Wessex Archaeology

Dropshort Roman Villa
Drayton, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results

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Dropshort Roman Villa
Drayton, Oxfordshire

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Summary

In April 2012 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' at Dropshort Roman Villa, Drayton, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR 449420 193890), to reinvestigate and re-evaluate the Roman villa that had been the subject of archaeological investigations in 1962 and 1966. The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain the extent and condition of surviving archaeological deposits on the villa site, along with their chronological and spatial relationships, and to gain an understanding of the function or functions of the Roman structures.

The evaluation revealed the remnants of a Romano-British building complex, which had been revealed within previous excavations. Four rooms were uncovered, although their functions were not clear. The smallest of the rooms may have included a hypocaust, as this is suggested on the 1966 plan of the site. What could be suggested from the incomplete plan is that it was possibly a villa of winged corridor type. The building complex appeared to be surrounded by two enclosures: an inner single-ditched enclosure and a much larger, double-ditched enclosure. Nothing was found to support the circumstantial evidence (site of spring, proximity to hoard site) that the Site may have been of ritual or cult significance during the Romano-British period.

Although no associated features were found with it, a significant amount of malt was found in environmental samples taken from Trench 1, suggesting that brewing was taking place at the Site.

There was limited evidence of occupation of the Site prior to and after the Romano-British period. A small amount of struck flint was found in a tree throw in trench 5, and a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was found in a ditch in Trench 1.

The Site has been subject to ploughing, and the state of preservation seems to have deteriorated through this activity, being further disturbed by the 1966 excavations. Topsoil across the Site is relatively shallow. The mosaic floor recorded in the 1966 excavations has not survived. The building had also been robbed in antiquity and a number of the walls were represented only by robber trenches.

The evaluation has served to confirm some of the details of the building complex located in the 1960s, and to ascertain more of its surrounding context, but the limited extent of the trenches excavated allow little more detailed discussion of the Site. Further analysis and detailed publication is not proposed, but a summary of the Site will be submitted to *Oxoniensia*, for the annual round-up of archaeology in the county.

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The excavation was undertaken by Time Team's retained archaeologists, Phil Harding (Wessex Archaeology), Tracey Smith, Ian Powlesland, Matt Williams, Raksha Dave, Cassie Newland and Naomi Sewpaul and local archaeologists Ray Spencer, Emily Buma, Haley Nicol, Gavin Davis and Rob Hedge. The metal detector survey was carried out by Kevin Benning. The geophysical survey was undertaken by Jimmy Adcock, Emma Wood and Claire Stephens. The recording process was co-ordinated by Simon Flaherty and the finds co-ordination and processing was conducted by Darryl Freer, both of Wessex Archaeology. Finds identification on site was undertaken by Danielle Wootton (Finds Liaison Officer, Devon), Louise Revell and Mark Corney.

The archive was collated and all post excavation was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology. The report was researched and compiled by Simon Flaherty, with specialist reports by Nicholas Cooke (coins), Lorrain Higbee (animal bone), Dr Kevin Hayward (geological identifications), Rachael Seager Smith (all other finds). The environmental samples were processed by Steve Winterton and were assessed by Dr Chris J. Stevens. The molluscs were assessed by Sarah F Wyles. The Illustrations were prepared by Kenneth Lymer. The post-excavation project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mepham.

Thanks must also be extended to the people who helped to initiate the project: Roger Thomas (English Heritage) and the landowners Mr and Mrs Allen.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Videotext Communications Ltd to carry out the recording and post-excavation analysis for an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Channel 4's 'Time Team' on the site of Dropshort Roman villa, Drayton (hereafter the 'Site', **Figure 1**).

1.1.2 This report documents the results of the archaeological investigations undertaken by 'Time Team', and presents an assessment of these results.

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site is centred upon NGR 449420 193890 at a height of approximately 9m aOD. Dropshort Roman villa is approximately 4 miles (6.5 km) north-west of Didcot and approximately 3 miles (5 km) south-east of Abingdon.

1.2.2 The underlying geology consists of limestone, silt and sand (BGS Sheet 253). The site is currently used as arable land and pasture.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Recent investigations in the area

2.1.1 The remains of a probable Romano-British villa were discovered in 1962 by the then landowner, Mr. Fidler, who uncovered stone foundations, Roman building material (including roof tile), pottery and evidence of tessellated floors (Anon. 1962, 118).

2.1.2 In 1966, an archaeological excavation of the site was directed by Graham Thomas of Reading University, on behalf of Berkshire Archaeological Society and Reading Museum. The evidence found suggested that it may have contained a winged villa, and the coins recovered indicated a period of use from the 1st to 5th centuries AD. The results of the excavations were never published, although notes did appear in the *Journal of Roman Studies* (1967, 198), and a short news report in the *Daily Telegraph* (15th August 1966). These described the site as a substantial stone-built structure with a mosaic floor and a hypocaust. Finds recovered during the excavation suggest occupation throughout the Roman period (Hamerow *et al*. 2007, 114-15). Field ditches visible as crop marks on aerial photographs to the west of the Site (Videotext Communications 2012, fig. 5) are likely to belong to an estate associated with this villa (Barclay *et al*. 2003, 23).

2.1.3 In 2011, as part of a survey of Roman villa sites in the Vale of the White Horse, William Wintle (University of Oxford) studied field notes from the 1966 excavation. These suggested that 12 trenches were excavated, exposing significant sections of the villa structure or structures. Trench 1 contained no features, the next five trenches (2 – 6) were

excavated until *in situ* structural remains were reached. The remaining four trenches (7-12) were only partially completed. Trench 2 was considered to correspond to the initial 1962 discovery of tessellated floors (Videotext Communications 2012, figs 7 and 8).

2.1.4 The remains of stone walls were located in trenches 2, 5, 6 and 12, with five possible footings in trench 8. These, together with the traces of robber trenches, enabled four rooms to be postulated, although it is not clear whether they all belonged to the same building or building phase. In addition, a square room or building of probable wooden construction was excavated in trench 4.

2.1.5 Further remains, ditches and/or robbed-out walls were observed in trenches 3 and 8 to 12. Only trenches 2 and 8 contained significant quantities of tesserae. Further structural remains recovered included window glass and at least three fragments of wall plaster.

2.1.6 In December 2011, an initial evaluation of Dropshort Villa was conducted at the site by the 'Time Team' Club in collaboration with Wessex Archaeology and GSB Prospection Ltd. This work involved an initial geophysical survey of the location of the villa, three 1m x 1m test pits designed to investigate the nature of cropmarks, and a fieldwalking exercise. The work produced a large volume of material including pottery, roof tile, hypocaust fragments and painted wall plaster. The results of this evaluation were not available for incorporation into this report.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 A project design for the work was compiled by Jim Mower (Videotext Communications 2012), providing full details of the research aims and methods. A brief summary is provided here.

3.1.2 The project aimed to carry out a limited programme of non-intrusive investigations and intrusive excavation The following research aims were defined:

Research Aim 1: What is the extent of archaeological deposits at the Dropshort site?

3.1.3 Aerial photographs and previous investigations suggest a substantial building complex, possibly comprising more than one structure. Landscape study and geophysical survey was undertaken to provide targets for the invasive trenching. This trenching was intended to characterise the extent, form, chronological, functional and spatial relationships between the possible Roman features (the putative 'villa') known through documentary references and previous investigation within Area 1.

Research Aim 2: What is the condition of archaeological deposits at the Dropshort site?

3.1.4 The Dropshort site was initially discovered as a result of ploughing, and the damage caused by agricultural practices over centuries appears to have significantly disturbed archaeological deposits at the site. The incomplete excavations conducted in 1966 further disturbed the remains. The targeted trenching, based on geophysical survey results, was also intended to establish the present condition of the archaeological deposits across the site.

Research Aim 3: What are the chronological and spatial relationships of archaeological deposits at the Dropshort site?

3.1.5 The date range demonstrated by archaeological deposits at the Dropshort site remains unclear. The targeted trenching, based on geophysical survey results, was undertaken in order to clarify both the chronological and spatial relationships of archaeological deposits and to retrieve material suitable for dating. In addition, it was proposed that an attempt

was made in at least one location on site to excavate to natural deposits in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of stratigraphic relationships.

Research Aim 4: What was the function or functions of the Roman structures at the Dropshort site?

3.1.6 Dropshort Villa is part of a complex palimpsest of features visible on the Thames gravels as cropmarks. These include remains interpreted as being of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Anglo Saxon date. The Royal *vil* site of Sutton Courtenay less than a kilometre away is of particular importance. The Dropshort site exhibits evidence of a spring and is close to the site of a hoard of Roman pewter tableware recovered from a well at nearby Appleford. This evidence is circumstantial, but may suggest that Dropshort was a site of ritual or cult importance in the Romano-British period.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Geophysical survey

4.1.1 Prior to the excavation of evaluation trenches, a geophysical survey was carried out across the Site using a combination of resistance and magnetic survey. The survey grid was tied in to the Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble real time differential GPS system.

4.2 Evaluation Trenches

4.2.1 Eight machine-dug trenches were excavated (**Figure 1**). A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision removed the overburden from all the trenches. Machining ceased as soon as significant archaeological deposits were identified. The trenches were cleaned by hand with limited sampling of the underlying archaeological deposits. All spoil arising from the evaluation trenches was scanned by an experienced metal detectorist.

4.2.2 All contexts and features were recorded using standard Wessex Archaeology *pro-forma* record sheets. A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits was made, usually at a scale of 1:20; sections were drawn as appropriate. The OD height of all principal strata and features was indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. A photographic record of the investigations and individual features was also prepared. All trenches were related to the National Grid/Ordnance Datum by local control.

4.2.3 At the completion of the work, all trenches were reinstated using the excavated soil.

4.2.4 The work was carried out between 3-6 April 2012. The archive and all artefacts were subsequently transported to the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury where they were processed and assessed for this report.

4.3 Copyright

4.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

5 RESULTS

5.1.1 The following sections provide a summary of the information held in the Site archive including the full geophysical report (GSB 2012). Details of individually excavated contexts and features are retained in the Site archive and a detailed tabulated version of these can be found in **Appendix 1.**

5.2 Geophysical Survey

*Magnetometer Survey (**Figure 2A**)*

5.2.1 The most obvious anomaly that can be seen within the data is the pipe running on a north-east to south-west alignment; this cut through the eastern and southern sections of the feature [**A**]/[**B**] which encloses the villa complex. The latter feature forms a double-ditched enclosure; sections of the southern ditch [**B**] within Area 3 have only been detected as weak linear trends.

5.2.2 Linear anomalies [**C**] potentially form an internal division, although the pipe makes interpretation difficult within this area. The magnetic responses in the western side of the enclosure are a little complex due to numerous short sections of ditch-like responses having been recorded. An area of increased response [**D**] is likely to represent features associated with the villa, whilst similar response [**E**] depicted as a broad anomaly, is thought to represent an 'outbuilding'; trenching simply revealed a compacted surface and evidence of burning, but no solid walls.

5.2.3 A handful of responses have a pit-like magnetic signature such as those at [**F**] whilst those at [**G**] have a stronger signal and may represent large rubbish pits.

5.2.4 Anomalies that have been interpreted as *?Archaeology* or *Uncertain* may have an association with the villa but have been classified as such due to their weak magnetic response or ill-defined anomaly.

5.2.5 A handful of anomalies are thought to be natural in origin based on their amorphous character. Small scale ferrous responses are scattered throughout the data, these are likely to be caused by metal debris within the topsoil or on the surface. Other larger ferrous disturbance seen along the perimeter of the survey areas are caused by metal fencing.

*GPR Survey (**Figure 2B**)*

5.2.6 The summary plot for the GPR (**Figure 2**) shows a single slice which is a processed composite of all reflections from the top 1.0m of deposits. The most obvious point to make is that there is no clear footprint of the villa. In fact, there is very little that could be immediately classified as *in situ* archaeology; it is suspected that this is a result of a poor level of preservation – a combination of extensive robbing and plough damage, as confirmed by excavation.

5.2.7 It seems that anomalies [**1**] are the only reflections that can be attributed to villa structure, and this is largely based on analysis of the radargrams (supported by excavation evidence) as the time-slices are confused by ploughing striations and tractor ruts. The 'ringing' nature of the ruts (caused by producing an air-gap between the antenna and ground surface when crossing the depressions) results in them appearing throughout the data, even at depth, despite being surface features. Using [**1**] as a guide, similar anomalies [**2**], which were clear in the radargrams and produced reflections slightly off the alignment of ploughing were tentatively interpreted as further villa remnants. Excavation

proved this not to be the case and revealed natural gravel to be the source of reflections. The land drain [**3**] was also uncovered.

5.2.8 It is entirely possible that some of the smaller reflectors, for example those marked [**4**]**,** represent isolated sections of villa wall that have survived successive phases of robbing and ploughing. However, there was building debris visible in the plough soil and so they could easily be displaced rubble.

5.3 Evaluation trenches

5.3.1 The location of all eight trenches was determined by the results of the geophysical data and the aerial photography (**Figure 1**). Trench 2 was placed to relocate the 1966 excavation trench that had found the remains of a Roman building, in order to test its preservation.

5.3.2 The topsoil varied in depth (0.23m - 0.40m) across the site, often with occasional gravel inclusions. Trenches 7 and 8 both contained a subsoil that varied between and 0.12m and 0.28m thick, containing medium-sized, sub-rounded to rounded, moderately-sorted gravel.

5.3.3 The natural consisted of sandy gravels, which is in keeping with the British Geological Survey mapping for the area (BGS Sheet 253).

*Trench 1 (**Figure 3**)*

5.3.4 Trench 1 investigated a large magnetic response identified by the geophysical survey (**Figure 2A**, anomaly [E]). This was shown to be a spread of burnt material (**102**) that covered much of the trench. This material sealed a possible ditch (**106**), probably running in a north-west to south-east direction, although the exact line of this feature was unclear, its fill **103** being almost identical to the burnt spread material **102** (**Figure 3**, **Plate 1**). Although the stratigraphic sequence was unclear, finds suggest that possible ditch **106** (containing one sherd of early-middle Saxon pottery) truncated spread **102**, which only contained Roman pottery.

5.3.5 The only other feature within the trench was a possible posthole (**107**), sealed by burnt spread **102**. This feature contained no finds and remains undated. No other postholes were located near to it, although only a small section of layer **102** was removed.

5.3.6 Deposit **104** appeared to run throughout the trench beneath layer **102**, and was truncated by both possible ditch **106** and posthole **107**. This layer contained pottery dating from the mid 2nd century onwards.

*Trench 2 (**Figure 4**)*

5.3.7 Trench 2 was placed to relocate the 1966 excavations, to test the previous results and to ascertain the present state of preservation.

5.3.8 Structural remains were encountered within the trench. Limestone wall **203** ran on a south-west to north east alignment, turning at right angles at the north end to run south-eastwards (**Figure 4, Plate 4**). The wall was built on a limestone raft (**217**) that acted as a foundation for the building, the blocks placed at an angle. Wall **203** had been truncated at its southern and eastern ends. The raft and walls were supported by further limestone packing around the edges (**211**).

5.3.9 Wall **236** was a later addition, butting up against wall **205** (**Figure 4, Plate 3**). This wall appears to form the division between two ‘rooms’, to west and east respectively. Wall **236** was narrower than **205** and was bonded with clay rather than the sandy mortar used in

wall **205**. It was also partially built upon a limestone raft (**237**) but in this case the blocks were not set at an angle as in raft **217**. Wall appeared to be robbed at its north-east-east and south-west-west ends as well.

5.3.10 The walls had been partially robbed out: robber cut **222** truncated raft **217**, it ran in a north-east to south-west direction, and appears to have been cut to rob a wall parallel to **203**. The backfill of the robber cut contained two sherds of later Romano-British pottery, suggesting that the walls were robbed in the later Romano-British or post-Roman period. Cut **250** appeared to be on the same alignment as **222**, although it could not be traced in plan; this feature could represent a continuation of the robber trench and therefore the alignment of a wall parallel to **236**. The backfill of cut **250** also contained later Romano-British pottery.

5.3.11 Two possible floor bedding layers were revealed. Layer **235** overlay raft **217** to the south and east of wall **203**, suggesting that this was an internal floor surface. A second bedding layer (**243**) was found to the north of wall **203** and to the west of wall **236**, and sealed limestone raft **237**. This appeared represent the small room located within the 1966 excavations, the plan of which seemed to imply that this room (Room 1) may have contained hypocaust.

5.3.12 Several features had been truncated by the buildings and robber trenches. These included posthole **220** (cut by robber trench **222**), possible postholes (or, more probably, animal burrows) **208** and **210**, truncated by wall **203**, and feature **232**, either a pit or a tree throw. These features are an ambiguous indication of earlier activity on the Site prior to the construction of the building; most contained small quantities of Romano-British pottery.

5.3.13 Later features include a ditch or gully (**247**) running in a north-east to south-west direction in the north-west corner of the trench, and stratigraphically later than floor bedding layer **243**. It appeared to have two small 'buttress'-shaped extensions on its western side; it may be another robber cut although it appeared too regular for this interpretation. Feature 247 appeared to have been cut by a possible shallow pit (**227**), only visible in section, but the relationship was not clear, and may simply represent another fill of **247**. It contained some late Romano-British pottery sherds but these may have been redeposited.

5.3.14 Feature **205**, located in the south of the trench, may represent one of the 1960s excavation trenches. However, the fill of this feature was very similar to the topsoil and perhaps not as 'mixed' as might have been expected for a 50-year-old backfill deposit. Moreover, the edges of this feature were not vertical but angled at 45 degrees, which suggests that the trench was left open until the sides collapsed.

5.3.15 Two further features, **240** and **242,** were located in the eastern side of the trench. Although feature **242** clearly cut **240**, neither was completely revealed within the trench and their function remains unknown.

*Trench 3 (**Figure 5**)*

5.3.16 Trench 3 was targeted on a magnetic anomaly identified by the geophysical survey. This was found to correlate with a ditch (**307**) running across the trench (**Figure 5, Plate 5**). The ditch was half-filled with layers of trench-edge collapse (**306**, **310**, **311**), which produced no datable finds, overlain by layers of deliberate backfill (**303**, **304**, **305**, **309**) containing large amounts of Romano-British material. There seem to have been two distinct periods of backfilling, pottery from contexts **305**, **306** and **309** dating to the middle Romano-British period, while pottery from the latest backfill layer **304** is late Romano-British. Its location suggests that ditch **307** was a boundary ditch for the building.

*Trench 4 (**Figure 6**)*

5.3.17 Trench 4 was located to investigate two ditches, identified by the geophysical survey (**Figure 2A**, feature [A]). These run in a north-west to south-east direction and possibly represent a double enclosure ditch surrounding the villa, and a possible drove way.

5.3.18 In total, five ditches were identified crossing the trench. The northernmost was ditch **402** (**Figure 6, Plate 7**), which was aligned roughly east to west and appeared to be approaching a terminus at its western end. This ditch was 1.7m wide but its southern edge was truncated by a later recut (**420**) on a similar alignment (**Figure 6, section**). This ditch was only 1.05m wide but was roughly the same depth as ditch **402** (approx. 55m). Both ditches contained Romano-British pottery, undiagnostic from **402** and dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD from **420**.

5.3.19 A second large, shallow ditch, **409** (2.75m wide; 0.60m deep) ran to the south of **402** in a north-west to south-east direction (**Figure 6, Plate 6**). The ditch produced pottery with a date range spanning the Romano-British period. Ditch **409** truncated a small pit or posthole (**413**) which in turn cut through the fill of an earlier ditch (**418**) (**Figure 6, Plate 6**). Pit/posthole **413** produced a single undiagnostic sherd of Romano-British pottery. Ditch **418** had very steep sides and a concave base, being almost V-shaped in profile; it contained a single sherd of late Romano-British pottery, but this may have been residual.

5.3.20 A second small pit **415** may have been truncated by ditch **409**, but the relationship could not be ascertained when excavated. The close proximity to pit **413** suggests they may have been related.

5.3.21 Finally, ditch **406** was located at the extreme southern end of the trench, running east-west, and its full width was not exposed within the limits of the trench. It may represent a further boundary ditch. It contained undiagnostic Romano-British pottery.

*Trench 5 (**Figure 7**)*

5.3.22 Trench 5 was opened over an area with an unclear high magnetic anomaly. It was found to contain a narrow gully (**510**), truncated at its northern end by a field drain (**514**) running north-west to south-east. No dating evidence was recovered from the gully.

5.3.23 A small posthole (**506**) lay just to the south of drain **514**. It contained no dating evidence. The only other features encountered were two irregularly-shaped tree throws. Tree throw **503**, in the south-western corner of the trench, yielded a number of prehistoric struck flints providing the only evidence for pre-Roman activity on site. Tree throw **508** was located in the north-eastern corner of the trench. It contained undiagnostic Romano-British pottery, possibly dating to the later 1st or 2nd century AD.

*Trench 6 (**Figure 8**)*

5.3.24 Trench 6 lay between two of the 1960s trenches, and it was hoped that the trench might pick up robber trenches previously excavated. This proved successful, two two robber trenches being located (**606** and **610**), running parallel to each other, 2.5m apart, on a north-east to south-west alignment.

5.3.25 Trench **606** (**Figure 8, Plate 10**) was 1m wide, with straight sides and a flat base. It appeared to have been deliberately backfilled. It is likely that this represents the robbed-out remains of an external wall of the Roman building. The second ditch, **610** (**Figure 8, Plate 9**) had a similar profile to **608**, with straight sides and a flat base, but was significantly shallower and would have represented an internal wall of the building. These

two trenches were also on a similar alignment to walls **203** and **236** in **Trench 2**. Both robber trenches contained late Romano-British pottery in their upper fills.

5.3.26 These robber cuts were cut through an occupation spread (**611**), containing a number of fragments of animal bone, oyster shell and pottery. None of the pottery was closely chronologically distinctive, but its likely date range is *c*. 50-200 AD. This may give an approximate indication of the date when this part of the building was constructed. When placed in the context of the 1966 excavations, it seems likely that this formed a corridor on the eastern side of the building (**Room 4**).

*Trench 7 (**Figure 9**)*

5.3.27 **Trench 7** was placed over a large irregularly shaped geophysical anomaly to the north of Trench 2, and was dug to test whether the building extended any further.

5.3.28 There was no trace of any building remains in this trench, but three features were located: **703**, **706** and **708**. A shallow gully (**703**) ran north-west to south-east across the trench, widening towards the northern end. This may represent a boundary ditch or drainage channel. No dating evidence was recovered. At its northern end, gully **703** joined feature **706** which ran in an east-west direction. The latter feature was only partly exposed and, as it was not excavated, its purpose and relationship with gullies **703** and **708** was not ascertained.

5.3.29 Gully (**708**) ran parallel to gully **703** at a distance of approximately 0.45m. This feature remained unexcavated but its regular nature suggests that it was most likely to be a modern field drain.

*Trench 8 (**Figure 10**)*

5.3.30 Trench 8 was excavated in order to test the continuation of the possible field boundaries located in Trench 4, as indicated by the geophysical results.

5.3.31 The trench contained three features, but due to time restrictions none were excavated. These included a possible ditch terminal (**803**), perhaps representing a break in the enclosure ditch, and possibly part of the same feature as ditch **409** in Trench 4. Feature **803** was cut by a smaller, north/south aligned ditch (**805**).

5.3.32 A poorly-defined feature (**807**) was recorded in the northern part of the trench; its alignment appears to correspond to one of the boundary ditches picked up by the geophysical survey. Whether these two features were contemporaneous is debatable, as they were only 0.8m apart, but they did appear to run on the same alignment. Feature **807** may be a continuation of ditches **402** and **420** in Trench 4.

6 FINDS

6.1.1 Finds were recovered from seven of the eight trenches; no artefacts were recovered from **Trench 7** and the quantities from **Trenches 5** and **8** are only minimal. Only ceramic building material and pottery was recovered in any appreciable quantity. As befitting a Roman villa, the majority of artefacts belong within the Romano-British period but there are also a few items of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval date.

6.1.2 The condition of the material is generally good although the ceramic materials, especially the potter, had suffered moderately high levels of surface abrasion, probably as a result of chemical and/or mechanic erosion in the harsh sandy soils of the area rather than pre-depositional wear or abrasion.

6.1.3 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and this information is summarised by trench in **Table 1**. This section provides a basic description of the artefacts recovered and assesses their potential to address the aims and objectives of the project.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 The pottery provides the primary dating evidence for the site but approximately 25% of the assemblage is derived from topsoil or other insecurely stratified deposits. Although the overall mean sherd weight is high (19g; a figure of between 10g and 20g is considered 'normal' for Roman sites in central southern England), many pieces show significant surface abrasion and some edge damage, probably resulting from post-depositional chemical and mechanical abrasion in the harsh sandy soils of the area. A breakdown of the assemblage is shown in **Table 2**. Some fabrics of known type or sources were identified but many of the coarsewares were simply defined by their predominant inclusion type and/or colour.

Romano-British

6.2.2 Although the Romano-British assemblage spans the whole of this period (*c*. AD 50–410), it has a distinct Late Roman emphasis. Material clearly belonging within the 1st century AD includes a rim from a Terra Nigra dish (Cam 16; *c*. AD 50–85) found in the topsoil (401) of Trench 4 and a repaired (lead staple or rivet) South Gaulish samian form 29 bowl rim (*c*. AD 70–85) from the secondary fill of ditch 409. A stamped footring base from a fine, locally-made greyware bowl, probably imitating samian form 30 (e.g. Young 1977, 224, fig. 83, R64), is likely to be of Flavian-Trajanic date, but has been deliberately trimmed to form a flat disc 75mm in diameter at some later time. It too, was from Trench 4, found in the fill (**412**) of ditch **420**. The stamp is complete and from a well-cut die utilising vertical and diagonal lines to 'read' something like NIMN but it is probably only accidentally 'literate'. No direct parallels have been found although broadly similar stamps are relatively well-known in the area (Young 1977, fig. 69, 42-61; Rigby 1982, 150-2, fig. 49; Anderson 2001, 301-4, fig. 105). Although residual in these contexts, none of the Early Roman sherds survived in significantly poorer condition than the rest of the assemblage and do not appear to have moved far from the point of their original deposition, perhaps suggesting at least some activity in this vicinity from the 1st century AD onwards. Further later 1st to early 2nd century AD sherds may well be present among the 'catch-all' coarseware fabric groups (e.g. the grog-tempered, oxidised and grey wares) although in the absence of diagnostic vessel forms, these cannot be readily identified.

6.2.3 The ceramic assemblage indicates far greater levels of activity from *c*. AD 120/130 onwards. The remaining samian is from Central Gaul (Lezoux); most pieces derive from form 18/31 and 31 bowls while others comprise a rim chip from a form 35 cup or form 36 bowl (Trench 2, context 215), the base of a form 33 cup from the backfill of ditch **307** and a small decorated body sherd from a form 37 bowl found in layer **403**. Other imports are confined to Dressel 20 amphora which were made from the 1st to 3rd century AD and used to carry olive oil from Southern Spain across the whole of the western empire, as well as huge variety of secondary purposes. The source of one other amphora sherd found in ditch **307** remains unassigned.

6.2.4 Mortaria are poorly represented but all identified pieces derive from the local Oxfordshire industry; the vessel forms (Young 1977 types WC7 and M22) were both made throughout the main Late Roman production phase (*c*. AD 240–400). Red-slipped ware bowls (Young 1977, types C45 and C47) and brown colour-coated ware beakers and flagons, represented by body sherds only, were also obtained from this region. Pieces from Oxfordshire whiteware flagons, jars, beakers and bowls (types W15, W34, W36 and W47)

spanning the period from the 2nd–4th centuries AD were also recognised and it is probable that other, less diagnostic pieces are included among the more general 'Oxidised ware' category. This ware group has been used to describe a wide range of pale firing fabrics (white/buff/pink/orange) containing variable quantities of sand and/or mica. The majority of these are also likely to derive from the Oxfordshire kilns although other, smaller production centres such as that at Purton, to the west of Swindon (Anderson 1980, 55), may provide alternative sources. Vessel forms include cornice rim beakers, imitation samian forms 18/31 and 36, jars, a wall-sided flagon rim and a shallow, curved-wall dish. The greywares alone account for over half of the Romano-British sherds and include the entire range of coarse, utilitarian 'kitchen' vessels as well as finer beakers and bowls for use at table. Most are encompassed by the highly variable range of reduced ware fabrics and forms made by the Oxfordshire potters (Young 1977, 202-3, types R16, R20, R24, R31, R34, R35, R38, R41, R43, R45, R47, R53 and R56), although, again, the kilns to the west of Swindon (Anderson 1979, 14) may provide secondary sources.

6.2.5 Other British finewares are confined to a few pieces from North Wiltshire colour-coated ware beakers (*c*. AD 125–140/50), including one substantially complete profile from an indented, roughcast form found in the topsoil and fills (**302** and **304**) of ditch **307** in Trench 3. Two freshly broken joining sherds from a rouletted Nene Valley colour-coated ware beaker were also found in ditch **420**. Two flared jar rims and part of carinated bowl with flat-topped, out-turned rim were recognised among the externally-fumed coarse sandy whiteware fabric, although this remains unsourced. The South-east Dorset Black Burnished wares date to the period after the expansion of the industry around *c*. AD 120, extending into the 4th century AD. Vessel forms comprise the commonly transported types belonging to this period - everted rim jars, shallow, plain rimmed dishes, flat-, grooved- and dropped flanged bowls/dishes (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, types WA2, 3, 20, 22, 24 and 25). One straight-sided bowl dish base (ditch **409**) carries an incomplete graffito consisting of the letters]N\[scratched into its interior surface after firing, perhaps representing its owner's name or other dedication.

6.2.6 Although unsourced, the other coarsewares are likely to be of relatively local origin. The grog-tempered wares were mostly represented by body sherds. As noted above, these may include some Early Roman Savernake-type ware sherds (Hopkins 1999) as well as the harder, lighter coloured versions made during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD at kiln sites such as those at Whitehill and Toothill Farms to the west of Swindon (Anderson 1979, 13). The majority, however, appear to derive from Late Roman everted rim storage jars, rims from two particularly large examples (280mm and 340mm in diameter) being found in ditch **307**. Part of a handmade grooved flanged bowl was also found in feature **106**. The calcareous wares, here mostly tempered with crushed fossiliferous limestone, are also likely to be of Late Roman date. Although not common, Late Roman shelly wares are comparatively well known in the area (Seager Smith 2001, 249, fabric 85; English Heritage 2006, 38), with evidence from Uley (Leach 1993, 233, fabric 9) and the Beeches, Cirencester (Keely 1986, 163) suggesting that they appeared only after the middle of the 4th century AD. At Dropshot, the vessel forms are limited to fairly large, thick-walled, handmade jars with everted rims.

Saxon

6.2.7 The single Saxon sherd from a handmade, fine sand and organic-tempered ware jar was found in feature **106** and is likely to be of 5th–7th century AD date.

Medieval and later wares

6.2.8 These occurred in very small quantities and as plain body sherds only; all were found in the topsoil of Trench 4. They comprise two medieval coarsewares (11th–13th century),

one sherd of Surrey whiteware (14th/15th century); a late medieval or early post-medieval sandy ware of uncertain source, and two sherds of modern flowerpot.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

6.3.1 This material type was subject to an on-site discard policy, although the overall quantities (number and weight of pieces) by context were recorded prior to any discard. The full quantification is presented in **Table 1**. In all, approximately half the assemblage (524 pieces, 23.252kg; 56% by number, 49% by weight) was disposed of on site; this derived from the topsoil of Trenches 1, 2 and 4 as well as the backfill (context **304**) of ditch **307**, layer **403** and the secondary fill (context **410**) of ditch **409**.

6.3.2 Most of the retained ceramic building material is of Romano-British date although three small medieval/post-medieval peg-hole roof tile fragments were found in layer **104** and the topsoil of Trench 2. The assemblage is highly fragmentary but comprises pieces from *imbrex* and *tegula* roof tiles, box flue and voussoir blocks as well as Roman bricks. Tessera, generally around 30mm² and cut from brick or tile, were found in the topsoil of Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 6 as well as in layers **104**, **215** and **403**, post hole **226** (context **227**), ditch **409** (context **410**) and robber trenches **205**, **250** and **610** (contexts **202**, **233** and **608** respectively).

6.3.3 With the exception of one three-quarter complete *bessales* brick (210mm², 36mm thick) found in layer **403**, there were no complete dimensions. One fragment with combed keying from the primary fill (context **306**) of ditch **307** was sufficiently large to definitely identify it as part of a voussoir block while four of the pieces from ditch **409** (context **410**) probably derive from a single hypocaust box flue tile identified by their cut-out vents. Three other pieces from this context join to form part of a thick-walled (15mm), internally sooted box flue tile with relief-patterned (Betts *et. al.* 1994, die 2) keying on one face. One other example of this die is already known from Sutton Courtenay (*ibid*., 66) although the majority of examples cluster in Hertfordshire and London. The fabric of the Dropshot tile corresponds with that of the Museum of London fabric type 3069 (*ibid*., 20). No other examples of this fabric were noted among the retained assemblage; most pieces being made in bright orange sandy fabrics with a small number of the box flue/voussoir fragments in buff, grog-tempered wares. One brick fragment in a fossiliferous limestone tempered fabric was also noted among the retained pieces from context **410**, and seven fragments in very coarse, friable fabrics came from other contexts in Trench 4.

6.4 *Opus Signinum* , Wall Plaster and Mortar

6.4.1 Further building material is present in the form of small quantities of *opus signinum*, wall plaster and mortar. *Opus signinum*, a cement-like material containing small fragments of CBM, was used to line water tanks and for flooring; fragments occurred in Trenches 2 and 4. Small fragments of wall plaster were found in Trenches 1 (monochrome red) and 2 (monochrome white); small fragments of mortar came from the same trenches.

6.5 Worked Flint

6.5.1 The worked flint consists entirely of waste flakes, with raw materials derived from locally accessible gravel flint. In the absence of tools or other chronologically distinctive pieces, this small group cannot be dated more closely.

6.6 Worked and Utilised Stone

6.6.1 The stone consists largely of building materials, although 12 small fragments of lave quernstone were also recovered (all from one context in Trench 4). The building materials include limestone roof tiles (96 fragments) and tesserae in a variety of stone types (24

examples); one larger piece of limestone from an upper fill of ditch **307** shows no obvious signs of working but could have been utilised and building material. The limestone roofing tiles were subjected to a sampling policy on site, with only a representative sample retained (approximately 10%); **Table 1** gives the full quantification. No complete tiles were recovered, and only one complete original dimension was recorded (width of 260mm from a tile from ditch **307**).

6.6.2 Hand specimen comparative analysis of the stone has identified a range of source rocks, with the Site's proximity to the River Thames a major contributory factor to this diversity. Not only has the river made accessible continental source (German lavastone quern) but also the tilestone quarries of the Middle Jurassic to the north of Oxford (all the roofing tile). The palaeontology of the stone is certainly Middle Jurassic – the question is whether they are from the known Roman quarries at Stonesfield (accessible via the Evenlode and Akeman Street) or from the Forest Marble. It seems likely that they are from Stonesfield, given their widespread provincial distribution. These fine-grained, fissile rocks were also split for tessera production.

6.6.3 A range of other rock types were identified amongst the tesserae. The large, crudely made border tesserae were made from coral limestone from the local Upper Jurassic (Corallian) where again the outcrops lie alongside the Thames at Oxford. Sarsen, chalk-rock tesserae were also used for this purpose and were probably exploited from outcrops to the south. The closest source represented is Culham greensand rubble, identifiable from the fossil fish teeth.

6.7 Glass

6.7.1 The two pieces of glass recovered are both Romano-British. A small fragment from Trench 1, in a very pale blue/green glass, is flat and could derive either from a window quarry or from a vessel. The fragment from Trench 4 is a piece of melted waste.

6.8 Coins

6.8.1 Five coins were recovered (**Appendix 2**). All are copper alloy issues of the Roman period, struck in the late 3rd or 4th centuries AD. The five coins recovered are generally all in poor condition, with a number showing signs of bad corrosion. All also show signs of pre-deposition wear. Despite this, it is possible to identify four of the five to period.

6.8.2 The earliest coin from the site is a copy of a radiate *antoninianus* of Tetricus II (AD 270–273), which was probably struck between AD 270 and 296, when Diocletian reformed the coinage of the Empire. These radiate copies were copies of 'official' coinage, possibly struck to compensate for gaps in supply of coinage to Britain and to supply sufficient small change for the provinces needs. It is unclear whether these copies were officially sanctioned, if at all, but they are not uncommon as site finds, and seem to have circulated in the same fashion as officially struck coins. This coin, in keeping with many such 'barbarous' copies, has a very stylised suspension hole, now broken, indicating that the coin was used as a pendant. This hole was located above the bust on the obverse of the coin, suggesting that the intent was for the portrait to be displayed upright.

6.8.3 The remaining coins, including the illegible issue (Object 2, Trench 2 topsoil), all date to the 4th century AD. The earliest of these is a very worn 'Constantinopolis' *nummus* minted in Trier in AD 333 (Object 14, Trench 6 topsoil). The other two coins, both very corroded are a copy of a coin of Magnentius or Decentius (Object 10, Trench 3 topsoil), probably struck between AD 350 and AD 360 and a very corroded 'Gloria Novi Saeculi' issue of the emperor Gratian, minted in Arles between AD 367 and 378.

6.8.4 This small assemblage can tell us little about the site in general other than it was in use in the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD, and that coin use continued on site into the late 4th century AD, if not into the 5th. All of the coins recovered are common issues, and typical of coins found on late Roman sites.

6.9 Metalwork

6.9.1 Apart from coins, other metalwork includes objects of copper alloy, lead and iron.

Copper Alloy

6.9.2 The four copper alloy objects recovered comprise a small, baluster-shaped fitting, two small sheet fragments, one folded, and a button. The button and fitting are of modern date; the sheet fragments are not datable.

Lead

6.9.3 The lead consists of sheet offcuts and waste fragments, none of which is datable; fragments came from topsoil and unstratified contexts.

Iron

6.9.4 The iron consists largely of nails (45 examples). The only other identifiable object is a tumbler lock slide key (burnt spread **102**), which has a rectangular-sectioned grip (rising from the top of the teeth), surmounted by a circular suspension loop; details of the teeth are unclear (see Crummy 1983, no. 4154). An object (from the upper fill of enclosure ditch **307**) consists of a square sectioned shank with traces of a short possible blade at one end (total length 140mm); the object is of unknown date and function.

6.10 Worked Bone

6.10.1 Three worked bone objects were recovered, all from the fill of ditch **402**. All are made from large mammal long bone shafts, although the species is unidentifiable. One is certainly a pin, of Crummy's type 2, with transverse grooves below a conical head, although the head is largely missing (Crummy 1983, fig. 18). The other two objects could also be pins, falling within Crummy's type 1, plain with conical heads, although both are relatively thick and relatively short (65mm and 83mm respectively, although the tips are missing). An alternative interpretation as pegs, awls or styli is possible (*ibid*., 162-3, fig. 199). At Colchester, pins of types 1 and 2 date to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, but the possible pegs derived from later Roman or post-Roman contexts.

6.11 Animal Bone

6.11.1 The assemblage comprises 309 fragments (or 7.382kg) of hand-recovered animal bone. Bone was recovered from 31 separate contexts of Roman, Early Saxon, and modern date (**Table 3**).

6.11.2 The following information was recorded where applicable: species, skeletal element, preservation condition, fusion and tooth ageing data, butchery marks, metrical data, gnawing, burning, surface condition, pathology and non-metric traits. This information was directly recorded into a relational database (in MS Access) and cross-referenced with relevant contextual information.

6.11.3 Bone preservation is extremely good and only a small proportion of fragments were recorded with gnaw-marks. This suggests that bone waste was disposed of rapidly out of the reach of scavenging carnivores.

Romano-British

6.11.4 Animal bone was recovered from a number of Romano-British ditches, postholes, robber cuts and layers in Trenches 1 to 4, 6 and 8. Relatively large amounts of bone waste were recovered from late Romano-British ditches **307** and **402**.

6.11.5 The Romano-British assemblage comprises 232 fragments, of which *c.* 31% are identifiable to species and skeletal element. Identified species include cattle, sheep/goat, pig, red deer and domestic fowl. Species proportions are similar to the majority of villa sites in Britain, in that cattle bones predominate (see King 1978). A number of the cattle bones show signs of butchery, in particular the use of cleaver, the preferred butchery tool during this period.

6.11.6 Red deer is represented by a single fragment of antler, possibly an off-cut from craft-working.

Early Saxon

6.11.7 Three unidentifiable bone fragments were recovered from fill **103** of Early Saxon ditch **106** in Trench 1.

Modern

6.11.8 A total of 67 bone fragments were recovered from topsoil deposits. Identified species include cattle, sheep/goat, pig, dog, corvid (most probably crow/rook) and rabbit.

Undated

6.11.9 Three unidentifiable bone fragments were recovered from the surface of the nature **105** in **Trench 1**.

6.12 Potential and further recommendations

6.12.1 The evaluation produced a relatively small finds assemblage with no items of particular intrinsic interest. A significant proportion of the assemblage was derived from the topsoil and other insecurely stratified contexts.

6.12.2 Chronological evidence from the pottery and coins indicate that activity on the site spans the whole Roman period, although both these material types highlight the importance of the late 3rd and 4th centuries AD.

6.12.3 The range of material culture is relatively restricted, with only the pottery and ceramic building material occurring in any quantity. The pottery provides evidence for sources of supply, although the chronologically mixed nature of the larger feature groups restricts the usefulness of any significant level of further analysis. The building materials provide further limited structural evidence but all are highly fragmentary.

6.12.4 The faunal assemblage is extremely small and only 31% of fragments are identifiable to species and element. The amount of detailed information (i.e. age and biometric) available for further study is also extremely limited, therefore no further work is required.

6.12.5 The assemblage has already been recorded to a fairly detailed level (e.g. pottery ware types, quantified indication of forms present; brick/tile types), and no further analysis is proposed. The results of this assessment and data presented in this report could, with some modification, be used for publication.

7 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1.1 Six bulk samples were taken, all from features of Romano-British date. Three came from Trench 1, including a burnt spread, ditch **106** and a posthole **107**. A single posthole was sampled from Trench 2 and two samples were taken from the primary fill (**310**) and a charcoal-rich upper fill (**304**) of enclosure ditch **307** in Trench 3. The samples were processed for the assessment of charred plant remains and other environmental material.

7.1.2 The sample from the primary fill (**304**) of ditch **307** was also noted to contain waterlogged material.

7.1.3 The bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods; the flot retained on a 0.5 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 5.6 mm, 2 mm and 1 mm fractions and dried. The coarse fractions (>5.6 mm) were sorted, weighed and discarded. Flots were scanned under a x10 – x40 stereo-binocular microscope and the preservation and nature of the charred plant and wood charcoal remains recorded in **Table 4**. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary and Hopf (2000, Tables 3, page 28 and 5, page 65), for cereals.

7.1.4 With the exception of the smaller sample from posthole **220**, the flots were generally medium to large in size. Roots were generally low to absent from the samples and hence the deposits appear to come from relatively secure, well sealed contexts.

7.2 Charred Plant Remains and Charcoal

7.2.1 Charred grain and cereal remains in general were highly abundant in the three samples from Trench 1, but rare or absent from Trenches 2 and 3. The richest deposit came from the burnt spread (**102**), interpreted as a possible destruction layer, within Trench 1. This comprised over one litre of charred spelt grain (*Triticum spelta*), the majority of which grains had clearly germinated. Elongated coleoptiles (acrospires or sprouts) were also relatively common, but glume bases were, comparative to grains and coleoptiles, much rarer. Where present and identifiable these could be seen to come predominately from spelt wheat. A few germinated grains of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) were also recorded. Weed seeds were similarly very rare and only a single seed of corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*) was recorded in the entire sample.

7.2.2 The sample from ditch **106** also had high numbers of germinated grains of hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*), but was notably much richer in glume bases, mainly of spelt wheat, but also occasionally of emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*). Similarly weed seeds were more common with dock (*Rumex* sp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and cat's tails/annual meadow grass (*Poa/Phleum* sp.) all recorded. The final sample in this area, from posthole **107**, was less rich with mainly germinated grain, but also occasional glume bases.

7.2.3 The sample from posthole **220** (**221**) in Trench 2 contained no charred plant remains. The remaining two samples from the enclosure ditch in Trench 3, had very little in the way of charred plant remains, although occasional grains of barley, spelt and probably emmer were all recovered.

7.2.4 The charred samples from **Trench 1** are of some interest in that they would appear to relate to malting and hence brewing. Such samples have been recovered from a number of sites across Britain (Stevens *et al*. 2011; Stevens 2011; 2013). In most of the assemblages from other sites the samples have been glume rich, and, as such, are

interpreted as waste from dehusking of grain after it has been germinated in the spikelet (Stevens 2011; Smith 2011). In occasional cases assemblages more characteristic of the charring of germinated spikelets have also been recovered (Stevens 2013; Stevens forthcoming). The assemblage from this site however is unique in that it appears to comprise of the malt itself, e.g. germinated dehusked grain, free of chaff and weed seeds. While it is possible that grain was germinated after dehusking, this is unlikely as dehusking damages the embryo and hence hulled wheats are germinated within the spikelet (Samuel 2000). This might imply that, if the deposit does indeed relate to a destruction level, that it represents stored malt.

7.2.5 Such brewing sites are often located along or near Roman Roads, often adjacent to ancient springs, and sometimes close to Roman Towns (see Stevens *et al*. 2011). In the case of the Dropshort, the Roman town of Dorchester upon Thames lies around 7 miles to the east, with the nucleated settlement/*oppida* at Abingdon lying 2-3 miles to the north, to the west, the religious centre at Frilford lies around 3 miles away, located upon the main north-south Roman Road (*The Wessex Way*). The site is also situated on a possible spring, which could have provided the water for brewing, and it has been suggested that it may have been important a ritual or cult site (see op cite).

7.3 Wood charcoal

7.3.1 Wood charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 4**. Wood charcoal was generally recorded only in low quantities compared to the remains of cereals within Trench 1. In several cases round and twig wood could be identified which would imply general fuel rather than structural timbers. However, fragments of ring-porous charcoal, probably oak (*Quercus* sp.), were also recovered.

7.3.2 No wood charcoal was identified from posthole **220** and there were only limited numbers recorded from the lower fill of ditch **307**. The upper fill of this same ditch did contain some large fragments of wood charcoal, including round wood probably of oak.

7.4 Waterlogged Plant Remains

7.4.1 The basal sample from the primary fill of ditch **307** was noted during the assessment to contain reasonable quantities of waterlogged material. The flot was visually inspected under a x10 to x40 stereo-binocular microscope to determine the survival of various categories of waterlogged material. Preliminary identifications of dominant taxa, were conducted, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) and are presented below.

7.4.2 The sample included numerous fragments of wood, but was dominated by seeds of bramble (*Rubus* sp.) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). While both these species produce edible fruits and might therefore relate human consumption, the presence of fragments of wood and thorns of probable bramble suggests that rather they come from woody scrub growing in the vicinity of the ditch. Occasional fragments of hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) and also stones of sloe (*Prunus spinosa*) are likely to come from similar environments. Seeds of black horehound (*Ballota nigra*) were also common, a plant frequent in hedges and other boundary features, near habitation. Seeds of parsley piert (*Aphanes arvensis*) were also quite common, a plant associated with waste ground and arable fields, but also areas of scrub and shading.

7.4.3 Beyond the charred barley grains, the only other indications of human occupation were a few seeds of fig (*Ficus carica*).

7.4.4 The remainder of species, although less well represented, when taken together are indicative of field edges, verge areas of overgrown disturbed wet grassland and bare wet

mud, e.g. orache (*Atriplex* sp.), buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.), cleavers *Galium aparine*), sedges (*Carex* sp.), sow-thistle (*Sonchus asper*), fumitory (*Fumaria* sp.), thistles (*Carduus/Cirsium* sp.), burdock (*Arctium* cf. *lappa*), dead hemp nettle (*Galeopsis tetrahit*), fool's watercress (*Apium nodiflorum*) and bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides*).

7.4.5 Given the presence of waterlogged material from the Romano-British period across the floodplain at Drayton (Robinson 1992; 2003), around half a mile to the north, and the survival of waterlogged material in Roman deposits at Appleford (Robinson 1981) to the east, the survival of such material of this date is not unexpected.

7.4.6 The species list recovered here, although less rich and of narrower range, is similar to that recorded by Robinson (1981) from the Romano-British well at Appleford, with high numbers of elder and bramble, and reasonable numbers of black horehound.

7.4.7 The assemblage is however quite different from that associated with the Romano-British ditch, field system and ard marks at Drayton to the north. This assemblage was much more open, with many more species associated with rough pasture and arable fields (see Robinson 1992; 2003).

7.4.8 Whether the remains from this site relate to an established bank and hedge along the edge of the ditch or to just patches of scrub is difficult to interpret from a single sample. Certainly the molluscan evidence suggests open long grassland with very little direct evidence for shade, but in the waterlogged assemblage there are, comparatively to seeds of bramble and elder, relatively few seeds of plants exclusively associated with open country species.

7.5 Insects

7.5.1 Occasional waterlogged remains of insects were seen within the sample from ditch **307** (fill **310**) including wing elytra.

7.6 Land and aquatic molluscs

7.6.1 Mollusc shells were recorded from a number of the samples from Trenches 1 and 3 and preliminary identifications were made where possible. Nomenclature is according to Anderson (2005) and habitat preferences according to Kerney (1999). The presence of these shells may aid in broadly characterising the nature of the wider landscape.

7.6.2 The sample from layer **102** contained shells of *Vallonia* and *Helicella itala*, while that from ditch **106** contained *Trochulus hispidus*, *Cochlicopa* sp., *Clausilia bidentata*, *Cepaea* sp., *Helicella itala*, and *Anisus leucostoma*. Taken together these are indicative of long damp grass with some flooding rather than standing water and possibly also some shade. Posthole **107** contained a similar assemblage, including *Vallonia* sp., *Discus* sp., *Cochlicopa* sp. *Oxychilus cellarius Aegopinella nitidula*, *Trochulus hispidus*, and *Vallonia excentrica*.

7.6.3 The sample from posthole **220** contained no mollusc shells.

7.6.4 The basal sample from ditch **307** in Trench 3 had extremely high numbers of *Trochulus hispida*, along with lesser numbers of shells of *Vallonia excentrica*, *Cepaea*, *Aegopinella nitidula*, *Euconculus fulvus, Carychium tridentatum* and *Cochlicopa* sp. Associated with marshy ground were shells of *Succinea/Oxyloma* and *Carychium minimum*. Also present were shells associated with seasonal flooding; *Galba truncatula,* and more characteristic of flowing water *Pisidium amnicum*, *Radix balthica* and *Planorbis planorbis*. As stated

above the molluscan evidence from this ditch shows a much more open grassland landscape than that indicated by the waterlogged seeds.

7.7 Small animal and fish bones

7.7.1 During the processing of bulk soil samples for the recovery of charred plant remains and charcoals, small animal bones were noted, and recorded (**Table 4**), in the flots. These included several eel and fish in general from the upper layer of ditch **307** (**304**), but fish remains were absent from the other deposits, although small mammal bones were present in two of the samples within Trench 1.

7.8 Potential and further recommendations

Charred plant remains

7.8.1 The analysis of the charred plant assemblages has the potential to provide information on the function of certain parts of the site, the nature of the settlement, the local environment, local agricultural practices and crop husbandry techniques. The poor number of weed seeds means that any further information on crop-husbandry would be limited. Analysis would help confirm the observations made during the assessment regarding the interpretation of burnt malt from dehusked spikelets in layer 102 and waste from dehusking of malted grain in ditch **106**. It would add only limited information other than this.

Wood charcoal

7.8.2 The analysis of the wood charcoal would provide information on the species composition, management and exploitation of the local woodland resource on the site. However, given the small assemblages present and given that they are not clearly associated with any specific activity such information has limited potential.

Waterlogged plant remains

7.8.3 The waterlogged plant remains have the potential to provide information on the local vegetated environment associated with ditch **307**. However, as preliminary identifications have been carried out for most seeds, such analysis would only add a limited amount of information to the information given above.

Insect remains

7.8.4 Insect remains have the potential to inform on the local environment around features and sediments where such remains are present. While insect species can be related to specific plants species, they also can provide broad indications of the local environment be it, ancient woodland with rotting wood, marsh, pasture or settlement. Unlike waterlogged plant macrofossils which often provide information on the immediate area adjacent to the waterlogged sediments, and pollen which proves a more regional picture, insects can provide information on the intermediate localised environment stretching within hundreds of meters of where they are recovered.

Land and aquatic molluscs

7.8.5 Mollusc remains have the potential to inform on the local environment around features and sediments where such remains are present. They can be specific on the environment in the immediate vicinity, indicating the presence of different kinds of terrestrial environments such as woodland, marshy areas, pasture, and meadowland as well as defining the nature of any aquatic environments such as fast flowing permanent rivers to seasonally desiccated pools. Given the low number of mollusc present in many of the samples, and that no column samples are available such potential is very limited.

Small animal and fish bones

7.8.6 Remains of fish can provide supplementary information to that provided by animal bones on the range of species exploited. However, given the small number of remains recovered such potential is limited.

Scientific dating

7.8.7 The date of the burnt deposit and hence the malting and brewing appears unclear, e.g. it may be Early Saxon or Late Roman in date. While this might be difficult to ascertain given the nature of the calibration curve for this period, there may be some potential to ascertain whether the layer of burnt malt **102** was brunt and deposited at the end of the Romano-British period or indeed within the early Saxon period or relates to earlier Roman activity on the site.

Charred plant remains

7.8.8 No further work is recommended but the assemblages from the rich deposits could be available in archive to be studied as a student/ research project.

Other palaeoenvironmental remains

7.8.9 No further work is recommended on the waterlogged plant remains, insect remains, land and aquatic molluscs or small animal and fish bones.

8 DISCUSSION

8.1.1 The evaluation relocated the Roman building excavated in 1966. Four rooms were identified through a combination of remnant walls and robber trenches. Room 1 appears to correlate with a small room in the plan of the 1966 excavations which may represent a possible hypocaust, perhaps within a bath house. No evidence of a hypocaust was found within the room, however, although box flue tiles were found elsewhere during the evaluation. Other rooms were located directly to the east (Room 2) and south (Room 3) and presumably formed parts of the same building as Room 1.

8.1.2 A further room, Room 4, was identified within Trench 6. When related to the plan of the 1966 excavations it appears to form part of a long corridor. Although the full plan of the building was not exposed within the evaluation trenches, the presence of the long corridor on the eastern side of the building suggests that this may represent part of a winged corridor villa. No evidence was uncovered for the use of space between Room 4 and Rooms 1, 2 and 3.

8.1.3 The building appeared to be surrounded by an outer ditch (**307**). This may have divided the building from a wider, double-ditched enclosure that was revealed within the geophysical data and which was encountered in Trench 4, as ditches **402** and **409**. These two ditches possibly continued into Trench 8, although the relevant features remained unexcavated.

8.1.4 Environmental samples taken from Trench 1 showed high amounts of malt which suggests that brewing took place at the site. Similar examples of brewing on Romano-British settlements are know, for example from Weedon Hill, Aylesbury (Stevens *et al*. 2011) and at Atworth, Draycot Foliat and Littlecote in Wiltshire (Walters 2001), where structural evidence for the brewing process was present.

8.1.5 Dating evidence recovered indicates that occupation of the Site spanned the whole Romano-British period, but the pottery assemblage gave particular emphasis to the 3rd to 4th centuries AD. The potential of this dating evidence to refine a sequence of activity on

the Site, however, is extremely limited, given the redeposited nature of a significant proportion of the finds assemblage.

8.1.6 There was some evidence for pre- and post-Romano-British occupation of the Site. A number of struck flints were found in tree throw **503**. The Anglo-Saxon period was represented by a single ditch in Trench 1, tentatively dated from a single pottery sherd.

8.1.7 The excavation revealed significant archaeological features associated with a Romano-British building complex. Although still not completely clear, the site seems likely to have been a villa complex with a possible bath house, and with brewing production likely to have been taking place on site. While there is significant archaeological material located on the site, it does seem to have suffered damage from previous excavations and additional damage from ploughing due to shallow topsoil. Since the 1966 excavations, the tessellated pavement that was discovered then seems to have been completely lost and pieces of *tesserae* found in the current evaluation were possibly the last vestiges of that floor. There was also evidence that the building had been the subject to robbing after the building had gone out of use.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1.1 The evaluation has served to confirm some of the details of the building complex located in the 1960s, and to ascertain more of its surrounding context, but the limited extent of the trenches excavated allow little more detailed discussion of the Site. Further analysis and detailed publication is not proposed, but a summary of the Site will be submitted to *Oxoniensia*, for the annual round-up of archaeology in the county.

9.1.2 An OASIS online record (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/) has been initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the AHBR. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

10 ARCHIVE

10.1.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, digital data, artefacts and ecofacts, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (ADS 2012; SMA 1995; Brown 2011).

10.1.2 The archive is currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code **85200**. It is intended that the archive will ultimately be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum Service under the accession code **OXCMS: 2012.60**, subject to the agreement of the landowners.

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Table 1: All finds by material type and by trench (number / weight in grammes)

Material	Tr 1	Tr 2	Tr 3	Tr 4	Tr 5	Tr 6	Tr 8	unstrat	Total
Pottery	86/1198	93/955	285/8085	363/6068	18/167	66/596	6/142	-	917/17211
Roman	*85/1183*	*93/155*	*285/8085*	*357/5994*	*18/167*	*66/596*	*6/142*	-	*910/17122*
Saxon	*1/15*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*1/15*
Medieval & Post-medieval	-	-	-	*6/74*	-	-	-	-	*6/74*
Ceramic Building Material	205/5639	405/12436	34/6933	260/22,421	-	28/1026	4/433	1/30	937/48,918
Wall Plaster	1/73	1/9	-	-	-	-	-	-	2/82
Opus signinum	-	6/175	-	1/46	-	-	-	-	7/221
Mortar	1/27	2/75	-	-	-	-	-	-	11/512
Fired Clay	-	-	8/591	-	-	-	-	-	8/591
Stone	7/203	24/1325	17/18518	80/5789	-	5/182	-	-	133/26,017
Flint	1/6	2/7	-	-	4/7	-	-	-	7/20
Burnt Flint	1/1	1/16	-	-	1/1	-	-	-	3/18
Glass	1/3	-	-	1/14	-	-	-	-	2/17
Slag	-	1/10	-	-	-	-	-	-	1/10
Metalwork (no. objects)	13	18	19	11	5	7	-	2	75
Coins	-	*2*	*1*	-	-	*1*	-	*1*	*5*
Copper Alloy	-	*1*	*2*	-	*1*	-	-	-	*4*
Lead	-	-	-	-	-	*3*	-	*1*	*4*
Iron	*13*	*15*	*16*	*11*	*4*	*3*	-	-	*62*
Worked Bone (no. objects)	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
Animal Bone	23/144	30/522	26/665	211/5577	3/4	6/19	10/451	-	309/7382
Shell	2/20	3/53	50/1021	19/419	-	-	-	-	74/1513

Table 2: Pottery totals by ware type

Ware type	No.	Wt. (g)
Romano-British		
Samian	20	250
Terra Nigra	1	8
Dressel 20 amphora	8	1218
Unassigned amphora	1	52
North Wiltshire colour-coated ware	11	54
Nene Valley colour-coated ware	2	13
Oxon white-slipped red mortaria	3	38
Oxon whiteware mortaria	4	124
Oxon colour coat	27	286
Oxon whiteware	14	96
Oxidised wares	69	538
Externally-fumed sandy whiteware	22	176
Greyware	505	7195
SE Dorset BB1	104	1681
Grog-tempered ware	71	3886
Calcareous ware	47	1503
Sand and flint-tempered ware	1	4
subtotal:	*910*	*17122*
Saxon		
Organic-tempered ware	1	15
subtotal:	*1*	*15*
Medieval and Post-medieval		
Medieval coarseware	2	24
Surrey whiteware	1	13
Late med/early post-med coarseware	1	23
Modern flower-pot	2	14
subtotal:	*6*	*74*
Overall total:	**917**	**17211**

Table 3: Animal bone: number of identified specimens present (or NISP) by period

Species	Roman	Early Saxon	modern	Undated	Total
cattle	38		11		49
sheep/goat	20		4		24
pig	8		2		10
dog	1		1		2
deer	1				1
domestic fowl	7				7
corvid			1		1
rabbit			1		1
unidentifiable	161	3	47	3	214
Total	**236**	**3**	**67**	**3**	**309**

Table 4: Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

Samples				Flot								
Feature	Context	Sample	Vol. Ltrs	Flot (ml)	% roots	Charred Plant Remains				Charcoal >4/2mm	Other	Analysis
						Grain	Chaff	Other	Comments			
Trench 1												
spread	102	1	10	1500	0	A***	A	C	>1 litre of spelt grain mostly germinated, large numbers of sprouts, some spelt glumes. A few germinated barley. *Agrostemma githago* Ring-porous large	30/10ml	Sab – (C) Moll-t (C)	-
Ditch 106	103	2	10	150	20	A**	A***	A	Spelt and emmer glumes, germinated grains, coleoptiles, Rumex, Galium, Poa/Phleum	5/5ml	Moll-t (B) Moll-f (B)	-
Posthole 107	108	3	10	160	25	A*	B	C	Germinated grain, Occasional glume bases Twig & round wood	10/8ml	Sab-(C) Moll-t (C)	-
Trench 2												
Posthole 220	221	6	1	10	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trench 3												
Ditch 307	310	4	30	1000	n/a	B	-	-	Barley grain. Waterlogged but little charred	5/5ml	Moll-t (A*) Moll-f (A*)	-
Ditch 307	304	5	30	350	5	B	-	-	Barley, spelt and emmer grains, large fragments of round wood. Vicia sp.	50/20ml	Eel-(C) Fish-(C) Moll-t (C)	-

Key: A*** = exceptional, A** = 100+, A* = 30-99, A = >10, B = 9-5, C = <5; Sab = small animal bones, Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs, Moll-f = aquatic molluscs

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

bgl: below ground level
aOD: above Ordnance Datum

Trench 1	**Dimensions: 9.71m x 1.95m x 0.25m**		
	Land use: arable		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
101	Topsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay loam with stone inclusions <50mm, rounded, medium density and moderately sorted. Contained occasional CBM, abraded <100mm; occasional abraded pottery.	0-0.23m
102	Layer	Dark brown-black silty clay; burning layer with stone inclusions <80mm, poorly sorted, occasional, sub-rounded. Burnt spread overlying large part of the trench.	0.23m-0.37m
103	Fill	Dark brown-black silty clay burning layer containing stone inclusions <180mm, subangular to sub-rounded, poorly sorted, rare. Fill of cut **106**. Contained small pieces of wall plaster and CBM <80mm. Deliberate backfill layer; very diffuse with fill **102**.	0.60m
104	Layer	Dark brown silty clay loam with flint inclusions <50mm, rounded. Occasional animal bone and CBM. Disturbed natural cut through by archaeological features. Possibly represents construction layer.	0.23m-0.46m
105	Natural	Light yellow-brown sandy clayey loam below **104**; contained small rounded stones/gravel.	0.40m
106	Cut	Feature, NW-SE aligned, only visible at NW end. Possibly a ditch although not enough visible within the trench and fill **104** is too diffuse with **103** to follow its edges.	0.25m-0.82m
107	Cut	Possible posthole; semi-circular with concave steep sides and a concave base. Unclear whether a real actual archaeological feature or not. Diameter 0.35m. Filled with **108**.	0.38m-0.63m
108	Fill	Secondary fill of posthole **107**. Dark grey-brown sandy clay with pebble/gravel inclusions <50mm, rounded, occasional, moderately sorted with occasional charcoal flecking.	0.39m – 0.68m

Trench 2	**Dimensions: 8.62m x 6.62m x 0.32m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
201	Layer	Topsoil: mid grey-black silty clay with gravel inclusions <50mm, subangular to sub-rounded, poorly sorted, common. Contained occasional pottery and CBM.	0-0.32m
202	Fill	Mid grey-brown, gritty sandy silt clay with small, occasional, abraded pottery. Secondary or deliberate backfill of possible previous excavation trench or robber trench **205**. Fill very similar to topsoil.	0.15m
203	Structure	Limestone wall, NNE-SSW; at northern end turns through 90 degrees to run WNW-ESE. Truncated at southern end by cut **205**. Bonded with sand-based mortar with gravel inclusions. Height 0.15m, width 0.7m; runs for approximate length of 4.7m. Part of building; abutted by wall **236** to north.	0.15m
204		VOID	
205	Cut	Cut of possible 1960s excavation trench or possible robber trench. Sub-square in shape; only partially exposed. Length 3.4m exposed in trench; width 3.3m. Filled with **202**.	0.15m

206		VOID	
207	Fill	Secondary fill of possible posthole **208.** Mid greyish-black silty sand. Contained single sherd of Romano-British pottery; some animal bone.	0.11m
208	Cut	Posthole or animal burrow, sub-circular, with shallow sloping edges and a concave base. Contained single fill **207**. Length 0.28m; width 0.14m.	0.11m
209	Fill	Mid greyish-brown silty sand, coarse-grained, with moderate, poorly sorted small stones. Contained Romano-British pottery and animal bone. Fill of possible posthole **210**.	0.07m
210	Cut	Possible posthole or rooting. Sub-circular with very shallow sloping edges and a concave base. Filled with context **209**. Diameter 0.35m.	0.07m
211	Fill	Mid-grey silt clay with gravel inclusions <20mm, sub rounded, moderately sorted. Contained common, well sorted, subangular limestone <180mm. Deliberate backfill packing around wall **203** and fill of raft cut **212**.	0.3m
212	Cut	Cut for raft **217** and wall **203**. Truncated on eastern side by robber trench **222**; only visible on western side. Sub-square with steep concave sides and flat base Width 3.2m wide. Cut same as **213**.	0.3m
213	Cut	Cut for raft **217** and wall **203**. Exactly the same as 212 but within different section. Length 2m long (in section) and 1.33m (in section).	0.33m
214	Fill	Dark yellow-brown silty clay with 50% large, subangular limestone and 10% very small rounded gravel inclusions. Deliberate backfill packing layer around wall **203**. It is the same as context **211** but has been given separate number. Width 0.53m.	0.33m
215	Fill	Dark brown-black soft silty clay with 50% small rounded, well sorted, gravel inclusions and 5% mortar inclusions. Deliberate backfill layer within robber trench, deposited after area of raft **217** and wall **203** had been robbed out. Fill is quite clear. Width 0.95m.	0.28m
216	Layer	Mid yellow-brown silty clay with 5% gravel inclusions and 1% white mortar. Colluvial layer or layer of trample created during construction of the villa.	0.1m
217	Structure	Limestone raft that wall **203** built upon; bonded with redeposited natural. Limestone placed on edge at approximately 30 degree angle. Width 2.9m.	0.23
218		VOID	
219		VOID; duplicate context of **215**.	
220	Cut	Posthole, sub-circular; steep concave sides and a concave base. Diameter 0.22m. Contained single fill **221**. Posthole truncated by robber trench **222**.	0.10m
221	Fill	Secondary fill of posthole, caused by gradual silting up of feature. Mid grey-brown gravelly sand with 50% sub-rounded gravels <30mm and 10% pink mortar inclusions, although this may have been residual. Width 0.22m.	0.15-0.25m
222	Cut	Robber trench for robbed out N-S wall. Trench is linear with a straight moderate slope and a flat base. Contained two fills **223** and **215**. Visible for a length of 3.78m; width 0.92m.	0.34m
223	Fill	Primary fill of robber trench **222**, caused by initial digging and trampling within trench. Light yellow-grey sandy clay with small, rounded, well sorted gravel inclusions with a 50% density. Width 0.96m.	0.13m-0.38m.
224		VOID	

225		VOID	
226	Cut	Possible pit, although very hard to tell - shape unclear. Shallow, concave sides with a flat base. Possible that it was just a change in the fill in feature **247**. Contained single fill (**227**). Large numbers of tesserae. Width 0.88m.	0.13m
227	Fill	Secondary fill of possible posthole **226**, with deliberate backfill of tesserae. Dark brown-black silty sand.	0.13m
228	Layer	Redeposited natural layer, most likely disturbed natural. Light brownish-yellow, coarse-grained sand and clay.	0.1-0.26m
229		VOID	
230	Fill	Secondary fill of **232**. Mid yellow-brown silty clay with 30% small, well rounded gravel and 1% charcoal inclusions. Width 0.52m.	0.08m
231	Fill	Secondary fill of possible tree throw **232**. Dark brown-black silty clay with small, rounded, well sorted stones. Width 0.72m.	0.22m
232	Cut	Tree throw, irregular, in SW corner of Trench 2. Edges regular in plan but base uneven and undulating, Truncated by wall footings **212**. Contained fills **230** and **231**.	0.22m
233	Fill	Possible deliberate backfill of robber trench **250.** Dark brown-black soft silty clay with 50% small, well rounded gravel inclusions.	0.2m
234	Fill	Primary fill of robber trench **250**. Mid brownish-grey yellow silty gravels, contained 80% pea grit gravels and a single piece of pottery.	0.16-0.41m
235	Layer	Light brown-pink silty clay with 50% small, well sorted, rounded gravels; contained small fragments of CBM inclusions. Layer forms base for *opus signinum* floor mortar, moderately firm. Levelling/ bedding layer. 1.8m long by 1.1m wide. Fill of cut **212**.	0.1m
236	Structure	Limestone wall, approx N-S; at northern end turns and runs E-W. Single course high. Built upon raft **237**. Runs for 3.6m, varies in width from 0.3-0.54m. Bonded with clay. At southern end it abutted wall **203**. In cut **238**.	0.25m
237	Fill	Limestone-lined raft that wall **236** lies upon. Western edge of raft bonded with more yellow sandy clay bonding – remainder is more mid-grey sandy clay although this may be staining from the grey clay bonding of wall **236** above it. Limestone used is <240mm, subangular – sub-rounded and well sorted. This limestone is not placed on edge like raft **217**. Visible within the slot for 2m x 1m.	0.2-0.3m
238	Cut	Cut for construction of raft **237** and wall **236** measuring 1.06m x 1.15m in section the cut is sub-square with straight steep sides and a flat base.	0-0.3m
239	Fill	Mid grey-brown silty clay sand with small coarse sub-rounded, moderately sorted, gravel inclusions. Deliberate backfill layer around wall **236**. Fill of **238**.	0-0.3m
240	Cut	Linear feature (unexcavated) running NE-SW. Possibly cut of a robber trench. Contained mixed mid-yellowish grey gritty silty clay with approx 30% gravel inclusions and some pottery.	-
241	Fill	Very dark-grey-brown silty clay loam with small sub-rounded poorly sorted gravels. Secondary fill of linear feature **242**. Very similar to topsoil.	0.14m
242	Cut	Cut of unknown feature, only partially exposed. Unknown shape; eastern side disappears into section. In section sides appear concave and shallow with a concave base, but edges very diffuse. Filled with **241**. Dimensions within trench 3.8m x 0.86m.	0.14m
243	Layer	Dark pink *opus signinum* with occasional to common, small, sub-rounded, well sorted gravel inclusions and frequent, well sorted, angular and subangular inclusions of broken tile pieces. Bedding layer of *opus signinum* floor. It is thought that this was where the	0-0.08m

		partial remains of the mosaic were found in the 1960s, but since ploughed out. Visible for 1.95m by 1.4m. Fill of cut **238**.	
244	Layer	Mid yellow-brown clay sand with small sub-rounded, common gravel inclusions. Deliberate backfill layer lying over the raft to level the ground before laying floor **243**. Very similar to natural. Fill of cut **238**.	0.08-0.16m
245	Layer	Mid brown-yellow silty clay with common gravel inclusions; also bone and CBM fragments. Possible disturbed natural layer. Located in south-east side of trench, truncated by **222** and **240**.	0.09m
246	Fill	Dark yellowish-brown silty sand, coarse-grained with frequent inclusions of small, sub-rounded to subangular, well sorted stones. Deliberate backfill layer of cut **246**.	0.05m
247	Cut	Linear feature, NNE-SSW. Unclear function; very shallow. Very regular with 2 'buttresses'. Appears too regular to be a robber trench and not deep enough. Filled with **246**.	0.05m
248	Layer	Mid greyish-brown, coarse-grained silty sand with frequent inclusions of well sorted, sub-rounded stones. Disturbed natural caused by building of structure.	0.08m
249	Natural	Light yellow-brown sandy clay with rounded, well sorted gravel inclusions <80mm.	0.32m+
250	Cut	Linear feature, possibly a ditch or robber trench. In alignment with cut **222**, so possibly part of same feature although stratigraphically it appears earlier. Only western side of feature excavated; not visible in plan. Ran in a NE-SW direction and filled with **234** and **233**.	0.41m
251	Layer	Mid brownish-yellow gravelly silty clay. Disturbed natural with Romano-British pottery. A layer that features are cut into.	-
252	Layer	Mid brownish-yellow silty clay with lenses of gravel within it. Several features cut through this layer..	-

Trench 3	**Dimensions: 5.58m x 1.69m x 0.38m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
301	Layer	Topsoil: mid-grey-brown silty sandy clay with stone inclusions <50mm, common, sub-rounded.	0-0.3m
302	Fill	Tertiary fill of ditch **307**. Mid-grey-brown sandy clay, very similar to topsoil. Contained fragments of pottery and CBM.	0.3m – 0.4m
303	Fill	Deliberate mortar backfill of ditch **307**. Light yellow sandy mortar with grit inclusions <10mm, rounded, well sorted, moderate density. Thin layer of mortar deliberately dumped in ditch.	0.3m-0.34m
304	Fill	Deliberate backfill of ditch **307**. Mid-grey-black clay with occasional rounded, poorly sorted gravel inclusions. Contained abundant pottery, CBM and oyster shell.	0.3m-0.60m
305	Fill	Redeposited natural layer in ditch **307**. Mid-yellow-brown gravel clay, gravel <50mm, rounded, moderately sorted.	0.4m-0.52m
306	Fill	Primary fill caused by erosion and stabilization within ditch **307**. Mid-grey-brown gravelly sandy clay. Gravel <50mm, rounded, moderately sorted.	
307	Cut	Ditch, N-S. Length of 1.6m within trench; 2.4m wide. Concave sides with moderate slope, and flattish base. Inner boundary ditch surrounding Roman building.	0.3m-1.11m
308	Layer	Natural: mid-yellow-brown sandy clay with small, well sorted, abundant rounded gravel inclusions.	0.36m+
309	Fill	Deliberate backfill of ditch **307**. Mid-grey-black silty clay with occasional, sub-rounded, moderately sorted gravels < 40mm.	0.3m-0.7m

		Layer contained large amount of oyster shell and some pottery and CBM.	
310	Fill	Primary fill of ditch **307**. Mid-brown-black clay sand with abundant, well sorted gravel inclusions <80mm.	0.79m-1.1m
311	Fill	Primary fill of ditch **307**. Mid-yellow-grey clay sand with abundant, rounded, well sorted gravels <90mm.	0.55m-0.86m

Trench 4	**Dimensions: 9.87m x 1.83m x 0.35m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
401	Layer	Topsoil: dark grey-brown silty clay with gravel inclusions <40mm, sub rounded to rounded, occasional–moderate density.	0-0.34m
402	Cut	Ditch, ESE-WNW; concave and stepped edges, steep with an irregular base. Runs for 1.98m within the trench and is 2.16m wide. Western end of ditch seems to be curving in to form terminal. Contains fill **405**.	**0-0.75m**
403	Fill	Deliberate backfill of ditch **402**; spread beyond ditch edge through ploughing activity. Dark grey silt loam with subangular, rare limestone inclusions <20mm. Difficult to determine if **404** was a separate fill of an earlier cut or if it was a lens within **403**.	0-0.19m
404	Fill	Deliberate backfill of ditch **402**. Mid-grey-brown silt loam with white clay deposits; fine to medium, sub-rounded to well rounded pebbles, moderate density; subangular rubble limestone <200mm. Also contained pottery.	0-0.26m
405	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **402**. Mid-orange-brown sandy silt loam with rare, medium-sized flint nodules and fine to medium-sized angular, sparse limestone, fill also contained animal bone and pottery.	0.15m-0.75m
406	Cut	Boundary ditch, east-west; contained two fills (**407**, **408**). Length 2m within trench; width 0.8m although not fully exposed. Slightly stepped edge with moderate to steep slope and concave base.	0.36m-0.84m
407	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **406**. Mid-grey-brown gritty silt clay with rounded, moderately sorted, moderate density of gravels <30mm.	0.36-0.74m
408	Fill	Primary fill of ditch **406**. Mid-orange-brown clay sand with rounded, well sorted, common gravels <30mm.	0.74m-0.84m
409	Cut	Ditch, NW-SE; concave and moderately sloped side, flat base. Length 2.3m within trench; width 2.74m. Contained fill **410**. Truncated ditch **418** and posthole **413**.	0.42m
410	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **409**. Diffuse with surrounding fills. Mid-grey-brown with lenses of dark grey-brown sandy loam with moderate, poorly sorted, medium gravel and sparse subangular limestone. It also contained rare mortar fragments and sparse charcoal fragments.	0.35m-0.73m
411	Layer	Natural: mid-orange-brown clay sand with rounded, well sorted gravels <30mm.	0.35m+
412	Fill	Deliberate backfill of ditch **420**. Mostly orange, white & brown gravels with dark grey sandy silt, fine pea gravel, abundant (80%), < 5mm.	0.08m-0.41m
413	Cut	Posthole, sub-oval; concave base and side, moderate to steep slope. Diameter 0.5m. It cut ditch **418** but was cut by ditch **409**.	0.23m
414	Fill	Secondary fill of posthole **413**. Mid-brown sandy silt loam with rare, sub-rounded stones <20mm and sparse angular limestone <20mm; also sparse charcoal fragments.	0.23m
415	Cut	Posthole, sub-circular; concave, shallow sides. Diameter 0.6m. Truncated by ditch re-cut **409**.	0.17m

416	Fill	Secondary fill of posthole **415**; rare rounded fine gravel, common angular limestone and sparse limestone fleck inclusions; rare charcoal flecks.	0.17m
417	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **420**, caused by gradual filling up of ditch. Mid-grey-brown sandy silt with rare fine limestone and rare fine charcoal inclusions.	0-0.52m
418	Cut	Ditch, NW-SE; concave base and straight steep sides. Length 2m within trench; width 0.44m. Filled with **419**.	0.40m
419	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **418**. Light brown with orange hue sandy silt with moderate rounded stone and subangular flint and limestone inclusions; sparse charcoal.	0.40m
420	Cut	Linear feature, ESE-WSW; flat, slightly irregular base with steep sides. South side convex and north side concave. Recut of ditch **402**. Length 2m; width 1.06m. Filled with **412** and **417**.	**0.55m**

Trench 5	**Dimensions: 6.47m x 4.22m x 0.31m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
501	Layer	Topsoil: mid grey-black silty clay with gravel and stone inclusions <30mm, subangular to rounded, moderately well sorted and common.	0-0.30m
502	Layer	Natural: mid-orange-brown sandy gravel with gravel inclusions <30mm, rounded, well sorted, abundant.	0.3m+
503	Cut	Tree throw, irregular with slightly undulating base and shallow concave sides. 1m long by 0.7m wide. Filled with **504** and **505**. Contained struck flint.	0.28m-0.48m
504	Fill	Fill of tree throw **503**: mid-grey-brown silty sandy clay with rounded, well sorted, abundant gravels <20mm.	0.28m-0.48m
505	Fill	Fill of tree throw **503**: dark brown silty clay with sub-rounded, moderately well sorted gravel <20mm. Contained struck flint.	0.28m-0.48m
506	Cut	Posthole, sub-circular; concave base and steep sides. Diameter 0.25m. Filled with **507**.	0-0.18m
507	Fill	Secondary fill of posthole **506**. Mid-brown silty clay gravel. Gravel inclusions < 10mm, well sorted, common, sub rounded – rounded.	0.18m
508	Cut	Tree throw, irregularly shaped, with undulating base and irregular steep sides. Filled with **509**.	0.3m-0.65m
509	Fill	Fill of tree throw **508**. Dark grey-brown silty clay with sub-angular – rounded, poorly sorted, common gravel <60mm. Fill very similar to topsoil.	0.3m-0.65m
510	Cut	Gully, NNE-SSW; concave base and sides on moderate angle. Truncated at northern end by field drain **514**. Length within trench 1.8m, width 0.5m. Filled with **512** and **513**.	0.24m-0.49m
511		VOID	
512	Fill	Primary fill of gully **510**. Mid-yellow-brown sandy clay with rounded, well sorted, abundant gravel <20mm.	0.24m-0.49m
513	Fill	Secondary fill of gully **510**. Mid-grey-brown silty clay with occasional, rounded, moderately sorted gravel <30mm.	0.24m-0.39m
514	Cut	Modern field drain, NW-SE. Contained mid-grey-brown silty clay with a touch of sand. Contained round, moderately sorted gravels.	0.2m

Trench 6	**Dimensions: 6.82m x 1.87m x 0.33m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
601	Layer	Topsoil: mid-grey-black silty clay with gravel and stone inclusions <30mm, subangular - rounded, moderately well sorted and common.	0-0.3m
602	Fill	Deliberate backfill of robber trench **606**: thin spread of mortar, mid-light yellow-pink, with rounded, well sorted common gravels.	0.3m-0.6m
603	Fill	Deliberate backfill of robber trench 606: mid-brown-grey coarse silty clay with subangular – rounded gravels, poorly sorted with moderate stone fragments. Moderate sandy mortar chunks <80mm.	0.33m-0.68m
604	Fill	Primary fill of robber trench **606**: mid-yellow-brown silty clay with sub-rounded, moderately well sorted, rare gravel <10mm.	0.3m-0.68m
605	Fill	Primary fill of robber trench **606**. Dark grey-yellow clay with occasional, moderately well sorted, sub-rounded gravel <30mm.	0.35m-0.68m
606	Cut	Robber trench, north-south; flat, steep, straight-sided. Filled with **602**, **603**, **604**, **605**, **607**.	0.3-0.79m
607	Fill	Primary fill of robber trench **606**: mid-grey gravel silt, gravel inclusions <35mm, rounded, well sorted, common-abundant.	0.68-0.79m
608	Fill	Deliberate backfill of robber trench **610**: mid-brown-grey silt clay with coarse gravel inclusions <30mm, poorly sorted, rounded, common.	0.3m-0.45m
609	Fill	Mixed redeposited natural, most likely dumping layer in robber trench **610**. Mid-yellow-grey sand silt clay with gravel inclusions <30mm, rounded, moderate density; large limestone (<200mm). Subangular - subrounded.	0.52m-0.58m
610	Cut	Robber, north-south; deliberately backfilled. Ran parallel to robber trench **606**. Length 1.9m within trench; width 0.83m.	0.3m-0.58m
611	Fill	Trample layer; mid-brown-grey gritty silty clay with common, rounded, poorly sorted, gravel < 60mm. Layer most likely formed when buildings initially constructed.	0.3m+`
612	Fill	Subsoil: located mainly at the west end of the trench and running intermittently throughout the trench. Mid-grey-brown silty sandy clay with sub-rounded, occasional, moderately sorted gravel <60mm.	0.24m-0.31m

Trench 7	**Dimensions: 5.30m x 1.93m x 0.52m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
701	Layer	Topsoil: mid-grey-black silty sandy clay with gravel inclusions <60mm, sub-rounded, moderately well sorted, common; occasional chalk flecking.	0-0.4m
702	Layer	Subsoil: mid-grey-brown silty sandy clay with sub-rounded, moderate gravel inclusions <60mm, moderately well sorted.	0.4-0.52m
703	Cut	Gully, north-south, with concave base and concave, shallow sides. Filled with **704** and **705**. Length within trench 5.2m; width 0.75m.	0.52m-0.77m
704	Fill	Secondary fill of gully **703**. Mid-blue-black sandy clay with sub-rounded, moderately well sorted, rare gravels <20mm.	0.63m-0.77m
705	Fill	Secondary fill of gully **703**. Dark brown-grey gritty silty clay with	0.52m-

		sub-rounded, moderately well sorted gravels, moderate density <30mm. Brown flecking within the fill, which is slightly cessy.	0.63m
706	Cut	Gully, east west; not excavated. In north-eastern part of trench; relationship unclear with gullies **703** and **708**. Contained single fill (**707)**. Width 0.4m (although only partially exposed); length of 0.95m.	0.52m+
707	Fill	Secondary fill of gully **706**. Mid-grey-brown silty sandy clay with gravel inclusions <60mm, sub-rounded, poor-moderately sorted, moderate density. Unexcavated.	0.52m+
708	Cut	Gully, north-south, very straight; same alignment as **703**. Very small and regular, suggesting most likely field drain. Relationship in plan with **706** is unclear; feature unexcavated. Length within trench 3.8m; width 0.2m. Filled with **709**.	0.52m+
709	Fill	Secondary or deliberate backfill of possible field drain **708**. Mid-brown-grey silty sandy clay with gravel inclusions <60mm, occasional, poorly sorted, sub-rounded – rounded.	0.52m+
710	Layer	Natural: mid-yellow-brown sandy gravel with a touch of clay. Gravel inclusions <90mm, sub-angular – rounded, well sorted, abundant.	0.52m+

Trench 8	**Dimensions: 6.03m x 3.96m x 0.60m**		
	Land use: pasture		
Context	**Category**	**Description**	**Depth/ Thickness**
801	Layer	Topsoil: mid-grey-black silty sandy clay with gravel inclusions <40mm, poorly sorted, rare, sub rounded.	0-0.20m
802	Layer	Subsoil: mid-grey-black silty sandy clay with gravel inclusions <50mm, moderately well sorted, moderate – common density, sub rounded – rounded.	0.30-0.58m
803	Cut	Linear feature, east-west; geophysical data show it as a boundary ditch. Unexcavated; southern edge not visible. Length within trench 4.68m; width 1.3m. Filled with 804.	0.58m+
804	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **803**. Mid-grey-black silty clay with gravel inclusions <60mm, rare, poorly sorted, sub-rounded. Fill cut by ditch **805**.	0.58m+
805	Cut	Ditch, north-south; it truncated ditch **803**. Unexcavated; filled with **806**. Length within trench 2m; width 0.9m.	0.58m+
806	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch of **805**. Mid-brown-black silty clay with gravel inclusions <30mm, sub-rounded, moderately sorted, common.	0.58m+
807	Cut	Ditch, east-west. Unexcavated; filled with **808**. Length within trench 1.8m; width 1.74m.	0.58m+
808	Fill	Secondary fill of ditch **807**. Mid-grey-black silty clay with a touch of sand and gravel inclusions, occasional, <40mm, sub-rounded; chalk flecking. Edge of fill quite diffuse with natural.	0.58m+

APPENDIX 2: COIN CATALOGUE

SITE CODE: 85200 ***SITE NAME:*** Dropshort Villa

Context **201**
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 18
Issuer Gratian
Obverse condition Corroded
Obverse Bust r, -NVS-

Mint Arles
Notes
Reece Periods: 19 - AD 364 - 378

Object **1**
Denomination Nummus
Weight 2.24 ***Reverse axis*** 12
Issue date AD 367 - 375
Reverse condition Corroded
Reverse Emperor facing, holding labrarum, hand on shield. Gloria Novi Saeculi type
Officina:
References As LRBC II, 503
Casey Period: 25 - AD 364 - 378

Context **201**
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 11
Issuer Unknown Roman Emperor
Obverse condition Corroded
Obverse Bust
Mint Unknown
Notes C4 copy. Type uncertain. Dated by size alone
Reece Periods:

Object **2**
Denomination Nummus
Weight 1.21 ***Reverse axis*** 0
Issue date C4

Reverse condition Corroded
Reverse Illegible
Officina:
References
Casey Period:

Context **201**
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 14
Issuer
Obverse condition
Obverse
Mint
Notes Folded and damaged cu alloy object. Although broadly circular, this does not appear to be a coin. Both damaged and folded
Reece Periods:

Object **4**
Denomination
Weight 0.67 ***Reverse axis*** 0
Issue date
Reverse condition
Reverse
Officina:
References

Casey Period:

Context **301**
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 15
Issuer Magnentius/Decentius
Obverse condition Corroded
Obverse Bust r, bareheaded

Mint Unknown
Notes Smallish flan, stylised engraving
Reece Periods: 18 - AD 348 - 364

Object **10**
Denomination Nummus
Weight 1.41 ***Reverse axis*** 6
Issue date AD 350 - 360
Reverse condition Corroded
Reverse 2 facing victories holding shield on ? Short column (stylised) Victoriaeddnnaugetcae type
Officina:
References Copy as LRBC II, 5
Casey Period: 24 - AD 348 - 364

Context
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 14
Issuer Radiate copy
Obverse condition Corroded
Obverse Bust r, radiate. V stylised

Mint Unknown
Notes Barbarous copy of coin of Tetricus II, struck on a small irregular flan. Stylised engraving. Pierced for suspension, although damage to coin edge now means that the suspension hole now lies on the edge of the flan. Suspension would have shown the face upright on the pendant
Reece Periods: 13 - AD 260 - 275

Object **12**
Denomination Antoninianus
Weight 0.72 ***Reverse axis*** 5
Issue date AD 270 - 296
Reverse condition Very worn
Reverse Priestly implements, jug w/ handle to l. v stylised
Officina:
References

Casey Period: 18 - AD 260 - 273

Context **601**
Metal Cu Alloy
Diameter 18
Issuer Emperor of the House of Constantine
Obverse condition Very worn
Obverse Bust l, helmeted. -STAN TINOPOLIS

Mint Trier
Notes
Reece Periods: 17 - AD 330 - 348

Object **14**
Denomination Nummus
Weight 2.5 ***Reverse axis*** 0
Issue date AD 333
Reverse condition Very worn
Reverse Winged victory on prow. Mint Mark: TRS*
Officina: Second
References LRBC I, 59
Casey Period: 23 - AD 330 - 348

Date:	27/10/14
Revision No.:	0
Scale:	1:1000 at A3
Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\DO\Report figs
	\eval\13_12\85200_fig01.dwg

Site and trench location

Figure 1

A. Gradiometer survey results

B. GPR survey results

Evaluation trench
Gradiometer survey area
GPR survey area

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:1000 & 1:400 at A3	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\Fig02.dwg		

Geophysic survey results

Figure 2

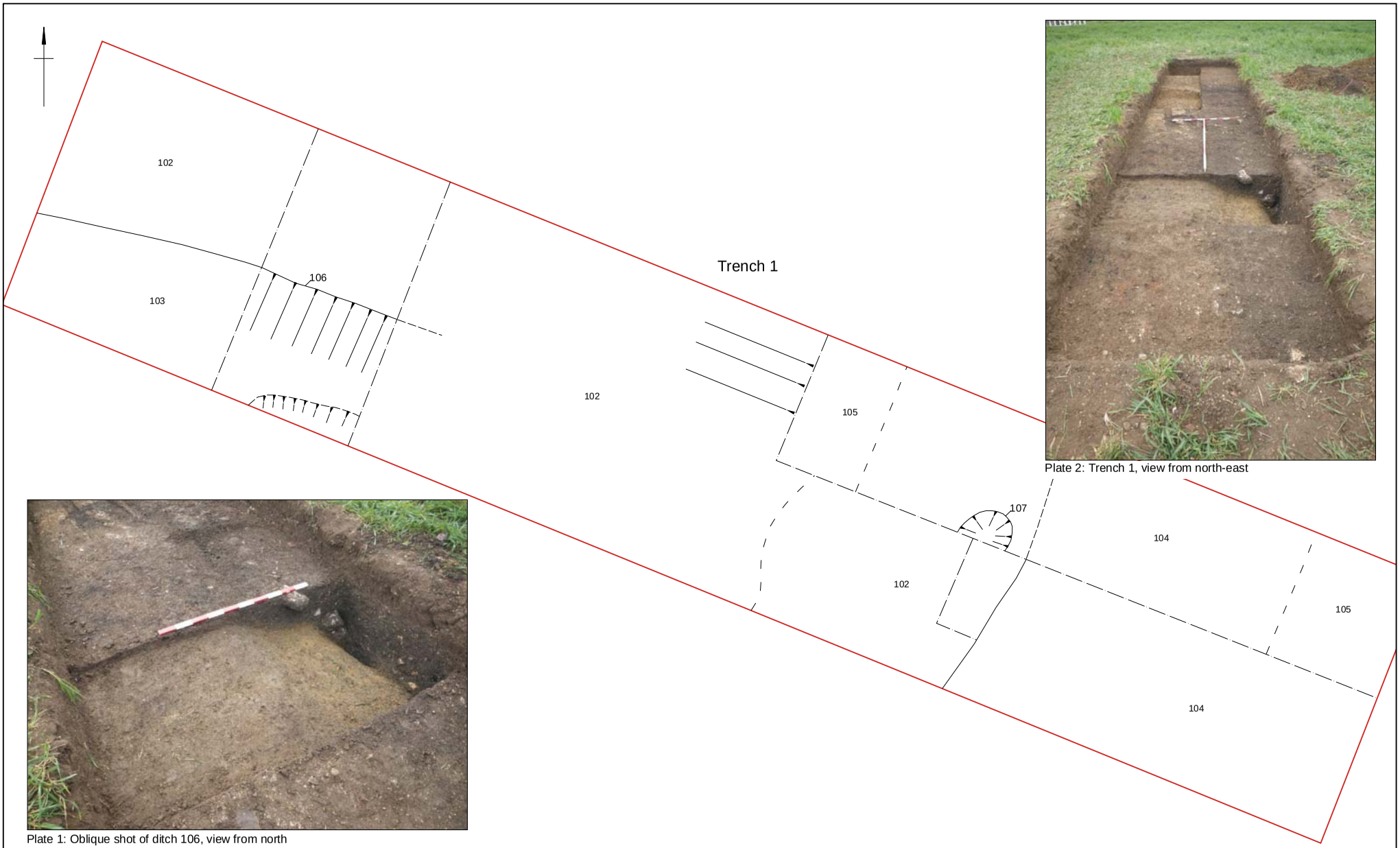

Plate 2: Trench 1, view from north-east

Plate 1: Oblique shot of ditch 106, view from north

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:25 at A3	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\Fig03-10.dwg		

Trench 1: Plan and photographs

Figure 3

Plate 3: Trench 2, view from north

Plate 4: South-west oblique view of wall 203, plinth 217 and robber cut 222

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	1:40 at A3	Illustrator:	KL
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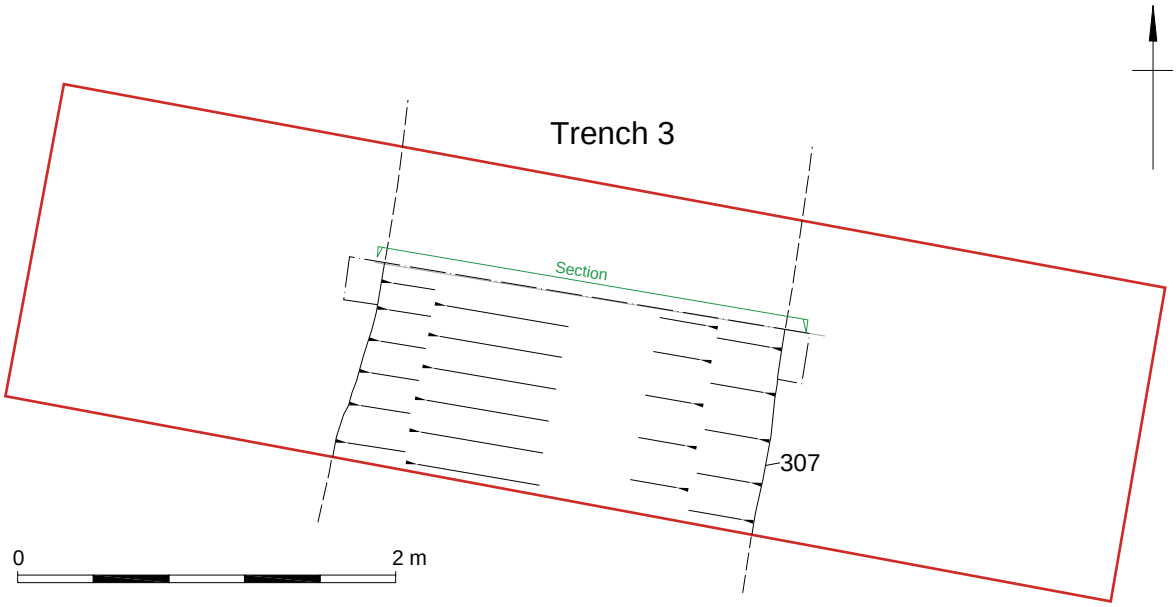
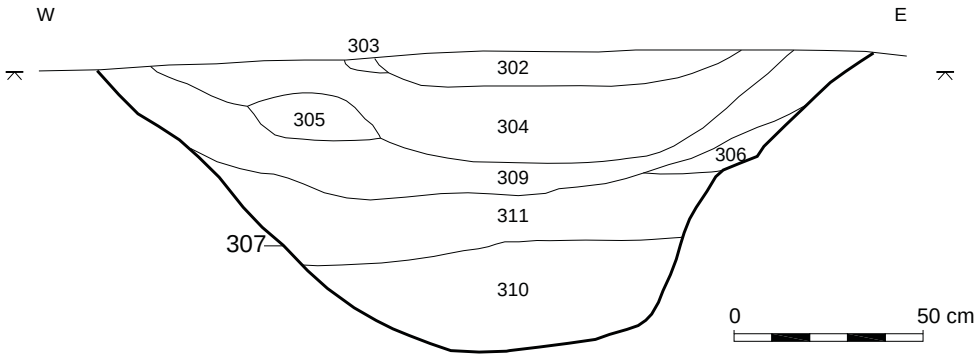
Trench 2: Plan and photographs

Figure 4





South-facing section of ditch 307

Plate 5: South-facing section of ditch 307

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:40 & Section 1:20	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\85200_Fig03-10.dwg		

Trench 3: Plan, section and photograph

Figure 5

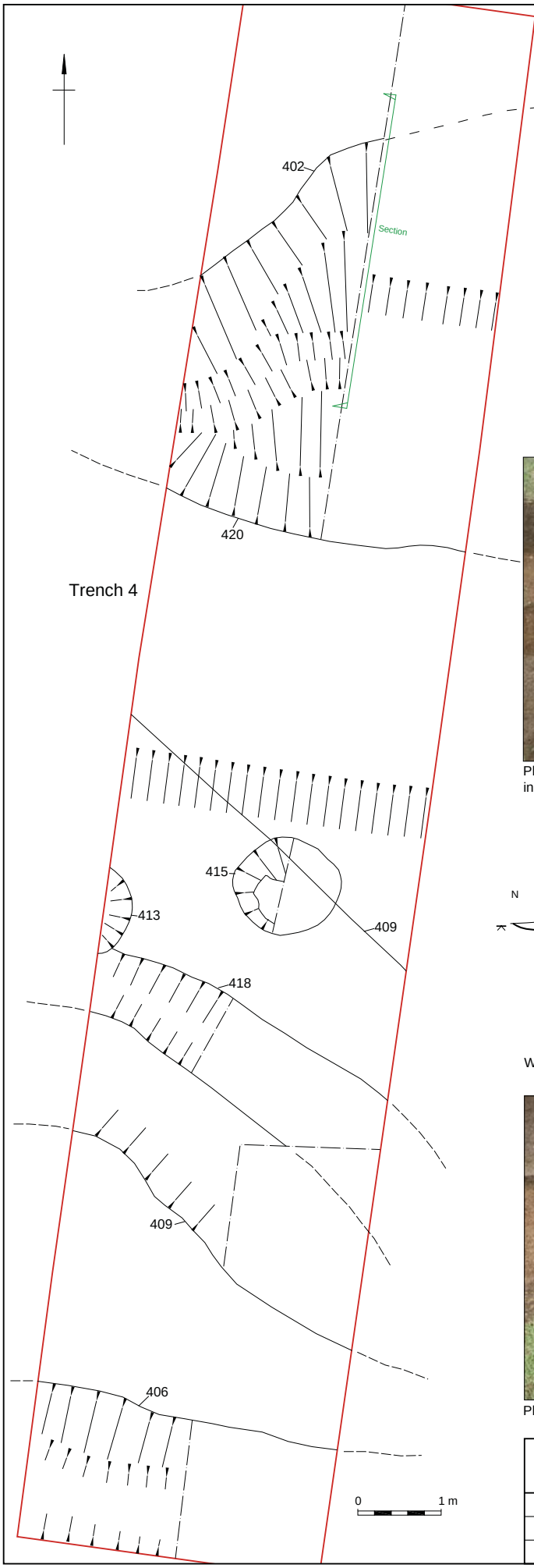


Plate 6: East-facing section of ditches 418 and 409 and pit 413, with pit 415 in the foreground

West-facing section of ditches 402 and 420

Plate 7: West-facing section of ditches 402 and 420

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:25 & Section 1:25	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\85200_Fig03-10.dwg		

Trench 4: Plan, section and photographs

Figure 6

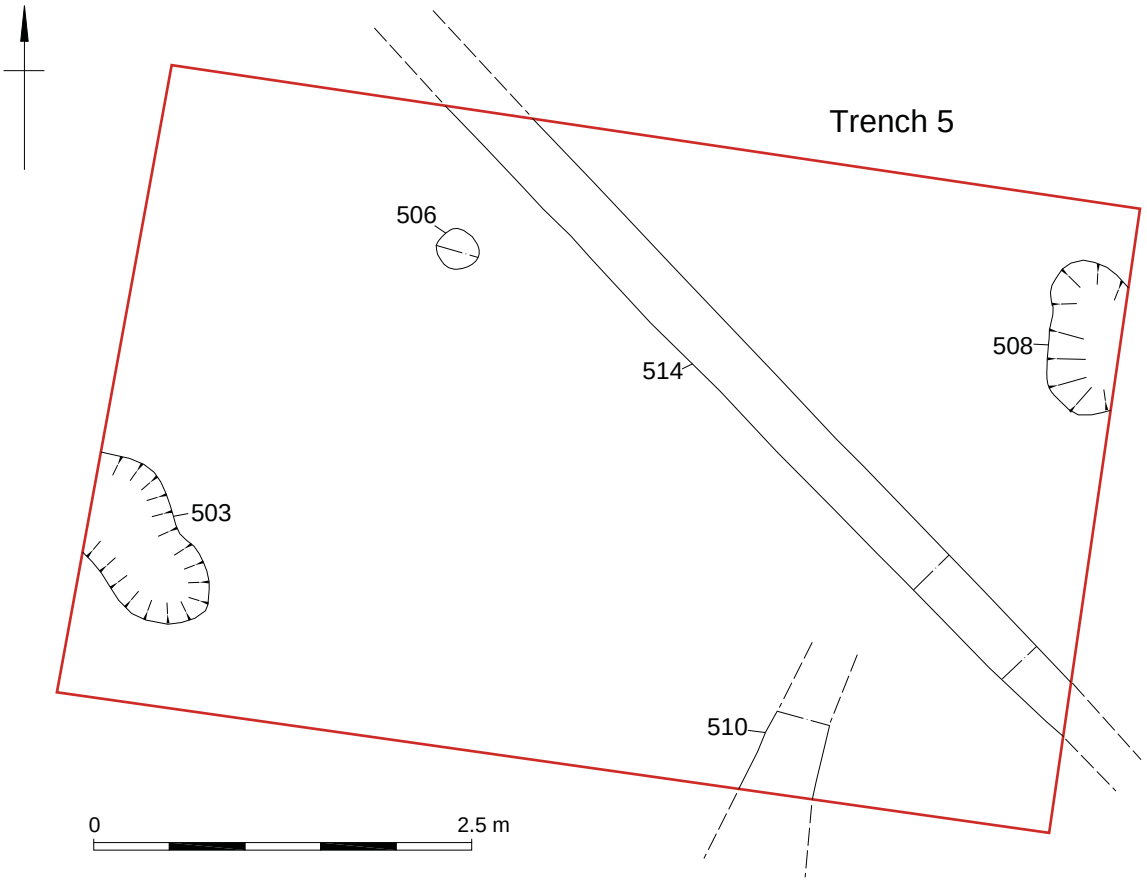


Plate 8: Trench 5, view from west

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:40	Illustrator:	KL
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Trench 5: Plan and photograph

Figure 7

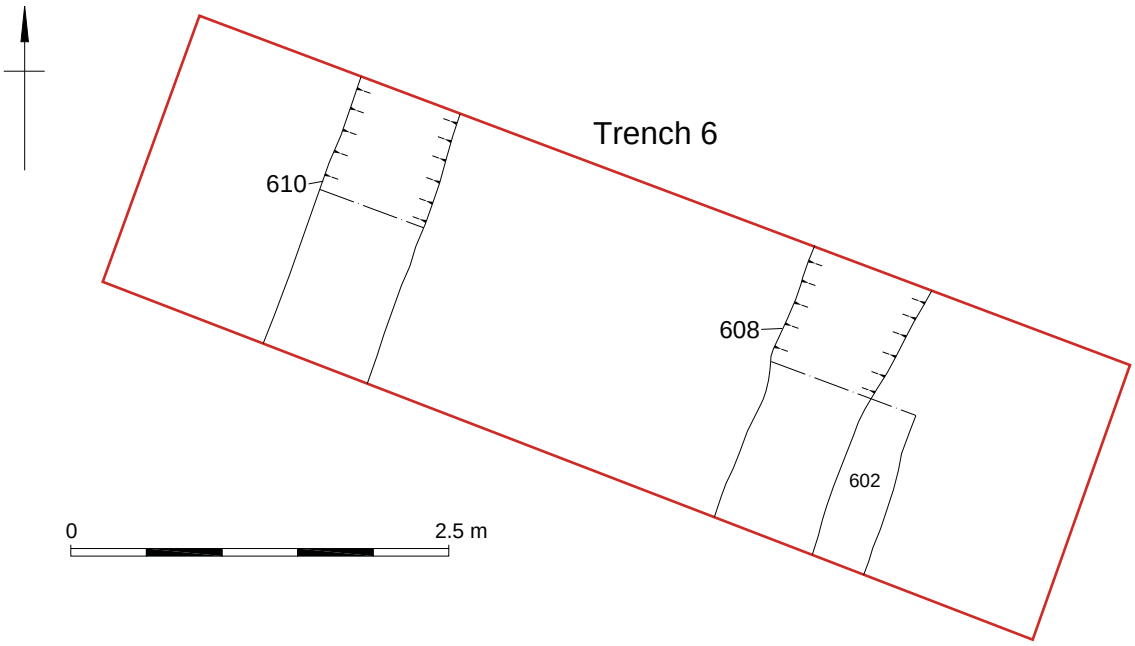


Plate 9: North-facing section of robber cut 610

Plate 10: North-facing section of robber cut 606

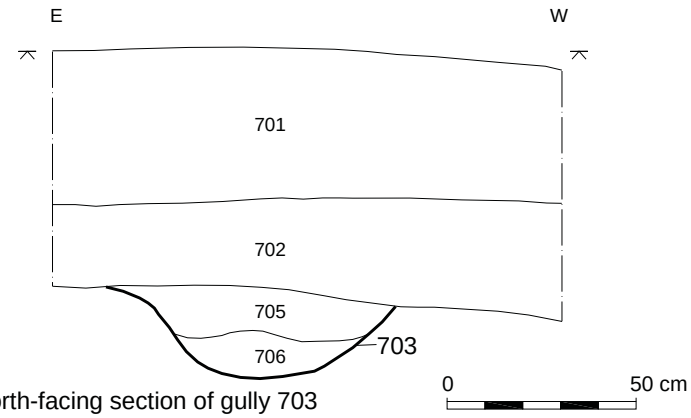
Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:40	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\85200_Fig03-10.dwg		

Trench 6: Plan and photographs

Figure 8

Plate 11: Trench 7, view from south



North-facing section of gully 703

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
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Trench 7: Plan, section and photograph

Figure 9

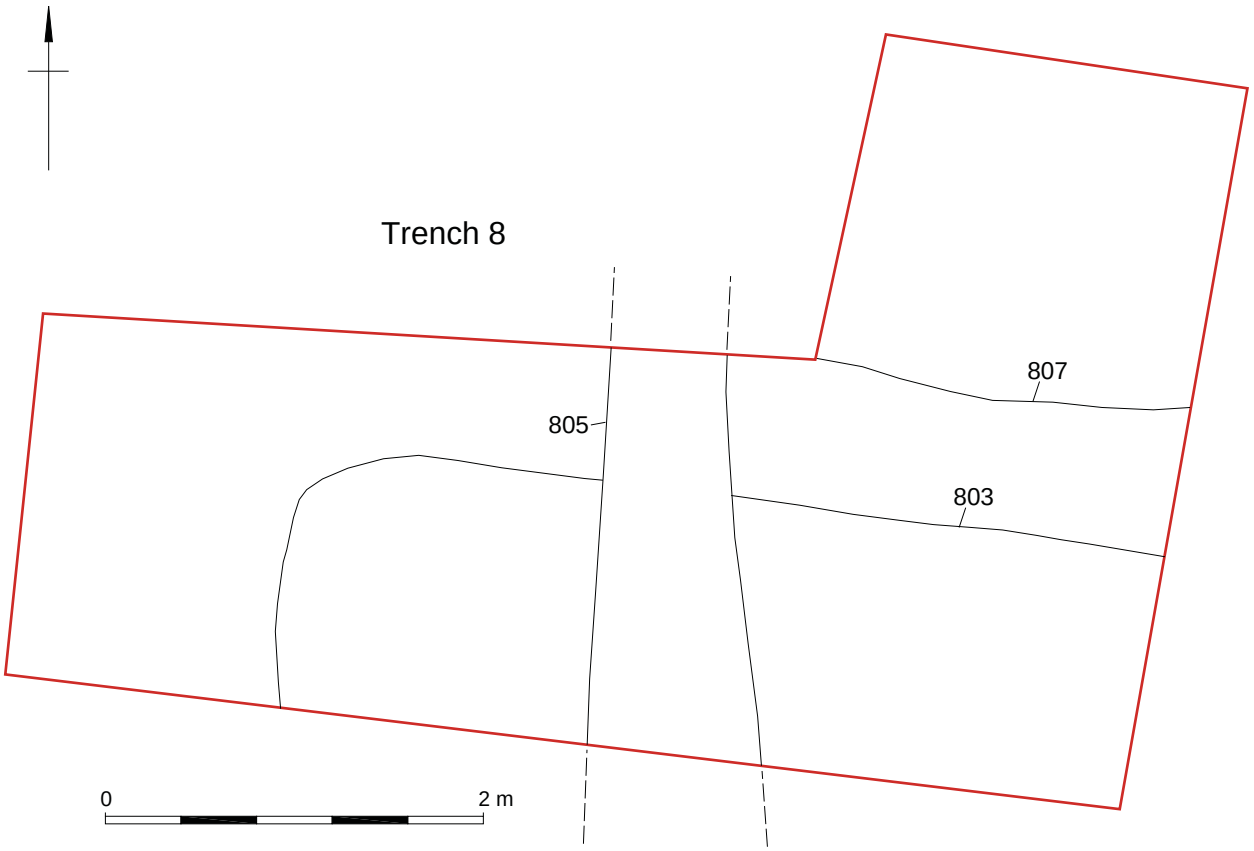

Plate 12: Trench 8, view from east

Evaluation trench

Date:	27/10/14	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plan 1:40	Illustrator:	KL
Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\85200TT\Drawing Office\Report figs\eval\13_12\85200_Fig03-10.dwg		

Trench 8: Plan and photograph

Figure 10

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