

**CHEDWORTH LODGE BASEMENT  
CHEDWORTH ROMAN VILLA  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

*For*

**THE NATIONAL TRUST**


CA PROJECT: 3166  
CA REPORT: 10159

OCTOBER 2010

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CA PROJECT: 3166  
CA REPORT: 10159

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date	12 October 2010
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signed	
date	12 October 2010
issue	01

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Chedworth Lodge Basement, Chedworth Roman Villa
<b>Location:</b>	Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire
<b>NGR:</b>	SP 0530 1345
<b>Type:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>Date:</b>	24-27 August 2010
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	10/02271/FUL
<b>SMC:</b>	S00005982
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Chedworth Roman Villa
<b>Site Code:</b>	CHE 10

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the change of use of the basement to a staff room at Chedworth Lodge Basement, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire.

Groundworks comprised removal of the backfill of the earlier evaluation trench and further excavation of the trench to a depth of 1.02m below previous ground level (bpgl) to further investigate the nature of the archaeological deposits and to accommodate a waste pump. The ground level of the whole of the basement area was subsequently reduced by c. 0.51m.

Colluvial deposits as well as several layers of made ground dumped prior to the erection of the Victorian lodge house were identified. Roman material from the excavation of the villa site in the 1860s was recorded but no significant archaeological features were identified.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for The National Trust at Chedworth Lodge Basement, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SP 0530 1345; Fig. 1). In a letter (ref. S00005982) dated 29 March 2010 Mr Thomas Powell, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, acting on the advice of Ms Melanie Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage, granted Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for the reduction of the basement floor level and the excavation of a sump pit with the provision that a program of archaeological work would be commissioned and undertaken in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). The objectives of the watching brief were to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development and to ensure that the agreed foundation scheme was adhered to.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a WSI produced by CA (2010a) submitted to and approved by Melanie Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage as part of the application for SMC. Following the granting of SMC the design was revised, requiring reopening of the evaluation trial pit and investigation to greater depth for a sump as well as further lowering of the formation level over the whole basement. This was agreed by Melanie Barge and a revised WSI (CA 2010b) was submitted to and approved by Melanie Barge.
- 1.3 The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire* (GCC 1995), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006).

### ***The site***

- 1.4 Chedworth Roman Villa is a major site of the Roman period in Britain, comprising the remains of one of the largest 4th-century villas so far discovered and excavated in this country. The site was excavated in 1864 and partially protected with some temporary structures soon after. A house was built in the centre of the excavated site to function as a museum and as a residence for the caretaker. A programme of

levelling and capping was carried out on the exposed walls and the site has been open to the public ever since. The villa was purchased by The National Trust in 1924 and is a Scheduled Monument (County No. 57).

- 1.5 The site lies at approximately 150m AOD and is located on a terrace cut into the steep south-facing slope near the head of a dry valley.
- 1.6 The basement, laid with limestone flagstones, has a floor area of approximately 13m<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.7 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Birdlip Limestone Formation of the Jurassic era (BGS 2010). The natural substrate was not encountered during the archaeological watching brief.

### ***Archaeological background***

- 1.8 The villa is situated 12km north of Cirencester, a major urban centre in the Roman period, and a provincial capital in the 4th century. The villa was excavated in 1864, following chance finds of pottery and *tesserae* in the area, although the presence of the villa was known about by local woodsmen for some time before. The villa has been open for public viewing since its excavation, when it was the private property of the Stowell Estate and after its purchase by The National Trust in 1924. Several small-scale excavations were undertaken at the villa during the 20th century, including investigations of the northern bath suite, inner courtyard and eastern corridor.
- 1.9 The current published model for the development of the villa is largely based on the work of Richmond (1958-65) and Goodburn (1979-93). Neither of these investigations were fully published. The conventional view of the villa is that it was occupied from the early 2nd to late 4th centuries AD (Goodburn 1983). Current thinking is that it originated as three separate blocks in the 2nd century AD which were subsequently incorporated into a single building around inner and outer courtyards in the later Roman period. This structure comprised areas at different levels; the north wing stands on a terrace partially recessed into the hillside and the south wing lies at a lower level on the valley bottom (RCHME 1979).
- 1.10 In 1994, an Archaeologist/Property Manager (Philip Bethell) was appointed, and during the following years to 2006, a programme of investigative surveys was

carried out in order to deepen understanding of the site. Recent work suggests that this consolidation into a single building occurred as a massive change in the 4th century, rather than as a gradual development (NT 2009).

- 1.11 Archaeological evaluation within the access road to the south of the site identified a buried Romano-British soil horizon overlain by colluvium and the metalled surface of a 19th-century trackway (CA 2008).
- 1.12 Archaeological evaluation to the south of The Lodge identified the remains of a possible sub-division within the courtyard of the villa and a probable robber trench possibly indicating the eastward continuation of the southern wall of the southern range of the villa (CA 2009).
- 1.13 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the installation of new drainage in the western part of the site. Buried soil horizons, sealed by colluvium, were identified together with stone culverts and trackways of probable 19th-century date (CA 2010c).
- 1.14 A trial pit excavated in the basement of the Victorian Lodge revealed a series of make-up/levelling deposits some of which contained Roman pottery. These deposits were truncated by the construction cut for the Victorian stone foundations of the present building (CA 2010d).

### ***Methodology***

- 1.15 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSIs (CA 2010a and b). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks. The backfill of the evaluation trench was removed and the evaluation trench was then deepened by an additional 0.22m to a total depth of 1.02m bpgl. The floor area within the basement was then lowered to a depth of c. 0.51m bpgl.
- 1.16 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.17 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 Chedworth Roman Villa, 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 3-4)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the watching brief 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.
- 2.2 Trench 1 (evaluation trench and sump pit, 1.2m by 1.2m) was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.02m (Fig. 3). Trench 2 (reduction of floor level, c. 3.5m by 3.6m) was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.51m (Fig. 4). For clarity the results of both trenches are described below in stratigraphic order.
- 2.3 The earliest deposit encountered on the site (110), consisting of a very compact red brown clay silt that contained a single rim sherd of Roman pottery and occasional charcoal flecks, was revealed in Trench 1 at an average depth of 0.94m bpgl. This was overlain by colluvial layer 109 averaging 0.18m in thickness and consisting of stony orange brown clay silt containing occasional charcoal inclusions, which was in turn sealed by 0.11m of gravel layer 108. This was overlain by charcoal rich grey brown clay silt 107/205, which was covered by layer 106/204 consisting of limestone gravel in a brown clay silt matrix. This was sealed by thin layer of gritty clay silt 105/203, which contained Roman pottery and was in turn covered by a series of makeup/levelling layers (104/202 and 102/103/201) consisting of mixed rubble, soil and charcoal lenses. Layer 104/202 contained significant quantities of *opus signinum* and fragments of Roman flue tile and painted Roman wall plaster
- 2.4 The uppermost deposit recorded was 101, consisting of limestone fragments and mortar. This was a bedding layer for the flagstone floor of the basement.
- 2.5 Northern wall 200 of the Victorian Lodge truncated deposit 102/103/201. Western wall 206 of the Victorian Lodge was observed to truncate this deposit and all underlying deposits.



### ***The Finds***

- 2.6 Finds including pottery, building materials, glass and mortar, together with quantities of animal bone was recovered from five deposits. Further material was unstratified (Appendix B).
- 2.7 Small quantities of Roman pottery and tile were associated with colluvial layers 109 and 110. The abraded nature of this material is consistent with these being re-deposited finds from deposits post-dating the abandonment of the villa site.
- 2.8 Larger quantities of pottery and other Roman materials were derived from deposits thought to relate to the Victorian 'clearance' (deposits 202, 203 and 204). A moderately large and unabraded sherd from a Central Gaulish samian bowl from deposit 204 dates to the first half of the 2nd century AD. The larger group of pottery from layer 202 includes sherds of Savernake grog-tempered ware dateable no later than c. 150 AD and Dorset Black Burnished ware which probably dates to the later 2nd to early 4th centuries AD. The presence of earlier Roman pottery from layers 204 and 202 and the absence of certainly 'late' (Roman) types is perhaps surprising given the likely date and re-deposited nature of the context, although the quantity of material recovered is small. The unstratified pottery also includes Savernake sherds as well as Black-Burnished Ware, Severn Valley Ware and grey and sandy oxidised ware types probably from north Wiltshire. Among identifiable forms from the unstratified group are a jar and a plain-rimmed dish in Dorset Black-Burnished Ware, probably dating to the later 2nd or 3rd centuries AD.
- 2.9 The quantities of ceramic building material and stone (Appendix B) includes a range of roofing and building stone classes which is to be expected for the site. Of moderate interest (although it is unstratified) is a flat limestone fragment with squared edges which might be a portion of wall veneer (P. Davenport pers comm.).
- 2.10 A total of 30 fragments of Roman wall plaster were recovered from deposit 202. These occur in two distinct 'fabrics'; one which is white throughout and one pinkish with red/pink mineral inclusions and seemingly with a white 'skim' surface. A single fragment in the pinkish fabric was also recovered as an unstratified find. Four fragments feature decoration as painted red bands.
- 2.11 Animal bone was recovered from deposits 110, 202 and 204. Some unstratified animal bone was also present. The only species identified is cow; the more

fragmented material is cow-sized and sheep-sized. The animal bones from deposit 202 show signs of butchery.

### 3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The watching brief helped to clarify the interpretation of the deposits from the earlier evaluation of the site (CA 2010d). It appears that the lowest deposits revealed by the groundworks were layers of colluvium which built up in the base of the dry valley within the low-lying outer courtyard area of the villa subsequent to the villa going out of use.

3.3 The sequence of deposits above the colluvial layers possibly reflects the sequence of the original Victorian clearance and excavation of the villa site, with spoil being dumped in a convenient location and any Roman material being residual. The dumping of this material would also have created a level platform for the construction of the Victorian Lodge.

### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by David Parry. The report was written by David Parry. The illustrations were prepared by Jon Bennett. The finds report was compiled by Angela Aggujaro. The archive has been compiled by David Parry, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

### 5. REFERENCES

BGS [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) accessed 9 September 2010

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## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1 - 149.5m AOD (present ground level within basement)

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
101	Layer	Levelling layer for flagstone floor. Rubble and dry lime	>1.2	>1.2	0.12	
102	Layer	Makeup/levelling layer of mixed rubble and soil	>1.2	>1.2	0.12	
103	Layer	Makeup/levelling layer of mixed rubble and soil	>1.2	>1.2	0.08	
104	Layer	Makeup/compacted dumped material including cream and pink <i>opus signinum</i>	>1.2	>1.2	0.12	
105	Layer	Mid brown gritty clay silt with rare small limestone and charcoal inclusions	>1.2	>1.2	0.04	
106	Layer	Limestone gravel in light red brown clay silt matrix	>1.2	>1.2	0.06	
107	Layer	Dark grey brown clay silt with common charcoal inclusions	>1.2	>1.2	0.09	
108	Layer	Limestone gravel	>1.2	>1.2	0.11	
109	Layer	?Colluvium. Mid orange brown clay silt with very common sub-angular limestone 10-60mm and rare charcoal flecks	>1.2	>1.2	0.18	RB
110	Layer	Colluvium. Mid red brown clay silt with common sub-rounded limestone 10-200mm and very rare charcoal flecks	>1.2	>1.2	>0.13	RB

Trench 2 - 149.5m AOD (present ground level within basement)

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Masonry	Stone wall footing. Limestone blocks	3.6		0.12	
201	Layer	Makeup/levelling layer of mixed rubble and soil	3.6	3.5	0.19 max	
202	Layer	Makeup/compacted dumped material including cream and pink <i>opus signinum</i>	3.6	3.5	0.08	C2-C4
203	Layer	Mid brown gritty clay silt with rare small limestone and charcoal inclusions	3.6	3.5	0.05	C2-C4
204	Layer	Limestone gravel in mid brown clay silt matrix	3.6	3.5	>0.12	EMC2
205	Layer	Dark grey brown clay silt with common charcoal inclusions	3.6	3.5		
206	Masonry	Stone wall footing. Limestone blocks	4.0		>0.50	

## APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Ct.	Wt.	Date
109	Ceramic building material: misc (abraded)	2	43	RB
110	Roman pottery: greyware (abraded)	1	74	RB
	Animal bone; cattle, sheep-sized	2	1	
202	Iron nail: forged (?Roman)	1	43	C2-C4
	Tessera: blue lias?	1	2	
	Roman pottery: Dorset Black-Burnished ware, Savernake ware; greyware; fine micaceous black-firing	8	126	
	Animal bone; cow-sized, sheep-sized	8	14	
	Ceramic Building material: tegula; flue tile; brick	17	2324	
	Wall plaster	30	1155	
203	Roman pottery: Dorset Black-Burnished ware	2	14	C2-C4
204	Roman pottery: CG samian bowl. 18/31R	1	46	EMC2
	Ceramic building material: misc Roman	2	124	
	Animal bone: cow-sized	1	1	
u.s.	Tessera	1	3	-
	Roman pottery: Dorset Black-Burnished ware, Severn Valley Ware, oxidized ware; greyware, Savernake? grogged greyware	24	183	
	Animal bone; cattle, cow-sized	5	18	
	Ceramic Building material: tegula; flue tile	6	601	
	Mortar:	2	30	
	<i>Opus signinum</i>	1	74	
	Iron nail: modern wire nail	1	4	
	Glass: post-medieval/modern window glass and vessel glass	2	3	
	Fired clay	1	3	
	Oyster shell	1	42	
	Stone: limestone ?flag or wall veneer; ?old red series sandstone roof tile	2	904	
	Wall plaster	1	94	

## APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below present ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located on the kerbstone of the lodge driveway (151m AOD).

	Trench 1	Trench 2
Current ground level	149.5m	149.5m
Top of lower colluvial deposit	0.90m (148.6m)	
Limit of excavation	1.02m (148.48m)	0.51m (148.99m)

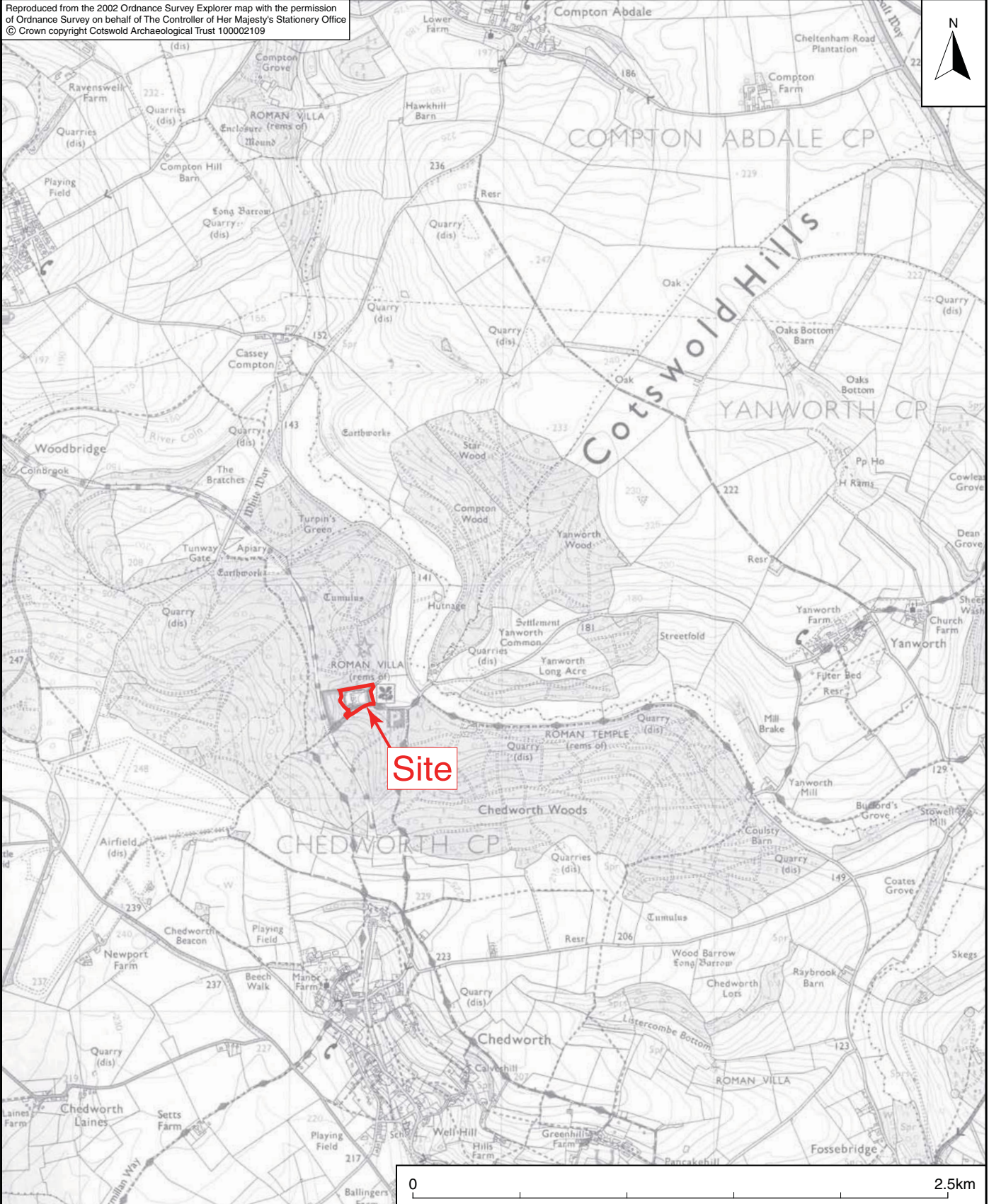
Upper figures are depth below present ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

## APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

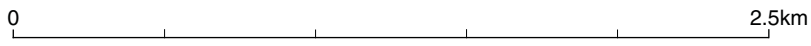
<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Chedworth Lodge Basement	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the change of use of the basement to a staff room at Chedworth Lodge Basement, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Groundworks comprised removal of the backfill of the earlier evaluation trench and further excavation of the trench to a depth of 1.02m below previous ground level (BpGL) to further investigate the nature of the archaeological deposits and to accommodate a waste pump. The ground level of the whole of the basement area was subsequently reduced by c. 0.51m.</p> <p>Colluvial deposits as well as several layers of made ground dumped prior to the erection of the Victorian lodge house were identified. Roman material from the excavation of the villa site in the 1860s was recorded but no significant archaeological features were identified.</p>	
Project dates	24-27 August 2010	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	n/a	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire	
Study area	13m <sup>2</sup>	
Site co-ordinates	SP 0530 1345	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	n/a	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	David Parry	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Chedworth Roman Villa	Ceramics, animal bone, stone, iron nail, wall plaster
Paper	Chedworth Roman Villa	Context sheets, permatrace drawings, photographic registers
Digital	Chedworth Roman Villa	Digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Chedworth Lodge, Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report <b>10159</b>		



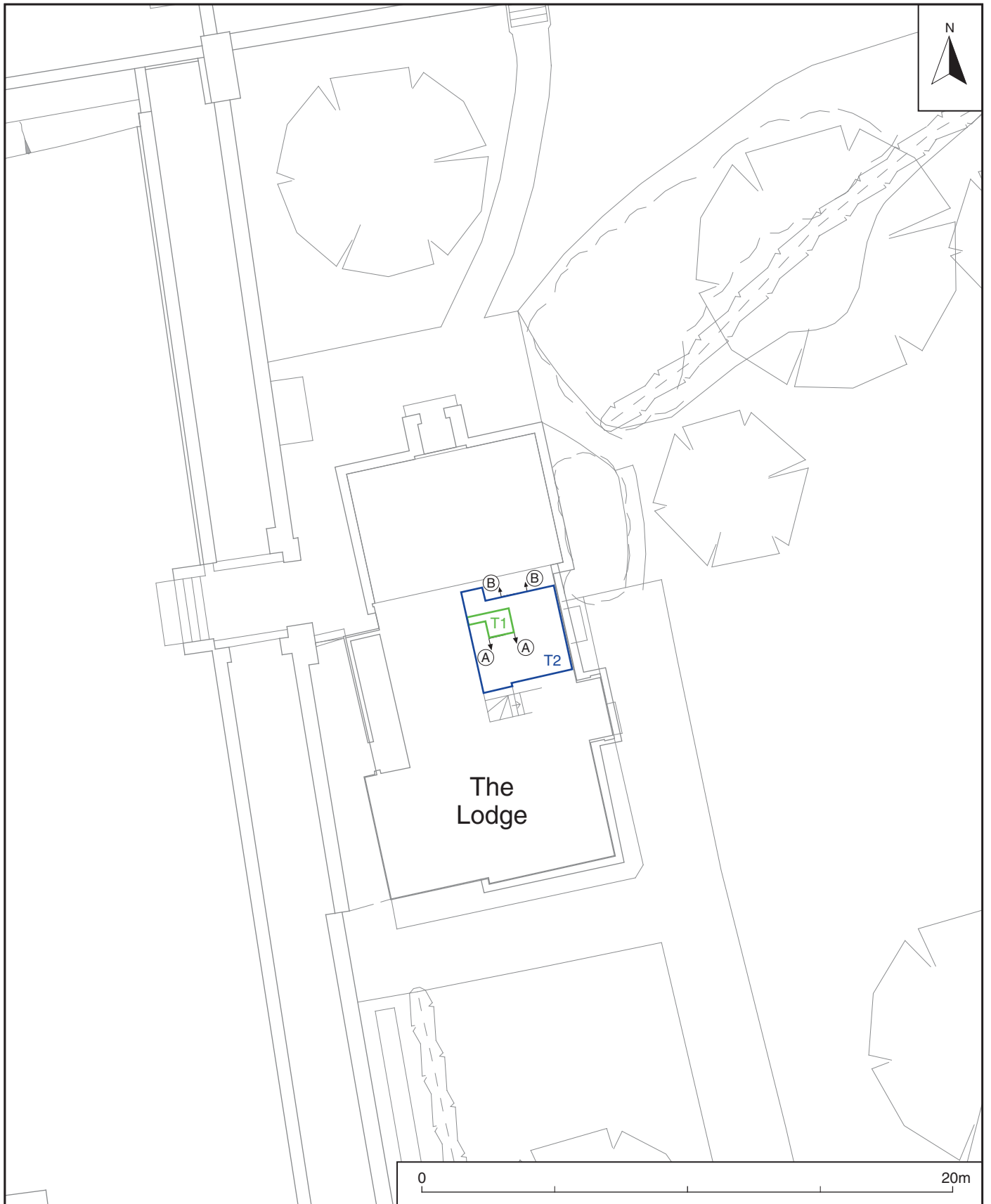
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Site



<b>COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY</b>			
PROJECT TITLE <b>Chedworth Lodge Basement          Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire</b>			
FIGURE TITLE <b>Site location plan</b>			
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JB	1:25,000@A4	3166	<b>1</b>



- evaluation trial pit and sump (Trench 1)
- area of ground reduction (Trench 2)



**COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE

**Chedworth Lodge Basement  
Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire**

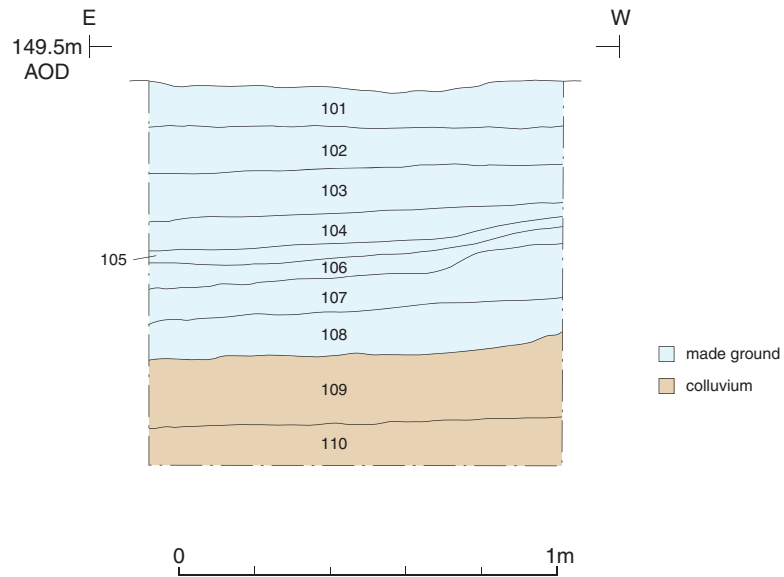
FIGURE TITLE

**Location of groundworks**

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JB	1:200@A4	3166	<b>2</b>



Section AA



North facing section of trial pit and sump, looking south  
(1m scale)



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Chedworth Lodge Basement  
Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 1; section and photograph**

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SCALE

1:20@A4

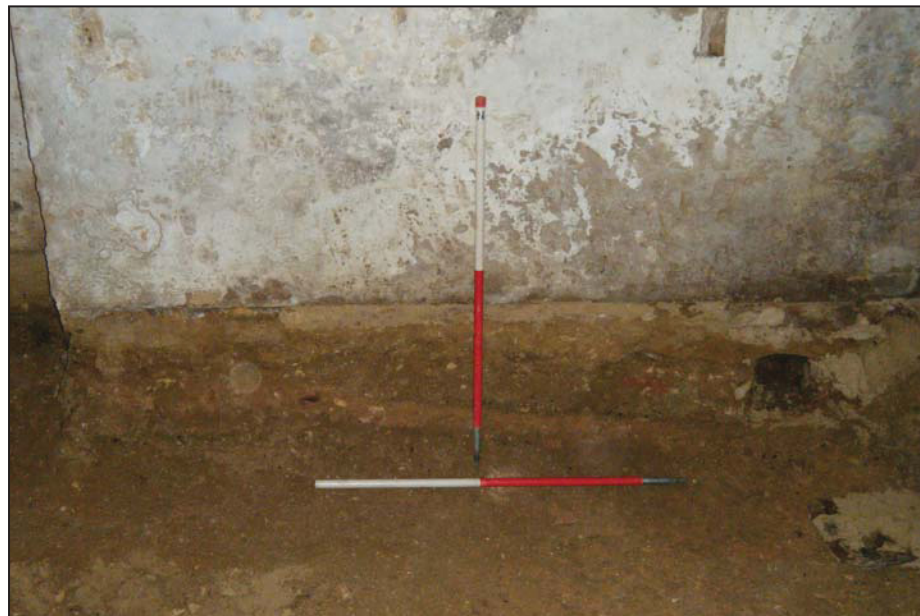
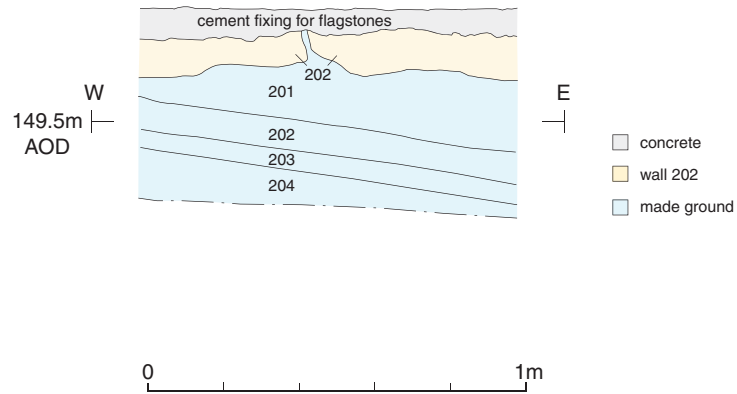
PROJECT NO.

3166

FIGURE NO.

**3**

Section BB



View of floor level reduction, looking north (1m scales)



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Chedworth Lodge Basement  
Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire

FIGURE TITLE

**Trench 2; section and photograph**

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PROJECT NO.

3166

FIGURE NO.

**4**