



9 Church Street Cirencester Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief



for Mrs S. Jones

CA Project: 4680 CA Report: 15123

May 2015



Andover Cirencester Milton Keynes

9 Church Street Cirencester Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	9 Church Street
Location:	Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SP 0280 0133
Туре:	Watching Brief
Date:	9-10 March 2013
Planning Reference:	Cotswold District Council ref: 13/04058/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Corinium Museum
Site Code:	CHUR 15

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of a domestic dwelling at 9 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

Evidence for a possible north-east/south-west orientated Roman road with a southern side ditch was uncovered and preserved in *situ* under the new building foundation. This feature was covered by Roman demolition material, which was sealed by modern garden soil.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Mrs Sarah Jones at 9 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: SP 0280 0133; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for a single storey extension to the rear of a domestic dwelling (Cotswold District Council (CDC) Planning ref: 13/04058/FUL, condition No. 3).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with recommendations made by Charles Parry, Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). archaeological advisor to CDC, and with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2013) and approved by Mr Parry. The fieldwork also followed Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014), the Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire (GCC 1996), the Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (English Heritage 1991) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.3 The development area is approximately 0.1ha in extent, and comprises gardens to the rear and side of 9 Church Street. The site is bound to the east and west by properties fronting on to Church Street, and by gardens belonging to properties fronting King Street to the north. The site lies at approximately 106m AOD.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Forest Marble Formation Mudstone of the Jurassic Period with overlying superficial deposits of Quaternary river terrace gravels (BGS 2015). Natural deposits were not reached during the groundworks.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site falls outside the notification areas of the Scheduled Monument, Corinium Roman Town (National Monument 1003426; Glos SAM 361). However, research indicates that the proposed development is sited in an area of high archaeological potential. In particular, it lies within the Insula VIII of the Roman town, between Ermin Street (which lies immediately to the east of the site) and the street bounding the south-western side of the insula (Streets A and C Holbrook and Pamment Salvatore 1998, Fig 7).
- 2.2 Within Church Street a single inhumation burial has previously been identified during the excavation of a service trench (McWhirr et al. 1982). Finds recovered from the vicinity of the burial dated to the 3rd to 4th centuries AD. Sculptured stone, coins and pottery have also been found in the vicinity of the current site (Ordnance Survey (OS) 1875).
- 2.3 Archaeological evaluation to the rear of 8 Church Street identified Roman deposits overlain by 0.65m of 'dark earth' deposits and 0.2m of modern overburden (CAT 1999).
- An archaeological evaluation at 20 Church Street identified an *in situ* Roman deposit (a probable floor surface) 0.53m below the present ground level (106.63m AOD).
 This was in turn sealed by a reworked post-Roman 'dark earth' deposit (CA 2008).
- 2.5 Construction in 1908 of Bingham Hall directly to the north-east of the development site identified part of a Roman building (Building IX,3, McWhirr, 1986, 193) and a north to south orientated Roman street, presumed to be Ermin Street. In 1929 a mosaic was uncovered 12m north-east of Bingham Hall. Excavations undertaken in 1958 between Bingham Hall and Victoria Road again revealed the mosaic, along with structural remains of at least one further building. The building contained a polygonal structure, broadly interpreted as a heated triclinium, and a twin apsed room, interpreted as a caldarium of a small domestic bath house (Holbrook 1994).
- 2.6 Archaeological evaluation in 2000 and subsequent excavation in 2002 within the grounds of Bingham Hall recorded street metalling and a road-side ditch associated with Ermin Street. Adjacent to the roadside ditch, evidence for a portico and for buildings was also revealed (Havard and Watts 2008). To the south of the current

site, an excavation in 2003-4 revealed further street metalling and road side ditches associated with Ermin Street, in addition to road side buildings (Evans 2008).

- 2.7 No evidence for medieval activity is recorded within the general vicinity of the development site, and it is suggested that the site lay outside of the township boundary of medieval Cirencester (Slater 1976).
- 2.8 Within the post-medieval period, cartographic evidence from the Cirencester Tithe Map (1838) indicates the site was contained within the nurseries and orchards which filled the southern half of the town (Gerrard 1984). The Ordnance Survey First Edition map of 1875 illustrates the study area as part of the grounds of Watermoor House.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 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.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, comprising the excavation of foundations (Trench 1) and drainage (Trench 2) for a single storey extension to the rear of a domestic dwelling (Fig. 2). During the excavation of the foundations archaeology deposits consisting of a Roman road surface and demolition deposits were encountered *c* 0.18m above foundation depth. It was agreed with the archaeological advisor to CDC and CDC Building Control that these deposits could be left *in situ and* the foundation raft could be built directly off the archaeological deposits, providing a thin separation layer of sand topped by geotextile was used.

- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 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 is set out within Appendix E and will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

5.1 The natural geological substrate was not encountered during the groundworks.

Trench 1 *Roman*

- 5.2 A compact gravel and crushed limestone surface 118 was encountered 0.52m below modern ground level (bmgl) at 107.22m AOD (Fig. 2). Its visible extent was 3m long by 1.64 m wide and seemed to continue to the north-east beneath demolition layer 106 with surface 107 (observed through a hole in layer 106 against the eastern bulk of the trench), probably an eastern continuation of it. Surface 118 showed signs of having been resurfaced. Butting the southern edge of surface 118 there was an extremely hard band of crushed limestone, 119. It was >0.84m long by 1.04 wide. The two surfaces slope slightly from north-west to south-east, with the slope gradually becoming extreme towards the southern extent of surface 119 (Fig. 4: section AA). It was not possible to determine the relationship between 118 and 119.
- 5.3 The south-eastern extent of 119 was well defined and straight. To the south of this was a north-east/south-west orientated band of firm, inclusionless, dark grey sandy silt, 120. Deposit 120 was similar in composition to the upper fills of Roman roadside ditches previously observed within Cirencester, for example Southway House (CA 2014) and Bingham Hall a few metres to the north-east of the current site (Havard and Watts 2008). The possibility that it is a robber trench fill, of a wall flanking the surface can be ruled out As the deposit is too firm, consistent, and inclusionless to be a backfill deposit. It is therefore probable that this linear deposit is a roadside

ditch fill and the two surfaces to its north are more likely to be road surfaces than yard surfaces given their sloping surface.

Post-Roman

- 5.4 Directly overlying the road surface 118 in the eastern portion of the trench was demolition deposit 106 (Fig. 2). It consisted of light brown lime mortar with limestone fragments, Roman tile fragments and large lumps of painted plaster left *in situ*.
- 5.5 Overlying the demolition debris and road surface 118 was a very dark brown silt clay layer 116 (Fig. 4: section AA), interpreted as a 'dark earth' deposit, similar to others seen throughout post Roman Cirencester. 'Dark earth' deposit 125 was a similar band of soil overlying the roadside ditch fill 120. Due to modern truncation by a lead water pipe and a previous house extension foundation the relationship between this deposit and 116 could not be established. The finds from deposits 116 and 125 suggest a late Roman (3rd to 4th century) date for these contexts, although these finds could be residual. The presence of fragments of tegulae and sandstone roof tile in the 'dark earth' deposits could suggest tile and stone roofs in the area. Similarly the box flue tile fragments from the 'dark earth' suggest the presence of nearby structures with hypocaust heating systems, although all these items could have come from a considerable distance and been dumped.

Modern

5.6 Sealing the Roman and post Roman deposits was modern garden soil 103 and a number of modern features cut these deposits.

Trench 2

5.7 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the excavation of this trench, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material recovered during the watching brief was recorded from two deposits: 'dark earth' layers 116 and 125. All of the recovered material dates to the Roman period. Quantities of the artefact types recovered are given in Appendix B. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Fabric

codes are equated to the Cirencester pottery type series as defined by Rigby (1982); where applicable National Roman Fabric Reference Collection codes are also given in Appendix B (Tomber and Dore 1998).

Roman pottery

- 6.2 A total of 21 sherds (197g) of Roman pottery was hand recovered from two 'dark earth' deposits. The assemblage survives in moderately good condition, with slip and burnishing preserved, and burnt food residues present on the exterior of three sherds of Dorset Black-burnished ware from deposit 125. The assemblage is moderately fragmented, with an average sherd weight of 9.4g.
- 6.3 A single continental import, a bodysherd of south Gaulish Samian (Fabric 154) of mid 1st to early 2nd century date (Webster 1996, 2–3), was recovered from 'dark earth' layer 125. Regional imports are represented by a rimsherd from a Young C51 hemispherical flanged bowl in Oxford Red-slipped ware (Fabric 83) from deposit 125 and a total of 14 sherds of Dorset Black-burnished ware (Fabric 74) recovered across both deposits. The Oxford potteries manufactured Red-slipped ware from the mid 3rd to 4th centuries (Young 1977, 123–4). Whilst the Black-burnished ware was produced near Poole in Dorset and when found outside the county it typically dates to the second to fourth centuries (Davies et al. 1994, 107). The sherds from deposit 125 include a rimsherd from a Seager Smith and Davies Type 1 or 2 everted rim jar, which is a broadly dateable form (1993, 230–1).
- 6.4 The remainder of the coarsewares are of local manufacture in the Cirencester and north Wiltshire areas. The north Wiltshire oxidised (Fabric 98) and reduced wares (Fabrics 17/98) are of broad Roman date, however, the imitation Black-burnished ware (Fabrics 102-104), dates to the 3rd to 4th centuries.

Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

6.5 Ceramic building material of Roman date, amounting to 11 fragments, was recovered from 'dark earth' 116. Most of this material is in good to moderate condition, with only two small fragments displaying abraded edges. Two fragments were identified as being from tegulae and two from box flue tiles. The remainder were too fragmentary for further classification.

Other finds

- 6.6 A moderately corroded iron nail was recorded in 'dark earth' deposit 116. It corresponds to Manning's Type 1B classification for Roman nails (Manning 1980, 134–5), which feature a square-sectioned stem, flat head and a length of less than 150mm.
- 6.7 A small fragment of sandstone from 'dark earth' deposit 125 is likely to be a fragment of roof tile: sandstone was commonly used as a roofing material during the Roman period.
- 6.8 Dark earth 125 also produced a small and very friable fragment of wall plaster of Roman date, which featured a small area of purplish-red paint.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal Bone

7.1 A total of ten fragments (192g) of animal bone were hand recovered from 'dark earth' deposit 116, in association with finds dating to the Roman period (Table 1). The bone was generally well preserved and it was possible to identify the remains of cattle (Bos taurus), sheep/goat (Ovis aries/Capra hircus) and pig (Sus scrofa domesticus), species that are to be expected in assemblages of this period (Baker and Worley, 2014).

8. DISCUSSION (FIG 6)

8.1 The watching brief identified Roman surfaces, a possible ditch, and an overlying demolition layer, all of which have now been preserved *in situ*, under a thin layer of sand below the foundations of the new extension.

Roman

8.2 The earliest deposits encountered were compacted gravel/limestone surface 118 and limestone surface 119. These surfaces may represent external yard surfaces associated with buildings fronting Ermin Street (located approximately 5m to the west). However, the north-west to south-east orientated slope or camber of the surfaces and the presence of a possible drainage ditch 121 to the south-east, suggest that it is more probable that these features represent a previously unknown north-east/south-west orientated street and associated drainage ditch. Given the projected alignment of ditch 121, it is probable that this road joins with Ermin Street at 90° just beyond the limits of the current site (Fig. 6). Although the surface may simply be an access route to buildings within Insular VIII, visual analysis of the Roman street plan of Cirencester reveals that this postulated new street lies half way between the Silchester Gate and the street bounding the northern limits of Insular VIII. This opens up the possibility that the street in Trench 1 is a previously unknown Roman grid street, dividing Insular VII into two equal parts, that has similar dimensions to Insulaes I, II, V, and VI just to the north.

Post Roman

- 8.3 Demolition layer 106 bares comparison with similar deposits previously revieled throughout Cirencester which result from the decay and/or salvaging of building materials from the Roman buildings. It is noteworthy that layer 106seems to lie directly on the upper surfaces of the postulated street metalling and that it contains large pieces of painted plaster, suggesting that it may not have been subjected to compaction post deposition. If this hypnosis is correct, then it suggests that this inter-insula street went out of use prior to the demolition of the adjacent buildings. Excavations at The Foresters Arms, Queen Street in 2003/4 (a short distance to the south of the current site), also recorded demolition deposits overlying part of the metaled surfaces of Ermin Street and its roadside ditch (Holbrook 2008, pp34, Fig 22 section b, context 047).
- 8.4 The formation of the 'dark earth' deposit 116/125 over the demolition deposit (not visible in section 5) and road surface is typical of sites throughout the Roman town. Unfortunately the lack of post Roman finds means that it is unclear whether this soil is the result of medieval or post-medieval cultivation.

Modern

8.5 The wall trench 105 (not illustrated) may represent a north-west/south-east aligned garden feature and the construction trenches 110, 124, and 126 and path 101 belongs to various extensions built to the rear of the building during the late 20th and early 21st century.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Busby. The report was written by Peter Busby. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Andy Clarke respectively. The illustrations were prepared by Aleksandra Osinska. The archive has been compiled by Peter Busby, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness (m)	Spot- date
1	101	Layer		Concrete path	Grey yellow concrete	>4.6	>3.1	0.08	
1	102	Layer		Concrete path sub-base	Light yellow sand gravel with 20% limestone cobbles	3.17		0.27	
1	103	Layer		Garden soil	Very dark brown silt clay with 15% gravel and <1% slate, coal, blue and white ceramics, plastic. Finds not retrieved	4.6	3.17	0.5	
1	104	Fill	105	Possible wall trench fill	Mixed fill of grey brown sand lime mortar with bricks and brick fragments		0.56	0.18	
1	105	Cut		Possible wall trench	NW/SE linear with steep sides and flat base		0.56	0.18	
1	106	Layer		Demolition layer	Brown white sand lime mortar with 15% angular limestone pebbles/stones and 10% pained wall plaster (not excavated)	>3	>2.65		
1	107	Layer		Road	Dark brown silt sand with 50% gravel and crushed limestone (not excavated)	>0.32	>0.25		
1	108	Fill	121	Road side ditch fill	Dark grey/grey sand silt (not excavated)	>0.34	>0.20		
1	109	Structure		Extension Foundation	Concrete (not excavated)	>0.7	>0.17		
1	110	Cut		Construction	NE/SW linear with vertical sides, base not seen	>0.7	>0.19	>0.32	
1	111	Fill	110	Construction trench fill	Dark brown clay silt with 25% angular limestone cobbles, bricks and plastic	>0.7	>0.19	>0.32	
1	112	Fill	113	Pit fill	Dark brown silt clay with 25% angular limestone stones/cobbles	>0.44	0.42	>0.21	
1	113	Cut		Pit	Rectangular cut with rounded corners and steep sides, base not seen	>0.44	0.42	>0.21	
1	114	Layer		Layer	Dark brown sand silt with 25% gravel	>1.98	>1.05	0.1	
1	115	Layer		Layer	As 114	0.69		0.08	
1	116	Layer		Dark earth	Very dark brown silt clay with 5% gravel	>3.2	>3.17	0.19	C3-C4
1	117	Structure	126	Extension Foundation	Yellow concrete	>2.09		0.42	
1	118	Layer		Road	Sandy gravel (limestone and flint) very hard	>3	>1.64		
1	119	Layer		Road	Light yellow white crushed limestone, extremely hard	>0.84	1.04		
1	120	Fill	121	Road side ditch fill	As 108	>0.84	0.34		
1	121	Cut		Road side ditch	NE/SW linear, sides and base not seen	>0.84	0.34		
1	122	Fill	124	Construction trench fill	As 111	>0.84	0.27	0.16	
1	123	Structure	124	Extension Foundation	As 109	>0.84	>0.22		
1	124	Cut		Construction	As 110	>0.84	>0.22	>0.16	
1	125	Fill/Layer	126	Dark earth	Brown black clay silt with 5% gravel	>0.84	1.6	0.16	MC3 -C4
1	126	Cut		Construction trench	NW/SE linear with vertical sides and flat base	>2.09		0.42	
2	201	Layer		Concrete path	As 101	>1.2	>0.8	0.07	

			sub-base					
2	202	Layer	Concrete path sub-base	As 102	>1.2	>0.8	0.13	
2	203	Fill	Service trench fill	Soft dark brown silt clay with 10% bricks, ceramic drain fragments. Cut not seen	>1.2	>0.8	>0.6	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Finds concordance

Context	Category	Fabric Code/ NRFRC*	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
116	Roman pottery	154/ LGF SA	South Gaulish samian	1	10	C3-C4
	Roman pottery	74/DOR BB1	Dorset Black-burnished	2	19	
			ware			
	Roman pottery	102-104	Late Black-burnished	2	21	
			imitation			
	Roman pottery	17	North Wiltshire	2	18	
			greywares			
	Roman pottery	98	North Wiltshire oxidised	1	17	
	Roman CBM		Tegula	2	208	
	Roman CBM		Box flue	2	169	
	Roman CBM		Brick/tile	7	271	
	Iron object		Nail	1	13	
125	Roman pottery	74/DOR BB1	Dorset Black-burnished	12	99	MC3-C4
			ware			
	Roman pottery	83/ OXF RS	Oxford Red-slipped	1	13	
			ware			
	Roman worked stone		Roof tile	1	21	
	Roman plaster		Painted wall plaster	1	5	

* National Roman Fabric Reference Collection codes in bold

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context.

Fill	BOS	O/C	SUS	LM	ММ	Total	Weight (g)
116	3	1	1	1	4	10	192
Total	3	1	1	1	4	10	
Weight	95	23	14	44	16	192	

BOS = Cattle; O/C = sheep/goat; SUS = pig; EQ= horse; LM= large sized mammal; MM = medium sized mammal

APPENDIX D: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located at the corner of Church Street and Victoria Road (107.15m AOD).

	Trench 1
Current ground level	0.00m (107.74m)
Top of demolition layer (Context 116)	0.5m (107.24m)
Top of Roman street (Context 118)	0.52m (107.22m)
Top of Roman street side ditch (Context 120)	0.74m (107m)

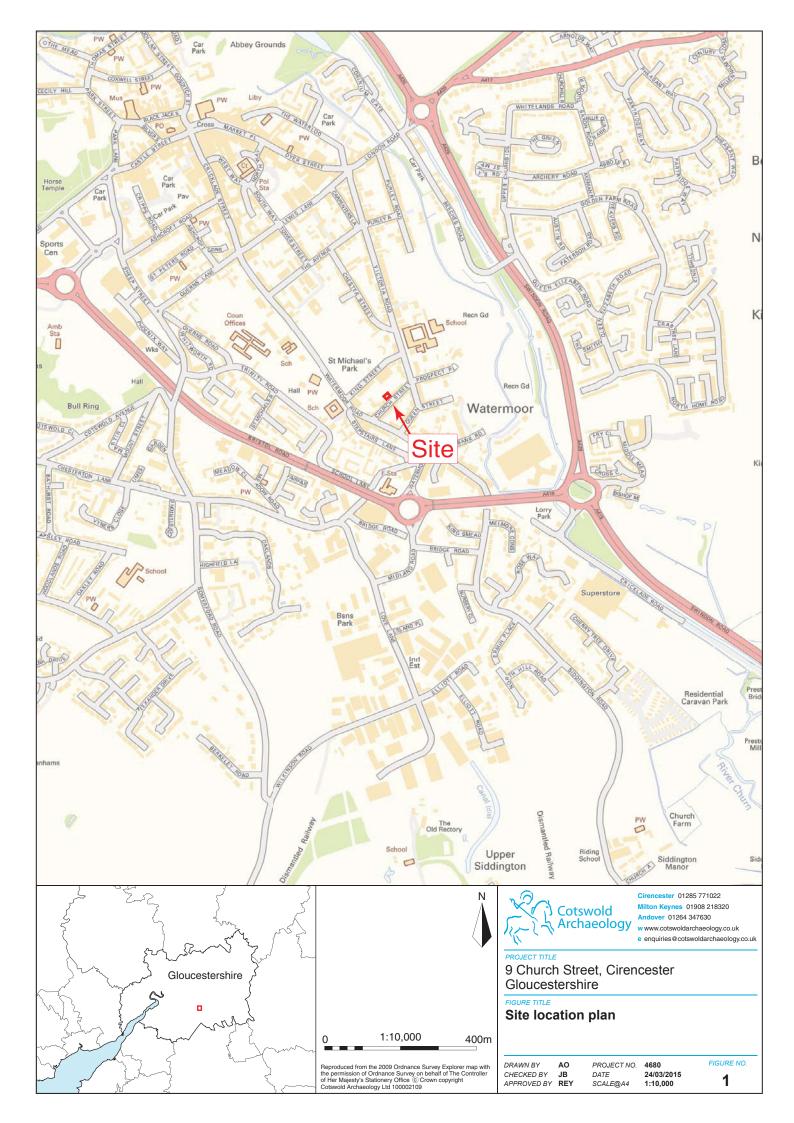
Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

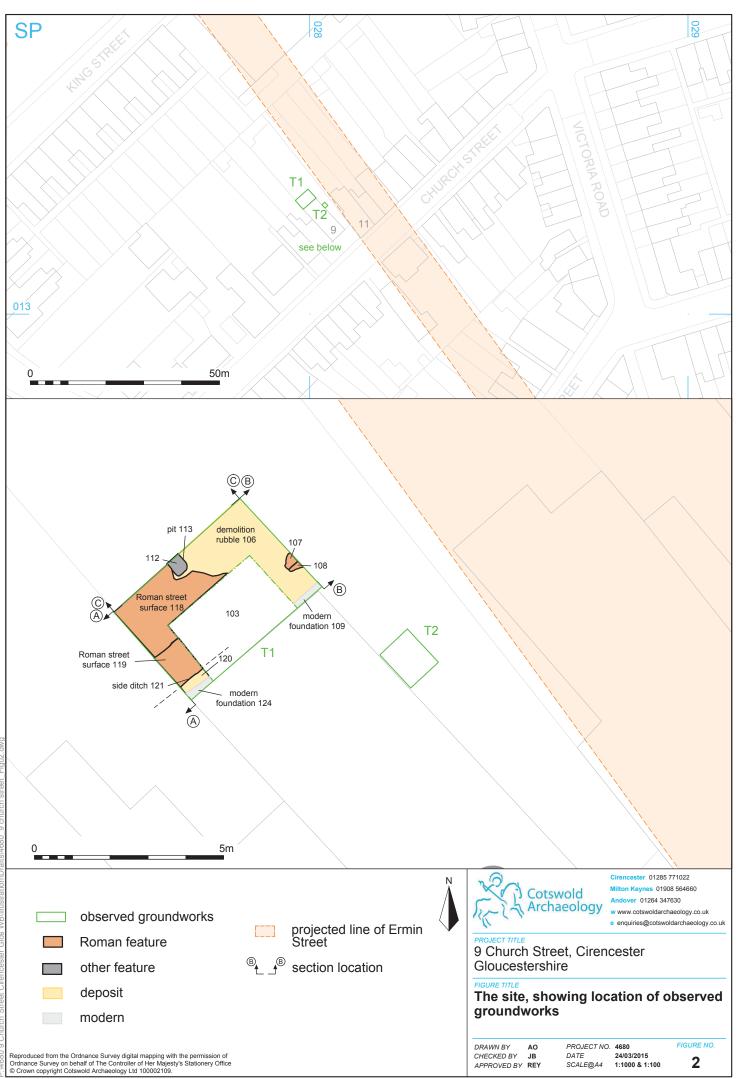
APPENDIX E: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	9 Church Street			
Short description	Archaeology during groundworks as of a single-storey extension to the re	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a single-storey extension to the rear of a domestic dwelling at 9 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.		
	Evidence for a possible north-east road with a southern side ditch was situ under the new building foundati by Roman demolition material, wh garden soil.	on. This feature was covered		
Project dates				
Project type	Archaeological Watching Brief			
Previous work	None	None		
Future work	Unknown	Unknown		
PROJECT LOCATION				
Site Location	9 Church Street, Cirencester, Glouce	9 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire		
Study area				
Site co-ordinates	SP 0280 0133	SP 0280 0133		
PROJECT CREATORS				
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology			
Project Brief originator				
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology			
Project Manager	Richard Young			
Project Supervisor	Peter Busby			
MONUMENT TYPE	Roman Road			
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None			
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content		
Physical	Corinium Museum	Ceramics, animal bone Iron object.		
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context sheets, Trencl sheets, drawings		
Digital	Corinium Museum	Digital photos		
BIBLIOGRAPHY				

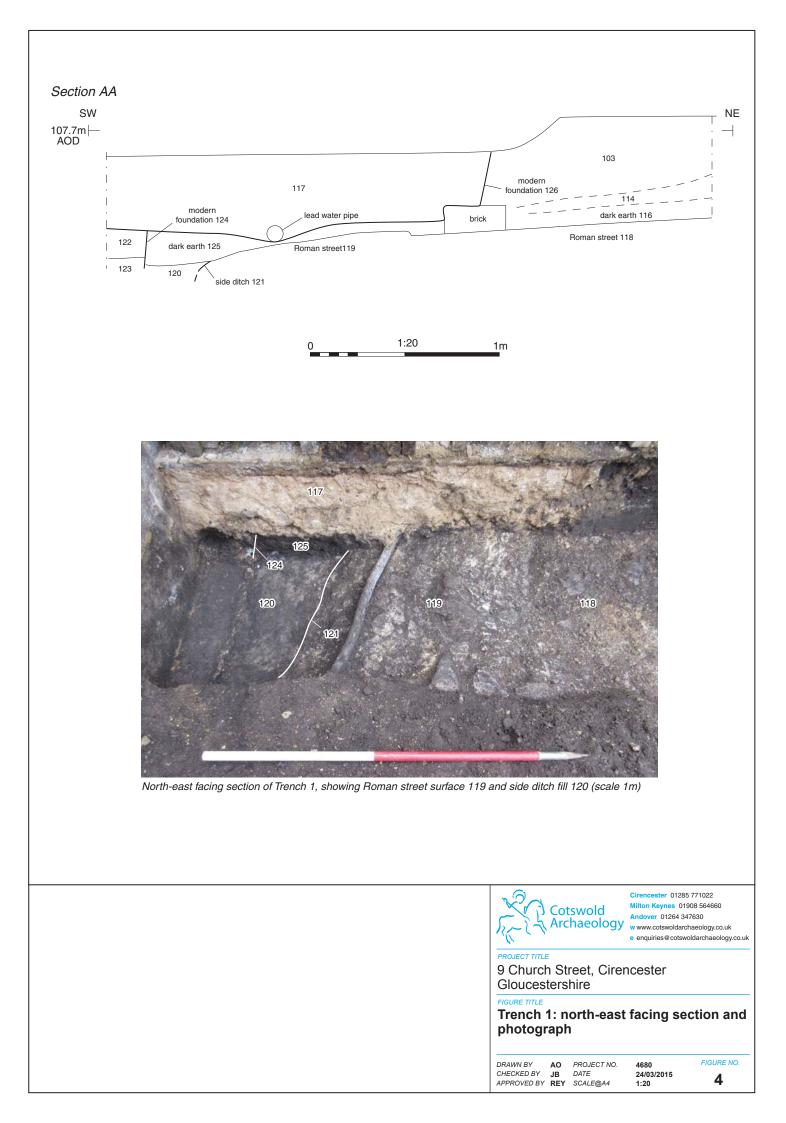
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 9 Church Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief. CA typescript report **15123**

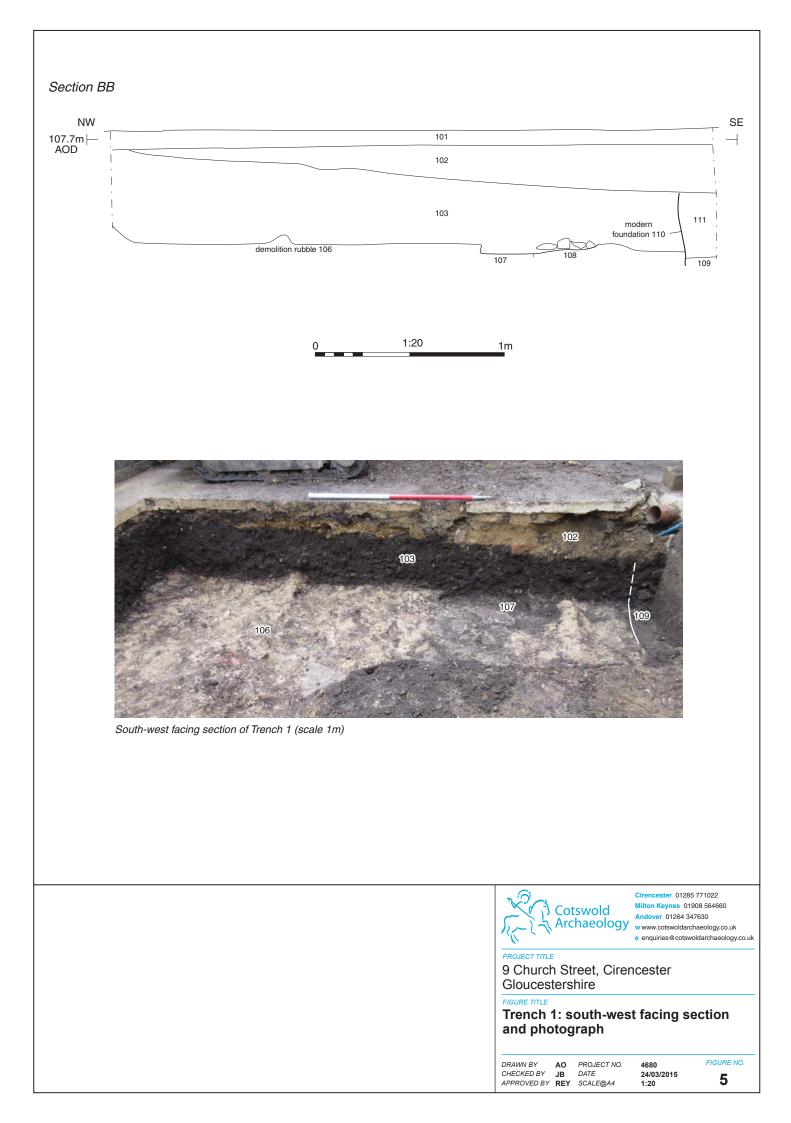




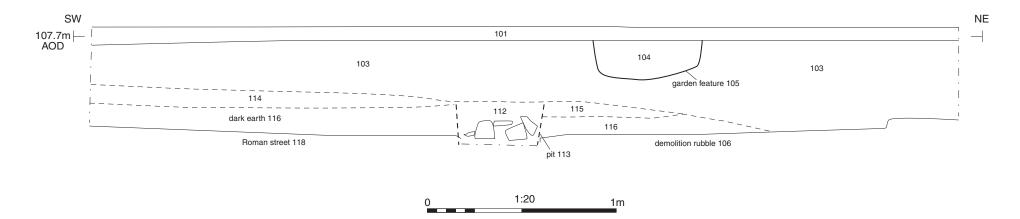


3 View of Trench 1 loc	oking south-east (1m scales)	Cotswold Archaeology e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
		PROJECT TITLE 9 Church Street, Cirencester Gloucestershire
		FIGURE TITLE Trench 1: Photograph
		DRAWN BY AO PROJECT NO. 4680 FIGURE NO. CHECKED BY JB DATE 24/03/2015 APPROVED BY REY SCALE@A4 N/A 3





Section CC





North-west facing section of Trench 1 (scale 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE 9 Church Street, Cirencester Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE Trench 1: north-west facing section and photograph

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CHECKED BY	JB	L
APPROVED BY	REY	;

PROJECT NO. DATE SCALE@A4 4680 08/05/2015 1:20 FIGURE NO.

6





observed groundworks

- previous works
- Roman street
- projected new Roman street ----
- VIII Insulae number
- Roman defences



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9 Church Street, Cirencester Gloucestershire

Plan of Roman Streets and Insulaes in south of Roman Cirencester, showing site and possible new street

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 4680

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 JB
 DATE
 25/03/2015

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 1:2000

PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE NO. 7



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Cirencester Office

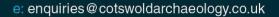
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