JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE WILDERNESS / 1 VALENS TERRACE,

BOX, WILTSHIRE

SN13 8NR

NGR ST 82331 68561

JANUARY 2023

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief on the west side of Box, on the north side of Church Lane (centred NGR ST 82331 68561). The development site is located on the site of Box Roman Villa, Scheduled Monument No: SM 30299, HA 1019189. Partial collapse of the extant boundary wall between the gardens of The Wilderness and 1 Valens Terrace needed rebuilding. Previous evaluation work at the site informed structural engineer plans to install reinforced concrete strip footing above the level of the Roman remains; the groundworks for the trench required to house this concrete footing were subject to watching brief conditions. The subsequent archaeological investigation of the horizons and features was minimally invasive, with preference given to in situ *preservation of the discovered remains.*

*Two sections of Roman masonry were exposed and surveyed during the works: structure **4** corresponded to the previously-mapped "wall 4a", whilst structure **14** was discovered for the first time. It was concluded that a 19th-century protective sandy layer had safeguarded much of the Roman masonry and other deposits from the construction of the boundary wall in this location, with the exception of a small area where an additional foundation was positioned. A post-medieval ditch was also uncovered, probably related to garden use; residual artefacts of Roman pottery, tesserae, wall plaster, and ceramic building material were recovered from the ditch fill, indicating that archaeological remains had been disturbed by the residential activity.*

The northern edges of two post-medieval to modern features were revealed, though their functions could not be ascertained. Post-medieval to modern finds were also encountered in the two uppermost deposits, which were garden soil layers imported by the previous owner of The Wilderness.

Overall, this archaeological watching brief succeeded in facilitating the works to repair the partially-collapsed garden boundary wall, whilst simultaneously protecting and developing understanding of Box Roman Villa scheduled monument.

1 INTRODUCTION

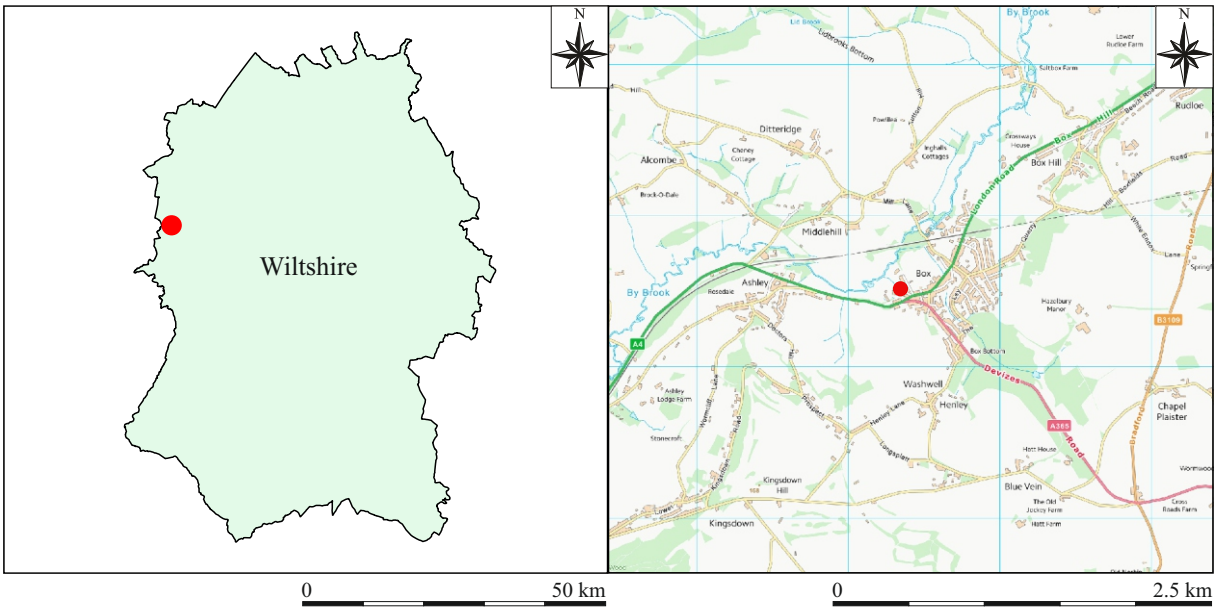
1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

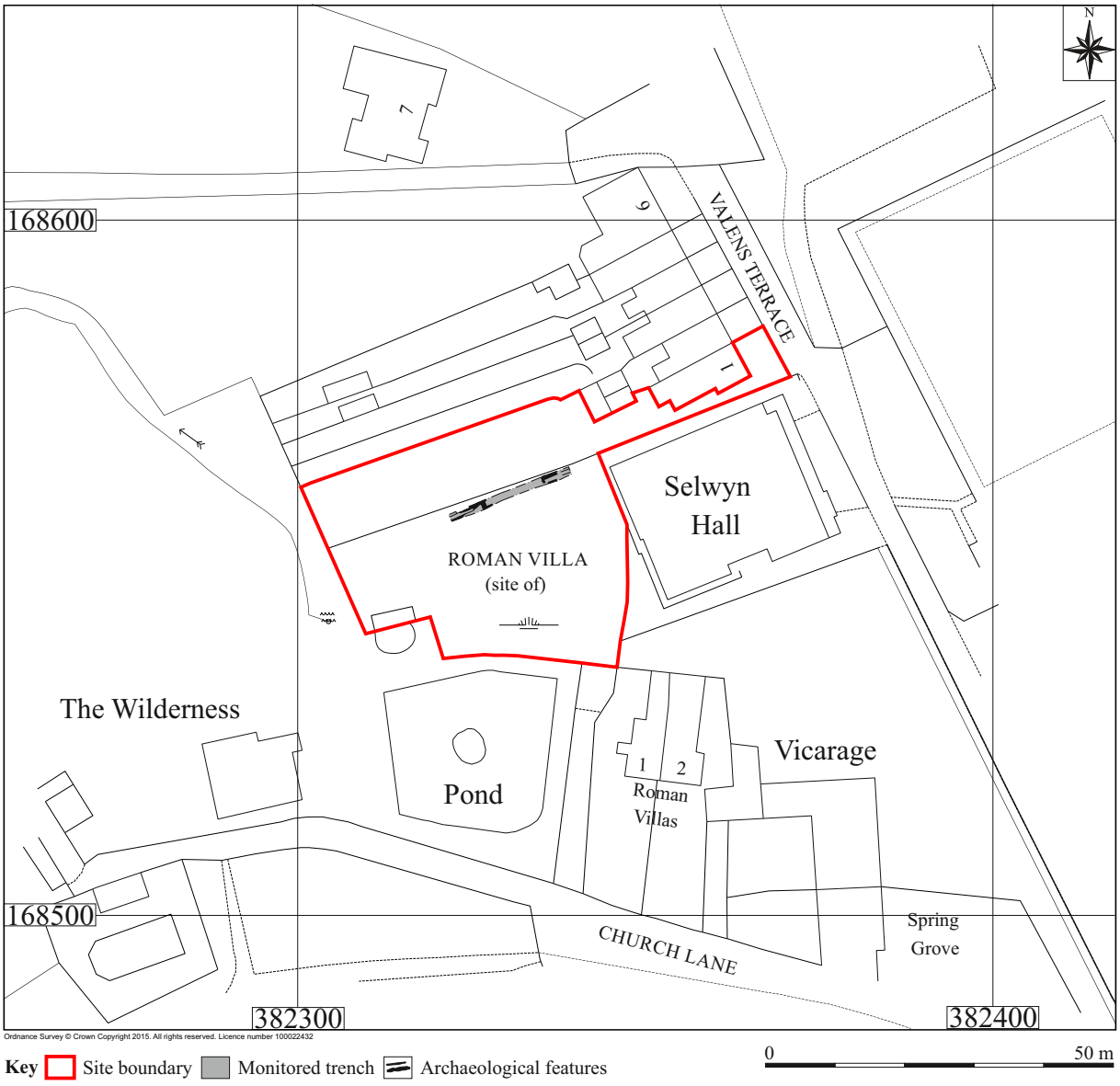
The development site is located on the west side of Box, on the north side of Church Lane (centred NGR ST 82331 68561).

The site is currently residential and lies at approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The underlying geology is Bridport Sand Formation, a sandstone sedimentary bedrock, overlain by a superficial alluvial clay, silt, sand, and gravel deposit (https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html).

1.2 Planning Background

The site location plan was submitted along with the Scheduled Monument Consent Application Form. Scheduled Monument Consent (S00241228) had been granted for





Key Site boundary | Monitored trench | Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

the rebuilding of a stone boundary wall between The Wilderness and No1 Valens Terrace (Scheduled Monument No: SM 30299, HA 1019189). Conditions were attached to the consent:

(a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by Historic England. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments (southwestcasework@historicengland.org.uk) in order that an Historic England representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.

(b) No groundworks shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(c) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the owner that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.

(d) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.

(e) The foundation shall be no deeper than the evaluation test pits and the base of the new foundation trench will be no deeper than 41.60m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

(f) A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the County Historic Environment Record and to Mel Barge at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

(g) The contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - http://oasis.ac.uk/england/) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of this collapsed section of wall lies partly within the scheduled area of Roman villa 500m southeast of Hill House Farm (List Entry No. 1019189) which is more commonly known as Box Roman villa. The villa survives as a series of buried deposits and a standing wall, situated on an east to west terrace on the south side of a valley overlooking Box Brook.

Two partial excavations and a series of smaller archaeological evaluations have revealed three sides of a courtyard type villa showing evidence of occupation between

the second and third centuries AD. The last phase of rebuilding took place in the later third or early fourth century AD. An imported marble wall tile and 20 mosaic floors dating from the second to fourth centuries AD identified within the main complex demonstrate the high status of the villa throughout its use.

A series of wall foundations, a drain, and a boundary ditch towards the western end of Church Lane and within the grounds of 'The Wilderness' and 'Box House' relate directly to the main villa building and suggest either a further wing or ancillary structures associated with an outer courtyard located on the western side of the complex.

An evaluation consisting of trial pits was carried out by JMHS in January 2021. The depth of the Roman archaeological horizon was at approximately 1-1.3m below the current ground level on the SE side of the wall. The ground level was lower on the NW side, where fewer archaeological deposits appeared to have survived (JMHS 2021a).

Trial pits TP1, TP2, and TP5, excavated within the garden of The Wilderness, revealed thick layers of garden soil and levelling deposits approximately 1m in total depth, built up against the southeastern side of the wall. Deposits (1/01 – 1/04), (2/01 – 202) and (5/01 – 5/02) are most likely to be the imported material by the previous owner of The Wilderness. Deposits (1/05), (2/03), and (5/03) were garden deposits at the time of the boundary wall construction. This additional material increasing weight on one side of the wall has probably resulted in the partial collapse of the wall (*ibid*).

Intact archaeological deposits were encountered below the garden soil and levelling deposits at depths of 1.03 to 1.24m below ground level. Within TP1, TP2, and TP5, the archaeological horizon comprised a sandy bedding surface, perhaps associated with a previously removed floor. No structural features were recorded. The base of the boundary wall footing was encountered at 1 to 1.1m below present ground level and was seen to have been constructed directly on or just above the underlying Roman deposits (*ibid*).

On the northwest side of the wall, within the garden of 1 Valens Terrace, were trial pits TP3 and TP4. In TP3 a compact rubble deposit was encountered immediately below the boundary wall footing. In TP4 a dump of loose rubble was encountered; this appeared to sit within a cut, perhaps associated with the known buttress walling in this area, suggesting that the Roman wall has been robbed for its stone. In both trenches the base of the boundary wall footing was located at or just below current ground level (*ibid*).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any archaeological remains that are encountered during the groundworks
- To aid to the understanding of the scheduled monument
- To further ascertain the amount of imported soil into the garden of The Wilderness

In particular, to address the following questions:

- Was this length of wall entirely founded on the top, or just above, the Roman deposits? Did the wall construction physically impact any Roman deposits? Has the use of the garden prior to the importation of soil impacted on any archaeological deposits?
- Is there any evidence of walls or of the robbing of them for their stone?

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Melanie Barge, the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments (JMHS 2021b).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

3.2 Methodology

The groundworks consisted of a single foundation trench measuring 18.69m in length; between approximately 1.00m to 1.20m in width, and up to approximately 1.00m in depth; the ground was hand-excavated by groundworkers.

Where archaeological horizons were encountered, they were cleaned by the archaeologist by hand. In all cases, investigation of the archaeological horizons and features was minimally invasive, with preference given to *in situ* preservation of the discovered remains where possible. Standard John Moore Heritage Services recording techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

The spoil from all of the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Roman period.

Where a Roman wall was discovered, the ground reduction was halted to protect the masonry. Discussion between John Moore Heritage Services, the architect, and the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments led to a revision of the modern wall construction plans, which allowed shallower foundations in parts. Furthermore, when ground reduction was complete, a soil ‘blinding’ layer was laid over the base of the whole trench, followed by a sheet of geotextile, followed by a second soil ‘blinding’ layer. These three layers protected the underlying archaeology ahead of the pouring of concrete, as agreed with the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

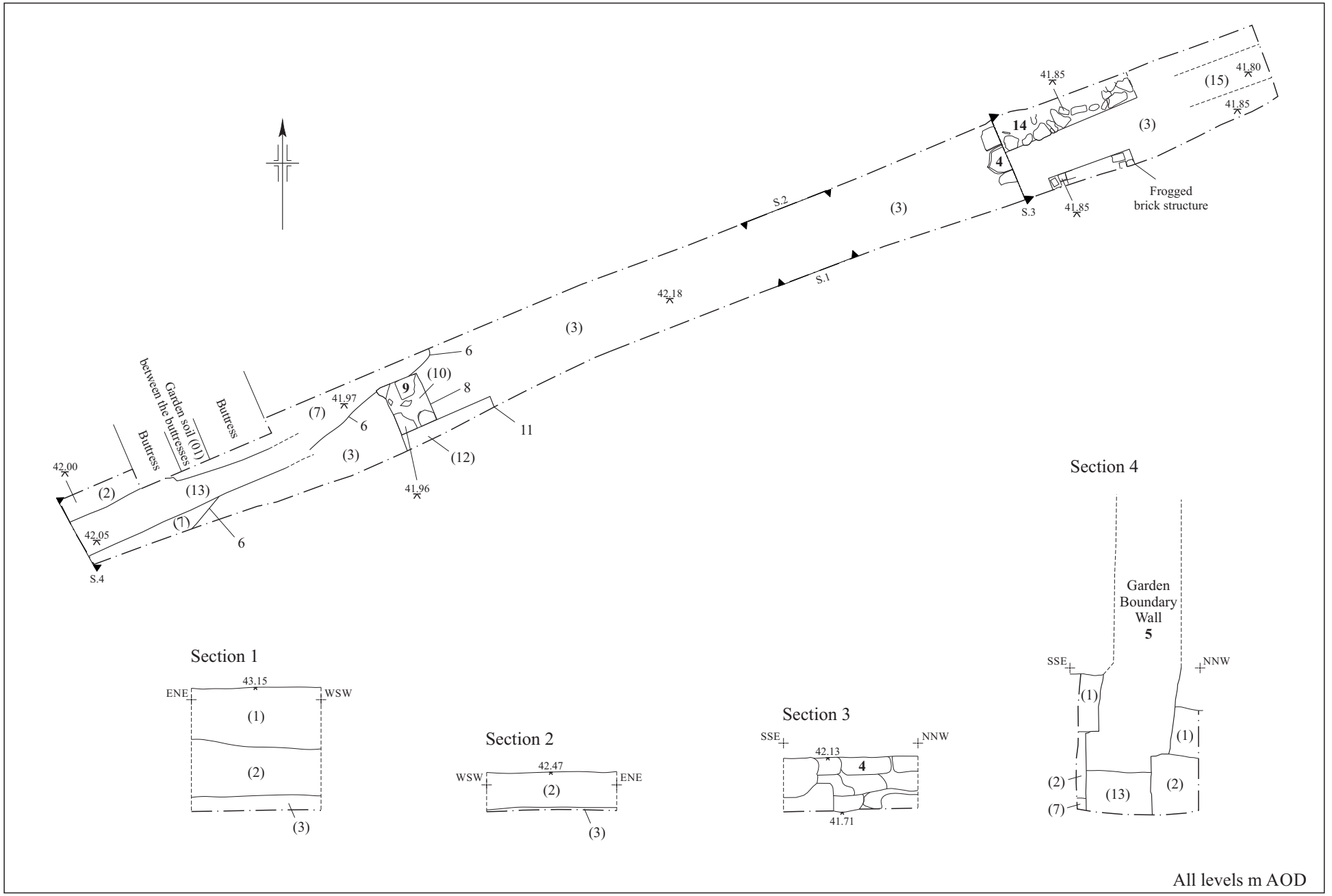


Figure 2: Site plan and sections

A Roman wall or other masonry structure – oriented north-northwest to south-southeast and recorded as structure **4** – was uncovered in the east-northeast half of the trench and consisted of large roughly squared limestone with squared random coursing. It was bonded by mid yellowish grey lime mortar. The structure was over 1m in length and over 0.36m in width; three courses were visible, though it extended below the limit of excavation (see Plate 1).

Plate 1: Roman masonry structure **4**

Plate 2: Structure **14** butting structure **4**

Masonry structure **14** abutted the east-northeast edge of structure **4** and ran perpendicularly, aligned west-southwest to east-northeast (see Plate 2). The top of structure **14** was discovered 0.28m below the top of wall **4**, and was also made with large limestones. The largest limestone visible measured 250mm in breadth by 200mm in length by 65mm in thickness, whereas the smallest stone measured 100x 160x60mm. The limestone was roughly squared, random coursed, and bonded with

mid yellowish grey lime mortar. Two courses were visible in wall **14**, though it also extended below the limit of excavation. It was over 0.52m in width and 2.07m or greater in length; a possible east-northeast edge was observed, but it could instead have represented wall robbing, collapse, or other disturbance at this point.

Above and beside the top courses of structures **4** and **14** was a deposit which was encountered across the development area, consisting of compact mid brownish orange sand (3), with frequent inclusions of sub-angular gravel (10-50mm in size) (see Plate 3). Finds of Roman wall plaster, a mosaic *tessera*, tile fragments, post-medieval pottery and an iron fastener were recovered from the deposit.

Cut into deposit (3) was linear ditch 6, which was was located at the west-southwest end of the trench, oriented northeast-southwest (see Plate 4). The ditch was over 5.73m in length, and probably approximately 0.75m in width. The edge of the ditch curved at the furthest northeastern point that could be seen in the trench, indicating a potential turn or termination of ditch 6 just beyond the limit of excavation. The feature did not require excavation as it was not impacted by the proposed works. The top fill of ditch 6 was recorded in plan and consisted of friable mid greyish brown sandy clay (7), with frequent small sub-angular stones (2-15mm) and occasional larger sub-angular stones (50-200mm). The fill contained Roman pottery, wall plaster, *tesserae*, brick, and tile, as well as a fragment of animal bone.

Deposit (3) and ditch fill (7) were both cut by construction cut 8, which housed masonry structure **9** and backfill deposit (10) (see Plate 4). Construction cut 8 was rectangular in shape, with 90^{o} corners, dimensions of 0.75m by 0.60m, and a north-northwest to south-southeast orientation. This feature also did not require excavation so its depth is unknown, though a small test sondage proved that it was greater than 0.15m. Structure **9** within the construction cut was made with large limestones; the largest limestone visible measured 280mm in breadth by 360mm in length by 95mm in thickness, whereas the smallest stone measured 120x200x85mm. The limestone was roughly squared, with coursing that was probably either random coursed or random uncoursed – only one course of stone could be seen so this could not be confirmed. Once again, the structure extended below the limit of excavation. Unlike other limestone structures observed in the trench, structure **9** appeared only to be bonded by earth, a sandy clay loam matrix: deposit (10). Deposit (10) was a loose mid greyish brown sandy clay loam containing frequent sub-rounded stones (1-18mm), a piece of animal bone and a fragment of Roman roof tile.

The extant garden boundary wall separating The Wilderness from 1 Valens Terrace was recorded as wall **5**, constructed with roughly squared random coursed limestone, bonded with cement and lime mortar. Before its collapse, wall **5** would have directly overlaid structure **9**. Similarly, deposit (13) lay at the base of wall **5** at the west-southwest end of the trench, and deposit (15) lay at the base of wall **5** at the east-northeast end of the trench. Both deposits were friable mid greyish brown sandy clays with frequent sub-angular limestone inclusions, ranging in size from 80mm to 350mm. At the far west-southwest end of the trench, loose mid orange sand very similar to deposit (3) was mixed with deposit (13) (see Plate 5).

Immediately adjacent to the south-southeast edge of construction cut 8 was rectangular or square feature 11 (see Plate 4). It also had 90^{o} corners, with a length of

Plate 3: Representative section showing the deposits which form the landscape

Plate 4: Ditch 6, construction cut 8, and feature 11

Plate 5: Section 4, showing the extant garden boundary wall; deposit (13); ditch 6; and imported garden soils (2) and (1)

1.40m, a width of over 0.25m, and an unknown depth. The feature extended beyond the south-southeast limit of excavation, as well as below the base of the trench. The uppermost fill of feature 11 consisted of friable dark brown sandy clay (12), which abutted structure **9**. Fill (12) contained rare inclusions of sub-angular stone (30-110mm), as well as Roman and undated ceramic building material.

Near the east-northeastern end of the trench, the edge of another structure was observed – 1.23m long and over 0.21m wide – which was constructed of frogged bricks in a dark silty matrix. The structure was not numbered.

Overlying deposit (3) across the trench was a friable to compact mid brownish grey silty clay made ground or built-up garden soil layer (2), which was approximately 0.44m thick (see Plates 3 and 5). Deposit (2) contained frequent sub-angular stone inclusions, ceramic building material, and occasional grass roots. A representative sample of the finds were retained, including a small glass bottle, several late post-medieval pottery sherds and a residual medieval pottery sherd. Several large modern metal items were also observed, but not collected.

The uppermost deposit was observed mostly on the south-southeast side of the trench (within the land of The Wilderness, but rarely in 1 Valens Terrace); it consisted of 0.46m thick friable dark blackish brown silty clay imported garden soil (1), with frequent sub-angular stone inclusions, ceramic building material and grass roots (see Plates 3 and 5). Finds from this deposit included a glass bottle, an animal bone, three late post-medieval pottery sherds, and a fragment of potentially Roman ceramic building material.

Reliability of Results
The friable nature of the garden soil coupled with the wet weather resulted in the collapse of the trench walls on numerous occasions. Several times, the archaeological features were re-covered in garden soil and had to be re-cleaned to allow recording. Re-cleaning was undertaken by the archaeologist carefully and thoughtfully to minimise feature truncation and artefact loss.

The monitored work was undertaken with good cooperation from site staff, ensuring that the archaeological investigation could be undertaken without further impediment.

5 FINDS

5.1 Roman Pottery *by Jane Timby*

Introduction
The recent archaeological work resulted in the recovery of just four sherds of Roman pottery weighing 31.8 g to add to the 41 sherds from previous work (Timby 2020).

The pottery was from a single deposit: fill (7) of ditch 6.

The sherds are in variable condition with some larger, well-preserved pieces alongside more fragmented sherds. Surface preservation is generally good.

For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess the likely chronology and quantified by count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is catalogued below.

Pottery

The pottery comprises two bodysherds and two rimsherds, the latter from a simple everted rim jar and a bifid rim bowl. The wares all appear to be local Wiltshire coarsewares with two pieces belonging to the South-west oxidised/reduced ware group.

Dating can only be regarded as provisional with such a small group but a date in the 2nd century is likely.

Further work and retention

This is a very small assemblage comprising of mid Roman date which is probably associated with the Roman villa already documented at Box (Hurst *et al*. 1987).

No further ceramic work is recommended at this stage. Most of the material could be discarded.

Catalogue

1. Rim and bodysherds from an everted rim jar. Well-fired reduced ware with orange streaking with a single line of burnished wavy line decoration. Probably a well fired variant of South west oxidised ware. Wt. 21 g. Ditch 6, fill (7).
2. Bodysherd. Very hard well-fired oxidised ware with sparse quartz and rare white fine grained inclusions and black iron. May equate with Seager Smith (2001), fabric 24. Wt. 6g. Ditch 6, fill (7).
3. Rimsherd. Hard grey sandy ware with a black burnished surface. Bowl with a squat bifid rim. Wt. 4 g. Ditch 6, fill (7).

5.2 Post-Roman Pottery *by Paul Blinkhorn*

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised 10 sherds with a total weight of 357g. It was all post-medieval to modern, apart from a single residual medieval sherd. The following fabric types were noted:

ENGS: **English Stoneware**, 1700-1900. 1 sherd, 4g.
ENPO: **English Porcelain**, 1745-1900. 1 sherd, 7g.
HORT: **Horticultural Earthenwares**, 19th – 20th century. 2 sherds, 108g.
NASH: **Lacock Nash Hill Ware**, late 13th – 14th century (McCarthy 1974). 1 sherd, 19g.
PMR SLIP: **Slipped Redware**, 1800-1900. 3 sherds, 189g.
REFW: **Refined Whiteware**, 1800-1900. 2 sherds, 30g.

The post-Roman pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

The sherd of NASH is from the body of a glazed jug, a typical product of the tradition. Despite being residual, it is in quite good condition and does not appear to have been subject to a great deal of attrition.

	NASH		**ENPO**		**ENGS**		**HORT**		**PMR SLIP**		**REFW**		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1			1	7			2	108					MOD
2	1	19							2	168	2	30	MOD
3					1	4			1	21			MOD
Total	**1**	**19**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**108**	**3**	**189**	**2**	**30**	

Table 1: Post-Roman Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

5.3 Other Finds *by Simona Denis*

Building Materials

Plaster

Wall plaster fragments were recovered from two deposits: sandy layer (3), and fill (7), contained in ditch 6. The material included monochromatic examples as well as items decorated with an assortment of colours (see Plate 6). The identifiable patterns consisted of multi-coloured elements, possibly forming panels or decorative bands. The material is generally fairly preserved, although fragmentary and displaying degradation of the painted surfaces.

Context	**Decoration**	**No. of Items**	**Weight (g)**	**Comments**
3	Dark red with light brown and pink straight bands	1	4	
	Pink and light brown straight bands	1	4	
7	Plain dark red	13	326	
	Plain pink-orange	7	126	
	Plain light blue	1	3	
	Plain light grey	1	4	
	White with thin yellow band	1	5	
	Off-white with very light purple band	1	16	
	Dark red with white central band with yellow bands on either side	1	26	
	Dark red with multiple pink lines	3	42	
	Dark red with light brown bands, pink ?triangle, thin white band and purple band	5	87	
	Dark red	1	94	Possibly decorated, surface poorly preserved
	None	5	172	Surface not preserved
Total		**41**	**909**	

Table 2: Wall plaster occurrence by context and decoration

The decorated wall plaster is recommended for complete retention.

Tesserae
A total of 24 *tesserae* was collected; with the exception of a single item found in sandy layer (3), all of the examples were recovered from deposit (7), the fill of ditch 6 (see Plate 6). The *tesserae* weighed 185g combined and originated from a Roman mosaic floor; however, none of the items was found *in situ*, therefore no design pattern was preserved. The tesserae varied in size, from a minimum of 10x9mm to a maximum of 33x22mm; however, most of the items measured ca. 15x15mm. Traces of white mortar were present on some of the objects.

The vast majority (19 *tesserae*) were made of blue/grey lias; two examples were of white limestone. A single item, the largest (32x22mm) of the group, was make of a reddish stone. Two *tesserae* made of ceramic building material of an orange-pink colour were also present.

The *tesserae* assemblage is recommended for complete retention.

Ceramic Building Material
A total of 20 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 1645.06g combined, was collected from five different deposits. Although fragmentary, the material was in a fair state of preservation. The majority of the items preserved enough diagnostic features to allow a tentative identification of the original function of the objects.

Context	**Type**	**No. of Items**	**Complete Thickness (mm)**	**Weight (g)**	**Comments**	**Period**
1	?*Imbrex*	1	14	34.48	Curved profile	?Roman
3	?Flue tile	1	21	95.26		Roman
	?Roof tile	1	16	101.55	Slightly curved profile	Undetermined
	Undetermined	2		54.29		Undetermined
7	?*Tegula*	1	24	12.25		?Roman
	Tegulae	2, conjoining		644		Roman
	?Brick	1	31	240	Corner	?Roman
	Undetermined	6		28.25		Undetermined
10	*Imbrex*	1	22	270	Curved profile	Roman
12	?*Tegula*	1	22	151.94		Roman
	?*Parietalis*	1		4.42	Two parallel notches	Roman
	Undetermined	2		8.56		Undetermined
Total		**20**		**1645.06**		

Table 3: Ceramic Building Material occurrence by context and type

A range of typical Roman tile types were present in the assemblage. Roofing tiles were represented by both *tegulae* and *imbrices*. A possible flue tile fragment was recovered from sandy layer (3); although largely incomplete, the item preserved a short section indicating the profile was probably originally L-shaped. One small fragment collected from deposit (12) measured only *ca*. 25x25mm; however, the surface preserved two parallel notches, suggesting it could have originated from a *parietalis*, used to line walls.

The remaining items were too fragmentary and not large enough or diagnostic enough to be identified to form; their date remains undetermined.

The Roman tile and brick fragments are recommended for retention.

Animal Bone

A very small assemblage of four animal bone fragments was recovered during the archaeological monitoring.

One cow lumbar vertebra, weighing 86.54g, was collected from garden soil (1); the fragment represents half of the bone, which showed the flat, polished surface with fine, parallel striations typical of modern saws (Crabtree 2008).

A fragment of rib weighing 1.38g was found in deposit (7), the fill of ditch 6. The item was too fragmentary to retain any genus-specific characteristic; it was therefore attributed to a 'small mammal' (sheep/goat, pig, roe deer) of undetermined species (O'Connor 2003) exclusively on the basis of the size. One pig incisor, weighing 2g, was also recovered from this deposit.

One additional fragment of animal bone was recovered from deposit (10), which surrounded wall **9**. It weighed 10.31g and was positively identified as the distal epiphysis of a sheep/goat tibia; possible slice marks were observed.

The animal bone fragments recovered from Roman deposits are recommended for retention; the modern example is recommended for disposal, due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

Glass

Two glass bottles, of a combined weight of 118.58g, were collected during the archaeological works.

One fragmentary bottle of a pale blue aqua colour was found in garden soil (1). It weighed 56.91g and had visible mould seams running along the sides up to the straight finish, indicating it was machine-made; the base of the bottle was missing. The presence of seam lines indicated it was produced using a two or three piece mould, used from the 1800s onwards.

A similarly manufactured but complete, small bottle of pale blue aqua colour was recovered from made ground (2). The object measured 109mm in height and weighed 61.67g; it had continuous seams along the side and a rounded base. No embossing or marks were present; however, the size of the bottle suggests it was originally use to contain medicinal products or toiletries.

Iron

A single iron fastener was recovered from sandy layer (3); the object measured 32mm in length and weighed 4.52g, and was tentatively identified as a nail. The item was poorly preserved and severely affected by oxidation; a circular, flat head was visible and the shaft appeared to be square or rectangular in section, which would indicate a pre-1880s date for the object.

The iron nail is not recommended for retention, due to its extremely poor state of preservation and limited potential for further analysis.

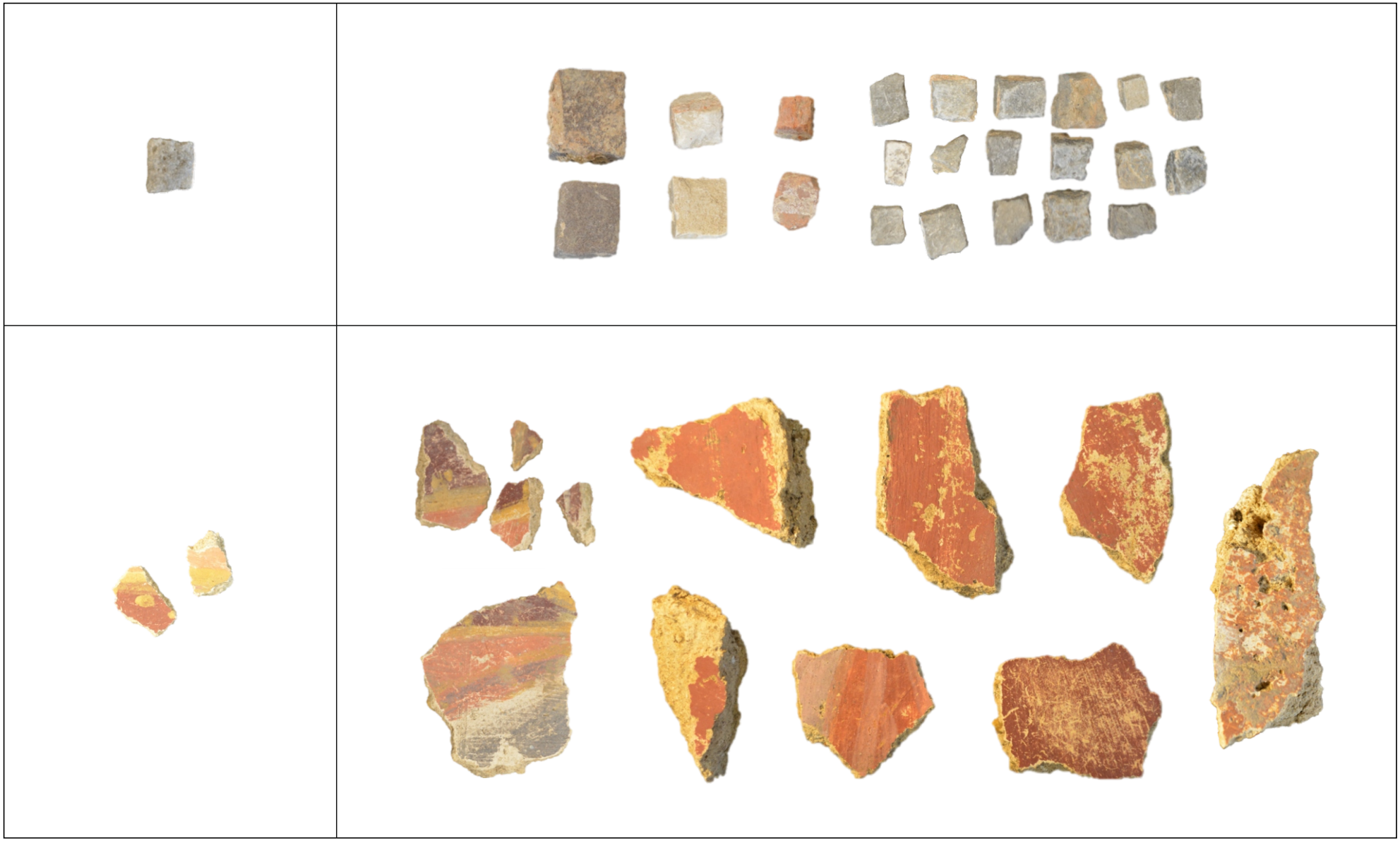


Plate 6: Tessera from deposit (3) *top left*; tesserae from deposit (7) *top right*;
wall plaster fragments from deposit (3) *bottom left*; selection of wall plaster fragments from deposit (7) *bottom right*

6 DISCUSSION (Figures 3 and 4)

The watching brief uncovered a series of manmade deposits across the development area, demonstrating the anthropogenic processes which formed the landscape.

The earliest manmade feature encountered was masonry structure **4** which dates to the Roman period. The location, orientation, and construction of the structure suggests that it corresponds to "wall" *4a* (of Roman construction phase 3B) identified less than 2m to the south-southeast during the 1967-8 excavations of the Roman Villa (Hurst et al. 1987: 39-40) (see Figure 3). It has been suggested that the purpose of this masonry may have been to serve as an external buttress at the northeast corner of the villa, or possibly to provide a base for a staircase leading to an entrance at the northeast part of apsidal Room 26:

> *"Such an entrance would be suitable for a dominus to hold audience, with his petitioners approaching from the far end of the room… or would equally well suit diners using the apse and those who served them"* (Hurst et al. 1987: 32).

Perpendicular wall or other masonry structure **14** had not been previously mapped. It consisted of the same construction and bonding materials as structure **4** which it abutted, and is therefore probably contemporaneous (Roman construction phase 3B). Alternatively, it could be a later Roman addition. The purpose of structure **14** is unclear, but it may have served an ancillary function for structure **4**, or have connected to parts of the villa further to the east which are not currently well-understood (see villa plan in Corney 2012: 24-25, fig 7, for reference).

Sandy layer (3) contained a variety of artefacts from the Roman and post-medieval periods, and was observed stratigraphically above the Roman masonry structures and below the imported garden soils. The most likely interpretation for this layer is that it represents an antiquarian deposit intended to cover up and/or protect the remains of the Roman Villa following the unsurveyed 19th-century investigations and commercial events. A similar protective layer was discovered under the neighbouring property of 1 Roman Villas during recent archaeological evaluative work (JMHS 2022).

Chronologically, the next evidence for activity in the area was ditch 6 which was cut into layer (3). The ditch does not share an alignment with the Roman walls, the extant garden boundary wall, or any other feature observed during this stage of works, and may be unrelated to them all. This activity appears to have significantly impacted the Roman remains below, as a relatively large quantity of Roman artefacts was observed at the top of ditch fill (7). These artefacts – including pottery, *tesserae*, wall plaster, and ceramic building material – were not found *in situ*, and must have been disturbed during the digging of ditch 6. It is likely that the ditch was not intended for artefact collection for commercial gain, as the finds have not been removed from the property. Instead, ditch 6 may be related to residential 19th-century garden use; if the ditch did terminate just northeast of the limit of excavation, then this would correspond to the approximate boundary between the newly-divided land plots A and E (Corney 2012: 18-19). Furthermore, evidence for archaeologically insensitive residential garden use is documented in the mid-19th century, as at least one owner of The Wilderness

property regarded the Roman remains simply as "impediments to vegetable growth" (Brakspear 1904: 3).

Although the artefacts found in ditch 6 had been displaced from their original location, it is clear that they once served as construction materials for Box Roman Villa, as their presence is consistent with findings from other investigations into the villa. For example, the mosaic tesserae and painted and unpainted wall plaster recovered from ditch 6 are similar to tesserae and wall plaster fragments recovered from a number of other rooms throughout the villa (e.g. Hurst et al. 1987: 46-47; JMHS 2022: 8-11). Similarly, the *tegulae* and *imbrices* discovered during this watching brief corroborate the theory that this ancient Greek and Roman roofing technique was employed on parts of this villa (Hurst et al. 1987: 46).

The partially collapsed garden boundary wall **5** was probably constructed at a similar time in the late post-medieval period to the antiquarian protective layer (3) and ditch 6; wall **5** was certainly in place by the time the land was sold to Hardy in 1897 (Corney 2012: 21-22). Wall **5** sits atop protective layer (3), and must therefore be later in date. Deposit (13) at the base of wall **5** appears to sit atop or be pressed into ditch fill (7), and must therefore be later than ditch 6. Similarly, construction cut 8 which houses structure **9** cuts through layer (3) and fill (7), and must also be post-medieval. It is possible that structure **9** represents a foundation to support wall **5**. The positioning of the possible foundation is noteworthy, as it is located at the point where the Roman wall of Room 26 ends. Although the Roman wall was not uncovered during this phase of works, there is a high likelihood that it survives *in situ* below the level of impact and provides some structural support to wall **5**. If this was known to the post-medieval builders of wall **5**, then structure **9** may have been placed accordingly to assist in bearing the weight of the wall as it bridged the internal area of Room 26 where no Roman walls existed to act as improvised foundations.

Two pieces of possible Roman ceramic building material were recovered from adjacent rectangular or square feature 11, though they were residual finds not relating to the date of the feature's construction. Feature 11 was cut into layer (3) and must relate to the late post-medieval or modern period. It was not possible to ascertain its function because only the edge of the feature was revealed in this phase of works. Similarly, only the edge of the frogged brick structure on the east-northeastern side of the trench was observed. The frogged brick indicates a post-medieval to modern date of construction, but the function of the structure is unclear. An early-20th-century map of the area shows an unlabelled building or lean-to, measuring approximately 4.6m by 3.0m, abutting the south face of the garden boundary wall in this area (Brakspear 1904: 7); the frogged brick structure may relate to the same phase of construction, though this conclusion can only be considered tentative.

The two uppermost deposits were made ground/built-up garden soil layer, (2), and garden soil, (1), which were imported by the previous owner of The Wilderness, and which match the upper deposits recorded during the previous evaluative work in this location (JMHS 2021a).

The results of this watching brief allow further interpretation of four of the trial pits excavated during the preceding evaluative works.

Figure 3: Trench location in relation to previously-mapped villa

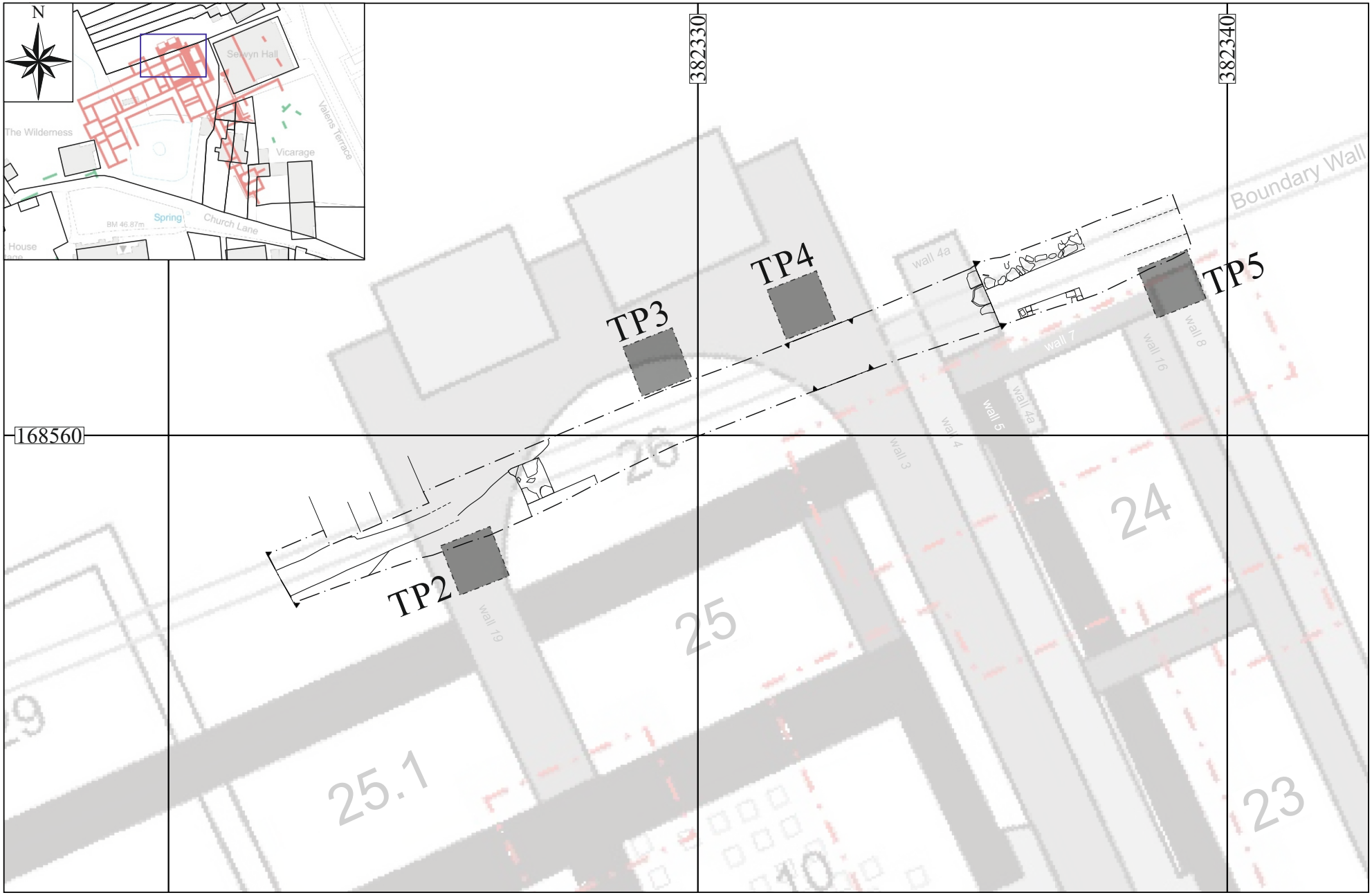


Figure 4: Trial pit locations in relation to previously-mapped villa

Trial Pits 2, 3, and 4 were positioned over the wall of apsidal Room 26 (numbered as 3 and 19 by Hurst et al. (1987)) (see Figure 4). The greatest depth reached in this part of the watching brief trench was 41.96m AOD, where the Roman wall was not encountered. This elucidates the reason why shallower Trial Pit 2 (maximum depth: 42.17m AOD) did encounter the Roman wall. Deeper Trial Pits 3 and 4 (depths of 41.78m AOD and 41.61m AOD respectively) both encountered limestone rubble which may relate to the Roman wall of Room 26. Furthermore, it is possible that the curve of the wall of Room 26 is seen running through the centre of Trial Pit 3.

Trial Pit 5 was positioned over the north corner of Room 24, but did not expose any Roman masonry. This is because the Roman walls numbered by Hurst et al. as *7*, *8*, and *16* only survived at a greater depth (1987: 40-41).

Overall, the watching brief findings provide some insight into the research questions regarding the construction of this part of the boundary wall.

Whilst the late post-medieval boundary wall was constructed just above the Roman deposits, antiquarian protective sandy layer (3) probably shielded much of the Roman masonry from damage. The wall recorded as *4a* by Hurst et al. (1987) survived at a higher altitude than any other Roman masonry in this area; layer (3) was very thin at this point, but the boundary wall does not appear to have caused considerable damage to the stone of wall *4a*. The unmapped section of wall running perpendicularly (recorded during this watching brief as structure **14**) also had a recognisable face and form, though showed signs of disturbance, especially at its east-northeast end. It is possible that this disturbance represents partial wall collapse or robbing following the villa's abandonment; however, the possibility that the construction of the boundary wall damaged structure **14** cannot be discounted.

To the west of wall *4a*, no further Roman masonry was encountered at the depth of the limit of excavation. It is highly likely therefore that layer (3) continues to protect the walls recorded by Hurst et al. 1987 as *4*, *3*, and *19*, with limited or no impact from the construction of the boundary wall. The exception may be construction cut 8, which was excavated to an unknown depth to house an additional foundation for the boundary wall. Due to its location, construction cut 8 may have physically impacted upon the Roman deposits located internally to apsidal Room 26, as well as the room's western wall (wall *19* (Hurst et al. 1987)). The extent of the impact on the Roman remains is dependent on the depth of cut 8, which could not be investigated during this stage of works.

Ditch 6 was the only feature discovered which may have related to garden use prior to the importation of soil. The quantity of *ex situ* Roman material recovered from the top of the ditch fill indicates that post-Roman garden use did impact upon archaeological deposits, at least in this location, just outside of villa rooms 26 and 25.1. Further excavation of The Wilderness garden would be required to further substantiate this conclusion.

Finally, this archaeological watching brief succeeded in facilitating the works to repair the partially-collapsed garden boundary wall, whilst simultaneously protecting and developing our understanding of Box Roman Villa scheduled monument (List Entry No. 1019189).

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents
The archive consists of the following:

Paper record	Physical record	Digital record
Written Scheme of Investigation	Finds	Digitised primary records
Project Report		Digitised drawings
Primary Site Records		Synthesised registers
		QGIS files
		Digital photographs
		Report text files

The documentary and material archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Wiltshire Museum with accession number DZSWS:40-2020. The digital archive will be transferred to the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Summary for johnmoor1-512425

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-512425
Project Name	The Wilderness/1 Valens Terrace, Box
Sitename	The Wilderness/1 Valens Terrace, Box
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	4519, BXCL 20, DZSWS:40-2020
Planning Id	S00241228
Reason For Investigation	Scheduled monument consent
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	24-Oct-2022 - 02-Nov-2022
Location	The Wilderness/1 Valens Terrace, Box NGR : ST 82331 68561 LL : 51.41578699503, -2.25546357156635 12 Fig : 382331,168561
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Wiltshire District : Wiltshire Parish : Box
Project Methodology	The groundworks consisted of a single foundation trench measuring 18.69m in length; between approximately 1.00m to 1.20m in width, and up to approximately 1.00m in depth; the ground was hand-excavated by groundworkers. Where archaeological horizons were encountered, they were cleaned by the archaeologist by hand. In all cases, investigation of the archaeological horizons and features was minimally invasive, with preference given to in situ preservation of the discovered remains where possible. Standard John Moore Heritage Services recording techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced. The spoil from all of the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Roman period. Where a Roman wall was discovered, the ground reduction was halted to protect the masonry. Discussion between John Moore Heritage Services, the architect, and the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments led to a revision of the modern wall construction plans, which allowed shallower foundations in parts. Furthermore, when ground reduction was complete, a soil ‘blinding’ layer was laid over the base of the whole trench, followed by a sheet of geotextile, followed by a second soil ‘blinding’ layer. These three layers protected the underlying archaeology ahead of the pouring of concrete, as agreed with the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

Project Results	Overall, the watching brief findings provide some insight into the research questions regarding the construction of this part of the boundary wall. Whilst the late post-medieval boundary wall was constructed just above the Roman deposits, antiquarian protective sandy layer (3) probably shielded much of the Roman masonry from damage. The wall recorded as 4a by Hurst et al. (1987) survived at a higher altitude than any other Roman masonry in this area; layer (3) was very thin at this point, but the boundary wall does not appear to have caused considerable damage to the stone of wall 4a. The unmapped section of wall running perpendicularly (recorded during this watching brief as structure 14) also had a recognisable face and form, though showed signs of disturbance, especially at its east-northeast end. It is possible that this disturbance represents partial wall collapse or robbing following the villa's abandonment; however, the possibility that the construction of the boundary wall damaged structure 14 cannot be discounted. To the west of wall 4a, no further Roman masonry was encountered at the depth of the limit of excavation. It is highly likely therefore that layer (3) continues to protect the walls recorded by Hurst et al. 1987 as 4, 3, and 19, with limited or no impact from the construction of the boundary wall. The exception may be construction cut 8, which was excavated to an unknown depth to house an additional foundation for the boundary wall. Due to its location, construction cut 8 may have physically impacted upon the Roman deposits located internally to apsidal Room 26, as well as the room's western wall (wall 19 (Hurst et al. 1987)). The extent of the impact on the Roman remains is dependent on the depth of cut 8, which could not be investigated during this stage of works. Ditch 6 was the only feature discovered which may have related to garden use prior to the importation of soil. The quantity of ex situ Roman material recovered from the top of the ditch fill indicates that post-Roman garden use did impact upon archaeological deposits, at least in this location, just outside of villa rooms 26 and 25.1. Further excavation of The Wilderness garden would be required to further substantiate this conclusion.
Keywords	Wall - ROMAN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Tessera - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Sherd - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Rim Sherd - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Imbrex - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Tegula - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Wall Plaster - ROMAN - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	
HER	Scheduled Monument Casework - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	S, Gordon
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Wiltshire Museum; Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;