

**RACKHAMS CIRENCESTER
MARKET PLACE
CIRENCESTER
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

For

BEARD CONSTRUCTION


CA PROJECT: 3086
CA REPORT: 10077

JULY 2010

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prepared by	Jonathan Hart, Publications Officer
date	13 July 2010
checked by	Richard Young, Project Manager
date	13 July 2010
approved by	Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork
signed	
date	19 July 2010
issue	01

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)	5
3. DISCUSSION.....	6
4. CA PROJECT TEAM	6
5. REFERENCES	7
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	8
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS	9
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	10

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks and archaeological features (1:250)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Rackhams Cirencester
Location: Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire
NGR: SP 0242 0208
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 13-27 April 2010
Planning Reference: 08/02567/FUL
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester
Site Code: RCG 10

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the replacement of the existing storage facilities with a single storey building at Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

An undated but possibly Roman layer was exposed at the base of a foundation trench and was sealed by dark earth. The dark earth had been cut by the construction cuts for two walls, one of which contained a 15th to early 16th-century French jetton. These walls appear to be part of late medieval/early post-medieval boundaries associated with plots fronting onto Market Place.

The late medieval/early post-medieval boundary walls were sealed by a 19th-century dumped layer which formed the construction level for a limestone surface. This layer was also cut by a well. These deposits seem to indicate a period of reorganisation within the site during the 19th century.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Beard Construction at Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SP 0242 0208; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent for the replacement of the existing storage facilities with a single storey building (Cotswold District Council (CDC) Planning ref: 08/02567/FUL). The condition was recommended by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC), archaeological advisor to CDC. The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.

1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2010) and approved CDC acting on the advice of Mr Parry. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), the *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): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Mr Parry.

The site

1.3 The site is located within the centre of Cirencester and comprises a former car park and store room facilities to the rear of Rackhams store (Fig. 2). It is bounded by the churchyard of St John Baptist Church to the north, by a residential property to the east, by The Waterloo to the south and by Rackhams store to the west. The site is flat and lies at 110m AOD. The underlying solid geology is mapped as Forest Marble of the Middle Jurassic geological era (BGS 1946) but was not encountered during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

1.4 The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential within the core of the Roman and medieval town. In particular, it lies on or adjacent to the postulated alignment of a Roman street (Street J, Holbrook 1998, Fig. 7) that divided *Insulae* XXIII from *Insulae* XXIV. Archaeological observations throughout Dyer Street and Market Place

during sewer replacement works in the mid 1970s identified Roman street surfaces at depths of 0.2m below the present ground level (bpgl), with contemporary structural remains buried beneath dark earth deposits at 1.2m+ bpgl (CA 2000). Adjacent to the site the dark earth was observed to depths of 2m bpgl (ibid.).

- 1.5 Medieval deposits are less well attested within Cirencester, although the site's location to the rear of the Market Place and adjacent to the churchyard of St John Baptist Church suggests a high potential for the survival of medieval deposits.
- 1.6 An archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in December 2008. Three trenches were excavated. The earliest deposit encountered was a dark earth containing late medieval pottery and tile. This was sealed by a post-medieval deposit. The latter was overlain by a cobbled surface, probably representing a former yard or street, within which a post setting and possible beam slot were observed.

Methodology

- 1.7 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2010). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising Trench 1 (2m x 0.8m), which was a contractor's trial trench, and Trench 2, a series of 0.6m to 0.9m wide foundation trenches (Fig. 2). The depth and unstable edges of the trenches meant that it was not safe to enter them and therefore most of the exposed deposits were only inspected from a distance. The spoil was scanned for finds as it was excavated.
- 1.8 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.9 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, Cirencester, along with the site archive. 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.

2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)

- 2.1 Trenches 1 and 2 contained a similar sequence of deposits and the results for both are discussed together.
- 2.2 The earliest encountered deposit was layer 207, exposed at the base of the trench at 1.45m below present ground level (bpgl). Its full extent in plan was not exposed and it remained unexcavated but appeared to comprise a layer of yellow brown gravel and sand. It was overlain by dark earth 103/203, which consisted of dark brown clay silt. This was not excavated to its full depth throughout most of the site, but was between 0.5m and at least 0.9m deep. No finds were recovered from either of these deposits.
- 2.3 The dark earth had been cut by the construction cuts for two north-west/south-east aligned walls, wall 210 and wall 212. Both were limestone-built, possibly with clay bonding, and were 0.5m wide. They were excavated to a depth of 0.3m without their bases being encountered. Robber cut 208, located to the north-west of wall 210, appeared to indicate the wall's former continuation, although it should be noted that a wall or robber cut was not visible in the stretch of trench between the locations of wall 210 and robber cut 208. A French copper alloy jetton (reckoning counter) dating to the 15th to early 16th centuries was recovered from wall 210.
- 2.4 The walls and robber trench were sealed by layer 102/202, a dumped deposit consisting of grey brown clay silt with limestone rubble which was up to 1m thick. Clay tobacco pipe fragments dating to the 16th to 19th centuries were recovered from this deposit.
- 2.5 In the south-western part of the site dumped layer 102/202 was overlain by surface 204, a roughly laid limestone surface which had been exposed previously within Trench 3 of the evaluation. The dumped layer was also cut by construction cut 206 for well 205, located 2m to the east of surface 204. The well consisted of a drystone limestone shaft with an internal diameter of 0.6m. Much of the shaft extended below the water table and remained unexcavated, but it was at least 4m deep. No artefactual material was recovered from these deposits.
- 2.6 The latest deposits consisted of modern limestone slabs and concrete surfacing.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Undated sand and gravel layer 207 is difficult to interpret due to its limited exposure and the absence of close inspection. However, previous archaeological recording along Dyer Street and Market Place identified Roman street surfaces at 0.2m bpgl and Roman structural remains buried beneath dark earth deposits at 1.2m+ bpgl (CA 2000). Given the depth of layer 207 (1.45m bpgl) and its stratigraphic location beneath the dark earth, it is therefore possible that it was a Roman deposit.
- 3.2 Although the dark earth remained undated during the watching brief, late medieval finds were recovered from the same deposit during the evaluation (CA 2008). The absence of later material from the dark earth may be notable and could suggest an immediately post-Roman date, but is based on limited investigation.
- 3.3 A *terminus post quem* for wall 210, and possibly for parallel wall 212, is provided by the 15th to early 16th-century jetton. In addition, these walls were sealed by dumped layer 102/202 from which 16th to 19th-century finds were recovered. On this basis, the walls probably represent boundary walls between or within plots fronting onto Market Place and originating in the late medieval/early post-medieval period.
- 3.4 The presence of dumped layer 102/202 sealing the late medieval/early post-medieval boundary walls reflects a period of reorganisation within the site during the 19th century. Surface 204 and well 205 were probably constructed during this period.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 4.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Hart. This report was written by Jonathan Hart with illustrations prepared by Jonathan Bennett. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jonathan Hart. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1946 *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 235, Cirencester*, 1 inch to 1 mile

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2000 *Cirencester Traffic and Environment Plan: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. CA typescript report **001239**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation*. CA typescript report **08252**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Holbrook, N. 1998 *Cirencester Excavations V: Cirencester the Roman Town Defences, Public Buildings and Shops* Cirencester, Cotswold Archaeological Trust

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench1

No.	Type	Description	Width	Depth	Spot-date
101	Layer	Limestone slab surface		0.1m	
102	Layer	Dumped layer: mid grey-brown clay silt with limestone rubble		1m	C16-C19
103	Layer	Dark earth: dark brown clay silt (not excavated to full depth)		0.9m+	

Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Width	Depth	Spot-date
201	Layer	Concrete surface and gravel bedding		0.15m	
202	Layer	Dumped layer: mid grey-brown clay silt with limestone rubble		0.95m	C18
203	Layer	Dark earth: dark brown clay silt (not excavated to full depth in most of trench)		0.5m+	
204	Layer	Limestone surface: angular limestones with grey clay bonding		0.1m	
205	Well	Drystone limestone lining of well. Internal shaft diameter of 0.6m. not excavated to full depth	0.8m	4m+	
206	Cut	Construction cut for 205	0.8m	4m+	
207	Layer	Yellow brown gravel and sand partially exposed at base of trench. Full extent not exposed and not excavated			
208	Cut	Robber cut through layer 203. Full depth not exposed	1.4m	0.3m+	
209	Fill	Fill of 208: green grey sandy silt with limestone fragments	1.4m	0.3m+	
210	Wall	Limestone wall, possibly with clay bonding. Full depth not exposed	0.5m	0.3m+	C15-eC16
211	Cut	Construction cut for wall 210	0.5m	0.3m+	
212	Wall	Limestone wall, possibly with clay bonding. Full depth not exposed	0.5m	0.3m+	
213	Cut	Construction cut for wall 210	0.5m	0.3m+	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

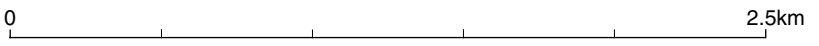
Artefactual material consisting of fragments of clay tobacco pipe and a late medieval or early post-medieval copper alloy jetton (reckoning counter) was recovered from three deposits (below).

Context	Description	Count	Weight	Date
102	Clay pipe: stem	1	2	C16–C19
202	Clay pipe: bowl and stems	4	25	C18
210	Copper alloy jetton: French Tournai type obv. with cross and fleur de lis/Rev. French shield. Legend reads 'VIVE LE ROI'	1	3	C15-eC16

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the replacement of the existing storage facilities with a single storey building at Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.</p> <p>An undated but possibly Roman layer was exposed at the base of a foundation trench and was sealed by dark earth. The dark earth had been cut by the construction cuts for two walls, one of which contained a 15th to early 16th-century French jetton. These walls appear to be part of late medieval/early post-medieval boundaries associated with plots fronting onto Market Place.</p> <p>The late medieval/early post-medieval boundary walls were sealed by a 19th-century dumped layer which formed the construction level for a limestone surface. This layer was also cut by a well. These deposits seem to indicate a period of reorganisation within the site during the 19th century.</p>	
Project dates	13-27 April 2010	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Evaluation (CA 2008)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire	
Study area	1250m ²	
Site co-ordinates	SP 0242 0208	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Gloucestershire County Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Jonathan Hart	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Corinium Museum	Clay tobacco pipe; copper alloy jetton
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context records, matrix, plan
Digital	Corinium Museum	Database
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 10077		

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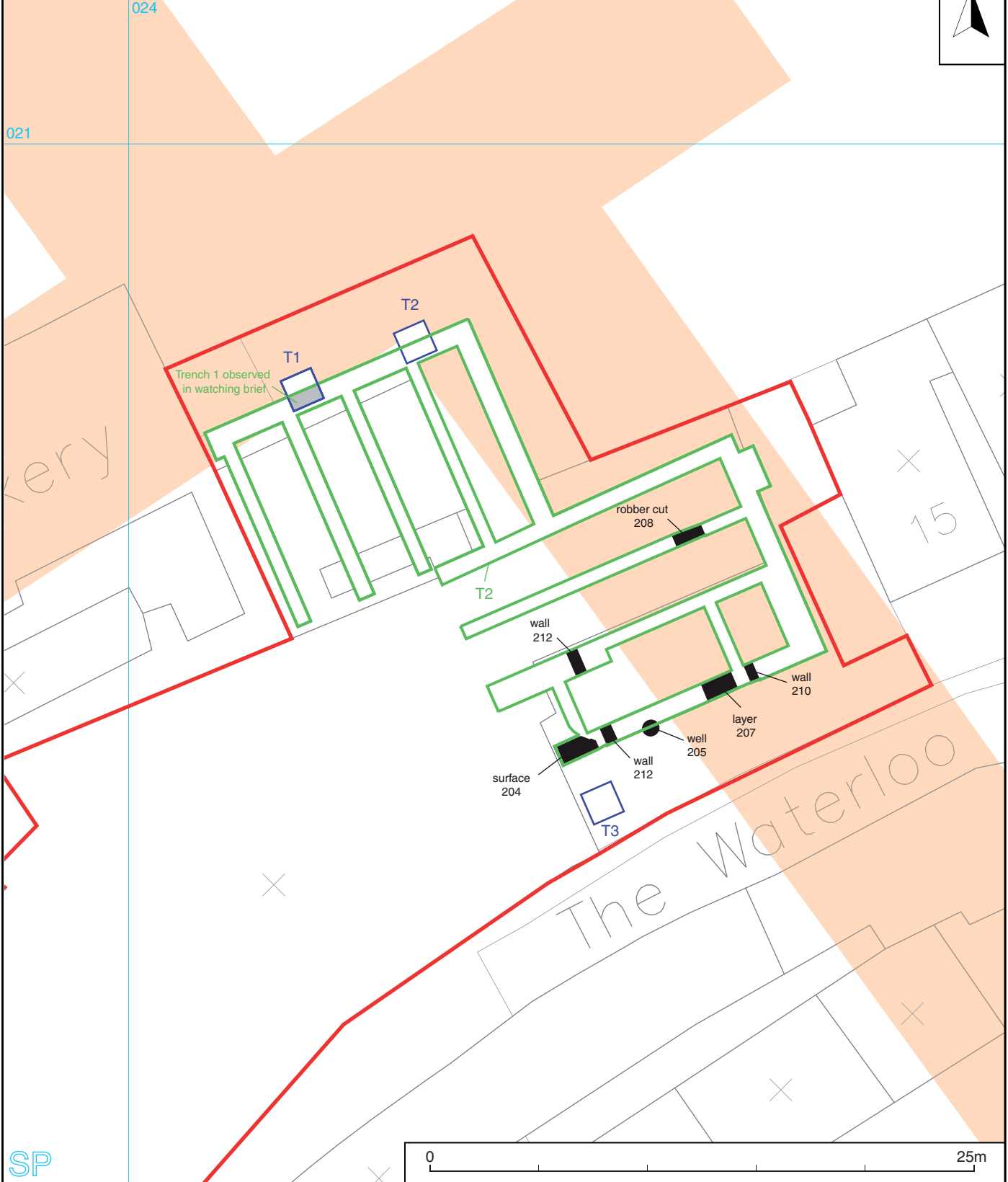


 **COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE
**Rackhams, Cirencester, Market Place
 Cirencester, Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
JB	1:25,000@A4	3086	1



- site
- area of observed groundworks showing archaeological features
- evaluation trench 2008
- projected course of Roman road



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE
**Rackhams Cirencester, Market Place
 Cirencester, Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE
**The site, showing location of
 groundworks and archaeological features**

<i>DRAWN BY</i>	<i>SCALE</i>	<i>PROJECT NO.</i>	<i>FIGURE NO.</i>
JB	1:250@A4	3086	2