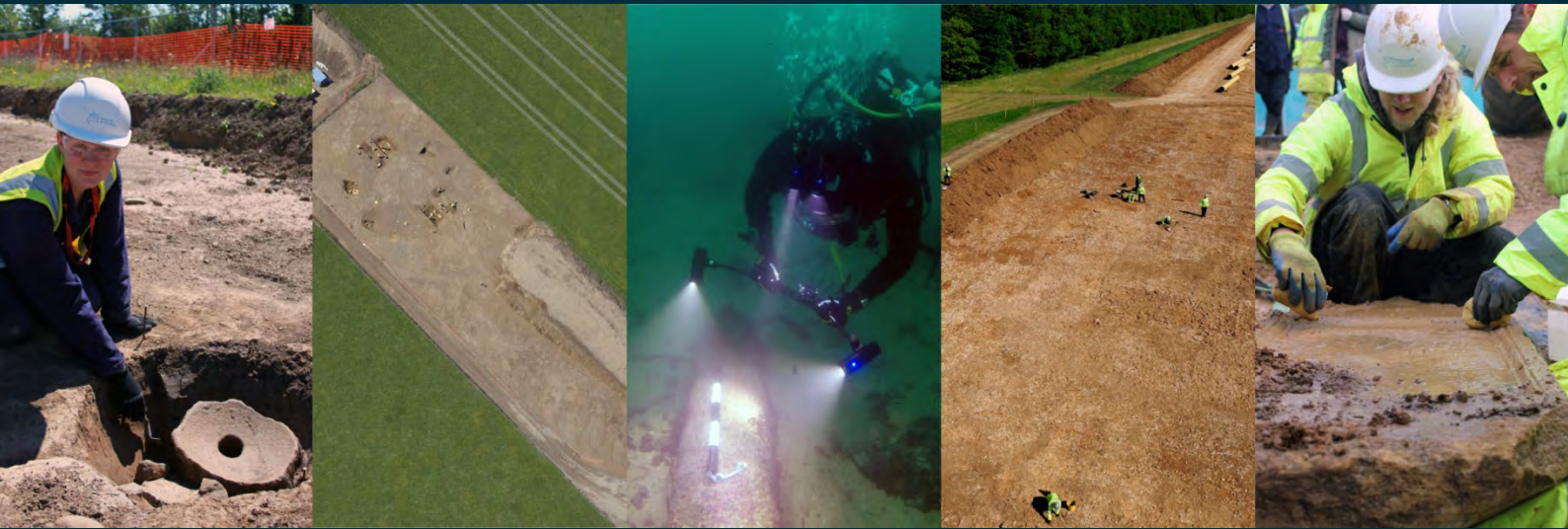


# Gloucestershire Archives Extension Alvin Street Gloucester

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*



for  
Gloucestershire  
County Council

CA Project: 5556  
CA Report: 5556\_1

March 2021



Gloucestershire Archives Extension  
 Alvin Street  
 Gloucester

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 5556  
 CA Report: 5556\_1



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Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	25 March 2021	Monica Fombellida	Laurent Coleman	Internal review		Martin Watts
B	29 March 2021	Monica Fombellida	Laurent Coleman	Final	To address comments from Heather Forbes (GCC)	Martin Watts

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## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Gloucestershire Archives Extension  
**Location:** Alvin Street, Gloucester  
**NGR:** 383556 218935  
**Type:** Watching Brief  
**Date:** May 2017 to April 2018  
**Planning Reference:** Gloucestershire County Council Ref: 15/0058/GLREG3  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited at the Museum of Gloucester and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)  
**Accession Number:** GLRCM:2017.003  
**Site Code:** GAA17

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of Gloucestershire Archives, including the erection of three new strong rooms, new training suite, front entrance (replacing a HORSAs hut), car park re-organisation and soft landscaping at Gloucestershire Archives Centre, Alvin Street, Gloucester.

During the monitoring of the groundworks one Roman ditch, a post-medieval pit and wall foundation, and an undated pit were identified. No evidence for the Civil War defensive line was identified.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between May 2017 and April 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) at Gloucestershire Archives, Alvin Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire (centred at NGR: 383556 218935; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition (10) attached to planning consent (GCC planning ref: 15/0058/GLREG3) granted by GCC, who were also the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the refurbishment of the existing Archive Centre, including the erection of three new strong rooms, car park re-organisation and soft landscaping. Condition 9 (now approved) required that the type and depth of foundations, drainage and services were approved by the LPA.
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Toby Catchpole, Heritage Team Leader, GCC. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014).

### ***The site***

- 1.4 The development area was approximately 0.8ha in extent and comprised the existing Gloucestershire Archives buildings and associated car park. It is bounded to the north, north-east and south by residential and commercial development and to the south-west by a railway embankment. The site lies at approximately 14m AOD and drops downward slightly to the west.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock of the area is mapped as Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone Formations, sedimentary bedrocks formed in the Jurassic and Triassic periods. These are overlain by superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel, formed in the Quaternary period (BGS 2016). Yellow orange sandy clay natural deposits were encountered in all of the trenches.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development area was subject to preceding Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (CA 2015a) and evaluation trenching (CA 2015b). The following is a summary of their conclusions.
- 2.2 The assessment noted that no designated heritage assets were recorded within the site. However, it did indicate that the site is located within an area of archaeological potential to the north-east of Gloucester's Roman and medieval defences, and between the locations of two major Roman roads; Worcester Street and London Road (CA 2015a). Archaeological trial trenching at no. 1 Alvin Street, immediately to the east of the site, identified Roman features including a Roman soil horizon, postholes, pits, ditches, a wall, a metalled surface, and at least one grave. Another Roman grave was excavated in close proximity to no. 1 Alvin Street in 1988 (Cook *et al.* 2015).
- 2.3 During the early medieval and medieval periods, it is probable that the site remained within the agricultural hinterland of the post-Roman settlement at Gloucester. There is no evidence for early medieval settlement in the immediate area, and although medieval remains have been identified in close proximity to the site, the nature of these remains, such as pits and ditches, is more suggestive of extra-urban agricultural activity (CA 2015a).
- 2.4 The site lies within close proximity to the postulated alignment of Gloucester's Civil War defences associated with the 1643 siege of the city. During the 19th century the site formed the grounds of the Alvin Iron Works and Wheeler's Gardens/Nursery. It became the site of Kingsholm School in the early 20th century and has been used to house the Gloucestershire Archives since the 1970s (CA 2015a).
- 2.5 An archaeological evaluation, comprising three trenches, was undertaken on the site in May 2015 (CA 2015b). A buried soil horizon, pre-dating observed Roman activity, was identified immediately above the natural substrate within Trenches 1 and 3 (Fig. 2). Within Trench 1 this was sealed by gravel-and-mortar probable surfaces from which a heavily corroded Roman coin, provisionally dated to the 1st to 2nd centuries AD, was recovered. The probable surfaces were subsequently cut by a ditch from which late 3rd to 4th-century pottery was recovered. Further later Roman activity, a large east/west-aligned ditch and probable quarry pits, were also identified.

2.6 A broadly analogous sequence of cultivation deposits, comprising two identifiable soil horizons immediately sealing the fills of the identified Roman features and deposits, was revealed in all of the trenches. The cultivation soils were cut by ditches probably representing post-medieval plot divisions or drainage. No evidence for the Civil War defensive line or the Alvin Iron Works was identified during the evaluation.

### **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 2016). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks including the excavation of foundation trenches, services trenches and ground reduction (see Fig. 2 for location and extent).

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*. Artefacts were processed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 3: *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling.

- 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 Museum of Gloucester under accession number GLRCM:2017.003, along with the site archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020). 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 This section provides an overview of the results. Detailed description and extent of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendix A and B, respectively. Trench 4 was excavated to depth of c. 0.55m below present ground level (bpgl) for the construction of the pile mat. Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of c. 0.85m bpgl for the construction of a wall foundation. Trench 6 was general excavated to a depth of c. 0.65m bpgl, with some deeper excavations for services.

### *Trenches 4 and 5 (Figs 2 and 3)*

- 5.2 The natural geological substrate, 507, consisting of yellow orange sand clay, was revealed an average of 0.9m below present ground level (bpgl) in Trench 5. This was overlain by further natural sand and gravel deposits, 506, which were 0.15m thick.
- 5.3 In Trench 5 the natural deposits were cut by north-east/south-west-aligned ditch, 505 (Fig. 3 Section AA). The single fill 504 of the ditch contained two pottery sherds (and ceramic building material) dating to the Roman period and one sherd dating to the mid 1st to 2nd centuries AD. It was overlain by made-ground deposit 501, which was 0.5m thick. This was cut by pit 503, its fill 502 containing pottery dating to the 17th to 18th centuries and a fragment of clay pipe dating to c. 1600 to 1640, together with residual Roman pottery dating to the mid 1st to 2nd centuries AD. North-west/south-east-aligned wall foundation 508 was located to the north-west of the pit and was constructed from red bricks. The wall foundation and fill 502 were



sealed made-ground deposit 500/402, which was 0.3m thick and which was overlain by red brick surface 401 and tarmac surface 400.

*Trench 6 (Fig. 4)*

- 5.4 The natural substrate, 613, was identified at a depth of 1.3m bpgl. This was overlain by blue grey clay sand, 611, which was 0.2m thick and was cut by pit, 608 which contained a single undated fill, 609. This feature was previously identified during the evaluation (CA 2015b, 7, pit 307), also undated. Fill 609 was overlain by made-ground deposit, 610, which was 0.5m thick and was overlain by red brick surfaces 604/603, (which had been truncated by services and subsequent construction) rubble deposit 605 (0.1m thick) and make up deposit 602 for tarmac surface 600.

## **6. THE FINDS**

- 6.1 Artefactual material was hand-recovered from two deposits (fills of a pit and a ditch). The recovered material dates to the Roman and post-medieval periods. The pottery has been recorded according to sherd count/weight per fabric. Pottery fabric codes (in parentheses in the text) equate to the online Gloucester pottery type series (<http://glospot.potsherd.net/docs/intro>). National Roman Fabric Reference Collection codes are also given in Appendix B, where applicable (Tomber and Dore 1998).

*Pottery*

- 6.2 Four unfeathered bodysherds of pottery (22.5g) of Roman date were retrieved. A sherd of south Gaulish samian (TF8B) was recorded from fill 502 of pit 503. Samian from this manufacturing zone was imported to Britain during the mid 1st to early 2nd centuries (Webster 1996, 2–3). A sherd in a charcoal-tempered variant of Severn Valley (oxidised) ware (TF17) from fill 504 of ditch/gully 505 dates to the mid 1st to 2nd century. The other ware types present – Severn Valley (oxidised) ware (TF11B) and a fine oxidised fabric (TF20) – are only broadly dateable to the Roman period.
- 6.3 Pit fill 502 (pit 503) also produced an unfeathered bodysherd (2g) in an unsourced glazed earthenware fabric (TF50), dateable to the mid 16th to 18th centuries.

*Other finds*

- 6.4 An unclassifiable fragment of ceramic building material (6g) of Roman date was retrieved from ditch fill 504 (ditch 505).

- 6.5 A fragmentary clay tobacco pipe (10g) from pit fill 502 (pit 503) accords with Peacey's Type 1a for Gloucestershire which dates to c. 1600-1640 (Peacey 1979, 46–7).

## **7. DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 The watching brief recorded archaeological features and deposits dating from the Roman and post-medieval periods. A short length of ditch 505, dating from 1st to 2nd centuries AD, was recorded in Trench 5; its function was unclear, but it could be interpreted (together with similar features identified in evaluation Trench 1) as having been part of a Roman field system in the agricultural hinterland of the Roman city. Pit 608 in Trench 6 appeared broadly contemporary with ditch 505 but was undated. Deposits overlying these features were also undated but are likely to represent agricultural activity dating from the post-Roman to medieval periods.

- 7.2 Post-medieval/modern features included pit 503 and wall foundation 508 in Trench 5, and brick surfaces 603 and 604 in Trench 6. These features were associated with post-medieval or modern activity at the site, probably the 19th-century Alvin Iron Works or the 20th-century Kingsholm School. As with the preceding evaluation, no evidence for the Civil War defensive line was identified.

## **8. CA PROJECT TEAM**

- 8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Paolo Guarino, Luke Brandlund, Greg Crees, Ray Holt and Monica Fombellida. The report was written by Monica Fombellida. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Gemma Bowen and Krissy Moore. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman and Laurent Coleman.

## 9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 Geology of Britain Viewer [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology\\_viewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html) (accessed 18 July 2016)
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- CA 2015b 'Gloucestershire Archives Extension, Alvin Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation', CA report **15270**
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- Peacey, A. 1979 *Clay Tobacco Pipes in Gloucestershire* CRAAGS Occasional Paper **4**, Bristol, Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset
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## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
4	400	Deposit		Tarmac	Car park tarmac	>42	>10	0.1	
4	401	Structure		Brick Surface	Red brick schoolyard surface	>42	>10	0.15	
4	402	Deposit		Made ground	Dark grey-brown silt-sand with CBM inclusions	>42	>10	0.2	
4	403	Deposit		Made ground	Dark grey sand-silt	>42	>10	0.5	
4	404	Layer		Natural	Orange sandy gravel	>42	>10	0.1	
4	405	Layer		Natural	yellow-orange sand-clay	>42	>10	>0.12	
5	500	Deposit		Made ground	Dark grey-brown silt-sand with CBM inclusions	>38	>1	0.2	
5	501	Deposit		Made ground	Dark grey sand-silt			0.5	
5	502	Fill	503	Fill of pit	Mid grey sand-silt	0.8	0.2	0.22	C17-C18
5	503	Pit		Cut of pit	Circular in plan with moderate sides and concave base	0.8	0.2	0.22	
5	504	Fill	505	Fill of ditch	Mid grey sand-silt	>1	0.65	0.2	MC1-C2
5	505	Ditch		Cut of ditch	NE/SW aligned ditch with moderate sides and concave base	>1	0.65	0.2	
5	506	Layer		Natural	Orange sandy gravel	>38	>1	0.15	
5	507	Layer		Natural	yellow-orange sand-clay	>42	>10	>0.12	
5	508	Structure		Brick Wall	Modern brick wall	1.05	0.36	>0.15	
6	600	Deposit		Tarmac	Grey tarmac	>22	>12	0.07	
6	601	Deposit		Made ground	Mid grey-green soil	>22	>12	0.3	
6	602	Deposit		Make-up	Gravel make-up under tarmac, 600	>22	>12	0.18	
6	603	Structure		Brick Surface	Red brick schoolyard surface	3.1	1.3	0.1	
6	604	Structure		Brick Surface	Red brick schoolyard surface	3	2	0.1	
6	605	Deposit		Rubble	Disturbed red brick surface	1.5	1.5	0.1	
6	608	Pit		Cut of pit	Oval shallow pit	0.41	0.45	0.23	
6	609	Fill	608	Fill of pit	Mid yellow-grey silt-clay	0.41	0.45	0.23	
6	610	Deposit		Made ground	Yellow-grey clay-sand	>22	>12	0.5	
6	611	Deposit		Made ground	Blue-grey clay-sand	>22	>12	0.2	
6	612	Structure		Services	Modern services	4.35	0.42	n/a	
6	613	Layer		Natural	yellow-orange sand-clay	>22	>12	n/a	

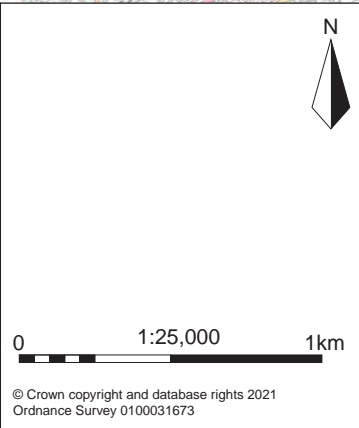
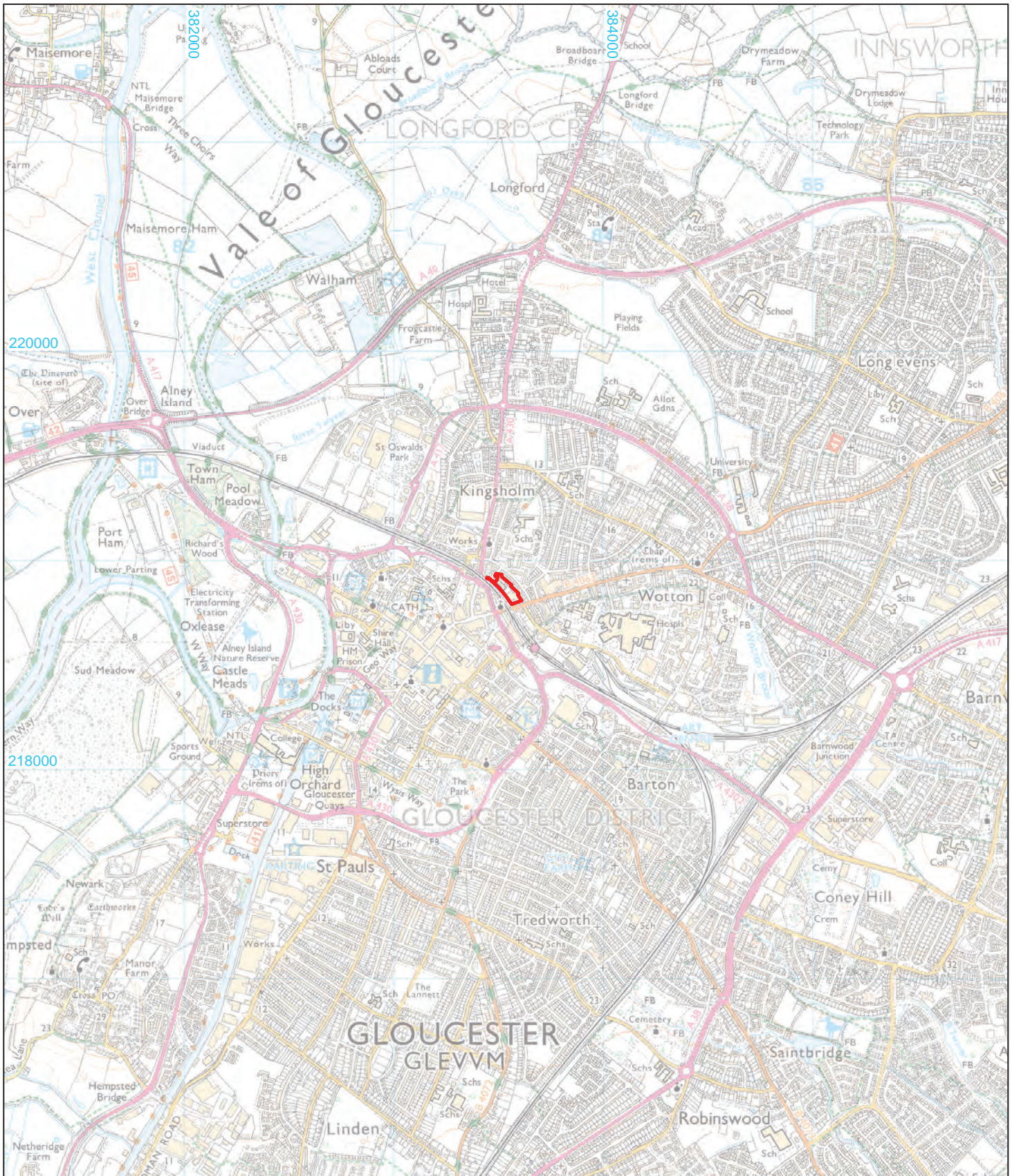
**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>FabricCode/ NRFC*</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>
502	Roman pottery	South Gaulish samian	TF8B/ <b>LGF SA</b>	1	0.5	C17-C18
	Roman pottery	Severn Valley (oxidised) ware	TF11B/ <b>SVW OX2</b>	1	5	
	Post-medieval pottery	Glazed earthenware	TF50	1	2	
	Clay tobacco pipe	Bowl		1	10	
504	Roman pottery	Severn Valley (oxidised) ware - charcoal-tempered variant	TF17	1	14	MC1-C2
	Roman pottery	Fine oxidised fabric	TF20	1	3	
	Roman ceramic building material	Fragment		1	6	

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Gloucestershire Archives Extension	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of the Gloucestershire Archives Centre, including the erection of three new strong rooms, car park re-organisation and soft landscaping at the Gloucestershire Archives Centre, Alvin Street, Gloucester.</p> <p>During the monitoring of the groundworks one Roman ditch, a post-medieval pit and wall foundation and an undated pit were identified. No evidence for the Civil War defensive line was identified.</p>	
Project dates	May 2017 and April 2018	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Archaeological desk-based assessment (CA 2015) Archaeological evaluation (CA 2015)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Alvin Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.8 ha	
Site co-ordinates	383556 218935	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Batman and Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Monica Fombellida	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	none	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Museum of Gloucester	Pottery sherds, clay pipe
Paper	Museum of Gloucester	Context sheets, matrices, report
Digital	Archaeology Data Service	Digital photos, report
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2019 <i>Gloucestershire Archives Extension, Alvin Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i>. CA report 5556_1</p>		





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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Gloucestershire Archives Extension,  
 Alvin Street, Gloucester

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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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- Site boundary
- Watching brief; observed groundworks
- Archaeological feature
- Structure
- Modern
- Archaeological evaluation trench (CA 2015)
- Archaeological evaluation feature (CA 2015)
- A A Section location



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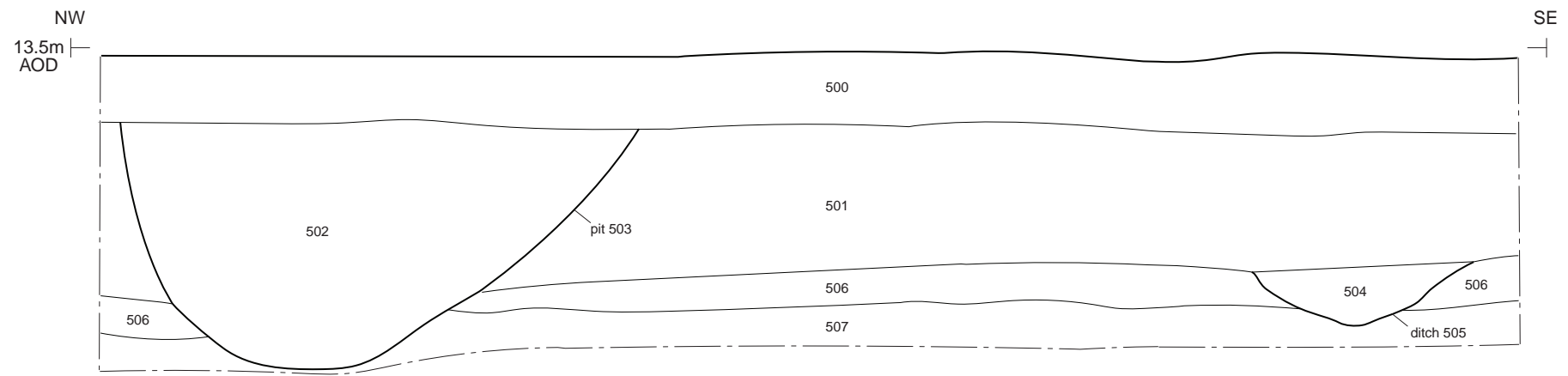
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
**The site, showing location of observed groundworks**

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<small>APPROVED BY</small> MF	<small>SCALE@A3</small> 1:250	



Section AA



Section of pit 503 and ditch 505, looking north-east (1m scale)



Trench 5 and brick wall foundation 508, looking south-east (1m scale)


  
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 FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench 5: section and photographs**





Brick surface 603, looking south-east (0.5m scale)



Brick surface 604, looking south-east (1m and 0.5m scales)



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FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 6: photographs**

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FIGURE NO.

**4**



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