



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

24 MANOR FARM ROAD,

DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES, OXFORDSHIRE

On behalf of

Gillian Johnson

JANUARY 2011

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during ground reduction in advance of extensions to 24 Manor Farm Rd, Dorchester-on Thames, Wallingford (NGR: 457981 194305). A total of six site visits were made intermittently over the period from 29th November 2010 to 10th January 2011. The monitored groundworks involved initial topsoil stripping followed by excavation of wall footing trenches up to 1m in depth from present ground levels. To the rear of the property Roman pits were encountered and a compacted surface with an overlying Roman occupation soil containing pottery sherds and animal bones dating from the immediate post Roman conquest. Above the occupation soil was a thick heterogeneous layer containing stones and flint nodules thought to be Roman building material. One post-medieval pit was also discovered cutting through a Roman pit. At the front of the property a new porch, wall footing trenches for a new utility room and service trenching connected to a new soakaway revealed further pits, gullies and a posthole all of early Roman date with a notable large quantity of 1st Century AD pottery from the fill of the pit in the service trench. Limited interpretations can be made as to the function of the site due to the nature of the small excavations, but it would seem probable that this area was part of the extra-mural Roman settlement of Dorchester, not previously thought to have extended this far east of the town.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site was located on the eastern side of the Roman town of Dorchester-on-Thames (NGR centred: SP50671076) to the south of Manor Farm Rd and north of the Abbey Church of St Peter and Paul. The underlying geology is shown as 1st Terrace River Gravels (BGS sheet 254), near the border of alluvium. Alluvial clay deposits were revealed during excavation and the site lies at approximately 50m AOD.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted by South Oxfordshire District Council for the erection of single storey extensions, comprising utility room and front entrance porch, with car port to side and bedroom to rear, solar panel to roof with active water catch system for brown water usage (P10/W0288).

Due to the high potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during all groundworks. Oxfordshire Archaeological Services (OCAS), the Archaeological Advisor to South Oxfordshire District Council, prepared a *Brief* for the archaeological work. Based on the brief A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by JMHS (JMHS 2010). This document outlined the method by which the watching brief would be carried out in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

The condition attached to the planning consent stated that:

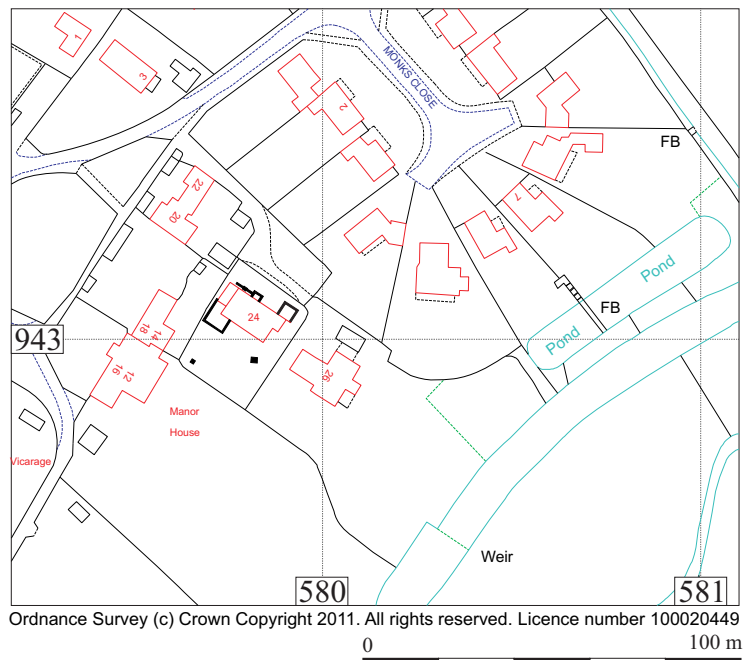


Figure 1. Site location

A full archaeological watching brief shall be carried out during the period of construction works by a professionally competent archaeological organisation in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development commences. The brief shall include the recording of any archaeological features revealed, limited archaeological excavation and the retrieval of artefactual evidence. Reason: To secure the protection of and proper provision for any archaeological remains in accordance with Government advice set out in PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' and in accordance with Policies CON11, CON13 and CON14 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

The Brief (OCAS 2010) was prepared with regard to the new guidelines of PPS5 due to the presence of known heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the development proposals and in accordance with the Local Plan Policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological Brief (OCAS 2010) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2010) set out the archaeological background to the site and detailed the known HER assets located within a radius of the site. This background study stated that the site is located to the north east of the Roman town of Dorchester (SAM OX116). The northern section of the Scheduled Ancient Monument lies 44m to the north-west of the development site.

The HER assets described in the OCAS Brief are tabulated below:

Table 1: Summary of HER data form OCAS Brief

HER No.	NGR: SU	Description
PRN 4896	5788 9439	Extra Mural Suburbs
PRN 8544	5805 9455	Trackway and cropmarks
PRN 5416	5817 9492	Roman road
PRN17313	5798 9426	Roman coins
PRN 17315	5800 9440	Roman pottery and Greek Wine cup

The village of Dorchester is rich in archaeological remains with nationally important monuments of many periods both within the present village and its immediate environs. It lies in the loop of the River Thames at its confluence with the River Thame and is on a peninsula of first gravel terrace above flood plains. Gravel quarrying the 1940's destroyed an important prehistoric ceremonial centre. During the construction of the bypass in 1981 the south eastern terminal of the cursus monument was examined along with a Neolithic enclosure with small features. Aerial photographs show more ring ditches and rectangular enclosures between the area of the cursus and the town indicating that the ceremonial complex may be more extensive than previously thought.

To the south of the town is the well preserved Dyke Hills ramparts connected with the 25 hectare Iron Age Oppidum. Within the enclosure are the remains of house circles, pits and other settlement evidence seen from aerial photographs.

During the Roman period Dorchester became a small walled Roman town. The 2nd Century defences enclosed an area of 6 hectares to the west of the River Thame. Extra mural Roman settlement is known to lie north of the town, some of which was destroyed by gravel quarrying and housing developments without any archaeological

observation. An extensive Late Roman ‘managed’ cemetery was excavated at Queenford Farm c. 700m north of the town in advance of gravel quarrying and road construction in 1972 and 1981 (Durham & Rowley 1972). The 2nd Century ramparts and stone defences of the town were excavated by Shepperd Frere in 1962-4 (Frere 1962; 1984). Of particular significance were three nationally important early 5th Century AD burials found at Dorchester, two within the Dyke Hills ramparts and one at the Minchin Recreation ground. The objects buried with them suggest that at the end of the Roman period in the early 5th Century the females had an intriguing combination of Romano-British and Germanic artefacts while the man seems to have been associated with the Roman military.

In the 7th Century AD Birinus established a bishopric at Dorchester, the first within the Kingdom of Wessex. In 1071 William the Conqueror removed the bishopric to Lincoln, leaving the former Cathedral site as a minster of secular priests then an Augustinian Abbey.

In 2007 a Dorchester Research Project was set up with the intention of focusing on key questions regarding the archaeology of Dorchester and re-assessing earlier published and unpublished data. The project was a collaborative venture between the Institute of Archaeology (Oxford University) and Oxford Archaeology (OA) with Dorchester Museum as a key partner along with The Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The overall aims of the ‘Discover Dorchester’ project focus on an understanding of people’s sense of identity and how this changed and was redefined through time, especially through key periods of transition. It was stated within the Research Plan of Dorchester that the aims of all time periods should investigate:

- A. The relationship between people, their families and the community on a local and regional scale;
- B. Belief systems and the role of ceremonial and religious sites;
- C. Changing expressions of identity at individual, community and wider levels through time and;
- D. The relationship between people and the surrounding landscape, including their impact upon it.

Further research objectives can be found in the Research plan for Dorchester-on-Thames.

2.1 Project Objectives

The main and general project objectives outlined in the WSI (JMHS 2010) were to:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains
- In particular to record any evidence relating to the Roman occupation of the town

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994), the OCAS prepared *Brief* and John Moore Heritage Services *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2010).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during all ground reduction connected to the new wall footing trenches, soakaways and service trenches. All ground reduction was achieved using a combination of a mini tracked excavator fitted with a ditching bucket or limited hand excavation.

The topsoil was removed by mini digger fitted with a 1m wide ditching bucket across the area of the new extension to the rear of the property and beneath the old paving slabs to the rear and front of the property. At the rear of the property the wall footing trenches were then excavated with a 0.50m wide bucket to depths of 1m beneath the present ground surface or until firm natural ground was reached. The wall footing trenches at the front of the property were shallower reaching a maximum depth of 0.60m beneath the present ground level.

A journal, recorded on specially designed record sheets, was maintained which detailed times and durations of site visits as well as notes on areas monitored by the archaeologist.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded in accordance with all accepted professional standards set out by the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance* for archaeological watching brief and by John Moore Heritage Services general excavation procedures set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2010).

A photographic record of the work was kept of colour transparency, black and white and digital record, which will form part of the site archive to be submitted to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

4 RESULTS

Individual context numbers were assigned on site to cuts and deposits encountered during the ground reduction. Context numbers in () indicate deposits of material or fill of features.

4.1 Rear property extension (new bedroom) (Fig 2)

General overburden

The lowest geological horizon attained was the natural light brown orange clay with no inclusions (18). The depth at which this horizon was attained was generally around c. 0.70m from the current ground surface.

At the western end of the site the earliest deposit recorded was mid orange-brown clay silt with heavy root disturbance throughout (04). Rotten tree roots had re-worked the consistency of this deposit, which may have been alluvium. Overlying this was *c.* 0.20m thick dark brown-black silty clay (03) of a post-medieval date. This was overlain by *c.* 0.40m thick dark brown-black silty clay (02) with frequent peg tiles interpreted as dumped waste from a post-medieval building.

Also overlying (03) and the natural (18) was a layer of dark grey-brown silty clay (17) with occasional gravels. This deposit was recorded in section and was interpreted as post-medieval levelling. The latest deposit in this sequence was dark grey-black silty clay (01) with pea gravels and occasional peg tiles (Fig. 3, Section 1).

The eastern half of the site revealed a different stratigraphic sequence with *in situ* layers (21), (22) & (25) containing early Roman finds thought to be associated with Romano-British occupation (see below). These layers were sealed by *c.* 0.30m in thick dark grey brown silty clay topsoil of a fairly recent origin (16) (Fig. 3, Section 2).

Table 2: List of contexts within trenches to rear of property (Trenches 1, 2 & 3)

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
01	Deposit	Current surface topsoil	0.30	Tr.	3.5		
02	Deposit	Dark brown black silty clay	0.40	Tr.	1.7	CBM	
03	Deposit	Dark brown black silty clay with rare mortar flecks	0.20 (min)	Tr.	2.10	CBM	
04	Deposit	Mid orange brown clay silt	0.15 (min)	Tr.	1.20		
05	Cut	Cut of pit	0.30	Tr.	1.20		
07	Cut	Cut of pit	0.45 (min)	Tr.	1.9m		
08	Fill	Fill of 07; Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.45	Tr.	1.9	Pot	Romano-British
09	Cut	Cut of pit?	0.70	Tr.	1.30		
10	Fill	Fill of 09; Dark blackish brown silty clay	0.30	Tr.	1.60	Pot	Romano-British
11	Fill	Fill of 09; Mid brown orange silty clay	0.10	Tr.	0.60 (min)		
12	Cut	Cut of pit	0.60 (min)	Tr.	1.9m		
13	Fill	Fill of 12; Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.60 (min)	Tr.	1m	Pot	Post med
14	Fill	Fill of 05; Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.30	Tr.	1.10		
15	Fill	Fill of 05; Dark brown orange silty clay	0.10	Tr.	0.70	Pot	Romano-British
16	Deposit	Dark grey brown silty clay	0.40	Tr.	Tr.		
17	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.22	Tr.	3.8		
18	Deposit	Mid brown orange clay silt	/	Tr.	/		
19	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty	0.40	Tr.	1		

20	Deposit	clay Dark orange brown silty	0.60 (min)	Tr.	0.60 (min)	Pot	19 th Century AD
21	Deposit	clay Dark greyish brown silty	0.40	Tr.	3	Pot	Romano-British
22	Deposit	clay Light orange brown silty	0.10	Tr.	3	Pot	Romano-British
23	Deposit	clay Light brownish orange	0.10	Tr.	0.80		
24	Deposit	silty sand Dark greyish brown	0.25 (min)	Tr.	0.80 (min)		
25	Deposit	Cemented stones and gravels	0.02	Tr.	2		

Roman: Period 1

Pits

Pit 09 was located at the junction of trenches 1 & 2, and was 1.30m in diameter and 0.70m in depth with steep concave sides and a flattish base. It had two fills, the primary fill was c. 0.30m thick dark black-brown silty clay (10) with 11 mostly 1st Century AD pot sherds but with one sherd (if not intrusive) of later date indicating that the feature was later than 100AD and probably 2nd Century AD. Overlying this was c. 0.10m thick mid brown-orange silty clay (11) (Fig. 3; Section 1)

Cut over the top of pit 09 was Pit 05. This feature was probably sub circular in shape and had a depth of 0.30m with steep concave sides and a flat base (Fig. 3; Section 1). It was filled by dark grey-brown silty clay (14) with gravels overlaid by mid-dark brown-orange silty clay with frequent gravels (15) with nine mostly 1st Century AD pot sherds but with an intrusive sherd of 2nd Century or later date. The recent topsoil deposit (16) directly overlaid context (15).

Layers

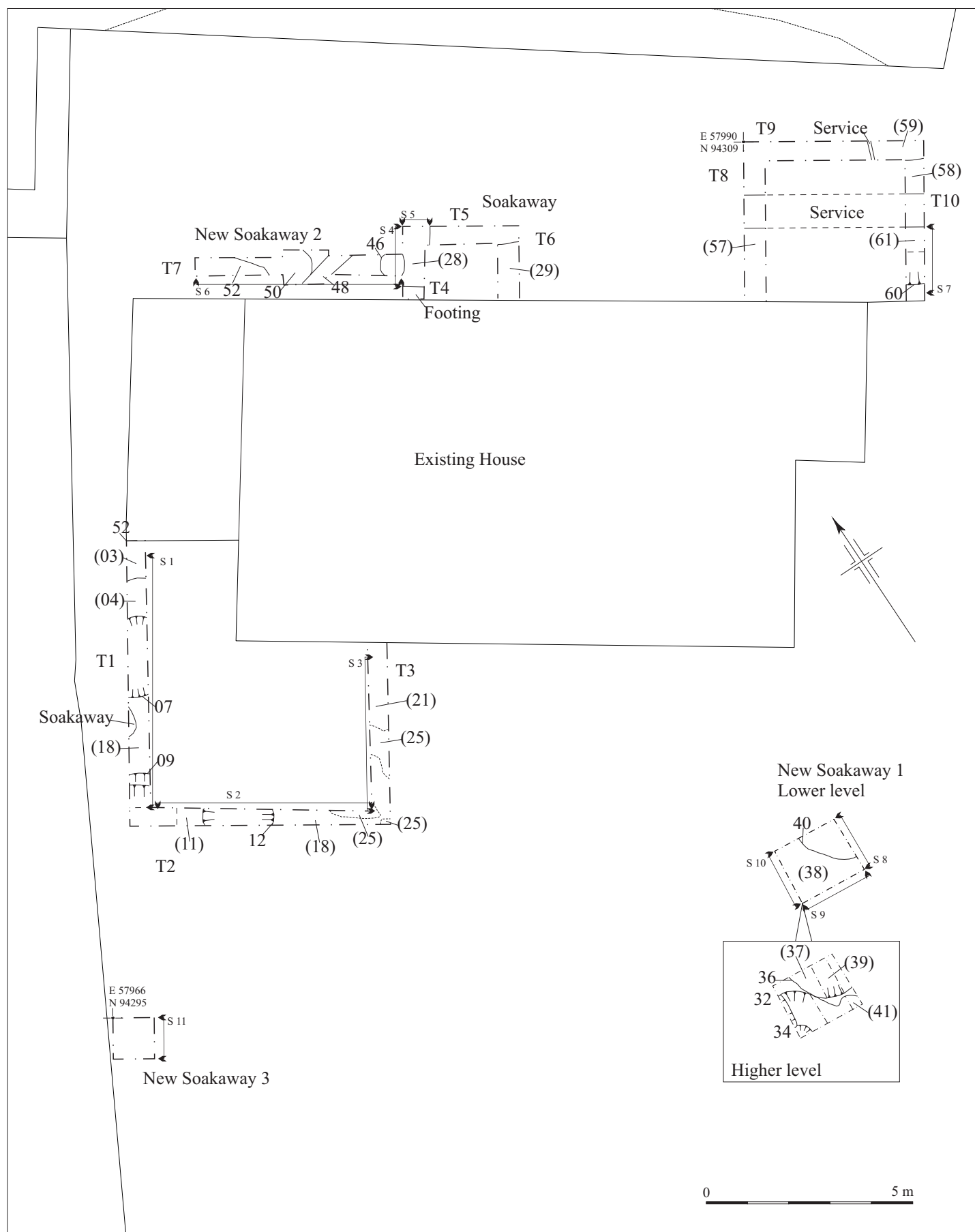
On the eastern side of the extension the earliest recorded deposit was the natural clay (18) overlaid by a firm compacted surface of gravels cemented together to form a solid base (25). This 'yard' surface was sealed by c. 0.10m thick light orange-brown silty clay (22) interpreted as an occupation soil with three 1st Century AD Roman pottery sherds and two animal bones. Overlying this was heterogeneous c. 0.35m thick dark grey-brown silty clay (21) with roughly squared stones (<100-200mm) and flint nodules (<100-150mm) thought to be possible Roman building material as they were discovered alongside 17 1st Century Roman pot sherds and 22 animal bones.

Post medieval: Period 2

Pits

Within Trench 1 was Pit 07 c. 0.45m in depth (min) and 1.9m in diameter with concave sides and an unknown base. The pit was filled by dark grey-brown (08) with black mottling throughout from rotten tree roots. The fill contained six Roman pot sherds and two post-medieval pot sherds which indicate this feature was post-medieval in date (Fig. 3; Section 1)

Within Trench 2 was Pit 12, which was 1.9m in diameter and had a minimum depth of 0.60m. It was gradual to steep on the NW side and had concave sides and an unknown base (Figure 3; Section 2). Due to the narrowness of the trench it was not possible to



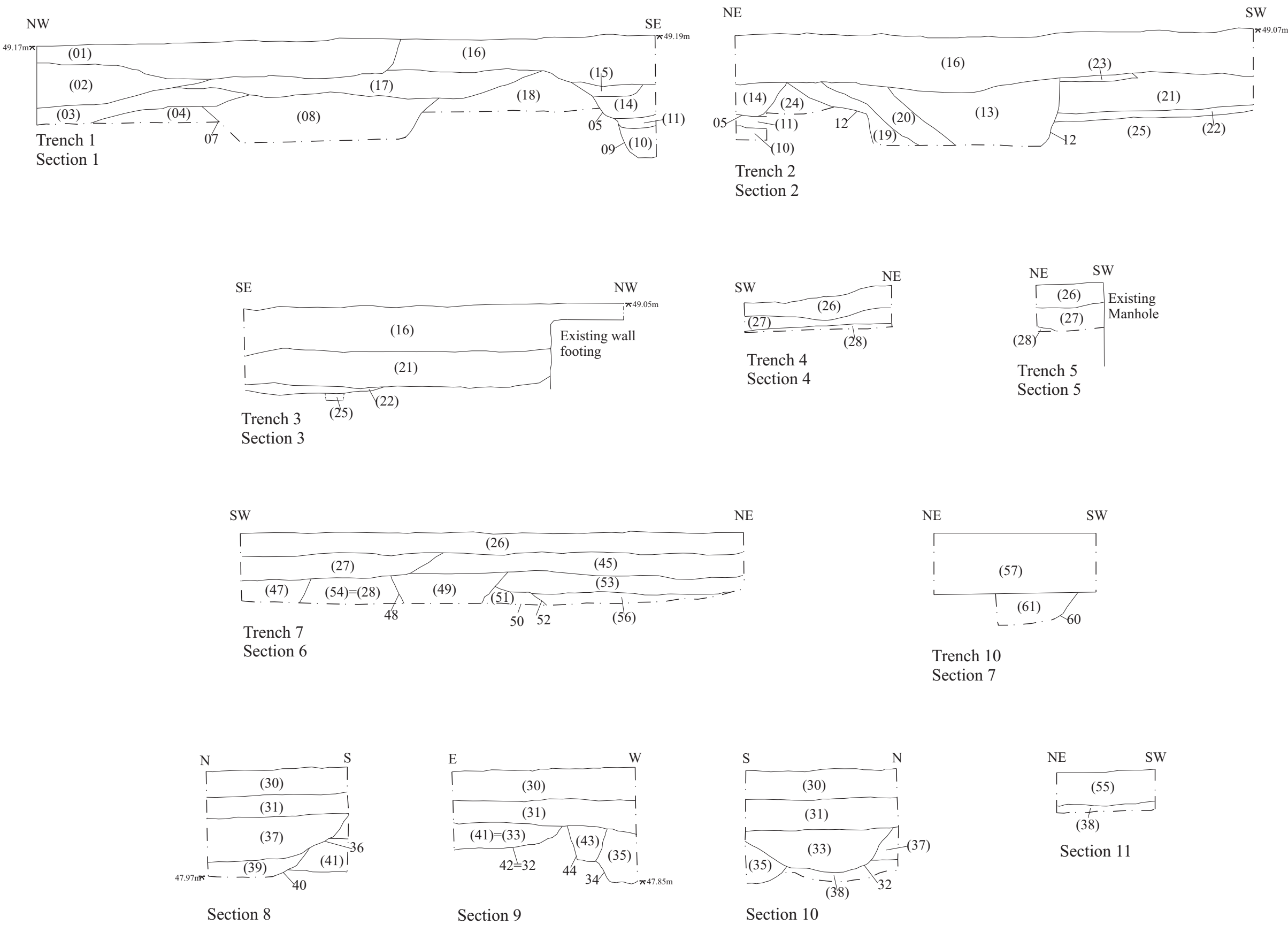


Figure 3. Sections

ascertain the shape of this feature but it is assumed due to the 19th Century AD finds from within its fills (13) & (20) it is a Victorian garden feature of little significance.

4.2 The front extension: Porch (Fig 2)

The overburden revealed during the front porch excavations was variable. The archaeological layers were seen only within the western side of the porch area. In all other areas disturbance from a recent manhole and services either completely destroyed or truncated part of the archaeological layers.

The two layers which contained high quantities of 1st Century AD Roman pot were (27) & (28). The earliest layer was light grey-brown clay silt (28) considered to be a Roman subsoil (same as 54) which contained nine Roman pot sherds and three animal bones dated to the mid 1st Century AD. Directly above this was 0.40m thick friable light greyish brown silty clay (27) with 15 Roman pot sherds and 15 animal bones dated to 50-100 AD. The latest deposit in this sequence was 0.25m thick dark grey-brown silty clay (26) considered topsoil of recent origin (Fig. 3, Section 6).

Service trench from porch (Fig 2)

Cutting through layer (28)=(54) was a sub circular shaped feature (Figure 3; Section 6) 0.60m wide and minimum 0.20m deep with one mid orange-brown fill (47).

Also cutting (28)=(54) was a linear shaped feature 48 that was 1.20m wide and 0.30m minimum depth (not bottomed) orientated on an approximate east-west direction with concave sides and one friable dark brown grey fill (49) with 15 sherds of Roman 1st Century AD pottery and one animal bone although one sherd could date it to the 2nd century or later if it is not intrusive. This linear feature also cut earlier pit [50] & [52] on its southern side (Fig 3; Section 6).

Pit 50 was seen in plan and section and had curving sides and one visible fill (51) with 53 sherds of 1st Century AD Roman pottery and animal bones throughout in high quantities. The pottery is dated to 50-100 AD although the end date may be 70/80 AD. This pit seems to have been re-cut as 52 which was a minimum of 0.30m deep and 2.4m wide. The earliest fill of pit 52 was friable dark grey-brown silty clay (56) overlain by 0.15m thick, mottled grey brown silty clay (53).

Table 3; Summary of contexts within Porch and new service trench including soakaway 2 (Trenches 4, 5, 6 & 7)

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
26	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.25	Tr.	5 (min)		
27	Deposit	Light greyish brown silty clay	0.30	Tr.	2m	Pot	Romano-British
28	Deposit	Light greyish brown clay silt	/	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Romano-British
29	Deposit	Dark greyish black silty clay	0.60	Tr.	Tr.		
45	Deposit	Dark greyish black silty clay	0.25	Tr.	3.4	Pot	Romano-British
46	Cut	Sub circular	0.20	Tr.	0.60		
47	Fill	Mid orange brown silty clay	0.20 (min)	Tr.	0.60	Pot	Romano-British

48	Cut	Linear	0.30 (min)	Tr.	1.20		
49	Fill	Dark brownish grey silty clay	0.30 (min)	Tr.	1.20	Pot	Romano-British
50	Cut	Sub circular	0.20 (min)	Tr.	0.60		
51	Fill	Mid dark greyish brown silty clay	0.20 (min)	Tr.	0.60	Pot	Romano-British
52	Cut	Sub circular	0.30 (min)	Tr.	2.4		
53	Fill	Mottled grey brown silty clay	0.20	Tr.	2.4		
54	Deposit	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.25	Tr.	0.90	Pot	Romano-British
56	Deposit	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.10 (min)	Tr.	1.80		

4.3 Soakaway 1

The earliest deposit uncovered within the soakaway trench was light orange-brown clay silt (38) natural clay.

Pit 34 was the stratigraphically the earliest feature truncated on both sides by 32 & 44 but had a surviving depth of 0.45m and flat base (Figure 3; Section 9). It was filled by light-mid orange-brown silty clay (35) with three sherds of 2nd half 1st Century AD Roman pottery and one flint scraper of probable Bronze Age date.

Cut across pit 34 and into natural was pit 42=32 c. 0.40m deep with concave sides and an almost flat base, filled by dark grey-black silty clay (41)=(33) with a total of eight sherds of 3rd to 4th Century AD Roman pottery and two animal bones (Figure 3; Section 9).

Posthole 44 also cut across pit 34 and had steep concave sides and a flat base. It was filled by dark brown-grey silty clay (43) with no finds (Figure 3; Section 9).

Cutting pit 42=32 was pit 40, which had gradually curving concave sides but unknown base (Figure 3; Section 8). It was filled by mottled light brown-grey silty clay with a high frequency of tile (39).

Pit 40 was cut by pit 36 which had fairly steep concave side and an almost flat base, filled by dark grey-brown silty clay (37) with three sherds of Roman pottery dating from after the mid 3rd Century AD (Figure 3; Section 8).

Two deposits covered all of the archaeological features with this area. The earliest deposit was 0.25m thick mid greyish brown silty clay with Victorian finds (31) overlain by 0.30m thick friable dark greyish black silty clay topsoil (30) (Figure 3; Section's 8, 9, & 10).

Table4; Summary of contexts within Soakaway 1

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
30	Deposit	Dark greyish black silty clay	0.30	Tr.	Tr.		
31	Deposit	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.25	Tr.	Tr.	Pot	Post med

32	Cut	Cut of pit	0.40	1.40	Tr.		
33	Fill	Dark greyish black silty clay	0.40	Tr.	1.5	Pot	Romano-British
34	Cut	Cut of pit	0.45	0.40	/		
35	Fill	Light-mid orange brown silty clay	0.40	0.30	/	Pot	Romano-British
36	Cut	Cut of pit	0.40	Tr.	1.40		
37	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.40	Tr.	1.60	Pot	Romano-British
38	Deposit	Light orange brown clay silt	/	Tr.	/		
39	Fill	Light brownish grey silty clay	/	1	1		
40	Cut	Cut of pit	/	1	1		
41	Fill	Dark brownish grey silty clay	0.25	Tr.	1	Pot	Romano-British
42	Cut	Cut of pit	0.25	Tr.	1		
43	Fill	Dark brownish grey silty clay	0.30	Tr.	0.60		
44	Cut	Cut of Posthole	0.40	0.30	0.40		

4.4 Soakaway 3

The excavations in advance of the new garden shed revealed a simple sequence of dark grey-black topsoil (55) overlying natural clay (38). No archaeological features or finds were seen (Figure 3; Section 11).

4.5 The extension at front of house (new utility room)

The sequence of overburden recorded within the wall footing trenches was consistent across this area. The earliest deposit was natural ground seen at the far southern corner of Trench 10. Above the natural was a c. 0.50m thick homogenous dark black-brown topsoil of post-medieval origin (57).

Cut through the natural was feature 60 which had steep concave sides but unknown shape and base. It was filled by mid-dark grey-brown silty clay with no finds (Figure 3; Section 7).

At the junction of Trench 9 & 10 beneath context (57) were two contexts thought to be the fills of pit 60. These fills were not excavated and left *in situ* but Roman pottery of possible 1st Century date was collected from the surface of both contexts. Context (58) was friable dark brown-grey silty clay and context (59) was firm light orange brown silty clay.

Table 5: Summary of contexts within wall footing trenches (new utility room)

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
57	Deposit	Dark blackish brown silty clay topsoil	0.50	Tr.	Tr.	pot	medieval
58	Deposit	Dark brownish grey silty clay	N/a	Tr.	N/a	Pot	Romano-British

59	Deposit	Light orange brown silty clay	N/a	Tr.	N/a	Pot	Romano-British
60	Cut	Cut of Pit?	0.40 (min)	Tr.	N/a		
61	Fill	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.40 (min)	Tr.	N/a		

4.6 Reliability of Results

The watching brief was carried out in wintry conditions with good co-operation from the contractor carrying out the groundworks. The methodology employed fully complied with WSI and a high level of recording was achieved in line with all IfA standards and guidance. The wall footing trenches were left open enabling full recording and hand excavation of features albeit in very narrow trenches.

The high presence of tree roots throughout the excavations to the rear of the property (Trenches 1-3) was indicative of a large tree once existing at this location. The archaeological features although disturbed by the roots were still visible, although some edges were difficult to define initially where roots had worked there way into the natural clay. One root within trench 1 was seen protruding from the baulk section and was extremely thick and well set in. This was removed by chain saw and is likely to have destroyed or certainly truncated any archaeological features in this area (but outside the present line of excavations).

The archaeological pits within the wall footing trenches to the rear of the property were hand excavated to enable the features to be characterised and dated with regard to the development impact levels. It was necessary to hand excavate the archaeological features to deeper depths than required by the contractors in order to define edges and obtain dating evidence. One Roman pit was fully bottomed and the other pit was excavated to a depth of 0.20m deeper than the required finished levels, at which point hand excavation ceased as enough dating evidence had been recovered and the narrowness of the trench and the presence of tree roots meant hand excavation was very difficult.

The narrow service trench associated with soakaway 2 at the front of the property revealed further intercutting features of Roman date. During machine excavation enough pottery was obtained to date the features in this area without the need for further hand excavation beneath the development impact levels.

The impact levels of wall footing trenches at the front of the house (new utility room) were shallower than the rear of the property and reached a maximum depth of 0.60m. One edge of an archaeological feature was seen and hand excavated in an attempt to obtain dating evidence. All other deposits of a likely Roman date seen in this area were left *in situ*.

Overall, the reliability of the results can be considered to be very good given the ‘key-hole’ nature of the excavations. A significant amount of information has been recovered but due to the limitations of the excavations interpretation of features was difficult. The development impact levels were not always great enough to enable the full excavation of the bottom of features or deposits thought to archaeological.

5 FINDS

5.1 The Roman and Post-medieval pottery by Paul Booth

The watching brief produced 177 sherds (2786 g) of Roman and later pottery. The post-Roman component consisted of 10 sherds (26 g), one of which was of later medieval date and the rest 18th/19th century and later. The pottery was scanned rapidly and notes of key characteristics were made using codes from the Oxford Archaeology later prehistoric and Roman pottery recording system. This information is summarised by context in the table below. The sherds vary considerably in size but are mostly in fairly good condition, with little indication of abrasion.

Table 6: Quantification of pottery

CONTEXT	NOSH	WT	FABRICS/FORMS	DATE	CXT DATE	COMMENT
3	1	8	GWE	19C+		
8	6	26	R10; R90, E30	1C?	PMED	
8	2	23	GRE	18C+	PMED	1 uncertain, but rim of larger sherd
10	11	148	R30, R90, R95, R10, M22, O20(EA?)	2C?		mostly 1C but M22 (burnt b sh) must be after 100
13	1	14	R90	1-2C	PMED	
13	2	120	GRE, GWE	19C+	PMED	
15	9	200	R90, E80, E20, R10(D/750)	2C+		most 1C, but 2 R10 sherds rather later
20	2	48	GRE, porcelain	18-19C		
21/22	17	331	R90, E20, R20(EA?)	50-100		quite poss 50-70?
22	3	28	R90?, E30	50+		sooting
27	15	88	R90, E30, R20	50-100		3 small (?jar) rims
28	9	166	R90, E80(CD), E30	mid 1C		
31	1	2	O20	1C	PMED	
31	2	20	GRE	18C+	PMED	
33	7	41	R20, R30, F51, F52	240+	4C+?	
35	3	19	E80, R30?, R90?	50-100		
37	3	49	R90, R11, B11(HB/440)	250+		
41	1	20	R30(JA/111)	3-4C		
45	1	13	R90	1C		
47	3	83	R90	1C?		
49	15	251	R90, R20, R30, R11	70-100?		1 R30 sherd possibly later? - 2C+?
51	53	856	R90, R20, R30, O10, S20, E30(JA/111), R10, W20	50-100		quite poss 50-70/80. 2x S20 sherds pre-Flavian
54	3	154	R90, ?R95, W20	1C		
57	3	46	R30, M41(C100), Q21(WC3)	4C	MED	
57	1	7	green-glazed oxidised	13C+?	MED	?Brill - poss later
58	1	10	E60	1C?		
59	2	15	R90, E30	1C?		

Discussion

Apart from the small amount of post-Roman material the pottery is mainly of two phases within the Roman period. The majority belongs to the early Roman period. Some of the fabrics in the E ware group could be of pre-conquest date, but sherds in the grog-tempered E80 group, which are most typical of this period, are in fact poorly represented by comparison with the sand-tempered components such as E20 (fine sand-tempered) and E30 (coarse sand-tempered) in the same group. The balance of the evidence therefore suggests that the early Roman activity represented by this material is likely to have begun after the Roman conquest. A number of these groups

are dated to the period AD 50-100, although the largest of them, such as 21/22, 51 and 54, might well belong to the earlier part of this date range. In some cases, however, there are hints of the presence of later material, as in groups 10 and 15. It is not clear if the later Roman sherds identified in these groups are intrusive or whether they genuinely indicate the date of the assemblages. Only three groups (33, 37 and 57) contained typical late Roman sherds of the mid 3rd-4th century, and in the case of 57 these sherds are in any case likely to have been residual.

Overall therefore, occupation on this site seems to have been most intensive in the early post conquest period, particularly from *c* AD 50-80, with hints of continued activity into the 2nd century and a few features of late Roman date. Post -Roman activity, other than the incidental occurrence of occasional sherds, is likely to have been confined to the 18th century and later.

5.2 The General finds *by Paul Riccoboni*

A number of general finds from overburden deposits were collected on site, weighed and then discarded.

Table 7: Finds; weighed and discarded.

<i>Cntxt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
(21)	14	8kg	Stones	Roman? Post med?
(21)	3	1.6kg	Flints	Roman? Post med?
(02)	32	3.5kg	CBM	Post med

Table 8: Mixed finds retained for archive

<i>Cntxt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
02	1		glass	Modern?
08	12		Wall plaster	Roman
10	1		Foreign stone	
15	1		Coke?	Roman
25	10		Compacted (metalled) surface of gravels and stones bonded with a cement mortar	Roman
31	1		Flint flake	unknown
33	1		Dressed? Foreign stone	
35	1		Scraper	Bronze Age
37	1		Foreign stone	
37	1		Scraper	Bronze Age
39	1		Foreign stone	
58	1		Slag?	Roman?

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief at 24 Manor Farm Road was successful in proving that archaeological remains exist on the site dating from the Romano-British period. The eastern boundary of the walled Roman town is uncertain and is thought to be just to the west of the abbey where a large wall was located in 1961, producing an elongated rectangular outline. This however, leaves questions as to why the adjacent topographical high point was not incorporated within the circuit (Henig & Booth 2000). If we assume that the town limits were west of the abbey the Roman archaeological features uncovered during this watching brief would relate to the

poorly understood extra mural settlement. At Birinus Primary School archaeological monitoring recorded 50 features dated between the 1st and 4th Centuries (Torrance and Durden 1999) and it was considered that the site was part of the extra mural settlement. The results from Manor Farm Road suggest a continuation of this settlement even further east towards the river.

The rear of the property revealed Roman pits thought to be waste pits connected to a building probably constructed of stone, flint and timber with a tiled roof. The 'metalled' surface may have once formed part of the floor of a building or more likely a yard surface outside of the building. The occupation soil (22), which accumulated over the metalled surface (25), suggests that this area was used intensively over a period of some time. Overlying the 'occupation soil' was another deposit (21), which provided further evidence of a Roman building once at this location. High numbers of roughly dressed stones and flint nodules (along with possible wall plaster specks), may have once been the remains of a Roman wall, which perhaps formed part of a building. Although only hypothesised, evidence of well preserved Roman demolition layers and occupation soils are rare and provide important evidence that this part of Roman Dorchester was occupied during the period immediately after the conquest.

Within Soakaway 1 at the rear of the house evidence of dense pitting and a posthole are indicative of settlement at this location continuing until the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD. The only negative archaeological evidence in the rear garden of the property came from the small excavation of Soakaway 3, beneath the new garden shed, which revealed a simple sequence of topsoil over undisturbed natural.

The features at the front of the house within the new porch, service trench and wall footing trenches prove additional evidence of occupation at the site during the 1st - 2nd Centuries AD. The high amount of pottery sherds from the 1st Century AD indicate this area was used as refuse disposal, probably connected to a nearby dwelling(s), which perhaps existed beneath the present house.

The watching brief at 24 Manor Farm Road, Dorchester has proven that Roman occupation continued into the eastern side of the present village and raises the possibility that the Roman walled town may have been larger than previously postulated.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief	The project report
Written Scheme of Investigation	The primary site records
The drawn records	All finds including animal bones

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service under accession number 2010.49.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Plate 1: General Pre-ex shot of rear extension (bedroom)



Plate 2: General shot of Roman pit 09



Plate 3: General shot of Soakaway 1



Plate 4: General shot of Trench 7 (front of house)



Plate 5: North east facing section of pit 60



Plate 6: General shot of utility room excavations

Site Name: 24 Manor Park Road, Dorchester-on-Thames	
Site Address: 24 Manor Park Road, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon	
Summary: Roman occupation	
District/Unitary: South Oxfordshire	Parish: Dorchester
Period(s): Roman and Post medieval	
NGR (centre of site: 8 figures): 457981 194305	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Watching Brief	
Date of Recording: 29/11/10 – 10/1/11	
Unit undertaking recording: JMHS	
Geology: River gravels – head clay deposit seen during excavation	
Title and author of accompanying report: Archaeological Watching Brief at 24 Manor Farm Road, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.	
Prepared by Paul Riccoboni BA (Hons) Arch AIFA	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during ground reduction in advance of an extension to 24 Manor Farm Rd, Dorchester-on Thames, Wallingford, OX10 7HZ (NGR: 457981 194305). A total of six site visits were made intermittently over the period from 29th November 2010 to 10th January 2011. The monitored groundworks involved initial topsoil stripping followed by excavation of wall footing trenches up to 1m in depth from present ground levels. To the rear of the property Roman pits were encountered and a compacted surface with an overlying Roman occupation soil containing pottery sherds and animal bones dating from the immediate post Roman conquest. Above the occupation soil was a thick heterogeneous layer containing stones and flint nodules thought to be Roman building material. One Post medieval pit was also discovered cutting through a Roman pit. At the front of the property a new porch, wall footing trenches for a new utility room and service trenching connected to a new soakaway revealed further pits, gullies and a posthole all of early Roman date with a notable large quantity of 1st Century AD pottery from the fill of the pit in the service trench. Limited interpretations can be made as to the function of the site due to the nature of the small excavations, but it would seem probable that this area was part of the extra-mural Roman settlement of Dorchester, not previously thought to have extended this far east of the town.</i>	
Location of archive/finds:	
Contact at JMHS: : Paul Riccoboni info@jmheritageservices.co.uk	Date: 11/1/11