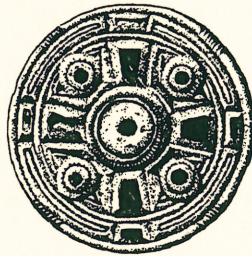




ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD OFFICE
FULBOURN COMMUNITY CENTRE
HAGGIS GAP, FULBOURN
CAMBRIDGE CB1 5HD Tel: 081614
(Fax)

OFFICE COPY.



Archaeological Field Unit

A Romano-British Site East of Hinxtton Grange: A11 Stump
Cross to Four Wentways Road Improvement Scheme
(TL5112/4644)

R Heawood BA MA and B Robinson BSc MA

1998

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 114

Commissioned By The Highways Agency

**A Romano-British Site East of Hinxton Grange: A11 Stump Cross to Four
Went Ways Road Improvement Scheme
(TL 5112/4644)**

R Heawood BA MA and B Robinson BSc MA

1998

Editor: B Robinson BSc MA
Illustrator: M Paice BSc and C Fletcher BA

Report No 114

©Archaeological Field Unit
Cambridgeshire County Council
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap, Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946

SUMMARY

In April and May 1994, Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit carried out limited excavation of remains of Roman date on a hilltop east of Hinxton Grange, at TL 5112/4644. The work was conducted as part of a programme of fieldwork undertaken for the Highways Agency, in advance of and during construction work on the A11 between Stump Cross and Four Went Ways. The fieldwork had included a series of archaeological evaluations carried out in October 1993, and monitoring during construction early in 1994, in addition to the salvage excavation which is described here. This last phase of work enabled the ground plan of part of a moderately 'high status' Roman building to be recorded. All traces of the walls and most of the foundations were missing, either robbed for building materials or removed during an unrecorded excavation, but a short length of the foundations remained intact. The majority of the building, however, had been removed during quarrying, possibly in connection with construction of the adjacent railway in the mid 19th century. In addition, a very substantial ditch was discovered, sharing the same alignment, and again of Roman date. Two smaller ditches on a different alignment remained undated; other shallow features on site may relate to post medieval or modern cultivation. Four Roman coins of the second and third centuries AD were recovered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
3.1	General	1
3.2	Adjacent Cropmarks	3
3.3	Field D Trenches	3
4	METHODS	3
5	RESULTS	6
5.1	Undated Features	6
5.2	Roman Period Features	8
5.3	Probable Post-medieval Features	12
5.4	Recent Features	15
6	DISCUSSION	15
6.1	Field D Evaluation Trenches	15
6.2	Phasing	15
7	CONCLUSION	18
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	19
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	19
	APPENDIX A Assessment of Building Materials	20
	APPENDIX B Assessment of Pottery	20
	APPENDIX C List of Iron Finds	21
	APPENDIX D List of Copper Alloy Coins Recovered during Excavation	21
	APPENDIX E List of Miscellaneous Finds	22
	APPENDIX F List of Contexts	22

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Location Map	2
Figure 2	Plan of Assessment Trenches II - IV	4
Figure 3	Plan of Assessment Trench V	5
Figure 4	Plan showing Assessment Trenches and Area of Salvage Excavation	5
Figure 5	Section, Ditch Cut 1067	6
Figure 6	Plan of Archaeological Features South of the Quarry	7
Figure 7	Sections, Pit Cut 1071 and Ditch Cut 1050	8
Figure 8	Section, Foundation Cut 1052 (Section 1, Fig 13)	8
Figure 9	Section, Ditch Cut 1046	9
Figure 10	Plan, Ditch Cut 1046	9
Figure 11	Plans of Deposits within Foundation Cut 1052	10
Figure 12	Plan of Archaeological Features North of the Quarry	11
Figure 13	Plan of Foundation Cut 1052 and Robber Cut 1036	11
Figure 14	Sections of Post Holes North of Ditch Cut 1046	12
Figure 15	Sections across Robber Cut 1036 (Sections 2 - 6, Fig 13)	13
Figure 16	Section, Linear Cut 1041	15

A ROMANO-BRITISH SITE EAST OF HINXTON GRANGE: A11 STUMP CROSS TO FOUR WENT WAYS ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1994, Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit carried out monitoring for the Department of Transport along an easement stripped of topsoil as part of the A11 Road Improvement Scheme. The site discussed here had not been identified during earlier evaluation trenching in autumn 1993 as it lay partly under a small copse at the north end of Field D (Heawood and Robinson 1997). When this copse was felled in April 1994 and metal detectorists reported finds of Roman coins at the edge of, and within, a disused quarry the area was re-examined. Attention was focused immediately to the north and south of the quarry, which lay within the copse but was not marked on OS Maps. At this point the road corridor lies just to the east of a disused railway cutting.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on the Middle Chalk, on a low hilltop at a height of *c* 70m OD.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General

The stripped easement lay immediately to the west of a Roman road, the line of which was followed at this point by the old A11. The road seems to originate in Braughing, Essex and then runs north-east through Great Chesterford (fording the Cam) and on towards a crossing point with Worsted Street Roman road at Worsted Lodge. It is likely that its course represents a 'Romanised' length of an Icknield Way track and that it forms part of a route which turns northwards at Thetford and terminates at the North-west Norfolk coast near Hunstanton (Margary 1967, 200; 262-263); however, see Malim *et al* (1997, 58-60) for a reinterpretation of this road. The Icknield Way, prior to its formalisation during the Roman period probably consisted of a series of trackways, or a broad route way. The land through which it passed in this area was bounded by the low ground of river valleys or the fen edge to the north, and the boulder clay capped chalk 'uplands' to the south.

The importance of this corridor as a route to and from the northern East Anglian coast is indicated by a series of linear earthworks which traverse the corridor on north-west to south-east alignments. Of the four dykes within Cambridgeshire, all 'face' south-west, that is to say that their ditches are located on the south-west, their banks on the north-east. This suggests that they were designed to control or impede movement from the south-west into East Anglia, or to state an unequivocal territorial message to those in the south-west. Each dyke begins in low fenny ground, crosses the south Cambridgeshire Middle Chalk zone and terminates on the boulder clay plateau on the Cambridgeshire/Essex border. Devil's Ditch, Fleam Dyke and Bran Ditch have been dated by controlled excavation to the late or post-Roman period. Brent ditch has recently been demonstrated to post-date the late second century AD (Robinson 1992).

A fort was established at Great Chesterford in the first century AD to protect the ford and, presumably, to control movement along the Icknield Way corridor and the Cam valley. The town which grew up outside the fort became the only walled settlement, (excluding Colchester), to be established in the Trinovantian region during the Roman period (Going, *mss.*). It was re-fortified at the end of the fourth century and may have

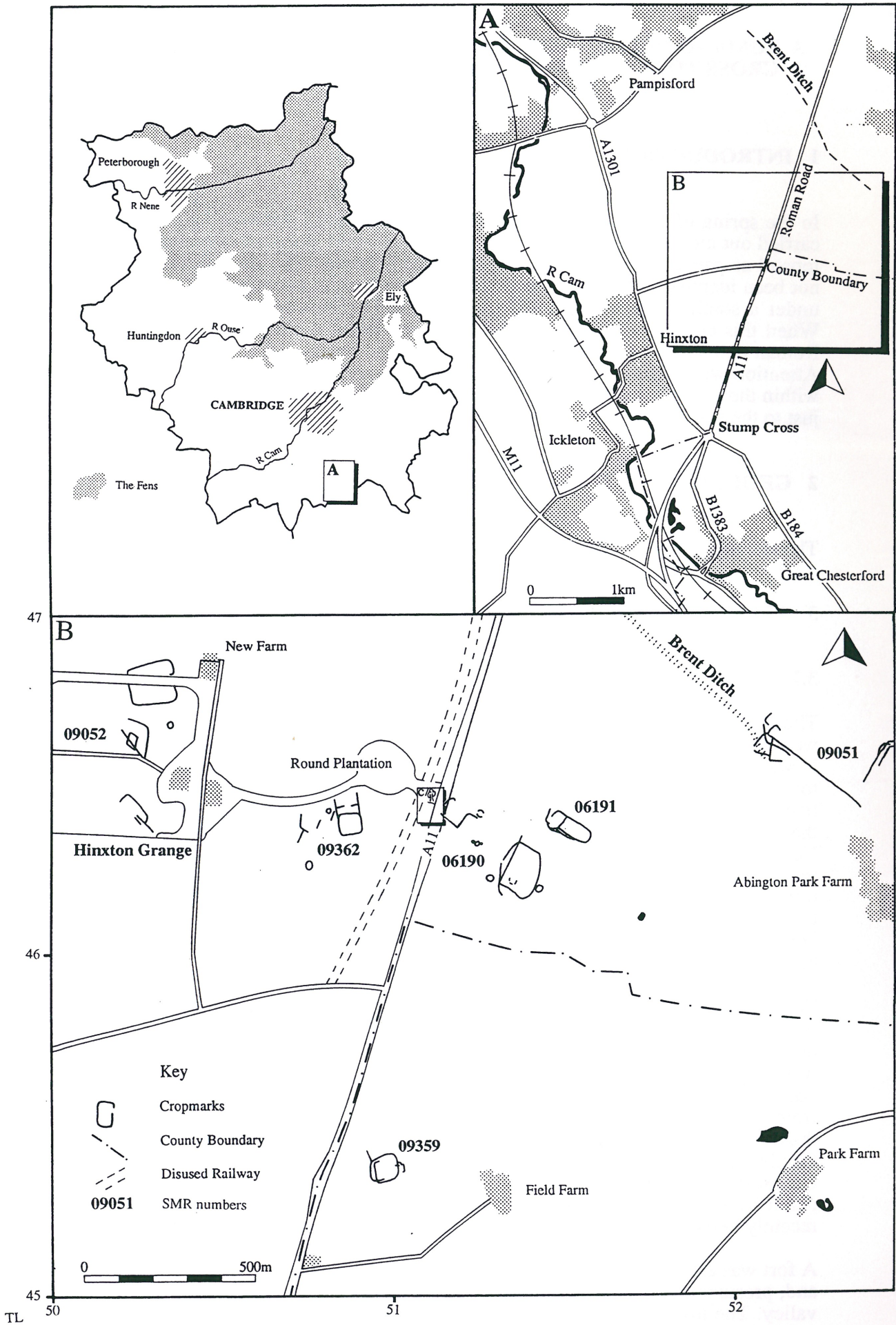


Figure 1 Location Map

formed part of a system of strong points to counteract the early Saxon incursions and later colonisation of East Anglia. Great Chesterford lies c 3.5km to the south of the site discussed here.

Prehistoric activity in the area seems to have been concentrated on the terrace gravels of the Cam valley, where intensive lithic concentrations have been investigated (Evans 1991, Evans 1993, Spoerry 1994). Nevertheless, ring ditches and Bronze Age pottery indicate barrow clusters on the Middle Chalk at Abingdon Farm (SMR 06190), close to the site described herein.

3.2 Adjacent Cropmarks

The site lay in the midst of a cropmark complex (Fig 1). The cropmarks to the west (SMR 09362) comprise a neat rectilinear enclosure with an annex, two ring ditches and short lengths of linear features which possibly form another enclosure. Those to the east consist of three rectilinear enclosures and at least six ring ditches (SMR 06190, 06191). Feature alignments offer few clues as to the relationship of cropmark elements, or indications of the presence or absence of multiple structural phases. A fragment of Bronze Age pottery, however, has been found in the ploughsoil in the vicinity of SMR 06190, whilst a large quantity of Romano-British material, indicative of buildings, has been found at SMR 06191.

It would seem probable therefore that the ring ditches represent a ploughed out round barrow cemetery, and that at least some of the rectilinear and linear features are Romano-British; others may be prehistoric.

No cropmarks had been recorded within Evaluation Field D itself, (Heawood and Robinson 1997), though the alignment of some cropmark features suggested that they might in fact continue into the area. Evaluation trenches had been sited in order to test this.

3.3 Field D Evaluation Trenches (Fig 2)

No significant features had been identified in Trench I, but Trenches II - V had revealed a small number of linear features (Figs 3, 4). Two trenches picked up the line of a shallow ditch, F1004, which ran parallel to the A11. This was cut by another small linear ditch, F1002, which extended for at least 20m on a north-west / south-east orientation, appearing in Trenches II, III, and IV. A single sherd of late Iron Age / early Romano-British coarse pottery was recovered from its fill. This feature was itself cut by a third ditch, visible in the same three trenches, again orientated with the A11. A probable third century Roman coin was found at the interface between the fill of its recut, and the overlying colluvium. To the south, Trench V revealed a wide shallow linear feature, its base probably wheel rutted, extending perpendicular to the line of the A11.

4 METHOD

A grid was laid out over a sample area from which coins had been reported, and 5m squares selected for hand cleaning. When archaeological features were located, additional squares were cleaned as necessary, to confirm alignments and the extent of features. The site was base planned, and selected features excavated and recorded using standard Archaeological Field Unit single context recording techniques.

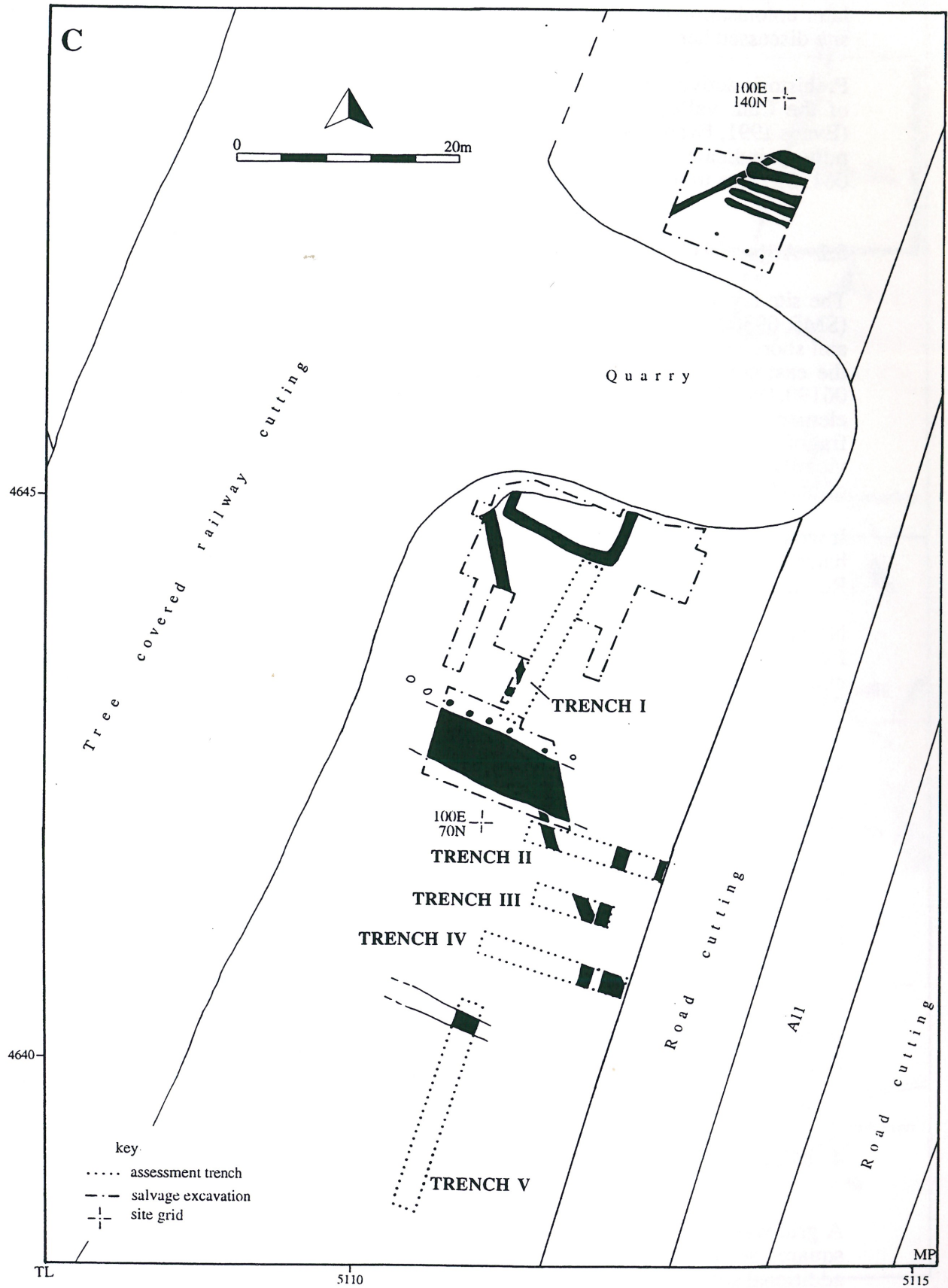


Figure 2 Plan Showing Assessment Trenches and Area of Salvage Excavation

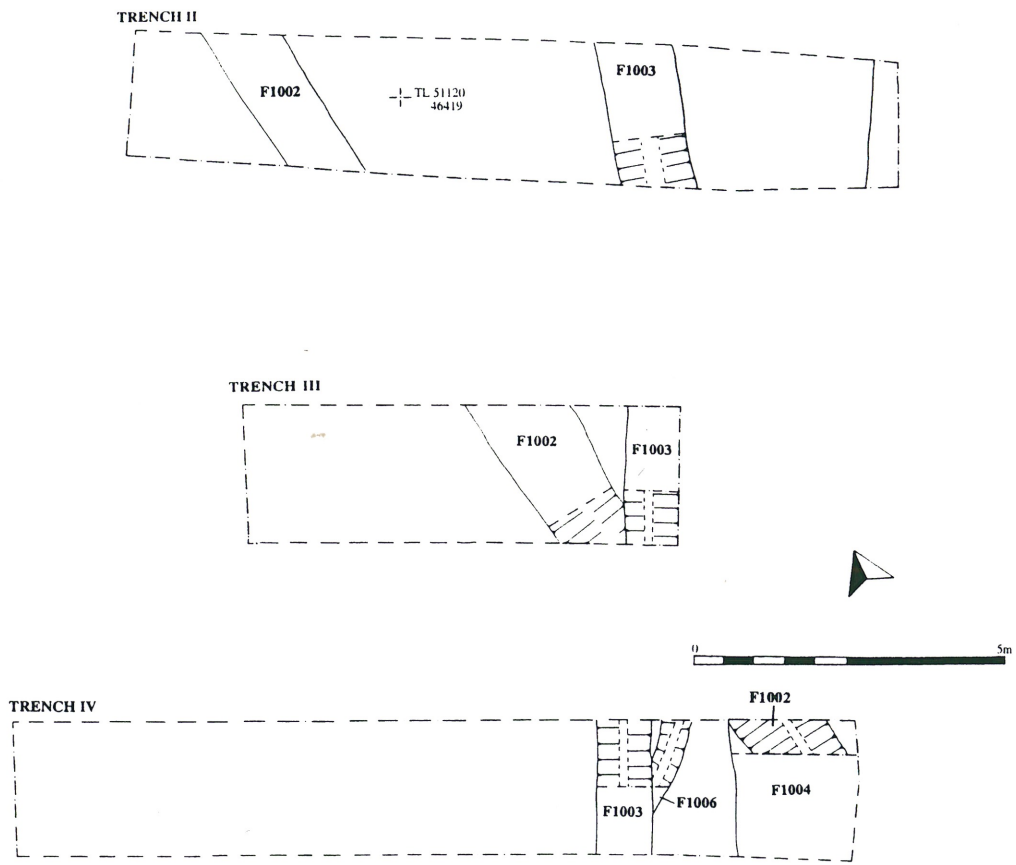


Figure 3 Plan of Assessment Trenches II - IV

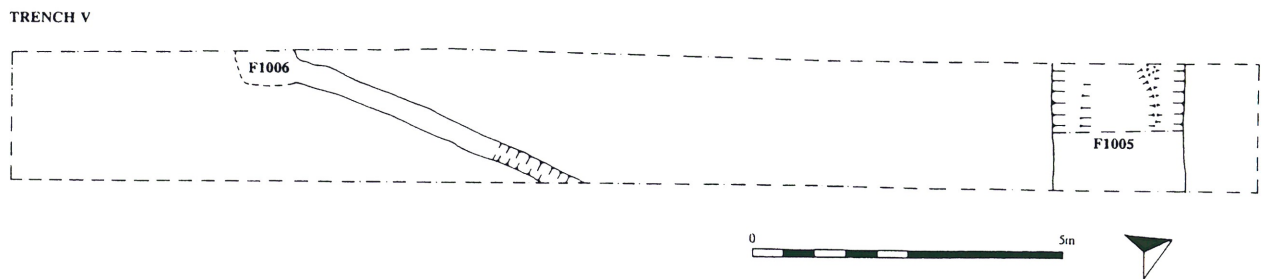


Figure 4 Plan of Assessment Trench V

In addition, a metal detector survey of the site was carried out. When a levelled deposit of compact chalk was identified sealing part of the area, a machine was used to excavate linear trenches through it, in order to examine the surface of the undisturbed chalk below. The machine was also used to excavate a section across a substantial ditch. On-going roadworks necessitated the reservation of a corridor along the eastern edge of the site. A new arbitrary site grid was laid out for this excavation.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Undated Features

Ditches Cut 1067 was recorded extending for >35m across the southern part of the site (Fig 6). It had convex, rounded sides and a flat base, and was a maximum of 0.55m deep (Fig 5). Where excavated, the lower fill, (1069), contained a high proportion of redeposited chalk, but also a concentration of flint field stones. An upper fill, (1067), was predominantly silty and had a much lower chalk content. No finds were recovered apart from two small fragments of bone. The feature was cut by a substantial Roman ditch, Cut 1046, and sealed, in different places, by three possible post-medieval deposits, (1043), (1068), both levelled, and (1055). The alignment of the ditch, north-north-west / south-south-east, contrasts with that of the known Roman features on site, and of the Roman road.

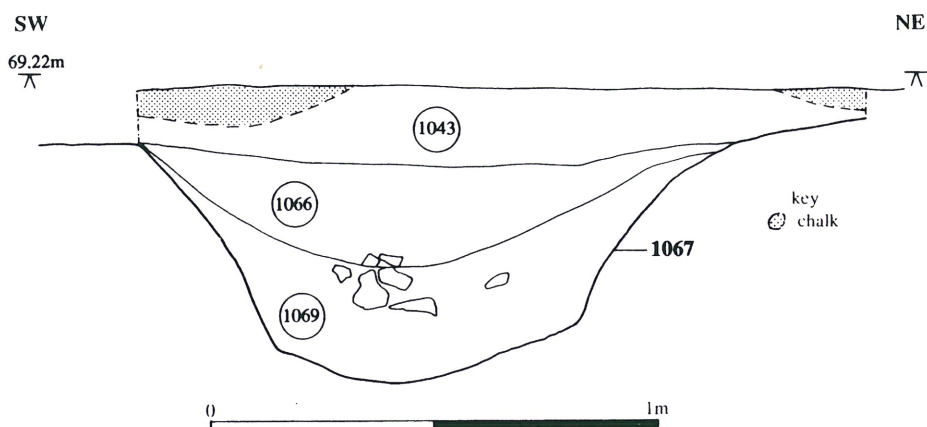


Figure 5 Section, Ditch Cut 1067

North of the quarry, a ditch was recorded extending across the cleaned area for at least 10m, aligned west-south-west / east-north-east (Cut 1050, Fig 12). It was 0.68m wide x 0.35m deep, the cut having steep straight sides and a rounded base (Fig 7). No finds were recovered from the single fill.

A further ditch was recorded in plan but not hand excavated (Deposit (1092)). It lay to the south of the known Roman features, and beyond the limit of the hand cleaned area, but shared roughly the same alignment as the Roman features. It seems to correlate with Feature F1005 recorded during evaluation trenching in 1993 (Fig 3, and R Heawood and B Robinson 1997).

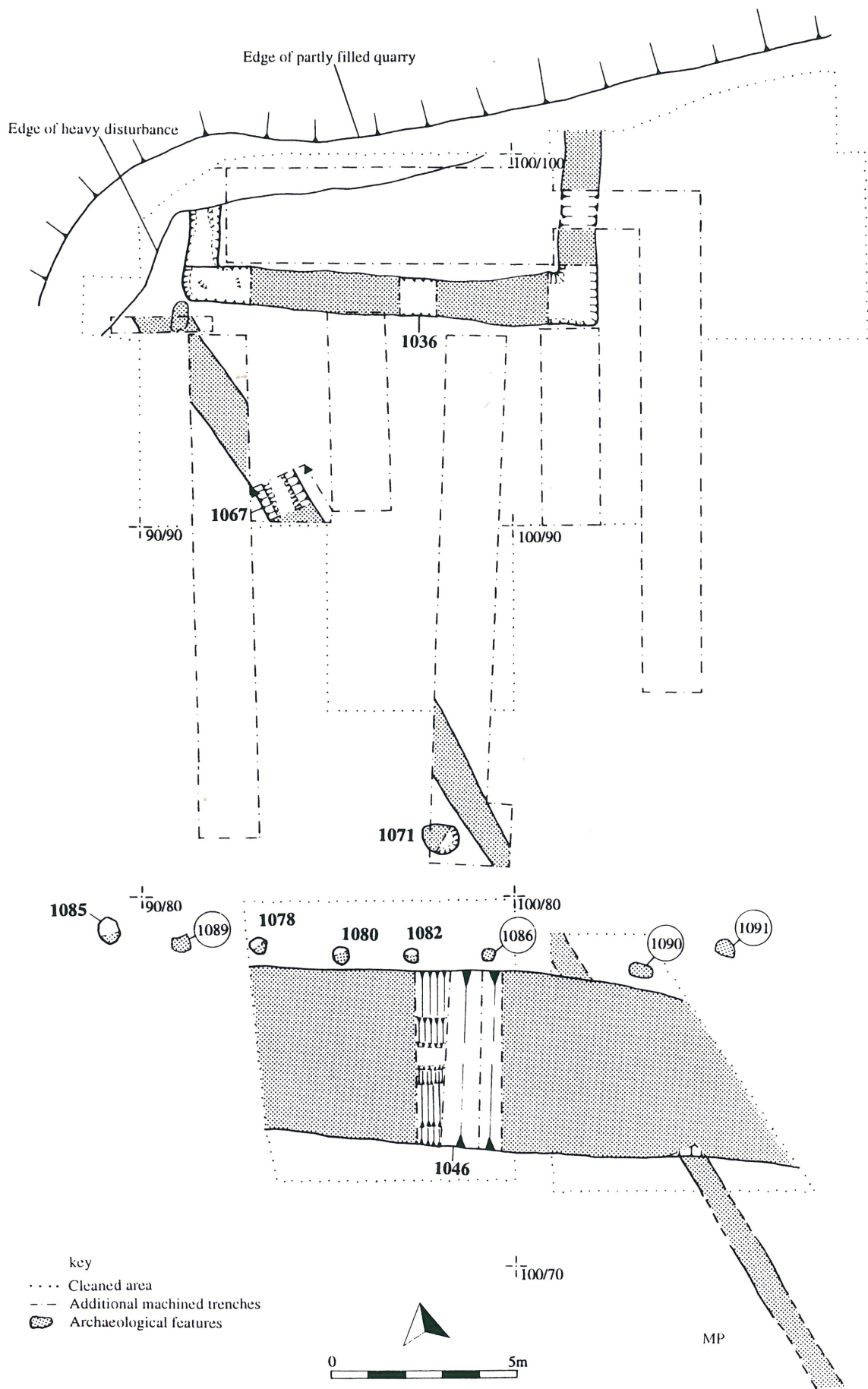


Figure 6 Plan of Archaeological Features South of the Quarry

Pit A small ovoid pit, Cut 1071, lay within 0.6m of Cut 1067. The cut measured 1.00m x 0.85m, and was c 0.3m deep before truncation by machine. The sides were steep and straight, and the base flat but uneven (Fig 7). No finds were recovered from the fill.

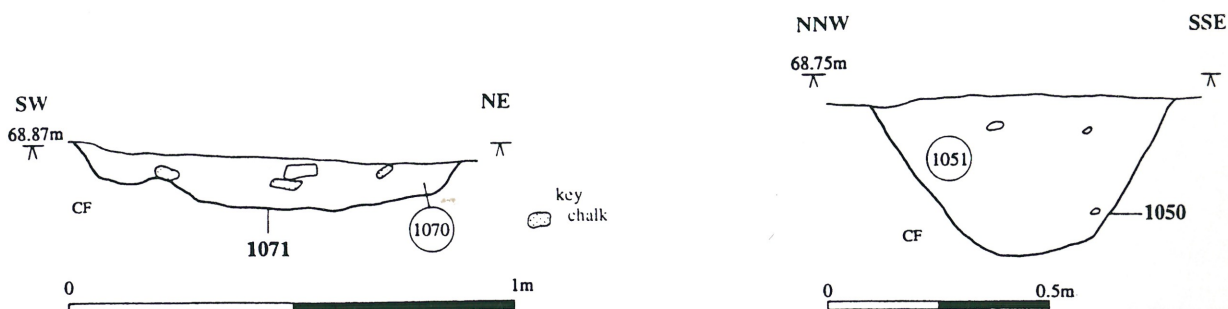


Figure 7 Sections, Pit Cut 1071 and Ditch Cut 1050

5.2 Roman Period Features

Wall Foundations A short length of the construction cut for a wall foundation was discovered (Cut 1052). It was 0.18m deep x c 0.90m wide, and extended for 1.60m, being truncated at either end. The sides were near vertical, the base roughly flat, and the feature was aligned north-north-east / south-south-west (Figs 8, 13). It could only definitely be seen to cut the undisturbed chalk; the relationships with the deposits (1037) and (1055), lying over the chalk to east and west, remained uncertain as root disturbance had been considerable.

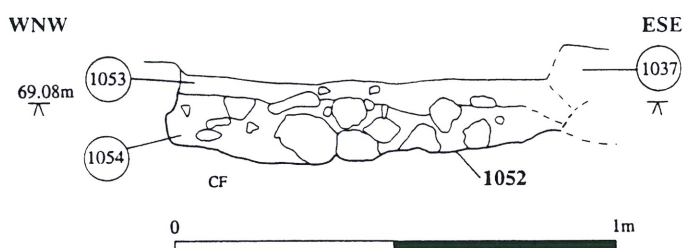


Figure 8 Section, Foundation Cut 1052 (Section 1, Fig 13)

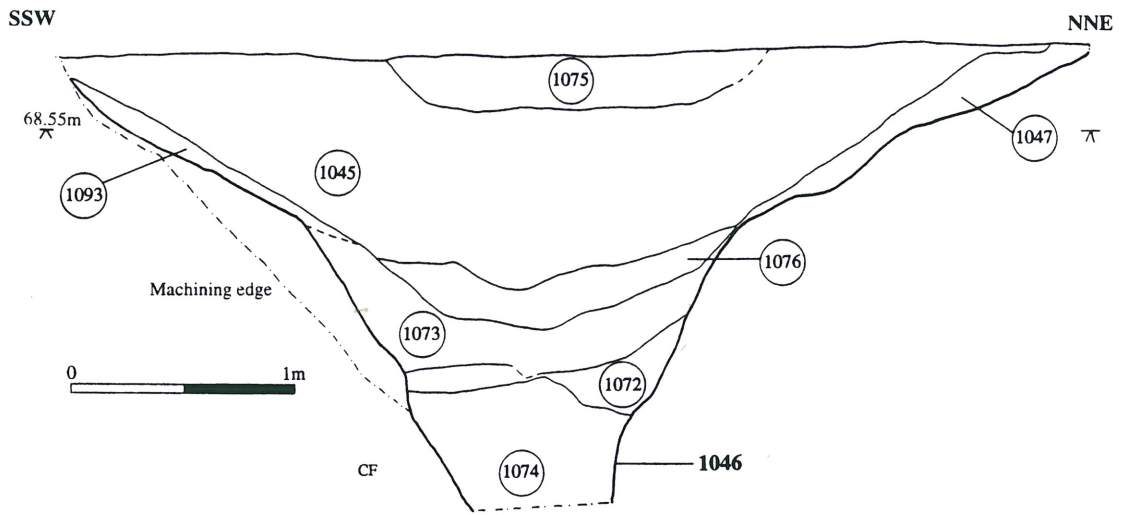


Figure 9 Section, Cut 1046

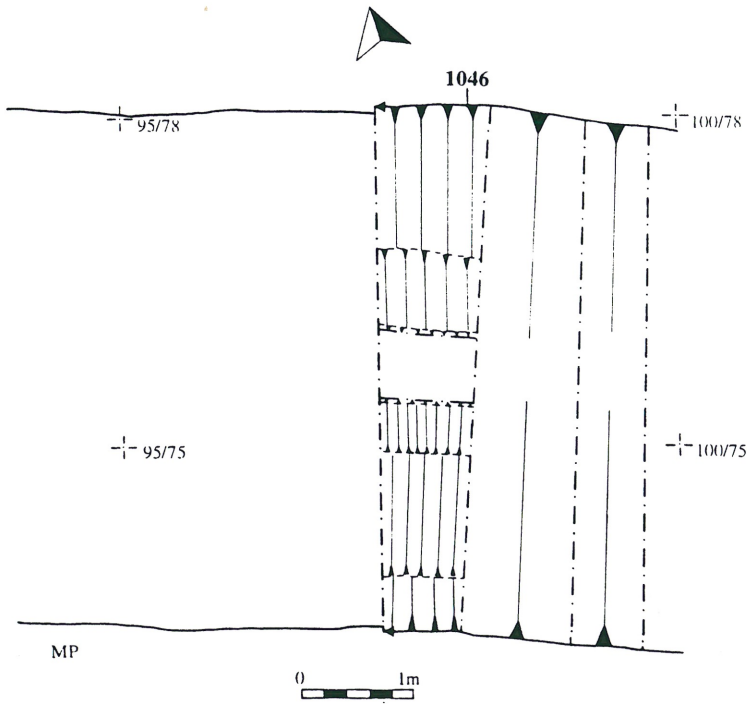


Figure 10 Plan, Ditch Cut 1046

The cut contained two foundation deposits (Fig 11). The lower fill, (1054), was 0.16m deep, composed of *c* 90% flint field stones, mostly unsplit nodules with maximum dimensions of *c* 0.20m x 0.10m x 0.10m. Above lay a rammed chalk deposit, (1053), 0.05 - 0.10m deep, *c* 85% chalk with a small component of silt and small and medium stones. The feature was truncated to the north by heavy root disturbance just south of the quarry, and to the south by Cut 1036, the cut of a robber trench.

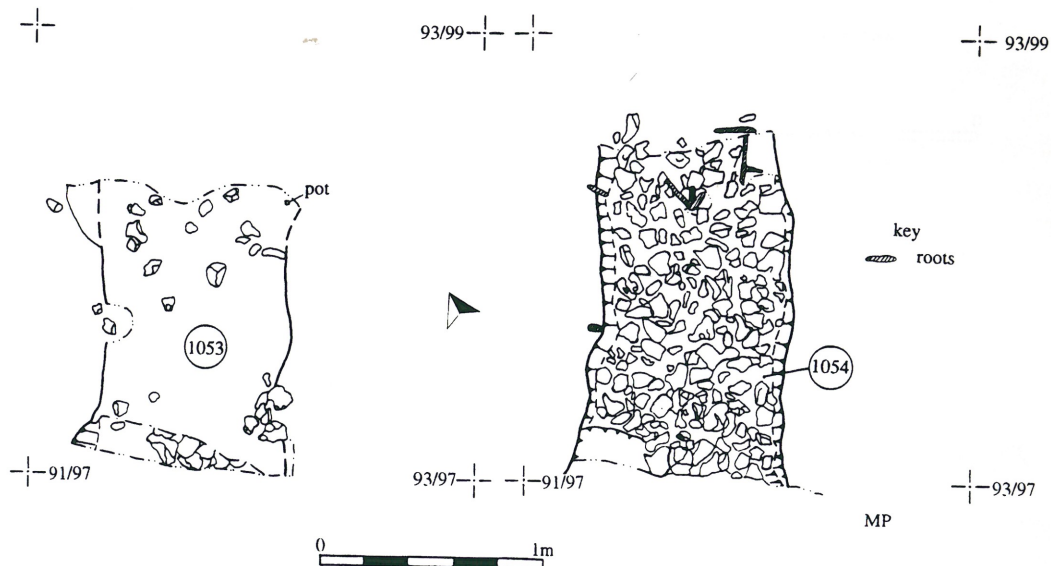


Figure 11 Plans of Deposits within Foundation Cut 1052

Cut 1036 (discussed below) seems to give an indication of the ground plan of the building of which this length of surviving foundation trench was a part (Fig 13). It extends east-south-east for *c* 11.2m from the point at which it cuts the foundations, at right angles to them, then turning a corner and extending north-north-east for > 5.3m. This would imply a structure with external dimensions of *c* 11.2 x >5.3m, and walls *c* 0.9m thick. The fills of the robber trench contained a considerable number of Roman finds and fragments of building material (described below), strongly suggesting that the robbed building was of Roman date.

Ditch A very substantial ditch, Cut 1046, 4.6m wide x >2m deep, lay *c* 18m south of the longest length of robber trench, sharing the same west-north-west / east-south-east alignment (Fig 6). Where cleaned, it could be seen extending across the easement for >14m, at right angles to the line of the Roman Road. A section was excavated across it by machine (Figs 9, 10), although the bottom was not reached when further excavation became unsafe. The base cannot have been more than 0.6m wide, though its shape remained uncertain. The sides were convex, gentle towards the top, with a break of slope after *c* 0.8m. Below, the lower sides were relatively straight, with the gradient ranging from 3 in 1 to near vertical. The lower part of the ditch had filled with a deposit of loose chalk rubble, >0.55m deep. Above lay slightly more silty chalk weathering fills, with a total depth of *c* 0.45m, and finally clay silt fills *c* 1.0m deep. Two copper alloy Roman coins of the second and third centuries AD were recovered from (1045), one of these upper fills. This fill also contained Roman pottery and tile, nine iron nail fragments, and six other iron fragments.

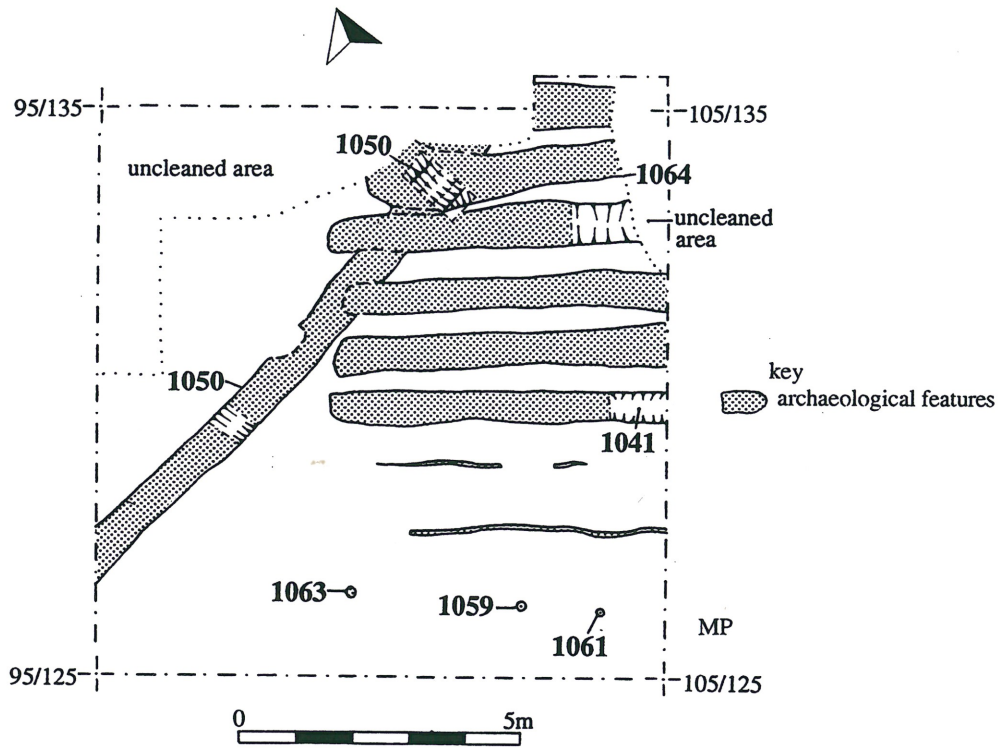


Figure 12 *Plan of Archaeological Features North of the Quarry*

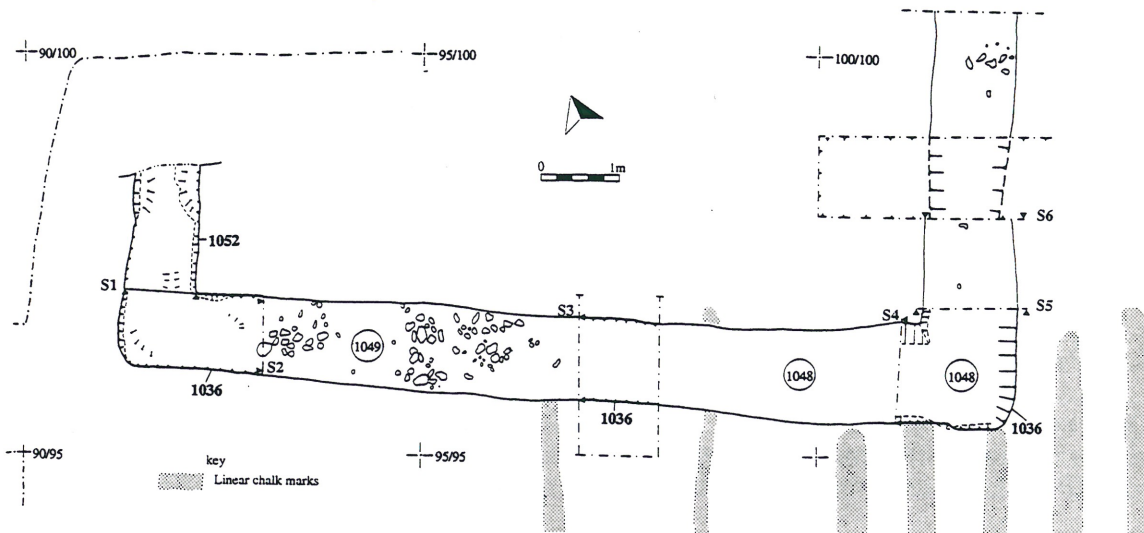


Figure 13 *Plan of Foundation Cut 1052 and Robber Cut 1036*

Post Holes An alignment of eight post holes was recorded along the north edge of Cut 1046, most *c* 0.1 - 0.3m from the cut edge, and spaced at *c* 2m intervals (Fig 6). Four were excavated. Cuts 1078, 1080, and 1082 had diameters of *c* 0.45m and were *c* 0.35m deep. Cut 1085 was larger, measuring 0.70 x 0.52m in plan, and with a depth of 0.45m (Fig 14). Within Cuts 1082 and 1085, clear evidence for a post pipe was preserved. In each case the central silty fill was *c* 0.18 wide, and was surrounded by chalk packing. Several large packing stones were also recorded in Cut 1085.

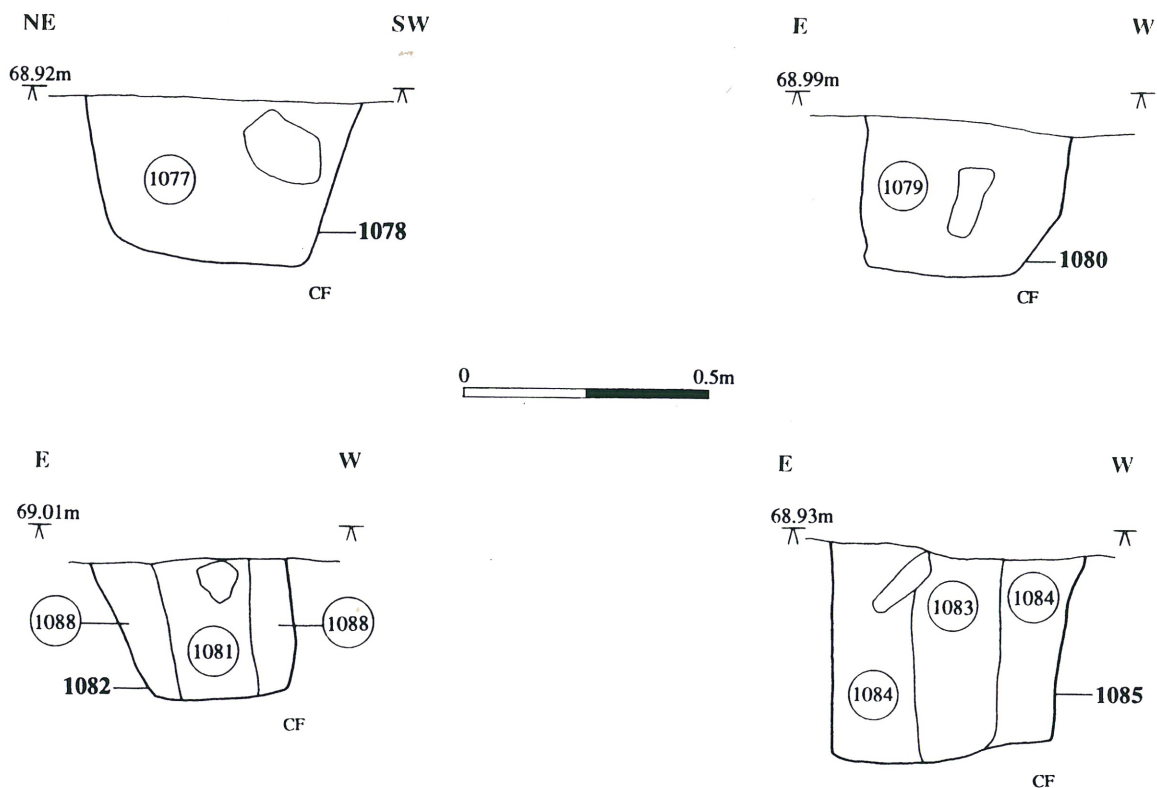


Figure 14 Sections of Post Holes North of Ditch Cut 1046

5.3 Probable Post-medieval Features

Quarry A substantial quarry *c* 24m wide from north to south extended eastwards across the easement from the railway cutting towards the cutting for the modern A11 road (Fig 4). Its relationship with the railway cutting was unclear on the ground.

Ploughed Deposits South of the quarry was a deposit 0.18m deep, (1043), which appeared to retain evidence of a single phase of levelling. It was recorded as a single context, but consisted of parallel linear concentrations of compact chalk, 0.35m wide x 0.13m deep, aligned south-south-west / north-north-east. These were *c* 0.5m apart, and were redeposited. Brown sandy clay silt with only occasional fragments of chalk separated the linear bands, and extended between them and the undisturbed chalk below. The process that had formed this deposit had not caused any scoring or furrowing of the underlying *in situ* chalk. The deposit contained Roman pottery and tile fragments, twenty iron nail fragments, and five other iron fragments; it sealed the fills of Linear Cut 1067, (the undated north-west to south-east aligned ditch). Deposit (1043) extended across the full width of the cleaned area. It could be traced southwards to within *c* 5m of Cut 1046. To the north, it appeared to be cut by a

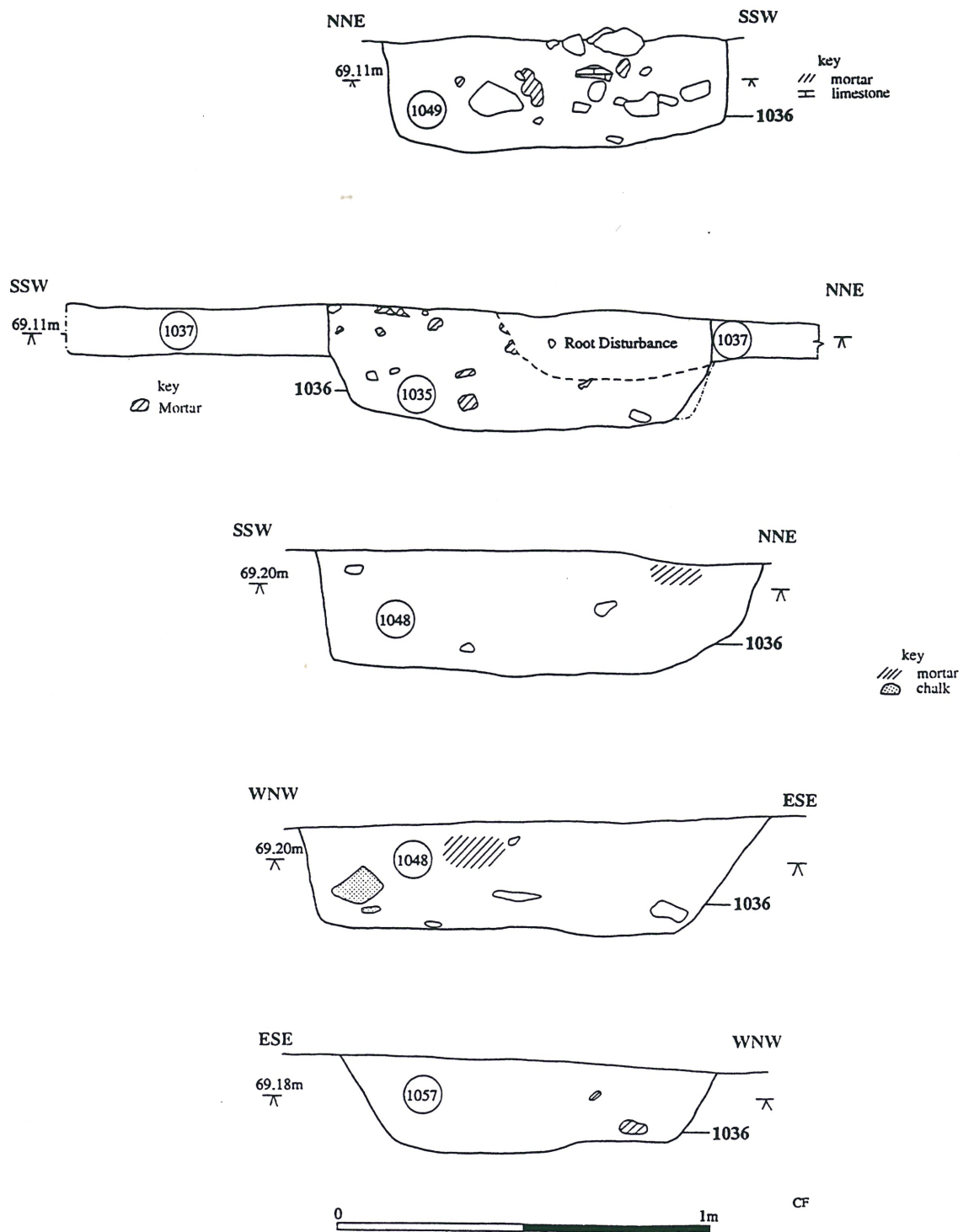


Figure 15 Sections across Robber Cut 1036 (Sections 2 - 6, Fig 13)

robber trench, Cut **1036**, (Fig 13; also discussed below). East of the robber trench, it could be traced extending a further 3.5m north, to an area of very heavy root disturbance *c* 3.2m south of the quarry. This point coincides roughly with the southern edge of the copse as shown on OS maps.

Deposit (1068) lay at the north-western corner of (1043), and consisted of a concentration of flints at the end of one of the chalk plough marks. This deposit probably represents dumping contemporary to the deposition of (1043).

Other Deposits Deposit (1055), beyond (1043) to the north-west, appeared similar to the silty component of (1043) although heavy tree root disturbance made any further comparisons impossible. It also contained Roman pottery and tile.

Deposit (1037) existed east of Roman construction cut **1052**, and north of robber trench **1036**, and extended to the edge of the quarry. It was predominantly silty, but with frequent small fragments of chalk, and was *c* 0.10m deep. This deposit was clearly cut by **1036**, but the root disturbance made the relationship with **1052** uncertain. There was no evidence that it had been ploughed, but there were occasional inclusions of plaster, and in lesser quantity, Roman tile and pottery.

Robber Trench Cut **1036** extended east-south-east from the corner of Construction Cut **1052** for 11.2m, then north-north-east for >5.3m (Fig 13). Its width varied between 0.95m and 1.25m, and it was 0.15 - 0.33m deep, becoming shallower as the ground surface sloped down towards the north-north-east.

Several sections were excavated by hand across the feature, and four differing fills recorded ((1035), (1048), (1049), and (1057), Fig 15). All had a light yellowish brown silt matrix, a component of chalk fragments varying between 15% and 60%, and occasional to frequent angular flint inclusions. A variety of other building materials were represented as inclusions. All the fills contained 5 -15% mortar or plaster fragments, and some painted plaster fragments were recorded. Frequent medium and large limestone inclusions, probably building rubble as some had traces of mortar, were recorded within (1048). In addition, all contained Roman tile, and all but (1049) Roman pottery. Most of this pottery was heavily abraded and had probably been exposed to damage, possibly in a plough soil, before deposition in the robber trench. Fills (1035) and (1048) each contained a copper alloy Roman coin of the third century AD.

Cut **1036** appears to be later than the phase of levelling represented by deposit (1043), present to the south, and to cut (1037) to the north. Clear chalk plough marks within (1043) extended up to Cut **1036**, and then stopped abruptly (Fig 13). The mortar rich fills (1035) and (1048) then started along the same line, with very little sign that these fills and the deposit to the south had been subject to any mixing. A little uncertainty remains, suggesting the possibility that the plough could have continued across the robber trench: in two places, possible lines of chalk flecks within (1048) seemed to be aligned with the clear marks to the south, whilst the northern side of **1036** was not very clear, with mortar present within (1037) beyond. However, the balance of evidence was such that **1036** must be considered the latest feature in this area, with no reliable evidence that the fills of the robber trench or (1037) to the north had been ploughed.

Parallel Linear Features At least six shallow parallel linear features were recorded north of the quarry, aligned east-south-east / west-north-west, and cutting into the undisturbed chalk (Fig 12). They extended for *c* 6m into the cleaned area from an easterly direction, ending *c* 16m east-south-east of the railway cutting. The most southerly of these features lay *c* 3m north of the Quarry. The series of features appeared to be continuing to the north-north-east beyond the cleaned area.

Two of these features were excavated. Cut 1041 was 0.13m deep x 0.60m wide, with gentle concave sides and a rounded base. No finds were recovered from the fill, a fine clay silt with *c* 10% chalk fragments. Cut 1064 was 0.15m deep x 0.75m wide, with a similar profile and fill. Where excavated it appeared to cut the fill of an undated ditch, Cut 1050. These parallel linear features may represent planting trenches relating to probably post-medieval agricultural practices.

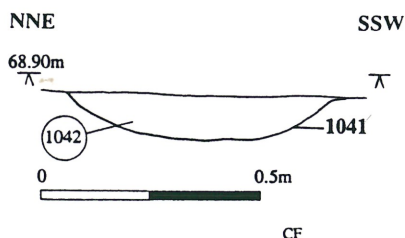


Figure 16 Section, Linear Cut 1041

Possible Post Holes A line of three small shallow features was recorded *c* 1.5m south-south-west of the parallel linear features described above, sharing the same alignment (Fig 12). All were *c* 0.14m deep, and 0.18 - 0.21m in diameter. Although very shallow, the fact that they align with nearby features suggests that they may be heavily truncated post holes.

5.4 Recent Features

Root Disturbance Deposit (1056), composed of very loose silt and tree roots, sealed the fills of Construction Cut 1052. It contained Roman pottery and tile fragments, and fragments of coarse mortar.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Field D Evaluation Trenches

The results of this phase of salvage excavation need consideration alongside the findings from the Field D evaluation trenches excavated in October 1993 (see above, and Fig 2). Two features were recorded in both the evaluation trenches and the salvage excavation. Ditch F1002 in Trenches II, III, and IV appears to be the same feature as Cut 1067, whilst to the south, Ditch F1005 in Trench V appears to be the same as deposit (1092). (Ditch F1002 was not observed within Trench I as here it was sealed by compact redeposited chalk).

Comparison of the trench locations from the two phases of fieldwork shows why the robbed out Roman building and substantial ditch were not detected during evaluation, and illustrates how even densely spaced evaluation trenches can miss significant archaeological features, especially when finds densities are low. The position of the copse meant that trenching had to stop *c* 5m south of the quarry, yet it was here that the robber trench was located, 0.5m north of Trench I. Similarly, a gap of *c* 8m on a north-north-east / south-south-west axis was left between Trenches I and II, yet a very substantial ditch, Cut 1046, 4.6m wide, proved to extend through this gap. Trench I had been carefully positioned to test whether the north-west / south-east element of

the cropmarks immediately east of the A11 continued into the evaluation area. Cut 1046 seems unlikely to represent such a continuation, unless the feature represented by the cropmark deviates significantly to the south.

6.2 Phasing

Some of the features excavated did not produce good dating evidence, and where recorded did not have stratigraphic relationships with other features. Although this means that the archaeological evidence cannot always be accurately phased, a basic sequence of activity can be suggested.

Phase 1 Ditch F1004, parallel to the line of the A11, seems to lie early in the sequence features represented on site as it was cut by Ditch F1002 (Fig 3). It is uncertain whether its alignment relates directly to the Roman road. No dateable artefacts were recovered, and whilst known Roman features later shared this alignment, an intermediate phase of activity was orientated differently.

Phase 2 Ditch F1002 (= Cut 1067) may belong to a second phase. A single sherd of coarse late Iron Age / early Romano-British pottery was recovered from the fill. This in itself is inadequate dating evidence, but there are other indications that this feature predates the main period of Roman activity on site. The lack of building debris and other Roman material in the fill suggests an earlier date, whilst the ditch was cut by two others containing third Century Roman finds (F1003 and 1046, see below), and was aligned diagonally to these later features. It had no relationship with the building foundations within Cut 1052, but its proximity to these foundations suggests that the features would not have been contemporary (Fig 6). An Iron Age or early Roman date for the ditch seems probable.

North of the quarry, a relatively shallow ditch (Cut 1050), extended across the cleaned area on an alignment roughly at right angles to Cut 1067. It is possible that this feature dates from the same period, although the evidence is inconclusive: its rounded profile was different to that of 1067, and its fill not dissimilar to that of Cut 1064, a possible post-medieval feature which truncated it.

The alignments of these ditches do not appear to correspond to those of the three sided cropmark enclosure (part of SMR 06190) to the east of the A11, extending to within c 30m of the site (Fig 1).

Phase 3 After Ditch Cut 1067 went out of use, the landscape seems to have been divided up along a different pattern of alignments. Ditch F1003 was dug, parallel to the line of the Roman Road, and was recut once. A third Century Roman coin was found at the interface between the fill of its second cut, and the overlying colluvium.

To the north, a substantial ditch, Cut 1046, was excavated at right angles to the line of the Roman Road. It is not known whether this ditch intersected with F1003, nor is it clear whether the ditch or the road was in use first. The dating of this larger ditch again cannot be precise. Two second and third century Roman coins were found close to the base of the silting fill. By the time they were deposited the ditch had already been open sufficiently long for over a metre depth of chalk rubble and chalky fills to accumulate, although the steep nature of the sides and susceptibility of chalk natural to weathering may mean this was only a very few years after construction. Assuming the coins were not residual, it seems probable that the ditch was cut at some time before or during the third century AD. A medium sized tile fragment was also found at the base of the same fill. This may suggest that the ditch was partially open when the building to the north fell into disrepair. It is thought probable that the line of post holes at the north side of the ditch implies a contemporary fence, although it could represent earlier, or later, attempts to enforce this as a significant boundary.

It seems unlikely that this large ditch relates to the north-west / south-east element of the enclosure seen as cropmarks immediately east of the A11 at this point (part of SMR 01690). Unless the plotting of the aerial photograph showing the enclosure was very inaccurate, the line of the cropmark would have to deviate significantly to the south for the alignments to correspond. It is not impossible that the large ditch continues east on its own alignment. Although very substantial, it did not show up on aerial photographs where it crosses the evaluation area, so it might have remained invisible to the east while other features were showing as cropmarks. Alternatively, the feature may terminate at the Roman road. There is no evidence that the ditch turns to enclose the Roman structure to the north so it may be an estate boundary or major land division, perhaps with the additional function of preventing trespass from the Roman road.

F1005 was a possible trackway lying *c* 22m south of Cut 1046 on a parallel alignment (Fig 4). It is possible, but not certain, that this feature belongs to the same phase.

To the north, the ground plan of the Roman building again shares this alignment. The dating for the wall foundations within Cut 1052 rests on the assumption that these remains were part of the structure robbed out when Cut 1036 was dug. This robber trench contained large quantities of Roman building debris, and it seems clear that it reflects the position of a relatively substantial Roman building, at least partially stone built, with a tiled roof, and dimensions of 11.2m x >5.3m. The presence of the tegula and imbrex roof tile fragments, and traces of painted plaster, *opus signinum*, and box flue tile within the robber trench fills, suggests a structure of relatively high status. This is reinforced by reports that metal detectorists had recovered up to thirty coins from the hilltop when the copse was felled. Two third century Roman coins were found in the fills of the robber trench during excavation. Close to a Roman Road, these need not relate to the occupation of the building. However, the fact that three of the four coins recovered archaeologically date to the Third Century AD suggests the probability that the site was occupied at this time.

After the Field D Evaluation, it was suggested that the paucity of artefacts within excavated features implied that the nearest settlement nucleus lay some distance away, probably represented by the cropmarks and finds scatter to the east (Fig 1, and Heawood and Robinson, 1997). This conclusion has not been disproved by further excavation. Although many Roman coins are known to have been found on site, and significant quantities of Roman building debris have been recovered, pottery and animal bone have only been found in very small quantities, much abraded. It could be that field work had failed to locate rubbish deposits, but equally, it may be significant that amongst the pottery recovered, no evidence for the use of vessels as cooking pots was observed. The evidence for a high status building, combined with lack of evidence for habitation and other nearby structures, may suggest that the structure located had a religious function, and that the local population was not living in the immediate vicinity. This interpretation is further suggested by the hilltop location, not an ideal place for domestic habitation but often chosen for buildings of a religious nature, for example the Romano-British temple at Swaffham Prior (S Bray 1998) and the much closer temple at Great Chesterford (Miller 1996). At the end of the life of the building, the uniform burning on some tile fragments suggested the steady heat of a possible demolition fire. Unfortunately, the heavy truncation of the site, and the absence of walls, floor surfaces, and datable finds in primary contexts, has prevented a more detailed understanding of the date, construction, and use of this structure.

Phase 4 The sequence of land use on the hilltop after the life of the Roman building remains uncertain. Within the area defined by the building foundations and robber trench, a compact deposit containing *c* 30% chalk fragments developed (1037). The formation of this deposit was not fully understood. Its stratigraphic relationship with Roman Construction Cut 1052 could not be established because of root disturbance,

but it seems certain that it post dates the use of the building as it contained a similar range of Roman demolition material to the robber trench: mortar, plaster, and tile fragments. It might be thought possible that the Roman material may have been ploughed into a naturally forming soil, yet the deposit seems to butt up against rammed chalk foundations (1053), probably Roman, and these display no evidence of plough damage. As an alternative, it can be suggested that the Roman finds were introduced by root and animal activity. Both of these explanations may be unsatisfactory: ploughing or root activity might be expected to introduce mortar fragments south of the robber trench as well, but none were noticed.

Deposit (1037) appeared to be cut by the quarry. The latter has not been dated, but seems most plausibly associated with the construction of the adjacent railway in the mid nineteenth century. The chalky plough marks visible in Deposit (1043) in turn may post date the quarry: east of the robber trench, they could only be traced to within *c* 3m of the quarry, and may be respecting it. This levelling of quarry spoil seemed to be cut by the robber trench locating the Roman building, implying that the robbing out of the foundations may have been a relatively recent event. The robber trench extends up to the edge of the quarry, but was not necessarily cut by it. This makes good sense, as it is very plausible that the remains of the Roman building were discovered when the quarry was dug. Given the careful, almost archaeological nature of the tracing and removal of the foundations, this may even represent the unrecorded activities of a local antiquarian at work in the nineteenth century.

The copse removed at the start of road works may also have been planted in the mid nineteenth century to landscape the quarry. It does not appear on an 1830s estate map. The function of the unusual redeposited chalk plough marks within (1043) is unknown. It is possible that they relate to preparation for this tree planting, though they extend south of the copse for *c* 10 - 15m. Their form may derive from the levelling and 'ploughing in' of chalk spoil excavated from the quarry, rather than the *in situ* disturbance of the underlying chalk, which appeared unmarked.

North of the quarry, another series of features relates to agriculture or tree planting. The shallow parallel trenches recorded cutting the chalk here seem likely to have been excavated to improve the growth of crops or saplings, whilst a line of post holes *c* 1.5m to the south probably indicates the position of a fence. The alignments conform to field boundaries visible on the 1830s estate map, and these features probably predate the planting of the copse.

7 CONCLUSION

Despite reports that metal detectorists had recovered up to thirty Roman coins from the site these were unstratified, so it remains uncertain whether they represent a scattered hoard from a single feature or a more general loss pattern across the whole site. Given the suggestion that the area had been levelled with spoil from quarrying, and then ploughed, it seems possible that these coins may have been imported onto site from deposits disturbed during the earlier works. This is further suggested by the fact that little roman material was located by fieldwalking in the ploughed field adjacent to the copse.

The large number of coins, together with the significant quantities of roof tile and occasional fragments of painted plaster, *opus signinum*, and box flue tile from the archaeological deposits, suggest a structure of relatively high status. This appears inconsistent with the paucity of other occupation debris recovered, unless rubbish deposits existed outside the area which it was possible to investigate. It may be that this was not a habitation site at all, but (bearing in mind the absence of other

structures combined with indications of high status), a temple, shrine, or building connected with the road. Unfortunately, not enough of the structure remained to support a more definite interpretation. Coins suggest use of the site in the Third Century AD, but the presence of these coins in a robber trench and partly filled ditch does not rule out earlier occupation.

The late date at which the Roman foundations appear to have been robbed is, in itself, of some interest. If they were similar to the short length that remained intact, the bottom two deposits consisted only of flint field stones and chalk. It seems unlikely that these deposits would have been so completely removed from the robbed area in the nineteenth century for their value as building materials. They may have been dug out by treasure hunters, or as part of an unrecorded antiquarian excavation, during or soon after, the construction of the railway.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the Highways Agency for funding this project. Advice on illustration was given by Caroline Gait-Utime.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bray, S, 1998 *Romano-British Temple and Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Swaffham Prior, Cambs*, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Report 100

Evans, C, 1991 *Archaeological Investigations at Duxford, Cambridge*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Evans, C, 1993 *Archaeological Investigations at Hinxton Quarry, Cambridge*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Evans, C, 1993 *Archaeological Investigations at Bourn Bridge, Pampisford, Cambridgeshire*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report 165

Going, C, unpublished manuscript *A Trinovantian Town in the Roman Period and After: The Defences of Great Chesterford*

Heawood, R, and Robinson, B, 1997 *All Stump Cross to Four Went Ways Road Improvement Scheme: Romano-British and Undated Features Recorded During Archaeological Evaluation*, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit Report A118

Malim, T, *et al* 1997 *New Evidence on the Cambridgeshire Dykes and Worsted Street Roman Road*, Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Vol. LXXXV: pp 27-122

Miller T.E 1996 *The Romano British Temple Precinct at Great Chesterford, Essex* proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society LXXXIV, 1995

Margary, I D, 1967 *Roman Roads in Britain*, John Baker, London

Robinson, B, 1992 *Excavations at Brent Ditch*, Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Report 68

Spoerry, P, 1994 *Excavations at Hinxton Hall, Cambridgeshire*, CBA Mid Anglia Region Bulletin, Winter 1994

APPENDIX A Assessment of Building Materials Philip Copleston

Tile

Context	Weight	Type	Abrasion
Unstrat	1947g	<i>Tegula, imbrex, pedalis</i>	Abraded
(1035)	842g	<i>Tegula, imbrex, other</i>	Heavily abraded
(1043)	3120g	<i>Tegula, imbrex, other Roman</i>	Slightly abraded
(1045)	306g	<i>Imbrex, other Roman</i>	Slightly abraded
(1048)	2250g	<i>Tegula, imbrex, box flue, burnt Roman, other Roman, modern brick</i>	Abraded
(1049)	1096g	<i>Tegula, imbrex (1 burnt)</i>	Abraded
(1055)	572g	<i>Tegula, other Roman</i>	Abraded
(1056)	511g	<i>Tegula, imbrex / roof ridge</i>	Abraded
(1057)	764g	<i>Tegula, imbrex, burnt Roman, other Roman</i>	Abraded

Mortar / Plaster etc

Context	Weight	Type
(1035)	28g	Plaster
(1037)	14g	Plaster (1 frag painted)
(1048)	1410g	Mortar (some with impressions), plaster (some with fine coating over flat face)
(1049)	228g	Plaster (1 frag painted) <i>opus signinum</i> (containing chopped tile frags)
(1056)	138g	Mortar (coarse)
(1057)	85g	Plaster (Three frags dressed limestone also recovered)

The very high proportion of *tegula* and *imbrex* roof tiles suggests that these had been used on site for their primary purpose: as a roofing material. Their size would be appropriate for a small building. The box flue tile might suggest a heated building, but the single fragment present could easily have been re-used. Some coarse mortar was represented, along with a fragment of *opus signinum*. However, a lime or burnt chalk faced plaster appeared to be more prevalent. Two painted fragments were recovered, one yellow with dark red, possibly derived from a frieze.

It is most probable that this assemblage of building debris was derived from a small building of relatively high status, possibly a public building, temple, or shrine.

APPENDIX B Assessment of Pottery Philip Copleston

Context	Weight	Types	Abrasion
Unstrat	160g	Greyware, fumed greyware, colour coated greyware, redware, oxidised ware (Forms: jar, bowl, flagon)	Abraded
(1035)	93g	Greyware, colour coated greyware, Nene Valley colour coated ware, oxidised ware (Forms: flagon, small jar)	Abraded
(1037)	17g	Greyware, oxidised ware (Forms: jar, scroll jar)	Abraded
(1043)	199g	Greyware, oxidised ware (Forms: jar)	Very abraded
(1045)	16g	Oxidised ware (Form: unknown)	Abraded
(1048)	157g	Grey ware, oxidised ware, reduced ware, Harold ware (Forms: jars)	Abraded
(1055)	20g	Oxidised ware, Harold ware (Forms: Harold ware bowl, unknown)	Very abraded
(1056)	29g	Greyware, fumed greyware (Forms: dish/bowl)	Unabraded
(1057)	18g	Greyware, oxidised ware (Forms: dish, narrow necked jar)	Abraded

The fabrics represented are all local and regional coarse wares. The forms are dishes, jars, bowls, and flagons, predominantly small serving dishes. This range of vessels might be thought typical of a small domestic assemblage, except that no evidence of use of vessels for cooking was observed.

These coarsewares are not closely dateable. Most sherds could be dated to the second to third centuries AD, however a few sherds suggest the third to fourth centuries. It is not impossible that all the sherds date from this later period.

APPENDIX C List of Iron Finds

Recovered from defined contexts (hand excavated and metal detected):

Context	Description
(1043)	20 Fe nails and nail frags 5 Fe objects / fragments
(1045)	9 Fe nails and nail frags 6 Fe objects / frags
(1048)	1 Fe nail frag

Unstratified, recovered by metal detector survey:

Grid Square	Description
95/77	2 Fe nail frags
96/85	1 Fe nail frag
99/88	1 Fe nail frag 1 Fe object
102/89	1 Fe nail frag
98/90	1 Fe nail frag
100/90	1 Fe nail frag
96/92	1 Fe object
99/93	1 Fe object
96/96	1 Fe nail frag
94/97	1 Fe nail frag
98/97	1 Fe nail frag
99/97	1 Fe nail frag
100/97	1 Fe nail frag
102/97	1 Fe nail frag
98/98	1 Fe nail frag
94/99	1 Fe frag

Other unstratified: 2 Fe nail frags
1 Fe object

The majority of nails recovered were of square cross section.

APPENDIX D List of Copper Alloy Coins Recovered during Excavation Chris Montague

Context	Find No	Description
(1035)	1	Carausius, antonianus; <i>rev</i> : ? Pax or Hilaritas standing; AD 287-293; ? London mint
(1045)	3	Claudius Gothicus II, barbarous radiate AE 2, AD 268-270
(1045)	4	? dupondius AD 100-200
(1048)	2	Postumus, antonianus; <i>rev</i> : Postumus standing, AD 259-268; Trier mint

APPENDIX E List of miscellaneous finds

Context	Weight	Description
Unstrat	16g	2 Flint flakes
(1043)	26g	Abraded animal bone
(1045)	1g	Abraded bone
(1049)	16g	Abraded animal tooth
(1066)	7g	Abraded bone
(1070)	1g	Abraded bone

APPENDIX F List of Contexts

Context	Description	Nature
1035	Fill of 1036	10YR 6/4 Light yellowish brown silt
1036	Cut	Robber trench
1037	Layer	2.5Y 4/2 Dark yellowish brown silt
1038	Abandoned	
1039	Abandoned	
1040	Abandoned	
1041	Cut	?Cultivation trench
1042	Fill of 1041	Brown silt
1043	Layer	10YR 5/3 Brown clay silt
1044	Abandoned	
1045	Fill of 1046	10YR 5/3 Brown clay silt
1046	Cut	Substantial Ditch
1047	Fill of 1046	10YR 5/4 Yellowish brown clay silt
1048	Fill of 1036	10YR 6/4 Light yellowish brown silt
1049	Fill of 1036	2.5Y 6/3 Light yellowish grey silt
1050	Cut	Shallow ditch
1051	Fill of 1050	10YR 5/3 Brown silty clay
1052	Cut	Foundation trench
1053	Fill of 1052	White chalk, fine but compact
1054	Fill of 1052	Angular/subangular flint fieldstones
1055	Layer	2.5Y 4/2 Dark yellowish brown silt
1056	Layer	Light brown silt
1057	Fill of 1036	10YR 6/4 Light yellowish brown silt
1058	Fill of 1059	2.5Y 6/4 Light yellowish brown sandy silt
1059	Cut	Post hole
1060	Fill of 1061	2.5Y 6/3 Light yellowish brown sandy silt
1061	Cut	Post hole
1062	Fill of 1063	2.5Y 6/3 Light yellowish brown sandy silt
1063	Cut	Post hole
1064	Cut	?Cultivation trench
1065	Fill of 1064	10YR 4/4 Dark yellowish brown clay silt
1066	Fill of 1067	10YR 4/2 Dark greyish brown clay sandy silt
1067	Cut	Ditch
1068	Deposit	Subangular flints and chalk fragments
1069	Fill of 1067	10YR 4/3 Brown sandy clay silt
1070	Fill of 1071	10YR 5/3 Brown silt
1071	Cut	Pit
1072	Fill of 1046	5Y 7/3 Light yellowish grey sandy clay silt
1073	Fill of 1046	Light grey silt
1074	Fill of 1046	White angular chalk fragments
1075	Fill of 1046	2.5Y 6/3 Light yellowish brown silt
1076	Fill of 1046	2.5Y 5/4 Light olive brown silt with 40% chalk fragments
1077	Fill of 1078	10YR 5/3 Brown silt
1078	Cut	Post hole
1079	Fill of 1080	10YR 6/4 Light brown sandy clay silt
1080	Cut	Post hole
1081	Fill of 1082	10YR 6/4 Light brown silt
1082	Cut	Post hole
1083	Fill of 1085	10YR 5/3 Brown silt
1084	Fill of 1085	10YR 7/3 Very pale brown silt
1085	Cut	Post hole
1086	Deposit	Brown sandy clay silt; probable fill of unex post hole
1087	Abandoned	
1088	Fill of 1082	2.5Y 5/3 Light grey silt
1089	Deposit	Light brown sandy clay silt; probable fill of unex posthole
1090	Deposit	Brown sandy clay silt; probable fill of unex post hole
1091	Deposit	Brown sandy clay silt; probable fill of unex post hole
1092	Deposit	Fill of unex linear feature



Cambridgeshire
County Council

Archaeology

The Archaeological Field Unit
Fulbourn Community Centre
Haggis Gap
Fulbourn
Cambridge CB1 5HD
Tel (01223) 881614
Fax (01223) 880946