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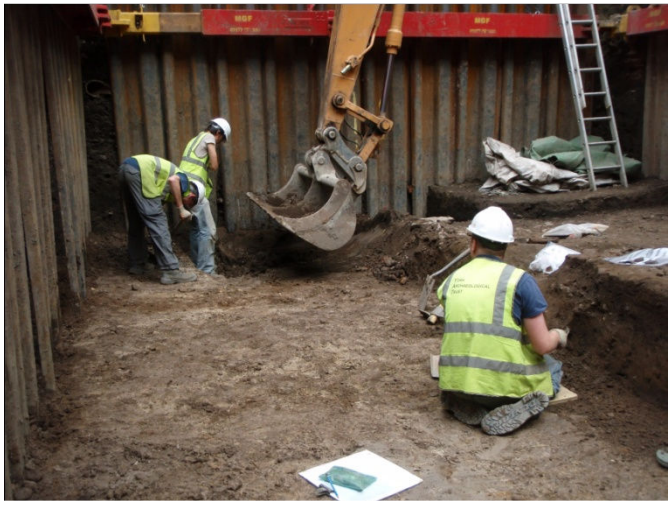

SEWAGE ATTENUATION TANKS,

28-40 BLOSSOM STREET, YORK

EXCAVATION ANALYSIS REPORT

by I.D. Milsted

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YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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YAT York Archaeological Trust

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

ABSTRACT

The analysis phase of this investigation has resulted in a refinement of the original assessment phasing and interpretation. Activity commenced on this site with a late 1st/early 2nd-century AD agricultural landscape, with a small road running perpendicular to the supposed main route into the civilian settlement from the south-west. The area south-west of this road was at the edge of a possible cremation cemetery in the early 3rd century AD, which seems to have gone out of use by the mid 3rd century, when a substantial levelling event using re-deposited 2nd century material occurred, with refuse pits and dumps, and a small post-built structure with a cobbled surface was erected in the late 3rd century. This activity was then sealed by levelling deposits and the yard and post-holes of a large timber building of early 4th century date. Its remains were heavily truncated by a clearance event in the late 11th century AD that removed any in-situ evidence for late and post-Roman activity, the presence of which was inferred from the quantity of residual material in later deposits.

1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological excavation was carried out on behalf of The Blossom Street Venture in advance of the installation of two sewage attenuation tanks in the car park to the rear of the former Prudential Insurance offices at 28-40 Blossom Street, York. This operation formed part of the refurbishment of the office building into a hotel. The excavation ran from 30th June to 14th August 2009 and an assessment report, YAT report 2009/90, was produced in July 2010. Further artefactual and stratigraphic analysis tasks were identified in that report and the results of this work are presented here.

2. METHODOLOGY

The assessment report noted that the 28-40 Blossom Street sequence showed phases of fairly ephemeral structures and unidentified activities with several episodes of extensive dumping and levelling that seemed to broadly relate to similarly dated events identified in three other sites in this area: LP Wenham's work in the 1950s (Wenham 1965), and two YAT excavations at 14-20 ('Forsellius' Garage'; Clarke 1991) and 35-41 ('Lion and Lamb'; Oakey 1990; Oakey 1992). The following specific tasks were recommended (Milsted 2010, 23-25):

- The assemblage of samian ware should be assessed and considered for further work
- The assemblage of coarse pottery should be considered for further work

- The stratigraphic phasing sequence should be re-examined and refined in the light of the further work recommended for the artefacts
- Some specific artefacts should be considered for further research and publication
- The landscape setting of the Roman sequence at 28-40 Blossom Street should be assessed via a limited study of the other Blossom Street sites

Accordingly, the assemblage of Samian ware was assessed by Dr Gwladys Monteil (see Appendix 1). Following this, it was decided not to proceed with further analysis of the coarse pottery assemblage as the likely enhancement of dating and deposit information was deemed insufficient. Further analysis of specific artefacts was also not considered necessary for this phase of the project. The stratigraphic sequence was re-examined and amended, and the results of this work are set out in phase order below, in Section **5**. This sequence was then re-interpreted as a landscape analysis based on a brief assessment of the other Blossom Street sites and the results are presented in Section **6**. For the original phasing structure, detailed context data, including descriptions, artefactual information and original phase plans and plates, please refer to the assessment report and appendices (Milsted 2010).

During the re-phasing of the sequence, it was found necessary to split Phases 2 and 4 into sub-phases. The Integrated Archaeological Database (IADB) used by YAT to organise, analyse and archive stratigraphic information does not allow for alpha-numeric systems such as '2a, 2b' and so the sub-divisions of Phase 2 are titled Phase 21 and 22, and those of Phase 4 are titled Phase 41, 42 and 43.

In the interests of clarity, the bibliographies for the analysis report and the Samian pottery assessment by Dr Monteil are presented separately, at the end of the relevant sections.

3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Reproduced from Milsted 2010, 3-4

The site was located at NGR SE 5963 5137 on the north-western side of Blossom Street (Figure 1), in a former car park behind the building formerly known as Prudential House. The former Odeon Cinema building overlooked the site from the south-west, with the modern Jarvis building forming the north-western boundary and the refurbished former Prudential House constituting the north-eastern and south-eastern boundaries of the area (Figure 2).

The drift geology of the area consists of boulder clays and sand overlying solid geological layers of Bunter and Keuper Sandstone (Geological Survey 1963). Previous investigations in the area had located natural drift deposits at around 12.70m AOD (Clarke 1991, 8).

The area had been used as a car park, and was surfaced with concrete. There was a pronounced slope running from 16.12m AOD at the south-eastern limit of excavation to 15.72m at the north-western limit of excavation. This was a fall of 0.40m over 6m, or a ratio of approximately 1:15.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Amended from Milsted 2010, 4-5

The site is located close to the projected line of the Roman road designated 10 by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHMY1, 3; figure 2). This was the main approach road to the fortress and civilian settlement from the south-west, connecting *Eboracum* with *Calcaria* (Tadcaster) (Brinklow *et al* 1986, 101), and correlates fairly closely with the modern A64 (Ottaway 2004, 50). Closer to York it runs parallel to and slightly north-west of the modern A1036 Tadcaster Road. The alignment of the road is based on observations made from near the probable bridgehead across the Ouse (observed during the Wellington Row excavations; Ottaway 2004, 93), several antiquarian and 19th century sightings within the *colonia* walls (RCHMY1, 3; Ottaway 2004, 92) and from several encounters in Blossom Street itself, discussed below. Approximately a mile to the south-west, the road was located during the 2003 excavations on the site of the former Starting Gate pub, near the junction of Tadcaster Road and St Helen's Road (Ottaway 2004, 50; McComish 2003).

Ground-works in the 1870s at 1 The Crescent, just south-west of the current site, encountered cobbles interpreted as Road 10 and it was also recorded beneath the Odeon Cinema in the 1930s (RCHMY1, 3; Raine 1955, 312). Excavations conducted by LP Wenham between 1953-1955 identified cobbled surfaces which were interpreted as Road 10, along with a junction with a road leading into the Holgate area (Wenham 1965, 527) just 100m to the north-east of the current A1036/A59 junction (Figure 2). Excavations conducted by YAT at 14-20 Blossom Street covered some of the area investigated by L.P. Wenham but although metalled surfaces were encountered, they did not accord with the scale of those identified in the 1950s (Clarke 1991, 13). There remains, then, some doubt as to the precise location of this thoroughfare which the current fieldwork had the potential to clarify.

Also located during LP Wenham's excavations was a small road-side building, tentatively interpreted as a 'wayside shrine' (Wenham 1965, 541). This building had five identifiable phases which seem to span the Roman presence in York; the major detail of note was a change of alignment from the main road in Phases 1 and 2 (1st – 2nd century) to the 'new' spur road in Phases 3-5 (late 2nd/early 3rd century to possibly early 5th) (Wenham 1965, 541). Some evidence for further buildings was encountered during the 1991 YAT excavations (Clarke 1991, 10), and ephemeral structural traces were also recorded by MAP during evaluation ahead of the construction of the Jarvis building to the north-west (MAP 2000, 10). There was therefore clearly some potential for further buildings and associated surfaces to be located in the current works, which lay immediately to the south-west of the area investigated by Wenham and latterly by YAT.

The wider area around of the recent excavations is also known for the presence of Roman burials, most notably beneath the railway station (RCHMY1, 76) and at 35-41 Blossom Street, directly opposite the current site, where a 3rd-4th century cemetery and mausoleum complex was excavated by YAT in 1989-90 (Oakey 1990, 10-17; 1992, 18-35). Fragments of head pots found at 14-20 Blossom Street were interpreted as evidence for disturbed burials (Clarke 1991, 11), and a cremation burial in a cinerary urn was discovered at the side of Road 10 in the 1950s along with disturbed fragments of other cremation burial vessels (Wenham 1965, 531). Of equal interest was the evidence at 35-41 Blossom Street for major changes of land-use in the area, with a period of extensive dumping identified between the main phases of burial (Oakey 1992, 57). Large amounts of dumping were also found at 14-20 Blossom Street and during Wenham's excavations, and interpreted as an accumulation of 'rubbish dumped at the roadside' (Wenham 1965, 531) and the development of agricultural soil during the Roman period (Clarke 1991, 27). At 35-41 Blossom Street there was also evidence for an early ditched enclosure with military characteristics (Oakey 1992, 15), after which the area seems to have been systematically cleared and undergone several dramatic alterations of use. The excavations at 28-40 Blossom Street had therefore significant potential to contribute to a broad range of issues concerning Roman activity in this area.

There is little evidence for Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian activity in this area. The name 'Ploxwangate' or 'street of the ploughman' is recorded by 1241 and seems to have become 'Blossom Street' by the 17th century (Palliser 1972, 6). The gradual development of the street with houses is presumed to commence in the 13th century, and can be traced through maps of the area from the 19th century onwards (Oakey 1992, 9), with the land behind the houses remaining largely agricultural. The 1961 OS map (detail included in Figure 2) shows properties occupying the area of the excavation which were built in the mid 18th century, in

particular 40 Blossom Street which was demolished in 1964 (RCHMY3, 65), prior to the construction of the office building currently subject to refurbishment.

5. AMENDED PHASING

5.1 PHASE 1: NATURAL

Natural, glacial deposits in the form of clean, slightly clayey sands were identified sloping down from south-west to north-east, from 13.22m AOD to 13.06m AOD (Plate 1). This accords well with the height and sloping trend of natural as identified in earlier interventions, in particular the borehole transects investigated during works at 14-20 Blossom Street (Clarke 1991, 8), but in these other projects natural was represented by clay. Blossom Street overlies the north-eastern edge of the York glacial terminal moraine, and variable deposits of mixed sands, cobbles and clays are entirely consistent with moraine environments (Monkhouse 1971, 241). The natural deposits identified to the south at Driffield Terrace demonstrate this clearly (Hunter-Mann 2005, 9), and it is suggested that the material seen at 28-40 Blossom Street represents a sand-filled depression in the variable and undulating, if generally sloping, moraine.

5.2 PHASE 21: LATE 1ST CENTURY ACTIVITY

This phase represents the earlier activity originally placed within Phase 2 after initial assessment (Milsted 2010, 6); the later elements form Phase 22 and are discussed below. The Samian ware assessment (Appendix 1) has refined the dating of this original phase, and a clear chronological distinction can now be linked to the spatial recognition of a change in land-use already recognised.

Phase 21 commenced in the late 1st century AD with the development of an agricultural soil, 1134, in open ground, at 13.10–13.35m AOD. 1134 contained cess material and charcoal, along with pottery from AD 71-100, and probably represents manuring and disposal of midden material. This was cut into by a 0.60m wide, north-north-east/south-south-west aligned ditch, 1137, with a possible bank, 1135, on the eastern side, probably representing a boundary feature, but an insufficient area was exposed to understand this early landscape more fully (Figure 3). It is possible that this represents a road-side ditch of Road 10, or perhaps more likely on the grounds of scale, a marking-out feature associated with the construction of this road (Kurt Hunter-Mann, pers. comm.) These features may also relate to those of a similar type and date encountered at 35-41 Blossom Street; this is discussed further in Section **6**.

5.2 PHASE 22: EARLY TO MID 2ND CENTURY ACTIVITY

The Phase 21 ditch was in-filled and the bank removed in the early 2nd century AD, as a substantial spread of mixed silty clayey sand, 1131, developed across the top of them at 13.36-13.53m AOD. This spread may be an intentional ground-raising deposit of refuse and material disturbed from elsewhere, as it contained a very mixed assemblage of nails, pot and bone, including fragments of human bone. The pottery and ceramic building material recovered were in the date-range AD 100-120, suggesting that 1131 may have been developing over 20 years through rubbish disposal, but the presence of disturbed funerary material may point to a deliberate re-ordering of the landscape by re-deposited material sourced from elsewhere.

Further landscape alterations were evidenced by the cutting of a new 'V' shaped ditch, 1140, on a north-west/south-east alignment, 0.80m wide and 0.45m deep, and interpreted as a boundary feature that may also have provided drainage (Figure 3). This ditch seems to have silted or been deliberately in-filled relatively quickly, as its line was soon used to lay out a small cobbled road, 1130, with a drainage gully to the south-west, cut into the fill of the earlier ditch (Plate 2, Figures 4 and 11). The cobbled surface of the road, at 13.52m AOD, was no more than 1.2m wide and contained material of early-mid 2nd century date, as did the substantial levelling deposits that developed on either side, 1133 to the north-east and 1127 to the south-west. These contained very mixed artefact assemblages, including the glass bangle and bone spoon handle described in the assessment report (Milsted 2010, 7) and may represent deliberate dumping of refuse material either side of the small road or lane aligned perpendicularly to the supposed position of the main *Calcaria* road.

As suggested during assessment, the lane appears to survive as an active surface into the mid 3rd century; if one accepts a slightly later date for its creation of the mid 2nd century, this still allows it an 80-100 year lifespan that may suggest a significance not immediately apparent from its size. There was evidence for the maintenance of the surface, with a large number of Dressel 20 amphora sherds possibly used to patch holes, or at least consolidate the metalling. The activity in this phase, and the wider alteration of the landscape after AD120 as seen elsewhere locally may reflect major changes in the life of the early fortress and civilian settlement, and their impact on the surrounding area; this is discussed below in Section **6**.

5.3 PHASE 3: MID 2ND TO EARLY 3RD CENTURY ACTIVITY

The original assessment placed a group of features - post-hole 1120, rubbish pit 1111 and gully 1112 at the end of the Phase 3 sequence (Milsted 2010, 7-8 and 16-17). Further analysis of the entire sequence suggests that the early-mid 3rd century pottery in the backfills

of this group, and their rather diffuse nature, makes more chronological and spatial sense if the group is placed in the re-modelled Phase 41. This is accordingly discussed below in **5.4.**

The sequence of the rest of this phase is unchanged from the assessment, but the re-organisation has focused the interpretation more tightly that was previously possible. The late 2nd/early 3rd century possible funerary pit, 1105, is now the only cut feature in this phase to post-date spreads 1116 and 1117 that made up the south-western part of the excavation area by up to 0.25m to around 13.86m AOD, some 0.30m higher than the still-active surface of road 1130 to the north-east (Plate 3, Figure 5). These spreads contained residual mid-2nd century material, and seem to have been deposited with reference to a large north-west – south-east aligned ditch (1110) that ran parallel to lane 1130, suggesting a deliberate landscaping event in the mid-late 2nd century AD.

Spread 1116 contained appreciable quantities of charcoal and ash (PRS, Appendix 8 of Milsted 2010, 107), and the sample yielded traces of hammer-scale, suggesting the presence of industrial activity in the area. It was previously argued, however, that this probably represented a rake-out deposit from a nearby hot industrial process rather than evidence for *in-situ* industrial activity (Milsted 2010, 17 and Cubitt, in Appendix 7, 98). Context 1116 is now felt to partially derive from deliberate levelling using re-deposited material, particularly given the mixed assemblage of pot, bone and nails within it. The underlying deposit, 1117, was the more substantial of the two, and contained a larger, even more mixed assemblage that included small amounts of glass working waste, as well as bone hair pins and copper alloy objects, along with an assemblage of butchered animal bone, iron nails and slag, all strongly suggesting a mixed levelling deposit derived from midden material, over which the 0.06m thick, charcoal-rich spread 1116 was then laid. In the light of the other features in this phase, the source of this burnt material is potentially significant.

The presence of semi-vitrified fuel ash, charcoal and fire waste from 1103, the backfill of pit 1105 (PRS 2010, 108), is of particular interest, as this feature also produced large sherds of near-complete and heavily burnt pottery vessels of mid-late 2nd century date that have been interpreted as evidence for *in-situ* funerary ritual activity (Leary, in Milsted 2010, 56; Plate 5). Deposit 1115, the fill of ditch 1110, produced large amounts of similar material, possibly suggesting the disposal or disturbance of grave furnishings (Plate 6). It is therefore possible that deposit 1116 was a deliberate preparation of the ground for funerary activity, possibly with the re-deposited remains of earlier deposits associated with cremation rites. This interpretation accords better with the pottery assemblage from the ditch and pit backfills

(Monteil, see Appendix 1 and Leary, in Milsted 2010, 56) than it does with the original assessment.

There is evidence for a cremation cemetery in the immediate vicinity of 28-40 Blossom Street, discussed further in Section **6.** The presence of a near-complete, heavily scorched jar and dish from pit-fill 1103 could indicate that is was a disturbed cremation burial. Such cremation-pits were more usually oval than square but the quantity of near-complete vessels is typical (Philpott 1991, 8). A high level of disturbance was noted in the majority of the Trentholme Drive cremations (Wenham 1968, 26), but this was inferred from the lack of grave furnishing associated with *in-situ* cinerary vessels (Philpott 1991, 37). Without a cinerary urn, and more critically with no evidence for burnt human bone, it seems unlikely that pit 1103/1105 is a cremation burial. If it were, it would be unusually rich for York in containing two ceramic offerings (Philpott 1991, 37). An alternative explanation is therefore required.

The high quantity of burnt material in 1116 is reminiscent of the substantial spreads of charcoal-rich deposits found at Trentholme Drive. These were interpreted as evidence for a cremation pyre or *ustrinum*, and whilst they were considerably thicker in places than spread 1116, they were not consistent, with patchier areas around the margin of an estimated 30m radius (Wenham 1968, 21). The contents of the Trentholme Drive deposit were very similar to the 28-40 Blossom Street spread, containing high quantities of nails, pottery and glass, along with charred wood, ash and coal/cinder traces (Wenham 1968, 21; PRS 2010, 107). The major exception was the presence of burnt human bone; although small fragments of bone were recovered from the Blossom Street samples, they were at best 'indeterminate' (PRS 2010, 107).

Despite the lack of human bone, the backfills of the ditch and pit may suggest the disposal of offerings made on cremation pyres. There is evidence that, outside of the south-east of England, it was common for ceramic vessels to be deliberately broken (Taylor 2001, 102) and burnt on the pyre rather than buried intact in the grave (Philpott 1991, 38) and that furthermore, many of these items 'never reached the grave' and were disposed of separately (Philpott 1991, 220-1). There is evidence from other northern military cremation cemeteries, most notably at Brougham, of the pyre debris being buried separately from the grave (Philpott 1991, 220-1); and even in the case of furnished cremation graves, they were usually dug some distance from the pyre itself (Philpott 1991, 8). It is therefore possible that the Phase 3 activity at 28-40 Blossom Street represents a spread of pyre-related material with a pit dug to bury debris collected after a cremation. The presence of similar material in the ditch points to an active cremation cemetery in the immediate vicinity at the turn of the 2nd

and 3rd centuries, with the lack of human bone recovered from 28-40 Blossom Street perhaps explained by the relative small sample that this excavation would represent of the wider area, along with the probability that these features are not actually the burials themselves but that they are on the fringes of a cremation cemetery.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this interpretation is the likely boundary of funerary activity represented by ditch 1110; it may be that 28-40 Blossom Street has for the first time demonstrated the limit of one of the area's cemeteries, which would represent a major development in the understanding of the area. The scattered presence of cinerary urns from elsewhere in the Blossom Street area (RCHMY1, 92-95) points towards a funerary landscape south-west of the road and ditch found at 28-40 Blossom Street, whilst the late 2nd – early 3rd century period also saw the establishment of the nearby cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street, south-east of the current site. Although this was an inhumation cemetery, reflecting the gradual change from cremation to inhumation during the 3rd century (Philpott 1991, 8; Taylor 2001, 109; Ottaway 2004, 121), its presence may provide a context for landscape changes seen elsewhere at 28-40 Blossom Street and elsewhere in the area. These wider landscape interpretations are discussed further in Section **6**.

5.4 PHASE 41: EARLY-MID 3RD CENTURY OPEN GROUND

The assessment Phase 4 has been substantially re-worked as a result of this analysis project, ultimately being sub-divided into three distinct but related phases of activity in the 3rd century AD, numbered 41-43. An early-mid 3rd century group containing a post-hole, a pit and gully have been moved from the original Phase 3 into Phase 41. Additionally, the series of mid 3rd century dumping and levelling deposits that constituted the bulk of the original Phase 4 have been re-examined, leading to a refinement of their interpretation and phasing. A slightly earlier sub-group of dump deposits have been phased into Phase 41, with the main levelling deposits placed into Phase 42 and discussed below in Section **5.5**. Additionally, a mid-late 3rd century group of cobble spreads and pits, formerly in the original Phase 5, have been re-phased with further levelling deposits as Phase 43, discussed in Section **5.6**. Finally, two large pits, 1118 and 1114, formerly in Phase 4, have on the basis of their medieval pottery assemblages been moved into Phase 8; the cut-points of these pits were not recognised during the excavation due to the significant disturbance of the area at the northern end of the trench in later phases.

In Phase 41, the mid 2nd century cobbled lane 1130 was sealed by two substantial dumps, 1107 and 1128, both of domestic refuse containing early-mid 3rd century pottery and a typical assemblage of butchered animal bone, nails and other detritus. This removal of the lane as an active surface appears to coincide with a hiatus in meaningful activity across the site. The

cut features moved from the earlier phase, an isolated post-hole (1120), a 0.40m deep rubbish pit (1111) and a shallow gully (1112) represent the fairly ephemeral activity one might expect in relatively disused, open ground, alongside discrete, relatively insubstantial rubbish dumping (Figure 6). The ceramic assemblage from the cut features includes material probably associated with funerary activity, suggesting a continuation of area's function as interpreted in the previous phase, expect that the material is more mixed and seems to represent disturbed funerary material rather than primary deposition. There is some evidence from the nearby 35-41 Blossom Street excavation of selective levelling across parts of the still-active cemetery identified there, from the late 3rd century onwards; this may provide a context for the slightly earlier cessation of funerary activity suggested for this phase.

5.5 PHASE 42: MID-LATE 3RD CENTURY LEVELLING

In her assessment of the coarse pottery assemblage for this site (see Milsted 2010, 56-57), Ruth Leary expressed concern at the high degree of 2nd century material recovered from the deposits originally identified as constituting Phase 4. This was interpreted as an importation of a significant quantity of re-deposited material from elsewhere in the fortress/colonia as part of a deliberate ground-raising exercise (Milsted 2010, 17-18). This interpretation still stands but has been refined through closer analysis.

By re-assigning the slightly earlier dumps 1107 and 1128 to Phase 41, it is now possible to define a separate and intentional levelling event in the mid 3rd century. This covered most of the excavated area by up to 0.50m with two large deposits, 1102 and the overlying 1101, both of which contained large amounts of residual 2nd century material, including disturbed funerary objects such as *tazze*. A barbarous radiate of Divus Claudius (Andrews-Wilson, in Milsted 2010, 93) in 1102, dated to AD 275-85, may place this levelling event in the later 3rd century, but may also be intrusive, deriving from the mid-late 3rd century pits in Phase 43. In the southern corner, over the position of Phase 3 funerary pit 1105, a supplementary series of levelling deposits were laid, possibly to counteract the subsiding fills of the earlier pit, as part of this levelling exercise, which brought the entire area up to around 13.90m AOD (Figure 7).

The purpose of what amounts to a major landscaping event remains unclear. The activity identified in the following two phases of activity, which encompass the end of the 3rd century and the early years of the 4th, do not in themselves constitute a convincing reason to raise the ground level so much, and the Phase 6 early-mid 4th century building (see Section **5.7**) has its own levelling spreads associated with it. It may be that the deposition of 1101 and 1102 has less to do with the levelling of this area and more to do with the need to remove it from somewhere else, and that therefore this area was merely the nearest convenient

dumping ground for large amounts of spoil generated either by a development within the *colonia* (See Section **6**). This argument is slightly undermined by the apparent extra levelling over the sinking fills of pit 1105, which seems to imply a purpose to creating a level surface, but it may be that this association is coincidental, or that these deposits belong in Phase 43. Either way, their relatively small scale does generally support the idea that the 3rd century sees the reversion of this part of Blossom Street from intense activity to 'waste' or open ground. This interpretation is now more clearly defined following the re-phasing of the deposits facilitated by this analysis.

5.6 PHASE 43: MID-LATE 3RD CENTURY OPEN GROUND

The activity in this phase was formerly placed in Phase 5, on the basis of its being clearly distinct from the earlier levelling, and its similarity to the surfaces and possible building described below in Section **5.7**. Ruth Leary (in Milsted 2010, 18 and 57) remarked on the difficulty of separating these phases chronologically, and on the basis of their marked similarity to the features of Phase 41, and the slightly later dating of the features in Phase 5, they are placed here.

Two patches of irregular cobbles, 1078 and 1096, formerly interpreted as the remains of a surface (Milsted 2010, 9), are now considered as spreads or dumps. They may represent the remains of a surface at around 14.05m AOD, but if so it was a crude and insubstantial one which was rapidly buried beneath a further 0.05-0.10m thick dump of refuse containing mixed domestic material and residual mid 3rd century pottery. Two large rubbish pits, 1094 and 1093, were cut through this deposit, again containing residual mid 3rd century material (Figure 8).

The similarity of Phases 41 and 43, both in terms of date and deposit type, stratigraphically bracket the major levelling of Phase 42, which when seen as the result of the area being open and relatively disused both before and afterwards, supports the idea that it was the first open space available for the deposition of spoil generated by activity within the *colonia*. The 3rd century of this part of Blossom Street can therefore be viewed as a period of relative local inactivity, but as reflecting major activity elsewhere in the settlement.

5.7 PHASE 5: LATE 3RD CENTURY STRUCTURE

The earlier elements of the original Phase 5, including spreads 1078 and 1096, dump 1095 and pits 1094 and 1093, all containing mid 3rd century material, are now in Phase 43. This leaves the cobbled surface and sequence of postholes, and later dump deposits, which are late 3rd century in date and together form a more coherent group than was previously identified, at around 14.10m AOD (Figure 9).

There is little to add to the sequence as described and interpreted in the assessment (Milsted 2010, 9-10 and 18-19) except that the crude surface 1077 and sequence of post-holes may represent a short-lived or temporary structure. As stated above, it seems unlikely that the major levelling episode of Phase 42 was intended for this structure; rather, the ephemeral activity in Phase 5 may at best represent the gradual re-use of an area of open ground towards the end of the 3rd century.

5.8 PHASE 6: EARLY 4TH CENTURY BUILDING

The original assessment of Phase 6 argues for a clearance of structures and deposits created in Phase 5, partly to explain their diffuse nature, but mainly to account for an apparent hiatus of 100 years between the dating evidence for the deposits described above in Section **5.7** and the mid-late 4th century material recovered from the substantial levelling deposits which form the earliest elements of this phase (Milsted 2010, 19). This interpretation has been re-considered in the light of further work on the artefactual archive, with the result that the early Phase 6 levelling deposits – 1067, 1060 and 1073 – are now interpreted as late 3rd-early 4th century in origin, on the basis of an overwhelming quantity of pottery of this date with earlier, residual material. The presence of a handful of later Roman sherds, including a single AD 370+ Crambeck face/neck jug sherd – is now considered intrusive, along with seven fragments of 9th-11th century pottery already interpreted in this way (Milsted 2010, 20). This decision is founded on the truncation by large cut features from the 11th century Phase 7 and the 12th century Phase 8, which include rubbish pits up to 1.5m across and two ditches, and removes any concern over the dating of Phase 6 expressed during assessment (Milsted 2010, 20), which is now confirmed as late 3rd /early 4th century rather than late or even post Roman.

The necessity for further levelling deposits on top of the substantial levelling of Phase 42 supports the interpretation of the earlier activity as reflecting a requirement for disposal rather than it having any other specific purpose. The Phase 6 levelling, however, represents a clear desire to create a cobbled open area in the southern area of the trench, interpreted as a yard associated with a large timber framed building in the northern area. Deposits 1067, and the overlying 1060, contained a large amount of cobble, with 1067 displaying a 'ramped' appearance that may, when projected southwards beyond the edge of the trench, have resolved into a road surface (Figures 10 & 11; Milsted 2010, 19-20). Further interpretation is limited by the clear evidence of a massive truncation from subsequent phases, but the interpretation of a yard at around 14.22m AOD seems reasonable, albeit with the caveat that it has been truncated. The source of these deposits, as suggested following the assessment, may still be the mid 3rd – mid 4th century demolition of structures and extensive levelling and rubbish dumping within the cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street (Milsted 2010, 19; Oakey

1992, 25-6), which may explain the presence of earlier funerary material, including two fragments of 3rd century Ebor ware head pots and *tazze* fragments (Leary, in Milsted 2010, 57); the disturbance of other cemeteries in the area is also a possibility, and is discussed further in Section **6**.

The interpretation of the four large cobble-packed postholes cut through levelling deposit 1073 (Figure 10) is still that they represent a large building, probably on a north-west/south-east alignment, with the significant revision that it is probably of early 4th century date rather than late 4th as previously suggested (Milsted 2010, 11 and 19). The possibility that these postholes significantly post-date the cobble spreads remains, which theoretically leaves open the interpretation that the building could be late- or even post-Roman. However, there is no direct evidence for this, as the backfills of the postholes contained only residual material disturbed from earlier contexts, and on spacial grounds it seems more reasonable to associate then with the early 4th century cobble spreads described above. This reduces, to an extent, any concerns about the limited lifespan of such a major structure as it provides for at least another 50 years of use, and more interestingly undermines any attempt to associate it directly with the re-establishment of the cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street in the late 4th century AD (Milsted 2010, 20). The broader landscape implications of this are addressed below; it also offers greater confidence in the integrity of the earlier stratigraphic sequence as it argues against a truncating clearance in the early 4th century. This in turn reinforces the view that the Phase 5 activity was ephemeral, rather than it being a truncated and therefore unprovable hypothesis, and thereby supports the interpretation of the Phase 42 levelling presented above.

The Phase 7 clearance event, discussed below in Section **5.9**, is incontrovertible, given the complete removal of any evidence for floors or even foundation trenches associated with the Phase 6 building. The width of the main structural post-holes, at 0.80m, was not matched by the depth, which at only 0.40m supports the truncation theory. It is therefore obvious that they must originally have been cut from a position significantly higher than the one they survived at – this implies that the levelling deposits must originally have been much more substantial. Some explanation for this may be found in the neighbouring excavation at 14-20 Blossom Street, where the latest Roman deposits, from the late 3rd century, survived 0.65m higher at 15.90m AOD than those at 28-40 Blossom Street, at c.14.25m AOD. If levelling deposits 1060-1067-1073 were originally much thicker, this could have brought the active surface associated with the building closer to that seen nearby. This may shed light on later activity, discussed below; the practical effect of the truncation remains, however, that very little can be said about the nature or purpose of the Phase 6 building, which must therefore remain an enigmatic and potentially unique structure in its contemporary landscape.

5.9 PHASES 7 & 8: 11TH - 13TH CENTURY ACTIVITY

Phase 7 was the last to be re-considered during analysis. The only real concern was the lack of medieval material from the earliest deposit, 1059, which was interpreted as levelling, and contained a large amount of Roman pottery up to the mid 4th century. The clear evidence for a truncation of the earlier activity, and the similarity of deposit 1059 to the overlying 1056, which did contain clearly medieval pottery, is still held to confirm the original phasing and dating.

It is therefore still held to be the case following the arrival of the Normans in York after 1070 (Raine 1955, x), this part of Blossom Street was systematically cleared to around 14.25m AOD and levelled with re-deposited material to c.14.30-14.40m AOD. The quantity of funerary material again suggests a link with disturbed local cemeteries, suggesting that the clearance was widespread. The presence of mid 4th–early 5th pottery also suggests that the medieval clearance has destroyed potentially significant information regarding late- and possibly post-Roman activity in this area. Both the 11th century clearance and the residual evidence for disturbed 5th century material have been observed across the Blossom Street area (Clarke 1991, 11; Oakey 1992, 61) and therefore, unfortunately, it is likely that little can be said for the activity in this area after c.450AD, including the use and purpose of the Phase 6 building identified at 28-40 Blossom Street.

The rest of the Phase 7 sequence of pits and gullies with a probable fence line in open ground remains unchanged from the original assessment (Milsted 2010, 11-12 and 20-21; Figure 11).

Phase 8 grouped the medieval cut features containing 12th and 13th century pottery, consisting of several large pits and ditches, to which have been added pits 1118 and 1114 erroneously placed in Phase 4 of the original assessment. This phase sees the development of a probable agricultural landscape at around 14.30-14.40m AOD, subdivided by ditches that were aligned perpendicularly to the proposed line of the main Roman road, which was in all likelihood still the main route into the city from the south. The large quantity of residual Roman pottery again points to the whole-sale disturbance of Roman deposits across a wide area (Figure 11).

5.10 PHASES 9-11: MEDIEVAL TO MODERN

These phases have remained unchanged following the analysis of the sequence and so are only summarised here (see Figure 11). Phase 9 consisted of the substantial plough soils created by agricultural activity from the 13th century onwards. These were up to 0.80m thick and contained large amounts of residual Roman material, reaffirming the degree of

disturbance wrought on the earlier deposits during this phase. Phase 10 contained an 18th century culvert and significant ground make-up deposit at 15.55m AOD, into which the foundations of 38 and 40 Blossom Street were cut (RCHMY3, 64-65) and out-buildings added in the 19th century. Phase 11 consisted of the 1960s clearance of these buildings to create the carpark at 15.92m AOD and office buildings now converted into a hotel, along with the evidence for previous site investigation works, including a large machine-dug test pit not previously identified.

6. LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION

The Blossom Street area has been subject to a group of closely-spaced archaeological investigations that have the potential to allow a closer reading of each individual site with reference to its immediate landscape. This section will interpret the sequence described at 28-40 Blossom Street with reference to those produced for 14-20 and 35-41 Blossom Street by YAT, along with the published account of LP Wenham's excavations in the 1950s. This analysis is limited to understanding the 28-40 Blossom Street site and is therefore structured by the phasing presented above. A broader investigation of the Blossom Street area using its archaeological interventions was proposed in the original assessment, and whilst this proposal has influenced the landscape analysis of 28-40 Blossom Street offered here, this should not be regarded as a substantive synthetic analysis of the whole area.

Activity at 28-40 Blossom Street commences with material dating to the earliest permanent Roman presence in York with the establishment of the legionary fortress in AD 71 (Ottaway 2004, 23). The agricultural soil of Phase 21 may represent the continued use of a pre-Roman agricultural soil or the development of it post-AD 71 following the laying-out of the main road, which may be evidenced by the late first century ditch and bank described above. For comparison, the development of a late 1st century agricultural soil with probable boundary or enclosure ditches was also noted at 35-41 Blossom Street, where the sequence of ditches suggested that this landscape was then re-developed from the early 2nd century onwards (Oakey 1992, 14-15). Phase 22 at 28-40 Blossom Street entailed a replacement of the earlier features with new ditches and a small road that clearly demarcated the land usage in this area from the first quarter of the 2nd century until at least the first quarter of the 3rd.

The post-AD 120 ditches at 35-41 Blossom Street were interpreted as being of a military character (Oakey 1992, 13), which together with the evidence for major landscape re-organisation from 28-40 Blossom Street could be seen in the context of the arrival of the 6th legion to *Eboracum* in around AD 120, when the fortress' *territorium*, estimated to have

included land up to 9 miles from the city (Ottaway 2004, 53), may well have experienced extensive revision and development, along with the civilian settlement that grew up opposite the fortress on the south-west bank of the Ouse. Given the proximity of the Blossom Street area to the probable limit of the civilian settlement (Ottaway 2004, 92) it seems likely that the early-mid 2nd century features discussed here relate to civilian rather than military activity (Kurt Hunter-Mann, pers. com.), although to what degree these can be distinguished is perhaps not clear. The definition of the *territorium* is difficult and complex, and the study of the direct correlation between *Eboracum* and its hinterland yet to be fully understood (Roskams 1997, 53); the agricultural development of the local area to support both military and civilian settlements is a perfectly valid suggestion, however, and whilst the evidence from 28-40 Blossom Street does not support the interpretation of the 35-41 Blossom Street ditches as military, an argument that both may represent a development of the area in response to that of the growing civilian settlement seems reasonable.

The small road at 28-40 Blossom Street is perpendicular to the projected line of a road encountered by Wenham and interpreted by him as the main route to *Calcaria* (Wenham 1965, 529), although at 13.52m AOD the surface of the 28-40 Blossom Street road was c.0.90m higher than that of Wenham's road, at c.12.65m AOD (Wenham 1965, figure 3, 526-527). As discussed in the original assessment for 28-40 Blossom Street, aside from the possible 'marking-out' ditch and bank, no definite direct evidence for Wenham's road was found during the most recent excavation, and it may be that Wenham's interpretation requires revisiting (Milsted 2010, 23-24). Although further work to fully test this assertion remains to be done, and lies beyond the remit of this project, a brief discussion with relation to the later phases at 28-40 Blossom Street is addressed below. The presence of a road network from the late 1st century AD is undeniable, and the roadside building identified by Wenham appears to undergo the first of many re-builds (Wenham 1965, 539) as a similar building is established in the area nearest the modern road excavated at 14-20 (Clarke 1991, 10-11), both at around the same time as the earliest ditches at both 28-40 and 35-41 Blossom Street were replaced by new ditches and boundaries. The limited evidence from 28-40 Blossom Street for this period therefore seems to suggest a development of the landscape immediately south-west of the young and rapidly developing civilian settlement in the first half of the 2nd century.

The civilian settlement at *Eboracum*, although of unknown legal status until the first reference to the *colonia* of c. AD 237 (Ottaway 2004, 83) nevertheless underwent a sustained period of rapid development from the mid 2nd century onwards, evidenced by the growth of large public buildings and private dwellings (Ottaway 2004, 94) and perhaps also by the apparent contemporary boom in local tile production discernable from the archaeological record

(Roskams 1997, 60). Amongst many other implications for the area, the implied population growth necessitated the development of extensive cemeteries along the routes of the major roads serving the fortress and civilian settlement. Blossom Street has produced evidence for funerary activity along its length since the 19th century (RCHMY1, 92; Ottaway 2004, 121).

The Phase 3, late 2nd/early 3rd century activity at 28-40 Blossom Street is interpreted as a deliberate preparation of the area south of the small cobbled road established c.AD 120, for funerary activity relating to nearby cremation rites and burial. The establishment of an inhumation cemetery with a mausoleum at 35-41 Blossom Street by the early 3rd century (Oakey 1992, 18) may establish a context for funerary activity at 28-40 Blossom Street, although the two sites are over 100m apart. Perhaps of greater relevance are the isolated groups of burials, cremations and stone coffins known from antiquarian activity in the immediate area of the Odeon Cinema and The Crescent (RCHMY1, 92-95), which lie to the south-west of 28-40 Blossom Street. These burials are unfortunately not specifically dated, but the secure date from 28-40 Blossom Street may assist further study of this area's Roman burial grounds, which are clearly extensive but have only been encountered in some locations (Ottaway 2004, 121). In particular, the possible presence of an *ustrinum* and pyre-waste disposal pits, suggested at 28-40 Blossom Street, near the roads identified by Wenham, stand in marked contrast to the contemporary inhumation cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street, and may provide a context for the development of the transport network, discussed below. The area south-west of the 28-40 Blossom Street cobbled road is in marked contrast to the area as sampled by previous excavations to the north-east of it, where the continued development of buildings described above lends support to the thesis that the excavation at 28-40 Blossom Street has possibly identified a division between occupation associated with the road system and an area set aside for burials during the late 2nd/early 3rd century. The single cremation burial found by the proposed main road in the 1950s (Wenham 1965, 529) was dated 'to the turn of the second century' and does not seem to fit with the 28-40 Blossom Street sequence; clearly there is both a need and potential for further research in this area.

The 3rd century Phases 41-43 and 5 at 28-40 Blossom Street seem to encompass a relative lack of activity, but attain a greater significance when viewed in the context of the wider contemporary landscape. The apparent abandonment of the small road, and presumed cessation of funerary activity associated with it, is argued to create an area of open ground which coincides very strongly with the evidence for abandonment and robbing from nearby. The main road identified by LP Wenham acquires its enigmatic 'spur' at this time, interpreted by Wenham as a new road to Aldborough (*Isurium*) (Wenham 1965, 533; 1968, 20). This addition becomes more significant when coupled with his evidence for a contemporary re-

build of the earlier road-side building that re-aligned its foundation to the new road (Wenham 1965, 539) and by the evidence for the apparent abandonment of the earlier roadway south-west of this new junction, in the form of dumps of material sealing the surface in the early 3rd century followed quickly by the robbing of its metalling and foundation cobbles (Wenham 1965, 541). This seems to imply that the supposed main road had effectively gone out of use south-west of the 'spur' road shortly after the latter's construction. Evidence for continuity of the original road north-east of this junction throughout the 3rd century was identified at 14-20 Blossom Street (Clarke 1991, 13), but it would appear that the removal of the south-western surface coincides with the abandonment of the small road at 28-40 Blossom Street, and the subsequent extensive levelling deposits that completely cover earlier activity with re-deposited 2nd century material. Towards the end of the 3rd century, even the main road surface north-east of the supposed 'spur' had been levelled over (Clarke 1991, 13), at the same time as the levelled ground at 28-40 Blossom Street was subject to refuse pits and dumps (Phase 43).

The association with the 'spur road' and the Royal Commission Road 9 to *Isurium* is contested (Ottaway 2004, 51) but from the evidence gathered together by the 28-40 Blossom Street sequence it can be argued that this early 3rd century road may actually be a replacement for the earlier road as identified by Wenham rather than a junction off it. Whether either road represents the main route to *Calcaria* is beyond the remit of this report, but on the basis of this landscape re-appraisal, this seems at least a matter of doubt. What is certain, however, is that any late 2nd/early 3rd century funerary activity associated with either the cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street or any of the burial sites in the area seems to have been short-lived as the area of 14-20 and 28-40 Blossom Street was turned over to open ground by the mid 3rd century. It may be that the development of the 'spur' road reflects this changing land-use, possibly created to divert traffic away from it.

The early to mid 3rd century is generally thought to be when the civilian settlement at *Eboracum* was elevated to *colonia* status, and also the approximate date for the final phases of re-construction of the fortress in stone (Ottaway 1997, 146). It has been noted that the development of the *colonia* area appears to slow down markedly after the early 3rd century (Ottaway 1997, 147), evidenced by a general lack of 3rd century cultural material, although this may be equally explained by the development of more efficient rubbish disposal systems, taking it out for disposal in the hinterland (Roskams 1997, 60). The apparent cessation of activity in the Blossom Street area may be argued to relate to either theory, as a reflection of there being little activity to the north-east, or by creating an area ideally suited for dumping refuse. The disturbance of earlier material implied by the early 3rd century fortress rebuild is unlikely to be the source for the Phase 42 levelling dumps, as much if not

all of this material was reused in the new embankment behind the walls (Ottaway 2004, 74-5; Kurt Hunter-Mann, pers. com.), and it may be that the final development of *colonia* prior to c. AD230 should be regarded as the more probable source on the grounds of its proximity to the Blossom Street area. The presence of disturbed funerary material in these dumps and levelling may also suggest that some local cemeteries had gone out of use by this time; clear evidence for this was only found in the later 3rd century phases at 35-41 Blossom Street (Oakey 1992, 25), and it may be that the early-mid 3rd century inhumation burials there during clearance elsewhere reflects the growing dominance of inhumation as the main funerary rite in urban settlements (Taylor 2001, 109). Future analysis of 28-40 Blossom Street with the other sites in the area may help to further refine the pattern, phasing and types of burial carried out here.

The possible post-built building in Phase 5 was ephemeral, and has no direct parallel in the immediate area. It should perhaps be seen as a temporary structure, perhaps even a platform or a fence-line, rather than a building; its purpose remains unclear. The dating evidence places it at the end of the 3rd century, and although it is possible to argue that as structural activity it represents the emerging re-use of the area, the tenuous nature of the features is felt to associate it with the same group of open-ground activities identified in Phases 41-43. By the late 3rd century, the only structural activity seen elsewhere in Blossom Street is the final re-build of the roadside building identified by Wenham (Wenham 1965, 539-541). Elsewhere, extensive levelling deposits had been deposited over the former main road and the structures identified at 14-20 Blossom Street, becoming in places a 'garden soil' indicative of cultivation (Clarke 1991, 13). At this point, the mausoleum at 35-41 Blossom Street is demolished and robbed, and the cemetery goes out of use beneath a layer of levelling and refuse dumps and pits which may suggest an extension of the dilapidation of the area seen elsewhere throughout the 3rd century (Oakey 1992, 18).

However, it is at this point that the large post-built building of Phase 6 appears, probably by the end of the first quarter of the 4th century. As already established, extensive truncation in the 11th century had removed any evidence for the purpose of this structure, which on the basis of data from the other sites appears to stand alone in an open landscape. The cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street is re-established by the mid 4th century (Oakey 1992, 31) but because of the truncation referred to above, it is not possible to relate the Phase 6 building to the renewed cemetery.

The only possible extant feature identified in nearby excavations contemporary with the 28-40 Blossom Street Phase 6 building is Wenham's 'spur' road, the projected alignment of which takes it well away from the position and alignment of the 28-40 Blossom Street Phase

6 building. The issue of where exactly the main *Eboracum-Calcaria* road actually was becomes relevant at this point, for if the road interpreted as Road 10 by LP Wenham and the Royal Commission actually goes out of use by the early-mid 3rd century, then an alternative candidate is required. Ottaway, amongst others, illustrates the disparity between the line of Wenham's road and the likely route of the main road within the *colonia*, running from the bridgehead identified at Wellington Row to the road surfaces encountered in Barker Lane and also just inside Micklegate Bar (Ottaway 2004, 51 and 91-93; Ottaway 1992, 9). Wenham's road, at 30' wide and constructed with deep packed clay-and-cobble foundations (Wenham 1965, 528-9) is substantial enough to be the main road, even if subsequent investigations couldn't confirm these observations (Clarke 1991, 9 and 13). The alignment of the Phase 6 building at 28-40 Blossom Street is perpendicular to the line of this road, and even though this road had ceased to exist, the scale of the building might indicate that it was a roadside structure. The earlier building identified at 14-20 Blossom Street was similarly substantial, though constructed with stone and not timber (Clarke 1991, 10-11) and was nearer to the line of the modern road than the line of Wenham's road. It may demonstrate that the 'real' main road in fact projected from the Barker Lane position and ran more or less beneath the current position of the A1036 Blossom Street. The 28-40 Blossom Street Phase 6 building may well relate to this alignment, but be located towards the rear of a plot, possibly with reference to a boundary relating to the older road way. Future in-depth analysis of the sites in this area, or future fieldwork, may demonstrate that the enigmatic early 4th century structure at 28-40 Blossom Street in is fact part of a built-up landscape that developed outside the *colonia* in the 4th century AD, perhaps as part of a 'revival' of the area that included the re-establishment of the inhumation cemetery identified at 35-41 Blossom Street.

As discussed in Section **5**, the subsequent truncation in the medieval period removed any definitive evidence for activity beyond the early 4th century at 28-40 Blossom Street, but apart from the renewed cemetery at 35-41 Blossom Street, the other sites all indicate a general reversion to agricultural activity by the end of the 3rd century. The Norman clearance, evidence for which was also observed in the form of a jump from the 4th to the 11th centuries at 14-20 (Clarke 1991, 11) and 35-41 (Oakey 1992, 61) Blossom Street, probably removed the later deposits with similar efficiency; the quantity of disturbed later material in the medieval ploughsoils, however, hint at a late- and possibly post-Roman story in this area that must remain undefined until further work reveals a part of it not demolished following the reordering of the city and its hinterland after 1070.

The sequence of deposits encountered at 28-40 Blossom Street have been analysed with reference to the wider area, and as such have drawn out interesting and potentially significant similarities and differences between the previous excavations and the most recent

one. The three modern excavations at 14-20, 35-41 and 28-40 Blossom Street have all been assessed, and both 35-41 and 28-40 Blossom Street have completed analysis phases. The potential for a substantive synthetic analysis of these sites to understand a large area immediately south-west of the *colonia* is apparent from the above discussion; given the added potential to re-assess older sources of information such as LP Wenham's archive and the corpus of antiquarian and later discoveries summarised by the Royal Commission, there is now an opportunity to produce a useful study of the area covering the entire Roman period in York. Such a study would be of interest to the development of the city and its hinterland, and specifically could re-examine the location of the main road, the nature of the land use around it from the earliest times, and re-define the funerary activity in this area.

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Editors	K. Hunter-Mann, R.A. Hall, M. Stockwell

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Figure 1 Site location

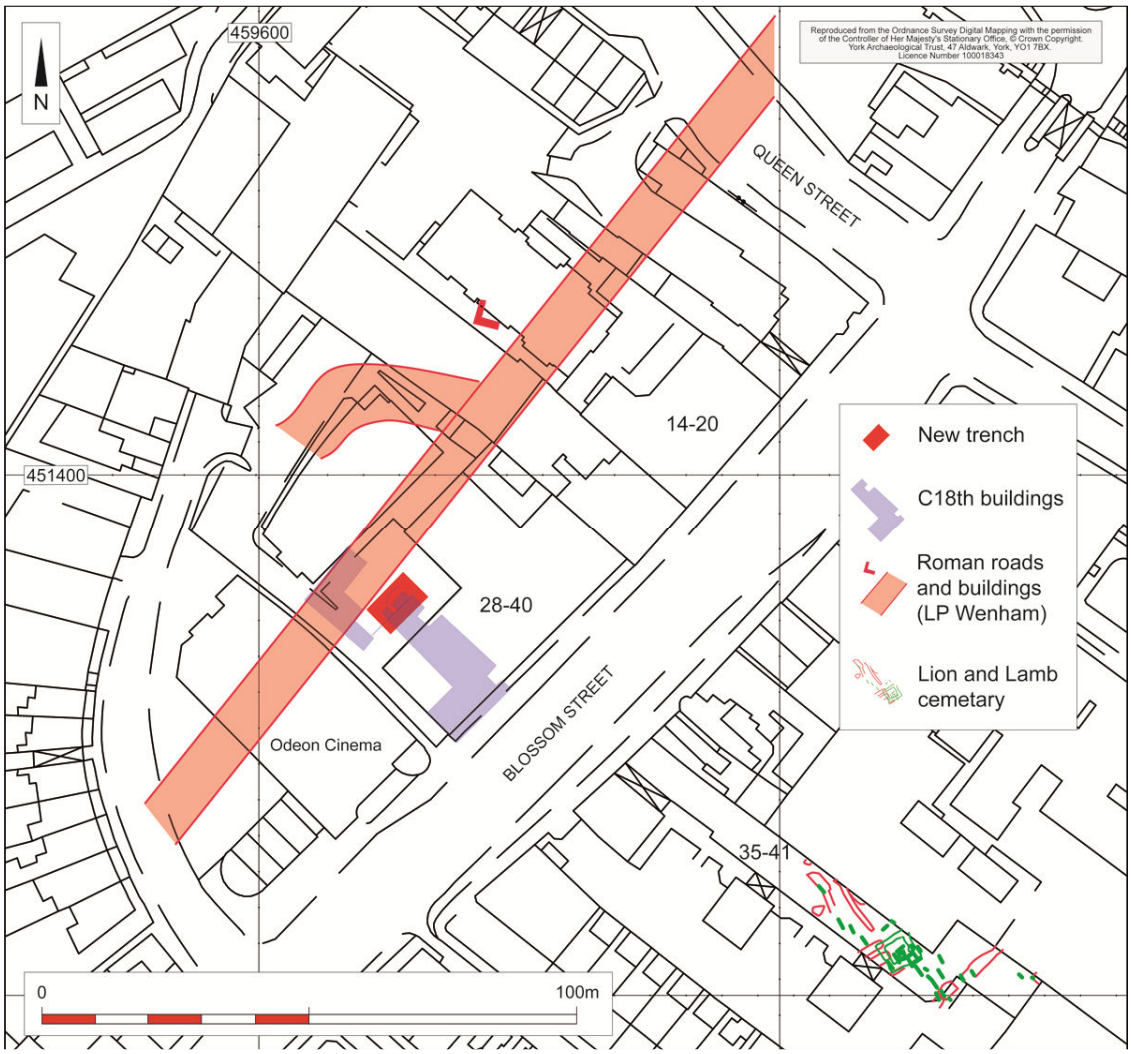

Figure 2 Location of excavation with earlier work and major Roman landmarks

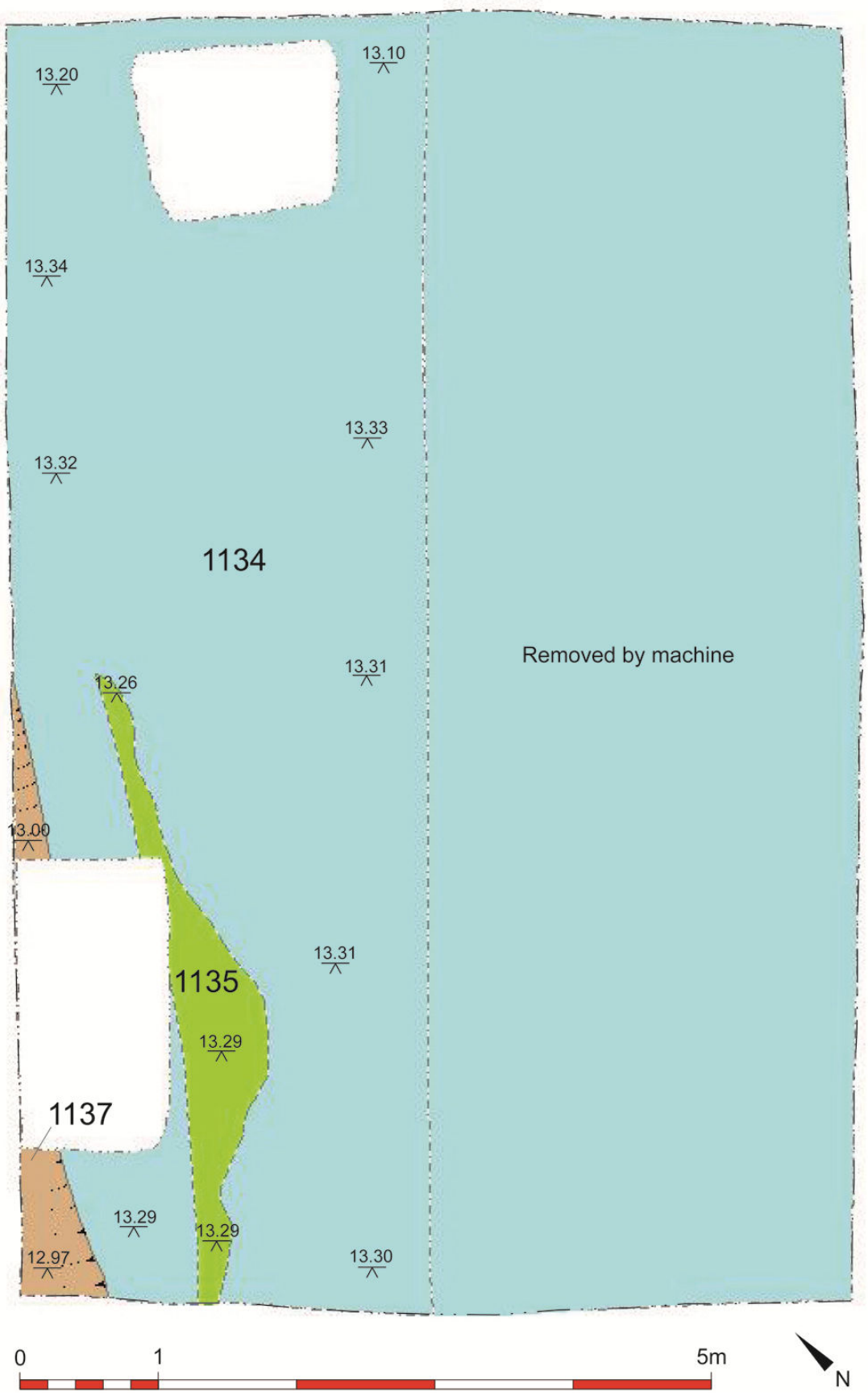

Figure 3 Plan of Phase 21

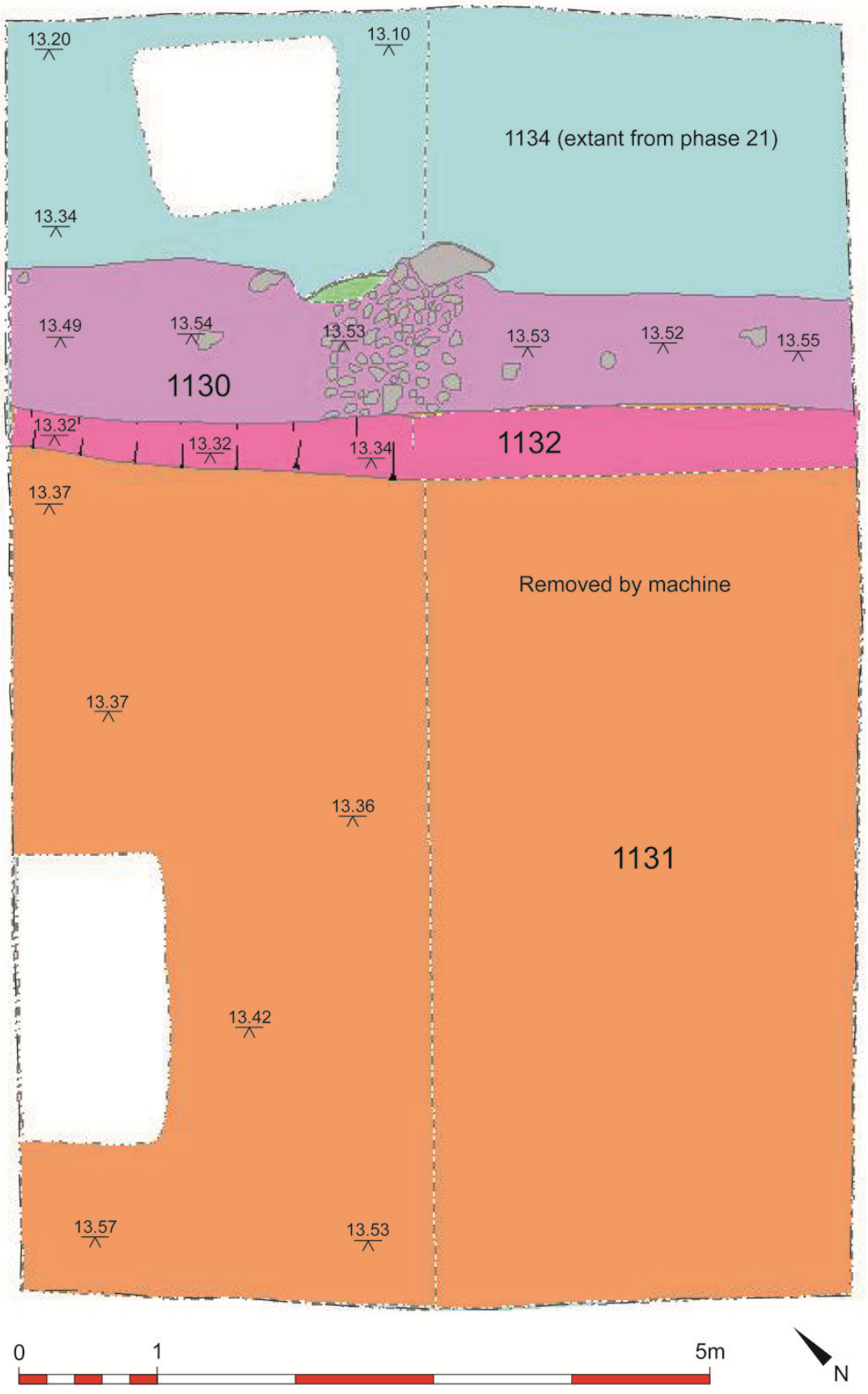

Figure 4 Plan of Phase 22

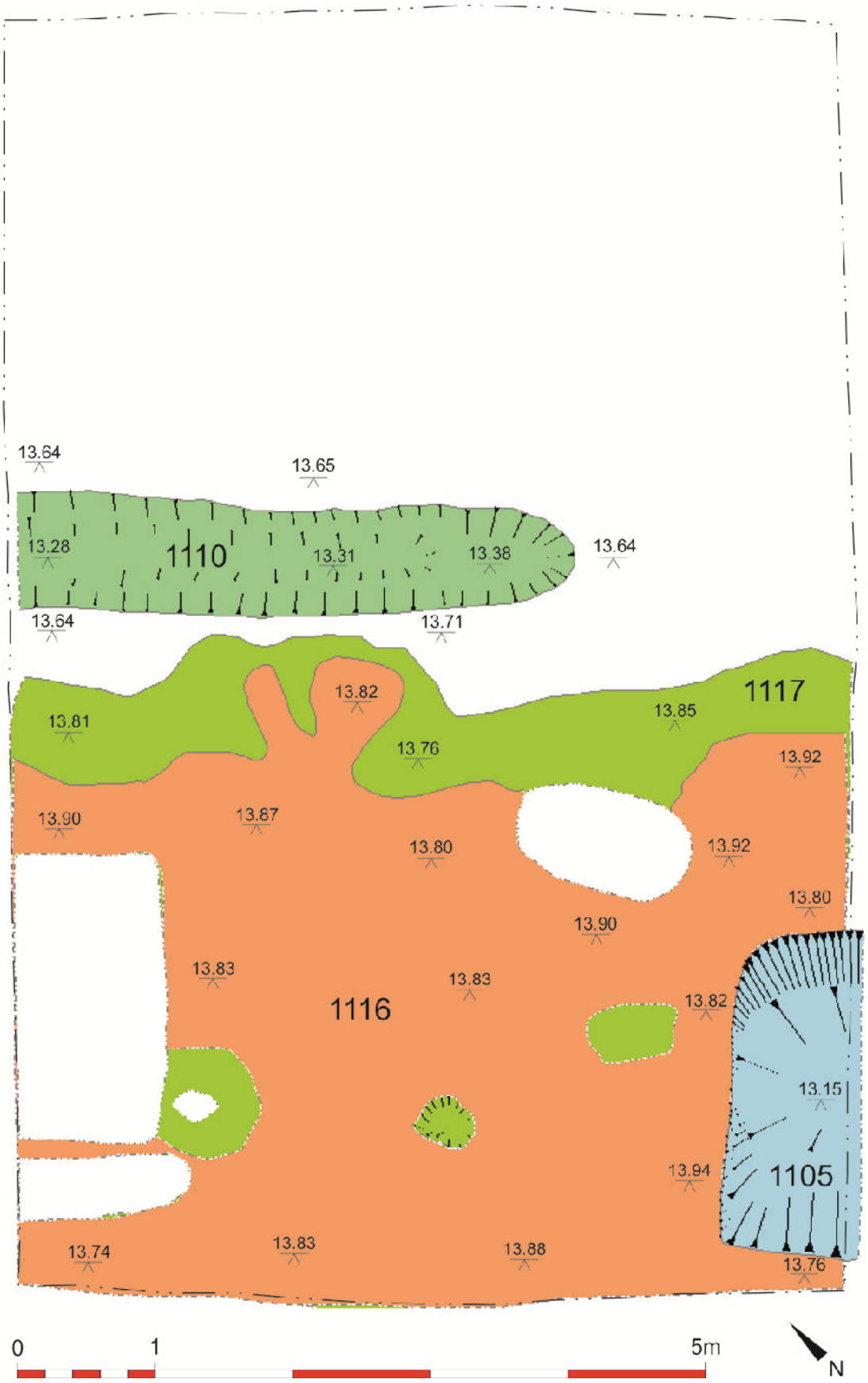

Figure 5 Plan of Phase 3

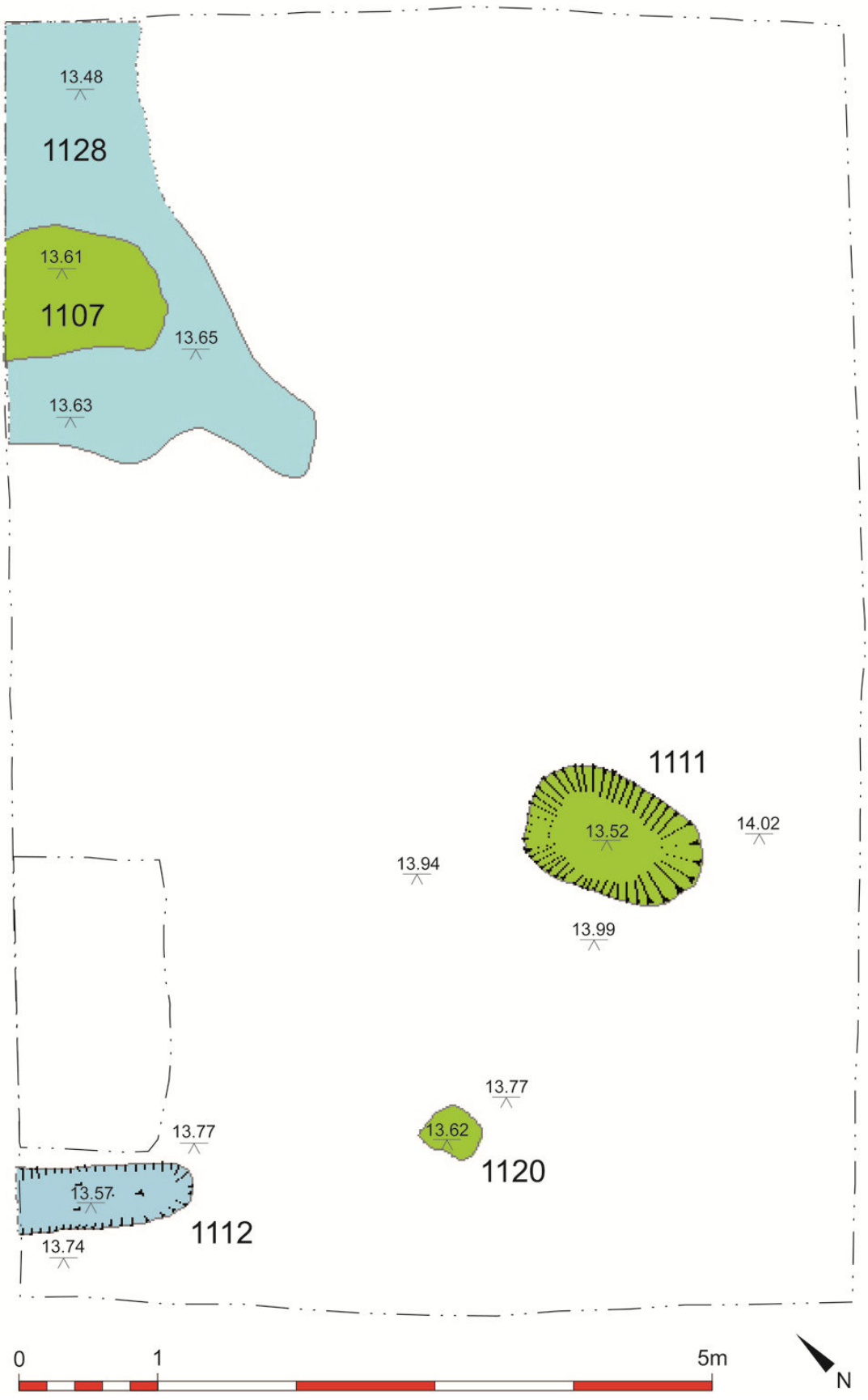

Figure 6 Plan of Phase 41

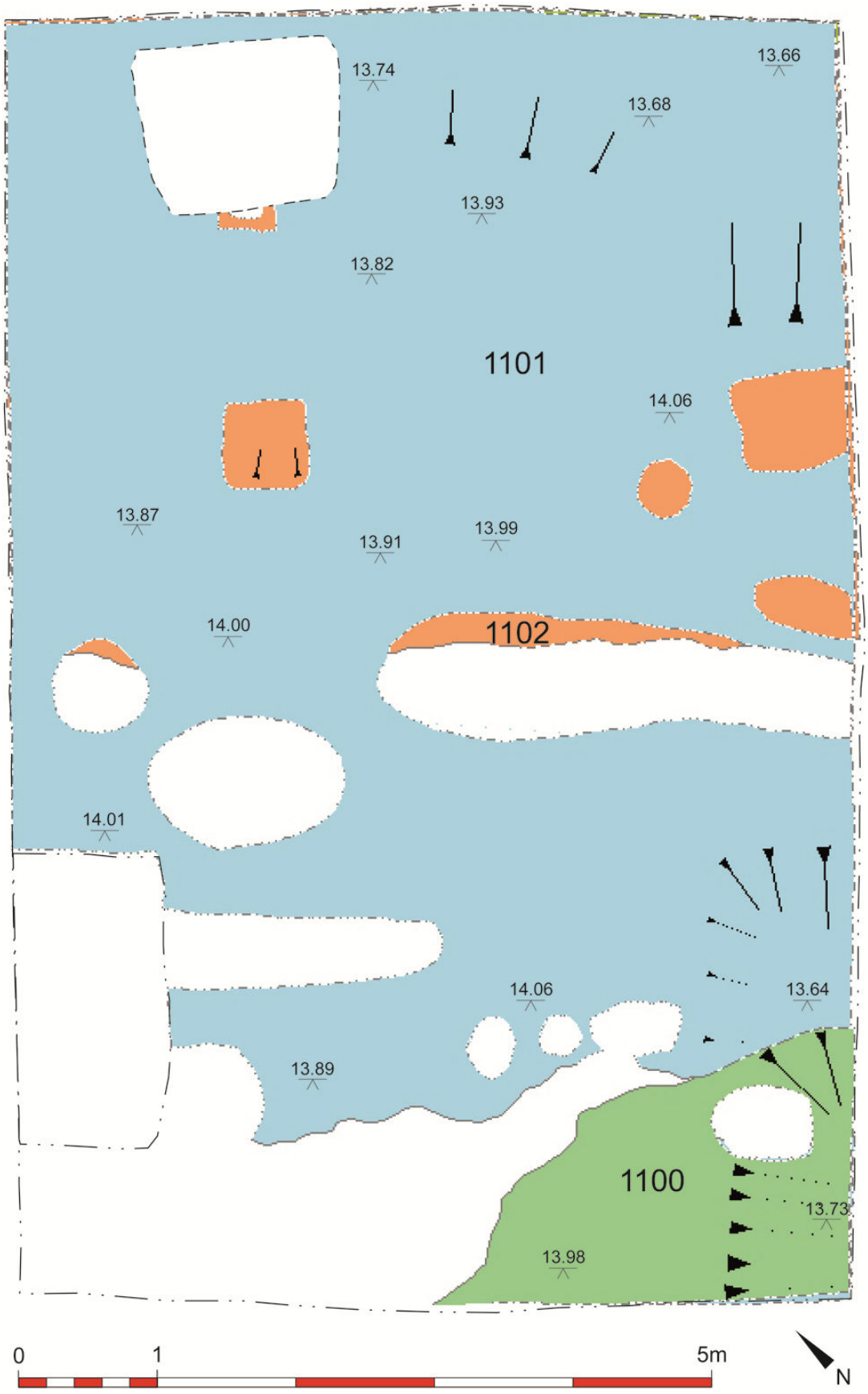

Figure 7 Plan of Phase 42

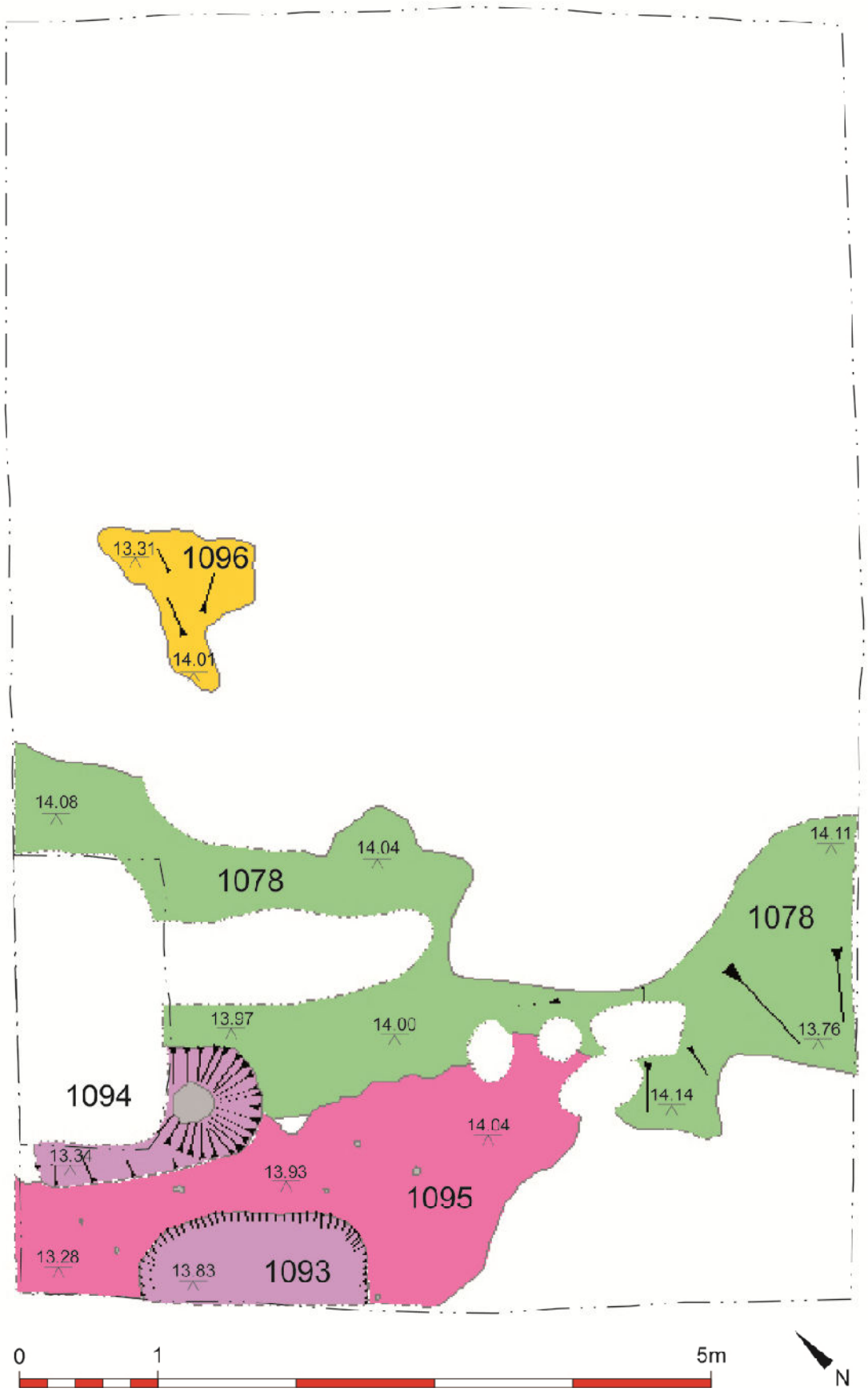

Figure 8 Plan of Phase 43

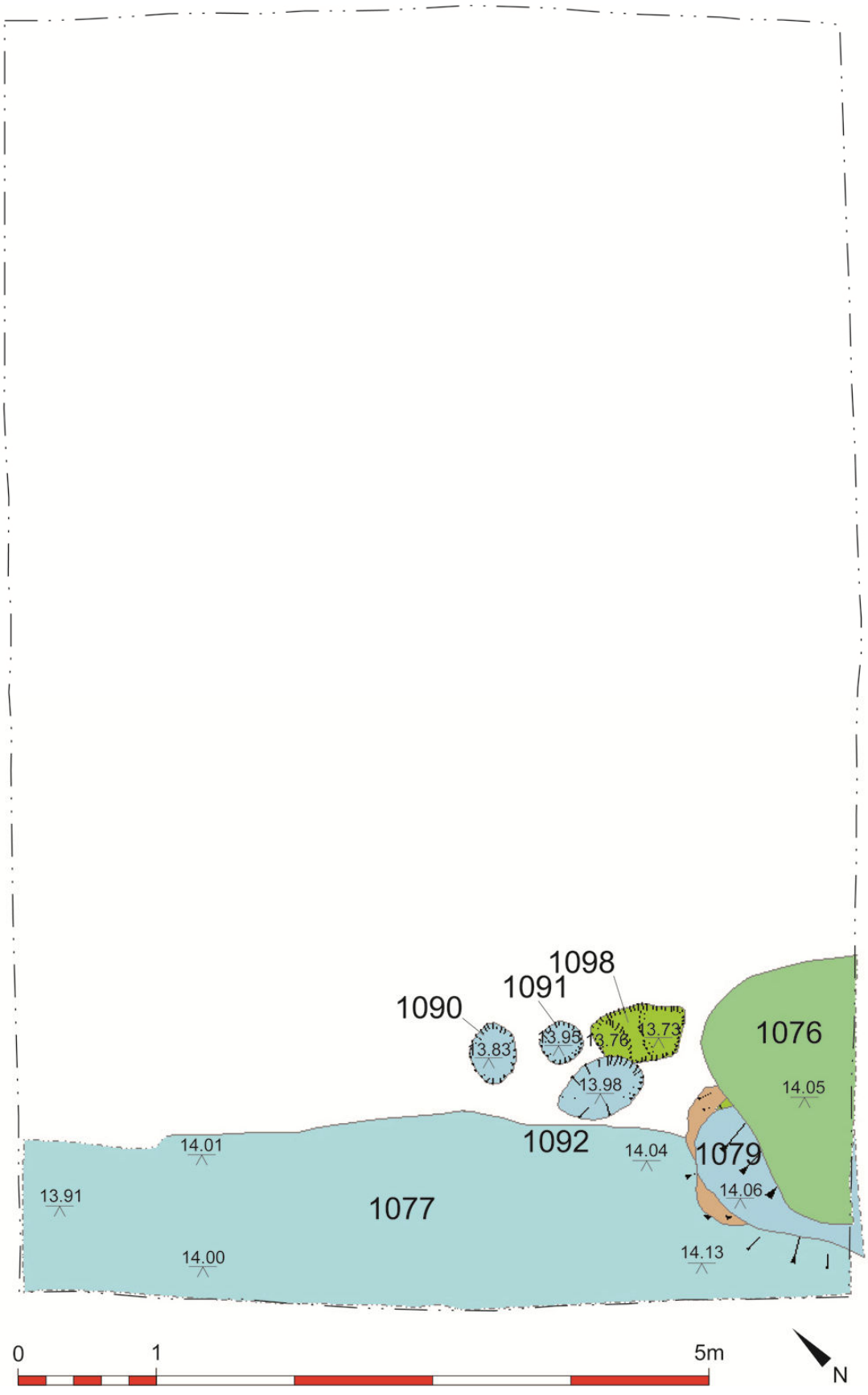

Figure 9 Plan of Phase 5

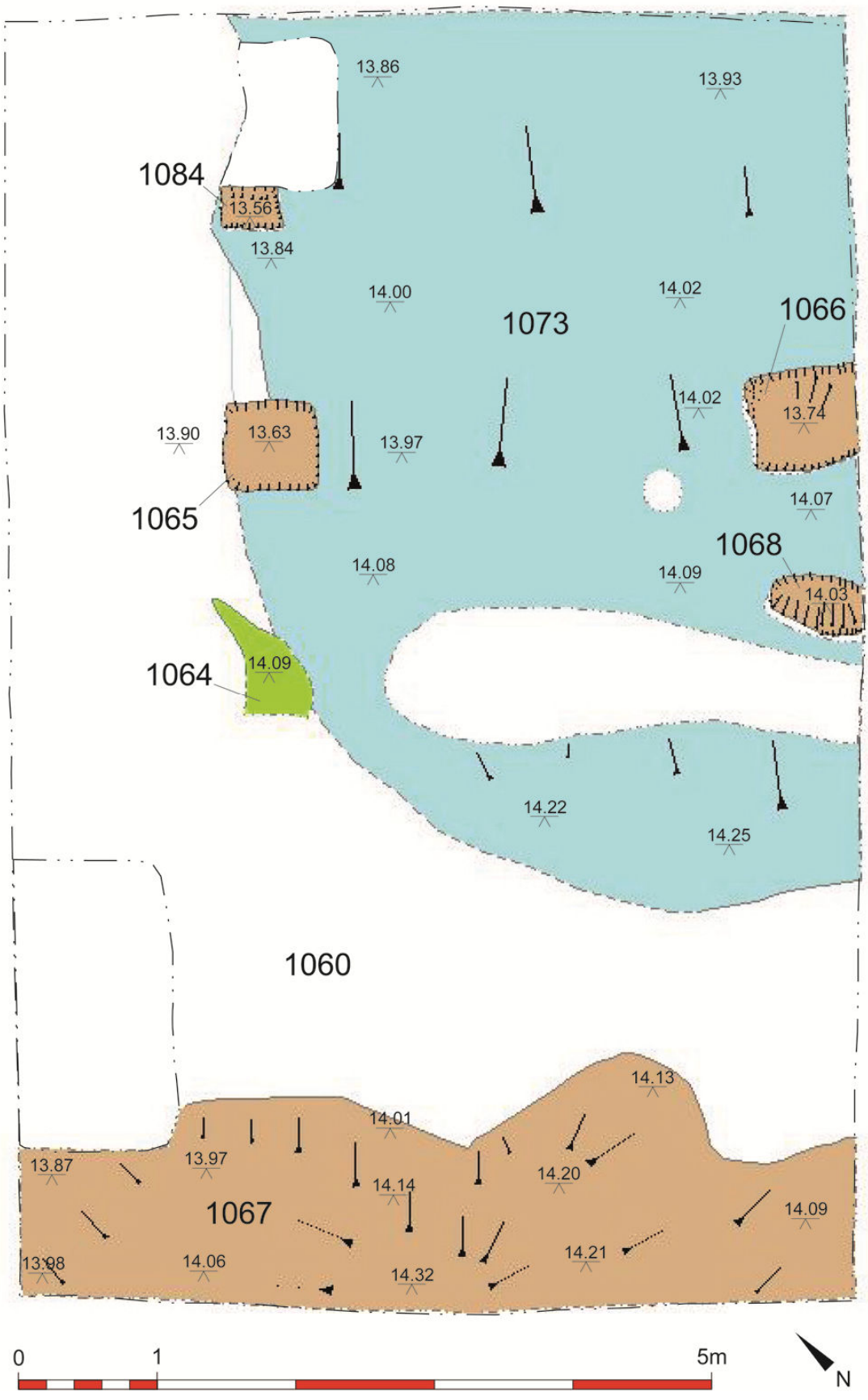

Figure 10 Plan of Phase 6

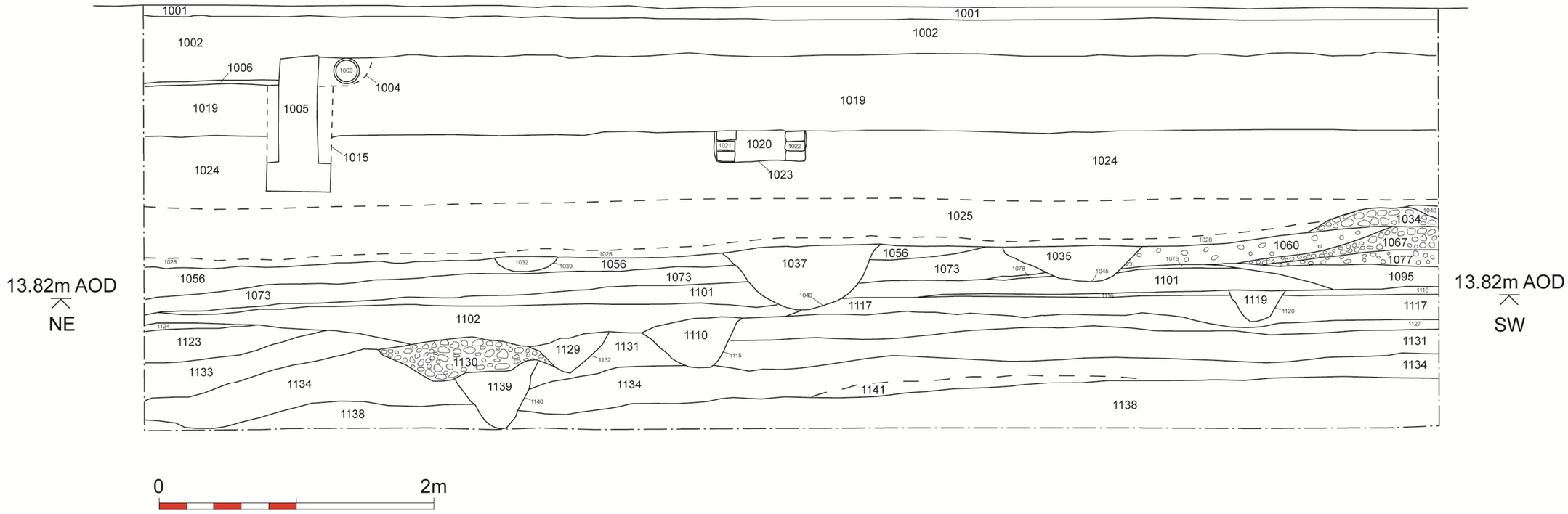

Figure 11 North-west facing section through the centre of the trench.
Lower part drawn on-site and remainder constructed from plan drawings and levels.

Plate 1 Stepped depth limit of excavation showing natural sands. Looking south-west.

Plate 2 Phase 2 road surface 1130, looking north-west

Plate 3 Phase 3 charcoal-rich spread 1116, looking south-west, with funerary pit 1103/1105 in top left hand corner and ditch fill 1110 in foreground.

Plate 4 Clay and cobble backfilled post-holes of Phase 6 building, looking south-east

Plate 5 Pottery assemblage from Phase 3 funerary pit backfill 1103

Plate 6 Pottery assemblage from Phase 3 ditch fill 1110

APPENDIX 1: SAMIAN POTTERY BY G. MONTEIL

1. INTRODUCTION

A total of just under 500 sherds of samian ware was examined for this assessment, 378 of which recovered from Roman contexts assigned to Phases 2 to 6. The reminder 119 sherds come from very late or post-Roman contexts (table 1).

The samian vessels were recorded following the methodology and codes used at Museum of London Archaeology (Symonds 1999). The fabric of each sherd was examined, after taking a small fresh break, under a x 20 binocular microscope. The material from Phases 2 to 6 was recorded in more details than the material in later medieval phases since quantification includes rim EVE. Each entry consists of a context number, fabric, form and decoration identification, condition, sherd count, rim EVE for Phases 2 to 6 only, and weight, notes and a date range. The presence of wear, repair and graffiti was also systematically recorded. When possible a reading of stamp was recorded and some suggestion of potters offered. Very brief notes about the decorated vessels were also taken. A functional profile was produced for two of the fabrics with a sufficiently high rim EVE figure, South and Central Gaulish samian ware (Figures 1 & 2).

Fabric Phase:	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	u/s	Total
Argonnes				1							1
Central Gaulish-Lezoux	13	43	74	38	34	27	20	11		2	262
East Gaulish			1	5	15	18	14	13	1	1	68
La Graufesenque	61	13	20	2		1	3	1	1	6	108
les Martres-de-Veyre	29	21	4								54
Rheinzabern			1	2	1						4
Total	**103**	**77**	**100**	**48**	**50**	**46**	**37**	**25**	**2**	**9**	**497**

Table 1: Samian fabrics present (sherds count by phase)

The following assessment report highlights the main components and interesting features of this samian assemblage and offers recommendations for future work.

2. THE SAMIAN ASSEMBLAGE

CONDITION

The samian assemblage is, on the whole, in good condition with an average sherd weight of c.19 g and a relatively low percentage of unidentified forms (5.62% of the total number of sherds; 4.49% for sherds in Phases 2 to 6). Some groups display particularly large sherds and near complete vessels, most of them showing no or little wear: levelling [1101], backfill [1110], deposits [1117] and [1127]. This latter spread yielded three near complete vessels one of which is a dish joining with another large sherd from levelling [1101]. Two other complete profiles, both cups form Dr27 with stamps, come from two contexts of Phase 3, [1110] and [1117].

Thirty seven sherds are burnt, some of them quite severely. There is no immediately clear chronological or functional clustering of these sherds, most of them are Central Gaulish (26 sherds 14 of which from Phases 4 and 5) and plain dishes. Perhaps the seven South Gaulish burnt fragments are the most coherent since they all come from Phase 2: from road surface 1130 and spreads 1131, 1133 and 1127.

Only three vessels had been mended or prepared for repair, two fragments are Central Gaulish decorated bowl form Dr30 from levelling context [1102] and the third one is a South Gaulish decorated bowl form Dr37 found residual in horticultural soil [1028]. Decorated samian is generally more repaired than plain samian (Monteil 2005, 108; Willis 2005).

Five vessels display signs of internal wear, often very idiosyncratic, particularly on ‘cups’. Biddulph (2008) has studied the existence of form specific wear and the evidence from this group broadly fits with his findings. Out of the five vessels, three are conical cups with one Dr33 and two Dr46s displaying similar wear that seems to concentrate on a thin band at the internal junction of the wall and base. The fourth cup with distinctive wear is a more open form a Dr27 from spread/dumping [1127] but the wear is there different and concentrates in a concentric internal patch. The last vessel with internal wear, a flanged bowl Dr38, comes from a post-Roman context, [1056]. Despite being residual it is nonetheless interesting since the flange is burnt black all around and the internal surface is worn from use in a concentric large patch.

One vessel from [1059] in Phase 7 seems to have been trimmed for secondary use, possibly as a counter.

THE SAMIAN FABRICS

The samian assemblage contains a range of fabrics and forms dating from the latter part of the 1st to the later part of the 2nd century AD and the early 3rd century AD. Trajanic Hadrianic and early Antonine material dominates however with Central Gaulish samian (Lezoux and les Martres-de-Veyre) representing more than 60% the total (table 2).

The quantitative role played by each of the samian sources found within this group fits with the samian supply figures published previously (Monaghan 1997, 948, table 170) with however a stronger role played by the Trajanic industry of les Martres-de-Veyre for this group from Blossom Street (table 2).

Fabric	Sherds	% Sherds	EVE	% EVE	Weight	% Weight
Argonnes	1	0.26%			39	0.82%
Central Gaulish-Lezoux	202	53.44%	5.765	61.69%	2769	58.33%
East Gaulish	21	5.56%	0.19	2.03%	263	5.54%
La Graufesenque	96	25.40%	2.125	22.74%	942	19.84%
Central Gaulish-Martres-de-Veyre	54	14.29%	0.94	12.73%	602	12.68%
Rheinzabern	4	1.06%	0.075	0.80%	132	2.78%
Total	**378**	**100%**	**9.345**	**100%**	**4747**	**100%**

Table 2 Samian fabrics present in the material from Phases 2 to 6 – sherds, weight and rim EVE - and as a proportion of the samian assemblage

Fabric Phase:	2	2 %	3	3 %	4	4 %	5	5 %	6	6 %	Total
Central Gaulish-Lezoux	0.925	16.05	1.2	20.82	2.365	41.02	0.415	7.20	0.86	14.92	**5.765**
East Gaulish							0.08	42.11	0.11	57.89	**0.19**
La Graufesenque	1.505	70.82	0.32	15.06	0.3	14.12					**2.125**
Les Martres-de-Veyre	0.43	45.74	0.39	41.49	0.12	12.77					**0.94**
Rheinzabern					0.075	100					**0.075**
Total	**3.11**	**31.45**	**1.91**	**21.00**	**2.86**	**31.45**	**0.495**	**5.44**	**0.97**	**10.67**	**9.345**

Table 3 Proportion of samian fabrics deposited in each of the main phases (% based on Rim EVEs for Phases 2 to 6)

SOUTH GAULISH

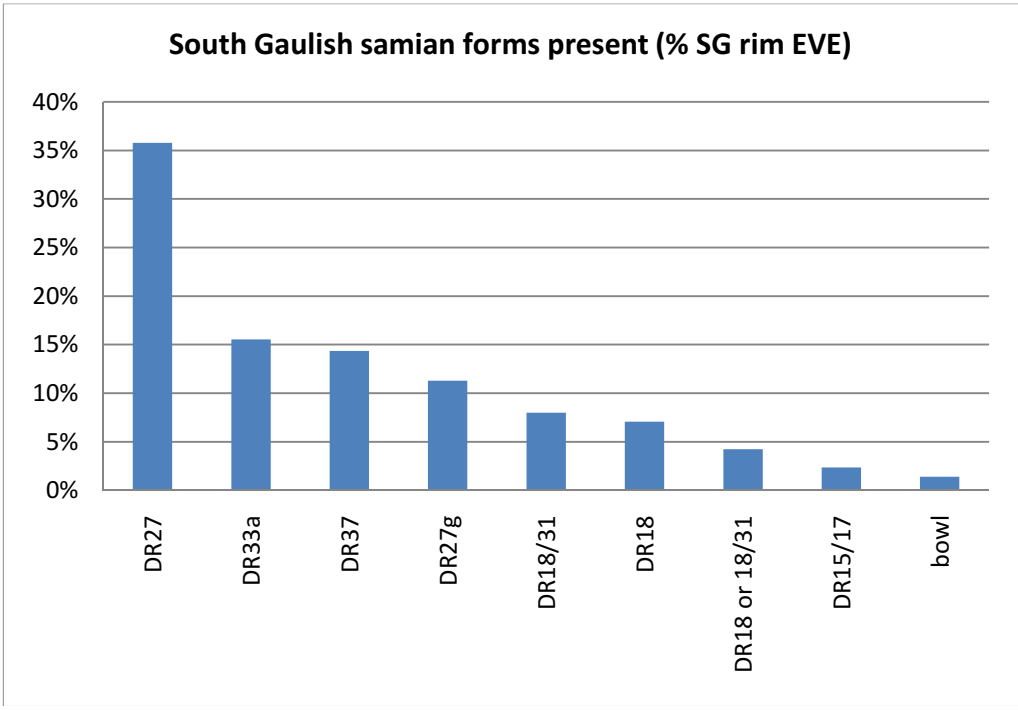

Figure1 South Gaulish samian forms present (% SG rim EVE)

There are 108 sherds of South Gaulish samian, 96 of which recovered from contexts assigned to Phases 2 to 6. The majority however, c. 71%, occurs in Phase 2 (table 3). The range of forms is typical with a high ratio of cup Dr27s to dish Dr18/31 and 18.

The most obvious early material, potentially Neronian consists of a single example of the dish Dr15/17 recovered residual in Phase 4 (context [1104]) and several examples of the dish form Dr18. The South Gaulish material is however overwhelmingly Flavian in nature and this is reflected in the stamps that all date to the Flavian or late Flavian/early Trajanic period (see below) and the ratio of Dr37s to Dr29s: Dr37s outnumber Dr29s at a ratio of 16:1.

Five South Gaulish vessels have stamps.

- From dump [1127]-Phase 2

    - On form Dr33a. Complete profile, fresh with a little wear on footring. Partial stamp-]ANTF. Carantus i, die 8a, AD 65-95 (Hartley and Dickinson 2008, vol 2, 237-8)
    - On form Dr29, 3 joining sherds from the base, partial stamp:]ASSEN with two retrograde S. Passienus, die 5a, AD 65-80.

- On dish, partial stamp: OF FV[. Fuscus ii, die 6a, AD 85-120 (Hartley and Dickinson 2009, vol 4, 121-2).

- From spread [1117]-Phase 3:

  - On form Dr27g, complete profile. Complete stamp: MMORM. The stamp is close to the one listed as M63* by Polak (2000, 268). This die is a damaged version of an earlier die which renders the reading as MMORM (as opposed to MEMORISM)-see die 3a' in Hartley and Dickinson 2010, vol 6. AD 70-90.

- From spread [1077]-Phase 5:

  - On dish, extremely partial stamp:]F. unidentified

CENTRAL GAULISH-LES MARTRES-DE-VEYRE

Some 54 sherds were identified as originating from the Trajanic Central Gaulish industry of les Martres-de-Veyre all of them recovered amongst material from Phases 2 to 4. These amount to a relatively high percentage for York (Monaghan 1997, table 170, 948) but a localized phenomenon already noticed at 35-41 Blossom Street (*ibid*, 949 and table 214). Very few forms were identified with several examples of the dish Dr18/31, three Dr46s, one Dr27 and at least twelve examples of the decorated form Dr37, one of which might have sherds scattered in contexts 1127 and 1131.

The style of Igocatus ([1127] and [1131]), possibly X-12 ([1127]) and Drusus i ([1131]) were identified. One decorated vessel from spread 1117 is particularly interesting. Much of it remains and a large section of the decoration is extant. The decoration is a little problematic since the ovolo, B38, is supposed to be X-9 and X-10 ovolo and the various decorative elements do not fit their style. Further work would shed light on this vessel but a close parallel can be found in Castleford (Dickinson and Hartley 2000, no. 1026). There the bowl was found in a Lezoux fabric.

CENTRAL GAULISH-LEZOUX

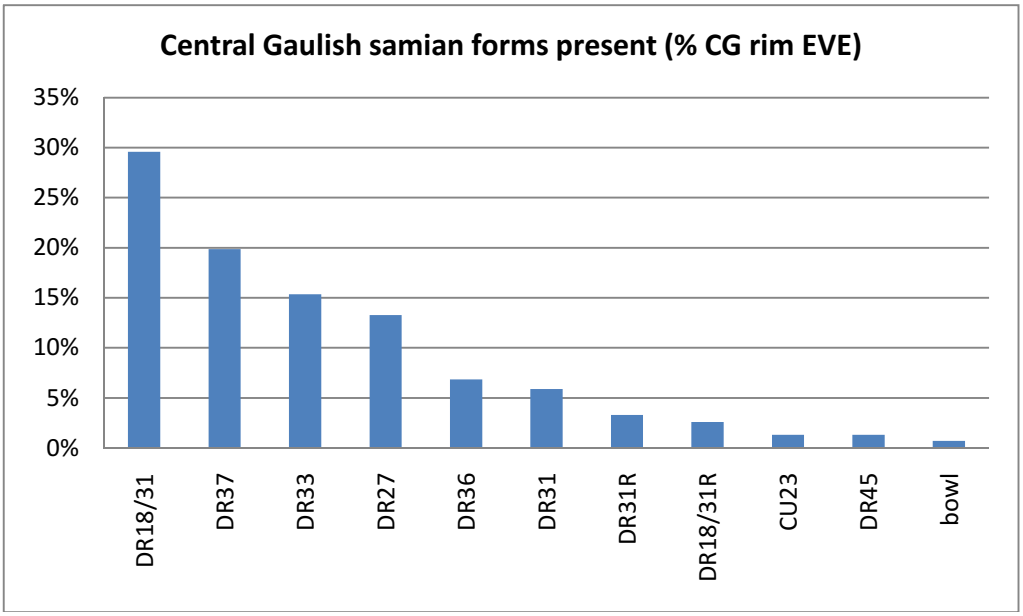

Figure 2 Central Gaulish samian forms present (% CG rim EVE)

By far the largest group with 102 sherds from Roman phases, Central Gaulish samian vessels dominate the samian assemblage, a figure entirely consistent with previous published evidence from York (Monaghan 1997, 948). The Central Gaulish group dates to the entire period of import and most of it was deposited in Phases 3 and 4 (table 3).

Characteristically Hadrianic forms are well represented in this group with a number of Dr27s and several Dr18/31s present. Some of the stamps date to this period: Marcellus iii and Taurinus, A brief assessment of the decorated vessels suggest that some of the Dr37s date to the Hadrianic period, a bowl by Attianus with joining sherds from contexts 1101, 1102 and possibly 1110, and another bowl by Docilis from spread 1117. Two Docilis i bowls were found at 35-41 Blossom Street (Dickinson 1997, no. 3453 and 3456, 957).
Further analysis of the decorated vessels will shed more light on this period and the various joins between contexts.

Antonine material is also well-represented with several forms and potters dating to this period, Secundinus vi, Atilianus i on plain ware and. Some forms illustrate that Central Gaulish products were reaching the site until the latter part of the 2nd c. AD and possibly the beginning of the 3rd: there are three examples of the mortarium form Dr45, several bodysherds from mortaria, beakers and late platters. These plain forms are one of the latest forms being produced at Lezoux (Bet and Delor 2000, Delage 2003).

A fragment from the top of a possible inkwell was identified in levelling layer [1060]. The presence of a samian inkwell is entirely probable in an urban group such as this one since samian inkwells are by far the most common types of inkwells recovered on Roman sites (Willis 2006). There is unfortunately little published evidence on samian inkwell from York to compare this inkwell to.

Five Central Gaulish vessels have stamps. Four of them could be identified for this assessment:

- from spreads [1077]-Phase 5 and [1095]-Phase 5
    - On form Dr31R, joining sherds of a base with a complete stamp- ATILIANI.O by Atilianus i, die 2?, AD 170-200 (Hartley and Dickinson 2008a, vol 1, 293).
- From backfill [1110]-Phase 3:
    - On form Dr27, complete profile. The vessel is very fresh with no sign of wear on footring or rim. Complete stamp: TAVRINI. Unusually this vessel was stamped twice to form a cross. Both stamps look like die 21 of Taurinus. AD 125-145.
- From levelling [1101]-Phase 4:
    - On form 18/31R. Base with partial stamp:]RCELLI.M . Marcellus iii, possibly die 2g. AD 136-165 (Hartley and Dickinson 2009, vol 5, 271).
- From levelling [1060]-Phase 6:
    - On platter, very partial stamp: N[unidentified.
- From backfill [1048]-Phase 7:
    - On form Dr38, base. SIICVNDINIM. Secundinus vi, die 3a (Dickinson 1986, 3.189-190, 195). AD 160-190.

EAST GAULISH

There are 72 sherds of samian ware from Eastern Gaul in this assemblage but only 25 came from contexts assigned to Phases 2 to 6. The rest come post-Roman contexts, not an unusual occurrence in urban context. The range of forms is relatively limited but illustrates

that East Gaulish material was reaching the site from the mid 2nd century to the late 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century AD. There are forms typical of the latter part of the 2nd century AD present: a mortarium form Cu21 with joining sherds from [1026], [1028] and [1059], dish form Dr31R, platter forms Dr32, LUDTg and WA79, and a flanged bowl Dr38 with a plain rim.

The East Gaulish group is poor in decorated bowls, a fairly typical trait of East Gaulish samian group since less decorated material is available once Central and East Gaulish kilns are the main source of imports (Darling 1998, Willis 2005). The range of forms is nonetheless lacking in bowls since only a single plain bowl, Dr38, was recovered.

Two plain East Gaulish vessels have stamps.

- From make-up layer [1073]
    - On form Dr31R, Rheinzabern, very partial stamp: [S] EVE [.Severus viii?
- From dump [1050]-Phase 8:
    - On form Dr31R, Rheinzabern, base with a complete stamp but blurred at one end. Matina, die 3a, AD 180-260 (Hartley and Dickinson, 2010, vol 6, 20).

3. SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH POTENTIAL

The samian group is an important and interesting samian group mainly because of its date and location. The presence of several fresh and large sherds and complete profiles with little or no wear from a selected number of contexts is interesting and warrantees further reasearch. All of the vessels with complete profile date to the late 1st c. AD and the beginning of the 2nd. The range of forms (i.e. dishes and cups) would not conflict with them being disturbed and re-deposited grave goods.

FUTURE RESEARCH POTENTIAL

- There are twelve potters' stamps in this assemblage, most of them new types for York (Dickinson and Hartley 1993, Dickinson 1997). Some of these could be indentified in future research.

- It is recommended that the samian data is fully integrated with the rest of the Roman Pottery from the site and used for further research, particularly of the burnt vessels and the near complete examples.
- Research of the decorated samian vessels in the assemblage to, on the one hand better determine the dating of the South Gaulish material and on the other to assess the relative proportion of Hadrianic and Antonine decorated pieces in the Central Gaulish assemblage. Further research work on the decorated vessels would also shed lights on depositional processes since it is suspected that a number of vessels are distributed across several contexts.
- Comparing the samian assemblage to published material from York (Dickinson and Hartley 1993, Dickinson 1997).
- Rubbings of the stamps and the more interesting decorated pieces-once mounted; they can be scanned for illustration purposes (in greyscale, 300dpi) and form part of the archives.

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