include, a folded beaker (Howe et al, fig 5, 52) and a shallow dish with plain rim (Ibid, fig 7, 87) of fourth century date. There are 13 sherds of non-local colour-coated wares from the Oxford region. Two pieces represent samian copies of Dragondorf types 31 (Young 45 fig 58) and Dr. 38 (Young 1977), while other forms include a necked jar (Young type C18, fig 54) and a flanged bowl with upright rim (Young type C51, fig 390). In addition two fragments of mortaria (Youngs C97/C98, ?C100) may also be provenanced to the Oxford kilns.

FABRIC TYPES	CONTEXT NUMBER																							
	GULLY		PIT		PIT		PIT		DITCH		GULLY		DITCH		DITCH		LAYER		DITCH		DITCH		PIT	
	1		2		7		8		12/20		13		16		18		21		22		27		155	
ROMAN POTTERY	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wg	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Amphorae			1	358					1	60														
Black B. ware									1	21														
Greyware	16	157	12	348			1	145	9	288	3	55			2	34	1	17	3	116				
Grog-tempered									1	45					1	46								
Mortaria			1	12																				
Nene Valley C.C.			3	33					1	37			1	1					1	24				
Oxford Ware C.C.			6	164					2	49														
Oxidised sandy			1	7																	1	30		
Samian			2	42																				
Shell-gritted			7	444	1	6			5	62	1	23	1	10	7	217	1	32	3	292			1	39
Soft-pink grog							1	324							1	95			2	55				
Unidentified																								
Total	16	157	33	1408	1	6	2	469	20	562	4	78	2	11	11	392	2	49	9	487	1	30	1	39

FABRIC	CLEANING EAST CORRIDOR		CLEANING INDUSTRIAL AREA N. OF BUILDING		CLEANING NORTH-EAST DITCH		ROOM 1 - FLUES STOKE HOLE AND DRAIN		BURIAL		CLEANING OVER VILLA BUILDING		UNSTRATIFIED		OVER ALL TOTAL*	
	100/110		101/105/107/108		102/109		112/113/114/115		156		104/111/ROOMS 1&2		U/S			
ROMAN POTTERY	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt
Amphorae															2	418
Black B. ware			1	40	1	7					1	11	6	249	10	328
Greyware	11	142	15	505	35	665	15	182			49	766	13	274	185	3694
Grog-tempered	5	228	2	25	7	125	5	219			11	597	3	101	35	1386
Mortaria											1	40	2	63	4	115
Nene Valley C.C.			5	104	2	13	4	124					1	25	18	361
Oxford Ware C.C.							2	9			3	23			13	245
Oxidised sandy	1	15			2	16	3	96			2	7			10	171
Samian	1	2			4	19			1	3	3	50	1	15	12	131
Shell-gritted	10	132	13	225	17	342	9	197	3	8	17	338	10	188	106	2555
Soft-pink grog															4	474
Unidentified					2	7									2	7
Total	28	519	36	899	70	1194	38	827	4	11	87	1832	36	915	401	9885

* Not including 3 sherds of post-medieval pottery weighing 105gm.

3.3 **Roman building materials** Tora Hylton and Andy Chapman

In total 28 kg of fragmented tile was retrieved. Much of it comprises large identifiable pieces that display very little sign of abrasion and ware, and smaller fragments were generally discarded on site. In addition, most of the tile and *opus signinum* floor of Room 2, which had been pulled out by machine excavation prior to the recognition of the villa, was also recovered. A small quantity of *opus signinum* was also recovered from Room 1, along with some fragments of painted wall plaster

The assemblage has been briefly scanned to determine fabric, and tile types have been identified by the presence of unique features: the upright flange on a *tegula*; the curvature of an *imbrex* and the combed keying lines and perforations of box flue tiles.

Fabrics

Three main fabric types were observed, although there may be other slight variations:

1) Shell-tempered fabrics containing abundant crushed fossil shell and fired to a pale buff colour; this type is predominant. A similar fabric has been recorded at Quinton (Friendship-Taylor 1979, 121ff). Friendship-Taylor suggest that it displays similarities to the material produced at the Harrold Kilns in Bedfordshire (Brown 1974, 9).

2) Sandy fabrics with varying quantities of fine-medium sand, which are generally orange in colour. A small amount has a distinct grey core.

3) Grog-tempered, soft with sparse inclusions, fired to a buff/pink colour with dark-light grey core. This fabric displays similarities to soft-pink-grog type fabrics and resembles Milton Keynes Fabric type five (Zeepvat, 1987, 120) and Quintons Fabric type d (Friendship-Taylor 1979, 123).

Roof tile and slate

A total of 81 fragments, weighing 12.73kg, are identified as ceramic roof tile, represented by *tegulae* (41 fragments) and *imbrices* (40 fragments). There are no complete examples and it is not possible to obtain any dimensions. Examples of tegulae manufactured from all three fabric types are present. The exterior surfaces on 10 fragments of roof tile are coated in a maroon/red coloured wash/paint; this occurs only on sand tempered *tegulae* and *imbrices* fired to a pale colour. Three pieces of *tegulae* contain nail holes towards their edge, perforated before firing.

One fragment of *imbrex* is decorated with a combed wavey-line motif.

Fragments of roofing slate in a fine grained sandstone were recovered from the excavated area in the western corridor at the opening of the hypocaust flue into room 1. The larger fragments indicate minimum dimensions of 400mm square by 25mm thick, with a single central perforation; in one example there is a fragment of an iron nail within the perforation.

Hypocaust tile

The majority of box flue tile (*tubulus*) were retrieved from the demolition debris in and around the pillared hypocaust in Room 2 (Broderibb 1979, 148).

A total of 32 fragments, weighing 8.57kg were recovered. They are all in a shell-tempered fabric, fired to a pale buff colour. It is not possible to obtain full dimensions, although two fragments provided a depth measurement of c.120-130mm. Fourteen pieces were furnished with `oval' side apertures that have been

manufactured by hand rather that cut with a knife. Combed keying lines were found on 20 fragments; the patterns produced vary. There are no examples that have been roller stamped.

Structural tile

Tile of this type is associated with the construction of floor supports in hypocaust systems. Three displaced *pilae* tiles from room 2 were retrieved. There are two complete examples, one sand tempered, measuring 180x175x30mm and with a signature in the form of a triple-lined cross, and a shell tempered example, which is slightly bigger, measuring 210x220x32mm.

The surviving part of the pillared hypocaust in room 2 comprised three rows of four *pilae*. Two rows comprised columns standing 3 pilae high, 140mm, formed from tiles 30mm thick and 215mm square. These were set on larger base tiles, also 30mm thick but 290mm square. The base tiles were set on a mortar bed and there was 25-30mm of pink mortar between the tiles. The northernmost row was of the same build but the *pilae* were rectangular, being made up of columns of single and half tiles.

In addition, a rectangular base tile with square *pilae* tiles still attached was recovered from spoil in the vicinity of Room 2. The base tile measures 370mm x 250mm and is extensively decorated with a range of incised graffiti (Fig 8). The principal group comprises several animal figures of various sizes. The largest appears to be a red deer, and the smaller running animals may also be deer. The other graffiti comprise an oval enclosing a row of dots, and a possible crude phallus.

CONTEXT	TILE TYPES: NUMBER/WEIGHT										TOTAL
	TEGULA		IMBREX		BOX FLUE		PILAE/BRICK		UNCERTAIN		
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
2	3	618	6	444							1062
8	1	414									414
12	2	665							1	88	753
14	1	490									490
18	2	442	2	230			2	582	4	135	1389
20	2	130	2	291					3	148	569
21	6	851	4	341					5	206	1398
100			3	311							311
101	3	601	3	315							916
102	1	236							2	79	315
104	3	230	3	224					4	136	590
105	9	1099	15	1331	3	239			11	380	3049
107									1	65	65
109					2	95					95
110	2	62									62
111	3	238							2	192	430
115	2	506	1	437							943
Room 1			2	279					2	243	522
Room 2					26	7941	3	4816			12,757
U/S	1	1467	1	474	1	291					2232
TOTAL	41	8049	40	4677	32	8566	5	5398	33	1672	28,362

The painted wall plaster

A small quantity of painted wall plaster was recovered from the fills of the channelled hypocaust in Room 1. The pieces are predominantly white or red, although there is a single piece in yellow and two small fragments in black, but there is insufficient to reconstruct the decorative scheme. Some fragments in mottled red over a white background suggest the presence of marble effect dado. In the few pieces with bordering colours, red beside white or yellow, the borders are all distinctly curved, and there are no pieces indicating the presence of line and stripe frameworks for rectilinear panels. The decorative scheme would therefore appear to have comprised large-scale figurative images

3.4 Other finds Tora Hylton

In total there are 48 individually recorded finds in six material types. They include items recovered during cleaning and also from a metal detector survey across both the site and the associated spoil. The paucity of metal items on the site is highlighted by the low recovery rate from the metal detector survey.

The assemblage includes a considerable number of iron nails, together with a small number of coins, and a small number of other items including tools (knife), household equipment (quernstone and glass tablewares) and jewellery (bracelet). The presence of copper alloy nodules and lead driblets (the latter coming from the industrial area to the north), together with a base fragment from a crucible demonstrate the presence of small-scale metal working.

MATERIAL	NUMBER
Copper alloy	14
Iron	15
lead	7
Glass	10
Ceramic (crucible)	1
Stone (quern)	1

Copper alloy

Copper alloy objects worthy of note include, fragments from a bracelet (ribbon strip type) and a hook which may have originated as part of a steelyard. A similar example is known from Richborough (Bush-Fox 1949, plate XXXVIII, 133). The coins are catalogued below.

Iron

With the exception of a single knife blade fragment, the entire assemblage comprises nails (19 examples) and rod fragments (2 pieces). The nails vary in length from 43-90mm; one may have been used as a door stud.

Lead

Identifiable objects include a conical weight, and a post-medieval musket ball. The rest of the assemblage

comprises off-cuts from sheet metal suggesting that fabrication took place on the site, while molten driblets indicate occasional melting.

Glass

There are 14 fragments of vessel glass and a single fragment of window glass. There are ten individual vessels including mould blown bowls and jars, fragments of handles from jugs and bowls and body sherds from bottles (?square). Decorative techniques include cut decoration set just below the rim (pers comm I. Meadows) and mould blown and drawn striations.

Quernstone

A complete upper stone from a beehive quern was recovered from the surface of an unexcavated, and undated pit (145).

3.5 **The Coins** Ian Meadows

A total of eight coins were recovered. Five were found during cleaning, but only three are from stratified contexts, and a further two were recovered by metal detector survey of the dumped spoil from both machine stripping and hand excavation. They are listed below chronologically, with the exception of one mid-late 2nd century sesterius, the entire collection dates to the late 3rd and early 4th century.

Marcus Aurelius, Sestertius, (illeg), (161-180)
Small find (SF) 17, Context 14,

Barbarous radiate AE3 based on Tetricus I (270-273)
SF 31, unstratified, metal detector find

Barbarous radiate AE3 c.275
SF 45, unstratified

Allectus, AE Quinarius, LAETITIA AUG, Galley, Clausentum mint (QC in ex.), (293-296)
SF 44, unstratified

Constantine I, Follis, SOL INVICTO COMITII, Trier mint (308-330)
SF 14, Context 18,

Constantine I, AE3, GLORIA EXCECITUS, 2 soldiers 2 standards, Trier mint (330-335)
SF 15, Context 104,

House of Constantine AE3 (illeg) (first half fourth century)
SF 46, unstratified

AE4 House of Constantine
SF 32, unstratified, metal detector find

3.6 **The faunal and environmental evidence**

Small quantities of animal bone were collected during the site cleaning. In total it amounts to less than a single archive box. No soil samples were taken.

4 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL AND PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

4.1 The stratigraphic record

Given the limited nature of the work undertaken a comprehensive summary of the site stratigraphy was prepared and is presented as part of this assessment report. The site archive contains little additional stratigraphic data that would repay further analysis.

It is therefore suggested that the present assessment report text would provide the basis for any text for publication, and that no further analysis is required.

4.2 The Iron Age Pottery

The small assemblage of Iron Age pottery has been fully reported. No further analysis is required, but approximately 6 vessels need to be illustrated to accompany this report.

4.3 The Roman pottery

The Roman pottery has been fully catalogued and there is a summary of the ceramic chronology. No further analysis is required, but the assemblage should be reviewed to provide an overview set within its local and regional context. Some illustration will be required.

4.4 The Finds

The site has produced a small assemblage of finds, and much of this material is from cleaning contexts. There are no items of either particularly intrinsic interest or capable of enhancing the broader understanding of the site.

4.5 The Building materials

The site has produced a range of building materials. As with the pottery, it will be appropriate to review these materials, including the small quantity of painted wall plaster, to set them within their local and regional context.

4.6 The faunal evidence

Given that the majority of the small quantity of faunal remains is unstratified, no further analysis is proposed.

4.7 The human remains

Two complete inhumation burials and some partial skeletal material were recovered. This small group of undated human contains minimal potential for enhancing the broader understanding of the site.

It is proposed that they should be submitted for specialist assessment to determine their basic palaeopathology; sex, age at death, and any pathological traits of intrinsic interest.

5 REPORTING AND ARCHIVE

5.1 Reporting

A report will be prepared for publication in Northamptonshire Archaeology, the journal of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Society.

5.2 Report Synopsis

1 Introduction

1.1 The circumstances of the excavation, including acknowledgements
1.2 Topography and geology
1.3 The archaeological context

2 The excavation and recording of the villa

2.1 Aims and objectives
2.2 Geophysical survey
2.3 The site chronology
2.4 The Iron Age settlement
2.5 The Roman villa
2.6 The medieval field system

3 The finds

3.1	The Iron Age pottery	Dennis Jackson
3.2	The Roman pottery	Tora Hylton
3.3	The Roman building materials	Tora Hylton
3.4	Other finds	Tora Hylton
3.5	The Coins	Ian Meadows

4 Discussion

Illustration schedule

Fig 1: Wootton Fields Roman villa, site location
Fig 2: Wootton Fields Roman villa, geophysical survey results
Fig 3: The villa precinct, including interpretation of geophysical survey
Fig 4: The excavated areas of the estate and haul roads
Fig 5: Iron Age and Roman features in the estate road trench
Fig 6: The Roman villa in the haul road trench
Fig 8: Section across the precinct ditch
Fig 9: Room 1, sections across hypocaust channels and drains
Fig 10: The Iron Age pottery
Fig 11: The Roman pottery
Fig 12: Ceramic tile with graffiti

5.3 The site archive

A microfilm copy of the site archive and the site narrative will be made to RCHME standards and submitted to the National Archaeological Record.

The site archive will comprise all written, drawn and photographic records, and all material finds recovered from the excavation. The site archive will be accompanied by the research archive, which will comprise the text, tabulated data, original drawings and all other records generated in the analysis of the site archive. The site archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 of the English Heritage procedural document, Management of Archaeological Projects (1991).

The archive will be fully catalogued and deposited in an appropriate local institution, in a format agreed with that institution.

6 METHODS, RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

6.1 Work completed

Consolidation of site archive
Finds processing
Preparation of draft site narrative
Publication quality site plans
Iron Age pottery report
Quantification of Roman pottery
Quantification of Roman building materials and other finds

6.2 Proposed work

TASKS	COSTINGS
Roman pottery review	£350.00
Roman building materials review	£350.00
Painted wall plaster assessment	£ 90.00
Human bone analysis	£150.00
Editing of site narrative	£325.00
Illustrations	£300.00
Integration of report	£325.00
Editing and proof reading	£175.00
Preparation of archive	£200.00
Materials	£ 75.00
Administration	£250.00
Publication grant (20 pages at £14.50/page)	£290.00
Archiving cost	£220.00
TOTAL COST	**£ 3,100.00**

6.3 Key Personnel

Andy Chapman	Senior Project Officer, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Tora Hylton	Finds Manager, Northamptonshire Archaeology
Prof. R Ling	Manchester University
Trevor Anderson	Consultant Osteo-Archaeologist
Mark Roughley	Illustrator, Northamptonshire Archaeology

6.4 Timetable

It is anticipated that all stages of work will be completed between May and July 2000, so that the finalised report will be submitted for inclusion in volume 29 of Northamptonshire Archaeology (note: Volume 28 is due for publication in May)

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Environment Directorate March 2000

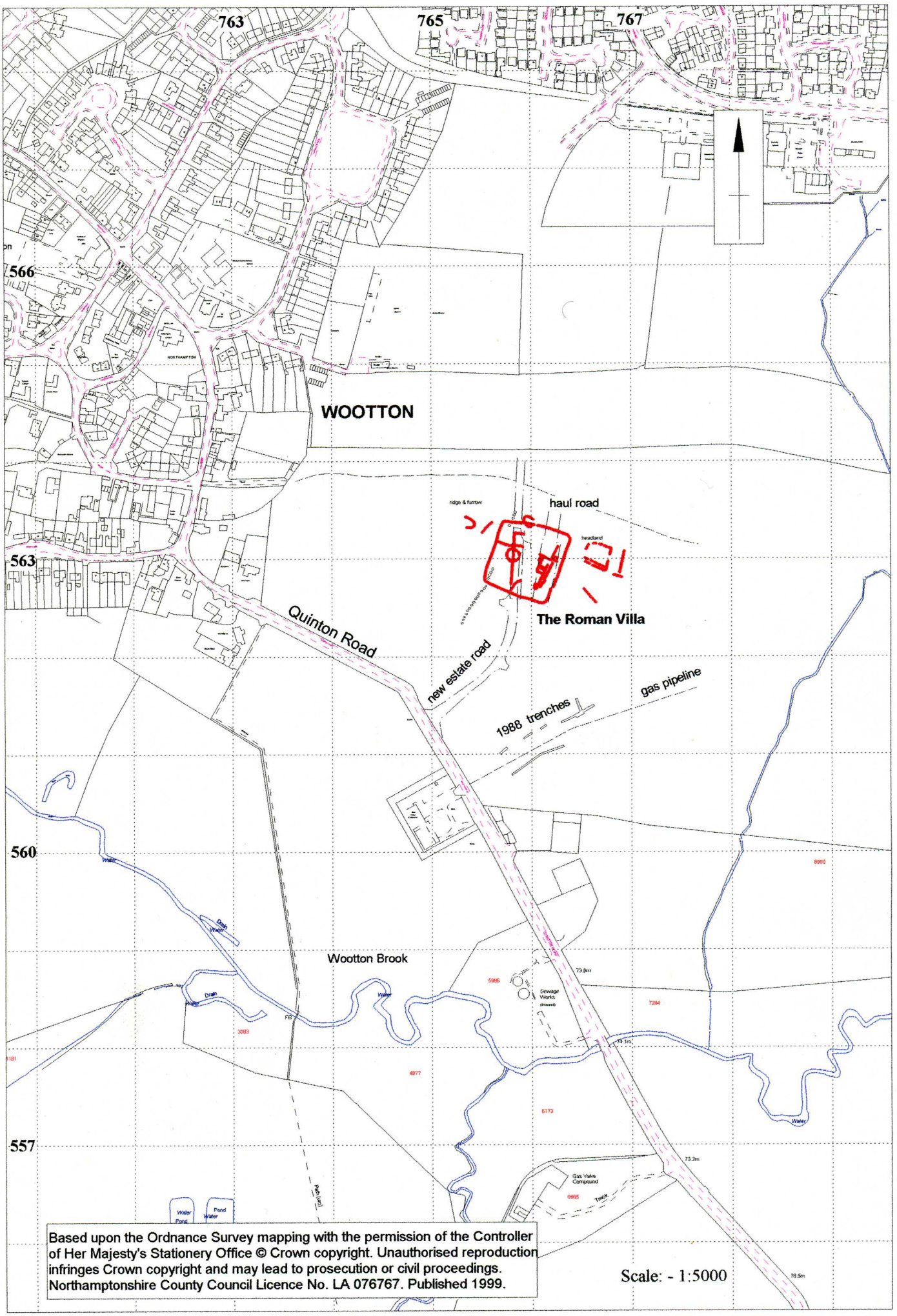

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Fig. 1 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, Site Location

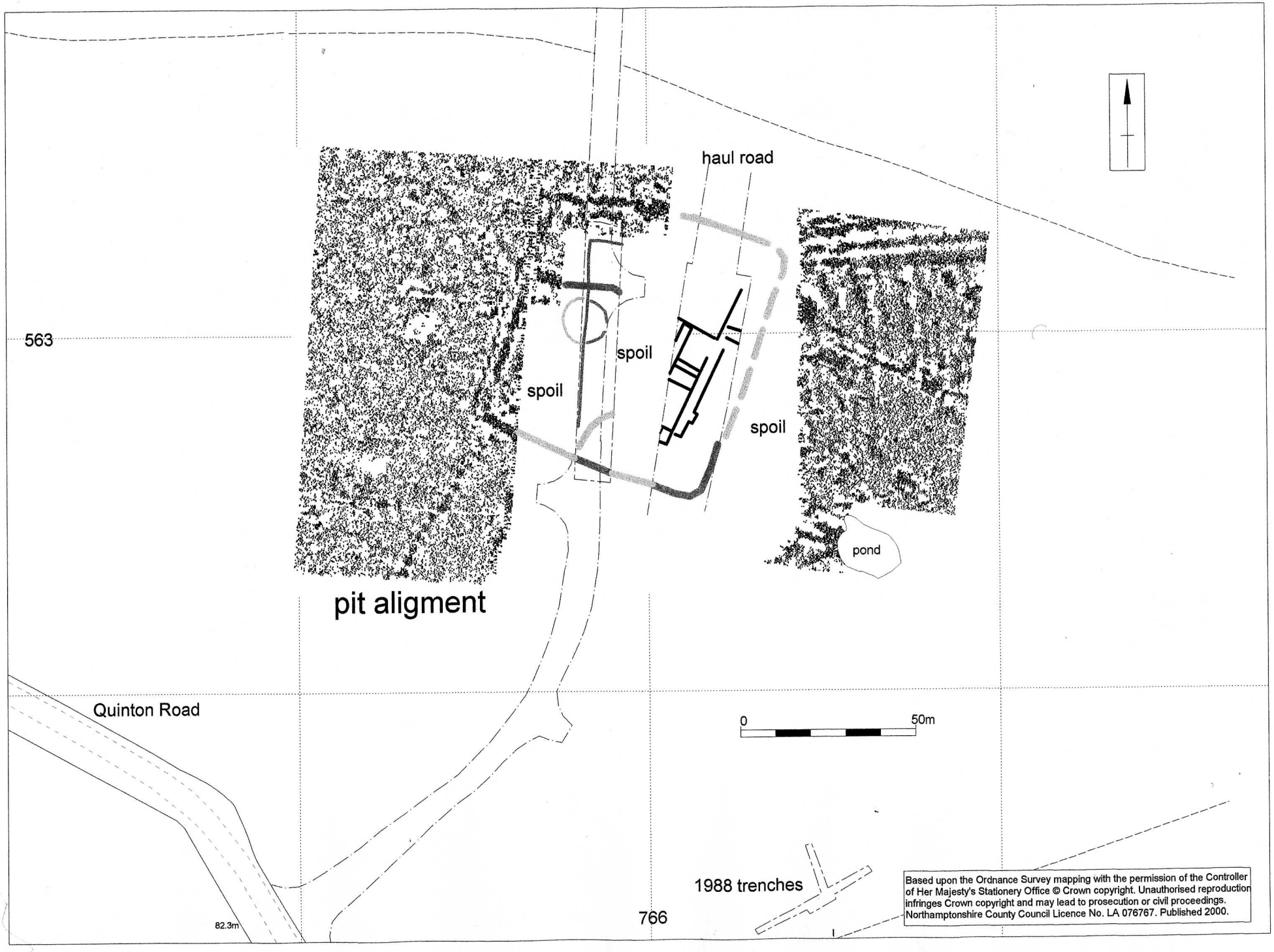

Fig. 2 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, Geophysical survey

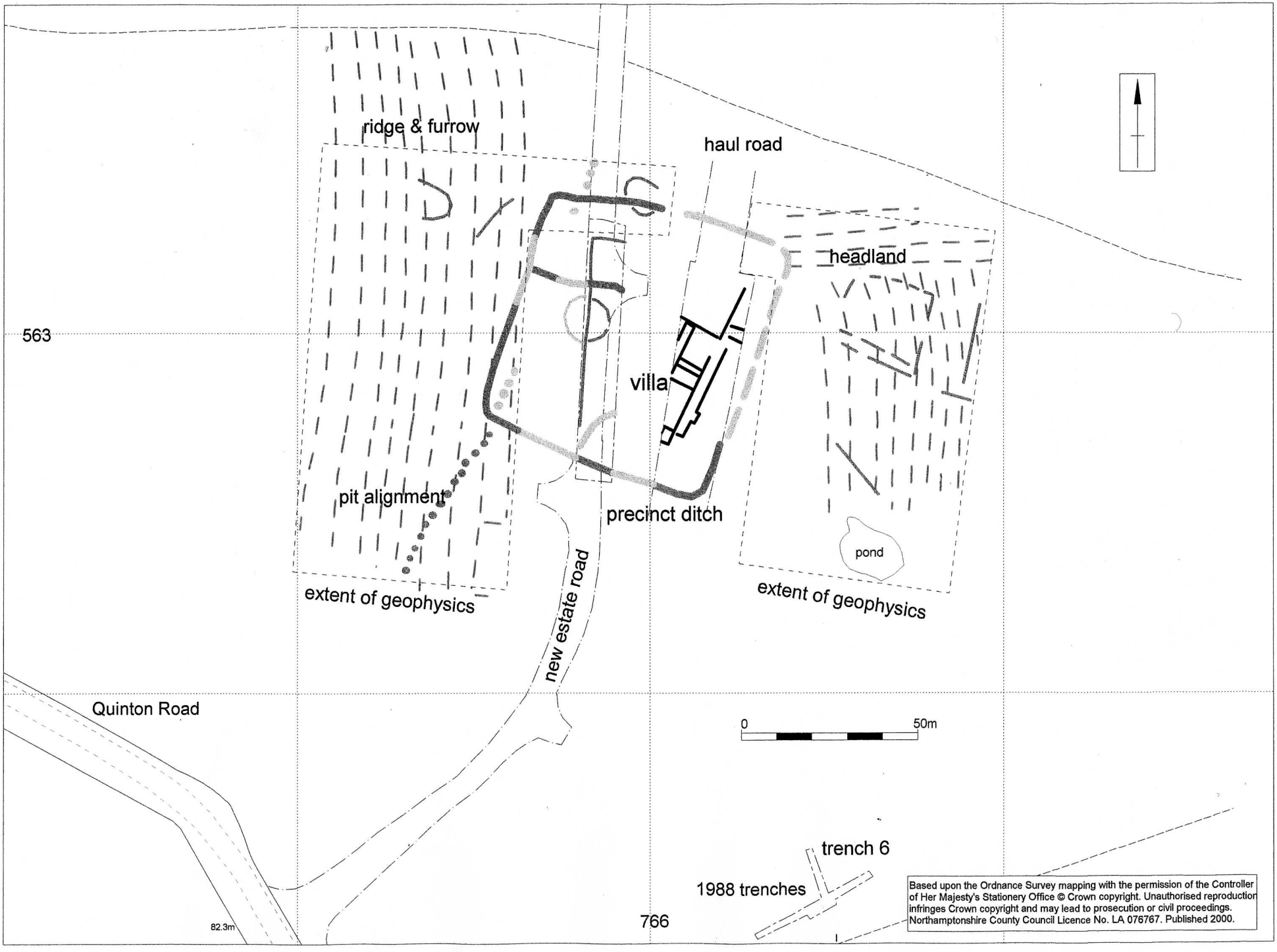

Fig. 3 Wootton Fields Roman Villa, The villa precinct

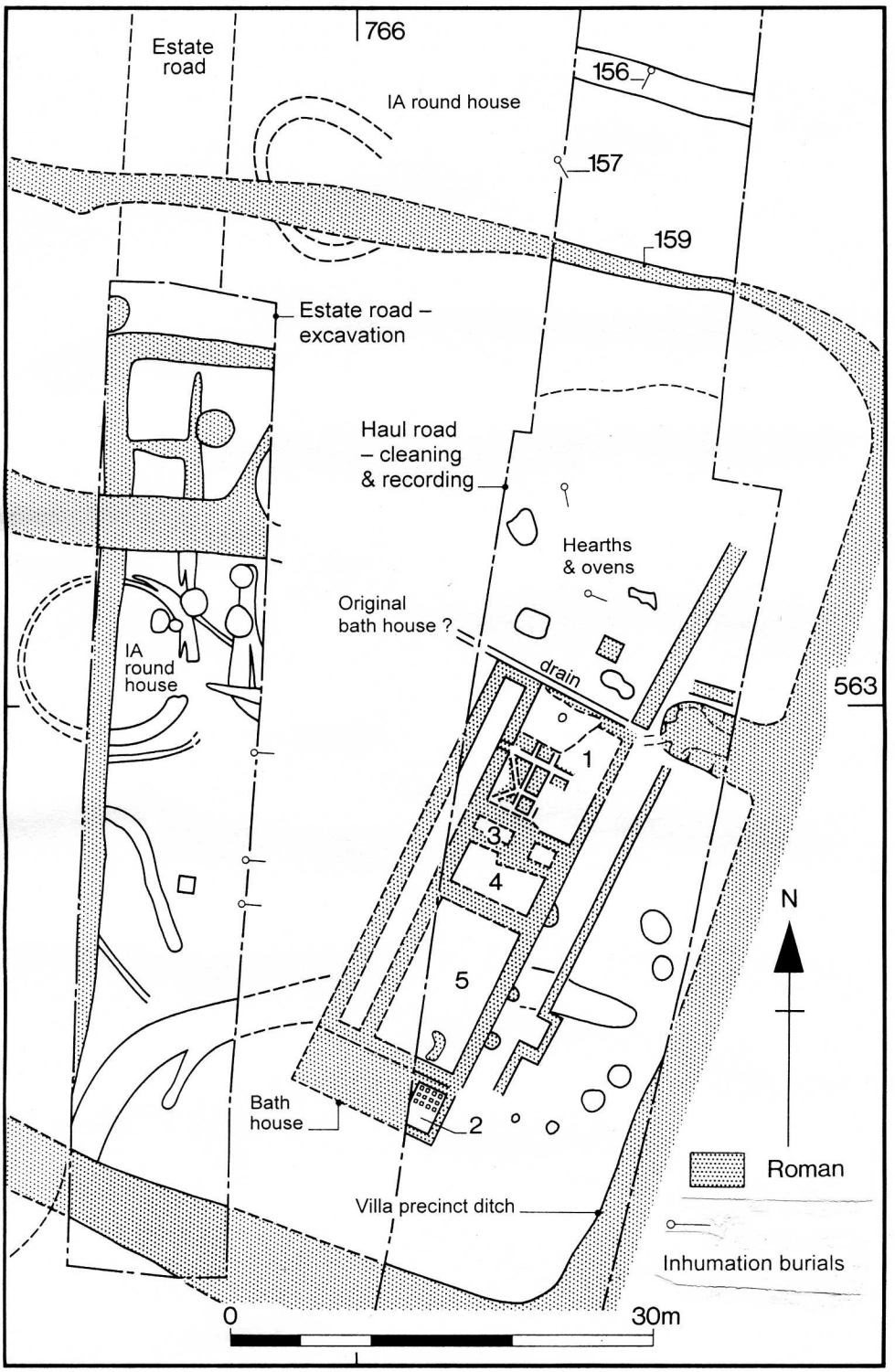
766
Estate road
156
IA round house
157
159
Estate road – excavation
Haul road – cleaning & recording
Hearths & ovens
Original bath house ?
drain
IA round house
563
1
3
4
5
2
Bath house
N
Roman
Villa precinct ditch
Inhumation burials
0
30m

Fig.4

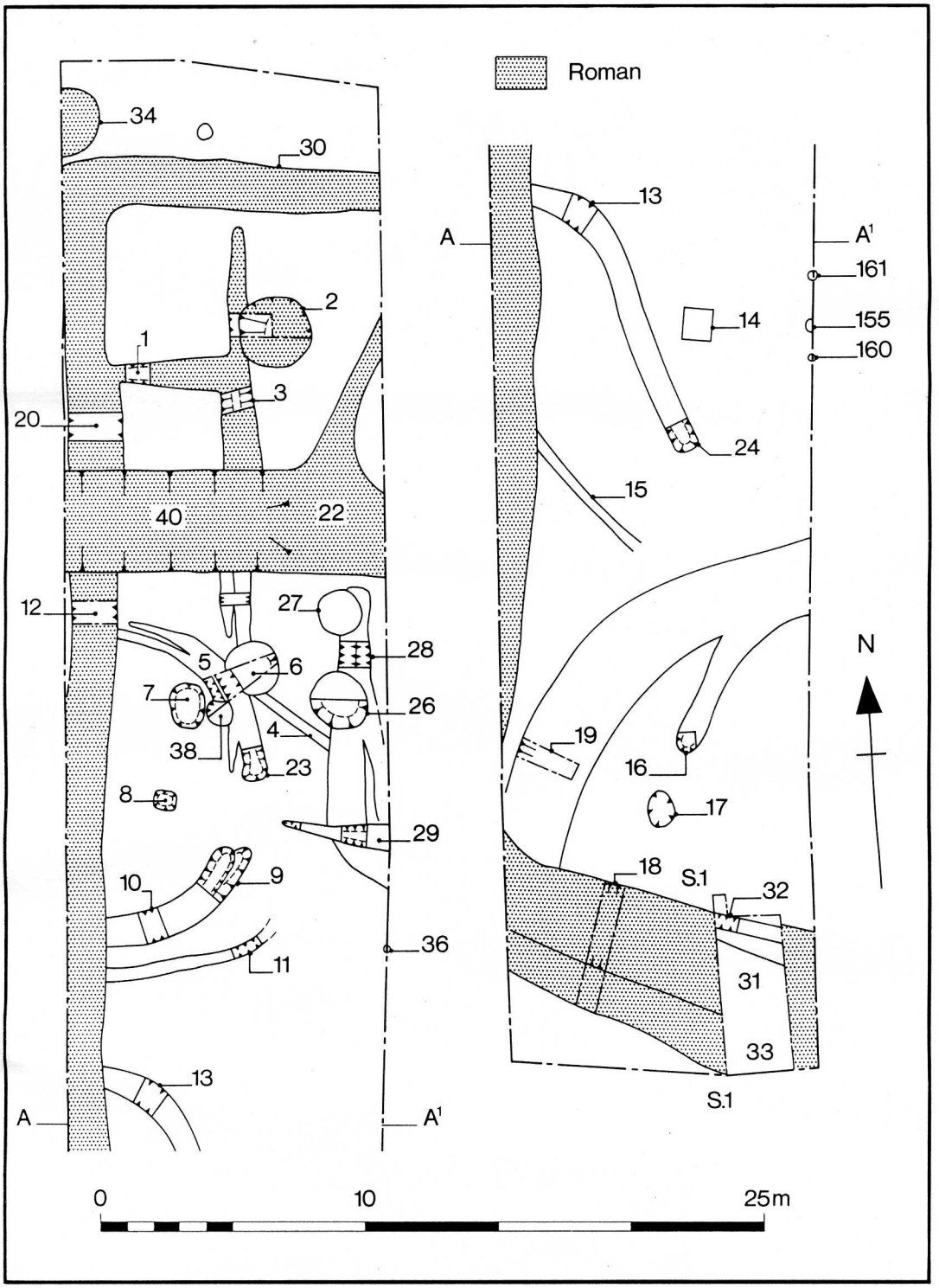
Roman
34
30
2
1
3
20
40
22
12
27
28
5
6
7
26
4
38
23
8
29
10
9
36
11
13
A
A¹
13
A
A¹
161
14
155
160
24
15
19
16
17
18
S.1
32
31
33
S.1
N
0
10
25m

Fig.5

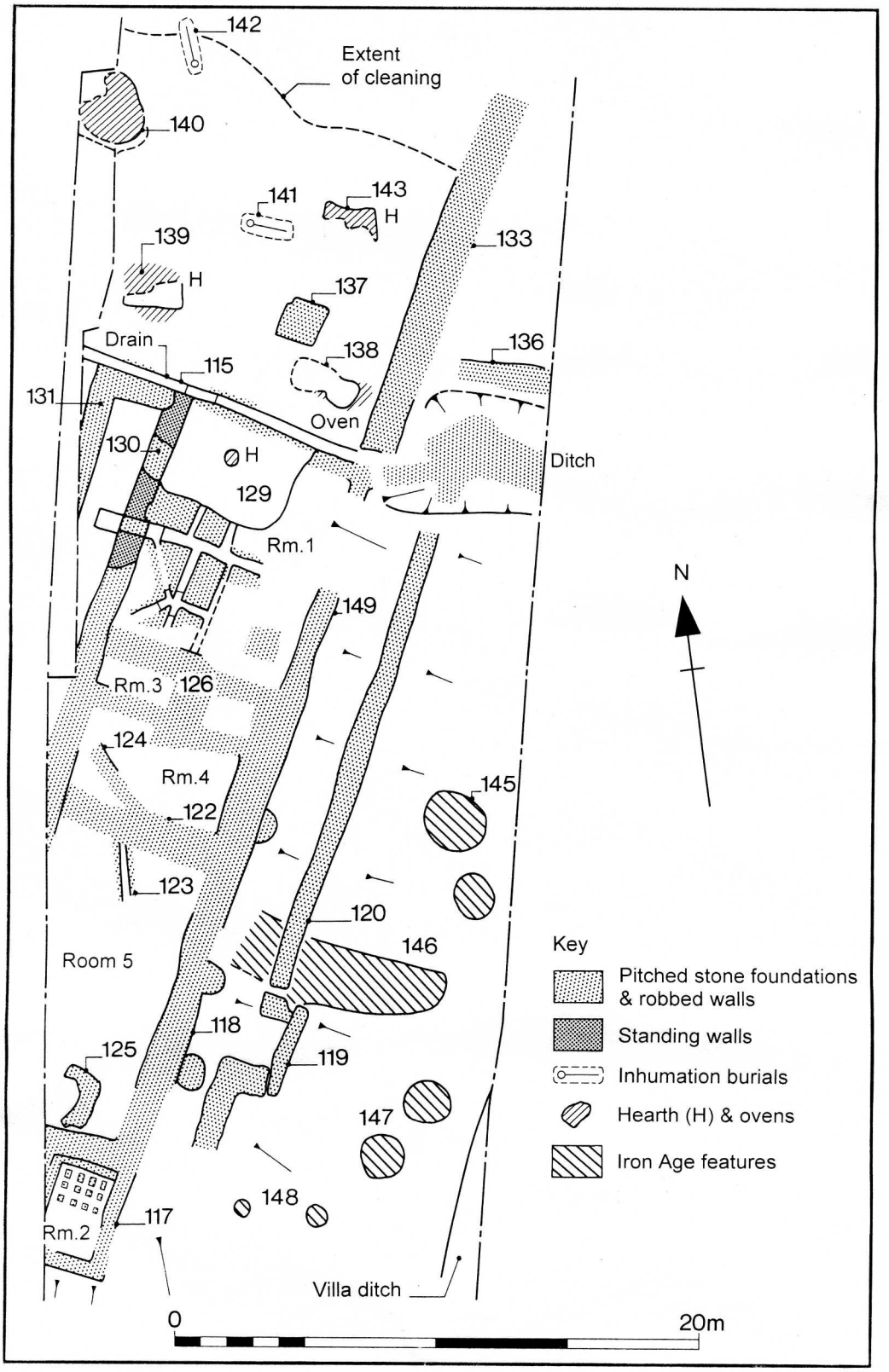
142
Extent
of cleaning
140
141
143
H
139
H
133
137
Drain
115
138
136
131
Oven
130
H
Ditch
129
Rm.1
149
Rm.3
126
124
Rm.4
122
145
123
120
146
Room 5
118
125
119
147
148
Rm.2
117
Villa ditch
0
20m
N
Key
Pitched stone foundations & robbed walls
Standing walls
Inhumation burials
Hearth (H) & ovens
Iron Age features

Fig.6

Section 1

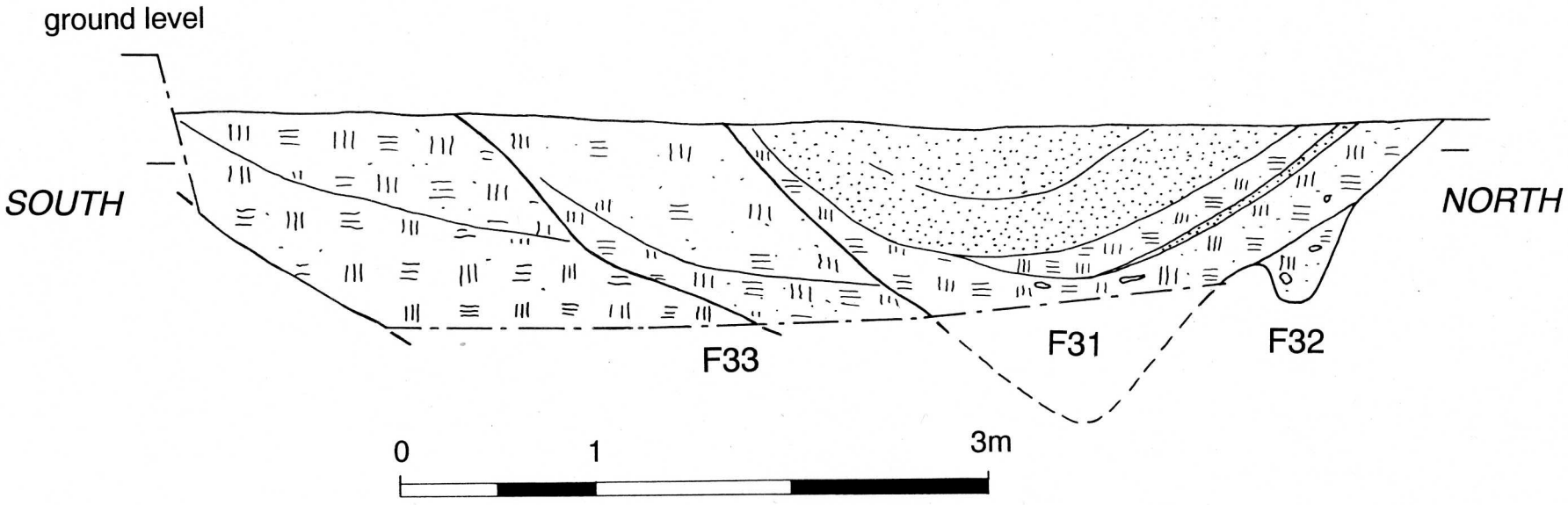

Fig. 7

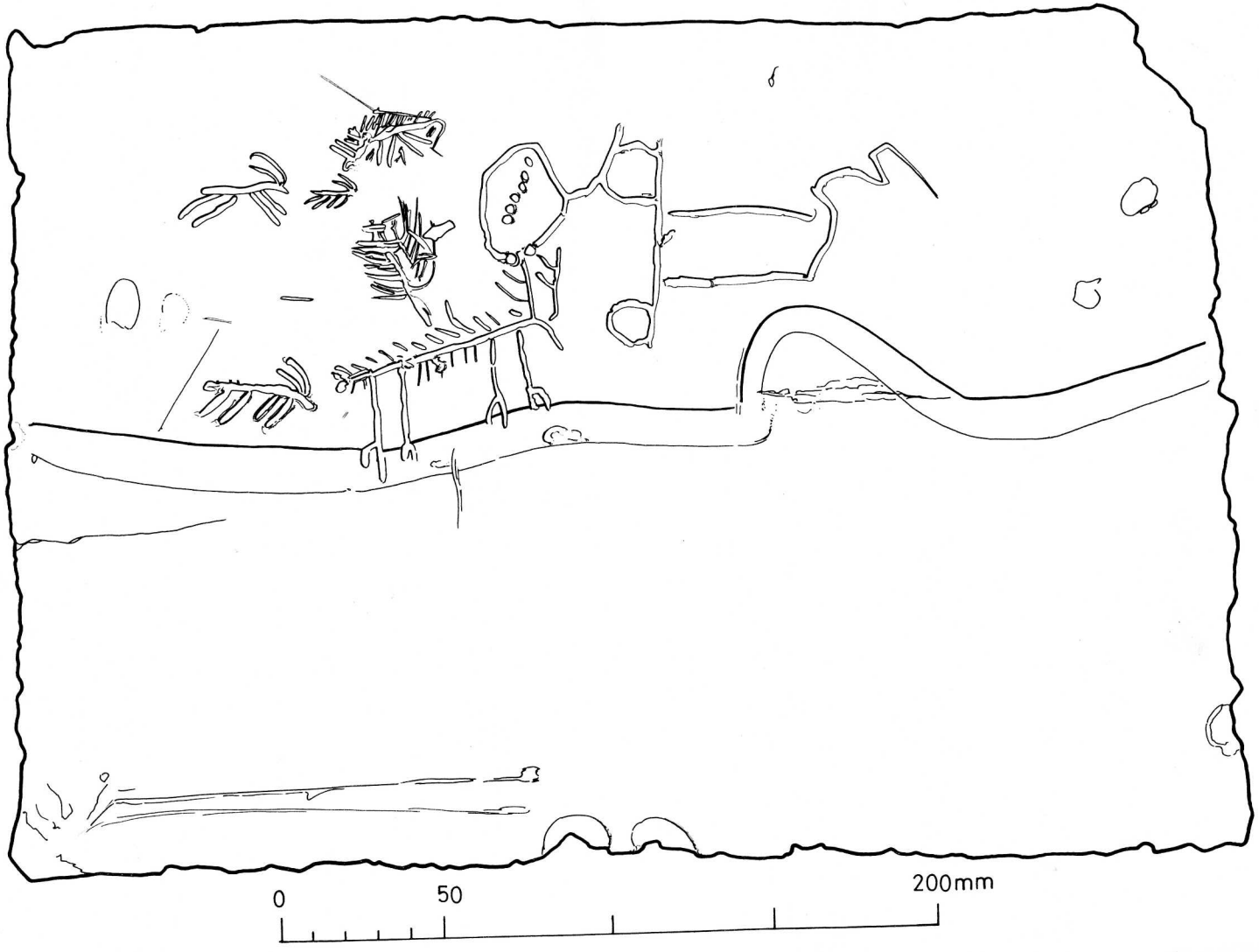

Fig. 8

Plate 1: Volunteers at work cleaning the villa looking south

Plate 2: General view looking north, with the pillared hypocaust of the bath house in the foreground

Plate 3: General view of Room 1 under cleaning

Plate 4: Wall 131, Room 1, drain 115 top left

Plate 5: Room 1, the channelled hypocaust Looking east

Plate 6: Room 1, the chanelled hypocaust looking north

Plate 7: The pillared hypocaust, Room 2; looking north-east

Plate 8: The *opus signinum* floor from Room 2, recovered from spoil heap

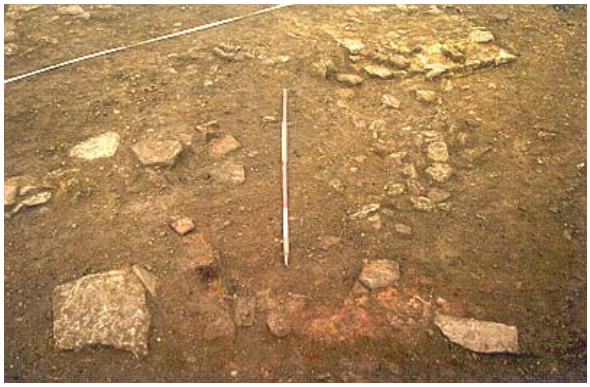

Plate 9: Oven 138, looking west

Plate 10: hearth 139, looking west

Plate 11: Section across precinct ditch, estate road trench early ditch left, palisade slot to right