

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
AT
WEST ALCESTER,
WARWICKSHIRE

Justin Hughes

With a contribution by Angus Crawford

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt and Sarah Phear

13 March 2008

© Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council

Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury,

University of Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project 2896
Report 1611
MWA 28

Contents

Part 1 Project summary

1

Part 2 Detailed report

1.	Background.....	3
1.1	Reasons for the project.....	3
1.2	Project parameters	3
1.3	Aims	3
2.	Methods.....	4
2.1	Fieldwork methodology.....	4
2.1.1	Fieldwork strategy	4
2.1.2	Structural analysis	4
2.1.3	Methodology	4
2.2	Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford	4
2.2.1	Artefact recovery policy	4
2.2.2	Method of analysis	4
3.	Topographical and archaeological context	5
3.1.1	Previous archaeological work.....	5
4.	Results	6
4.1	Structural analysis	6
4.2	Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford	9
4.2.1	The pottery	9
4.2.2	Other finds	12
4.2.3	Significance	12
5.	Discussion and conclusions	13
6.	Publication summary	13
7.	Acknowledgements.....	14
8.	Personnel	14
9.	Bibliography.....	14

Archaeological Watching Brief at West Alcester, Warwickshire

Justin Hughes

With a contribution by Angus Crawford

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken along the route of a water mains renewal programme in West Alcester. The construction works were undertaken, in three phases, by Balfour Beatty Utilities Ltd. Phases 1 and 2 were located in the vicinity of NGR SP 408 258, and Phase 3 at NGR SP 0882 5719.

The practical aim of the watching brief was to record archaeological deposits along the water pipeline routes west of the town in order to mitigate against their required disturbance. The academic aim of the programme was to further categorise signs of Alcester's physical past and to place this new information in the context of previous work, particularly in the area of Birch Abbey where extensive excavations were carried out in the 1960s.

The water mains renewal scheme largely followed existing service routes. Archaeological deposits and structural remains, mainly dateable to the Roman period, were recorded within the southern extramural settlement to the east of Ryknild Street and within the vicinity of an east-west road, identified during the Birch Abbey investigation as a possible major route to the contemporary industrial settlement at Droitwich (Mahany *et al* 1994).

The deposits chiefly comprised silty clay fills of foundation trenches for walls and former road surfaces of pebble and gravel construction; in some cases, metalled. A range of ceramic material, particularly locally produced Severn Valley oxidised and grey wares and imported Samian pieces indicate activity as early as the first quarter of the 2nd century. Brick fragments go some way towards corroborating this dating information.

Later remains (dated to 3rd and 4th century) were sparser but the extramural settlement area clearly remained stable. As with many Roman settlements in the Midlands, evidence for continued occupation into the 5th century and beyond is lacking.

In the monitored area little information has been added to knowledge of the character of the medieval town. It is probable that re-building and re-surfacing of the town's retail and residential streets has removed or significantly disturbed medieval and post-medieval remains. This is certainly indicated in much of the study area, most notably along Bleachfield Street and Priory Road.

Some of the residential areas, including Chantry Crescent, Newport Drive, Georgian Close, Sherwell Drive, Allimore Lane and Roebuck Park, yielded details of Roman date. Some structural information was noteworthy along the radial streets where modern retail and residential properties sit side by side, especially along Evesham Street, Birmingham Road and Swan Street.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in the west part of Alcester (centred around NGR SP 0882 5719 and SP 408 258; Fig 1) on behalf of Balfour Beatty Utilities Ltd which has undertaken a water mains renewal scheme. Archaeological supervision of the works was requested by Warwickshire County Council Museum Service (reference 351/D06/100850), which considers that areas of archaeological interest may be affected (Scheduled Monument No. 28).

1.2 Project parameters

The works lie within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 28 and 21562) and were considered by the Curator to have the potential to affect archaeological remains (SMR ref MWA 534, 7113, 4495, 9127 and 9585). The project conforms to the brief prepared by Warwickshire Museum Service (ref AS/W/W05_West Alcester Water Mains Renewal, January 2006) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WHEAS 2006b).

The archaeological background to the site is given in the Brief (Phase 2 dated 17th March; Phase 3 dated 27th January).

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999).

Phase 1 involved works along Birmingham Road, Regency Close, Willoughby Close and King's Coughton Lane on the north-west side of Alcester.

Phase 2 involved works along Augustus Drive, Hadrian's Walk, Roman Way, Seggs Lane, Cross Road, Allimore Lane, Sherwell Drive, Priory Road, Station Road, Minerva Mews, Birmingham Road, Ickneild Row, Eclipse Road, Allwood Close, Jephcott Close, Ragley Mill Lane and Roebuck Park on the west side of Alcester.

Phase 3 involved works along Stratford Road, Mill Lane, Swan Street, Bleachfield Street, Willow Close, Newport Drive, Orchard Drive, Boteler Close, Chantry Crescent, Birch Abbey and Evesham Street on the south-west side of Alcester.

1.3 Aims

Wherever possible the primary aim of the watching brief was to record and preserve archaeological deposits *insitu*. Where this was not possible, structures and artefacts were recorded prior to removal. A secondary aim of the works was to locate archaeological deposits and determine their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation.

The Brief indicated that significant deposits of Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date were likely to be encountered; including Iron Age settlement, Roman industrial, domestic and burial zones, medieval domestic and ecclesiastical activity. The potential presence of deposits of this character was therefore given due consideration during the field monitoring programme.

2. **Methods**

2.1 **Fieldwork methodology**

2.1.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

A total of 392 trenches were opened in order to lay new piping to serve residential and retail properties. Their locations are indicated in Figures 2 to 8. Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by machine under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material, as well as to determine their nature. A number of the trenches serving specific properties which contained modern make-up soils (notably in Bleachfield Street and Priory Road) were recorded but not individually numbered. It is noted in the appendix however, that these junctions lie between numbered trenches which form the major water service routes.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

2.1.2 **Structural analysis**

2.1.3 **Methodology**

The following analysis of the material remains, exposed during the water mains renewal scheme is divided into two sections, first by street, in order to describe the archaeological features and deposits, and secondly by zone, in order to explore their character in the wider context of the archaeology of Alcester. The context descriptions (appendix 1) reflect this approach, with general statements about the nature of the material remains being given street-by-street followed by specific descriptions of stratified deposits and features, to assist their interpretation in the structural and artefactual analyses section of the report.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was executed through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.2 **Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford**

2.2.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All artefacts from the areas monitored were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

2.2.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record was made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* date produced for each stratified context.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the Worcestershire fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992; Hurst 1994) and, where possible, the Warwickshire fabric series as described within Cracknell and Mahany (1994). Pottery fabrics were identified by referencing the Warwickshire county series maintained by the Museum Service.

Topographical and archaeological context

The areas investigated are in the parish of Alcester. The water mains route lies over the 1st and 2nd Terrace River Gravels, Alluvium, Arden Sandstone and Mercia Mudstone. Phase Three of the water mains renewal works lay in an area of particularly significant archaeological potential, across the known settlements occupied throughout the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

The town lies at the confluence of the Rivers Alne and Arrow, and 1st-2nd century civilian settlement has been identified to the east of Bleachfield Street and Birch Abbey.

Signs of military activity have been documented by aerial photography to the south of the river, at Lower Oversley Lodge, where a fort is thought to have been built on high ground (Plate 31). The emergent town to the north was surrounded, towards the end of the 2nd century, by a defensive rampart on an island of gravel surrounded by wet, lower lying ground occupied by a network of irregular streets. The military zone has been characterised by metalwork, coins and by large quantities of Neronian Samian ware. The defended and civilian areas subsequently formed the nucleus of the medieval town and this continued into the 21st century.

Settlement to the north of the town has been restricted by marshy ground, which possibly originated as a former water course of the Arrow and which ran to the west of the medieval and modern town centre.

The ‘extra-mural’ settlement, of over 30 hectares, grew around two major Roman road routes, Ryknild Street and the Salt Way (the modern Stratford to Droitwich Road), and comprised a wide variety of timber and stone-built structures, with a large open area, possibly surrounded by public buildings. An industrial zone has previously been identified in the Birch Abbey area, with a residential area to the east, and several cemeteries (Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record MWA 4495).

The results of excavations at Birch Abbey, in the 1960s (Mahany, ed 1994), clarified understanding of the growth of settlement to the south of the former core of the town, which lies abreast of the High Street and was enclosed by the fort’s defensive ramparts. Metalled surfaces and a large circular timber building were exposed with associated artefacts which indicate Roman civilian presence by the mid to late 1st century.

There is also substantial artefactual evidence for pre-Flavian and Flavian occupation to the east of Bleachfield Street and indications that military evacuation occurred in the 2nd century. This may account for the evident lack of surviving structural evidence for the fort’s ramparts, although extensive quarrying in the 19th century may have removed archaeological evidence and given rise to a biased interpretation.

Alcester prospered as a market economy through to the 4th century by which time the defences were strengthened with stone walling.

The national importance of the archaeological remains across this area is recognised by the statutory protection of parts of the Roman settlement as a Scheduled Monument (SAM No. 28).

Previous archaeological work

The first documented references which point to Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation in Alcester are from the 17th century. These refer to a 4th century coin hoard and to structural traces and burials in the southern part of the town (Meaney 1964). Since the 1670s little historical categorisation in the way of archaeological observation can be corroborated until

the 1920s when a resident (Davies, unpublished notes) embarked on a series of investigations over a period of 20 years.

From this work 24 burials, a good number of which are Roman in date (and some possibly earlier) were identified. Structural remains of buildings, facing north, onto the east-west (Birmingham to Stratford) road included floor layers, hypocaust, roof and flue tiles and mortared stonework with surviving plaster and a ‘circular *pillae*’; material presumably from a public building (a *mansio*).

Structural remains were also recorded along both sides of Bleachfield Street which runs at right angles to and joins the east-west road route through the original Roman settlement. These included evidence for metallised surfaces to the west of Birch Abbey and stone floors and *tesserae* from a building to the east.

The current picture of a Roman settlement, defined by the intersection of two major Roman roads, was first clarified by fieldwork in the 1950s and early 1960s. Sections of road surfaces were explored along Seggs Lane, and Swan Street and remains of buildings were recovered adjacent to Priory Road (Hughes 1958-1965).

Major excavations in the Birch Abbey area (1964-6) produced a thorough physical (and dateable) description of the phases of activity relating to the Roman settlement of West Alcester. The early military occupation and ancillary civilian population is evident from the fact that the majority of finds are earlier than AD 200. Later, 3rd and 4th century buildings and rubbish disposal areas masked the anticipated structural detail for the beginnings of settlement but it is clear that the town was occupied until at least the end of the 4th century (Cracknell and Mahany ed 1994).

Piecemeal evaluations and watching briefs have kept pace with modern development to the west of the town, particularly in the residential areas, and have added to the detail of the Birch Abbey work. Such monitoring has further clarified the character of the early settlement of a small Roman town with local, cultural variations, but not untypical of neighbouring populations in the Midlands. The town lay roughly at equal distances from the contemporary, larger towns of Leicester, Wroxeter and Cirencester (with which it appears to have had the closest links) and it would have been well served by its trading links with the industrial settlements at Droitwich (which produced massive quantities of salt) and Worcester, a major producer of iron.

4. Results

4.1 Structural analysis

The following trenches produced stratified deposits and/or structures, features and artefacts: Trenches 7, 57, 81, 83, 88, 102, 125, 138, 148, 149, 157, 164, 200, 239, 245, 254, 255, 261, 262, 264, 290, 293.

Natural Deposits

With only occasional variation the natural deposits encountered were compact mid reddish brown silty sands and clays with frequent gravel, sub-rounded pebbles and small cobbles, lying, generally, just below 1.00m from the road surfaces. There are some locally distinctive differences in these deposits in the northeast quarter of the monitored area. In the vicinity of the junction of Bleachfield Street and Swan Street, and running eastwards from here along the Stratford Road, this variation is marked by darker, siltier clays, which are typical of the riverine deposits shed by the Arrow on its western bank in the centre of the modern town.

Trench 7 (Figs 5 and 9, Plate 1).

Two boundary/drainage ditches (contexts 707 and 710) were located, cutting into natural subsoils in Chantry Crescent. The former was a large N-S aligned, parallel-sided boundary feature nearly 1.50m wide and over 0.75m deep. The latter was shallower, with a depth of 0.60m, but of similar width. The fills (contexts 708, 709, 711 and 712) of both linear cuts contained pottery and bone, of Roman date and appeared to have been deliberately placed to backfill a boundary line. The primary fill of ditch 707 (context 708) contained 51 sherds of amphorae.

Trenches 57, 81, 83 and 88 (Fig 5).

Newport Drive links Evesham Street with Bleachfield Street. However, no structural remains were encountered in the 53 trenches observed. Deposits below the modern road surface were largely comprised of disturbed made ground, with substantial layers of packed, modern rubble. Below these soils two small sherds of Roman pottery (1 piece of imported Samian ware and 1 local fragment of oxidised, glazed Malvernian ware) were retrieved in two trenches (57 and 88) contained within a dark silty matrix.

Trenches 102 and 125 (Fig2).

Roebuck Park lies to the northeast of Priory Road, adjacent to the line of the Birmingham – Stratford Road. Of the 39 trenches observed, two were of interest, containing compacted layers of clay and rounded pebbles (contexts 12503 and 12504) which form a possible Roman surface. The make-up material for the surface contained ceramic artefacts of pottery and brick.

Trenches 135-138, 149, 157, 164, 245 and 264 (Figs 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 14 and Plates 3 to 5, 8, 12, 13, 18, 19 and 25).

To the immediate west of Priory Road's junction with Evesham Street archaeological remains were encountered in Roman Way and Seggs Lane (see Allimore Lane below). At a depth of 0.70m a double-skinned blue lias stone wall (0.30m of the foundation survived) provided evidence of a possible Roman building (see contexts 13804, 13805, 13806 and 13807, Appendix 1). This was located near the junction of Evesham Street and Seggs Lane. Trenches 135 to 137 and 148 contained well-stratified layers of 'buried' soils with a dark organic silty matrix (Plates 3-5).

In Hadrian's Walk, which links Roman way with Evesham Street, a relict cultivation soil was evident in Trench 264 (context 26401) contained a single sherd of a Roman Oxfordshire white ware.

These silty clays were also evident in Roman Way and Seggs Lane but, with the exception of a deep (0.80m) curvilinear ditch across Trench 164 (Fig 11) and two shallow gullies (contexts 24506 and 24508) running across Trench 245 (in Cross Road, see Fig 14 and Plates 18 and 19), no further evidence of building remains were noted. Settlement evidence to the north of Birch Abbey is well attested (Mahaney1994) and so, its absence along the line of the water mains is misleading. Small quantities of artefacts were retrieved from trench deposits to the west of the Evesham Street-Seggs Lane junction, but it is not possible to conclusively link these horizons to the known Roman activity in this part of Alcester.

Trenches 200 and 239 (Fig 7 and Plates 14 to 17).

Further north, in Birmingham Road, the lower courses of two substantial limestone walls (contexts 20004 and 23905), laid in foundation ditches in excess of 2.00m wide were recorded, indicating that there were buildings of considerable proportions in part of this residential area of the Roman town, within the northern sector of the extra-mural settlement (Booth and Evans, ed 2002).

Trench 254 (Fig 2 and Plate 20).

A sondage, artificially excavated in this trench, contained dried-out alluvial clay silts which indicate a former river course. The main channel of the River Arrow's current route runs parallel to this section of the Birmingham Road. The northern extra-mural settlement lay outside the main area of residence in the Roman period, because marshy ground inhibited building.

Trenches 255, 261 and 262 (Figs 3, 15 and 16; Plates 21 to 24).

Several trenches, located to the east of the known line of Roman Ryknild Street, produced stratified deposits and structures. In Georgian Close a foundation wall of lias rubble was revealed within a trench cutting into natural (contexts 25506 and 25508). The wall lay alongside a pit containing rim and body sherds (contexts 25504 and 25505) from a large, reduced Severn Valley ware wide mouth vessel (manufactured in the 1st-2nd century).

In Sherwell Drive, which links Cross Road with Georgian Close, a possible metalled surface, composed of very compacted cobbles and set within a hard clay surface (context 26105), was recorded. It was aligned N-S and appeared to be about 4.50m in width (Trench 261, Fig 16). To the west, in Allimore Lane a further lias wall (context 26205, Fig 16 and plates 23 and 24) was recorded, measuring at least 2.00m in width, on a N-S alignment.

Trench 290 (Figs 5 and 17 and Plates 26 and 27).

Between 5 and 9 Swan Street, which links Priory Road and Stratford Road, and which is intersected by the northern end of Bleachfield Street, two limestone structures were exposed, recorded and left in situ. Both were well-preserved and encountered below the depth required for the water mains renewal pipes. The former was a stone-built well (context 29005, to the south of no.9 Swan Street), the latter a substantial wall (context 29006, to the south of No. 5 Swan Street) set within compacted clay foundation (context 29004).

The outer edge of the well (Plate 26) was 1.80m across with an internal shaft 0.80m in diameter. The wall (Plate 27) lay to the west of the well and was 1.40m wide.

Trenches 291 - 293 (Fig 5 and Plates 29 and 30).

Where Bleachfield Street is intersected by Newport Drive, there were a number of silty deposits below deep layers of rubble used as packing for the original laying of West Alcester's water mains in the post-war years of the 20th century. Trenches 291 and 292 traversed the central section of Bleachfield Street (from house numbers 83 to 27) running south to north. Throughout this 80m length the encountered layers were recorded lying below modern road make-up and comprised dark grey silts over pebbly orange brown natural clays. These deposits (context 29104) were up to 0.60m in depth in places and probably associated with changing water levels near the floodplain of the River Arrow.

A former culvert (context 23904, plate 32) constructed in brick, with some later stone capping lay in the base of Trench 293, running N-S for 15 metres. It was lined with machine made brick and cement mortar and was constructed as a water supply, probably in the early 20th century.

Trenches 429 - 443 (Fig 5, Plate 28).

Along the road line of Birch Abbey, which connects with Evesham Street, no archaeological deposits were recorded because the new pipeline was fed through existing ceramic piping.

No structural remains were evident in the area between Birch Abbey and Bleachfield Street where an early Roman fort site has been postulated (Booth and Evans 2001). However, the

leakage scheme route followed the already established course of residential water supply in this area of the town.

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figs 2 to 8. The detailed results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

4.2 Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford

4.2.1 The pottery

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the watching brief consisted of 107 sherds of pottery weighing 8.052 kg. In addition, fragments of fired clay, roof tile, brick, glass, iron work and animal bone were recovered. The group came from 31 contexts and could be dated from the Roman period onwards (Table 1). Levels of preservation were generally good with the majority of sherds displaying only limited amounts of abrasion.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	1	9
700	Iron	Handle	1	363
700	Pottery	Roman	1	4
706	Pottery	Roman	4	53
708	Bone	Animal	1	1
708	Pottery	Roman	55	6416
709	Bone	Animal	2	5
709	Pottery	Roman	6	55
714	Bone	Animal	5	1
714	Pottery	Roman	2	31
803	Pottery	Roman	1	6
1001	Pottery	Post-medieval	1	15
5204	Bone	Animal	1	17
5703	Bone	Animal	1	5
5703	Pottery	Roman	1	1
7004	Bone	Animal	3	39
7004	Pottery	Roman	1	30
7004	Pottery	Roman	5	42
7004	Stone	?Flag	2	149
7004	Tile	?Roman	1	30
8104	Pottery	Post-medieval	1	52
8104	Tile	Roof	1	19
8303	Tile	Roof	2	278
8802	Pottery	Post-medieval	1	11
12504	Pottery	Post-medieval	1	87
12504	Tile	Roof	1	13
13503	Bone	Animal	1	85
13805	Brick	Post-medieval	1	1408
13904	Bone	Animal	1	10
13904	Tile	Roof	1	19
14809	Fired	Clay	5	48
14809	Pottery	Roman	1	8
14810	Bone	Animal	7	19
14810	Pottery	Roman	5	33
14905	Pottery	Roman	2	17
14906	Pottery	Roman	1	12
15704	Pottery	Roman	1	3
15704	Roof	Slate	1	3

15706	Bone	Animal	1	6
16406	Animal	Bone	2	1
20004	Tile	Roof	3	42
23905	Brick	Post-medieval	9	582
25504	Bone	Animal	5	29
25504	Pottery	Roman	13	1138
25507	Pottery	Roman	1	7
26205	Pottery	Roman	1	10
26401	Glass	?Post-medieval	1	5
26401	Pottery	Roman	1	12

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Context	WHEAS Fabric	Warwickshire fabric	Fabric common name	Total	Weight (g)
Unstratified	12	DEA	Oxidised Severn Valley ware	1	9
700	12.2	DA	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	1	4
706	12.2	DA	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	1	9
706	43.2		Central Gaulish samian ware	1	18
706		GB	Coarse grog tempered	2	26
708	12.3	GC	Reduced organically tempered Severn Valley ware	2	98
708	42.1		Dressel 20 type amphorae	51	6300
708	98		Miscellaneous Roman wares	1	13
708		GA	Coarse shell tempered ware	1	5
709	12.2	DA	Oxidised organically tempered Severn Valley ware	2	17
709	12	DE	Oxidised Severn Valley ware	2	13
709	22	CB	Black Burnished ware	1	9
709		GB	Coarse grog tempered	1	16
714	30	DV	Oxfordshire white colour coated ware	1	2
714	98		Reduced sandy ware	1	29
803	12.1		Reduced Severn Valley ware	1	6
1001	78		Post-medieval red wares	1	15
5703	43.2		Central Gaulish samian ware	1	1
7004	12	DE	Oxidised Severn Valley ware	2	42
7004	12V		Oxidised Severn Valley ware variant	2	6
7004	30	DV	Oxfordshire white colour coated ware	1	9
7004	33.2		Oxfordshire red mortaria with white slip	1	15
8104	78		Post-medieval red wares	1	52
8802	69		Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	11
12504	78		Post-medieval red wares	1	87
14809	98		Reduced sandy ware	1	8
14810	12/DEA	DEA		4	30
14810	CA			1	3
14905	12/DE	DE		2	17
14906	91		Post-medieval buff wares	1	12
15704	12.2/DA	DA		1	3
25504	12.1		Reduced Severn Valley ware	12	1120
25504	38		Oxfordshire white ware	1	18

25507	38		Oxfordshire white ware	1	7
26205	29		Oxfordshire red/brown colour coated ware	1	10
26401	12	DW	Oxidised fine Severn Valley ware	1	12

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

Discussion of the pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). A total of three diagnostic form sherds were present and could be dated accordingly, the remaining sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Roman period

The majority of pottery within the assemblage could be attributed to this period. While the Roman pottery count amounted to 102 sherds (or 96% of the total sherd count), 51 of those sherds were attributed to a single Spanish Dressel type 20 amphorae (context 708, WHEAS fabric 42.1) dating from the early 1st to 3rd century.

Nineteen sherds of oxidised ware were broadly identified as Severn Valley products (WHEAS fabric 12). Of these, five sherds were identified as oxidised organically tempered wares (WHEAS fabric 12.2, Warwickshire fabric DA) dating from the 1st to 2nd century. Eleven sherds were of oxidised Severn Valley wares produced throughout the Roman period (mid 1st to 4th century) and included six sherds of Warwickshire fabric DE and five sherds of fabric DEA. Three sherds (one unstratified and two from context 7004) were identified as variant oxidised Severn Valley ware fabrics produced during the Roman period, with the unstratified sherd originating from a small jar of undetermined date.

Reduced fabric sherds were dominated by Severn Valley wares (WHEAS fabric 12.1) with a single sherd from context 803 and twelve sherds from a wide mouthed jar (Webster type 20) from context 25504 dating from the 1st to 2nd century. Further reduced Severn Valley wares included two organically tempered sherds (Context 708, WHEAS fabric 12.3, Warwickshire fabric GC) dating from the 1st to 2nd century and a rim sherd from a small jar in a probable Severn Valley fabric variant of possible mid 1st to 2nd Century date.

Three sherds of a coarse reduced fabric, contexts 706 and 709, were tentatively identified as Warwickshire fabric GB and of late Roman date with a further sherd from context 14809 being of 2nd to 4th century date (Warwickshire fabric CA). Two unidentified reduced sherds of sandy fabric from contexts 714 and 14809 could only be broadly dated to the Roman period.

Regional fabrics were represented by Oxfordshire fabrics with two sherds of Oxfordshire white wares (WHEAS fabric 38; contexts 25504 and 25507) dating from the 2nd to 4th century and two sherds of Oxfordshire white colour coated ware (WHEAS fabric 30, Warwickshire fabric DV; contexts 714 and 7004) dating from the 3rd to 4th century. Further Oxford fabrics included a single sherd of Oxfordshire red and brown colour-coated ware (WHEAS fabric 29, context 26205) of 3rd to 4th century date and a single sherd of Oxfordshire red mortarium with white slip (WHEAS fabric 33.2; context 7004) dating from the 3rd to 4th century.

A single sherd of Black Burnished ware, originating from southeast Dorset, was present within context 709 and dated from c. AD 120 to the 4th century (WHEAS fabric 22, Warwickshire fabric CB).

While imported pottery included the Dressel amphorae mentioned above, a single rim sherd of Central Gaulish Samian (WHEAS fabric 43.2), originating from a Dragendorff type 18/31 dish was also identified and dated from the early to mid 2nd century.

Post-medieval period

The post-medieval pottery assemblage consisted of five sherds of pottery. The dominant fabric was that of post-medieval red wares with three sherds (fabric 78, contexts 1001, 8104 and 12504) dated from the 17th to 18th century. The remaining sherds included one of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91, context 14906) dating to the 18th century and a single sherd of oxidised glazed Malvernian ware of late 16th to early 17th century date (WHEAS fabric 69; context 8802).

4.2.2 Other finds

The remaining finds assemblage includes several fragments of roof tile, which could be generally dated to the 13th to 18th century. However, a small fragment of tile from context 7004 is possibly Roman with a broad date applied of mid 1st to 4th century. The remaining material was typical of material from urban sites and included animal bone fragments and general building material of post-medieval to modern date.

4.2.3 Significance

The Roman finds assemblage is of some significance in that it reflects a range of local, regional and imported wares for the period. The Dressel amphorae are indicative of long-distance trade within the Empire, with vessels of this type typically utilized to transport products such as olive oil within the Roman Empire. While only a single sherd of Samian was present within the assemblage it is still representative of the desire for imported fine tablewares, with the remaining range of fabric types typical of those manufactured to supply a range of vessels for both serving, preparing and storing foods.

The post-medieval assemblage is of little significance and is typical of general household and building discard during the period.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The programme of watching briefs confirmed the accuracies of Booth's descriptions of Alcester's Roman southern extra-mural settlement (Cracknell and Mahany, ed 1994). The road routes radiating from Birch Abbey, that is, Evesham Street, Priory Road and Bleachfield Street, formed the core of the settlement. The major sample of evidence for roads and remains of buildings within this core area are catalogued in the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record. MWAs 495, 496, 511, 516, 3789, 4757 and 7400 indicate the density of physical remains, while MWAs 482, 485, 497 and 2248 (each of which record a broad range of artefacts from pottery to coins, dating from the 1st to 4th century) illustrate the longevity of the Roman occupation.

Trenches opened for the water mains renewal scheme revealed some structural remains but a relatively small artefact assemblage. The pipelines generally followed existing routes limiting the extent of new archaeological information. However, it is probable that, at the junctions of Birch Abbey, Seggs Lane, Evesham Street and Priory Road, stratified archaeological deposits are intact in areas where development has not taken place.

6. Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken along the route of a water mains renewal programme in West Alcester. The construction works were undertaken, in three phases, by Balfour Beatty Utilities Ltd. Phases 1 and 2 were located in the vicinity of National Grid reference SP 408 258, and Phase 3 at (NGR) SP 0882 5719.

The practical aim of the watching brief was to record archaeological deposits along the water pipeline routes west of the town in order to mitigate against their required disturbance. The academic aim of the programme was to further categorise signs of Alcester's physical past and to place this new information in the context of previous work, particularly in the area of Birch Abbey where extensive excavations were carried out in the 1960s.

The water mains renewal scheme largely followed existing service routes but archaeological deposits and structural remains, mainly dateable to the Roman period, were recorded within the southern extramural settlement to the east of Ryknild Street and within the vicinity of an east-west road identified, during the Birch Abbey investigation, as a possible major route to the contemporary industrial settlement at Droitwich (Mahany et al 1994).

The deposits chiefly comprised silty clay fills of foundation trenches for walls and former road surfaces of pebble and gravel construction; in some cases, metalled. A range of ceramic material, particularly locally produced Severn Valley oxidised and grey wares and imported Samian pieces indicate activity as early as the first quarter of the 2nd century. Brick fragments go some way towards corroborating this dating information.

Later, 3rd and 4th century remains were sparser but the extramural settlement area clearly remained stable. However, as with many Roman settlements in the Midlands, evidence for continued occupation into the 5th century and beyond is lacking.

In the monitored area little information has been added to the character of the medieval town. It is probable that re-building and re-surfacing of the town's retail and residential streets has removed or significantly disturbed medieval and post-medieval remains. This is certainly indicated in much of the study area, most notably along Bleachfield Street and Priory Road.

Some of the residential areas, including Chantry Crescent, Newport Drive, Georgian Close, Sherwell Drive, Allimore Lane and Roebuck Park, yielded details of Roman date. Some structural information was noteworthy along the radial streets where modern retail and residential properties sit side by side, especially along Evesham Street, Birmingham Road and Swan Street.

7. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Balfour Beatty Utilities Ltd (including all on-site contractors for their patience and interest), Anna Stocks, Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire Museum Service.

8. **Personnel**

The report was prepared by Justin Hughes. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Milward, Tom Vaughan, Tom Rogers, Sarah Phear, Angus Crawford, Alvaro Mora-Ottomano and Justin Hughes, finds analysis by Angus Crawford and illustrations by Carolyn Hunt and Sarah Phear.

9. **Bibliography**

Booth, P, and Evans, J, (ed) 2002 *Roman Alcester: Northern Extramural Area: 1969-1988 excavations*, Roman Alcester Series **3**/ CBA Research Report **127**

CAS 1995 (as amended) *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **399**

Cracknell, S, and Mahany, C (ed) 1994 *Roman Alcester: Southern Extramural Area: 1964-1966 Excavations*, Roman Alcester Series **2**/CBA Research Report **97**

Cracknell, S, 1996 *Roman Alcester: Defences and defended Area*, Roman Alcester Series **2**/CBA Research Report **106**

Davis, B, unpublished *Notes and Diary relating to archaeological investigations in the 1920s and 1930s*

Hughes, H V, 1958 *Recent work at Roman Alcester* Transactions Birmingham Warwickshire Archaeological Society, **76**

Hughes, H V, 1959 *Recent work at Roman Alcester II* Transactions Birmingham Warwickshire Archaeological Society, **77**, 1958

Hughes, H V, 1960-65 annual entries of *Recent work at Roman Alcester* West Midlands Archaeological News Sheet CBA

Hurst, J D, 1994 (as amended) *Pottery fabrics. A multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **445**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Mahany, C (ed), 1994 *Roman Alcester: southern extramural area: 1964-1966 Excavations, Stratigraphy and Structures*, Roman Alcester Series **1**: CBA Research Report **96**

Meaney, A, 1964 *A gazetteer of early Anglo-Saxon burial sites*, London

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983 Midland and Western England, sheet 3, scale 1:250,000 + *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (A brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*

WHEAS 2006 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at West Alcester, Warwickshire*. Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council

Plates

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Archaeological deposits and features are divided by street. As the water mains renewal programme was initiated as leakage protocol, the route followed, wherever possible, in large part, the existing pipelines and, therefore, soil deposits were, in large part, not encountered in their primary context. In many cases the trench descriptions for each street are therefore selected to describe general character. More detailed descriptions are ascribed to stratified layers and structures and complete field records are contained in the archive.

Trenches 1-10

Site area: Chantry Crescent

Dimensions: See Figure 5

Orientation : E-W, N-S and W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Layer	Mainly mixed soils and hardcore below modern road surface with dark grey silty loam matrix.	0.00 – 0.10m
102	Layer	Mainly mixed backfill of sandy loams and rubble.	0.10 – 0.50m
103	Natural	Compact small gravels in an orangey-red sandy matrix	> 0.50m
705	Cut	Ditch feature cutting 710 and aligned NW-SE and with a V-shaped profile.	
706	Fill	Dark brown, black friable and cohesive silty clay with occasional small sub-rounded stones – contains early 2 nd century SVW and Samian	
707	Cut	N-S aligned parallel-sided ditch.	>0.30 x 1.45 x >0.85m
708	Primary Fill	Friable grey silty sand with frequent small to medium charcoal flecks. Contains 55 sherds of Roman pottery, including 51 fragments of amphorae.	See section plan no.
709	Secondary Fill	Black friable and cohesive silty clay with abundant charcoal flecks and occasional small sub-rounded stones – contains various Roman wares early 2 nd century	See section plan no.
710	Cut	Ditch to east of 707. Truncated on eastern edge by 705. Aligned NE-SW. Deliberately back-filled by 711-714.	
711	Primary Fill	Friable grey silty sand with small to medium gravel matrix.	Depth 0.16m
712	Secondary Fill	Friable, dark brown cohesive silty clay, possibly contained by 713.	Depth 0.14m
713	Secondary Fill	Friable yellowish sand with occasional charcoal flecks.	Depth 0.30m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
714	Secondary Fill	Friable grey silty sand with small to medium gravel matrix – contains various Roman wares 3 rd to 4 th century	Depth 0.26m

Trenches 11-32, 53

Site area: King's Coughton Lane

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 1, 2 and 3

Orientation : E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1101	Layer	Mainly mixed soils and hardcore below modern road surface with dark grey silty loam matrix and containing moderate crushed brick and stone.	0.10 – 0.20m
1102	Natural	Grey-brown silty sand.	>0.20m

Trenches 33-52, 54-91

Site area: Newport Drive

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 39 and 40

Orientation : NW-SE, W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
3302 etc	Layers	Rubble backfill with brown silty loam in places	>0.60m
3303	Layer	Red sandy layer above 3304. Possible foundation layer for earlier road.	0.85m b.g.s and 0.30m in depth
3304	Natural	Light grey brown coarse sandy clay with frequent small to large pebbles and gravel – on the riverbed.	> 1.15m
5703	Layer	Dark grey silty clay with rounded pebbles – SVW and well preserved Samian	? 1.30m
8103	Layer	Black sandy silt	

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
8303	Layer	Mixed grey/black silts – contains medieval roof tile	

Trenches 92-130

Site area: Roebuck Park

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 6

Orientation : Circular Street layout

Main deposit description : see trench 102 to check for artefacts

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
12501	Topsoil	Clay silt with modern debris.	0.00 – 0.10m
12502	Layer	Firm mid reddish brown clay silt with frequent sub-rounded large pebbles and occasional small CBM fragments. Made ground.	0.10 – 0.50m
12503	Layer	Hardcore levelling layer containing light blue medium angular limestone cobbles within a grey silt matrix	Depth 0.10m
12504	Layer	Firm dark grey brown clay silt with frequent charcoal flecks and CBM fragments. Former plough soil.	0.50 – 0.80m
12505	Natural	Pink to red clay silt with moderate rounded and sub-rounded pebbles and gravel.	> 0.80m

Trenches 131-148, 400-428

Site area: Evesham Street

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 4, 7 and 33

Orientation : SW-NE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
13101	Structure	Tarmac	0.00 – 0.22m
13102	Layer	Hardcore	0.22 – 0.36m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
13103	Layer	Hard mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent rounded pebbles	0.36 – 0.53m
13104	Structure	Discontinuous layer of angular limestone blocks, possibly from an earlier road surface	0.53 – 0.76m
13105	Layer	Firm mid reddish brown clay with occasional rounded pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks	0.76 – 1.11m
13106	Natural	Hard mid reddish brown clay with occasional rounded pebbles	>1.11m
13804	Layer	Hard mid reddish brown silt with frequent small rounded cobbles and large pebbles.	0.55 – 0.75m
13805	Structure	Foundation wall of lias stones – see context sheet sketch and plan 7	
13806	Fill	Bonding material and infill for 13807. Light reddish brown clay.	
13807	Cut	Foundation cut for 13805	
14803	Layer	Made ground composed of large sub-rounded pebbles within clay matrix	0.30 – 0.60m
14804	Layer	Hard dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional medium sub-rounded pebbles	0.60 – 0.75m
14805	Layer	Firm mid reddish brown sandy silt with frequent small cobbles	0.75 – 1.00m
14806	Layer	Firm brownish grey sandy silt with frequent large gravels and occasional pebbles	1.00 – 1.20m
14807	Layer	Soft dark grey clay silt with pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks – contains sherd of SVW	1.20 – 1.30m
14808	Layer	Soft reddish brown silty sand with frequent small pebbles	1.30 – 1.40m
14809	Layer	Soft dark grey clay silt with frequent charcoal - sampled	1.40 – 1.55m
14810	Layer	Soft light grey clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks and few large pebbles contains SVW	1.55 – 1.95m
14811	Layer	Soft light greyish yellow silty sand with occasional pebbles	Depth 0.20m
14812	Natural	Firm mid reddish brown clay with frequent large pebbles	>1.95m

Trenches 149-150, 169-171, 239-254, 263, 266

Site area: Birmingham Road

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 6, 12-22, 24 and 25

Orientation : NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
17103	Topsoil	Firm dark greyish brown silt with frequent small cobbles and large pebbles and occasional charcoal flecking.	0.30 – 0.80m
17104	Layer	Compacted gravel, possible surface	0.80 – 0.90m
17105	Natural	Firm mid reddish brown clay with frequent large pebbles	>0.90m
20003	Layer	Hard mid orange brown clay with frequent large pebbles	0.80 – 0.90m
20004	Structure	W-E limestone foundation wall composed of angular blocks bonded with hard orange clay – contains medieval roof tile	>2.00m wide
20005	Cut	Foundation cut for 20005 – see context sheet sketch and plan 14	
20006	Natural	Hard bluish lias clay with frequent large pebbles	
23903	Layer	Made ground of medium cobbles within a firm dark grey silt matrix	
23904	Layer	Hard light yellowish brown silty clay with frequent medium cobbles	>0.80m
23905	Structure	E-W lias stone wall composed of angular blocks – sampled	>2.00m
23906	Natural	Hard mid reddish brown sandy clay with frequent medium cobbles	>0.80m
24503	Layer	Hard dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent small sub-rounded cobbles	0.25 – 0.85m
24504	Natural	Hard mid reddish brown clay with occasional small cobbles	>0.85m
24505	Fill	Soft mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent large pebbles and small cobbles	
24506	Cut	E-W aligned gully with vertical sides and flat base	
24507	Fill	Firm light yellowish brown clay silt with few charcoal flecks and large pebbles	

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
24508	Cut	E-W ditch with gradual, concave sides and flat base	
24903	Layer	Made ground of hard dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent small sub-rounded cobbles	0.25 – 0.85m
24904	Natural	Hard mid reddish brown clay with occasional small cobbles	>0.85m
24905	Fill	Firm mid reddish brown silty sand with occasional large pebbles and few charcoal flecks	
24906	Cut	Post hole with vertical sides and flattish base	0.35 by 0.35m
Trench 254	Sondage	See trench record sheet sketch and plan 6 – possible former river course	
26600	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.35m
26601	Layer	Made ground composed of variable bands of creamy orange/orangey brown/reddish brown sand with extensive small/medium sub-rounded pebble gravel. Occasional CBM fragments and occasional grey clayey bands in lower horizon	0.35 – 1.15m
26602	Natural	Reddish pink clay	>0.90m

Trenches 151-163, 172-176, 178-195, 197-209

Site area: Roman Way

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 8 and 9

Orientation : N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
15701	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
15702	Layer	Cinder	0.10 – 0.15m
15703	Layer	Hard mid orange-brown clay	0.15 – 0.35m
15704	Layer	Hard mid brownish grey silty clay with occasional medium pebbles and few charcoal flecks contains SVW	0.35 – 0.50m
15705	Layer	Firm dark brownish grey silty clay with occasional medium and large pebbles and few charcoal flecks	0.50 – 0.70m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
15706	Layer	Firm dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent small cobbles and few charcoal flecks contains animal bone	0.70 – 0.90m
15707	Natural	Hard light reddish brown clay with few medium pebbles	>0.90m

Trenches 164-168

Site area: Seggs Lane

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 10 and 11

Orientation : W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
16401	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
16402	Layer	Hardcore	0.10 – 0.20m
16403	Layer	Made ground, large rounded pebbles within a firm mid brownish grey silty matrix	0.20 – 0.70m
16404	Natural	Firm light reddish brown sandy silt with frequent well sorted gravel and pebbles	>0.70m
16405	Secondary Fill	Firm dark brownish grey sandy clay with frequent large pebbles and few charcoal flecks	0.70 – 1.08m
16406	Secondary Fill	Soft mid greenish grey sandy silt with occasional large pebbles and charcoal flecks contains animal bone	1.08 – 1.40m
16407	Primary Fill	Soft light greyish brown sandy silt with occasional large pebbles	1.40 – 1.50m
16408	Cut	NE-SW aligned ditch (but curves northwards as it meets the north baulk of the pipe trench) with almost vertical sides and concave base – see plans 10 and 11	Depth 0.80m

Trenches 177, 196, 210-238

Site area: Augustus Drive

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 8

Orientation : NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
21201	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.0 – 0.20m
21202	Layer	Loose light brown silty sand with high rubble content, brick and sub-rounded stones, clinker	0.20 - 0.60m
21203	Layer	Trench backfill and former services	0.20 – 0.80m
21204	Natural	Firm reddish brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and yellow-brown sand patches	>0.80m

Trenches 255-260

Site area: Georgian Close

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 20 and 42

Orientation : W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
25501	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.20m
25502	Layer	Hardcore	0.20 – 0.40m
25503	Layer	Hard mid brownish grey sandy clay with frequent small cobbles and large pebbles	0.40 – 0.85m
25504	Fill	Firm dark brownish grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks and pebbles – contains large grey ware vessel (1 st -2 nd century)	Depth 0.55m
25505	Cut	Circular pit with concave sides and base	Depth 0.55m
25506	Structure	Foundation wall of lias stones and rubble with regular settings	0.85m bgs
25507	Fill	Soft dark greyish brown sandy clay	>1.25m bgs
25508	Cut	Foundation trench for 25506, vertical sides with flat base	Depth >0.42m

Trench 261

Site area: Sherwell Drive

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 20

Orientation : N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
26101	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.05m
26102	Layer	Rubble hardcore	0.05 – 0.30m
26103	Layer	Hardcore	0.30 – 0.50m
26104	Layer	Made ground, pebbles and cobbles within a firm sandy matrix	0.50 – 1.00m
26105	Structure	Surface – possibly metalled, composed of very compacted medium sub-rounded cobbles within a hard mid reddish brown clay matrix	See plan 20
26106	Natural	Reddish brown sand with gravel	>1.00m

Trench 262

Site area: Allimore Lane

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 10

Orientation : NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
26201	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
26202	Layer	Made ground	0.10 – 0.50m
26203	Subsoil	Hard dark brownish grey clay	0.50 – 0.90m
26204	Fill	Soft red sand	0.50 – 0.90m
26205	Structure	Foundation wall composed of sand, lime and lias stones – 3-4 century pottery	0.50 – 0.90m
26206	Cut	Foundation trench – not excavated	0.90m bgs

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
26207	Natural	Mid reddish brown sandy clay	>0.90m

Trenches 264-265

Site area: Hadrian's Walk

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 8 and 23

Orientation : N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
26400	Structure	Tarmac – road surface	0.00 – 0.60m
26401	Relict Top/Subsoil	Dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and small sub-rounded pebble gravel – contains SVW	0.50 – 0.87m
26402	Natural	Mid brownish pink clay with frequent small sub-rounded pebbles	>0.75m

Trenches 267-271

Site area: Eclipse Road

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 22, 26 and 27

Orientation : NW-SE

Main deposit description – see Birmingham Road – Trench 266

Trenches 272, 287-289, 322-331, 371-374, 375, 376

Site area: Priory Road

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 28-30

Orientation : NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
28701	Structure	Asphalt road surface	0.00 – 0.05m
28702	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.05 – 0.12m
28703	Layer	Hardcore aggregate of sand and gravel	0.12 – 0.60m
28704	Layer	Made ground of hard reddish brown sandy clay	0.60 – 0.70m
28705	Layer	Soft light reddish brown sand	0.70 – 0.90m
28706	Natural	Hard light brown/grey clay	>0.90m
37401	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
37402	Layer	Cinder aggregate	0.10 – 0.30m
37403	Layer	Gravel and pebble rubble	0.20 – 0.40m
37404	Layer	Soft dark grey silty clay with lenses of charcoal and rounded and angular pebbles. Occasional CBM	0.40 – 0.80m
37405	Natural	Compact reddish brown clay silt	>0.80m

Trenches 273-275

Site area: Allwood Close

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 27

Orientation : N-S

For main deposit description see Trench 266

Trenches 276-285

Site area: Jephcott Close

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 26

Orientation : W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
---------	----------------	-------------	---

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
27601	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
27602	Layer	Hardcore	0.10 – 0.30m
27603	Layer	Backfill of made ground, mixed sand and clay with occasional pebbles	0.30 – 0.80m
27604	Natural	Soft reddish brown clay silt with pebbles and gravel	>0.80m

Trench 286

Site area: Station Road

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 25

Orientation : W-E

For main deposit description see Trench 272

Trench 290, 332

Site area: Swan Street

Dimensions: See 1:500 plan 31

Orientation : W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
29001	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.15m
29002	Layer	Loose made ground, dark grey clay silt with rubble	0.15 – 0.70m
29003	Structure	Possible wall of blue lias disturbed by machine	0.45m bgs
29004	Fill	Compact reddish brown clay (redeposited natural)	0.70m
29005	Structure	Limestone well, photographed but left <i>in-situ</i>	0.70m bgs
29006	Structure	Limestone wall, photographed but left <i>in-situ</i>	0.70m bgs
29007	Natural	Compact reddish brown clay with pebbles	>0.70m

Trenches 291-293, 294-321

Site area: Bleachfield Street

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 37 and 39

Orientation : S-N

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
29101	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.10m
29102	Layer	Hardcore of brick and pebble rubble	0.10 – 0.30m
29103	Layer	Made ground of sand and pebbles in a firm dark grey clay silt	0.30 – 0.50m
29104	Natural	Hard reddish brown sandy clay with frequent medium rounded pebbles	>0.90m
29106	Layer	Dark grey silty clay	0.10 – 0.70m
29107	Natural	Loose orange brown silty clay	>0.70m
29301	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.15m
29302	Layer	Hardcore of brick and stone	0.15 – 0.40m
29303	Layer	Made ground of cobbles and pebbles in a firm dark grey clay silt	0.40 – 0.70m
29304	Structure	Brick-lined culvert, with partial survival of capping	>0.70m
29305	Natural	Hard reddish brown sandy clay with frequent medium pebbles	>0.70m

Trench 350

Site area: Stratford Road

Dimensions: See 1:500 plans 31 and 32

Orientation : W-E

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
35001	Structure	Tarmac road surface	0.00 – 0.10m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
35002	Layer	Cinder and concrete aggregate	0.10 – 0.20m
35003	Layer	Stone and rubble aggregate	0.20 – 0.60m
35004	Layer	Compacted dark grey silty clay with moderate rounded pebbles	0.60 – 1.00m
35005	Natural	Hard blue lias in a silty clay matrix	>1.00m

Trenches 429 - 443

Site area: Birch Abbey

Dimensions: See 1:500 Figure 5

Orientation : S-N

No deposits were encountered because the water mains pipe was laid within existing pipe structures.

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

63	Fieldwork progress records AS2
12	Photographic record sheets AS3
6	Black and white photographic films
392	Trench record sheets AS41
43	Scale drawings and 22 measured sketches
2	Boxes of finds
	CD ROM containing the report and digital photographs

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Warwickshire Museum Services
The Butts
Warwick CV34 4SS
Tel. (01926) 412500

Plates



1. Chantry Crescent Trench 7, context 707 facing north



2. Newport Drive Trench 58, facing southwest



3. Evesham Street Trench 137, facing southeast



4. Evesham Street Trench 137, facing southeast



5. Evesham Street Trench 138, facing northeast



6. Evesham Street Trench 148, facing northeast



7. Birmingham Road Trench 149, facing north



8. Roman Way

Trench 157, facing northeast



9. Birmingham Road Trench 169, facing northeast



10. Roman Way

Trench 178, facing northwest



11. Roman Way

Trench 179, facing northwest



12. Seggs Lane

Trench 164, facing east



13. Seggs Lane

Trench 164, facing south



14. Birmingham Road Trench 200, context 2004, facing north



15. Birmingham Road Trench 200, context 2004 (detail) facing south



16. Birmingham Road Trench 239, context 23905, facing east



17. Birmingham Road Trench 239, context 23905, facing south



18. Birmingham Road Trench 245, context 24506, facing west



19. Birmingham Road Trench 245, context 24906 (detail) facing west



20. Birmingham Road Trench 254, facing west



21. Georgian Close Trench 255, facing south



22. Georgian Close Trench 255, facing east



23. Allimore Lane

Trench 262, facing northwest



24. Allimore Lane

Trench 262, (detail) facing south



25. Hadrian's Walk Trench 264, facing south



26. Swan Street

Trench 290, context 29005, facing northwest



27. Swan Street

Trench 290, context 29006, facing northwest



28. Birch Abbey

Shot of leakage scheme works, facing south



29. Bleachfield Street Shot of leakage scheme works, facing north



30. Bleachfield Street Shot of scheme works from Alne, facing northwest

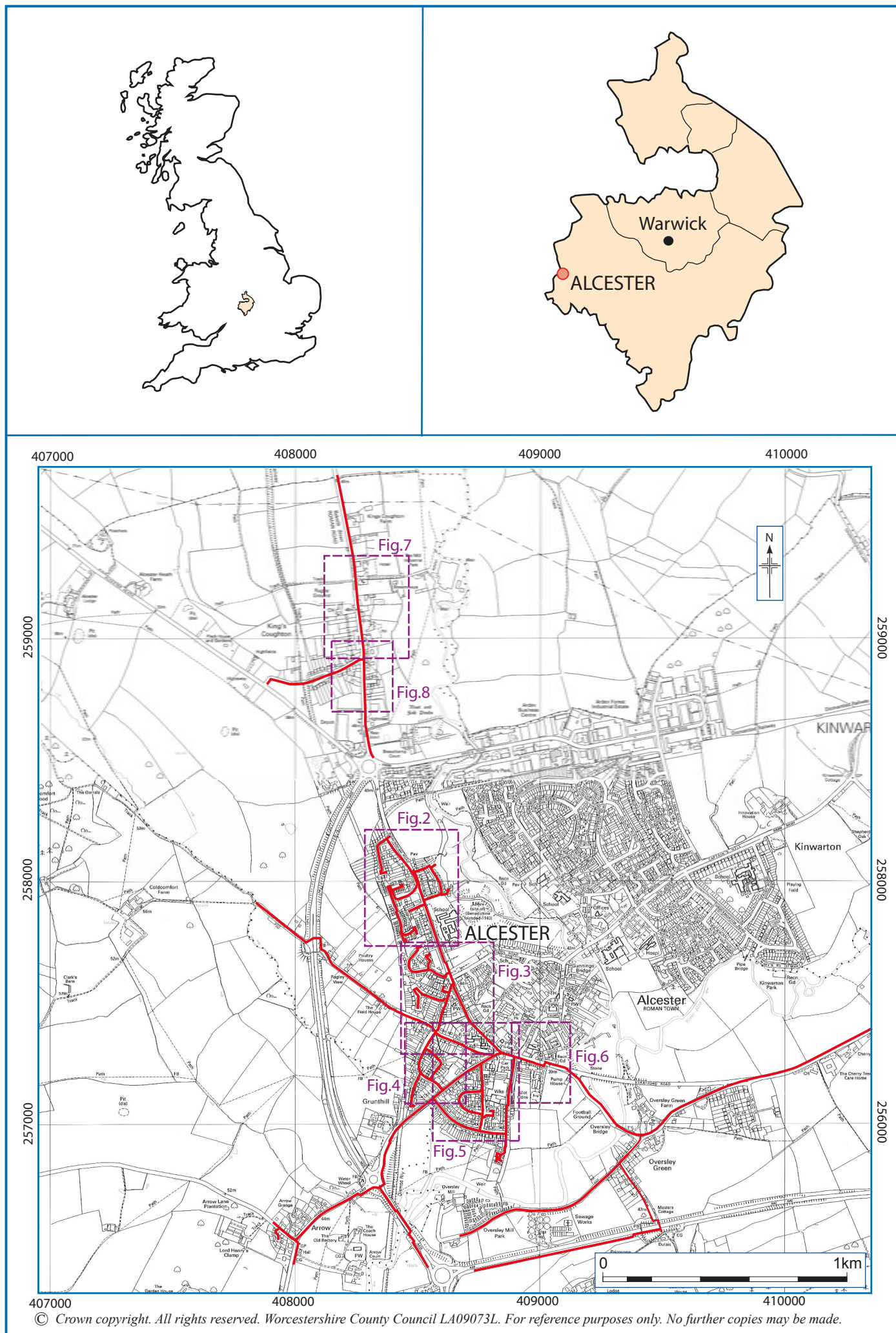


31. Oversley

Possible site of 1st century fort, facing southeast

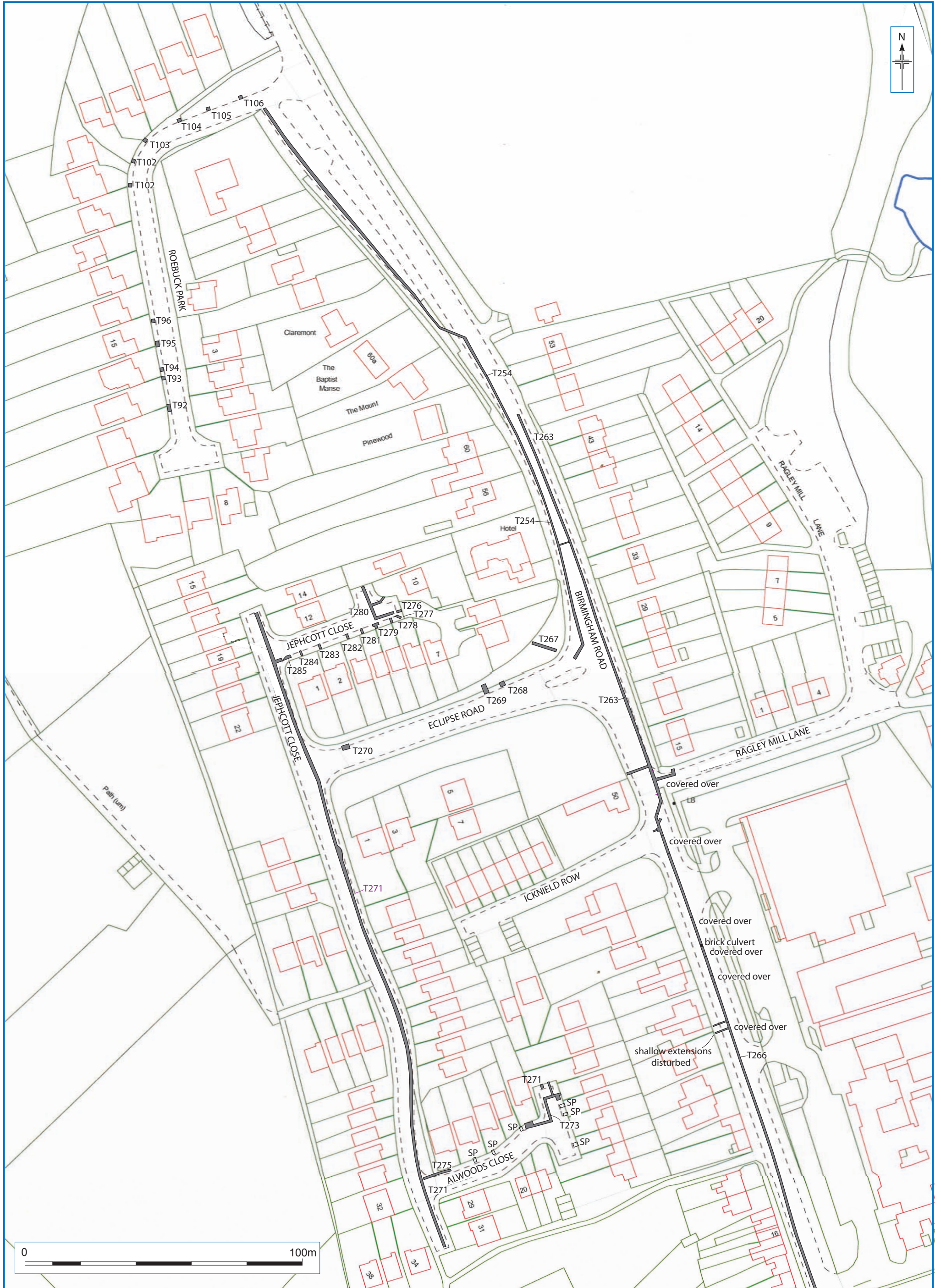


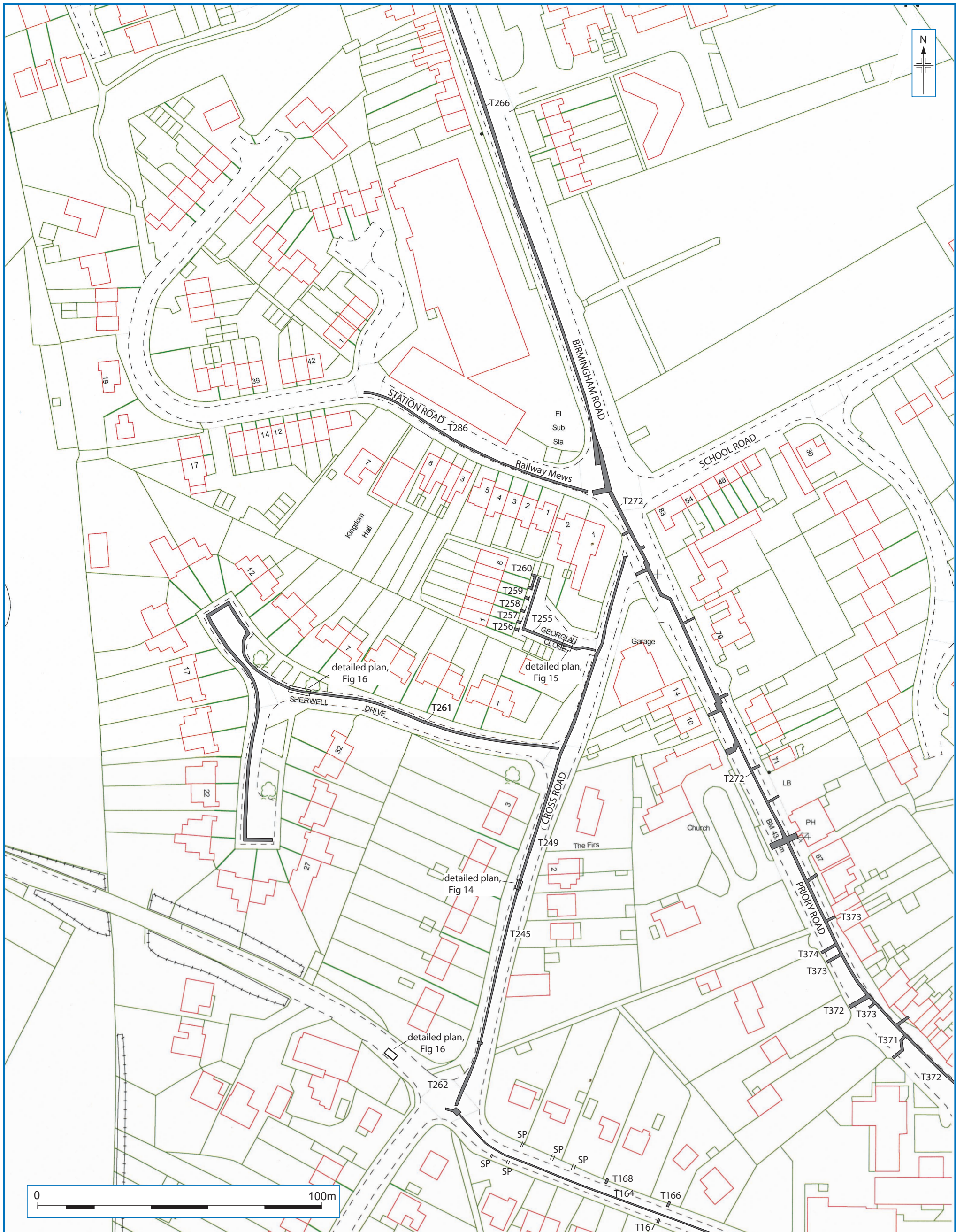
32. Bleachfield Street Trench 293, facing south



Location of the West Alcester Water Main Renewal Scheme

Figure 1

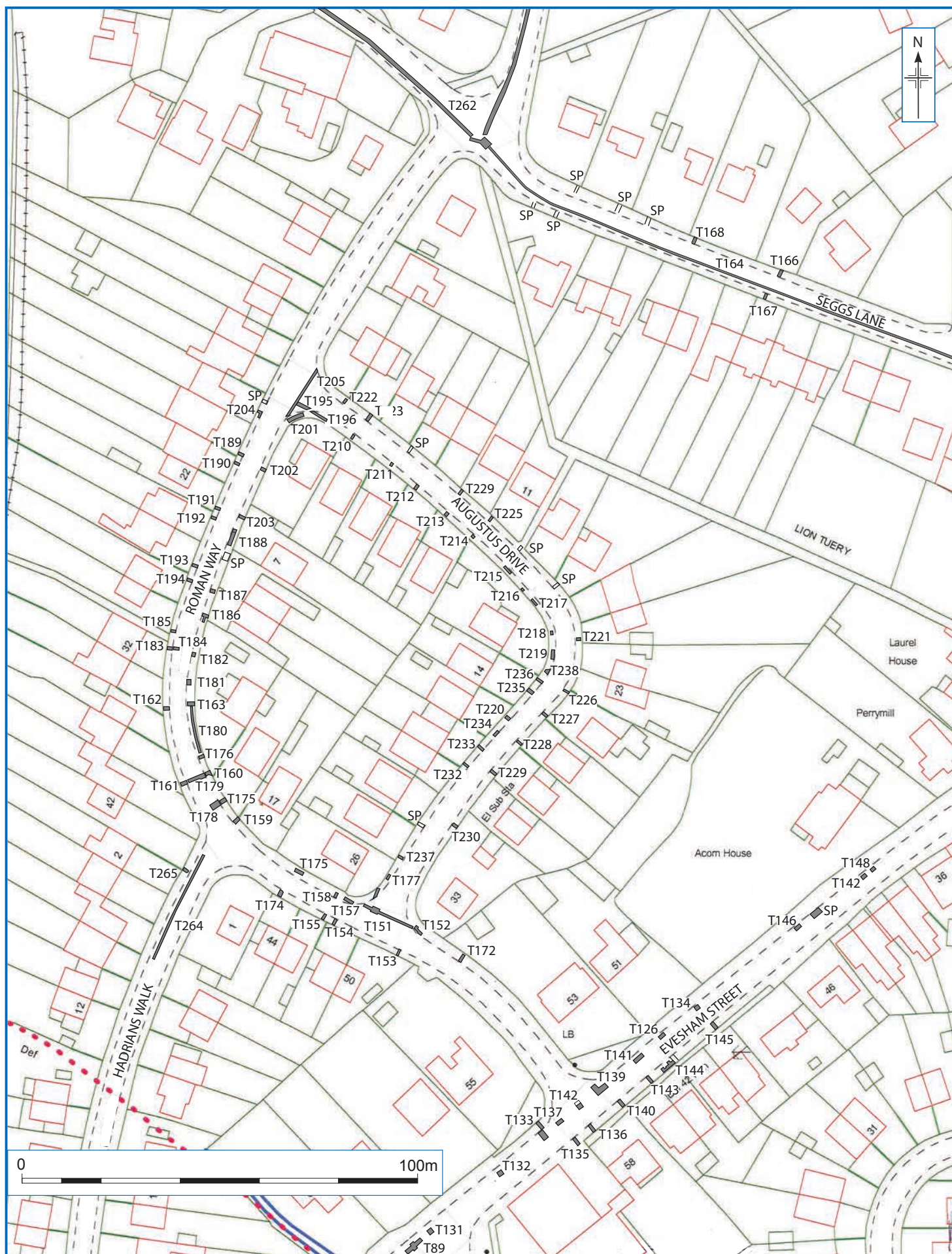




This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Birmingham Road, Cross Road and Priory Road

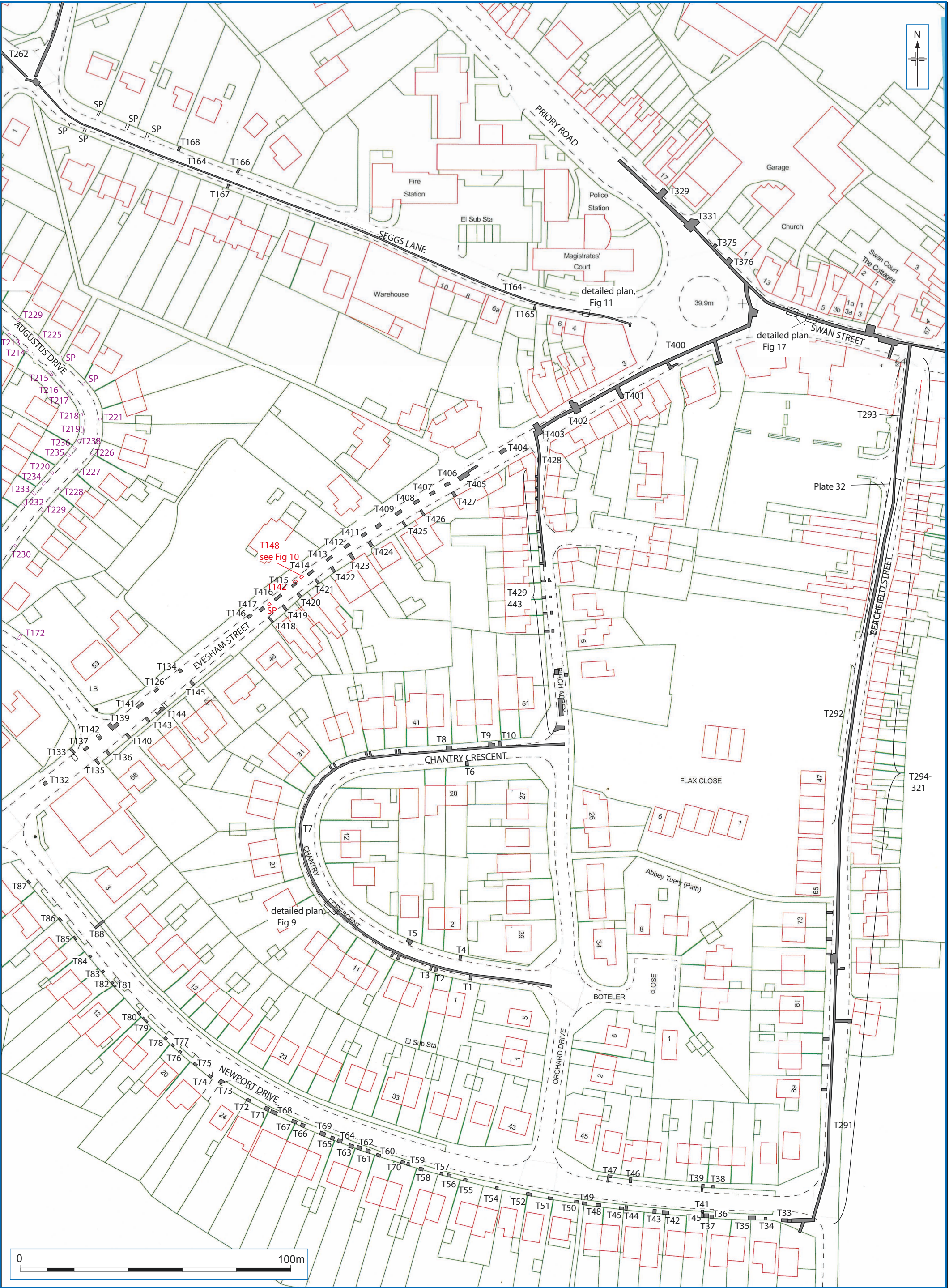
Figure 3



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Roman Way and Evesham Street

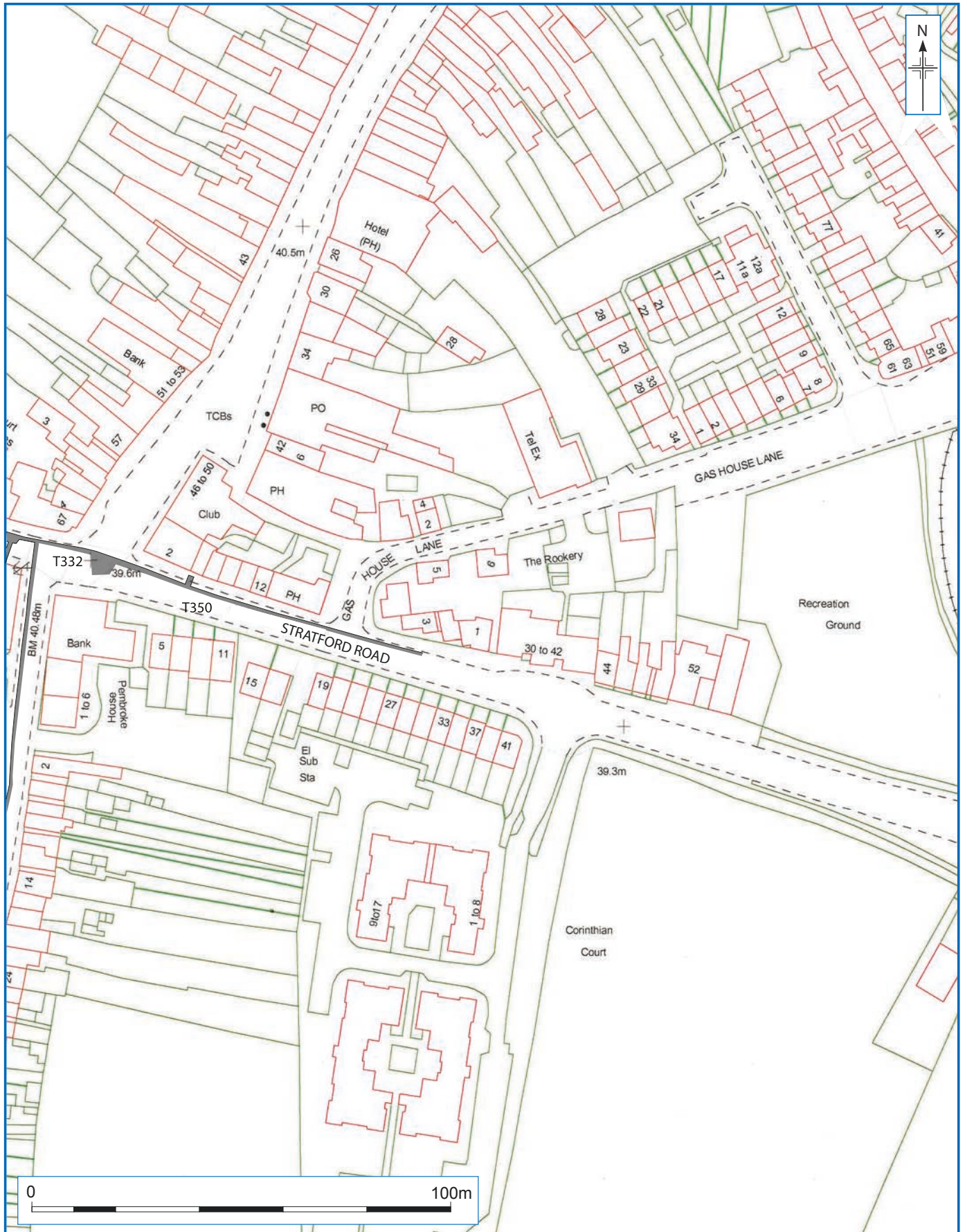
Figure 4



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Newport Drive and Beachfield Street

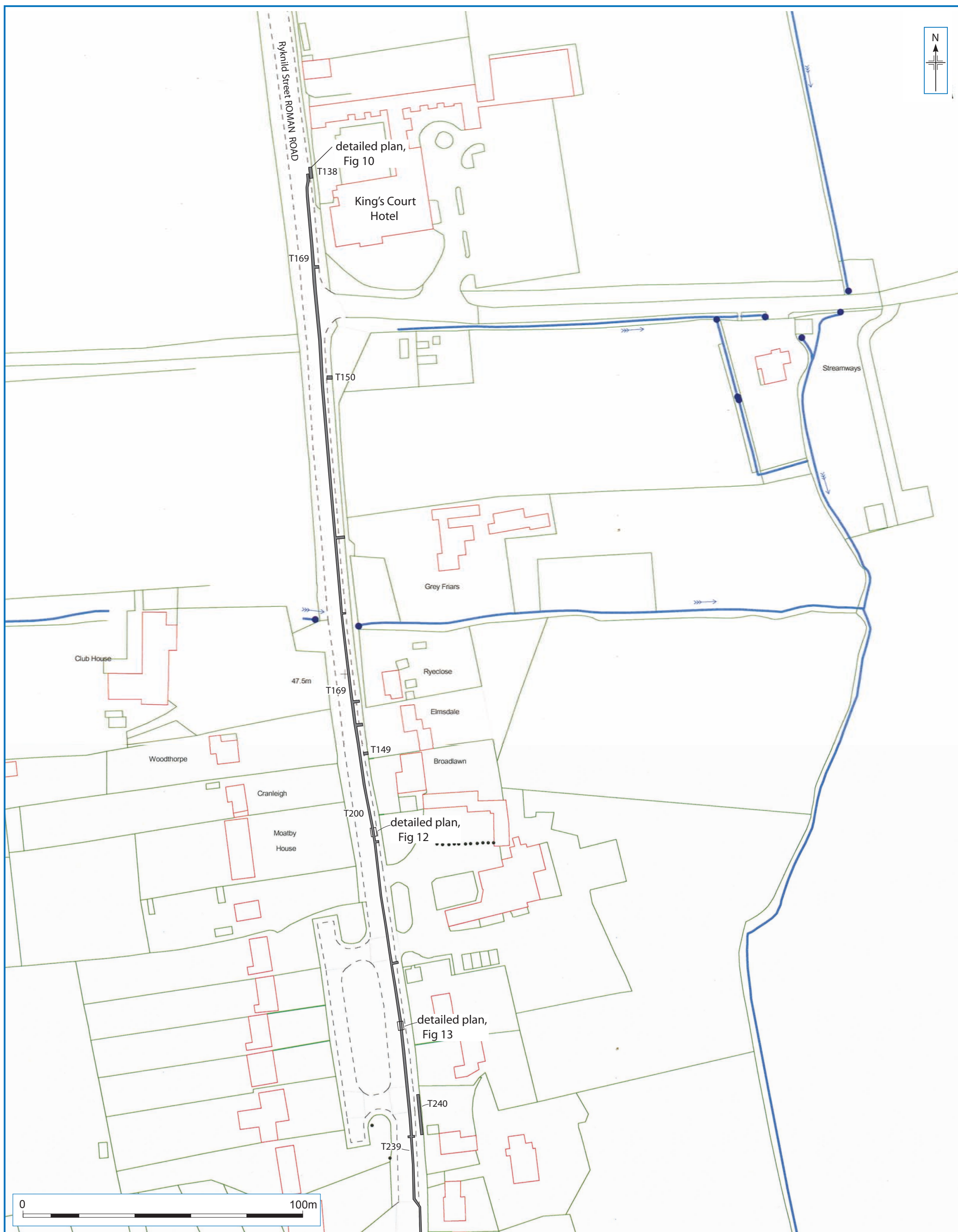
Figure 5



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Stratford Road

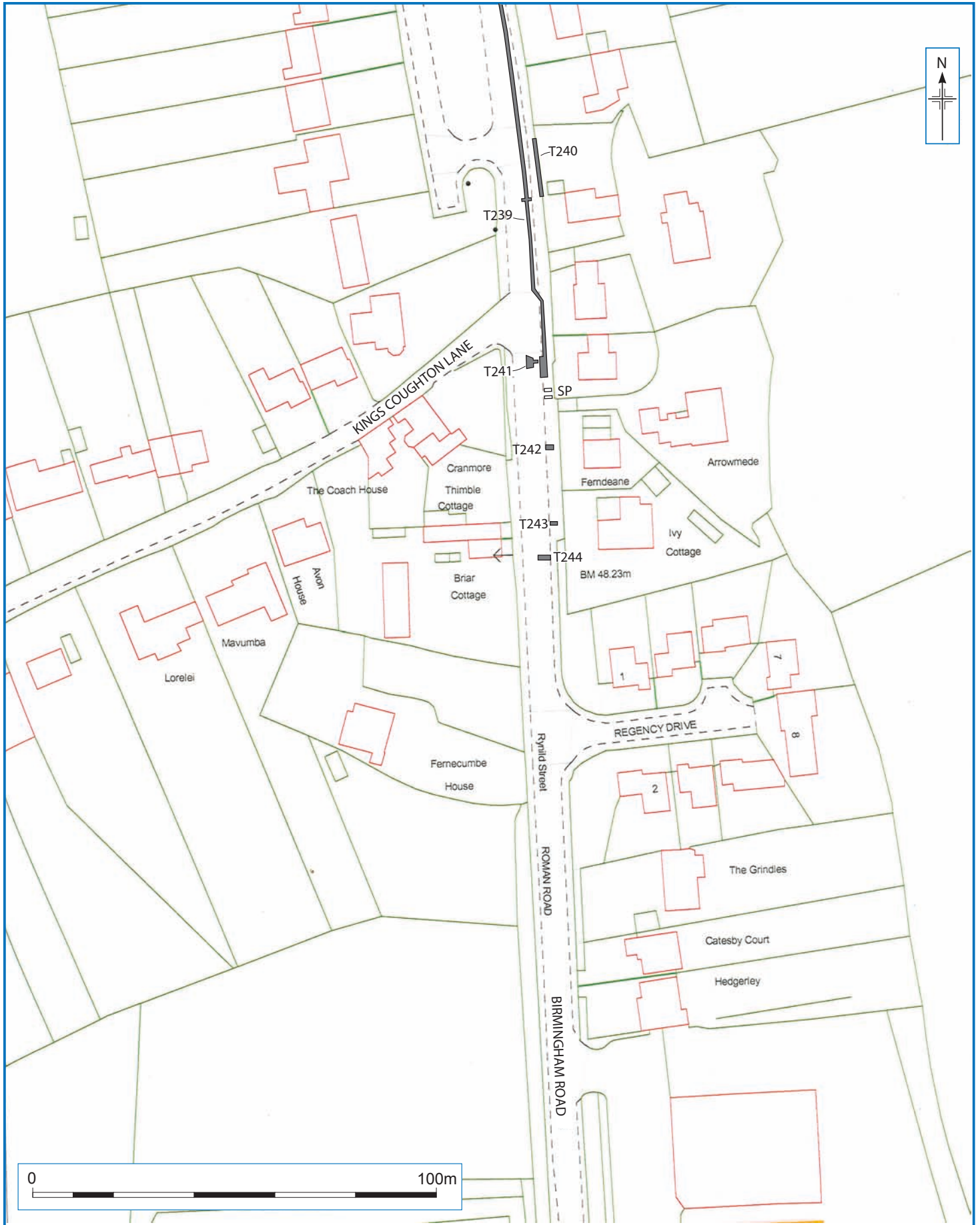
Figure 6



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

Birmingham Road (north section)

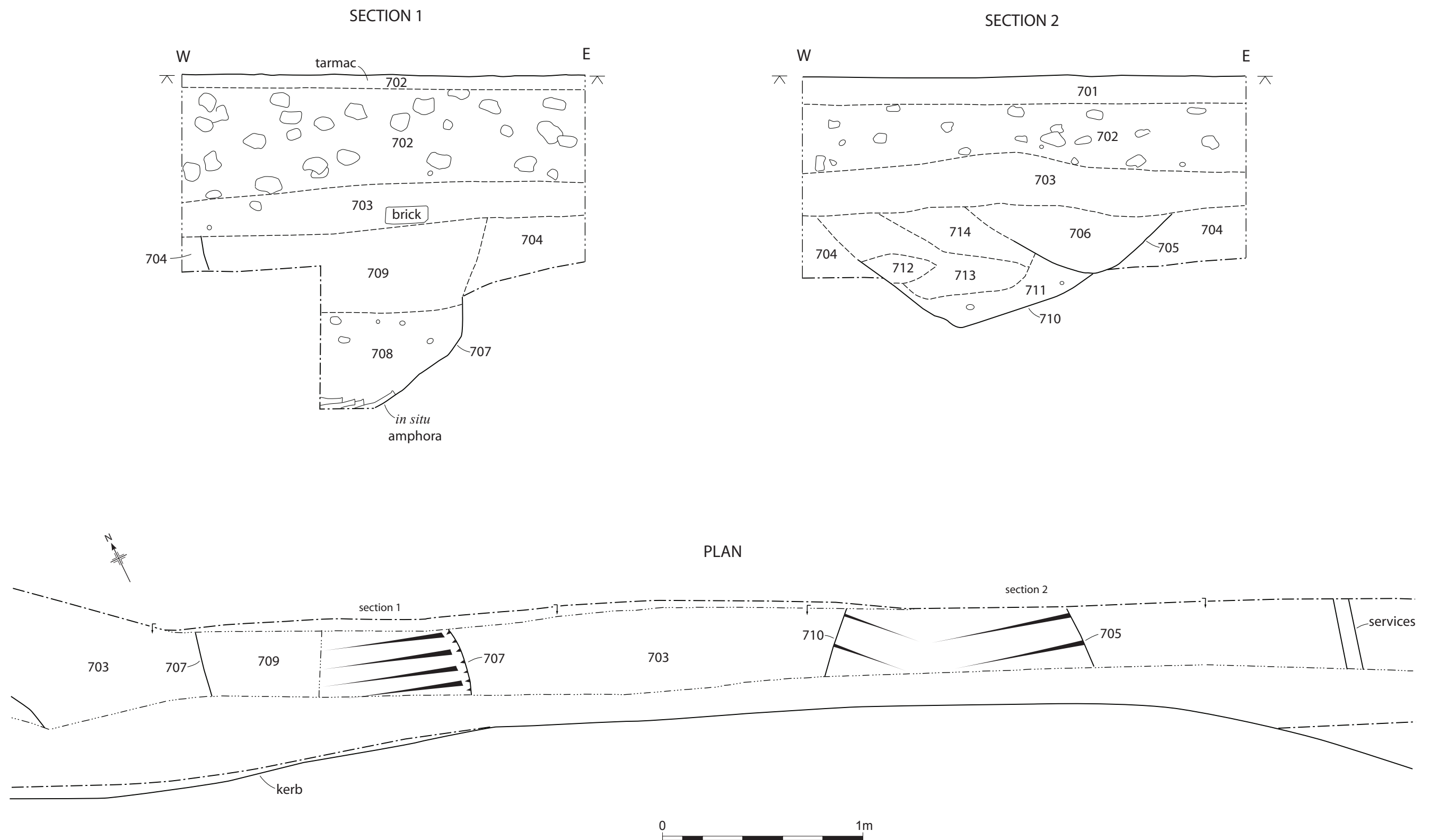
Figure 7



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Worcestershire County Council 100015914. For reference purposes only. No further copies may be made.

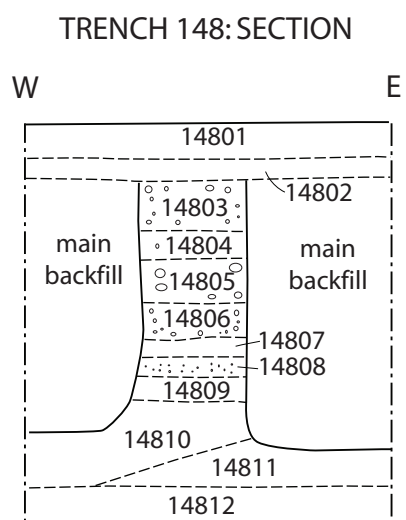
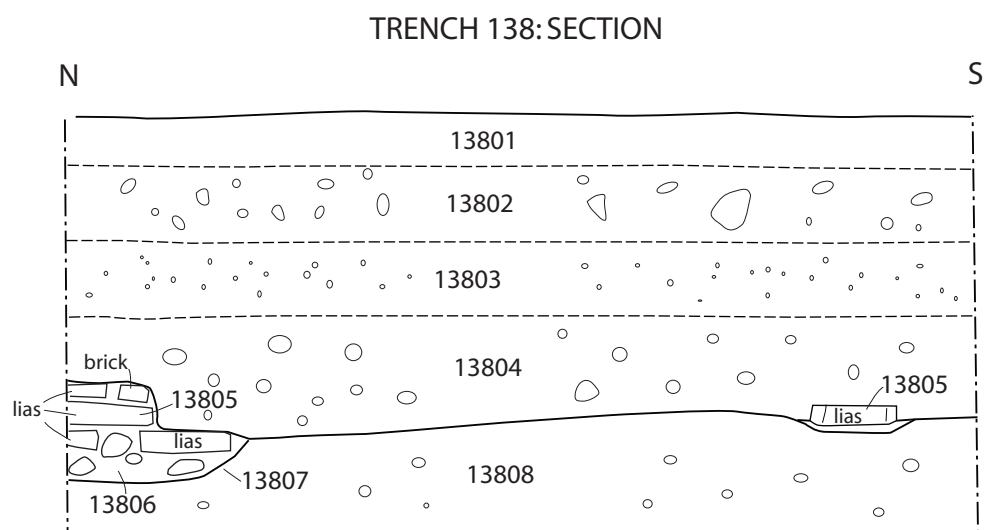
Birmingham Road (north section) continued

Figure 8



Chantry Crescent: plan and sections

Figure 9



Trenches 138 and 148: sections

TRENCH 164: PLAN OF DITCH 16408

No.4

pavement

kerb

Trench 164

SEGGS LANE

16406

16408

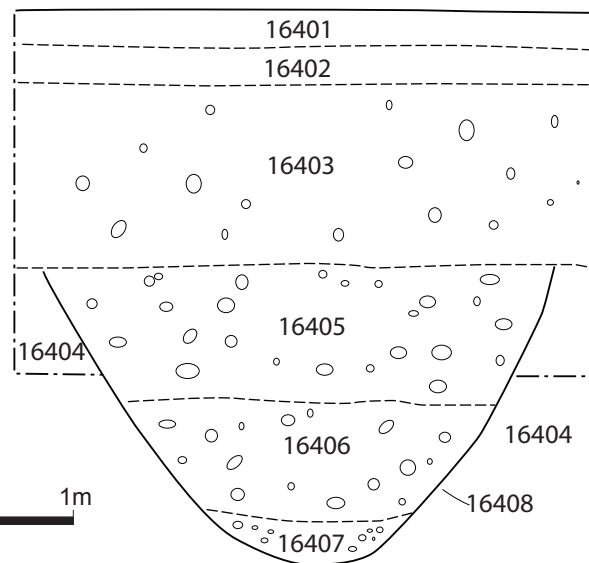
16404



SECTION

E

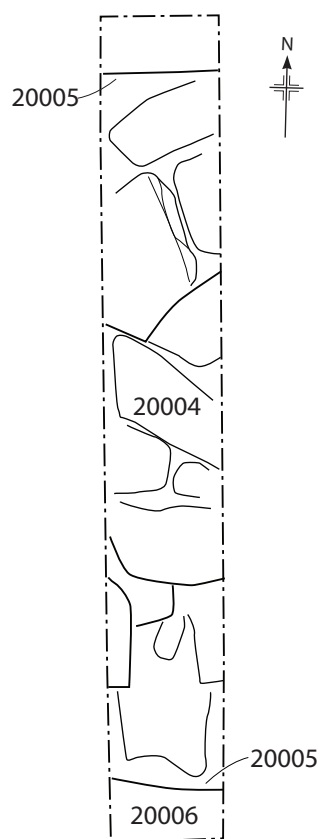
W



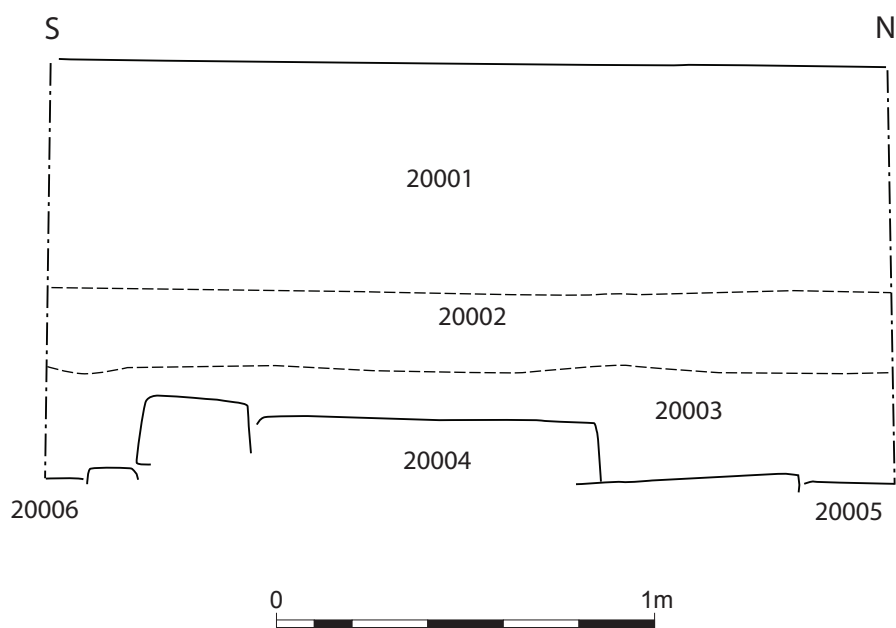
Trench 164: plan and sections

Figure 11

TRENCH 200

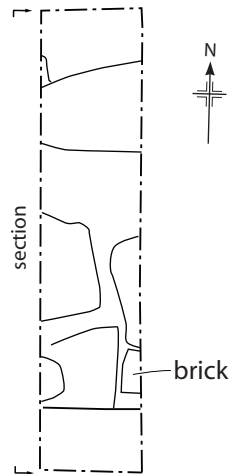


SECTION

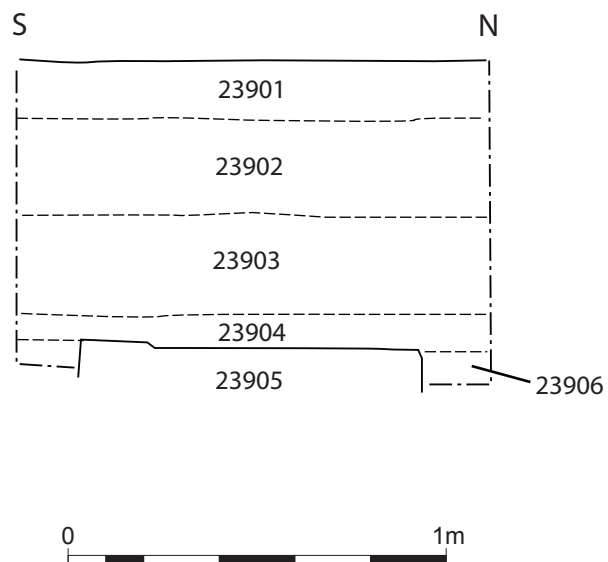


Trench 200: plan and sections

TRENCH 239: PLAN OF WALL 23905



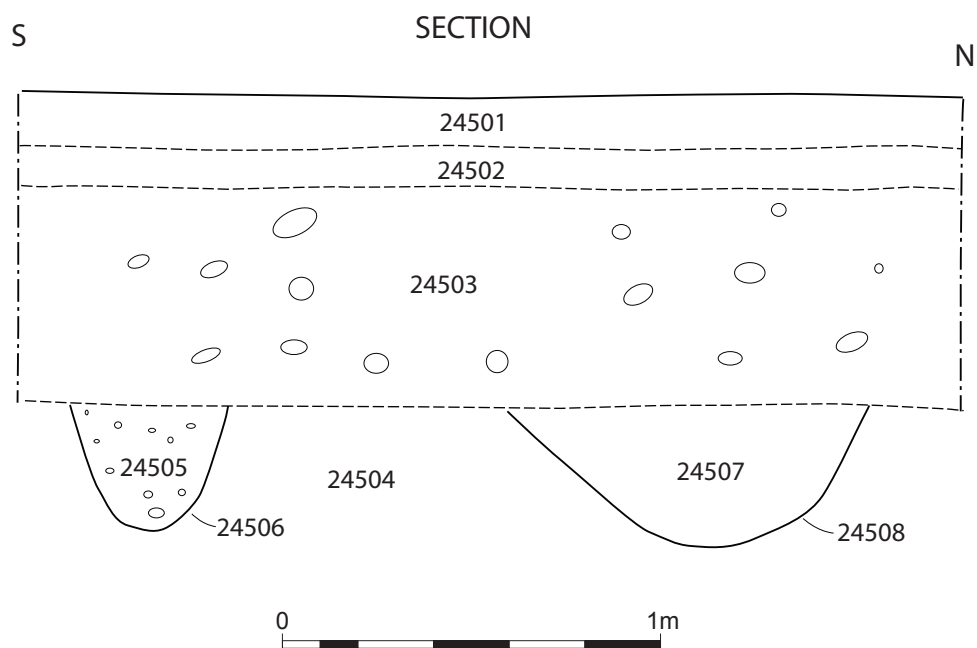
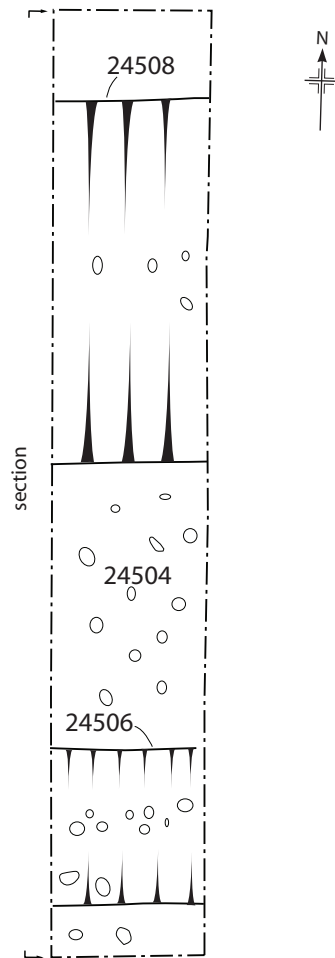
SECTION



Trench 239: plan and sections

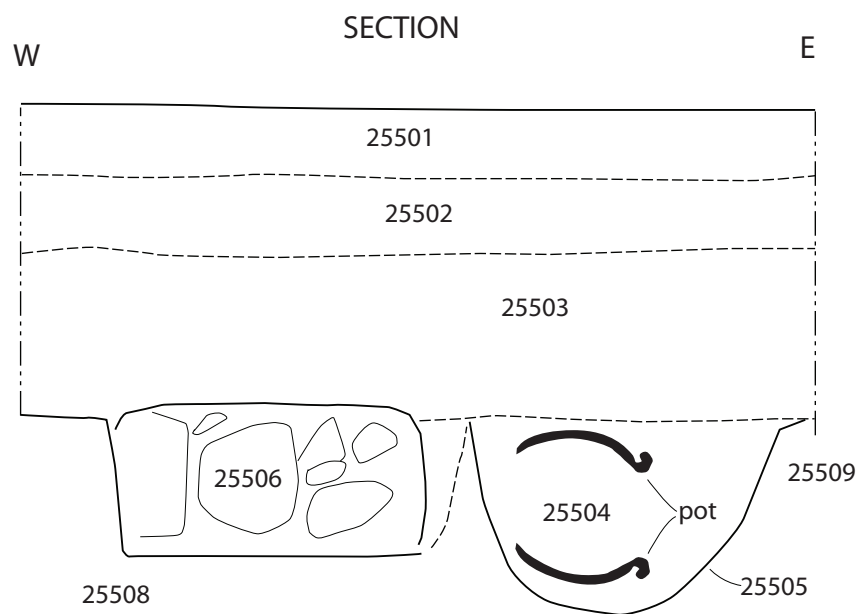
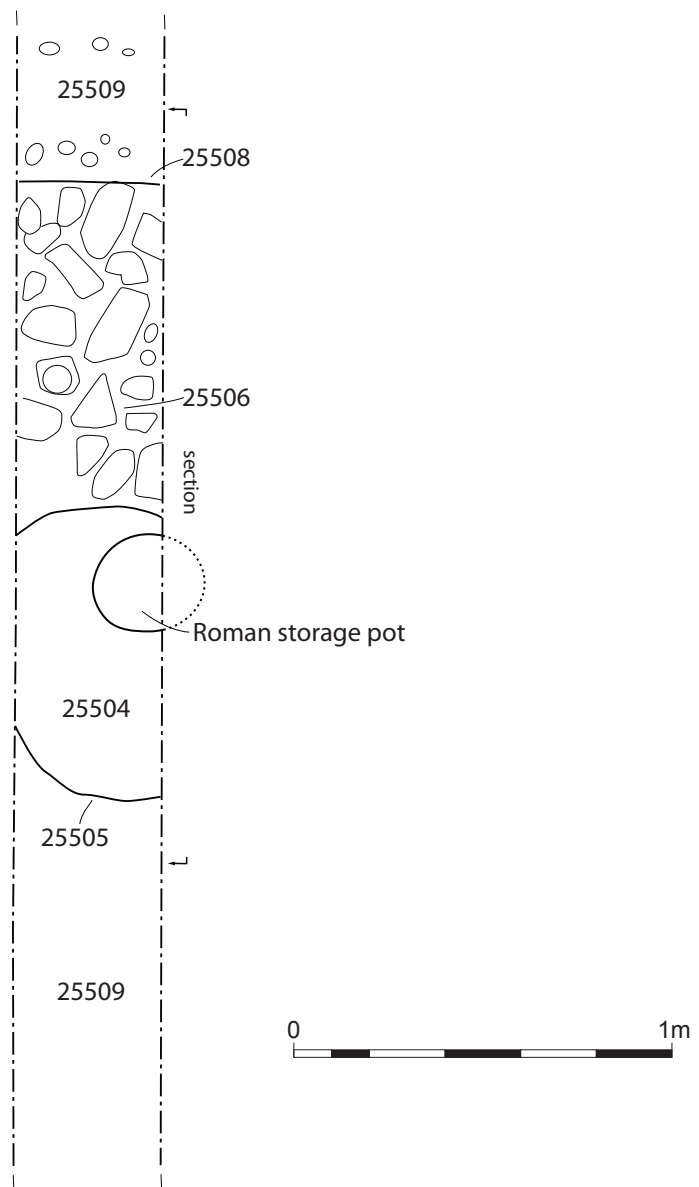
Figure 13

TRENCH 245



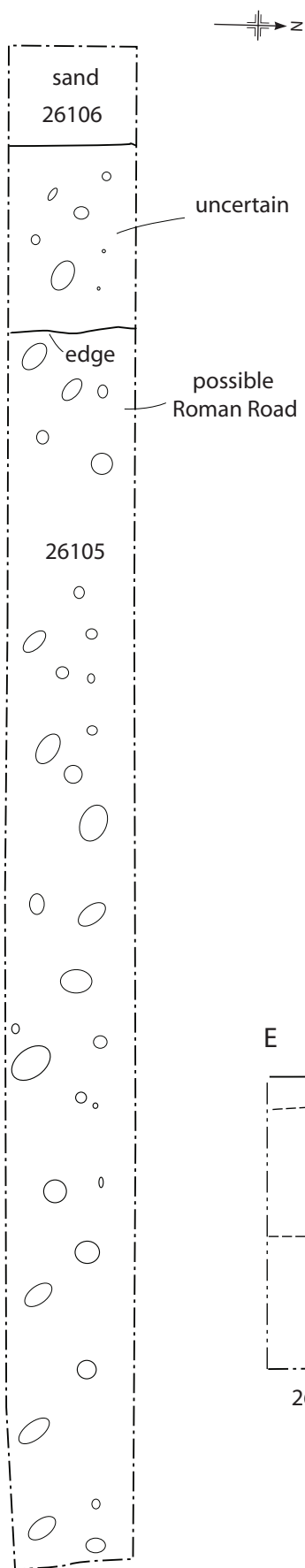
Trench 245 : plan and sections

TRENCH 261

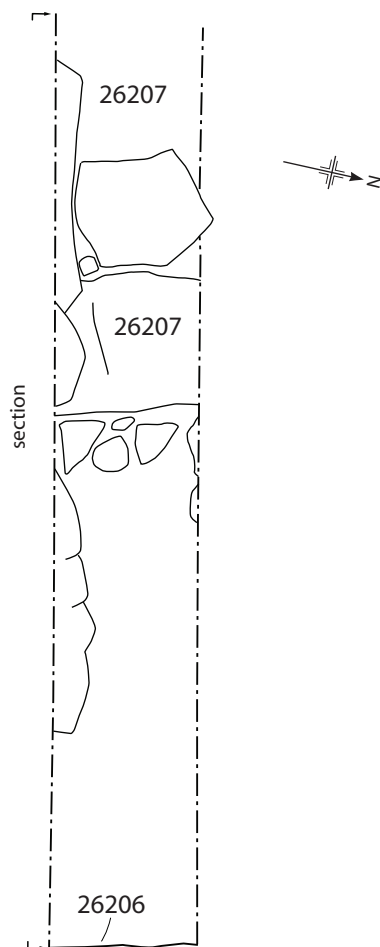


Trench 255: plan and sections

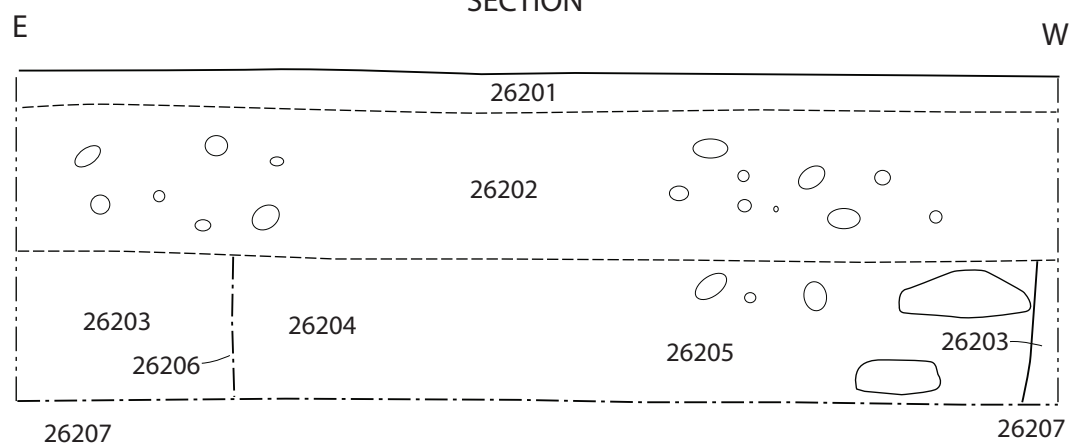
TRENCH 261



TRENCH 262

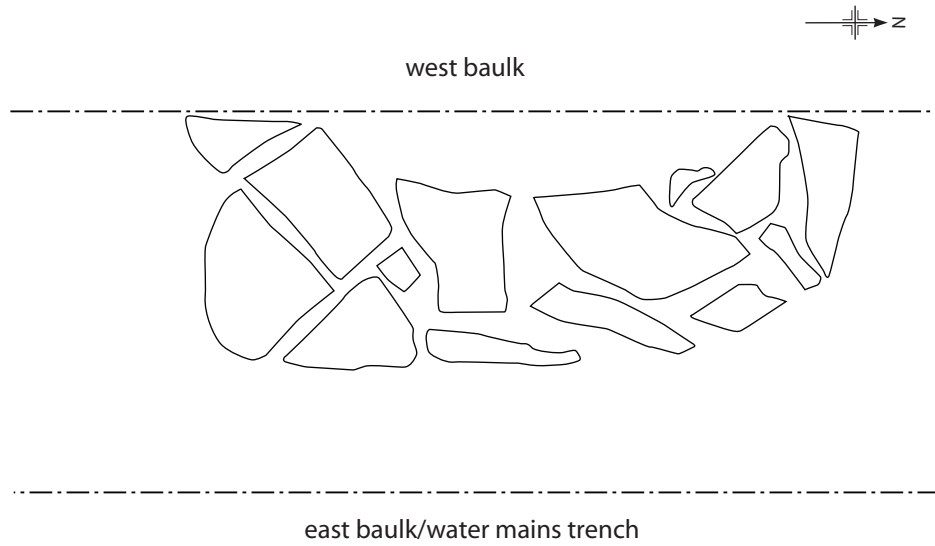


SECTION



0 1m

context 29005: limestone structure



context 29006: limestone wall structure

