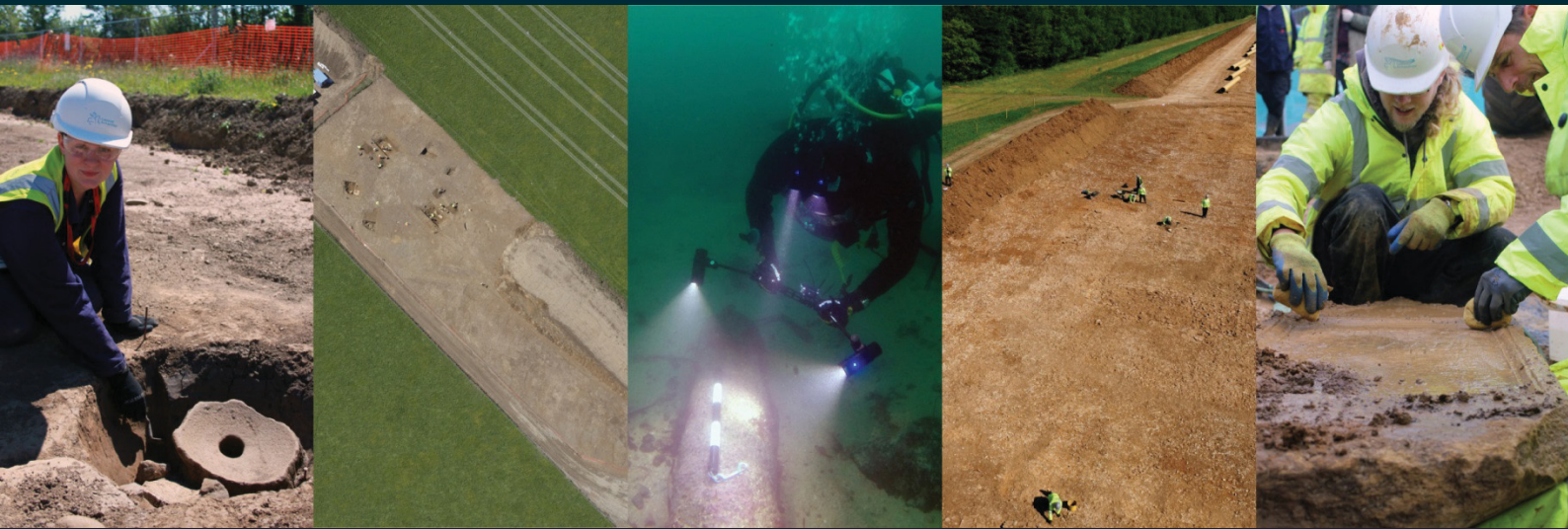


Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Roberts Limbrick Ltd

CA Project: 6020
CA Report: 16488

September 2016



Cirencester Primary School,
Victoria Road, Cirencester

Archaeological Evaluation

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	September 2016	Greg Crees and Peter Searle		Internal review		Cliff Bateman

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Cirencester Primary School
Location:	Victoria Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SP 0287 0149
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	30 Aug – 01 Sept 2016
SMC Reference:	S00142459
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Corinium Museum
Site Code:	CIP 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August and September 2016 at Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester. Four trenches were excavated.

Two sections of Roman wall, indicative of two separate buildings, and spreads of Roman demolition debris were identified throughout the proposed development area at depths of between 0.4m and 0.9m below the existing ground surface. All were sealed by reworked 'dark earth' that was in turn overlain by modern deposits and hardstanding.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August and September 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Roberts Limbrick Ltd. at Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SP 0287 0149; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to inform the determination of a forthcoming planning application to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and also an application for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for proposed redevelopment of the school. The redevelopment is aimed at rationalising the existing buildings, removing surplus/outdated accommodation and considering new build options for improved school facilities. The archaeological works were recommended by Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England (HE) in conjunction with Charles Parry, archaeological advisor to GCC.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016a) that was approved by Charles Parry and Mel Barge (GCC and HE respectively). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), 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).

The site

1.3 The site is located on the eastern side of Victoria Road in the centre of Cirencester. It comprises the primary school grounds, including the principal school buildings arranged around a central court yard area, a range of ancillary buildings and associated facilities, surfaced playgrounds, car-parking, lawns and areas of soft landscaping. The core of the historic school building is Grade II Listed, whilst the eastern part of the proposed development area, and the large area of playing fields located immediately east of the school, forms a notification area of a Scheduled Monument (National Monument 1003426; *Corinium* Roman Town). The site slopes gently from east to west (107m AOD to 105.5m AOD respectively).

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Forest Marble Formation – Mudstone of the Jurassic era with superficial deposits comprising River Terrace

deposits of the Quaternary Period also noted (BGS 2016). The natural substrate was not encountered in any of the excavated trenches.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following is a summary of relevant information featured in a preceding Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment which should be referred to for further details (CA 2016b).
- 2.2 There is little substantive evidence for prehistoric occupation within Cirencester. The remains of possible prehistoric barrows, Tar Barrow, survive to the north-east of the town. To the south-east of these is the more recently discovered site of Kingshill North, where evidence for occupation from the Neolithic through until the later Iron Age is in evidence (ibid.).
- 2.3 Cirencester (*Corinium Dobunorum*) was first established as a Roman military centre with the construction of a fort at Leaholme in c.45-50 AD. The fort was short-lived and seems to have been abandoned c.75 AD. Subsequently, the area developed into an urban centre, eventually becoming the civitas capital, the administrative and political centre of the Dobunni tribal area. The establishment of the street grid and construction of the town's major public buildings took place during the late 1st/early 2nd century (ibid.).
- 2.4 The current site is located within Insula X of the Roman town, with the northern part of the adjacent playing fields extending into Insula XI. Insula X is the south-easternmost of the identified insulae within *Corinium*, defined to the west by hypothesised intramural Street D, to the north by Street G, and to the east by the line of the town defences (ibid.).
- 2.5 Substantial remains of Roman buildings and other settlement activity have been recorded within Insula X, including within the Site itself. To date, seven main structures/buildings have been hypothesised (Buildings X.1 to X.7). More recently, one of these, Building X.7, has come to be considered an unlikely structure and is now thought more likely to represent a post-medieval watermeadow. Doubt has also been cast on the locations, though not necessarily the existence, of Buildings X.5 and X.6, both of which were only roughly planned on the basis of outlines (soil

marks) revealed subsequent to 1960s ploughing. Recent evaluation has identified another probable building within the site, adjacent to Street D; referred to as Building X.8 in the desk-based assessment (ibid.).

- 2.6 The extent and nature of post-Roman settlement in Cirencester currently remains undetermined. There is no evidence for Early medieval occupation within the proposed development area nor indeed elsewhere within former Insula X. By the 13th-14th century the current site formed part of a large area of meadow to the south of the town, known as 'The Lewes'. Cartographic sources indicate continued agricultural activity within this area until the establishment of Victoria Road in the mid 19th century (ibid.).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information will enable HE and GCC to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 4 trenches, each measuring 1.5m in length and 1.5m in width (Fig. 2). The locations of Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were slightly re-adjusted from their intended locations to avoid buried services or other on-site constraints. The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were located within existing hardstanding (tarmac playground and path/roadways) that was removed by mechanical excavator equipped with a

toothless grading bucket. All trenches were subsequently excavated by hand to the top of *in-situ* archaeological deposits. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation 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.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-6)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A, and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix C.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 5.2 Wall 103, partially exposed along the western edge of the trench at a depth of 0.68m below present ground level (bpgl), was the earliest feature/deposit encountered. It was aligned broadly northwest/southeast and comprised at least two courses of unbonded limestone blocks. Abutting wall 103 to the northeast was deposit 102, comprising frequent limestone rubble within a sandy clay matrix from which 2nd to 3rd-century Roman pottery was recovered. Sealing wall 103 and presumed demolition spread 102 was 'dark earth' deposit 101 from which Roman and post-medieval pottery, as well as clay tobacco pipe, was retrieved. This deposit was immediately sealed by modern make-up deposits for the existing tarmacadam playground surface, 100.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 5.3 Demolition deposit 203, comprising frequent limestone rubble within a sandy clay matrix, was encountered 0.87m bpgl. It was sealed by 'dark earth' deposits 202 and 201. Solely Roman artefacts (pottery and a coin) were recovered deposit 202 with exclusively post-medieval finds being retrieved from deposit 201. The foregoing deposits were sealed by modern make-up deposits for the existing tarmacadam playground surface, 200.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 5.4 Wall 304 was revealed close to the southern extent of the trench at 0.37m bpgl. It was aligned broadly northeast/southwest, measured 0.6m in width and comprised limestone blocks bonded by a sandy mortar. Dressed stone was evident on both the northern and southern elevations. Deposit 303, comprising frequent limestone rubble within a sandy clay matrix, abutted both sides of wall 304 and is interpreted as demolition debris. Sealing wall 304 and demolition spreads 303 was thin, typically 0.2m in thickness, 'dark earth' deposit 302 that was in turn sealed by levelling deposit 301 for modern tarmac surface 300. No artefacts were recovered from this trench.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 6)

- 5.5 Deposit 404, comprising frequent limestone rubble within a sandy clay matrix from which two sherds of mid 3rd to 4th-century pottery were retrieved, was revealed 0.42m below the adjacent roadway. It was sealed by 'dark earth' deposit 403, from which further Roman pottery was recovered. Deposit 403 was cut by a modern service trench, 402, and was sealed by modern soils 400 associated with former landscaping within the school grounds.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material recovered during the evaluation is listed in Appendix B and discussed further below.

Pottery

- 6.2 A total of 15 sherds (287g) of pottery was recorded from six deposits. The majority of pottery dates to the Roman period, although sherds of 18th to 19th-century pottery recovered alongside Roman ceramics within deposits 101 and 201 suggests that the 'dark earth' deposits have been re-worked. Where possible, Cirencester type series codes have been applied to Roman (Rigby 1982; Cooper 1998) and post-medieval fabrics (Ireland 1998) and are given below in bold.

Roman

- 6.3 The majority of sherds comprise regional and locally produced pottery types, predominantly coarsewares. A total of five sherds (76g) of Southeast Dorset Black-burnished Ware (**74**) was recorded from four deposits. Identifiable forms of this type

include a dish/bowl of Seagar Smith's type 22 from demolition debris 404 and a jar type 3 from 'dark earth' deposit 403. A further five sherds (123g) in greyware fabrics (GW and GWf) were recorded from three deposits.

- 6.4 A single sherd (11g) of regional or locally produced fineware (whf) was recorded from 'dark earth' deposit 202. The carinated bowl sherd occurs in Oxfordshire Parchment Ware (**155**) with painted decoration.
- 6.5 Imported finewares, consisting of Gaulish samian from Les Matres de Veyne and east Gaul (**154b** and **154c** respectively), were recorded from two deposits. A Curle 11 bowl was recorded from 'dark earth' deposit 101, is probably dateable to the Trajanic/Hadrianic period (early 2nd century AD). A Drag 38 bowl recorded from demolition debris 102 is dateable to the second half of the 2nd century.

Post-medieval/modern

- 6.6 A single sherd (2g) of transfer-printed white ware (**214**) from 'dark earth' 201 is dateable to the later 18th to 19th centuries. Similar dating is probable for a sherd (23g) of refined whiteware (Ref WW), recorded from 'dark earth' deposit 101.

Other finds

- 6.7 Two fragments of clay tobacco pipe (CTP) were recorded from 'dark earth' deposits 101 and 201. The stems are small and featureless and cannot be more closely dated than to between the late 16th and late 19th centuries.
- 6.8 A single copper alloy object, Ra. 1, recorded from 'dark earth' deposit 202 is a possible Roman *nummus* of uncertain emperor or a post-medieval token based on its size.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The archaeological evaluation demonstrated the survival of Roman deposits and structures throughout the site at depths ranging from 0.37m to 0.9m bpgl. All were overlain by 'dark earth' deposits.

Roman

- 7.2 Walls 103 and 304, identified in Trenches 1 and 3 respectively, correlate closely with the alignment of Roman buildings previously recorded throughout *Insula X* and are therefore either broadly parallel (103) or perpendicular (304) to Roman street D immediately west of the site. It is noteworthy that wall 304 aligns closely with the southern extent of previously identified Building X.2, or alternatively with walls identified during construction works immediately to the east in 1960 (see Grace and Holbrook, in Holbrook 2008, pp 90-2). The latter identified limestone walls that were typically 0.6m in width that were similarly revealed at shallow depths below the modern ground level (*ibid.*). By contrast, the wall revealed within Trench 1 seemingly identifies a previously unknown Roman building within *Insula X*.
- 7.3 Evidence for Roman demolition debris was encountered within all of the trenches. Little artefactual material was retrieved from these deposits, although it must be recognised that little, if any, hand excavation penetrated into these spreads. The limited artefactual material that was recovered is exclusively Roman in origin.
- 7.4 The identification of reworked 'dark earth' containing late post-medieval material alongside Roman artefacts, immediately sealing the Roman walls and demolition debris is consistent with past observations in the immediate vicinity of the site, and indeed throughout much of Cirencester. It is noteworthy that the 'dark earth' deposits had been truncated by modern school development to the east of the site (Trenches 3 and 4) where they survived to depths of less than 0.2m in contrast to the 0.5m plus observed in the school courtyard.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Greg Crees, assisted by Michael Joyce and Peter Searle. The report was written by Greg Crees and Peter Searle. The finds report was written by Katie Marsden. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled by Peter Searle and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

9. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer	Surface	Tarmac and make-up for current playground	>1.5	>1.5	0.16	
1	101	Deposit	'dark earth'	Mid dark grey brown sand clay	>1.5	>1.5	0.79	LC18-19
1	102	Deposit	Demolition layer	Mid green brown sand clay with frequent limestone inclusions	>1.5	>1.5	0.18	LC2-C3
1	103	Structure	Wall	NW/SE aligned limestone wall	>1.08	>0.21	>0.24	
2	200	Layer	Surface	Tarmac and make-up for current playground	>1.5	>1.5	0.18	
2	201	Deposit	'dark earth'	Mid green brown clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.38	C18
2	202	Deposit	'dark earth'	Mid dark green brown clay silt	>1.5	>1.5	0.34	RB
2	203	Deposit	Demolition layer	Mid yellow brown sand silt Mid with frequent limestone inclusions	>1.5	>1.5		
3	300	Layer	Surface	Tarmac pathway	>1.5	>1.5	0.09	
3	301	Deposit	Made ground	Mixed gravel and limestone make-up layer for 300	>1.5	>1.5	0.17	
3	302	Deposit	'dark earth'	Mid dark grey brown sand clay	>1.5	>1.5	0.2	
3	303	Deposit	Demolition layer	Mid green brown sand clay with frequent limestone inclusions	>1.5	>1.5	>0.05	
3	304	Structure	Wall	NE/SW aligned limestone block wall	>1.5	0.6	>0.8	
4	400	Layer	Topsoil	Current grassed area	>1.5	>1.3	0.55	
4	401	Fill	Fill of 402	Mid grey brown sand silt	>1	0.3	>0.55	
4	402	Cut	Cable trench	Modern cable trench	>1'	0.3	>0.55	
4	403	Deposit	'dark earth'	Mid dark grey brown sand silt	>1.5	>1.3	0.18	LC3-C4
4	404	Deposit	Demolition layer	Mid grey yellow brown clay sand	>1.5	>1.3		MC3-C4

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
101	post-medieval/modern pottery	Ref WW	1	28	LC18-C19
	Roman pottery	74	1	22	
	Roman pottery	154b	1	35	
	CTP	stem	1	1	
102	Roman pottery	154c	1	18	LC2-C3
	Roman pottery	74	2	6	
201	post-medieval pottery	214	1	2	C18
	CTP	stem	1	3	
202	Roman pottery	GW	2	86	RB
	Roman pottery	155	1	11	
	Roman pottery	GWf	1	3	
	Copper alloy	Ra. 1; coin/token?	1	1	
403	Roman pottery	GW	1	15	LC3-C4
	Roman pottery	74	1	17	
404	Roman pottery	GW	1	19	MC3-C4
	Roman pottery	74	1	31	

Period	Description	Code
Roman	Black Burnished Ware 1	74
	Greyware	GW
	Fine greyware	GWf
	Oxfordshire Parchment ware	155
	Central Gaulish (Les Matres) samian	154b
	East Gaulish samian	154c
post-medieval/modern	Transfer-printed white ware	214
	Refined white ware	Ref WW

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

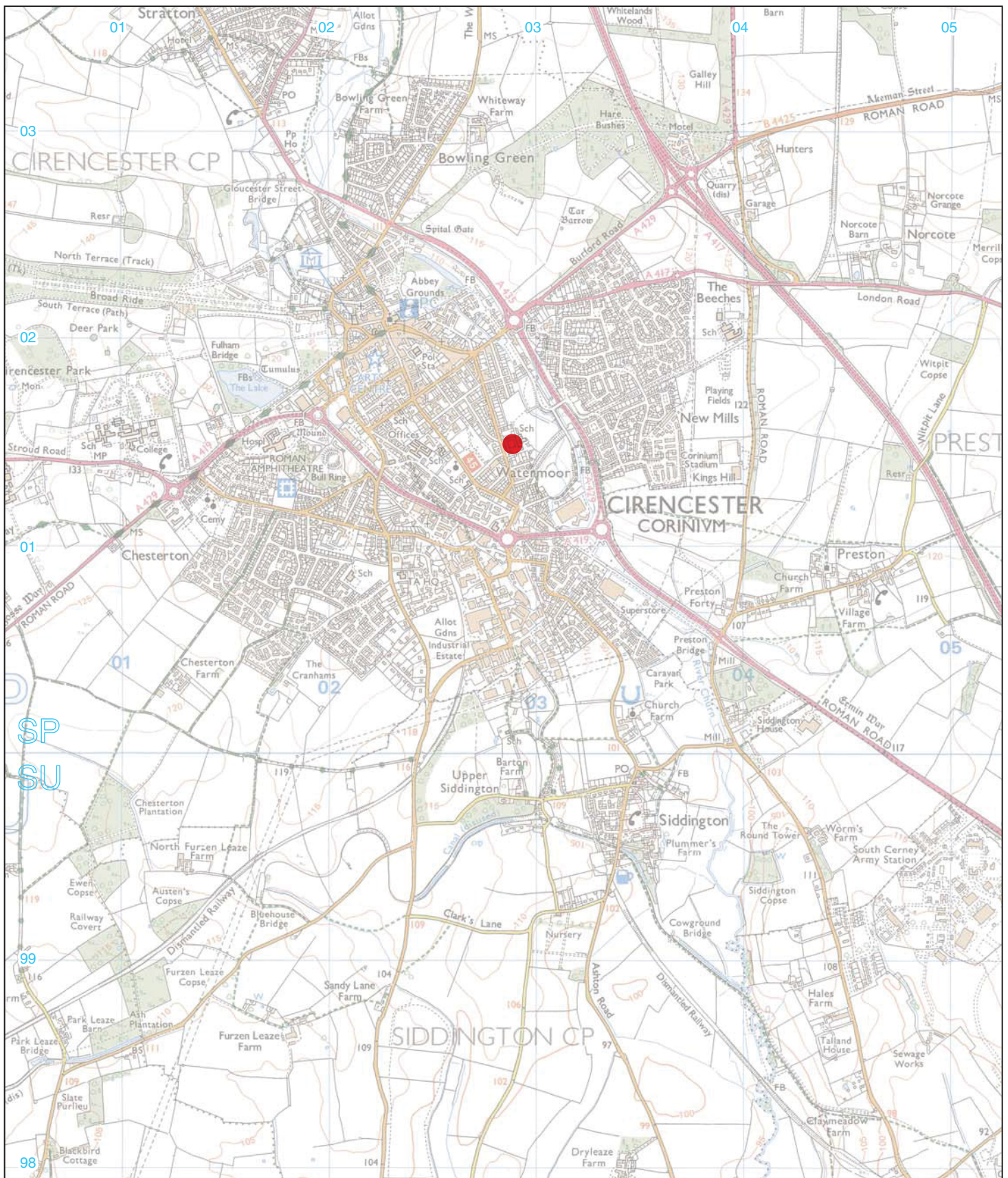
Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using Leica GPS survey equipment.

	Test Pit 1	Test Pit 2	Test Pit 3	Test Pit 4
Current ground level	0.00m (106.9m)	0.00m (107.26m)	0.00m (106.18m)	0.00m NE corner of test pit (106.05)
Top of reworked 'dark earth' deposit	0.15m (106.75m)	0.17m (107.09m)	0.24m (105.94)	0.26m (105.79)
Top of <i>in situ</i> Roman structures/deposits	0.68m (106.22m)	0.86m (106.4m)	0.38m (105.8m)	0.44 (105.61m)
Limit of excavation	0.95m (105.95m)	0.95m (106.31m)	0.52m (105.66m)	0.75m (105.31)

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

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August and September 2016 at Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester. Four trenches were excavated.</p> <p>Two sections of Roman wall and spreads of Roman demolition debris were identified throughout the proposed development area at depths of between 0.4m and 0.9m below the existing ground surface. All were sealed by reworked 'dark earth' that was in turn overlain by modern deposits and hardstanding.</p>	
Project dates	30 August to 1 September 2016	
Project type	Evaluation trenching	
Previous work	Desk-based Assessment CA 2016	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Victoria Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	1.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	SP 0287 0149	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Greg Crees	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	Roman walls and demolition rubble	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Corinium Museum	Pottery, clay tobacco pipe, coin or token
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context sheets, matrices
Digital	Corinium Museum	Database, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Cirencester Primary School, Victoria Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire Archaeological Evaluation</i>. CA typescript report 16488</p>		



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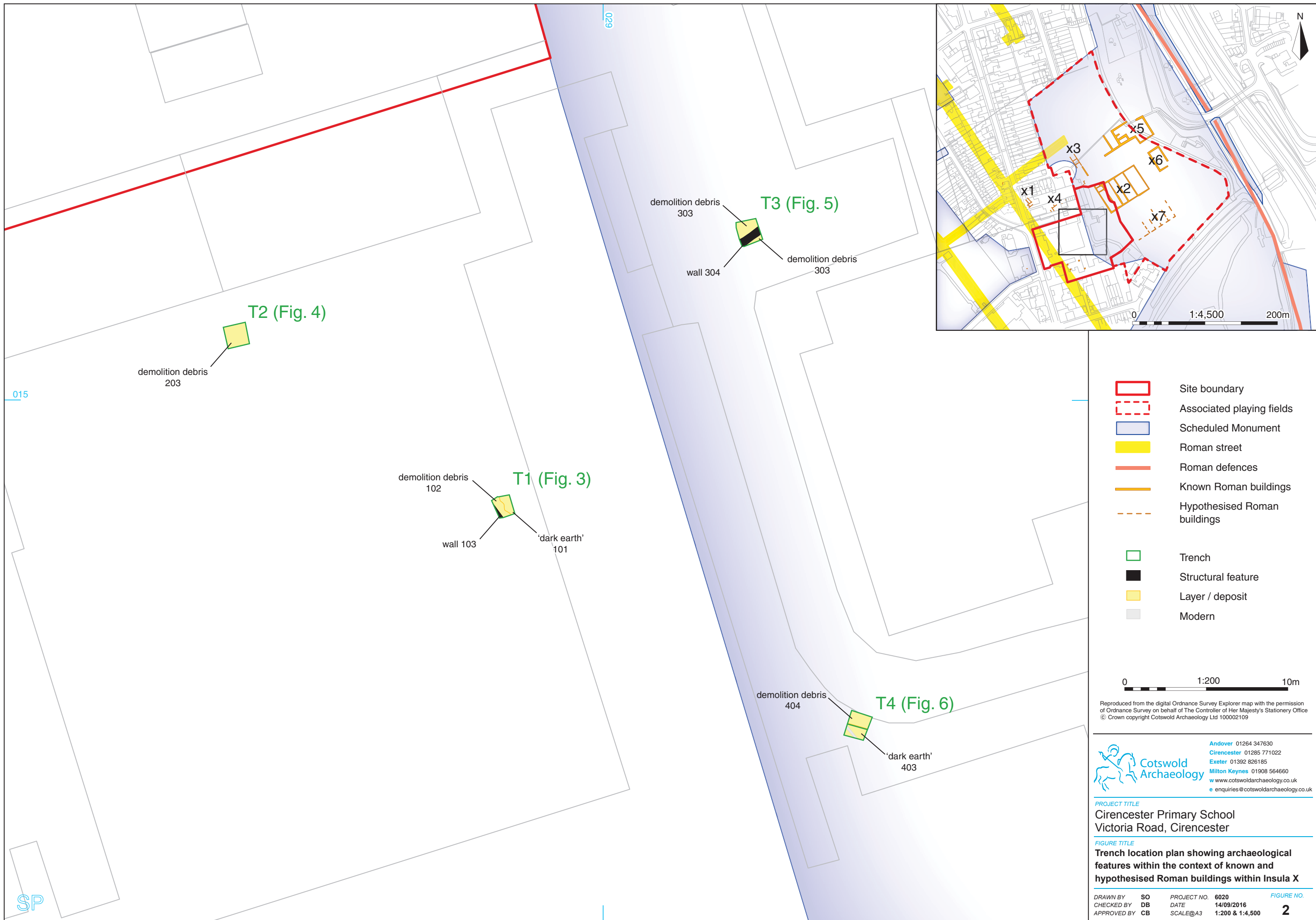


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PROJECT TITLE
Cirencester Primary School
Victoria Road, Cirencester

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

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CHECKED BY LM	DATE 13/09/2016	
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- Site boundary
- Associated playing fields
- Scheduled Monument
- Roman street
- Roman defences
- Known Roman buildings
- Hypothesised Roman buildings
- Trench
- Structural feature
- Layer / deposit
- Modern

0 1:200 10m

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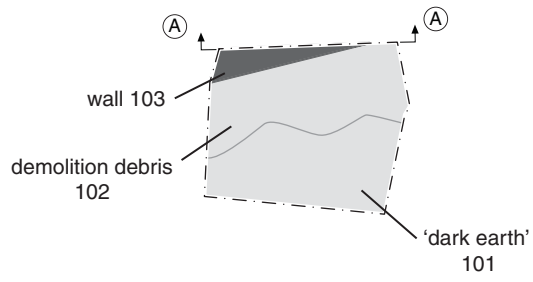
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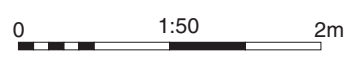
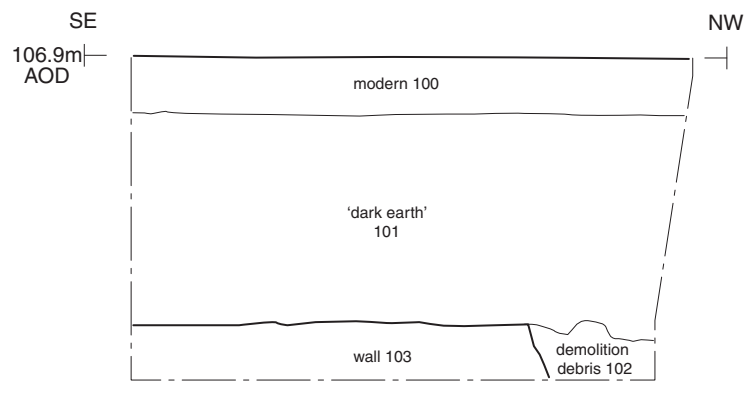
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench location plan showing archaeological features within the context of known and hypothesised Roman buildings within Insula X

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SP



Section AA



Trench 1, looking south-west (scale 1m)

- Structural feature
- Layer / deposit
- Section location



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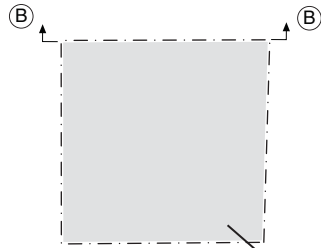
PROJECT TITLE
 Cirencester Primary School
 Victoria Road, Cirencester

FIGURE TITLE
Trench 1; plan, section & photograph

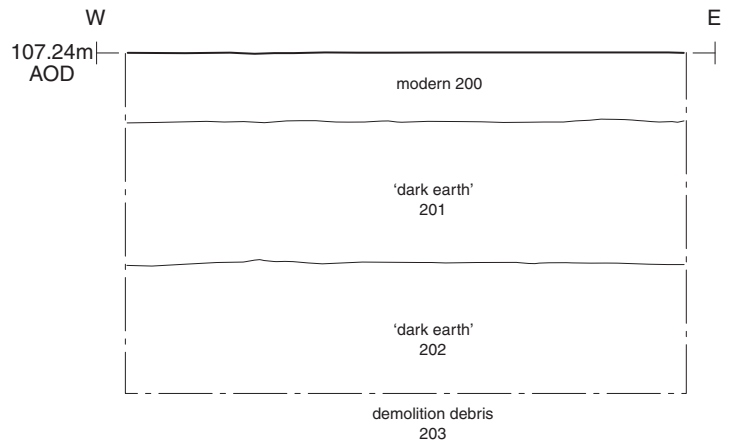
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Section BB



demolition debris
203



0 1:50 2m

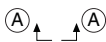
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Trench 2, looking north (scale 1m)



Layer / deposit



Section location



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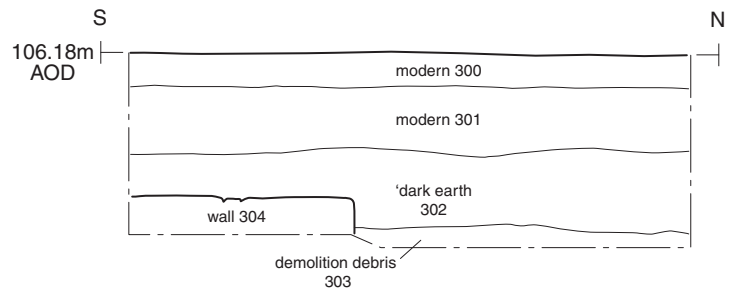
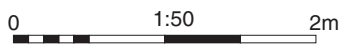
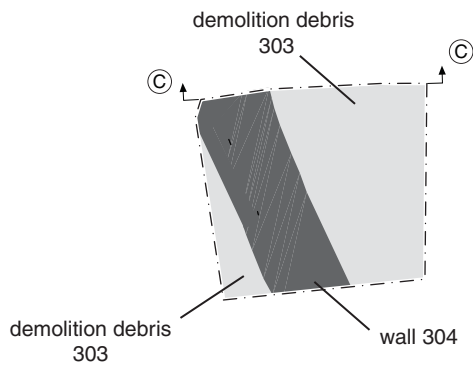
FIGURE TITLE

Trench 2; plan, section & photograph

DRAWN BY SO PROJECT NO. 6020 FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY DB DATE 15/09/2016
APPROVED BY CB SCALE@A4 1:20 & 1:50 4



Section CC



Trench 3, looking west (scale 1m)

- Structural feature
- Layer / deposit
- Section location



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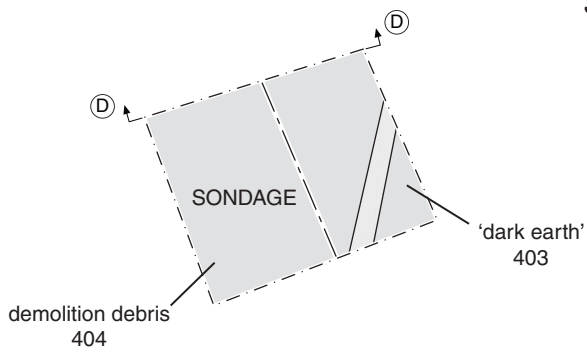
PROJECT TITLE

Cirencester Primary School
 Victoria Road, Cirencester

FIGURE TITLE

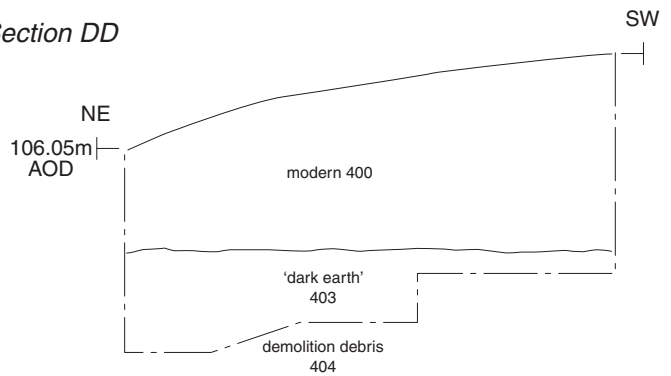
Trench 3; plan, section & photograph

DRAWN BY	SO	PROJECT NO.	6020	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DB	DATE	15/09/2016	
APPROVED BY	CB	SCALE@A4	1:20 & 1:50	5



0 1:50 2m




Section DD



0 1:20 1m



Trench 4, looking south-east (scale 1m)

-  Modern
-  Layer / deposit
-  Section location



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PROJECT TITLE

Cirencester Primary School
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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 4; plan, section & photograph

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