

Southway House South Way, Cirencester Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Castellum Cotswolds Ltd

CA Project: 6240
CA Report: 17717

December 2017



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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Southway House
Location:	South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR:	402469 201820
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	4-5 November 2017
Planning Reference:	CDC 16/04485/FUL; condition 11
Location of Archive:	Corinium Museum, Cirencester
Site Code:	STHW17

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with Southway House at South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2017 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Castellum Cotswolds Ltd at Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: 402469 201820; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent granted by Cotswold District Council (CDC) for an extension and alterations to provide additional (Class B1) office accommodation and three residential apartments (CDC planning ref: 16/04485/FUL; condition 11).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* produced by CA in April 2017 that was approved by CDC acting on the advice of Charles Parry, Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council and the archaeological advisor to CDC. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

The site

- 1.3 The development site is located immediately to the south-west of South Way, within the modern, central core of Cirencester. It currently comprises a tarmacadam car park, approximately 160m² in extent and lies at approximately 113m AOD.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Kellaways Formation (Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone) of the Jurassic era, overlain by superficial River Terrace Deposits of gravel (BGS 2017). The natural geological substrate was not encountered during the current works nor during a preceding evaluation (CA 2014a).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A preceding review of existing archaeological information noted that the current site is located immediately above the alignment of Roman Ermin Street (CA 2014b). Typically, the repeated re-metalling of Roman street surfaces within the Roman town of *Corinium* has resulted in the streets rising to higher levels relative to the contemporary buildings either side of them. The preceding evaluation trenching revealed the metallated surface of the street at a depth of 0.77m below present

ground level (bpgl). The fill of a ditch, probably the western flanking ditch for the street, was identified at a depth of 0.91m bpgl (CA 2014a).

- 2.2 Within the surrounding *insulae* of the Roman town, Roman buildings are generally identified at least 1.5m bpgl, and in some areas as much as 2m to 2.5m bpgl. Additionally, previous archaeological excavations within Cirencester have confirmed that Roman deposits, typically comprise the remains of high-quality domestic dwellings, border main of the main thoroughfares. These deposits are typically sealed by 'dark-earth' deposits (CA 2014b).
- 2.3 The depth to the top of *in-situ* medieval deposits is often harder to determine, particularly as when many of the previous archaeological excavations in the immediate area were undertaken such deposits were not recorded/excavated in any detail. 'Dark-earth' deposits that are likely to reflect medieval and post-medieval activity were recorded in the preceding evaluation from a depth of 0.39m–0.47m bpgl (CA 2014a).
- 2.4 The evaluation also identified evidence for late 19th- and early 20th-century buildings on the site that correlated with cartographic sources (*ibid.*).

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 and comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks, including the excavation of foundations and service trenches (recorded during the current works as Trench 3). Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the contractors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with a toothless bucket.
- 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 from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble prior to deposition with Corinium Museum, Cirencester. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 5.1 Informed by the results of a preceding evaluation of the site (CA 2014a) the approved development comprised a shallow, rafted foundation, typically excavated to a depth of 0.4m bpgl, with deeper groundworks penetrating to 0.7m bpgl around the foundation perimeter and for parts of the associated drainage trench (see Fig. 2 for locations and extent).
- 5.2 The earliest deposit encountered was 'dark-earth' 304, typically revealed at a depth of 0.52m bpgl. It comprised black-brown silty clay from which no artefacts were retrieved during the current works, although 19th to 20th-century ceramics, as well as residual Roman finds, were recovered from comparable deposits 105 and 212 during the preceding evaluation (CA 2014a).
- 5.3 The 'dark-earth' was typically overlain by dark brown black silt clay 303 containing frequent inclusions of brick and limestone rubble. It correlates with deposits 103 and 204 identified during the preceding evaluation (ibid.). Deposit 303 was cut along the eastern extent of the groundworks by a modern concrete footing, 305, for a kerb that previously formed the boundary between the carpark and an adjacent pathway. To

the west of this kerb gravel levelling 302 supported tarmacadam surface 301, and to the east the gravels were sealed by concrete paving.

- 5.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 As a consequence of the shallow foundation design adopted for the development the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. Rather, the intrusive groundworks were founded above the previously identified Roman street metalling and associated flanking ditch.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Cliff Bateman and Andy Donald. The report was written by Andy Donald. The illustrations were prepared by Aleksandra Osinska. The archive has been compiled by Andy Donald, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 10 April 2017

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014a *Southway House, South Way, Cirencester. Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA Report **14431**

CA 2014b *Southway House, South Way, Cirencester: Archaeological Review*

CA 2017 *Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
	301	Layer		Car park surface	Tarmac.			0.08
	302	Layer		Sub-base	Yellowish brown sandy gravel			0.13
	303	Layer		Demolition spread	Compacted rubble within brown-black silty clay			0.31
	304	Layer		'Dark-earth'	Black brown compacted silt			0.18+
	305	Layer		Concrete foundation for kerb	Modern concrete footing and associated concrete slabs			0.25

APPENDIX B: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

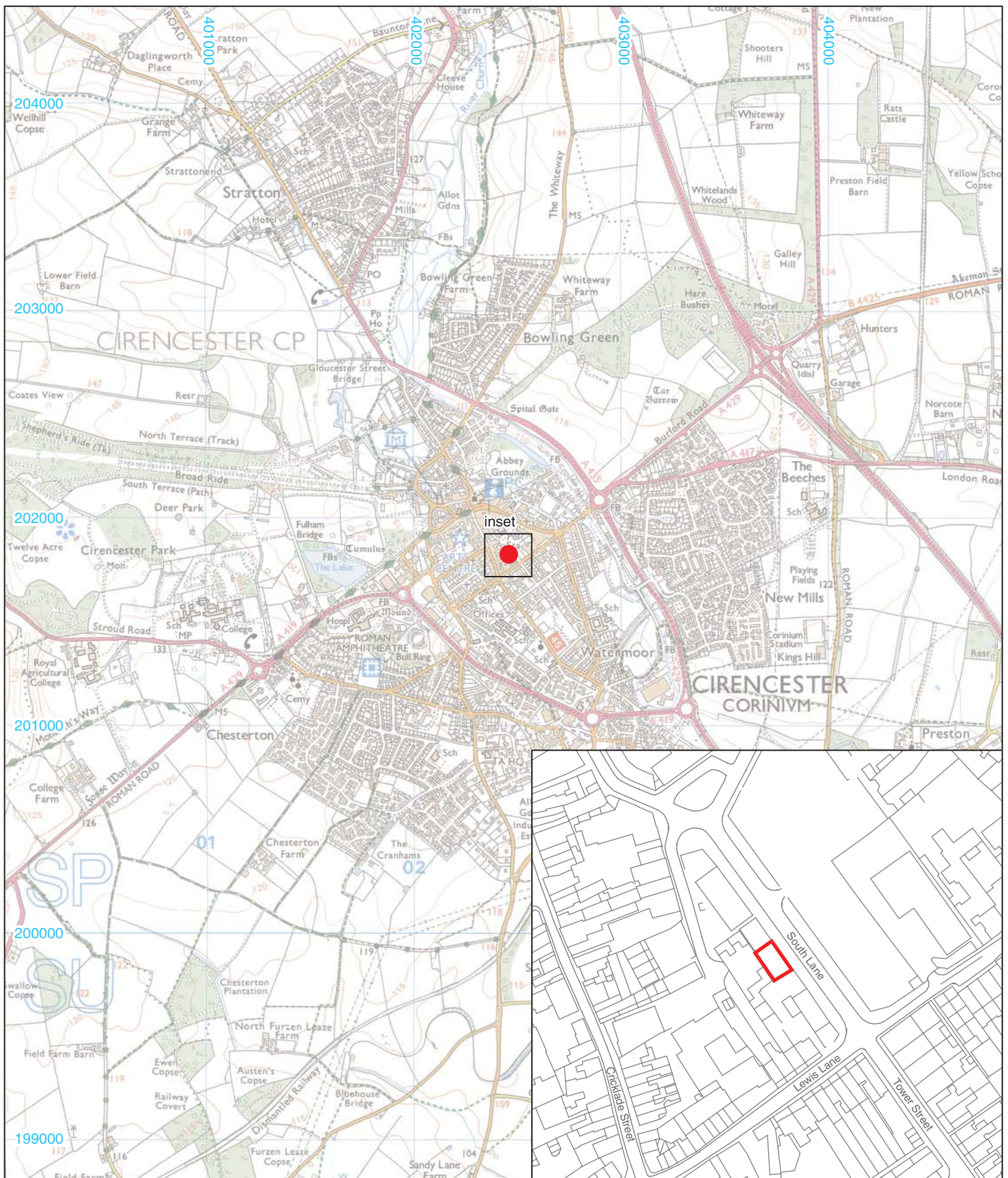
Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), as surveyed using Leica GPS unit.

	Preceding Evaluation (CA 2014a)		Current Watching Brief
	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3
Current ground level	0.00m (111.38m)	0.00m (111.50m)	0.00m (111.50m)
Top of 'dark-earth' deposit	0.39m (110.99m)	0.47m (111.03m)	0.52m (110.98m)
Top of Roman deposits	0.91m (110.47m)	0.77m (110.73m)	Not revealed

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

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with Southway House at South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	4-5 November 2018	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Evaluation (CA 2014a) Archaeological Review (desk-based) (CA 2014b)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	160m ²	
Site co-ordinates	402469 201820	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Cliff Bateman / Andy Donald	
MONUMENT TYPE		
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical		None
Paper	Corinium Museum	Plan of trenches, trench recording form, digital thumbnails and register
Digital	Corinium Museum	Scanned records, digital photos and a copy of the final report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 <i>Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 17711		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Southway House, South Way, Cirencester,
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

0 1km

Reproduced from the 2016 Ordnance Survey Explorer map with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright Cotswold Archaeology Ltd 100002109

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APPROVED BY CMB

PROJECT NO. 6240
DATE 07/12/2017
SCALE @A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.
 1



- site boundary
- postulated course of Ermin Street
- observed groundworks
- max depth 0.70m
- max depth 0.40m
- previous evaluation trench (CA 2014a)

- postulated course of Ermin Street
- Scheduled Monument (National Monument 1003426)



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PROJECT TITLE
 Southway House, South Way, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing area of observed groundworks

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FIGURE NO.
2



Working shot showing the extent of Trench 3, looking north-east



Eastern section of Trench 3 (1m scale)



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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