

**Akeman Court
Cirencester
Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

for

E.G. Carter and Co. Ltd

CA Project: 4172
CA Report: 14198

June 2014

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Akeman Court
Location: Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR: SP 0245 0176
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 14-28 February 2013 and 22 April - 9 May 2014
Planning Reference: Cotswold District Council 10/01975/CON
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Corinium Museum
Site Code: ACE13

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the demolition of an assisted living facility at Akeman Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, and the subsequent excavations associated with the construction of new dwellings on the site.

The watching brief identified Roman deposits consisting of mixed demolition layers, a length of Roman wall and associated floor surfaces. A probable early medieval pit was also recorded in the southern half of site. These archaeological features and deposits were sealed by a horizon of 'dark earth' which was in turn cut by a number of post-medieval and modern features.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 14-28 February 2013 and 22 April to 9 May 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for E.G. Carter and Co. Ltd at Akeman Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SP 0245 0176; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached by Cotswold District Council (CDC) to planning consent for the demolition of an existing assisted living facility and construction of new dwellings on the site (CDC; planning ref: 10/01975/CON). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Statement of Archaeological Impact and Mitigation prepared by CA (2012) that was approved by Charles Parry, Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), the archaeological advisor to CDC, and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2014) and approved by CDC acting on the advice of Charles Parry. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire* (GCC 1996), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Charles Parry.

The site

- 1.3 The development area is approximately 0.2ha in extent. Previous structures occupying the site include an assisted living facility, car park and hard standing. The site lies at approximately 111m AOD and is generally flat, with a slight rise to the north-west.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone of the Kellaways Formation of the Callovian Age, overlain by sand and gravel First River Terrace deposits of the Quaternary Age (BGS 2014).

Archaeological background

- 1.5 A desk-based assessment (CA 2009) and a Statement of Archaeological Impact and Mitigation (CA 2012) detailing the impact of the proposed development works have previously been compiled for the site. A summary of these documents is presented below.

Roman

- 1.6 Two main phases of Roman occupation are known from Cirencester; early military occupation (c. AD 45/50 to AD 65/70) and the Roman town of *Corinium Dobunorum* (AD 75-80 to AD 400).
- 1.7 The early Roman occupation of Cirencester comprises the Leaholme fort and a civilian *vicus*, which seems to have developed in the later years of military occupation (Wacher and McWhirr 1982). This activity was located to the south and east of the site, with the fort located in the area between Watermoor Road and Victoria Road and the *vicus* further to the north-west (Wacher and McWhirr 1982).
- 1.8 The Roman town of *Corinium Dobunorum* replaced the fort and its extra-mural settlement around AD 75-80. A formal street plan was laid out in a grid-system, and this was enclosed within defences in the 2nd century AD (Wacher and Salvatore 1998). The town of *Corinium* continued to flourish into the 4th century AD when it probably became the capital of *Britannia Prima*. Defences were maintained and extended and large town houses continued to be occupied. Occupation declined sharply at the beginning of the 5th century and the town became virtually deserted (Faulkner 1998).
- 1.9 The site is located towards the south-eastern edge of *insula* XIX. The street defining the south-east of *insula* XIX was the diverted route of the Fosse Way (Street B), running directly between the Bath and Verulamium Gates of the Roman town, although the exact route of this road is unclear due to limited exposure within the town (CAT 1999a, Holbrook 2008, 30-44). To the north-east, *insula* XIX was bounded by Street A and to the south-west by Street I (Fig. 2). It has been suggested that the diversion of the Fosse Way took place before the laying out of the street system of the Roman town, but that its line was shifted a small distance to the south-east in order that it ran almost perpendicular to Ermin Street on construction of the street grid (Holbrook and Pamment Salvatore 1998, 19). This implies that two

possible lines of this street are present within the site, one of them possibly Early Roman in date.

Early medieval (AD 410 - 1066)

- 1.10 Following the decline of *Corinium Dobunorum* 5th-century occupation of the area appears to have been minimal. Cirencester re-emerged as an estate centre in the 7th century. The site lies within the area of probable early medieval settlement, and the line of the present Lewis Lane was used as a thoroughfare at this time (Darvill and Gerrard 1994, 89). This probably represented a slight modification to the line of the Roman street, rather than the creation of a new route. Despite its location in the putative area of early medieval settlement, no early medieval finds or features were recorded during the watching brief within the site (CAT 1999) or have been recorded in its immediate vicinity (CAT 1996).
- 1.11 The main feature of immediately post-Roman archaeological deposits in Cirencester is the 'dark earth'. Deposits of this type have been found in Roman towns across Britain, but their origins are still not fully understood. The 'dark earth' is thought to be an amalgam of early medieval cultivation soil, decayed wooden structures and animal and vegetable remains. Medieval pottery has been found within these layers, together with Roman material which is probably residual (Darvill and Gerrard 1994). Deposits of 'dark earth' have been recorded both within the site and the general vicinity.

Medieval (1066 – 1540)

- 1.12 Cirencester grew to be a medium-sized market town in the medieval period (Darvill and Gerrard 1994). The boundary of the Medieval borough ran immediately to the south-east of the site, along the line of Lewis Lane which was in use at this time (Darvill and Gerrard 1994, 100). Although the site lay within the medieval borough, no medieval evidence was recorded during the watching brief within the site (CAT 1999). Medieval activity in the form of two pits and a wall was recorded at Cotswold Mill, 35m to the south of the site, which probably related to medieval structures along the southern side of Lewis Lane (Thomas 1999).

Post-medieval (1540 – 1800) and modern (1801 – present)

- 1.13 The earliest map to record the site in detail is a 1795 plan of the Borough Town of Cirencester. This map recorded the site as largely small plots of open land. These plots were almost certainly associated with tenements facing onto Cricklade Street,

and with the structures in the south of the site which lay on Lewis Lane (*Leause Lane* on the 1795 map). These structures, which were probably almshouses, are no longer extant. Wood's 1835 Plan of Cirencester recorded a rectangular building in the central western area of the site, and the probable almshouses along Lewis Lane were also recorded in the southern area of the site.

- 1.14 The site was recorded throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries by the Ordnance Survey. The earliest example to record the site was the 1875 1:500 Town Plan. This map recorded a small structure in the western-most area of the site. Extensive rebuilding took place in the vicinity of the site in the late 19th-century, which was first recorded on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1902. A large mission room was constructed in the northern area of the site and later demolished in the late 20th century.

Previous archaeological observations on site

- 1.15 Previous archaeological work within the site includes a watching brief undertaken by Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) in May 1999. The watching brief revealed a possible building footing, probably of late Roman origin. An area of courtyard surface or hard standing was also uncovered, possibly extending north from the Fosse Way which lay to the south (CAT 1999a).
- 1.16 The Roman hard standing recorded lay approximately 2.3m below ground level, and was overlain by 'dark earth'. All observed Roman remains did not appear to have been truncated. While no medieval evidence was recorded within the site during the watching brief, remains of this date were recorded at the Cotswold Mill (35m to the south of the site). These comprised a stone wall and two pits (CAT 1999b).
- 1.17 An archaeological evaluation of the site in January 2010 identified probable Roman demolition deposits surviving at a depth of between 1.05m and 1.2m below present ground level (CA 2010). A pit containing 14th to 15th-century AD pottery and evidence for 19th-century buildings was also encountered (*ibid*). Geotechnical investigation of the site in 2010 revealed a variable mantle of made/disturbed ground varying between 1.6m and 4.8m thick (Johnson Poole & Bloomer 2010).



Archaeological objectives

1.18 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

Methodology

1.19 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013, CA 2014). An archaeologist was present during all intrusive excavations, with the watching brief taking part in two phases. In 2013, this covered the removal of elements of the remaining Akeman Court assisted living facility, such as a shallow cellar, a lift shaft and various ground level floor surfaces. This phase of works also cleared the building's concrete foundations ready for later removal. The intrusive elements of these activities were termed Trench 1. A small test pit (termed Trench 2) was hand excavated in the south-west of site to test the stratigraphy and depth of significant archaeological deposits. Following the clearance to ground level of the site, a watching brief was carried out in 2014; it comprised of three areas (Trench 3, 4 and 5) covering the removal of existing concrete footings and the reduction and levelling of the three areas ready for construction of floating, pile-supported foundations.

1.20 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013).

1.21 The archive and artefacts from the watching brief are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Corinium Museum, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 2.1 In both the 2013 and 2014 phases of the watching brief, the earliest stratigraphy deposits revealed on site were a series of Roman demolition rubble and levelling layers (106, 110, 207, 309, 316, 326, 402 and 503). These deposits consisted of varying sized limestone blocks and fragments, and were recorded at the limit of excavation, typically c. 2.4m below present ground level (bpgl) and in places were sealed by degraded/disturbed demolition deposits (302, 303 and 502) of silty-sand, which measured, 0.15m, 0.45m and 0.2m thick respectively. The majority of these demolition deposits contained Roman pottery (dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries) and ceramic building material; painted wall plaster was recovered from 303.
- 2.2 Across the site, except for some variation in Trench 3 (as detailed below), these demolition deposits were sealed by 'dark earth' deposits (206, 301, 401 and 501), which consisted of clayey silt. This deposit survived to an average thickness of c.1m across site, increasing to c.1.9m in the north-west. These 'dark earth' deposits contained an array of pottery types dating from the Roman period to the post-medieval period, as well as clay tobacco pipe, ceramic building material and glass.
- 2.3 One piece of medieval Minety ware pottery was recovered from 206 and two sherds of oolitic limestone-tempered ware from layer 501. Notably, in Trench 3 the 'dark earth' layer 301 contained a worked bone gaming piece of probable Roman date (RA3.2). In Trench 5 'dark earth' 501 contained two copper alloy coins, RA5.1 and RA5.2. These 'dark earth' layers were sealed by modern deposits relating to the demolition of the assisted living facility.

Trench 3

- 2.4 At the northern extent of Trench 3 levelling/foundation deposit, 316 (which was recorded at a depth of c. 108.5m AOD), was overlain by a north-west/south-east aligned Roman wall, 311 (Fig. 3, Section AA). This wall was observed to be at least 1.45m in height and 2.7m in length and was constructed of roughly dressed limestone blocks set in regular courses, and bonded by a course mortar, with a single step or offset recorded towards the base. The wall was sealed by a sandy silt disuse/dump deposit of unknown origin, 314. No construction cut was visible, although this is probable due to the footings of wall 311 not being exposed.

- 2.5 To the south-west of wall 311 a number of floor surfaces were exposed (Fig. 4, Section BB). Levelling rubble 326 was sealed by 325, a 0.21m thick sand levelling layer. This was then covered by sandy-gravel bedding layer 324 (0.23m in thickness), for a mosaic floor surface, 323. This mosaic floor measured 40mm in thickness and was exposed as 1.1m in length and 0.4m in width. It comprised ceramic, limestone and blue lias tesserae set in a sand matrix and was noted to have been heavily disturbed, probably by the later Roman surfacing and post-medieval truncations. It also included some box flue tile within its matrix (Appendix B, Table 1). No pattern or order could be distinguished within the exposed area. Laid directly on to this mosaic floor was sandy-mortar 322. This mortar surface was 90mm in thickness and contained a copper alloy pin. Above this a 70mm thick bedding layer of gravelly sand, 321, was sealed by a compacted sandy-gravel surface, 320, measuring 30mm thick. Deposit 321 contained 17 sherds of Roman pottery, ceramic building material and three tesserae. The uppermost observed Roman structural deposit was a rough floor surface, 319, of limestone blocks in a sandy matrix, measuring 0.16m thick, which contained three pieces of Roman ceramic building material. Both wall 311 and the adjacent floor surfaces were sealed by Roman demolition deposit 310.
- 2.6 To the south east of wall 311, the upper Roman demolition layer 302 was cut by a small pit of late Roman or early medieval date, 306, at a depth of c. 1.5m bpgl (Fig. 5, Section CC). Within the limits of the observed groundworks, this pit measured 1m in length, 0.4m in width and 0.38m in depth, with a steep sided U-shaped profile. The basal fill of this pit was 307, a clayey-silt that extended from the top of the pit to its base. This fill contained an abundance of Roman pottery, broadly datable to between the 3rd and 4th centuries, as well as ceramic box flue, tegula and imbrex, a small copper alloy disc (RA 3.1) and an iron nail, which featured an attached section of wood despite the unfavourable conditions for preservation. Sealing this deposit, clayey-sand 308 filled the remainder of the pit to a maximum thickness of 0.16m.
- 2.7 Pit 306 and demolition deposit 310 were both sealed by probable late Roman occupation layers, 305 and 328 respectively. These layers consisted of clayey-silts and clayey-sands of between 0.2m and 0.26m in thickness. Layer 305 contained 4th century pottery, imbrex, box flue and brick ceramic building material, although no dateable material was recovered from 328. These deposits were sealed by 'dark earth' deposit 301.

- 2.8 Post-medieval pits were recorded in the north (111), west (112) and south (113) of the site. Each of their fills (105, 107 and 108 respectively) contained 19th century pottery. A highly degraded north-west/south-east aligned post-medieval wall footing (329) was recorded cutting 'dark earth' 301, within construction cut 330. The wall was observed to a maximum length of 4.5m, a maximum height of 0.5m and 0.3m in width. The wall consisted of roughly squared limestone blocks set in random courses, with crude, degraded mortar in the upper courses, with dry stone lower courses. This wall appeared heavily truncated and was sealed by 304, a mixed limestone and silty-clay post-medieval or early modern demolition rubble of 1m in thickness. This deposit contained RA3.3, a probable residual Roman sestertius dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD.
- 2.9 In the northern area of Trench 3, 'dark earth' deposit 301 was covered by a further layer of post-medieval or modern demolition, 327. This consisted of mixed ceramic tile, sands, soils, limestone rubble and concrete and measured 0.45m in thickness. This deposit, along with the Roman floor layers and wall 311, was cut by a modern foundation 313 and service trench 317, both relating to the now demolished assisted living facility of Akeman Court. This had removed any visible stratigraphic relationship between wall 311 and the adjacent Roman floor surfaces.

The finds

- 2.9 Finds recovered from watching brief included pottery, ceramic building material, clay tobacco pipe, painted wall plaster, worked bone, metal objects, glass and worked stone. Codings for Roman fabrics given in the text and Appendix B in parenthesis correspond to the Cirencester pottery type series codes as defined by Rigby (1982); codings for post-medieval fabrics correspond to the Cirencester pottery type series codes as defined by Ireland (1998).

'Dark Earth' Deposits

- 2.10 The 'dark earth' deposits throughout site (109, 206, 301, 401 and 501) contained a mixture of finds covering various materials and dates (Appendix B, Table 1). The Roman pottery recovered from the 'dark earth' deposits included Dorset BB1, local colour-coated ware, South and Central Gaulish Samian, Baetican and Gaulish amphora, Oxford white colour-coated ware, Oxford white-ware, Oxford red-slipped ware, one sherd of flagon fabric (from 401), greyware and four sherds of local colour-coated ware (105). These pottery types covered a period of between the 1st and 4th centuries. Furthermore, an abraded rimsherd of North Gaulish mortarium

was recovered from 401, and dates to the mid to late 1st century AD (Rigby 1982, 159). Two 'dark earth' deposits also contained pottery of 11th to 15th century date, in the form of one sherd of Minety ware (F200; Bryant 2004, 320) from 206 and two pieces of Cotswold oolitic limestone tempered ware (F202; Ireland 1998, 115) from 501. The post-medieval pottery from these contexts included 'late' English stoneware, transfer-printed refined whiteware, 11 sherds of Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware (F201; Ireland 1998, 115), unglazed earthenware, brown-glazed earthenware and Wedgewood basalt ware; all broadly dated from the late 17th to 19th centuries.

- 2.11 Seven fragments of Roman ceramic building material were recovered from 'dark earth' deposits 206, 301 and 501. These included imbrex, tegulae and box flue forms.
- 2.12 Two fragments of bottle glass of post-medieval date were recorded in 'dark earth' deposit 501.
- 2.13 A probable Roman coin, made from copper alloy and measuring 26mm in diameter, was recovered as a heavily corroded find in 'dark earth' 501. Additionally, a copper alloy object of post-medieval date consisted of a coin from 'dark earth' deposit 501. The coin measured 31mm in diameter and was probably a penny, but the surfaces were too heavily corroded for more precise dating.

Demolition Deposits

- 2.14 Four of the exposed demolition deposits (110, 303, 310 and 402) contained a range of Roman pottery, dating from the 2nd century to the late 4th century. The included forms were Dorset BB1, imitation BB1, South and Central Gaulish Samian, Baetican and Gaulish amphora, Oxford colour-coated ware, Oxford white-ware, Oxford red-slipped ware, four sherds of North Wiltshire pottery (from 303), greyware, and three sherds of grog-tempered ware.
- 2.15 Demolition deposits 303, 310, and 402 contained twenty fragments of Roman ceramic building material, including imbrex, tegulae and box flue forms, and 303 also contained three fragments of painted wall plaster, of Roman date. Demolition layer 310 also contained 12 blue lias tesserae and 49 limestone tesserae.

Pottery: Roman

- 2.16 A total of 13 sherds of South Gaulish Samian (154) were recovered from five deposits and eight sherds of Central Gaulish Samian (154) were recovered from six deposits. These came most notably from pit fill 307 and floor surface 321. South Gaulish Samian was exported to Britain from the mid 1st to early 2nd century and Central Gaulish during the 2nd century (Webster 1996, 2-3).
- 2.17 A total of four sherds of Baetican amphora (40) and one sherd of Gaulish amphora (35) were recovered from four deposits (301, 310, 401 and 402).
- 2.18 Pit fill 307 produced single rimsherds from beakers representing continental imports: Central Gaulish black-slipped ware (141), dateable from the early 2nd century to early 3rd centuries (Tyers 1996, 137), and a sherd with a cornice rim in Cologne colour-coated ware (81A), which dates to late 1st to mid 3rd centuries (Tyers 1996, 147–8).
- 2.19 A total of 27 sherds of Dorset Black Burnished Ware 1 (BB1) (74) were recovered from ten deposits. Black-burnished ware was produced near Poole in Dorset, and when found outside Dorset it typically dates between the 2nd and 4th centuries (Davies *et al.* 107, 1994). Notable finds included a Type 25 conical flanged bowl from occupation layer 305 (3rd to 4th century) and finds from pit fill 307, a Type 20 plain rim dish (late 2nd to 4th century in date) and a Type 22 flat-rimmed bowl or dish (early 2nd to 3rd centuries) (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 230–1).
- 2.20 A total of nine sherds of Oxford red colour-coated ware (83) was recovered from four deposits, with this type dating to the 4th century in Cirencester (Rigby 1982, D03). Notably, this included a decorated rouletted bowl rimsherd from occupation layer 305.
- 2.21 Oxford white colour-coated ware (84) was represented by five sherds, including three joining flagon rimsherds from layer 305. This ware type was manufactured from c. AD 240–400 (Young 1977, 120–2).
- 2.22 A total of five sherds from mortaria in Oxford White-ware (90) were recovered with one sherd identified as a (Young) Type M19, which dates to AD 240–300 (1977, 76–7).

- 2.23 Late Roman/early medieval layer 305 produced four sherds of Oxford reduced ware, including a rimsherd from a (Young) Type R12 flagon (dating to the late 2nd to mid 3rd century) and two joining rimsherds from a jar (1977, 209-210).
- 2.24 A total of four bodysherds in South-west White-slipped flagon fabric (88) were recovered from fill 307 of pit 306 and floor surface 321. This ware type was manufactured in the south-east Gloucestershire/north Wiltshire area (Tomber and Dore 1998, 192) and probably dates to the later 2nd to 3rd century.
- 2.25 Pit fill 307 produced five sherds of Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware, which is dateable from the mid 2nd to 4th centuries (81). This included three joining sherds from a 'Hunt Cup', featuring barbotine-trailed running hounds.
- 2.26 Two joining rimsherds from a bag-shaped beaker in North Wiltshire colour-coated ware (85) were recorded in fill 307 of pit 306.
- 2.27 Layer 305 produced a single bodysherd of New Forest colour-coated ware, which dates to the late 3rd and 4th centuries (Fulford 1975, 39-40).
- 2.28 A total of 11 sherds of greyware were recovered from six deposits; this group are broadly dateable to the Romano-British period. The greyware included a rimsherd from a plain rim dish from fill 307 of pit 306.

Pottery: Post-medieval

- 2.29 A total of five sherds of mottled brown-glazed earthenware, dating to the late-17th to 18th centuries, were recovered. A single bodysherd of a related type, 'Tiger ware', was recorded in fill 105 of pit 111.
- 2.30 One rimsherd of Wedgwood basalt ware (F258) , three sherds of porcelain (F218), three sherds of Pearlware, eight sherds of Transfer printed whiteware (F214) (including from fill 107 of pit 112) and two sherds of 'late' English stoneware (one notably from fill 108 of pit 113) were recovered; these are indicative of the large assemblage of post medieval material recovered across the site. These pottery types were produced during the 18th to 19th centuries.
- 2.31 Fill 105, of pit 111, produced three sherds from a teapot lid in industrial yellow ware, which is dateable to the 19th to 20th centuries.

Ceramic building material

- 2.32 A total of 49 fragments of ceramic building material of Roman date were recovered from 11 deposits. Aside from those in the 'dark earth' or demolition deposits outlined above, the most notable fragments were recorded in layer 305, fill 307 of pit 306 and floor surfaces 319 and 323; these were identifiable as tegulae, imbrex, box flue tile and brick.
- 2.33 Floor surfaces 321 and 322 produced a total of 20 ceramic tesserae, made from fragments of tile.

Clay tobacco pipe

- 2.34 A total of eight fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from four deposits, including made-ground 104. The majority were stem fragments, which are broadly dateable to the late 17th to late 19th centuries.

Glass

- 2.35 A button of modern (probable 19th century) date with a copper alloy loop on the reverse was recovered from fill 107 of pit 112. It featured etched decoration and was manufactured from black glass.

Worked bone

- 2.36 An undecorated, plano-convex gaming counter made from highly polished, worked bone was recovered from 'dark earth' deposit 301. It measured 19mm in diameter and cannot be dated more precisely than to the Roman period (MacGregor 1985, 132–3).

Worked stone

- 2.37 A total of 48 tesserae in blue lias and 116 in limestone were recorded in three deposits, including bedding layer 321 and mosaic floor surface 323.

Metal objects

- 2.38 Four iron nails were recovered from occupation layer 305.
- 2.39 A fragmentary, corroded copper alloy object was recorded in fill 307 of pit 306.

2.40 A copper alloy coin of Roman date, 31mm in diameter, was recorded in post-medieval demolition layer 304. Although substantially corroded, this was identified as a probable sestertius dating to the 1st or 2nd century AD.

2.41 A large rivet, recovered from floor surface 322, is likely to be of Roman date.

Faunal Remains

2.42 Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from 'dark earth' 206. Species identification was not possible but both are large mammal sized and display cut marks indicative of the butchery process.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 This watching brief identified a number of archaeological features within the areas affected by groundworks. Apart from the 19th century pits 111, 112 and 113, the main archaeological deposits are confined to Trench 3 and the southern area of site.

3.2 The general stratigraphic sequence seen throughout the watching brief indicated that, in certain locations within the site, Roman archaeology survives to a depth of c.2.7m bpgl. The deposits seen at this depth (310, 316 and 326) are likely to represent rubble used as a base for the construction of further Roman buildings, such as that relating to wall 311. The remains of mosaic floor surface 323 and the successive layers of flooring above indicate that it was used for an extended period of time, with pottery from 321 dating to the 2nd to 4th centuries.

3.2 The latest Roman deposits survive at a depth of between 1.2m and 2.4m bpgl (with any variations due to later truncation). These layers are consistent with previous work on the site and with similar deposits throughout Cirencester (CA 2002; Havard and Watts 2008) and contained a range of Roman pottery dating from the 2nd to late 4th centuries.

3.3 As mentioned above, the exact route of the Fosse Way (Street B) through Cirencester is unknown, save for limited evidence gained through past excavation works (CAT 1999, CA 2002). Where excavation went below 109.8m AOD in the south-eastern area of site, the observed groundworks revealed no evidence of the street surface in this area, pushing the possible line of the Fosse Way south, correlating with recent projections (Holbrook 2002, Fig. 18). Excavations at Bingham

Hall in 2002, approximately 500m to the south-east of site, revealed that the interior roads of Roman Cirencester were well constructed, with a pneumatic drill required to excavate a section across Ermin Street/Street A (Havard and Watts 2008), which also forms the eastern boundary of *Insula XIX*. It is therefore likely that wall 311 and the associated features do not relate to street fronting elements of buildings, but may relate to the rear of buildings leading on to either Ermin Street/Street A to the north-east or the Fosse Way/Street B to the south-east.

- 3.4 The small pit (306) seen in Trench 3 is likely to be some form of rubbish pit and suggests very late or early post-Roman activity on the site. The finds recovered from the fill of the pit, 307, and the occupation layer 305 that seals it date from the 3rd to late 4th century, likely dating both to the late Roman period or the immediate post-Roman period. Deposit 305 has also been observed to seal Roman demolition 310, suggesting that some disturbance of demolished Roman remains occurred in the early post-Roman period. This indicates early medieval activity adjacent to what is known to have been an active thoroughfare through the town (Darvill and Gerrard 1994, 89).
- 3.5 The 'dark earth' material recorded in all excavation areas represents the accumulation of medieval, post-medieval and modern deposits within the site and is typical of Roman towns within Britain, probably representing an amalgam of cultivation soils, decayed wooden structures and animal and vegetable remains (CA 2012). The varying thickness of this deposit across site (between 0.7m and 1.9m) probably represents successive phases of truncation throughout the post-medieval and modern periods.
- 3.6 Wall 329, seen in the very south of site, represents the remaining footings of mid 19th century almshouses facing on to Lewis Lane, as seen on Woods 1935 Plan of Cirencester (CA 2009, 13).

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Sausins and Alex Thomson. The report was written by Alex Thomson. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Jon Bennett. The archive has been compiled by Alex Thomson, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No	Context	Type	Fill of	Context Interpretation	Context Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	layer		concrete	modern concrete floor with tiles			0.1	
1	101	layer		concrete bedding	yellowish-brown sandy-gravel			0.1	
1	102	layer		made/disturbed ground	dark grey silty-clay			0.2	
1	103	layer		made/disturbed ground	dark grey silty-clay			0.15	
1	104	layer		made/disturbed ground	blackish-brown silty-clay			>0.3	
1	105	fill	111	fill of pit					
1	106	layer		demolition material	whitish-grey limestone rubble with clayey-silt			>0.05	
1	107	fill	112	fill of pit					
1	108	fill	113	fill of pit					
1	109	layer		dark earth	blackish-brown silty-clay			0.38	
1	110	layer		demolition material	whitish-grey limestone rubble with clayey-silt			>0.1	
1	111	cut		modern pit	modern rubbish pit				
1	112	cut		modern pit	modern rubbish pit				
1	113	cut		modern pit	modern rubbish pit				
2	200	layer		concrete	modern concrete			0.13	
2	201	layer		concrete bedding	yellowish-brown sandy-gravel			0.06	
2	202	cut		wall construction cut	modern wall construction cut			0.83	
2	203	fill	203	3rd fill of construction cut	yellowish-brown sandy-gravel			0.32	
2	204	fill	203	2nd fill of construction cut	yellowish-grey and grey silty-clay			0.15	
2	205	fill	203	1st fill of construction cut	black silty-clay			0.35	
2	206	layer		dark earth	blackish-brown silty-clay			1.6	
2	207	layer		demolition material	whitish-grey silty-clay and limestone rubble			>0.14	
3	300	layer		modern demolition layer	mixed rubbles, topsoils and gravels			0.5	
3	301	layer		dark earth	mixed dark blackish brown clayey-silt			0.7	
3	302	layer		demolition material	light yellowish-brown silty-sand			0.15	
3	303	layer		demolition material	greyish-brown clayey-silty-sand and limestone cobbles			0.45	
3	304	layer		demolition material	mixed yellowish-grey and brownish-grey rubble of brick, stone and sands	4.5		1	
3	305	layer		striped occupation layer	mixed dark brown, light yellowish-grey and greyish-brown clayey-silt and clayey-sand	>5	>1	0.26	
3	306	cut		pit	semi-circular cut with steeply sloping sides	1	>0.4	0.38	
3	307	fill	306	1st fill of pit	light brownish-grey clayey-silt	1	>0.4	0.38	
3	308	fill	306	2nd fill of pit	yellowish-grey clayey-sand	0.92	0.23	0.16	
3	309	layer		demolition material	light yellowish-grey limestone blocks	>0.5	>0.5	>0.8	
3	310	layer		demolition material	greyish-brown clayey-silty-sand and limestone cobbles			0.3	

3	311	structure		NW/SE wall	wall of roughly squared limestone blocks lain in squared, regular courses	>2.7	>0.1	1.45	
3	312	fill	313	fill of foundation cut	dark blackish-brown clayey-silt	>2	>3	>1.65	
3	313	cut		modern foundation cut	cut of modern foundation trench	>2	>3	>1.65	
3	314	layer		silting deposit	yellowish-brown sandy-silt	>2.7	>0.4	>0.88	
3	315	fill	313	fill of foundation cut	greyish-brown sandy-clay-silt		0.13	0.58	
3	316	layer		levelling material	yellowish-grey limestone rubble blocks		>0.25	>0.1	
3	317	cut		modern foundation cut	cut of modern foundation trench	>5	2	2	
3	318	fill	317	fill of foundation cut	dark blackish-brown clayey-silt	>5	2	2	
3	319	layer		cobbled floor surface	yellowish-grey limestone cobbles in a whitish-grey sand matrix	>1.1	>0.35	0.16	
3	320	layer		gravel floor surface	compact yellowish-grey gravel in sand matrix	>1.1	>0.35	0.03	
3	321	layer		gravel bedding layer	greyish-brown gravelly-sand	>1.1	>0.35	0.07	
3	322	layer		mortar floor surface	yellowish-grey sandy-mortar and sand	>1.1	>0.43	0.09	
3	323	layer		mosaic floor surface	greyish-red randomly arrayed cut tesserae in sand matrix	>1.1	>0.4	0.04	
3	324	layer		gravel bedding layer	yellowish-grey sandy-gravel	>0.5	>0.5	0.23	
3	325	layer		sandy levelling layer	greyish-brown sand	>0.5	>0.5	0.21	
3	326	layer		demolition material	yellowish-grey limestone blocks	>0.5	>0.5	>0.03	
3	327	layer		mixed demolition deposits	mixed building materials of post-medieval date	>5	>2	0.45	
3	328	layer		striped occupation layer	mixed dark brown, light yellowish-grey and greyish-brown clayey-silt and clayey-sand	>2	>0.4	0.2	
3	329	structure		post-medieval wall	wall of roughly squared limestone blocks lain in random courses	4.5	0.3	0.5	
3	330	cut		wall construction cut	cut of post-medieval wall	4.5	0.3	0.5	
4	400	layer		modern demolition layer	mixed rubbles, topsoils and gravels			0.5	
4	401	layer		dark earth	mixed dark blackish brown clayey-silt			1.9	
4	402	layer		demolition material	light yellowish-brown silty-sand			0.6	
4	403	layer		tarmac	modern tarmac carpark surface			0.1	
4	404	layer		tarmac bedding layer	greyish-yellow sandy-gravel			0.4	
5	500	layer		modern demolition layer	mixed rubbles, topsoils and gravels			0.5	
5	501	layer		dark earth	mixed dark blackish brown clayey-silt			1	
5	502	layer		demolition material	light yellowish-brown silty-sand			0.2	
5	503	layer		demolition material	greyish-brown clayey-silty-sand and limestone cobbles			>0.6	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds concordance

Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
102	Post-medieval pottery: English porcelain; transfer-printed refined whiteware; refined whiteware	3	15	LC17-EC18
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	2	12	
104	Roman pottery: Oxford White-ware	4	199	LC18-MC19
	Post-medieval pottery: transfer-printed Pearlware; Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware	2	53	
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem/bowl	3	21	
105	Post-medieval pottery: English porcelain; Pearlware; 'Tiger' ware; yellow ware; transfer-printed refined whiteware; refined whiteware	13	345	C19
107	Post-medieval pottery: transfer-printed refined whiteware	1	112	C19
	Jet? Button	1	6	
108	Post-medieval pottery: 'late' English stoneware; transfer-printed Pearlware; transfer-printed refined whiteware	3	132	C19
109	Roman pottery: Dorset BB1	1	6	C2-C4
110	Roman pottery: Dorset BB1	1	5	C2-C4
206	Roman pottery: local colour-coated ware	1	10	C19
	Medieval pottery: Minety ware	1	8	
	Post-medieval pottery: 'late' English stoneware; transfer-printed refined white ware; Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware; unglazed earthenware	6	103	
	Roman ceramic building material: imbrex	1	144	
	Clay tobacco pipe: stem	2	5	
	Shell	1	7	
301	Roman pottery: South Gaulish Samian; Baetican amphora; Gaulish amphora; miscellaneous amphora; Dorset BB1; Oxford white colour-coated ware; Oxford White-ware; local colour-coated ware; micaceous greyware; greyware	16	1418	Post-medieval
	Post-medieval pottery: Wedgwood Basalt ware; Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware; mottled brown-glazed earthenware; transfer-printed refined whiteware	9	466	
	Roman ceramic building material: tegulae, box flue	5	1870	
	Clay tobacco pipe: bowl	1	8	
	Worked bone object: gaming counter	1	3	
303	Roman pottery: Central Gaulish Samian; Dorset BB1; North Wiltshire greyware; North Wiltshire oxidised fabric	10	102	C2-C4
	Roman ceramic building material: imbrex, box flue, tile	6	1039	
	Painted wall plaster	3	99	
304	Copper alloy object: coin	1	21	C1-C2
305	Roman pottery: Dorset BB1; Oxford red-slipped ware; Oxford reduced ware; Oxford white colour-coated ware; New Forest colour-coated ware;	15	164	C4
	Roman ceramic building material: imbrex, box flue, brick	3	902	
	Iron object: nail	4	39	
307	Roman pottery: Central Gaulish Samian; Central Gaulish black-slipped ware; Cologne colour-coated ware; Dorset BB1; Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware; South-west White-slipped ware; North Wiltshire colour-coated ware; greyware;	28	599	C3-C4
	Roman ceramic building material: tegula, imbrex, box flue	4	458	
	Shell	2	64	
	Copper alloy object: disc	4	2	
	Iron object: fragment	1	4	
	Iron nail with attached wood	1	74	
310	Roman pottery: South and Central Gaulish Samian; Baetican amphora; Oxford red-slipped ware; Oxford white-slipped ware; Savernake grog-tempered ware; greyware	12	558	MC4-LC4
	Roman ceramic building material: tegulae, box flue	11	2838	
	Worked stone: blue lias tesserae	12	159	
	Worked stone: limestone tesserae	49	546	

	Shell	1	32	
319	Roman ceramic building material: brick, box flue, tile	3	502	RB
321	Roman pottery: South Gaulish Samian; Dorset BB1; South-west White-slipped ware; whiteware; greyware; flagon fabric	17	96	C2-C4
	Roman ceramic building material	3	96	
	Ceramic object: tessera	1	6	
	Worked stone: blue lias tesseræ	2	10	
322	Copper alloy object: rivet	1	2	RB
323	Roman pottery: oxidised fabric	1	8	RB
	Roman ceramic building material: box flue	9	430	
	Ceramic object: tesseræ	19	278	
	Worked stone: blue lias tesseræ	34	282	
	Worked stone: limestone tesseræ	67	722	
401	Roman pottery: South and Central Gaulish Samian; Baetican amphora; miscellaneous amphora; North Gaulish mortarium fabric; Dorset BB1; Oxford red-slipped ware; greyware; oxidised fabric; flagon fabric	20	1455	C17-C18
	Post-medieval pottery: Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware	2	449	
	Worked stone	1	390	
402	Roman pottery: South and Central Gaulish Samian; Gaulish amphora; Dorset BB1; imitation BB1; Oxford/New Forest colour-coated ware; soft pink grog-tempered ware; greyware	12	438	LC3-C4
	Roman ceramic building material	3	709	
501	Roman pottery: Central Gaulish Samian; Dorset BB1; Oxford red-slipped ware; local brown colour-coated ware	4	11	LC17-EC18
	Medieval pottery: Cotswold oolitic limestone-tempered ware	2	60	
	Post-medieval pottery: Ashton Keynes glazed earthenware; glazed earthenware; mottled brown-glazed earthenware	4	226	
	Roman ceramic building material: box flue	1	86	
	Post-medieval glass: bottle	2	25	
	Roman copper alloy object: coin	1	4	
	Post-medieval copper alloy object: coin	1	9	

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

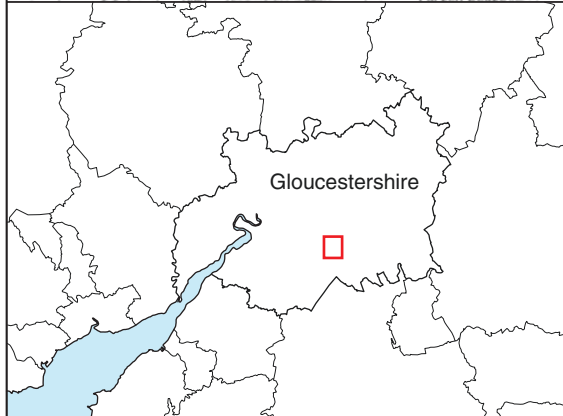
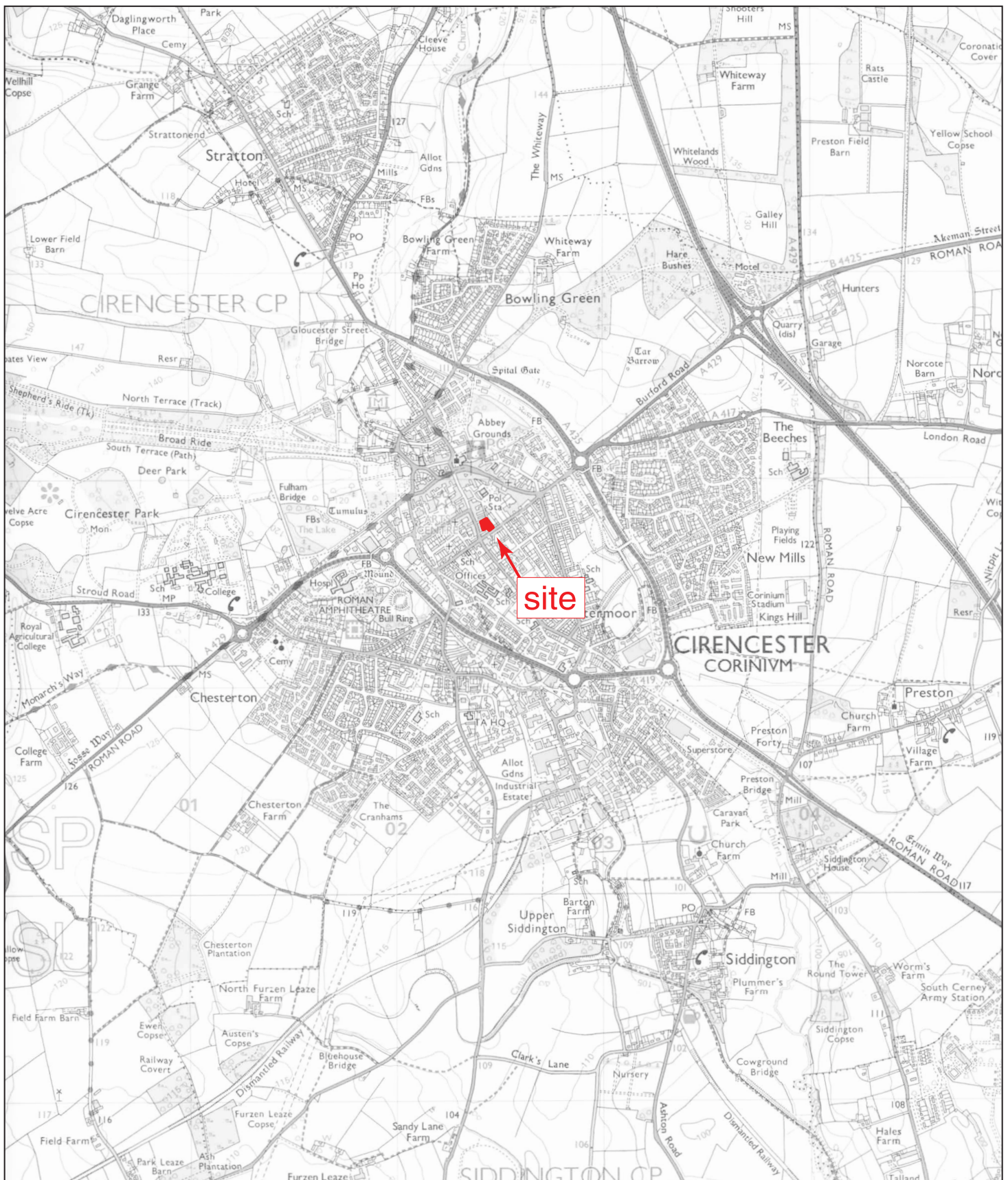
Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3	Trench 4	Trench 5
Current ground level	0.00m (111.1m)	0.00m (111.1m)	0.00m (111.10m)	0.00m (110.98m)	0.00m (111.0m)
Top of 'dark earth' deposits	0.55m (110.55m)	0.3m (110.8m)	0.5m (110.60m)	0.5m (110.48m)	0.5m (110.5m)
Top of Roman demolition deposits	1.8m (109.3m)	1.8m (109.3m)	1.2m (109.9m)	2.4m (108.58m)	1.5m (109.5m)
Limit of excavation	1.8m (109.3m)	1.9m (109.2m)	2.62m (108.48m)	2.7m (108.28m)	2.3m (108.7m)

Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Akeman Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the demolition of an assisted living facility at Akeman Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, and the subsequent excavations associated with the construction of new dwellings on the site.</p> <p>The watching brief identified Roman deposits consisting of mixed demolition layers, a length of Roman wall and associated floor surfaces. A probable early medieval pit was also recorded in the southern half of site. These archaeological features and deposits were sealed by a horizon of 'dark earth' which was in turn cut by a number of post-medieval and modern features.</p>	
Project dates	14-28 February 2013 and 22 April - 9 May 2014	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	CAT Watching Brief 1999, CA Evaluation 2010, CA DBA 2012	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Akeman Court, Cricklade Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.2ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 0245 0176	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Cotswold District Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ian Barnes	
Project Supervisor	Daniel Sausins and Alex Thomson	
MONUMENT TYPE	N/A	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Roman wall and associated floors, early medieval pit	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Corinium Museum	Pottery, CBM, stone, shell, metal, plaster, bone
Paper	Corinium Museum	Trench sheets, context sheets, field drawings, photographic registers, typescript report
Digital	Corinium Museum	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 <i>Akeman Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . a typescript report 14198		



0 1km

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PROJECT TITLE

Akeman Court, Cirencester
Gloucestershire

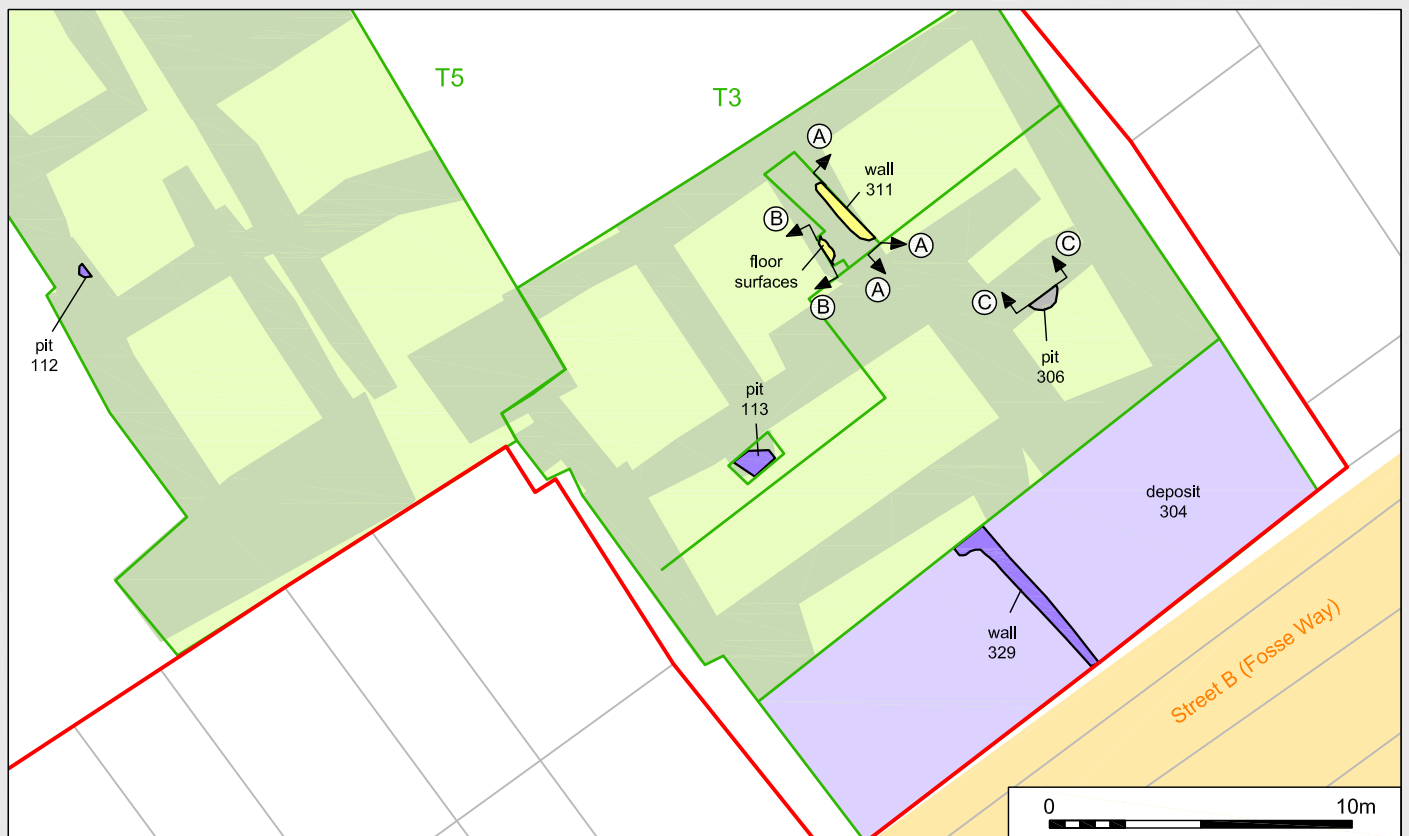
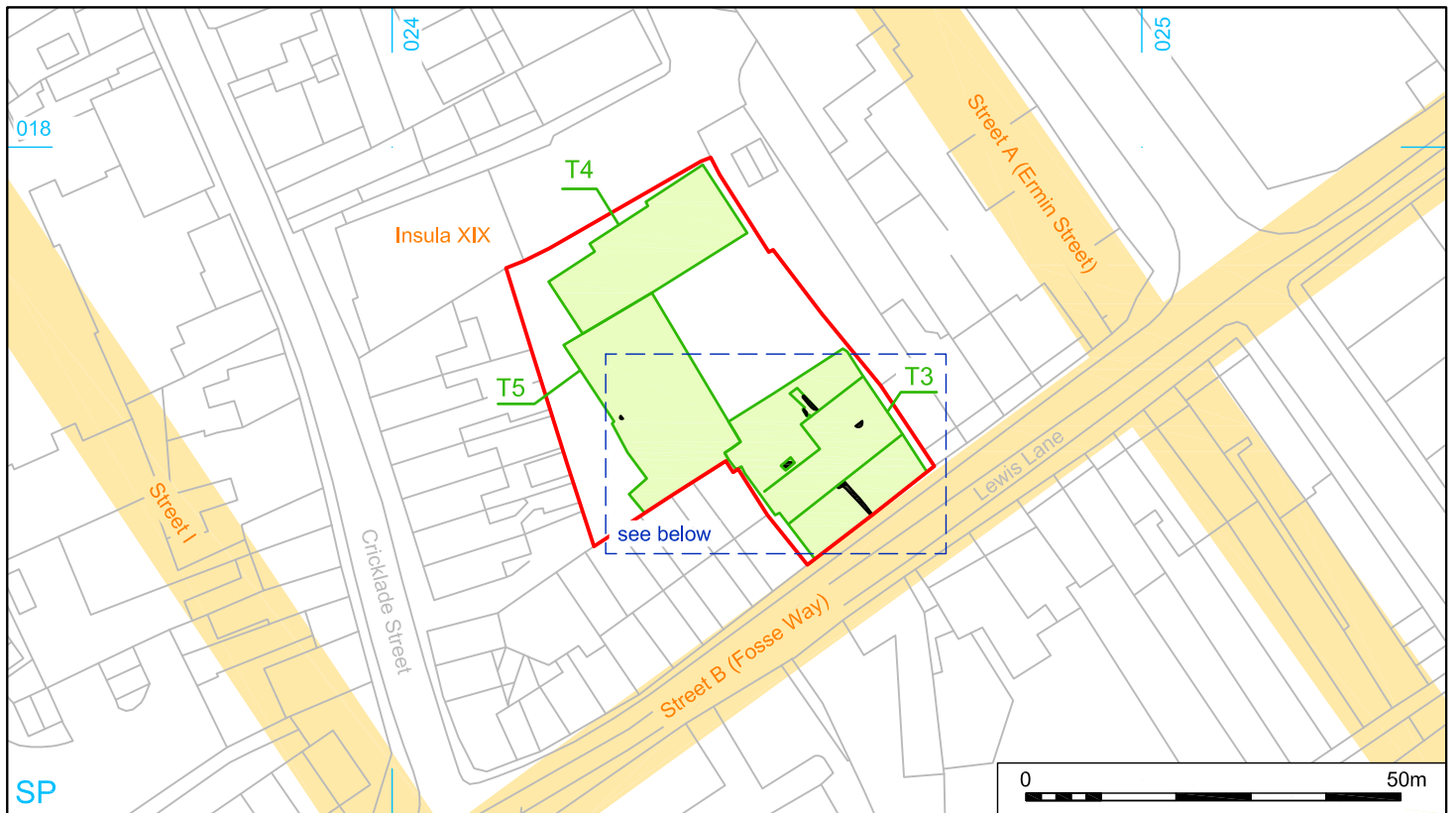
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 4172 DATE 02-06-2014
DRAWN BY JB REVISION 00
APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- site
- trench
- foundation trench
- archaeological feature
- projected course of Roman street (Holbrook 2008, Fig. 18)
- Roman
- post-medieval
- undated
- post-medieval/modern



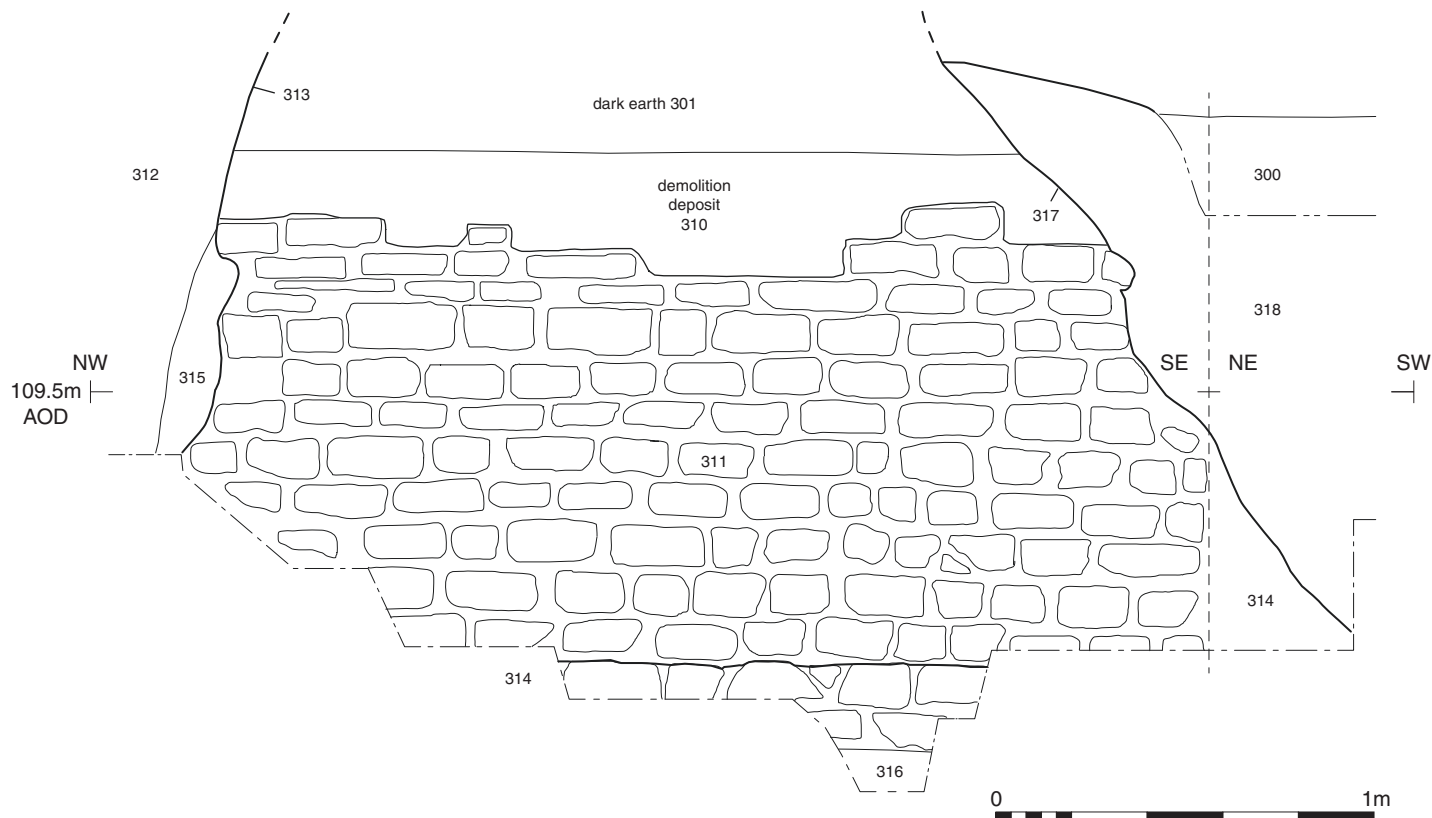
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PROJECT TITLE
 Akeman Court, Cirencester,
 Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 Site plan, showing archaeological
 features

PROJECT NO.	4172	DATE	02-06-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	JB	REVISION	00	2
APPROVED BY	LM/ATB	SCALE@A4	1:1000 and 1:250	

Elevation AA



Wall 311, looking south-west (scale 1m)



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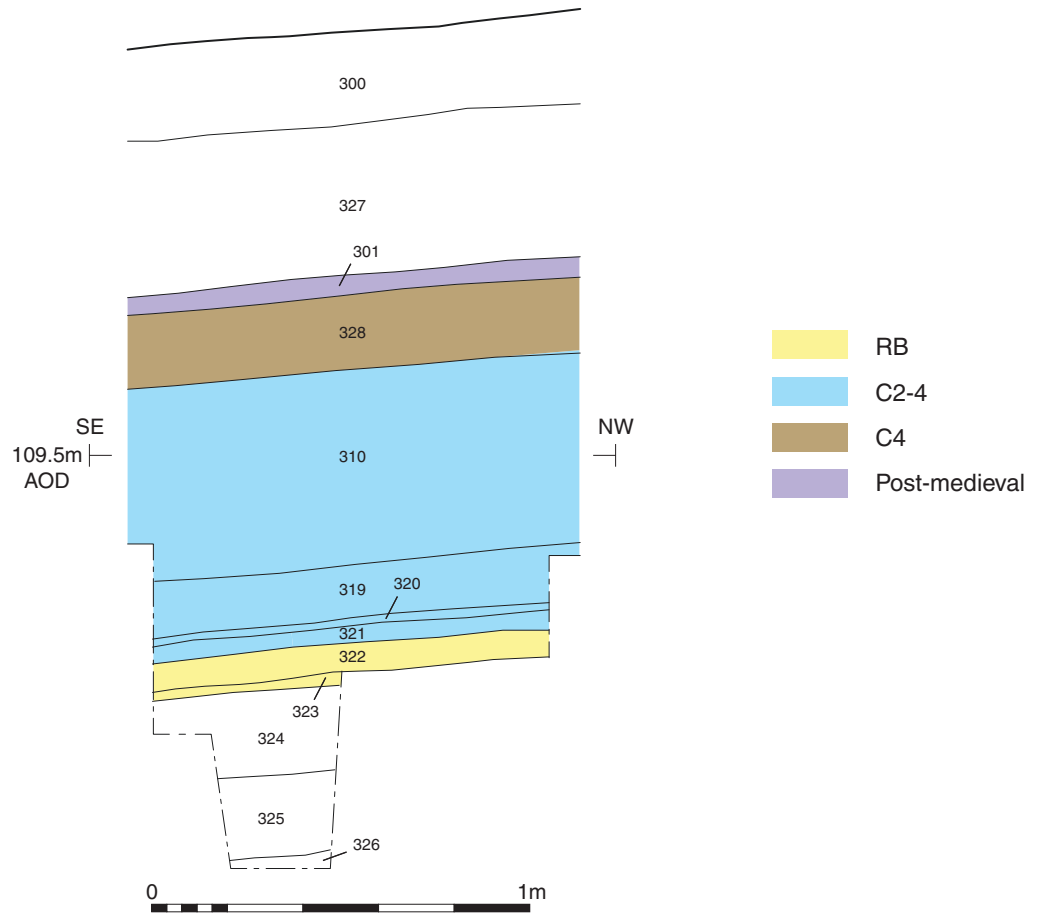
Akeman Court, Cirencester,
 Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

Elevation and photograph of wall 311

PROJECT NO. 4172	DATE 02-06-2014	FIGURE NO. 3
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APPROVED BY LM	SCALE@A4 1:20	

Section BB



Various floor surfaces, looking west
(scales 0.4m and 1m)



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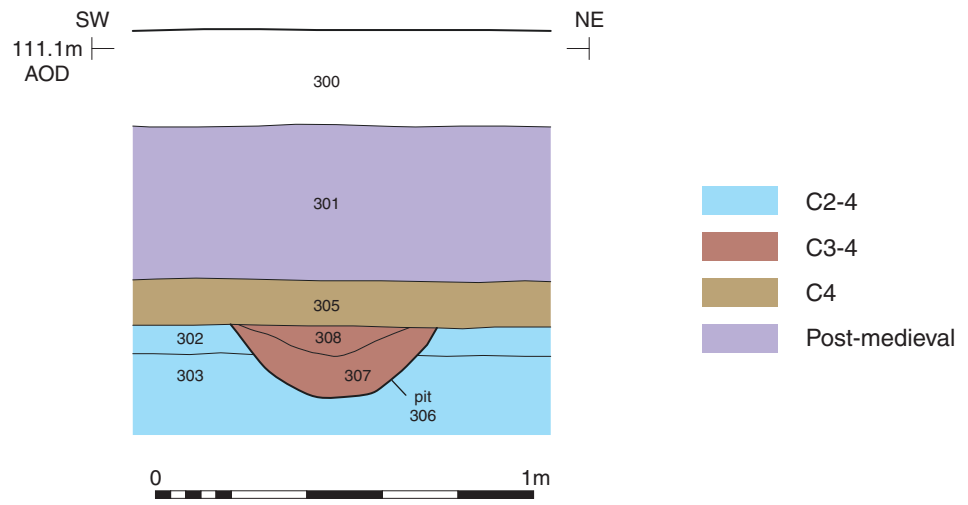
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FIGURE TITLE

Section and photograph in Trench 3,
 showing floor surfaces

PROJECT NO. 4172	DATE 02-06-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY JB	REVISION 00	
APPROVED BY LM	SCALE@A4 1:20	4

Section CC



Pit 306, looking north (scale 1m)



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FIGURE TITLE

Section and photograph of pit 306

PROJECT NO.	4172	DATE	02-06-2014	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	JB	REVISION	00	5
APPROVED BY	LM	SCALE@A4	1:20	