Chapter 2
Prehistoric and Roman evidence

by Lisa Brown and Edward Biddulph

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The general geological and topographic setting of Winchester and the area of excavation has been established in Chapter 1. One of the aims of the excavations was to record these aspects in detail to allow a more accurate picture to be established of the area of the site prior to the earliest evidence for human occupation.

The untruncated horizons of the Upper Chalk bedrock and overlying drift geology of Clay-with-Flints were only revealed in profile as a result of the excavation of deep cut features dating from the Roman to post-medieval periods. Investigation of the medieval wells which were cut as vertical shafts into the Upper Chalk bedrock showed that they were all excavated to depths between 34.89 m OD and 43.49 m OD (see Chapter 4), which either demonstrates the presence of perched water table, a spring-line, or they are cisterns collecting water percolating through the rock or redirected rain water.

The interface between the solid chalk bedrock and the drift geology was characteristically irregular and undulating; in places this was quite dramatic with the chalk affected by deep fissures. In all parts of the site the chalk was overlain by Clay-with-Flints deposits, which also filled the deep fissures. This drift geology was a strong orangey-brown coloured silty-clay, which contained over 50% broken angular flints and flint nodules. It varied in thickness but appeared to follow a general trend, being thinner on the upslope western side and thickening further downslope to the east. In one location, at the extreme western side of the site, the Clay-with-Flint deposit contained a single large Sarson stone.

Where untruncated the upper surface of the Clay-with-Flints did not undulate and was overlain by between 0.15 to 0.30 m of a duller orangy-brown sandy-silt with limited flint inclusions, originally representing the pre-Roman subsoil but which had been subsequently subject to cultivation and contained material of early Roman date (see Phase 1.3 below). As a consequence, all pre-Roman activity was found to have been overlain by this soil. Where the soil had been protected by the early Roman north-south street it contained material of largely pre-Roman date. Soil morphology (sample CCM602; see Macphail and Crowther, Chapter 8) here suggests that it represented slightly phosphate-rich physically disturbed/homogenised possible plough soil, suggesting pre-Roman arable activity. This horizon was present throughout the site apart from along the western half of the Discovery Centre where it had been removed by later terracing. However, enough of the untruncated surface of the Clay-with-Flints survived in order to generate the model of the site's original topography represented in Figure 2.1. It can clearly be seen that the site sloped gradually down from the west (*c* 52.99 m OD) to east (*c* 44.69 m OD) at a gradient of 5–6%. There was an indication of several natural terraces, running north-south and broadly corresponding with the Roman street, the modern alignment of Staple Gardens and the western side of the Northgate House site. There was also an indication of a broadly perpendicular east-west undulation within the general slope of the hillside, which started in the south-west part of the Northgate House site and ran eastwards into the southernmost limits of the Discovery Centre site.

THE PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT (PHASE 1)

by Lisa Brown

Introduction

The NH/CC site lies within the north-east corner of the 20 ha Iron Age enclosure known as Oram's Arbour (Fig. 2.2). The date of the enclosure and the role it played in the development of the modern city of Winchester and surrounding region are still debated. The current evidence suggests a middle Iron Age origin for the earthworks (Qualmann *et al.* 2004) and, although only a small proportion of the enclosure has been excavated, it is now generally agreed that it does not conform in many respects to the traditional model of the *oppidum*, as it has often been described in the past (Collis pers. comm.; Biddle 1990; Cunliffe 1996, 26).

The results of the recent fieldwork and of previous excavations on the plot of land situated between the present day Tower Street and Staple Gardens show that the NH/CC site was occupied by a settlement during the later prehistoric period, from the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age transition through to the late Iron Age. Although

Fig. 2.1 Plan of the natural topography of the site

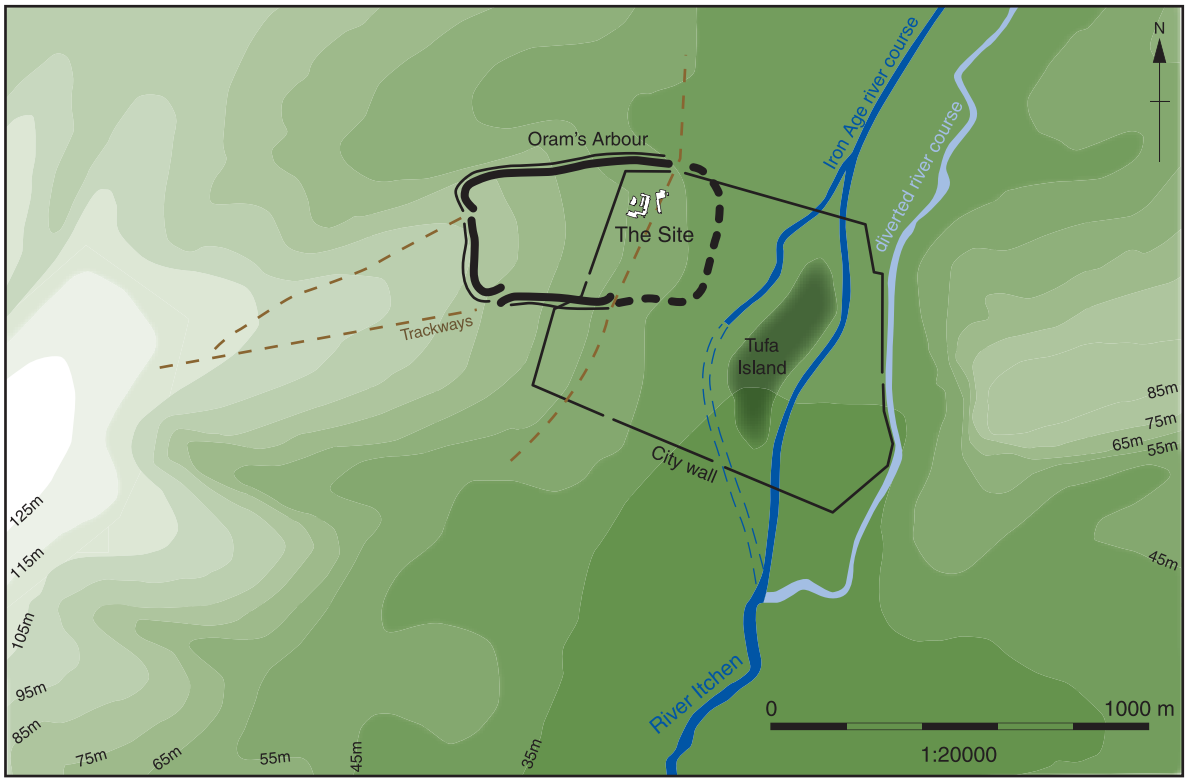


Fig. 2.2 Location of the excavations in relation to Oram's Arbour Iron Age enclosure

Fig. 2.3 Plan of early Iron Age and unphased prehistoric features, Phase 1.1 (c 700–400 BC)

evidence for scattered and sporadic earlier prehistoric activity has been recovered within the modern city, none was found on at this specific site (see Chapter 5).

Several small trenches excavated in 1960–1 within the current project area exposed a number of shallow pits, postholes and gullies cut into the natural gravel and sealed by Roman deposits (Fig. 2.3; Cunliffe 1964; UAD 791). No definite structures were identified but associated pottery corresponded to the decorated variety found at the nearby hillfort of St Catherine's Hill, where it was dated to between 300 and 100 BC (Hawkes *et al.*1930; Cunliffe 2005). Two minor investigations, carried out in 1952 (UAD 789) and in 1959 (UAD 790), also within the project area, produced a few traces of middle Iron Age activity.

Within the *c* 8257 m² development area of the NH/CC site, the excavation trenches formed *c* 2557 m². It is estimated that *c* 412 m² of the prehistoric deposits that could have been expected within this area had either been destroyed by intensive later pitting or lay below the level of archaeological mitigation. The total of undisturbed prehistoric levels available for investigation, therefore, amounted to only *c* 1004 m² (39% of the excavation trenches or 12% of the development area). Most of the surviving prehistoric activity was found in the western half of the NH site, which occupied a level terrace at *c* 52.2 m aOD (Fig. 2.3). However, due to the excavation strategy applied to this part of the site, the trenches did not penetrate the pre-Roman levels along its eastern side. Modern terracing may have removed any early remains along the western part of the CC site, but some traces of prehistoric activity survived further to the east.

As a consequence of the post-Roman destruction to later prehistoric levels and of restricted access dictated by the mitigation strategy, the overview obtained of the nature and pattern of later prehistoric occupation was somewhat limited. Nonetheless, the excavations exposed a number of structural features with associated ceramics that provided convincing evidence for at least two phases of Iron Age settlement activity. Phase 1.1 was represented by at least two post-built roundhouses associated with a few sherds of early Iron Age pottery (Fig. 2.3). A later group of four or five roundhouses (Phase 1.2; see Fig. 2.6), identified only by their eaves drip gullies, produced a somewhat larger assemblage of distinctive middle Iron Age pottery. Features and deposits thought to be contemporary with Iron Age activity, but lacking reliable stratigraphic and artefactual associations, were classified as Phase 1 (prehistoric unphased). These included two concentrations of postholes, which may have represented additional roundhouses or perhaps ancillary structures such as two-, four- or six-post structures.

The absence of genuine pits (as opposed to shallow hollows) within both the early and middle Iron Age settlements cannot be explained purely by the levels of truncation encountered during excavation, since the far less substantial remains of roundhouses survived here. Deep storage pits of the type commonly excavated in southern Britain, and typical of the Iron Age in Hampshire, have been found close to the site, both elsewhere in Winchester and at nearby Iron Age settlement sites such as Winnall Down (Fasham 1985).

A clue to the absence of pits at the NH/CC site no doubt lies in the localised geology (see above). The Iron Age roundhouses were constructed in an area where the Upper Chalk was capped with Clay-with-Flints and gravelly sand, an unsuitable location for digging storage pits. At Downland settlements such as Winnall Down and Easton Lane (Fasham 1985; Fasham *et al.* 1989) and on hilltop sites such as St Catherine's Hill (Hawkes *et al.* 1930) and Danebury (Cunliffe 1984 and 1995), where deep storage pits were common, the chalk lies directly below turfline/topsoil or below relatively thin and sporadic cappings of Clay-with-Flints. In Winchester a 1 m deep early Iron Age pit was recorded at New Road (Qualmann *et al*. 2004, 25) and a middle Iron Age pit at Sussex Street (ibid., 43), both within an area where the chalk spur rises to form St Paul's Hill. These locations lie only 100–150 m to the west of the NH roundhouses, and it would be reasonable to conjecture that the Iron Age inhabitants, who would have been very familiar with the local geology, dug their storage pits in this more suitable zone.

The topography of the area also had some bearing on the siting of a holloway (CC7000) that linked the north and south entrances of Oram's Arbour (Fig. 2.3). This worn track followed the natural line of the contours of St Paul's Hill (Fig. 2.2). It was clearly in use during the Iron Age, and almost certainly had an even earlier origin, predating the construction of the Oram's Arbour earthworks and influencing the arrangement of the early and middle Iron Age structures, and of a later Roman road. The holloway served as the north-south axis of a wide-ranging and probably very ancient network of trade routes linking prehistoric communities for centuries.

Phase 1.1 (*c* 700–400 BC): Early Iron Age roundhouses

During the earliest phase of settlement activity early Iron Age inhabitants constructed at least two post ring-built roundhouses (NH8502 and NH8508) some 60 m to the west of what was probably a pre-existing holloway (CC7000) (Fig. 2.3). The levels of truncation and paucity of artefacts from surrounding features hindered the identification of other settlement features that may have been associated with the roundhouses, but two concentrations of postholes, NH9800 and NH9801 (see below), may disguise poorly-preserved remains of four-post or similar buildings.

Structure NH8502 (Fig. 2.4; Plate 2.1)

Structure NH8502 survived as an arc of eight postholes (NH6167; NH6178; NH6207; NH6223 NH6182; NH6197; NH6180; NH6232) forming the northern side of a single-ring roundhouse estimated to be approximately 8 m in diameter. A south-east facing porched entrance can be inferred from the position of posthole NH5240, forming a pair with NH6232, sited about 1 m beyond the main post ring. The other side of the entrance was not preserved.

Another 12 features enclosed by the post ring could have supported internal divisions or the roof structure. Poorly preserved wide, shallow features, such as NH6212 and NH6225, may have been hearth bases or simple wear hollows produced by continual footfall or scratching animals. Although the precise date of these features and direct association with the structure was uncertain due to the paucity of finds, at least one (NH6195) was cut by the gully of middle Iron Age roundhouse NH8505, and so clearly pre-dated it.

The postholes belonging to Structure NH8502 were 0.3–0.5 m in diameter and survived to a depth of between only 0.05 m and 0.62 m. Their fills were a relatively homogeneous greyish-brown silty clay containing varying amounts of gravel, which distinctly contrasted with the overlying orange-brown subsoil. Four of the postholes, two belonging to the post ring and two internal ones, produced pottery of broadly later prehistoric type (see Brown, Chapter 7). Posthole NH6195 (see above) contained a small sherd of coarse shell-tempered pottery and posthole NH6223, one of the ring posts, produced a sherd of finely made flint-tempered ware, a type generally dated to the middle Iron Age but in this case possibly intrusive, considering the levels of localised disturbance.

A small, heavily fired brick and a fragment of vitrified furnace lining were found in postholes associated with Structure NH8502 (see Poole, Chapter 7). The furnace lining indicates some level of industrial activity, perhaps bronze-working, within the settlement. The brick may have been simply re-used as post packing, but the practice of deliberate placement of closing deposits within postholes following abandonment of buildings was relatively common in the Hampshire/Wiltshire region during the early Iron Age (Brown 2000).

Charred plant remains from nine features relating to Structure NH8502, including four of the ring postholes, provided evidence that more wheat than barley was being processed, and presumably grown, at the settlement during the early Iron Age. One of the internal postholes (NH6210) near the roundhouse entrance contained a large deposit of black mustard seeds, a native oil seed crop that may have been used for seasoning food.

Some 5 m to the north of Structure NH8502, two shallow hollows (NH6183 and NH6191) were cut by the gully of middle Iron Age roundhouse NH8504 (see below). They were both *c* 1 m across and less than 0.4 m deep, and may have been structural elements of an early Iron Age precursor to the later roundhouse, representing a structure occupying the space between NH8502 and NH8508. Although they contained no pottery, NH6183 produced a fragment of a Greensand saddle quern, a type common during the early Iron Age in Hampshire (Fig. 2.4 Section NH353).

Plate 2.1 Structure NH8502, Phase 1.1, looking south

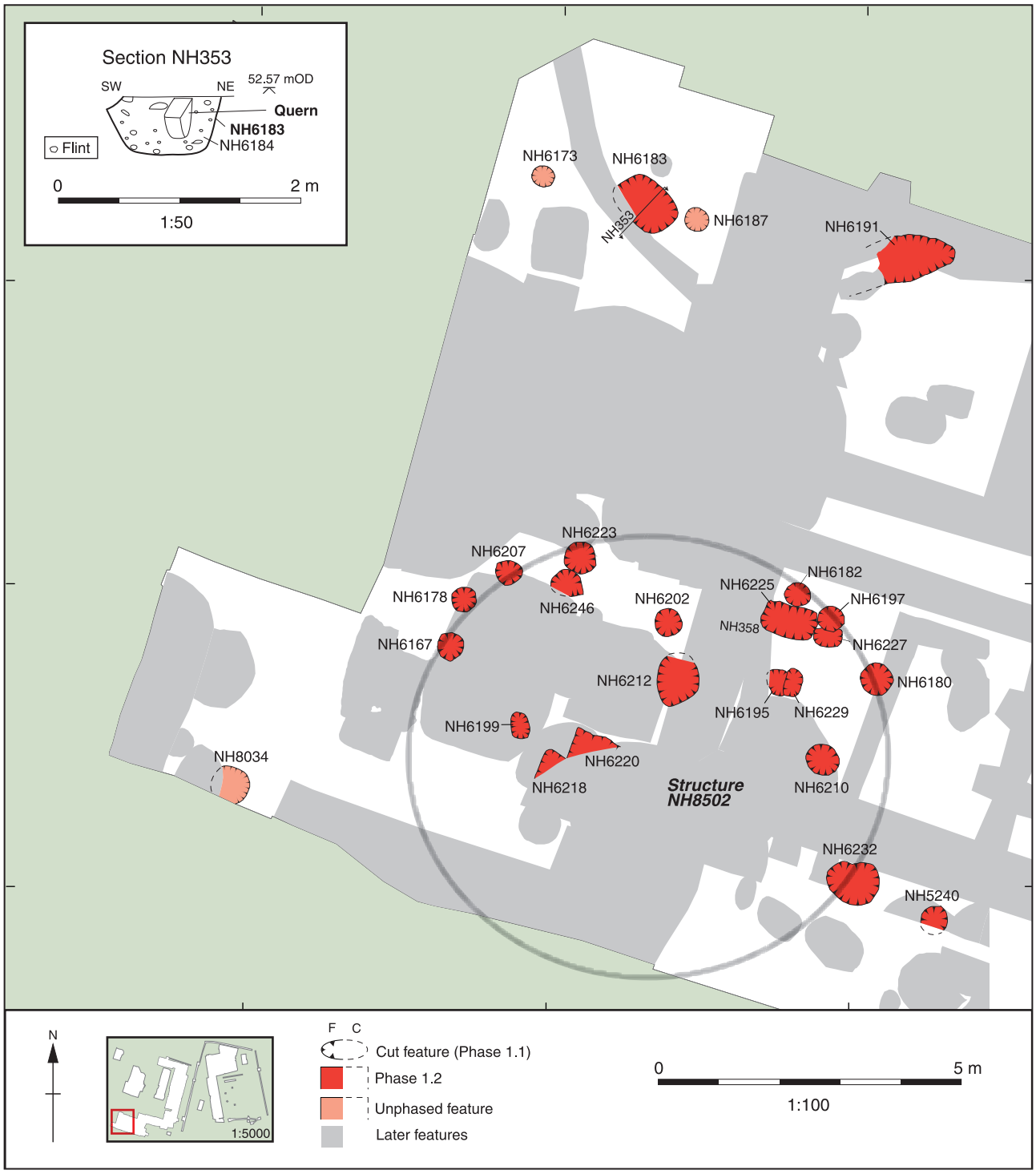


Fig. 2.4 Plan of early Iron Age Structure NH8502, Phase 1.1

Structure NH8508 (Fig. 2.5)

Structure NH8508 was represented by a group of sub-circular features, all probably the truncated bases of postholes. Due to later disturbance it was difficult to trace the full extent of the structure, and the possibility exists that this was a double-ring roundhouse, but equally it may have been a single-ring structure rebuilt at some stage, the second version slightly off-centre from the first. The positioning of the postholes indicated a diameter of about 12 m, much larger than NH8502, but within the recognised range for the early Iron Age. The postholes ranged from 0.63 to 1.15 m across and survived to between 0.25–0.55 m deep, with the exception of NH1614, which was considerably deeper. They were all filled with orange or greyish-brown silty clay with varying quantities of gravel.

Fig. 2.5 Plan of early Iron Age Structure NH8508, Phase 1.1

Fig. 2.6 Plan of middle Iron Age and unphased prehistoric features, Phase 1.2 (c 400–100 BC)

Four roughly equidistant postholes (NH1551, NH1557, NH1621 and NH1614) would have formed the eastern side of a post ring, with postholes NH1612, NH1524/1525; NH1531 and NH1537 completing the circuit. The northern and much of the southern stretch of postholes were lost to later disturbance. Although NH1614 was over 1 m, the profile suggested it was a posthole rather than a pit. Surviving traces of post-pipes in NH1614 and NH1557 indicated upright timbers of at least 0.20 m diameter, suggesting that these were load-bearing elements of a substantial structure. Postholes NH1547 and NH1559, located approximately 1 m outside of the proposed post ring, may have held porch posts.

The possible alternative circuit, second post ring or rebuilt version of roundhouse NH8508 was represented by postholes NH1547, NH1599 and NH1621 on the eastern side of the main circuit, NH1491 (and possibly NH1457) on the south-western side and Cunliffe posthole 15 on the north-western side.

A number of postholes lying within the area described by the posthole circuit/s included small features excavated during the 1960s (Cunliffe 1964) and re-exposed during the current excavations (Fig. 2.5, Cunliffe features 13 and 14). These, along with NH1579, NH1619, NH1624 and NH1626, may have also supported internal structures within the roundhouse.

None of the features relating to this structure, including those reported by Cunliffe (1964), produced any finds apart from a sherd of early Iron Age pottery from NH1621. Samples of charred plants from features NH1524, NH1547, NH1557 and NH1579 produced notably more barley than wheat, particularly posthole NH1524. The barley was mainly hulled but a naked grain suggested that some naked barley was present either as a minor crop or a sporadic variant (see Carruthers, Chapter 8). The presence of chaff fragments indicated that emmer and spelt wheat were being cultivated within the settlement, with spelt as the dominant crop. NH1621 produced a relatively large quantity of charred grain dominated by hulled wheat with some free-threshing wheat, but despite the amount of material, the feature was clearly not a grain storage pit (Fig. 2.5 Section NH1614).

Phase 1.2 (*c* 400–100 BC): Middle Iron Age roundhouses

Five middle Iron Age roundhouses were represented by severely truncated eaves drip gullies (Fig. 2.6). Four of the five were set in a linear arrangement, occupying a level terrace on the western side of the NH excavations. Again, no associated pits or ancillary structures could be definitely linked to this phase of the settlement.

Structure NH8507

The western curve of a well-preserved curvilinear gully with a projected diameter of *c* 8 m was the only surviving feature relating to roundhouse NH8507 (Fig. 2.6). This U-shaped gully was 0.5 m wide and survived to only 0.13 m deep. The homogeneous fill produced no finds.

Structure NH8509

Structure NH8509 was represented by a discontinuous curvilinear gully that lay within the space previously occupied by occupied by Phase 1.1 roundhouse NH8505 (Fig. 2.6). The gully was 0.45 m wide and 0.15 m deep and its western side had been truncated by later activity. Two small sherds of intrusive Roman pottery and a fragment of ceramic building material were recovered from the fill. A shallow feature (NH1628) to the east of the gully lies in the correct position to have been a south-eastern gully terminal. The primary fill of this feature showed evidence of gradual silting, but upper fill may have been deliberate levelling.

Structure NH8504 (Fig. 2.7)

The southern curve of a penannular gully with a projected diameter of *c* 9 m was probably a drip gully relating to another roundhouse (NH8504). A possible terminus was identified on the eastern side. The gully was 0.4–0.57 m wide and survived to a maximum depth of 0.22 m. The fill was a mid grey silty clay with gravel, which produced a sherd of highly burnished, flint-tempered middle Iron Age pottery. Posthole NH6168, which lay just beyond the south-eastern curve of the gully, may have been a rafter support for a porch. It contained three middle Iron Age sherds, including a fragment of a highly burnished flint-tempered globular jar.

Structure NH8505 (Fig. 2.7)

A short length of a curvilinear gully represented the eastern curve of an eaves drip gully enclosing roundhouse NH8505. The structure was sited only *c* 1 m to the south of NH8504 and was the southernmost of four middle Iron Age roundhouses on the western side of the excavation area. On the basis of the projected diameter of the gully, the roundhouse was probably *c* 8 m or 9 m in diameter. The gully was 0.45–0.5 m wide and 0.14–0.18 m deep, with steep sides and a rounded base. It was filled with greyish brown silty clay with gravel, which produced 11 sherds of burnished flint-tempered pottery, including a 'saucepan pot' rim and 10 fragments of a vessel with burnt organic residue on the inner surface, probably the remains of a meal.

Structure NH8506

A possible fifth roundhouse was represented by a very short length of gully located some 10 m to the north-east of roundhouse NH8507 (Fig. 2.6). Although too little of this feature survived to be certain of its size or function, it was dated to the

middle Iron Age on the basis of a burnished, flint-tempered saucepan pot rim found in its fill (NH7607).

Environmental remains from the middle Iron Age structures

Charred plant remains taken from Phase 1.2 gullies NH1633 (Structure NH8507), NH6162 (Structure NH8505), NH6163 (Structure NH8505), NH6189 (Structure NH8504) and NH7610 (Structure NH8506), and from posthole NH6168 (Structure NH8504), were similar to the early Iron Age samples, with mixed domestic waste of mostly wheat, but with relatively abundant barley (see Carruthers, Chapter 8). Chaff and weed seeds were again uncommon, suggesting that processing had taken place away from the immediate area. A

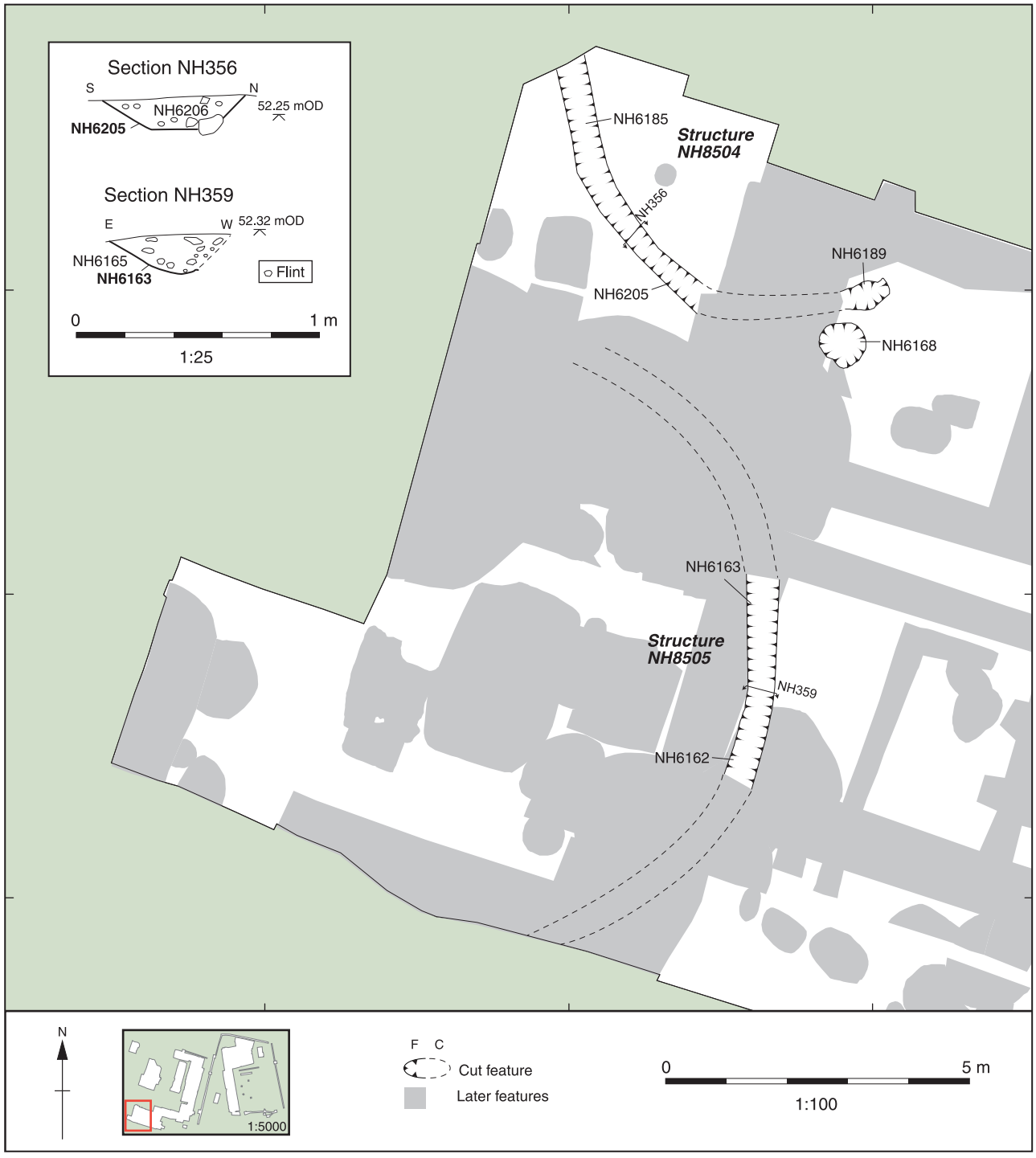


Fig. 2.7 Plan of middle Iron Age Structures NH8504 and NH8505, Phase 1.2

possible sloe stone fragment found in gully NH6162 and a possible Celtic bean from NH1634 provide some limited evidence for elements of the middle Iron Age diet. There was a slight increase in bread-type wheat during this period, a time when oats also made their first significant appearance. The oats may have been weeds rather than cultivated crops even at this late date, although there is evidence from contemporary sites that they were grown for fodder.

Holloway CC7000

The Iron Age roundhouses were constructed on a NE-SW alignment corresponding to that of a shallow linear holloway running *c* 50 m to the east (Figs 2.6 and 2.8). This worn prehistoric track was 3.5 m wide and survived to 0.15 m deep. It was exposed for a length of 11.3 m at the north end of CC site (Fig. 2.8) but modern terracing had removed all evidence of it in the southern part of the trench. What appears to be the northern continuation of holloway CC7000 (and the later Roman road) was found during excavations at Victoria Road, some 40 m outside of the projected line of Oram's Arbour (Qualmann *et al*. 2004, 47–8). Here, where the track (F856) was much better preserved than at the NH/CC site; it was consistently 5 m wide, with wheel-ruts underlying Roman period metalling.

The eastern side of the trackway was edged with discontinuous patches of flint nodules (CC3409 and CC3374), probably the remnants of an original rudimentary surface (Fig. 2.8, Section CC311). The hollow gradually filled with mixed gravel and soil that resembled the surrounding subsoil, representing a combination of eroded and trampled material deriving from the edges of the track. The surface of the gravelly make-up was overlain by a trampled soil surface incorporating small quantities of occupation material, including burnt flint and a

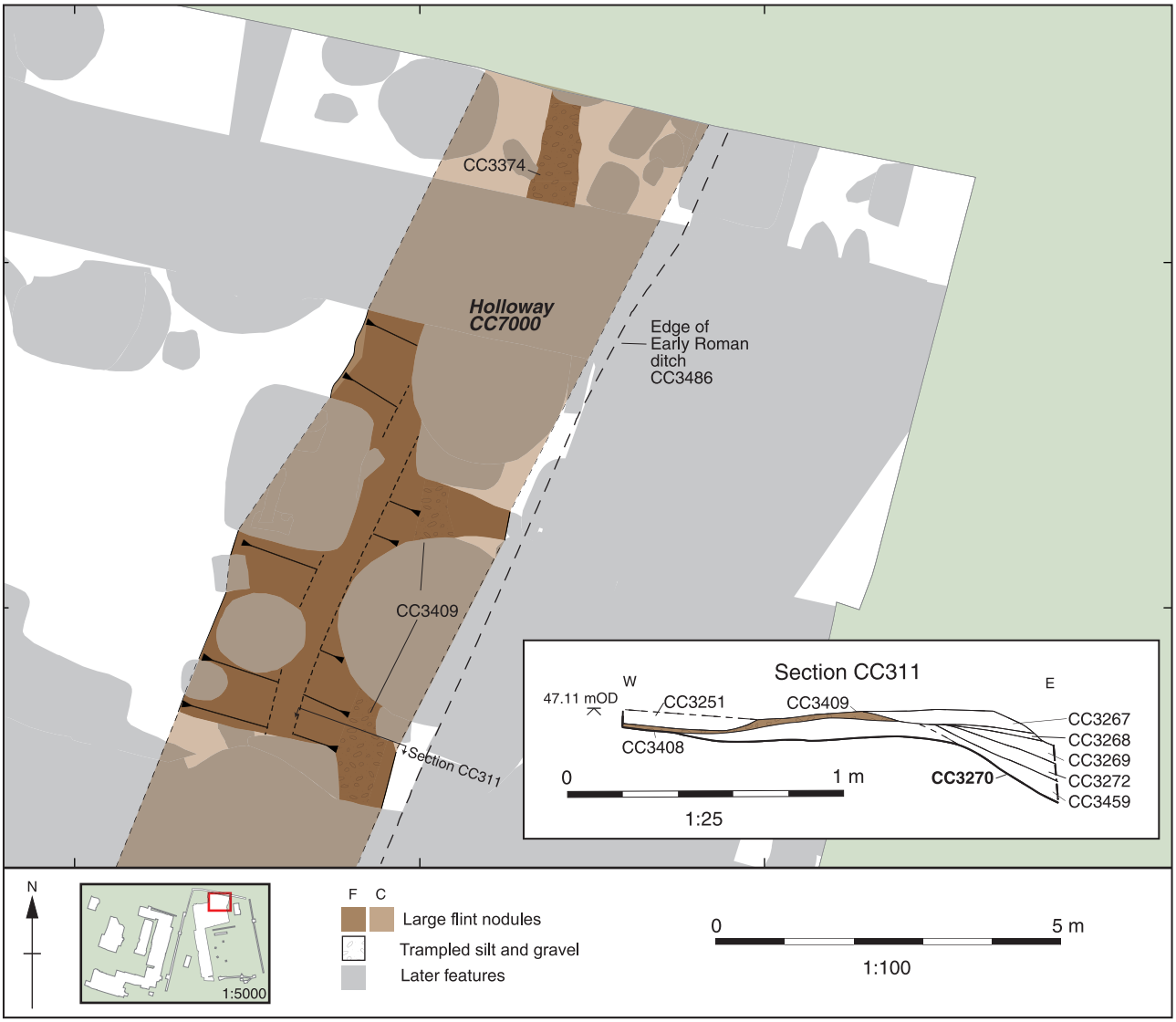


Fig. 2.8 Plan of Holloway CC7000, Phase 1.2

few sherds of flint-tempered prehistoric pottery. A cattle bone fragment recovered from this deposit produced a calibrated radiocarbon date of 40 BC–AD 90 (OxA-16793). A second sample from a sheep/goat tooth produced a calibrated date of AD 260–430 (OxA-16794), but this could have been intrusive from the extensive Roman period activity in the area.

A later Roman street (see below) appears to have mirrored the alignment of the prehistoric trackway, and both routes led to the postulated site of the north gate of the Roman town, which corresponds to the proposed northern entrance into the Iron Age Oram's Arbour enclosure. This ancient orientation was reflected in a V-shaped ditch (CC3486), which flanked the Roman road (Fig. 2.8). A direct association between the prehistoric trackway and the Roman road and ditch seems highly plausible, and suggests that the track, although abandoned prior to the construction of the Roman road, retained a visible presence in the landscape.

Undated features (Phase 1)

Two groups of postholes lay some 10 m to the east of the linear arrangement of Iron Age roundhouses (Fig. 2.6). For convenience sake these have been referred to as Structures NH9800 and NH9801, but it is likely that they were surviving elements of several structures, such as two- or four-posters or fences. The stratigraphic relationship between the postholes and the subsoil (NH8503/CC7001) was not observed during excavation as the posthole fills were similar in composition to the subsoil. None produced dating evidence, with the exception of NH9776, which contained a (probably) intrusive Roman sherd in the top fill.

The five postholes representing Structure NH9800 may have represented a four-post structure, of which one posthole did not survive, and a two-poster. The features were relatively deep at between 0.21 and 0.54 m, with diameters of 0.3–0.42 m, and all were filled with a mid-grey fine silt which contained no finds. Structure NH9801 consisted of six shallow postholes which appeared to follow a curvilinear arrangement, possibly belonging to a small roundhouse, but which, again, may have represented more than one phase and one structure. The postholes were between 0.3–0.5 m in diameter, with surviving depths ranging from only 0.1–0.21 m.

It would be reasonable to suggest that these 'structures' belonged to a zoned alignment of ancillary structures sited between the roundhouses and the holloway, with storage pits located on the western side of the roundhouses.

Phase 1.3 (*c* 100 BC–AD 43): Late Iron Age subsoil

The pre-Roman deposits were sealed by a homogeneous, gravelly subsoil (Phase 1.3; NH8503 and CC7001; not illustrated). Where it was securely sealed by Roman deposits, the subsoil contained no closely datable material, but elsewhere it included Roman and later artefacts, which had been incorporated during Roman period cultivation and later activity. Three samples taken from this worked soil produced very high concentrations of cereal grains. Bread-type wheat, most of it hulled, was the most common cereal in two of the samples and hulled barley dominated the third (NH1599). Few weed seeds and no chaff fragments were found in this soil, perhaps because they had been destroyed by cultivation, or because the grain found in the samples was processed cereal incorporated in a general mix of burnt household waste used to fertilise the soil. Three corn cockle seeds from two of the samples represent the earliest recorded find on the site for this poisonous plant, and may relate to the bringing in of seed corn from outside the region, probably during the Roman period.

Plate 2.2 Iron Age Dobunnic coin

The only pre-Roman coin (SF 1263) recovered from the excavations came from subsoil NH8503 (context NH4390). It was a base silver unit depicting a head on the obverse and a triple-tailed horse and a cock's head on the reverse, a type belonging to the early Dobunnic uninscribed series dated to *c* 40 BC (Plate 2.2 and see de Jersey, Chapter 7). Although the coin was effectively unstratified, its presence here as the first of its type found in Winchester, and occurring some way to the south-east of its currently recognised distribution pattern, is interesting in the context of the role that Oram's Arbour may have served in controlling a complex of far-reaching trade routes from the middle Iron Age and possibly later (see Chapter 5).

THE ROMAN OCCUPATION (PHASE 2)

by Edward Biddulph

Introduction

The excavations reported on here were located in the north-western quarter of the Roman town (Fig. 2.9; see also Fig. 5.3). The north gate utilised the north-east entrance of Oram's Arbour and was located some 100 m north of the excavation area. A street uncovered in the Discovery Centre (CC) area probably led to the gate being identified as the

Fig. 2.9 General plan of the Roman features, Phase 2 (AD 43–400)

principal north-south axis. The character of the early town was to a large extent determined by topography. Development concentrated on the west bank of the Itchen Valley, the streets being terraced into the hillside and orientated with the prevailing contours. The north-west part of the town was more sparsely occupied than areas closer to the centre and its character was distinctly industrial. However, much of the evidence recorded in the fieldwork was the product of domestic occupation and it is likely that the area was given over to both residential and industrial use.

Phase 2.1 (*c* AD 43–130/50): Early Roman structures, street surfaces and a water channel

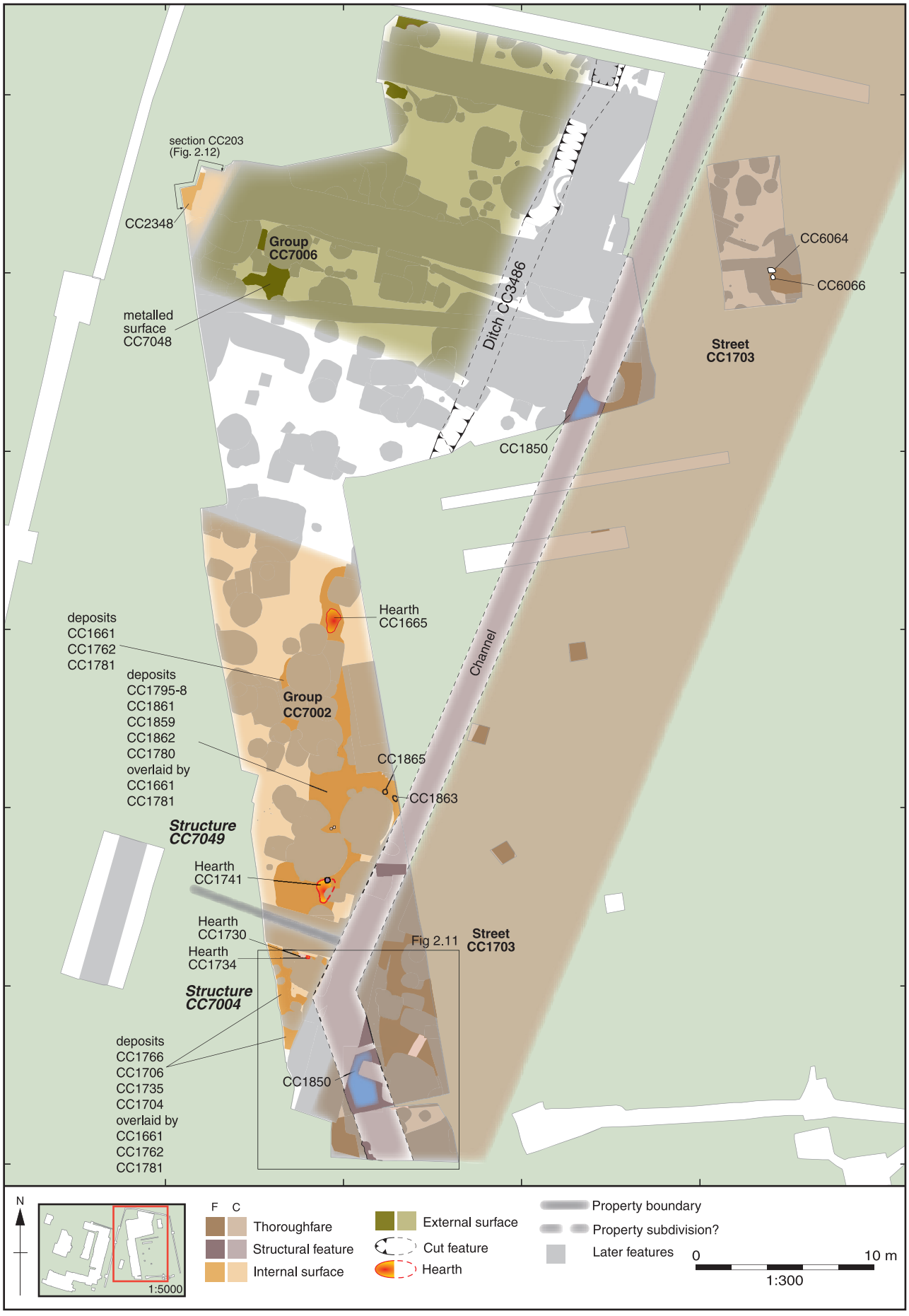
The north-west quarter of the town saw modest activity from the late Neronian/early Flavian period (Figs 2.9–10). Medieval truncation largely removed walls, foundations and floors of structures, but enough survives to suggest that buildings and yards existed here. These appear to have extended along the street (Street CC1703) leading to the north gate; dating evidence from the road tends towards the late Roman period, but an early Roman ditch (CC3486) aligned with the road may have been associated with it. A flint-lined channel (CC1850) probably carried water through the site.

Three early Roman structures have been tentatively identified. Structure CC7004 survived as hearths, surfaces and occupation layers confined in a small area at the south end of the Discovery Centre site (Fig. 2.10). A silty spread (CC1766), 0.64 m by 0.62 m and 40 mm deep, lay at the base of a sequence of occupation deposits above the prehistoric subsoil (CC1701). The deposit contained the burnt remains of plants and animals—including cattle, pig and probably sheep or goat, and cereal chaff and grain, mainly spelt, but also barley—that contributed to the dietary and other needs of early Roman inhabitants. The deposit was probably dumped to provide a base for a mortar surface (CC1706) laid above it. This was more extensive than CC1766, being 5.65 m long and 1.54 m wide, though it was just as shallow at 80 mm deep. Another part of the surface (CC1735) was seen nearby. This surface almost certainly served as a floor, since hearths were built on top of it. Burnt clay within occupation spread CC1704 provides ephemeral remains of one hearth, while a shallow scoop (CC1734) above deposit CC1735 and containing burnt clay, formed the more tangible remains of another (Fig. 2.11). The latter was replaced by a third hearth (CC1730) suggesting a degree of longevity in terms of occupation. No structural evidence was encountered. Pottery from mortar surface CC1706 gives a *terminus post quem* of AD 60–130 for the laying of the floor; vessel forms included two globular jars (CG) and a platter (JA), all in grey ware (ZM) (see Biddulph and Booth, Chapter 7). Pottery from CC1766 and CC1735 could only be dated broadly to the Roman period.

A number of features uncovered immediately north of Structure CC7004 may be part of a second structure (Structure CC7049) (Figs 2.10–11). A posthole (CC1863) and stakehole (CC1865) were cut into the prehistoric subsoil. That subsoil could account for the two possibly residual sherds of middle or late Iron Age pottery retrieved from the posthole's single clay-silt fill, although the feature may in fact belong to activity associated with the middle Iron Age settlement. A crushed chalk surface (CC1796–8) was more certain to form part of an early Roman structure. This survived as small patches, the largest measuring 0.45 by 0.42 m. Areas of burnt soil (CC1795/1861) may indicate the presence of hearths. A second phase of flooring is suggested by crushed chalk deposits (CC1859/62) that overlay the burnt soil. Occupation deposits were recorded in the form of sandy silts that sealed the surfaces and burnt areas. These contained small quantities of domestic debris, including amorphous pieces of fired clay, fuel-ash slag, and indeterminate animal bone fragments, but the pottery also recovered proved more useful in terms of dating. A South Gaulish samian Drag. 15/17 platter fragment from CC1780 (an occupation layer that sealed CC1796–8) is likely to have reached the town before AD 80, while a grey ware globular jar (CG, fabric ZMZ) and another South Gaulish samian sherd from below deposit CC1859, generally support a late 1st- or early 2nd-century date for deposition.

A surface or third structure was located at the north end of the Discovery Centre site (Fig. 2.10). Group CC7006 comprised a sequence of surface or occupation deposits. The lowest, a silty soil overlying the natural clay (CC2371), was sealed by redeposited natural (CC2370) followed by a small patch of chalk (CC2369), possibly the remains of a surface. This was followed by a redeposited silty clay natural (CC2193) that may have represented another surface, which was in turn covered by a loamy occupation deposit, CC2158. Pottery and vessel glass from these deposits placed the sequence in the second half of the 1st century AD. Soil CC2371 contained a grey ware globular jar (CH, ZM), a bead-rimmed jar in an oxidised fabric (CG, YM), and South Gaulish samian ware (TSA). Redeposited natural (CC2370) contained a butt-beaker in a fine oxidised ware (EA, fabric NFA) and a grey ware platter (JC, fabric ZM) and globular jar (CH, fabric ZFZ), giving a *terminus post quem* of *c* AD 55–70/80. A South Gaulish samian Drag. 18 platter and Alice Holt/Farnham-type bead-rimmed jars (CG)—supported by glass jug fragments—provide a date after AD 60 for levelling layer CC2193, while pottery from loam CC2158, including South Gaulish samian ware

*Fig. 2.10 (facing page) Plan of Street CC1703, channel CC1850 and Structures CC7002, CC7004, CC7006 and CC7049, Phase 2.1 (*c *AD 43–130/50)*


section CC203
(Fig. 2.12)
CC2348
Group
CC7006
metalled
surface
CC7048
Ditch CC3486
CC6064
CC6066
Street
CC1703
CC1850
deposits
CC1661
CC1762
CC1781
Hearth
CC1665
Channel
deposits
CC1795-8
CC1861
CC1859
CC1862
CC1780
overlaid by
CC1661
CC1781
Group
CC7002
CC1865
CC1863
Structure
CC7049
Hearth
CC1741
Hearth
CC1730
Hearth
CC1734
Fig 2.11
Street
CC1703
Structure
CC7004
deposits
CC1766
CC1706
CC1735
CC1704
overlaid by
CC1661
CC1762
CC1781
CC1850
N
1:5000
F C
Thoroughfare
Structural feature
Internal surface
External surface
Cut feature
Hearth
Property boundary
Property subdivision?
Later features
0
10 m
1:300

platters (forms 18 and 29), dated to *c* AD 75/90 or later. There were no structural elements apart from surfaces; a fragment of clay render may have derived from the wall of a building, but it was found in CC2370 and seems unlikely to have belonged to the structure that CC7006 may represent.

A pit (CC2348) was dug through the sequence (Figs 2.10 and 2.12). Its fills, comprising redeposited natural or chalk rubble, contained dating evidence that gave a late 1st-century or early 2nd-century date for the feature and the group as a whole. Another metalled surface (CC7048) lay directly over the natural clay (Fig. 2.10). It was composed of tightly packed rounded pebbles supporting a thin mortar-like surface. The lack of subsoil below suggests that it may have been set originally within a terrace or holloway, all trace of which was truncated by modern levelling. No dating evidence was recovered.

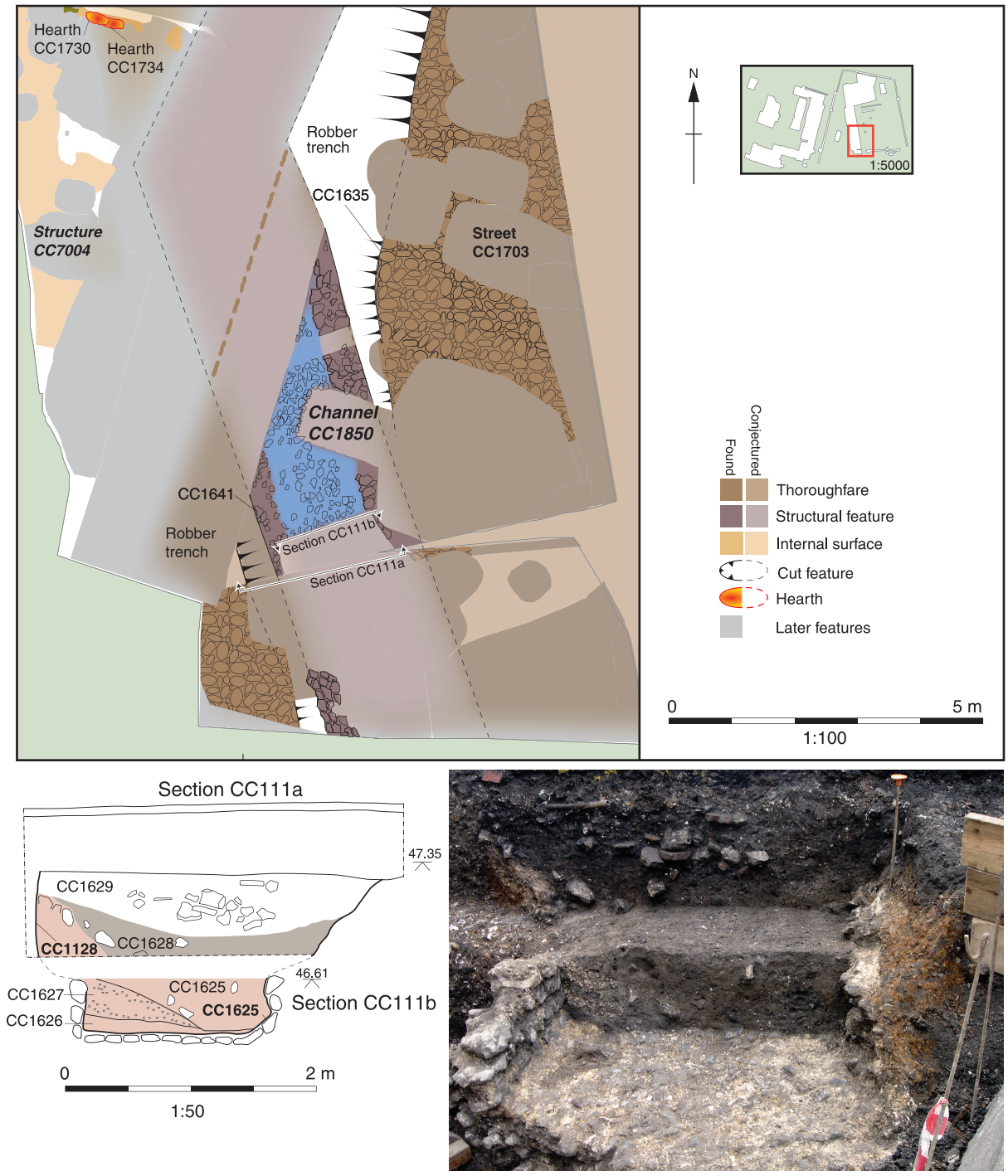


Fig. 2.11 Detailed plan of Street CC1703 and channel CC1850, Phase 2.1

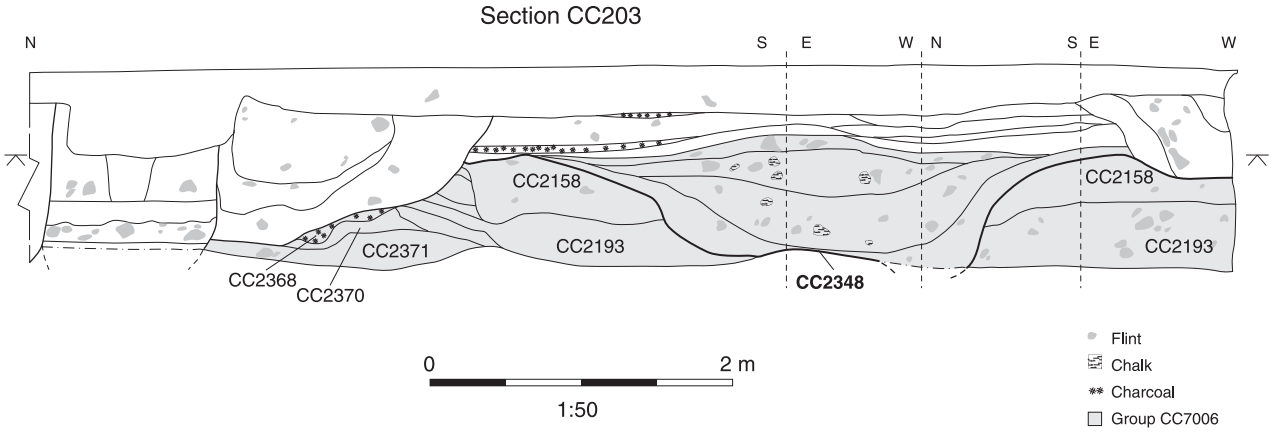


Fig. 2.12 Section showing deposits and features associated with Group CC7006 (surface or occupation deposits), Phase 2.1

A structure or surface (Group CC7002)—it is not clear whether it represented external or internal space—was uncovered towards the southern end of the excavation area (Fig. 2.10). This survived in patches, but stratigraphic relationships were clear enough to indicate that the surface overlay parts of Structures CC7004 and CC7049 and therefore appeared to be a later feature. Two areas of chalk and mortar cobbling were recorded at the lowest part of the sequence of deposits. The largest, 0.12 m thick and extending some 3.8 m by 3 m, lay above a hearth belonging to Structure CC7004. Redeposited natural or silty occupation soil sealed the cobbling, and was subsequently covered by more chalk surfacing or clay silt layers representing repairs or levelling. Dating evidence places the earliest phases of this surface close to the period in which Structures CC7004 and CC7049 were occupied. Pottery from the first phase of the surface (CC1661) included a fine grey ware butt-beaker (EA, fabric ZF) and provides a *terminus post quem* for laying of the surface of *c* AD 55–70. A silty layer (CC1762) trampled into surface Group CC7002 contained a fragment of a South Gaulish samian Drag. 29 bowl that dated to *c* AD 70–85. This early Flavian chronology overlaps with the dating produced by the underlying structures, suggesting that the structures were occupied for a short time only, perhaps little more than ten years, or that they briefly continued in use in some form when the surface was laid. Fire-reddened sandy silt (CC1781) later in the stratigraphic sequence and dated by pottery to AD 70–130 suggests industrial activity when viewed with the relatively large quantities of iron slag, hearth fragments, smithing hearth bottom fragments and cinders recovered from layer CC1762. That said, not all of this, or indeed any of it, need belong to the hearth, since a mixed assemblage of domestic material, including pottery, animal bones (some with butchery marks), vessel glass, and charred plant remains, was found with the industrial evidence, and must have been dumped there, possibly being derived from a number of households and structures. Other hearths were recorded in this part of the site. Hearth CC1665 gave an archaeomagnetic date of AD 30–120. An area of fire-reddened soil (CC1741) further south probably represented another hearth.

The surfaces were supplemented by a number of postholes and stakeholes. These formed no coherent pattern, but nevertheless must have contributed to buildings. The features were invariably cut into the natural deposits and so can be placed early in the stratigraphic sequence.

A metalled surface (Street CC1703) represented the continuation of a street identified during previous excavations to the south of the site (Fig. 2.11; Plates 2.3 and 2.4). The surfaces uncovered at the north and south ends of the Discovery Centre excavations, and during observations of new foundation pads for the refurbished centre, were found to match the NE-SW alignment of the previously-recorded elements exactly. The first phase of metalling comprised a layer (CC1724) of compacted flint and rounded pebbles terraced into the eastern-facing slope (Fig. 2.11 Section CC117). It was reasonably level—the surface was recorded at a height of 46.6 m aOD near its northern end and 47.13 m aOD at the south. The most extensive part of the surface was 2 m wide, but, based on remnants from its east and west sides, the street's full width approached 8 m. Surfaces were on average 90 mm thick. The street was carefully made; an area of metalling at the south end of the site had a foundation of mortar and small flints and was cambered on its western edge. The earliest phases cannot be dated with certainty—no useful dating evidence was recovered from the earliest surfaces—but its long stratigraphic sequence and its relationship with ditch CC3486 (see below) suggest that it was laid during the later 1st century AD. The street did not replace its precursor, Iron Age Holloway CC3049 10 m to the west, but was laid mainly onto the prehistoric subsoil (CC1701) or natural clay, while another remnant sealed early Roman postholes (CC6064 and CC6066; see Fig. 2.10). The Iron Age trackway and

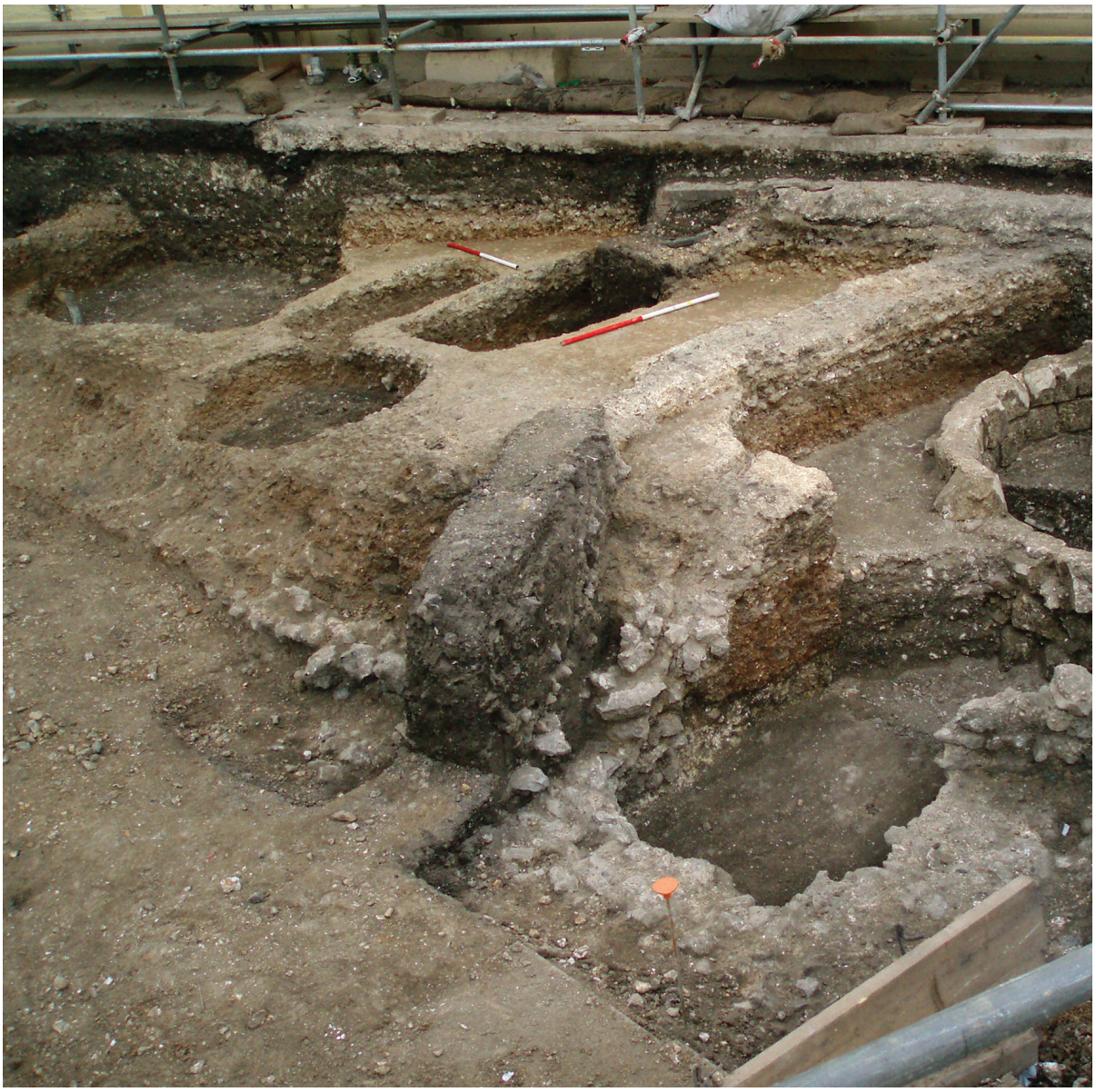


Plate 2.3 Street surface CC1703 in background (marked by ranging poles) and channel CC1850 in foreground, with retained baulk of robber-cut fill in between, looking east

the Roman street more or less shared orientation, though the former diverged slightly from the alignment to meet the north-east entrance (later the Roman north gate) of the Iron Age enclosure.

A channel (Channel CC1850) bordered the western edge of the street (Fig. 2.11 Sections CC111a–b; Plate 2.3). The channel was fragmentary, as much of the masonry had been robbed. It was seen, however, in three segments which indicates a total length of at least 35 m along the street. The channel comprised a steep-sided construction cut 2.5 m wide that was dug through the natural deposits. The sides of the cut were faced with at least three courses of roughly-worked flint nodules bonded by a hard buff lime mortar, which were best preserved at the southern part of the channel (Fig. 2.11, Section CC111b). The flint facing created a

Plate 2.4 Section through multiple surfaces of Street CC1703, overlying buried soil and natural gravel, looking north-east

straight-sided slot measuring 1.2 m wide and 0.5 m deep, also lined with flint nodules. Heights obtained along the base of the channel suggest a very gentle fall from north (on average 46.28 m OD) to south (46.17 m aOD). The height of the channel sides was, on excavation, found to be slightly lower than the street surface. The channel, extending for about 10 m along a NE-SW direction, turned eastwards to cut across the street. It is uncertain precisely how movement was maintained along the street at this point, but if it were covered then brick and mortar were used (see Poole and Shaffrey, Chapter 7) to form a culvert. Dating evidence was sparse, but overall an early or middle Roman date is favoured. Its relationship with the road and a coin from the base of channel segment CC1667 points to 1st- or 2nd-century AD construction. An alternative view is that the channel was a much later construction—3rd or 4th century—and that it cut a street that had long ceased to be maintained. In this scenario, the channel was open or provided with a relatively makeshift covering. On balance, though, an earlier chronology is preferred.

The prevailing orientation was preserved in a ditch that flanked the road *c* 6.2 m to the west. The ditch (CC3486), cut into the natural soil, was recorded at the northern end of the Discovery Centre site (Fig. 2.10). It was V-shaped and measured up to 1.5 m wide and 0.70 m deep. The feature was traced for some 24 m from the northern part of the site, but was discontinuous, having been severely truncated by later activity. The ditch generally contained two fills along its length, usually sandy or clay silt but occasionally including chalky material. Dating the feature is a little problematic in that it bordered the western edge of the prehistoric trackway and would appear to be associated with it. However, all pottery recovered from its fills suggests that the ditch was filled during the last third of the 1st century AD. Four grey ware platters recovered from the lower fill of segment CC3270 point to a date after AD 70 for initial deposition. A larger assemblage from the upper, charcoal-rich, fill included a *terra nigra* carinated bowl, grey ware bead-rimmed jars and a North Gaulish white ware butt-beaker. Early Roman pottery was also recovered from an upper fill of segment CC3458. If not established before AD 43, the ditch was certainly dug within a matter of years after the conquest, possibly marking out the road's alignment before it was surfaced to serve as a drainage ditch.

Phase 2.2 (*c* AD 130/50–270): Mid Roman domestic and industrial occupation

Occupation continued into the middle Roman period and expanded west (Fig. 2.13). The collection of pits and postholes in the Discovery Centre area assigned to this phase give a rather fragmented picture of activity here, but nevertheless relate to structures and domestic or industrial occupation.

Four pits were excavated, which were variable in size, but generally contained silty clay fills that occasionally included domestic material. Pit CC1688, 1.1 m wide and 1.2 m deep, contained pottery, prismatic bottle glass, and animal bone fragments from a range of species. Pottery from the lower of the two fills included pieces from a bead-rimmed dish, poppyhead beaker and cooking-pot jar, all in grey wares, and a south Gaulish amphora that dated deposition to the mid 2nd century. Another pit (CC3347), cut into earlier ditch CC3486 (see above), was also filled with domestic material, and, at the bottom, a rather green silty fill that suggested an initial cesspit function. It was 1.3 m by 1.2 m across and 0.5 m deep and contained animal bone fragments and pottery in its upper fills. The ceramic material gives a 2nd-century date for filling; pottery from the upper fill suggests that the pit continued to receive material in the final quarter of that century.

More coherent evidence was seen in the Northgate House area (Fig. 2.13). A stone structure (Structure NH8522), terraced into the slope, was located in the north-eastern corner of the excavation area (Fig. 2.14). The building lay mainly below the impact level of the Northgate House development and was only partially exposed during fieldwork. The outline was fragmentary, but elements of its southern and possibly western sides were recorded. The southern wall was defined by a mortar and chalk footing (NH2641), at least 3 m long (it extended beyond the excavation area) and 0.5 m wide. A flint and mortar footing (NH7548) almost 1 m long and 0.5 m wide may have formed the building's western side. A 1 m square structure (NH7647) of unbonded flint and chalk rubble within the putative structure may have been a post-pad or similar, or part of an internal wall. Floor surfaces were not reached, although the remains of a yellow-grey sand and mortar floor surface (NH2664) in the southern part of the building, which survived higher up in the sequence, were recorded.

Plate 2.5 Burnt layer from Structure NH8522 showing in situ *wall plaster, Phase 2.2*

Fig. 2.13 Plan of middle Roman features, Phase 2.2 (c AD 130/50–270)

Given its limited excavation, there was little dating evidence from the structure itself. A grey ware fragment from footing NH2641 dated after AD 100, while pottery from a silt layer below NH7647 dated from the 3rd century. The structure was destroyed by fire, preserving fragments of timbers from the superstructure (Fig. 2.15; Plates 2.5-6). Painted plaster recorded in between and over the burnt timbers indicates that the fragments belonged to a section of a wall. The surviving elements comprised three or four vertical members spaced about 0.2 m apart. Diagonal timbers—four were recorded—were positioned at an angle of 45° to the vertical timbers and appeared to form a lattice, though may have served as braces. At least one diagonal timber was connected to a vertical by means of a clenched iron nail and apparently an oblique halving. More studs were seen further along the diagonals. Structural nails were collected from other destruction deposits and it is likely that nails were used throughout to fasten the timbers. Regularly-spaced horizontal rows of charcoal fragments may record rods woven between the larger uprights. Daub collected amongst the burnt wood was almost certainly used to infill the wall. Accompanying plaster fragments indicate that the

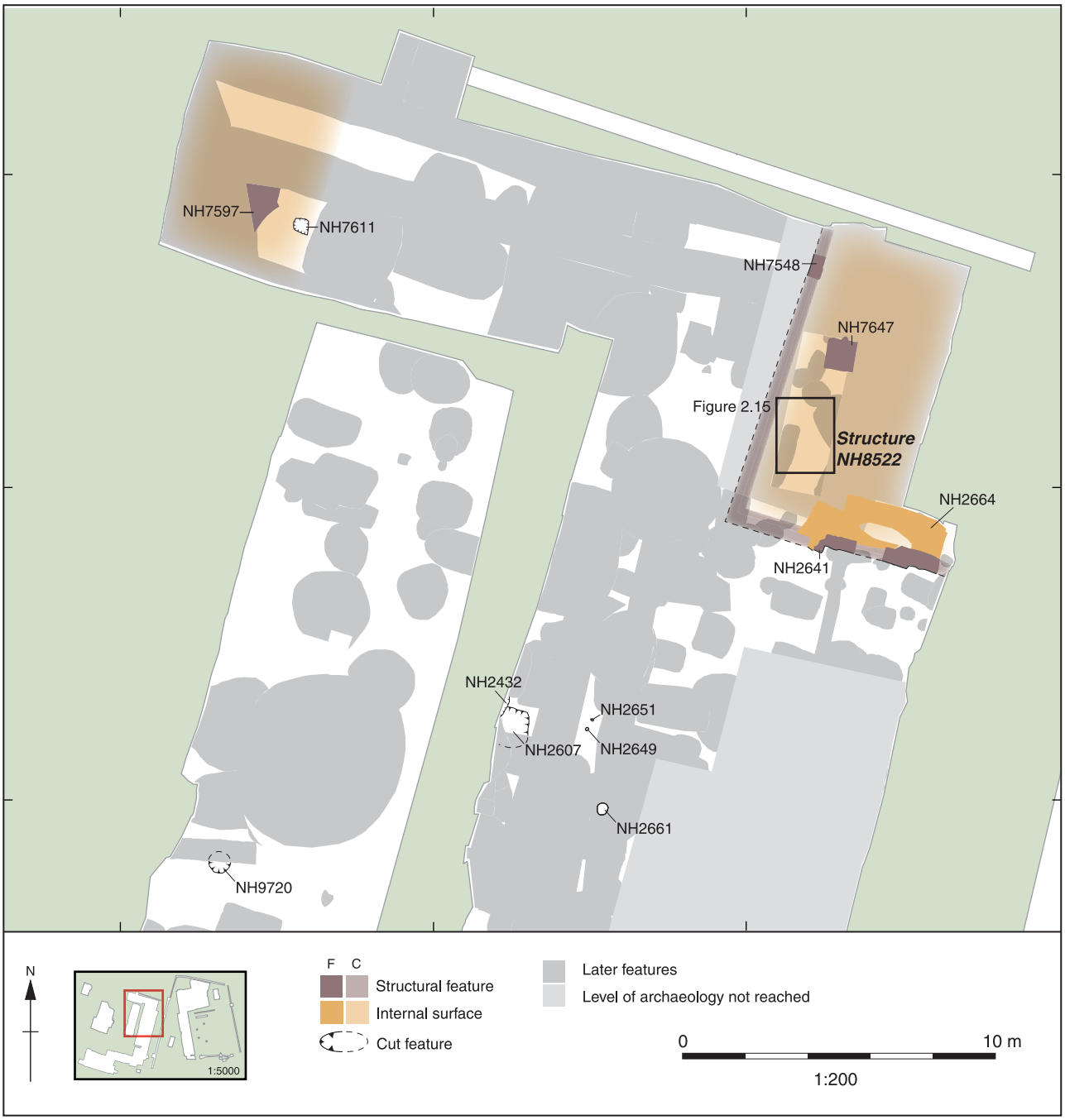


Fig. 2.14 Plan of Structure NH8522 and nearby features, Phase 2.2

Plate 2.6 Burnt timbers from Structure NH8522, Phase 2.2, looking west

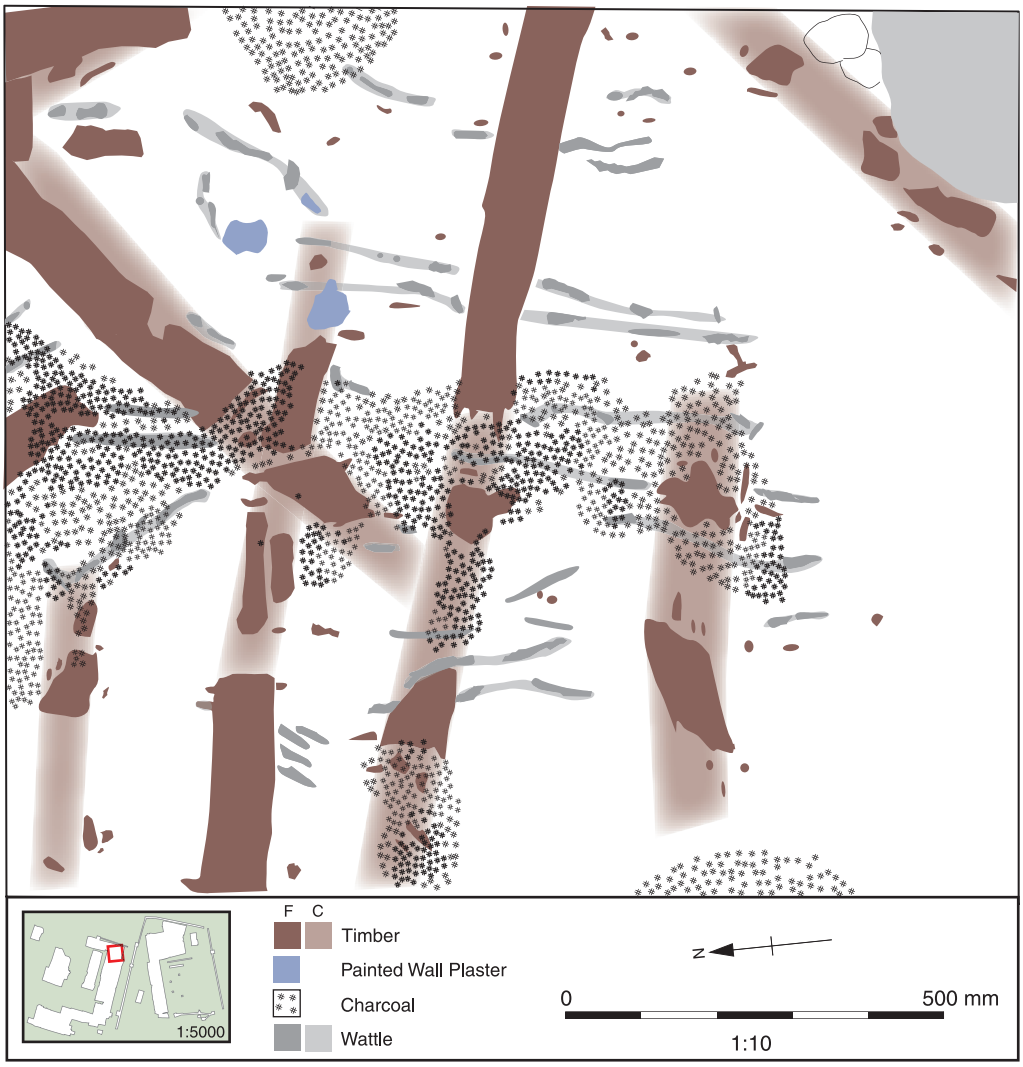


Fig. 2.15 Plan of Structure NH8522: detail of collapsed burnt timbers, Phase 2.2

wall was plastered and painted; the range of colours recorded points to a scheme incorporating orange- and red-brown and grey panels bordered by light grey stripes. Layers of ash, charcoal and building material—probably representing the remains of the collapsed structure and deliberate dumps—contained pottery dated after AD 250. Given the dating evidence, occupation was probably confined to the 3rd century, perhaps spanning little more than 50 years.

Another trace of a wall, an unmortared flint foundation, 1.4 m wide and 0.25 m deep (NH7597), was detected 18 m west of Structure NH8522 (Fig. 2.14). No dating evidence was retrieved, but like Structure NH8522, it was sealed by a dump that contained pottery, including grog-tempered ware (fabric SG) and a bag-beaker with scale decoration (Fulford 1975a, 58), with a date range of *c* AD 270–330. A number of pits, postholes and stakeholes were located to the south and west of Structure NH8522, although given the level of truncation it is impossible to be certain about what they represented. Little material was recovered, but pit NH2607 and posthole NH9720 were cut by Phase 2.3 pits (Fig. 2.14). Feature NH7611, possibly a posthole or pit and next to wall NH7597, contained pottery—including a fragment from a Central Gaulish samian cup—consistent with a 2nd-century date.

A neonate burial (NH6175) was recorded in the extreme south-west of the excavated area (see Fig. 2.13). A radiocarbon determination obtained from the skeleton gave a 1st- to 2nd-century AD date (cal AD 30–210; OxA-16713). Shallow pit NH6193, just to the south of the burial, can also be assigned to this phase on the basis of pottery recovered from it. Hearth NH5188 offers a further indication of Phase 2.2 activity in this area. The hearth was uncovered as a spread of burnt soil that was cut by Phase 2.3 postholes (NH5228, NH5230, NH5232 and NH5236) that formed part of Structure NH8520 (see below). Archaeomagnetic dating from NH5188 gave a date of 96 BC–AD 130 (WOC).

Phase 2.3 (*c* AD 270–350/75): Late Roman structures and a street

The late Roman period saw increased development of the site as new buildings were erected, especially in the Northgate House site (Fig. 2.16). Here, development extended along a new street, which was laid out and metalled in this phase (Street NH8511; Figs 2.16 and 2.17). Too little of the metalling survived to confirm the street's orientation, but we cannot assume that it extended NW-SE to meet Street CC1703 at right angles, not least because it appears to have replaced an older (and potentially irregularly-coursed) holloway. Instead of the expected dome-like profile (*agger*), allowing surface water to drain to the sides, the street surface gently sloped downwards so that its sides were higher than its centre (Fig. 2.18; Plate 2.7). The street's width approached 6 m, while the metalling—well-compacted flint gravel in a clay matrix—was on average 80 mm thick. The gravel surface was laid after AD 300. It sealed Iron Age gully NH1519 (Fig. 2.18), from which intrusive 2nd- to 4th-century pottery was collected. Silty clay deposits (NH1440 and 1486), probably dumped as levelling and sealed by the metalling, contained 4th-century pottery, including a grey ware, funnel-necked, globular beaker (Fulford 1975a, 89, 92) and black-burnished cooking bowls and jars (types CK and HB, fabric ZMA). During the course of its use, the street surface was trampled and disturbed, causing deposits of silt and gravel (Group NH8512 comprising NH1415, NH1377, NH1371 and NH1263) to accumulate (Fig. 2.18). This sequence was covered with a surface of relatively coarse flint nodules and occasional rammed chalk 80 mm thick (Street NH8513) as the street was re-metalled (Figs 2.17B and 2.18). The surface was narrower than the first; a flat-bottomed gully (NH1431) that cut through the earlier metalling defined the northern edge of the second phase and probably served as a drain (shown in Fig. 2.18). Like Group NH8512, trampled deposits and silts (Group NH8515, comprising NH1269 and NH1250), on average 90 mm thick, accumulated above the later surface. Coins and pottery were collected from these layers, but overall deposition could be dated no more precisely than 4th century.

Buildings were erected on both sides of the street. Structure NH8518 fronted on to the street's north side during its first phase (Fig. 2.17A). Little of the building survived, preserved only as a sequence of floors and a number of possibly related postholes. A layer of mortar (NH1539), containing charred cereal remains, and animal bone fragments, was first in sequence and levelled the area ready for construction. Another mortar deposit (NH1175), 70 mm thick, was laid above this—the two separated by a thin deposit of silty clay—though the loose nature of the mortar suggested that this was a foundation for a floor, rather than the floor itself. Pottery from the silty clay layer included grog-tempered ware (fabric SG) dated from AD 270 onwards; a larger assemblage from the overlying mortar was of similar date. Postholes, which cut into the mortar, held timbers that presumably formed part of the structure; the postholes were relatively wide at 0.44 m, but shallow at 0.11 m. It is impossible to determine quite how they were incorporated into the building. Postholes NH1510 and NH1464 were surrounded by mortar NH1175, suggesting that they marked an internal division. Further excavation revealed the small grave of an infant (NH1527) cut into the mortar layer. In common with many neonate burials (Philpott 1991, 97–102), the burial was made within the building and possibly underneath the floorboards. Fragments of pottery deposited with the grave's backfill dated to the 3rd or 4th centuries.

Timber Structure NH8518 was replaced by masonry Structure NH8517 (Fig. 2.17B; Plate 2.8). The building was defined by two walls made of unbonded flint up to 0.4 m wide and surviving to a

Fig. 2.16 Plan of late Roman features, Phase 2.3 (c AD 270–350/75)

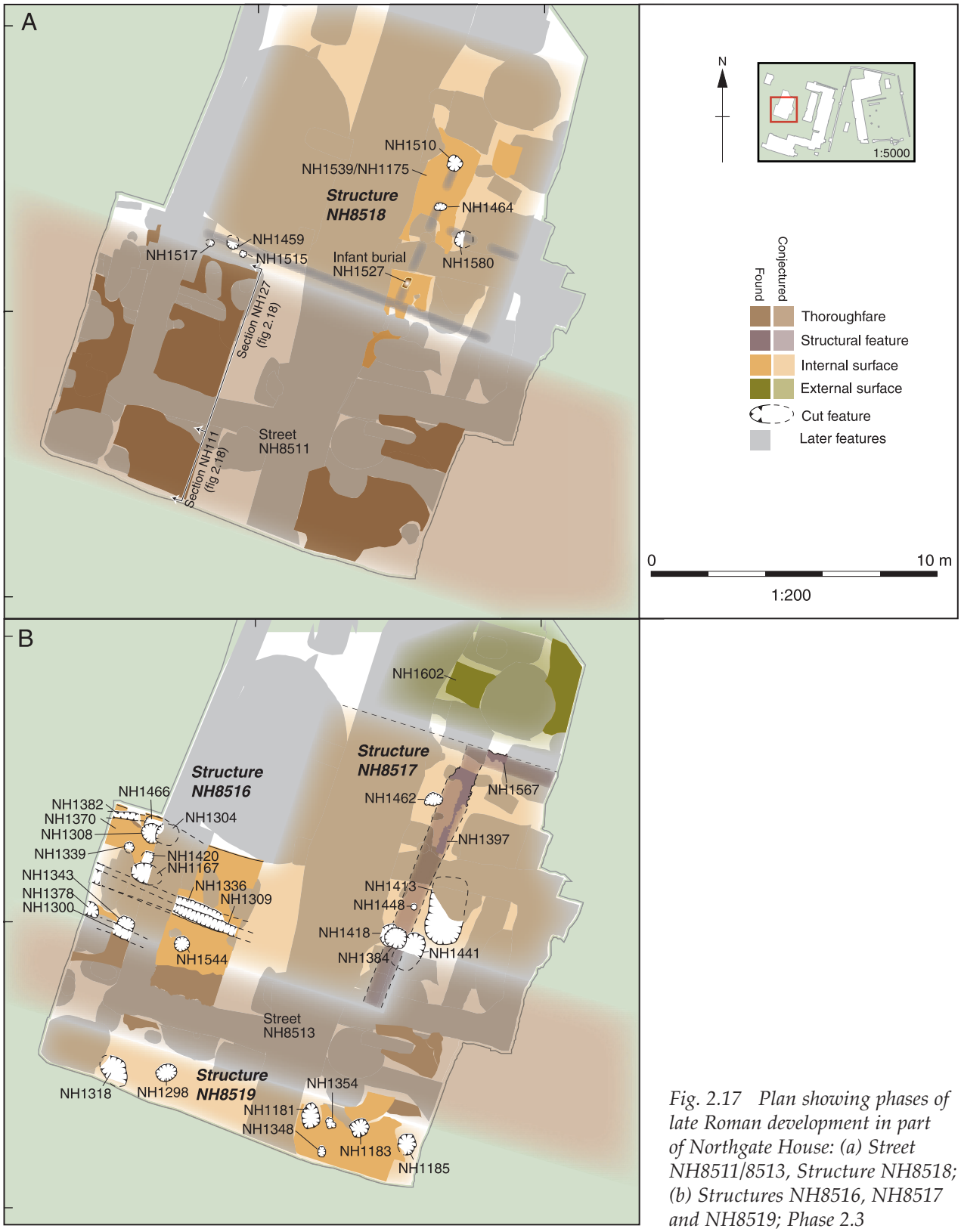


Fig. 2.17 Plan showing phases of late Roman development in part of Northgate House: (a) Street NH8511/8513, Structure NH8518; (b) Structures NH8516, NH8517 and NH8519; Phase 2.3

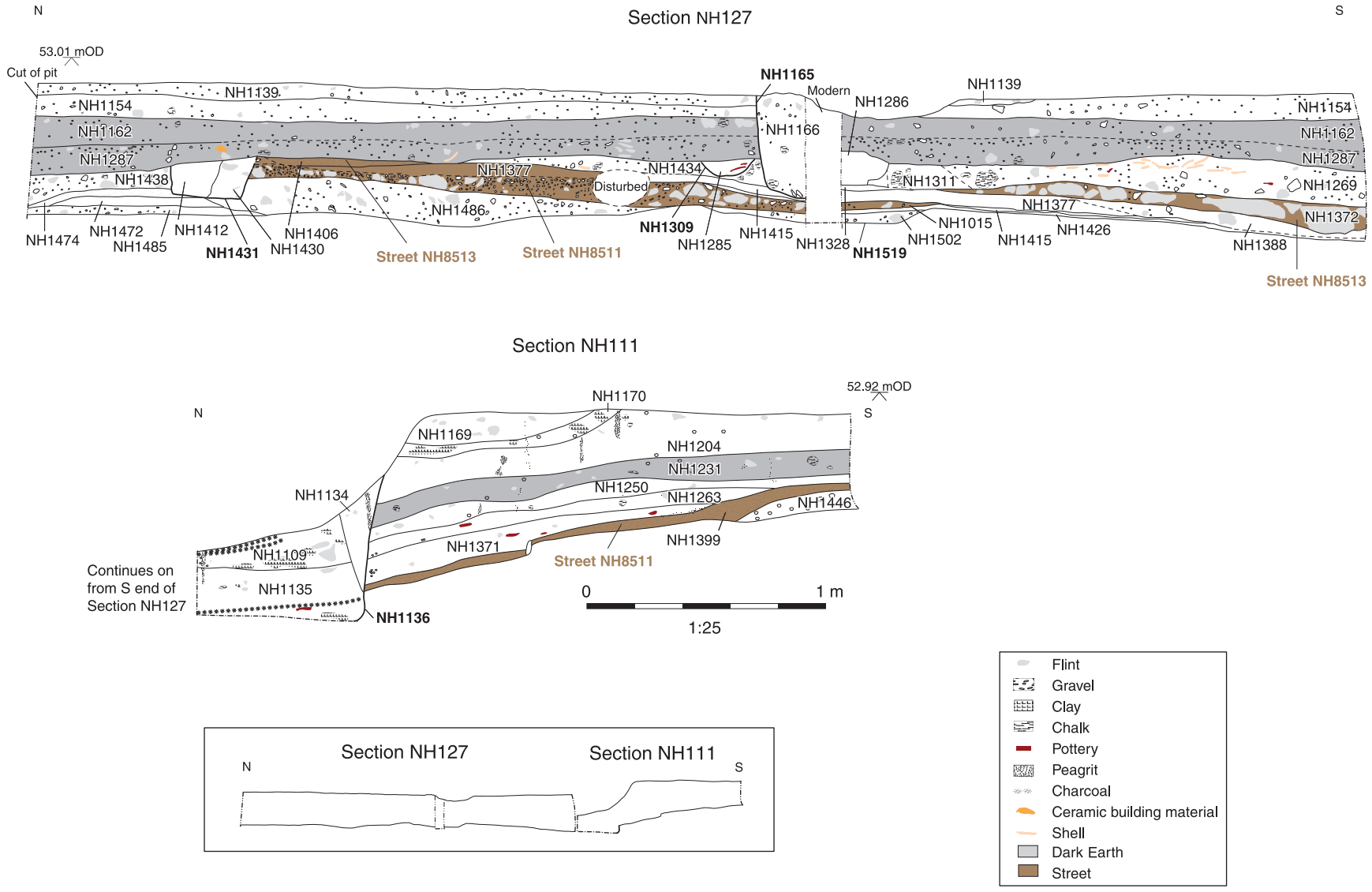


Fig. 2.18 Sections through Street NH8511/8513, Phase 2.3

Plate 2.7 Street surface NH8511, Phase 2.3, looking north-east

Plate 2.8 Structure NH8517, wall NH1397, Phase 2.3, looking east

height of 0.15 m (NH1397 and NH1567). The extent of this structure is unclear, but a shallow pit or posthole (NH1441) filled with large flint nodules, possibly packing for a post, could represent the position of its south side or equally mark the end of the north side of Structure NH8516 (see below). An extensive spread of gravel (NH1602) to the north of NH8517/8 was probably an external yard. Soil accumulating on the surface contained grog-tempered pottery (fabric SG) dated to AD 270–400.

The re-metalling of the street in the 4th century saw a change to the appearance of the street frontage as Structure NH8516 was erected along its north side (Fig. 2.17B). The post-built structure was cut into a deposit of silty clay that accumulated over the remains of the abandoned Structure NH8517/8; pottery from the deposit—some 60 sherds that included New Forest colour-coated ware, grog-tempered ware and black-burnished ware (fabrics TR, SG and ZMA respectively)—dated from AD 270 onwards. The south side of NH8516 was defined by a row of large postholes (NH1378, NH1343 and NH1544), which measured on average 0.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep. There were a number of postholes to the north of these. The outermost feature, NH1466, seems most likely to have held an external post given its size—0.7 m wide and 0.7 m deep. Internal features were restricted to two small postholes (NH1339 and NH1420), which may have marked an internal division, and the remains of a chalk surface (NH1370) up to 1 m thick, which partially overlaid the second-phase street metalling. Fired clay collected from the chalk floor was part of an oven, though whether it belonged to the building is in some doubt since it was found with long-discarded pottery and animal bone fragments. Some repair or rebuilding work was carried out some time after initial construction. A slot for a baseplate (NH1382) located along the north side of the building was dug into the edge of surface NH1370, while the postholes were cut by other postholes (NH1308, NH1304, NH1167), suggesting that the posts had been replaced. This second phase of construction cannot be dated precisely, as pottery from the later features was broadly dated to the late Roman period only. An east-west aligned shallow gully (NH1300), which cut the edge of a posthole along the southern side of the building and so appeared to post-date the building, may have served as a street-side drain. More drainage was provided by gully NH1336 (re-cut by NH1309), which extended through the centre of the now presumably abandoned structure (Fig. 2.17B). A silty clay layer (NH1287; Fig. 2.18) subsequently accumulated over the remains of the building and the drainage gullies. Pottery recovered from it suggested that this episode occurred before the end of the Roman period.

The south side of the street also saw development. Postholes revealed the position of timber-built Structure NH8519 that encroached on to the second phase of street metalling, or rather the silty deposits that had accumulated above it (Fig. 2.17B). The building's north side was defined by five large postholes (NH1318, NH1298, NH1181, NH1183, NH1185) averaging 0.77 m wide by 0.46 m deep and giving the structure a length of over 10 m. These cut into a spread of chalk and flint nodules that may represent part of the street surface. All the postholes were packed with chalk and flint nodules that must have held substantial, load-bearing posts. Two other postholes (NH1354 and NH1348), slighter at 0.36 wide by 0.25 m, projected at right angles from the alignment of the larger postholes and appeared to form an internal division, creating at least two rooms. No surfaces or floors were recorded. Dating evidence from the postholes confirmed a late Roman date offered by the stratigraphy. The structure was probably abandoned by the mid–late 4th century; the latest coin (AE4) from the thick deposits of Dark Earth covering the structure dated to AD 350–364.

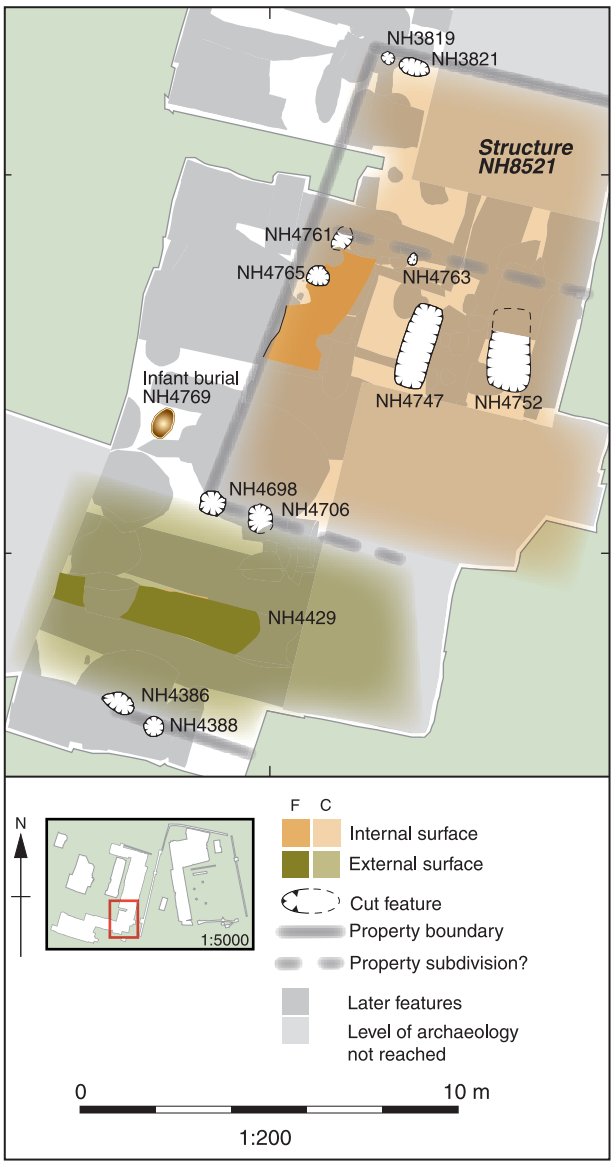


Fig. 2.19 Plan of Structure NH8521, Phase 2.3

If assumed to follow a NW-SE alignment to connect with Street CC1703 at right angles, then Street NH8511/8513 would have met Structure NH8521, which stood across it and was located close to the edge of a shallow terrace to the east (Figs 2.16 and 2.19). This possible structure was defined by two parallel rows of postholes. An alternative interpretation is that the rows represent successive phases of fence line, although, with a mean diameter of 0.6 m and depth of 0.3 m, the postholes were sufficiently substantial to serve a structural function. Nevertheless, the two rows are difficult to reconstruct as a building. Postholes NH3819/3821 and NH4386 may have marked the known limits of the west side of a structure, while postholes NH4763, NH4706 and NH4388 formed east-west alignments marking internal divisions, which continued into the area not investigated below Saxon levels. However, if a chalk, flint and gravel surface (NH4429) separating postholes NH4698 and NH4386 was external, then postholes NH4386 and NH4388 may define the edge of a second building to the south of Structure NH8521. In any case, pits NH4747 and NH4752 were internal features. Quite how NH4747 would have been incorporated into the predominantly timber structure is uncertain; the feature measured 2.2 m long by 0.61 m wide and 0.21 m deep and contained a hard chalk rubble and mortar fill. A patch of mortar seen within the building may be the remains of a floor. Pottery, for example grog-tempered ware recovered from pit NH4747, points to a date for deposition after AD 270. Occupation after AD 300 is suggested by an AE2 coin of Constantius or Constantine dated AD 300–307, which was found in a dark silty clay soil (NH4754) into which pit 4752 was cut, while loam soil (NH4742) that accumulated above the mortar floor produced New Forest colour-coated ware (fabric TR) and grog-tempered ware (fabric SG) dated more broadly to the 4th century. A grave containing a neonatal burial (NH4769) that was uncovered to the west of the north-south posthole rows may have been associated with the building, though was presumably an external feature. Late Roman pottery was recovered from its backfill.

The location of Structures NH8519 and NH8521 have implications for the dating and use of Street NH8511/8513. Both phases of street metalling can be placed with the first half of the 4th century, but the route that the street followed must have been earlier if a holloway preceded it. Structure NH8516 was contemporary with the second phase of metalled road, as NH8517 may also have been. However, by the time Structures NH8519 and NH8521 were erected, they encroached onto the

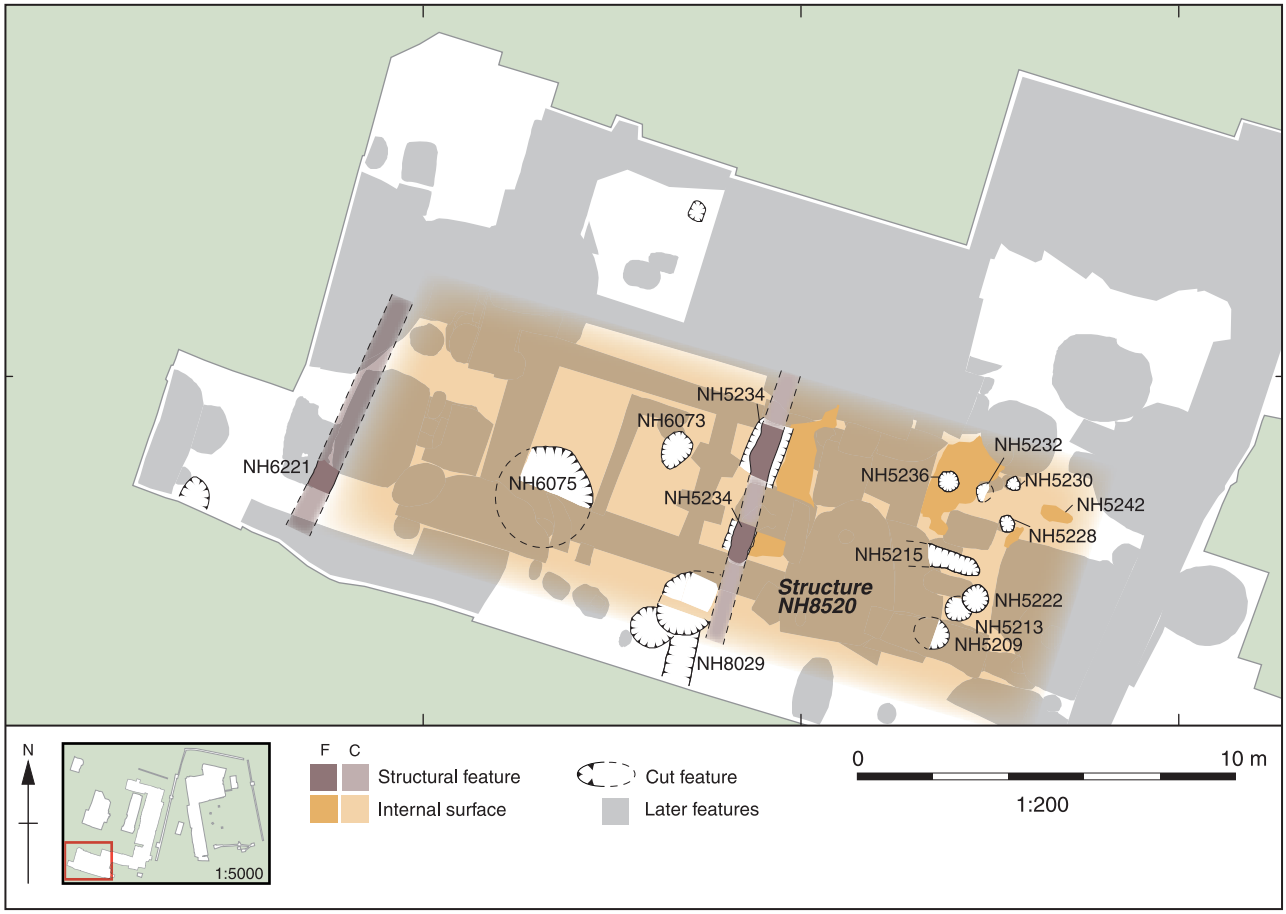


Fig. 2.20 Plan of Structure NH8520, Phase 2.3

street, or blocked its course, suggesting that the street had ceased to be used and maintained by the middle of the 4th century.

Structure NH8520 was located some 30 m south of the street (Figs 2.16 and 2.20). It was stone-built, though a number of postholes suggests that it had timber elements. Masonry NH5234 was the best-surviving wall. It marked the edge of a shallow terrace and was set within a trench 0.6 m wide by 0.1 m deep and comprised a single course, 0.3 m deep, of chalk and flint rubble. The NE-SW aligned wall, cut by later features, extended for a length of 3.8 m. Gully NH8029, 0.8 m wide by 0.08 m deep, was on the same alignment and may have been a wall trench, although no masonry was recovered. The remains of another wall (NH6221) were recorded 10 m further west. The clay-bonded flint foundation measured up to 0.75 m wide and 0.2 m deep and was set within a marginally larger wall slot.

A group of pits and postholes was uncovered some 5 m east of wall NH5234. Postholes NH5228, NH5230, NH5232 and NH5236 averaged 0.46 m in diameter by 0.2 m wide; three of them were aligned reasonably well, perhaps contributing to the side of a structure with the fourth potentially forming a corner. However, this is somewhat speculative given the potential loss of associated features from later truncation and disturbance. An east-west aligned gully (NH5215) immediately south of the postholes was similarly difficult to place, although it is possible that it carried a wall. Pits NH5213, NH5209 and NH5222, south of the gully, were small, on average 0.81 m in diameter and 0.44 m deep, though they had probably been truncated.

A mortar surface (NH5242) up to 0.4 m thick, laid above a gravel make-up deposit 0.05 m thick, was recorded at the east end of the structure, cut by the postholes. A rich assemblage of finds was recovered from the floor, including five weaving tablets. Pottery collected from walls NH5234 and NH6221 and the floor deposits, including grog-tempered ware, New Forest colour-coated ware and a parchment ware bowl (fabrics SG, TR and UMP respec-

Fig. 2.21 Plan of Pit Group NH8524 and nearby features, Phase 2.3

tively), gives a late Roman date for construction. Fourth-century occupation is suggested by three of the pits (if associated with the use of the building), which were filled after AD 300. The structure was abandoned after AD 350; Dark Earth sealing the entire structure contained pottery, including imported 'marbled' ware (*céramique à l'éponge*) and an Oxford colour-coated ware stamped carinated bowl, that dated to the second half of the 4th century.

An area to the north-east of Structures NH8517 and NH8518 was reserved for communal activities. Pits were dug to receive household rubbish, a probable well provided water, and a surface defined a yard (NH8524; Figs 2.16 and 2.21). The pits measured on average 1.7 m in diameter and at least 1.3 m deep (not all pits were fully excavated). Some were cesspits (for example NH2299, NH2358, NH2494), containing multiple fills of green-grey silt sealed by charcoal from hearths, but the features were also rich in domestic rubbish, particularly pottery and animal bone. Well NH9542 was 2.05 m in diameter and over 1.8 m deep. Identification of the feature was uncertain as its base and the water-table were not reached, but the shaft was lined with bonded chalk and flint rubble behind a facing of chalk-blocks, which strongly suggests an open well. The lower fill of the feature was a silty clay with chalk and flint derived from the lining. The upper fill was similar to the Dark Earth that sealed the feature.

The yard surface (NH8524), 0.29 m thick, comprised a flint deposit over gravel bedding. Dating evidence places the group as a whole into the late Roman period, and some features more precisely to the second or third quarter of the 4th century. Pottery (187 sherds) from the bottom fill and a coin (AE3) from the top fill suggested that pit NH2001 filled between the second and third quarters of the 4th century or later. The latest coin (an AE4 of Constans or Constantius) in the top fill of pit NH2299 dated to AD 335–341, while pottery from an upper fill of pit NH2358 dated from the mid 4th century.

At the Discovery Centre site there was development along Street CC1703 during the late Roman period (Fig. 2.16). Structure CC7003 at the north end of the site was a timber building set at right angles to the street (Fig. 2.22; Plates 2.9 and 10). Its southern side was defined by a row of large post-pads. The features measured on average 1.3 m in diameter and 0.4 m deep and some were filled at their bases with thick deposits of chalk on which the undoubtedly substantial posts stood (the depth of the features varied quite considerably, with some being defined mainly by the chalk layer). Once the posts had been erected, the deeper postholes were packed with more chalk. Just one posthole was recorded on the building's north side (CC3279). Others, presumably little more than hard pads on top of the ground surface, were completely lost to later truncation. Like those on the south side, posthole CC3279 was large, having a diameter of 1.45 m and depth of 0.2 m. It was similarly filled with a hard chalk pad. The area marked out by the postholes measured some 20 m long by 7 m wide. It may have represented the nave of an aisled building, with the roof extending beyond the posts. However, there is no hint of the wall slots or further postholes required for the external walls, even along the south side where the later truncation was less severe, and so the postholes appear to define the outline of the structure. Posthole CC3318 cut pit CC3330, which contained a large pottery assemblage dated to the final quarter of the 3rd century, while fragments of a grey ware globular beaker recovered from the post-pad of posthole CC2030 support a date after AD 270 for construction. Occupation was sufficiently prolonged for the building to require repairs; posthole CC3316 cut CC3318 perhaps as the original post was reset or replaced. Pits (eg CC7047) were located around the structure and may have been associated with it, probably serving as rubbish pits; all contained relatively large quantities of pottery, animal bone, shell, and in one case iron nails. The pottery suggested that one pit had filled by *c* AD 380. The others did not begin to receive material until the 4th century and may have been open up to that date.

Groups of stakeholes beneath post-pads CC3279 and CC3432 at the eastern end of the building seem unusual. Three rows orientated NW-SE were seen below the former, while two parallel rows orientated NE-SW were recorded below the latter. If projected, the rows would have met at 90°. The alignments were not shown to continue beyond the limits of the structure, nor were they associated with other postholes. The stakes below CC3279 (Plate 2.10) were driven into a clay silt layer that accumulated during Phase 2.1, while those below CC3432 cut into the silty sand fill of a Phase 2.1 ditch. The function of the stakes was no doubt identical to that of the harder metalled surface underneath some of the building's other post-pads—to provide a solid foundation for the posts in areas of relatively soft soil. A similar measure, albeit belonging to the medieval phase, was recorded during excavation at The Brooks; stakes there had been driven into alluvium of the flood-plain and overlain by chalk walls (S Teague, pers. comm.).

Further groups of stakeholes were recorded in the southern part of the Discovery Centre area (Fig. 2.23). These did not form coherent plans, but were presumably related to roadside structures or represented temporary constructions. Stakehole Group CC1849 was associated with a robber trench whose fill contained a coin (AE2) dated AD 320–324, while Stakehole Group CC1662 was cut into a surface belonging to Phase 2.1 Structure CC7002 and sealed by Dark Earth. The dating of Stakehole Group CC1599, cut into the natural soil and sealed by post-Roman deposits, is rather looser, but given its proximity to the other groups,

a late Roman date may also be appropriate. Pits and a hearth may have associated with the stakeholes. The brick- and tile-built hearth (CC1567) was set into the prehistoric subsoil. The burnt soil around the tile was archaeomagnetically dated to 96 BC–AD 25 (JSB1572), but pottery collected from the feature, including a New Forest colour-coated ware and a grog-tempered ware cooking jar (fabrics TR and SG), better placed it in the late Roman period. In addition, the tile used was in a fabric that was unlikely to have been of early Roman date. The pits (CC1048, CC1414, CC1510, CC1513, CC1556, CC1586, CC1588), circular or square in plan, were generally located to the south of the stakehole groups. None contained material that suggested function, but their dimensions—the square features were on average 1.16 m by 0.36 m, while the round pits measured 0.79 m by 0.5 m—were within the range encompassed by larger postholes (for example from Structure

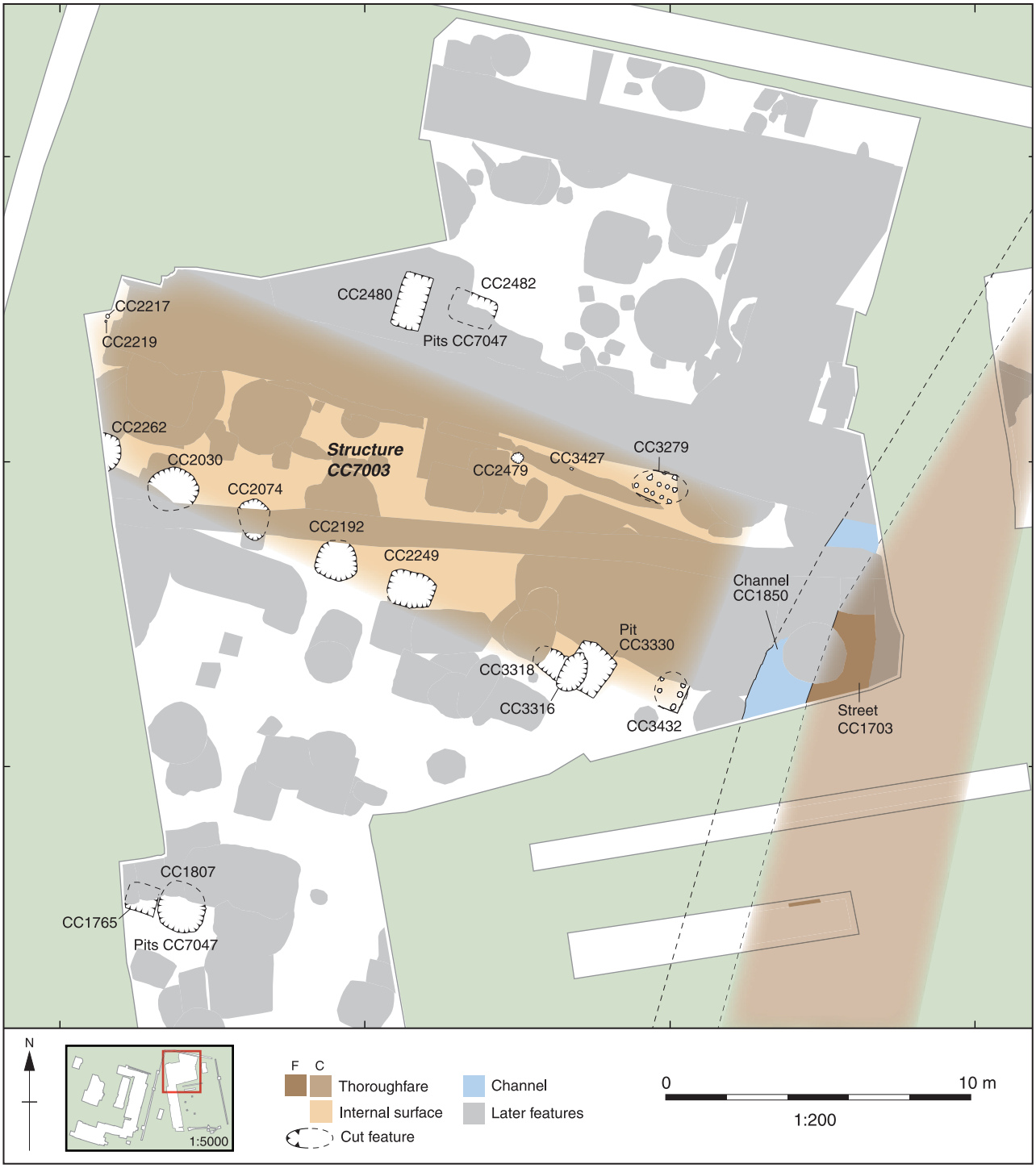


Fig. 2.22 Plan of Structure CC7003, Phase 2.3

Plate 2.9 Chalk-filled post-pads of Structure CC7003, looking south-east

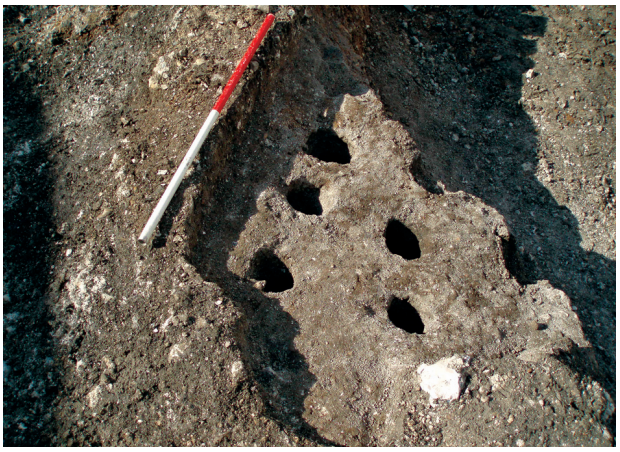


Plate 2.10 Stakeholes of Structure CC7003, Phase 2.3, looking north-west

CC7003). A structural function cannot be dismissed, but as the features were truncated, it seems more reasonable to regard them as pits. The latest pottery recovered from the features dated after AD 250.

Evidence that Street CC1703 continued to be used as a thoroughfare into the late Roman period is provided by a wheel rut (CC1698), which cut into the uppermost street surface of flint and gravel. Two pits, CC1439 and CC1694, were subsequently cut into the street surface and mark a period when the street ceased to be maintained (Fig. 2.23). The pits were below the thick horizon of 'Dark Earth' (see below) that covered the area when it was abandoned, which suggests that they were among the latest features of Phase 2.3 and that they were dug relatively soon after the street was no longer used. Pottery recovered from pit CC1439 included

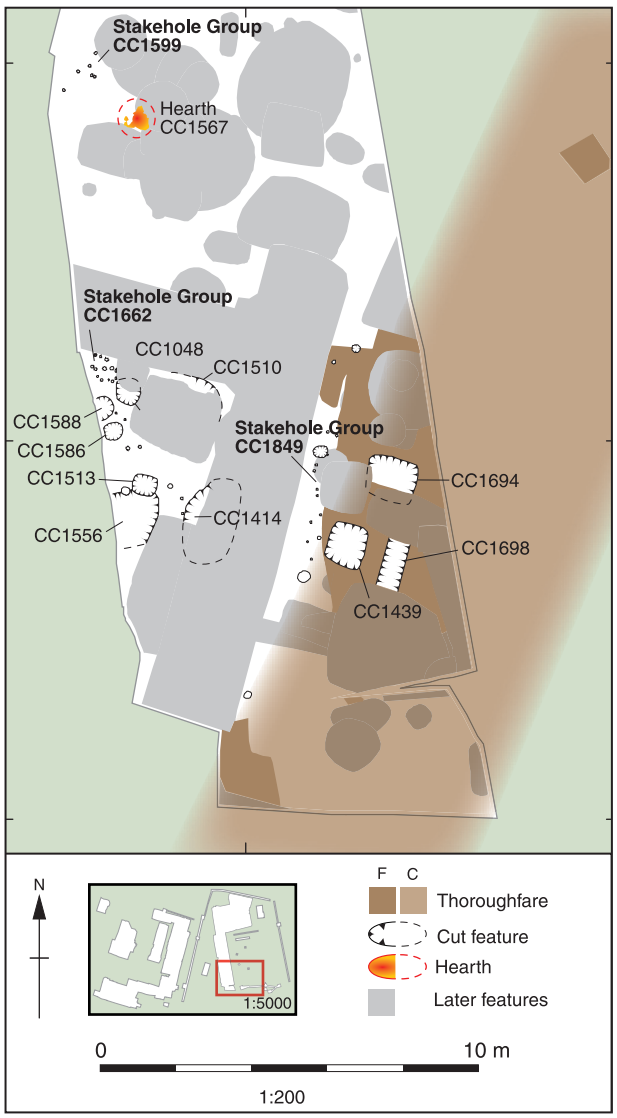


Fig. 2.23 Plan of pits and stakeholes in the eastern part of the Discovery Centre, Phase 2.3

New Forest colour-coated ware (fabric TR) and grog-tempered ware (fabric SG), while Oxford red colour-coated ware (fabric TO/TOR) and New Forest parchment ware (fabric UFN) were collected from pit CC1694. The groups suggest that the pits were filled, and the street abandoned, in the late 3rd or 4th century or later.

Phase 2.4 (*c* AD 350/75–400/50): Latest Roman Dark Earth

The landscape changed significantly from the late 4th century when structures were abandoned, became derelict or were steadily robbed of useful building material. A thick layer of dark, compact, soil—'Dark Earth'—accumulated over the remnants of the Phase 2.3 occupation (Fig. 2.24). The soil was consistent across the excavated areas. In the Discovery Centre site the silty clay deposit was on average 0.2 m thick, although in places the soil was as little as 0.06 m and as much as 0.5 m thick, no doubt depending on the extent of later truncation. The silty clay soil across the Northgate House site accumulated to a similar average thickness of 0.17 m. The latest coins from the Dark Earth included an AE3 dated AD 378–383 and at least two AE4 coins dated to AD 388–402, while the latest Roman pottery supports a date for deposition from the late 4th century onwards, potentially extending into the 5th century.

The soil was rich in artefacts and organic traces of occupation, and these provide information about how the deposits formed. Charred cereals (recovered from six samples), relatively well preserved and comprising a high proportion of burnt bread-type wheats and low proportion of fodder-type crops, suggested a domestic origin (see Carruthers, Chapter 8). The condition of almost all the animal bone from Phase 2.4 deposits was graded as fair to good (see Strid, Chapter 8). Dark Earth soils were also subjected to microstratigraphic investigation, including micromorphology and chemical and pollen analyses (see Macphail and Crowther, Chapter 8). The sampled deposits (NH4412 and NH5059) were dumped soils containing ash, dung and domestic waste, which were subsequently biologically worked through the growth and decay of vegetation and the action of worms and other creatures. Dark Earth also contained some of the largest pottery groups from the entire site, with almost 3000 sherds collected in total (see Biddulph and Booth, Chapter 7). The assemblage comprised a standard range of 4th-century forms and fabrics and included some of the latest products that emerged from the New Forest and Oxford industries. The condition of the pottery was generally good, with each fragment weighing on average 17 g, equal to the overall site mean, while the proportion of pottery certain to be residual (that is, dated earlier than the date of deposition) was very low at around 4% by sherd count.

The formation of Dark Earth is a well-known late Roman and early post-Roman urban phenomenon. The Dark Earth of Winchester's north-west quadrant is similar to the Dark Earths of, for example, London, York, Carlisle and other parts of Winchester, which generally consisted of homogeneous soil that accumulated through roots and worm action and the dumping of mixed cultural material and human waste (Watson 1998, 103; Macphail 1981, 321–2; Zant 2009, 363–9; Zant 1993, 154–5). The activities which caused the soil to form in these cases is not precisely known, but stratigraphic, artefactual and micromorphological analyses appear to rule out cultivation and garden activity and instead lead to the combination of biological accretion and the deliberate middening of occupation debris (Zant 2009, 368–9). The evidence from the Dark Earth of the Discovery Centre is consistent with this profile; indeed the micromorphological evidence (see Macphail and Crowther, Chapter 8), with its signature of ash, faecal matter and poor pollen preservation denoting earlier-formed soils, points strongly towards

Fig. 2.24 Plan showing extent of 'Dark Earth', Phase 2.4 (c AD 350/75–400/50)

it. The condition and chronological coherence of the pottery assemblage suggests that the middens were frequently dumped, then sealed in fairly rapid succession by new waste deposits. This explanation for the origin of Dark Earth is supported by evidence from The Brooks. The excavators dismissed the possibility of cultivation on the basis of the recovery of large, well-preserved animal bone and pottery fragments from the site's Dark Earth and the lack of evidence for disturbance and truncation (Zant 1993, 155). The shared characteristics between the sites suggest that the Dark Earth accumulated for the same reasons. Buildings may have been abandoned, but occupation of a sort that enjoyed new supplies of pottery, heat and light from hearths, and livestock for meat, clothing and dairy products, must have continued. No structures belonging to this phase were detected, although the rural, rather than urban, character of the occupation (see Macphail and Crowther, Chapter 8) suggests a relatively sparse population.