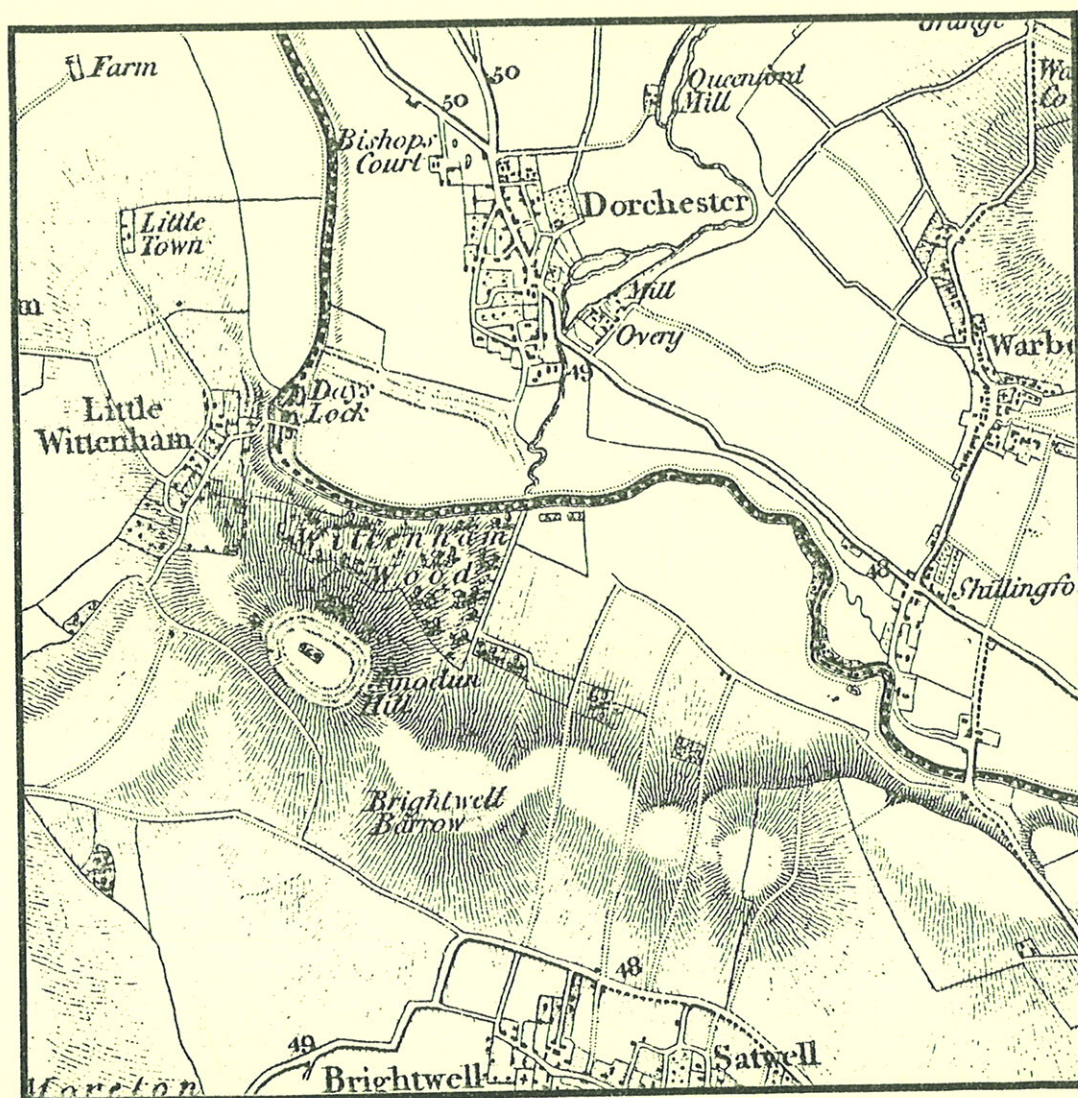


# DORCHESTER

## FLEUR-DE-LYS INN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1992



THE OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT





# FLEUR-DE-LYS INN, DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES 1992

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### Introduction

In early April 1992 an evaluation of the archaeological deposits in the yard of the Fleur-de-lys Inn, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxon., was conducted by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) to assist consideration of the granting of planning permission for the extension of the existing building.

The Inn, fronting onto the High Street, lies E of that portion of the defended Roman town, Saxon occupation and early ecclesiastical centre of Dorchester which has been given statutory protection as Oxfordshire Scheduled Ancient Monument 116. There is evidence for a Roman building including a tessellated floor in the immediate vicinity, and an extensive late Roman or early Saxon cemetery has been discovered to the S centred at Nos. 5 - 7 Rotten Row.

The area of proposed works (Fig. 1) lies S central to the existing building at OS grid reference SU 57825/94166 and involves the demolition of a small wing and the construction of an extension 2.8 m. N/S x 10.0 m. E/W on a shallow raft foundation to house toilet facilities. Two test pits, each measuring 1.0 x 1.2 m., were hand-excavated within the footprint of the proposed extension to a depth of 0.6 m. below grade, with each deposit encountered described and the artifacts from it recovered.

### Results

In the main, the deposits encountered were dark to medium dark silt or clay loams, with (broadly speaking) an increasing amount of sand and gravel inclusions and an increasing lightness of colour as depth below grade increased. Mottling, the presence of lines of pea-grit and broad layer interfaces indicate relatively high amounts of mixing and disturbance of these loamy deposits by worms and other animals. Deposits and features observed in Trench 1 to the E were numbered 1 - 13, and those in Trench 2 to the W numbered 20 - 30. An inventory of these contexts, with an assignment of age based on the recovered artifacts, is presented in Appendix One.

### **Trench One**

Under the concrete yard surface (context 1) and its levelling-up layer of sand 2 is a layer 3, which seals the layer 6, the fill 4 of a possible pit 5 in the NE corner of the trench, and the fill 7 of a sinuous cut feature 8 aligned NNW-SSE in the SW corner. This feature 8 may be a gully, but is more likely to be an animal burrow. Both 5 and 8 are cut into layer 6, which overlies a thick layer 10, a rough line of small limestone slabs 9 aligned ESE-WNW in the S central part of the trench, and a thin band of partly-fire-reddened clay 11 which fills a shallow depression 12 in the surface of 10 in the SE corner of the trench. The clay 11 may be the remains of an oven, and 9 may have been a rough footing. Layer 10 covers layer 13, the base of which was below the excavation limit.

## Trench Two

The surface of this trench lies about 0.2 m higher than that of Trench One. Under the thick reinforced concrete yard surface 20 is a brick wall 29 aligned N-S abutted by a layer 21 sealing a thin clay layer 22, possibly a rough floor. A small sandy layer 24 in the SW part of the trench and also sealed by layer 21 has no clear relationship with the possible floor 22, which covers the stone block foundation for wall 29 and the thick layer 23. A gravelly band 25 in the trench's SW corner on top of layer 23 and under sandy layer 24 may be part of a pathway. Layer 23 overlies layer 26, covering layer 27. The foundation for wall 29 does not appear to be in a construction trench, but was constructed from the surface of layer 27, with layers 23 and 25 accumulating against it. Under layer 27 is layer 28, which seals the probable floor 30 of brown mortar.

## Recovered Material

96 potsherds, 16 pieces of brick and tile and one clay pipestem (total weight 2.95 kg.) were recovered from Trench One. The pottery recovered from this trench was manufactured in the Roman period, with the groups from deposits 13 - 6 exhibiting a sequence from the late First to late Third or Fourth Centuries A. D. However, 4 brick fragments (100 g.) recovered from layer 6 are likely to be post-medieval, but it is possible that these are intrusive. The small round-headed copper-alloy pin (Small Find 2) also from layer 6 is probably of medieval or later date.

11 potsherds, 13 pieces of brick and tile and five clay pipestems (total weight 0.84 kg.) were recovered from Trench Two. The presence of pipestems in layer 27 shows that this and later deposits are post-medieval, and therefore the pottery was not examined in detail. Pottery of the Saxon and Victorian eras were absent from both trenches. An inventory of the artifacts recovered is presented in Appendix Two.

## Conclusions

The top of archaeologically significant deposits in Trench One is slightly ambiguous. Deposits above 0.19 m below grade are clearly post-medieval, and the post-medieval brick fragments and copper-alloy pin in layer 6 indicate that deposits of the Roman era begin at the base of this layer at 0.34 m. below grade. However, if the brick fragments and pin have been brought down into this layer by subsequent disturbances, it is possible that Roman deposits cut by later features begin at the top of layer 6 at 0.19 m. below grade. It seems unlikely that all of these artifacts are intrusive, and that so little accumulation has occurred since the end of the Roman era in the centre of a town such as Dorchester. Tenuous structural remains (the possible stone footing 9 and possible oven base 11) were noted at 0.34 m. below grade.

Clay pipestems found in layer 27 of Trench Two show that this layer and all the material physically above it (above 0.52 m. below grade) in this trench, including the wall 29 and the layers which have accumulated against it, are post-medieval. The lack of artifacts from layer 28 makes it impossible to date accurately this layer or the possible floor of brown mortar 30 below it. It is clear that this mortar is not *opus signinum*, the high-quality Roman mortar.



**Fleur-de-Lys Inn, Dorchester (DORFL 1992) Appendix One: Evaluation Context Inventory**

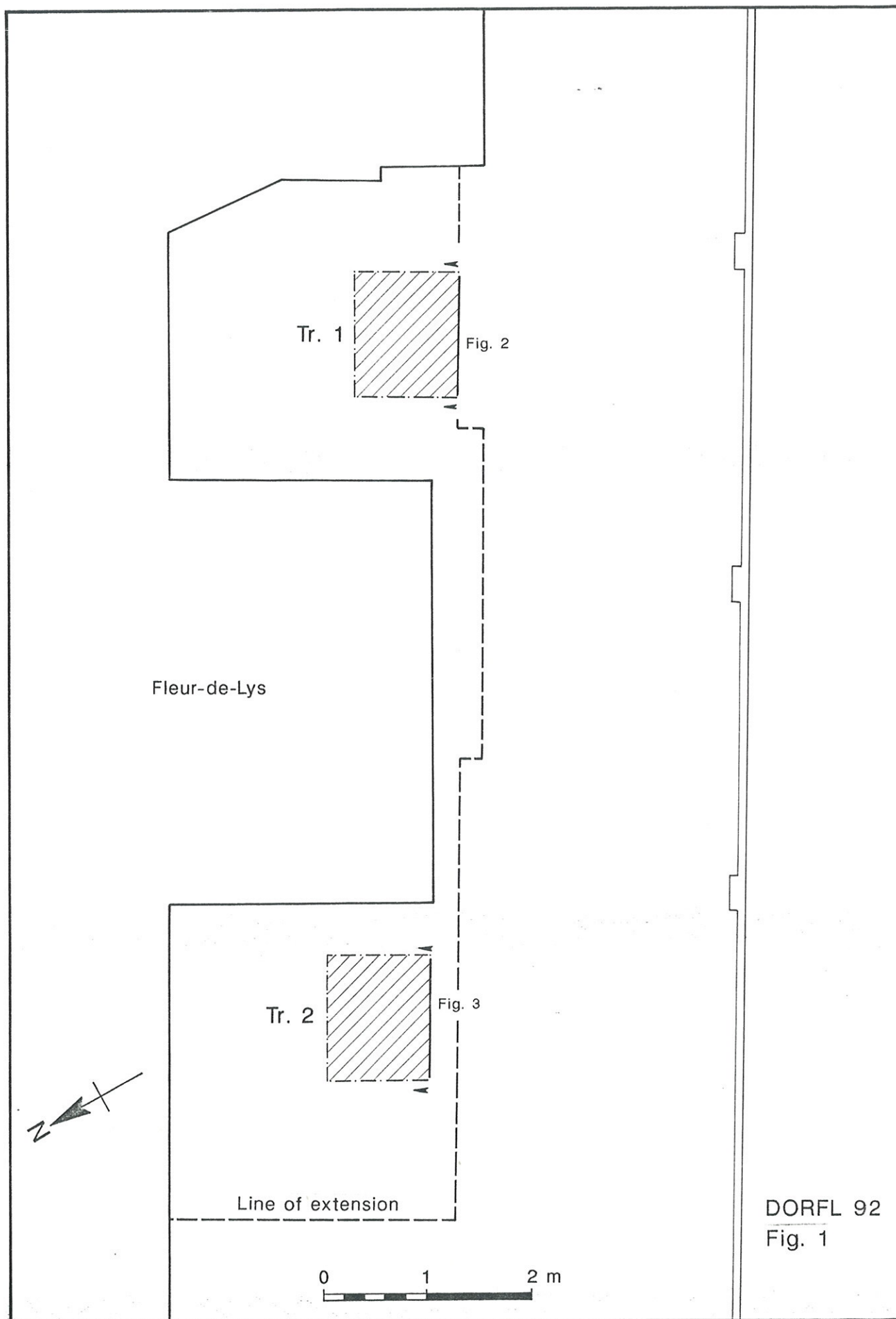
Cxt No.	Description	Dimensions (m.)	Depth below surface (m.)	Age
1	concrete yard surface	0.03 d	0.00	modern
2	sand makeup for 1	0.02 d	0.03	modern
3	layer	0.16 d	0.03	recent
4	fill of 5		0.19	med. or later
5	possible pit	>0.39 l x >0.32 w x 0.14 d	0.19	med. or later
6	layer	0.16 - 0.24 d	0.19	med. or later
7	fill of 8		0.18	med. or later
8	possible gully or burrow	>0.26 l x 0.20 w x 0.26 d	0.18	med. or later
9	row of stones	1.0 l x 0.3 w	0.34	Roman or later
10	layer	0.20 d	0.34	AD 120 - 160
11	possible oven base	>0.25 l x >0.25 w x 0.02 d	0.34	early 2nd Cent.
12	cut containing 11	>0.25 l x >0.25 w x 0.02 d	0.34	early 2nd Cent.
13	layer	>0.10 d	0.54	late 1st - early 2nd Cent.
20	concrete yard surface	0.10 d	0.00	modern
21	layer	0.07 d	0.10	recent
22	clay floor	0.02 d	0.18	post-medieval
23	layer	0.10 d	0.20	post-medieval
24	sand layer	0.02 d	0.18	post-medieval
25	possible path	0.02 d	0.20	post-medieval
26	layer	0.13 d	0.30	post-medieval
27	layer	0.09 d	0.43	post-medieval
28	layer	0.10 d	0.52	uncertain
29	wall	0.33 d	0.10	post-medieval
30	mortar floor	unexcavated	0.62	uncertain

Fleur-de-Lys Inn, Dorchester 1992 (DORFL 92) Appendix Two: Evaluation Artifact Inventory			
Cxt	No.	Description	Date
3	1	clay pipe stem shd.	post-medieval
	6	brick or tile. 2 frags Roman, others uncertain	uncertain
	6	sandy greyware shds.	Roman
	14	fine greyware shds. 3 rims	"
	1	Shell-tempered ware C11	"
	2	BB1 black-burnished ware shds. 1 rim	"
	2	Dressel 20 amphora shds.	"
	1	Oxon. colour-coated shd. with rouletted dec.	"
	1	Oxon. whiteware mortarium	"
	1	white colour-coated mortarium in oxidised fabric (Young WC7)	"
	1	brick frag.	post-med.
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 880 g.		
	1	glass fragment (Small Find 1)	
	17	450 g. of bones	
4	2	fine greyware shds.	2nd Cent.
	1	Samian rim frag.	Roman
	1	parchment ware rim shd.	"
	2	tile frags. 1 tegula flange	"
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 215 g.		
	9	130 g. of bone	
6	14	fine greyware shds. 1 rim	late 3rd or 4th Cent. AD
	3	sandy greyware	"
	1	shd. in coarse "storage jar" fabric	"
	1	M22 mortarium	"
	1	whiteware shd.	"
	2	Oxon. colour-coated shds.	"
	2	Dressel 20 amphora (1 handle, 1 doubtful)	"
	3	tile, 1 large imbrex	"
	4	frags. brick	uncertain, prob. post-medieval
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 700 g.		
	1	Cu-alloy pin (Small Find 2)	
	20	700 g. of bone	
7	3	greyware shds. 2 fine. 1 id.	prob. 2nd Cent.
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 55 g.		

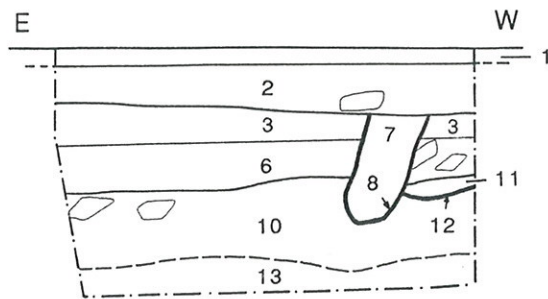
Fleur-de-Lys Inn, Dorchester 1992 (DORFL 92) Appendix Two: Evaluation Artifact Inventory

Cxt	No.	Description	Date
10	14	shds.sandy grey wares incl. grey/white fabrics. 1 rim	AD 120 - AD 160
	3	shds. fine grey fabrics	"
	2	shds. of coarse storage jar (R90)	"
	2	BB1 black-burnished ware bowl or dish (1 w/ acute lattice dec.)	"
	5	oxidised fabric with white slip	"
	5	sand-temperd whiteware shds. possibly Oxon.	"
	3	S Gaullish Samian shds. Dr.15/17 or 18 footring, prob. Neronian. 1 other shd. poss. Neronian	1st Cent.
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 315 g.		
	16	225 g. of bones	
11	1	Fe nail (Small Find 3)	
13	13	shds. sandy grey wares	late 1st - early 2nd cent.
	3	shds. fine grey ware incl. poppyhead beaker	"
	4	shds. coarse storage jar (1 rim)	"
	1	fine calcareous tempered possible butt beaker	"
	1	oxidised fabric with white slip	"
	2	whiteware shds., 1 fine, 1 sand tempered	"
	1	half-spout of Oxon. whiteware mortarium	"
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 780 g.		
	1	Fe nail (Small Find 4)	
21	2	60 g. of bones	
	1	Frag. of rim of glazed sewer pipe	recent
	2	frags. brick	post-med.
	2	shds. pottery. 1 Roman. 1 flowerpot base	recent
Weight of fired clay artifacts: 415 g.			
22	3	tile or brick frags.	post-med.
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 135 g.		
23	9	frags. brick or tile	uncertain
	3	clay pipe stem shds.	post-med.
	2	potshds.	uncertain, prob. Roman
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 100 g.		
	1	10 g. of bone	
27	1	frag. brick	prob. post-medieval
	1	frag. tile	post-medieval
	2	clay pipe stem shds.	post-medieval
	3	potshds.	uncertain, poss. Roman
	Weight of fired clay artifacts: 190 g.		
	2	15 g. of bones	

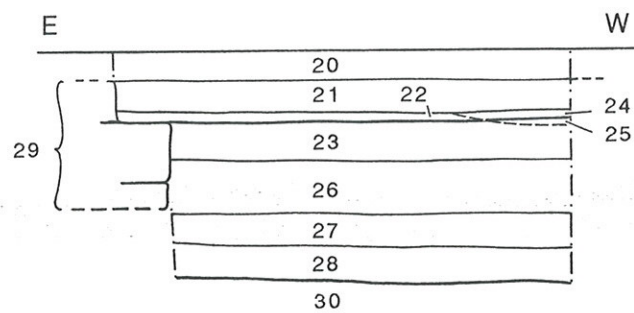




DORFL 92  
Fig. 1



DORFL 92  
Fig. 2



DORFL 92  
Fig. 3







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