

## Chapter 2

# Archaeological Sequence

### PHASE 1: EARLY PREHISTORIC TO BRONZE AGE (Figs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5)

#### Phase 1a: Mesolithic to Neolithic

Pit 1501 (Fig. 2.5), which measured 0.6m wide and 0.2m deep, contained four flints, a broken microlith, two bladelets and a flake. Considered together, the flints appear to be of mixed date, though would not be out of place in a Mesolithic context. However, if the microlith fragment were in fact of some other type, then an early Neolithic date would be possible. Flint objects of Mesolithic to early Neolithic date, including two blade forms and a single end truncation, were recovered from tree-throw holes 1093 and 1982 (Figs 2.2, 2.5 and 2.14). A single posthole or pit (1637), dating to the early Neolithic period was situated in the north-west of the site (Fig. 2.5). It had been cut by later ditches, but was over 0.4m in diameter and 0.23m deep. Its only fill was notably rich in burnt material, including abundant fragments of charred hazelnut shell and oak charcoal. The hazelnut shell was radiocarbon dated 3800-3650 cal BC (95.4% confidence; SUERC-75472; 4963±30BP). In the south-eastern part of the site, seven flints – a blade, four flakes, a chunk and an end truncation – were recovered from pit 2774 (Fig. 2.2).

#### Phase 1b: Bronze Age

Middle Bronze Age activity was represented by two small concentrations of features in the north-west and south-east parts of the site. In addition, a sherd from an everted-rim shouldered jar in a flint-tempered fabric attributable to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age came from a furrow (625) in the western edge of the site, and four small, undiagnostic sherds in a similar fabric were found in a tree-throw hole (596) in the same area (Fig. 2.12).

#### G2: Enclosure and possible structure

Excavation in the north-west part of the site uncovered the remains of a probable enclosure or field boundary of middle Bronze Age date (Fig. 2.5). Ditch SG8110 was aligned NE-SW and there appeared to be a gap along its length, with a return to the east, possibly to mark an entrance. The feature had been cut by a later ditch (SG8109) on the same alignment, which had truncated much of the

earlier cut. Some middle Bronze Age pottery was found redeposited in the later ditch.

A group of contemporaneous features (SG8150) was recorded to the west of the ditch. The group consisted of a row of at least four large postholes or pits connected by a gully or beamslot which may form the south western side of a structure. The postholes were relatively large, measuring up to 1m in diameter and surviving to a depth of 0.2m. Pottery from the fills of three was dated to the middle Bronze Age. A few undated postholes nearby may be related, including posthole 1036, which contained an undiagnostic retouched flint flake, and posthole or pit, 1041, which was situated 12m to the north-east of the group and, although not dated, contained an assemblage of 17 large mammal bones. The depth of the postholes compared to their width suggests significant truncation. Considered together, the features, both dated and undated, may form part of a rectangular structure, some 12m long by 6m wide.

A poorly preserved linear feature (SG8117) was situated c 20m to the north-west of the possible structure. It appeared to continue to the north-west, although its form was very unclear. Its single fill contained pottery of middle Bronze Age date. Posthole 1197, dated by Bronze Age pottery, was situated north of the linear feature and lay among a group of undated features of a similar size, although they presented no clear structural form. Also recovered from this area was a copper alloy awl (SF 2781), which was recovered from the subsoil, but is probably Bronze Age in date.

#### G20: Ring ditches and other features in the south-eastern part of the site

A ring ditch (SG8028) was dated to this period (Fig. 2.2). The feature measured 8.1m in diameter, the gully being c 0.75m wide and 0.6m deep with a very steep V-shaped profile. Pottery recovered from the fill dated to the middle Bronze Age. Part of another possible ring ditch (SG8035) was located c 20m to the south. This may have been contemporaneous, but contained no datable material. Despite no trace of human bone being found, both features may have been formed part of barrows, the ditches once surrounding central burials and a mound above. Any central burial within SG8028 is likely to have been completely removed by Phase 4 ditch SG8021, which extended through the centre of the ring ditch,

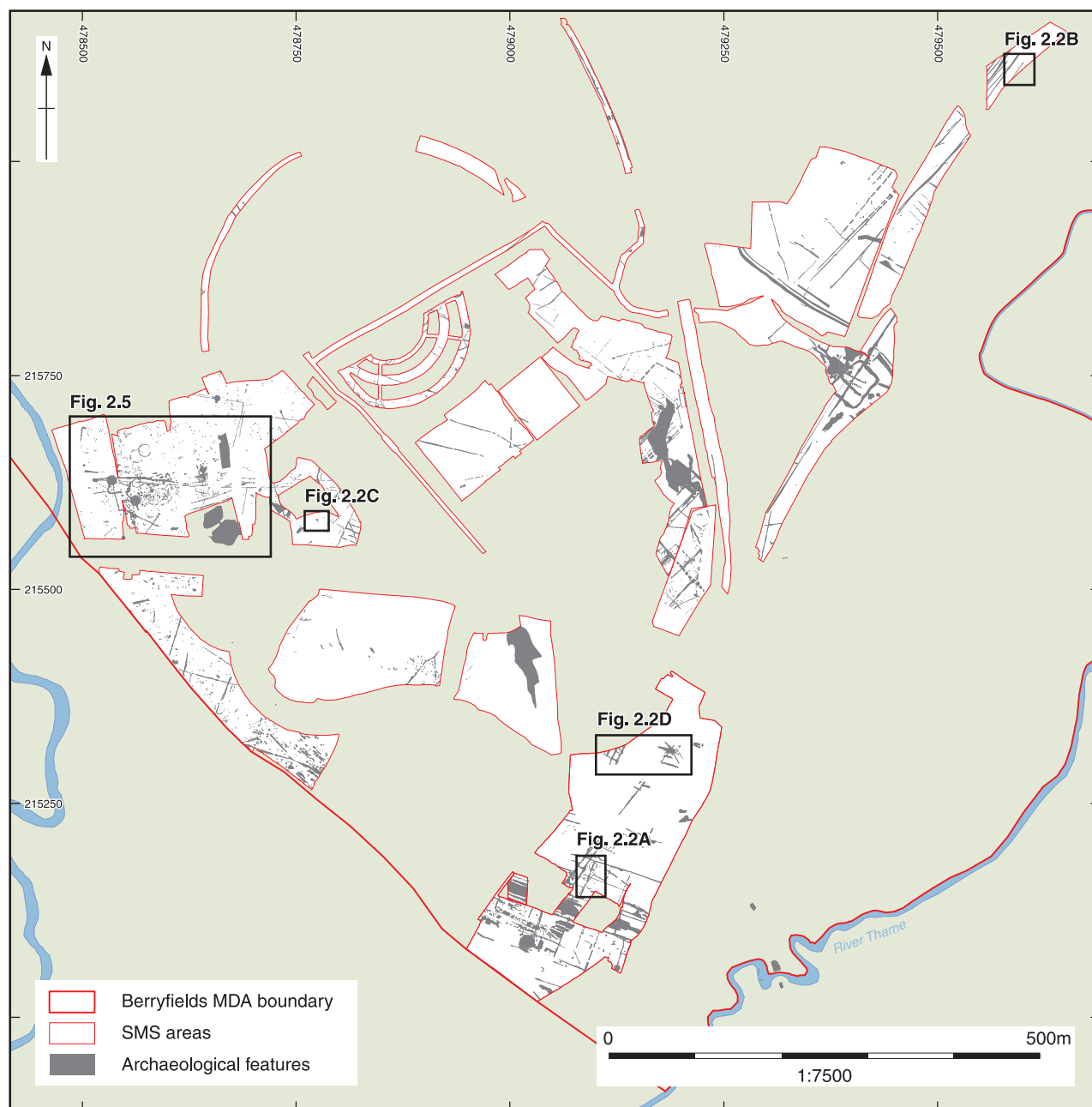


Fig. 2.1 Location of early prehistoric to Bronze Age features (Phase 1)

while medieval ploughing may have removed any burial associated with SG8035.

A short length of ditch (SG8029) just to the north of SG8028 also contained middle Bronze Age pottery. The feature was very shallow, measuring only 0.05-0.1m in depth, and may represent a heavily truncated enclosure ditch.

#### Other features

Two possible postholes or small pits (2761 and 2763) were situated *c* 125m north of ring ditch SG8028 and contained pottery of possible middle Bronze Age date. Both features were oval in shape and measured 0.25-0.3m in diameter and 0.1-0.3m deep. Pottery

from 2761 may be from a Barrel Urn. The isolated position of these two features makes interpretation difficult but they could be related to the wider middle Bronze Age settlement, of which little else has survived.

Two features of uncertain function (5607 and 5609) were recorded in the far north-eastern part of the site. Feature 5607 was the southernmost of the two. It was aligned NNE-SSW and measured 1.9m in length, 0.3m wide and, mainly, 0.1m deep. The feature deepened at its southern end to form a depression *c* 0.5m in diameter and 0.2m deep. This depression was filled with a silty clay soil containing charcoal, charred plant remains and burnt animal bone before the entire feature was



Fig. 2.2 Plan of early prehistoric to Bronze Age features (Phase 1)

filled with similar material. Feature 5609 to the north measured 2.2m long, 0.3m wide and, in the central part, 0.14m deep. The feature was deeper at each end and, like 5607, was filled in two episodes with silty clay, which also contained charcoal, plant remains and burnt animal bone. The plant remains from both features were identified as cereal grain and sparse glume bases/spikelet forks (Meen and Stafford 2017), while the animal bone included

burnt pig and cattle fragments. Dating evidence is restricted to two tiny sherds of early Bronze Age pottery from feature 5609. It is possible that the features functioned as hearths or ovens – in plan and section the features are not too dissimilar from late Roman oven SG8166 (Phase 6, below) – but no fired clay was present within the fills and the sides of the features were not apparently burnt. It is alternatively possible that the features were structural

and formed part of two- or four-post structures. Given the small sherd size, the pottery recovered from feature 5609 could well be residual.

**PHASE 1/2: LATE BRONZE AGE/EARLY IRON AGE OR MIDDLE IRON AGE (Figs 2.3-2.5)**

**G5: Pit alignment**

A pit alignment was situated to the north-east of Bronze Age activity G2 (Fig. 2.5). No dating evidence was recovered, but, judging by the chronology of such features in the region, the alignment is likely to fall within the period spanning the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age to middle Iron Age

(cf. Rippon 2018, 94). It is not impossible that the alignment was contemporary with boundary ditch SG8104, dated to the middle Iron Age (see below). The alignment was recorded as two groups, totalling eleven pits, but it may originally have been continuous, extending for c 80m on an east-west orientation. Though not excavated, pairs of circular features between the two groups and to the east may also have been part of the alignment (see Fig. 6.1). The excavated pits measured between 1.2m and 1.4m in diameter and survived to depths between 0.5m and 0.8m. Most were filled with single deposits that appear to have been slowly and naturally deposited, with well sorted small stone inclusions and occasional charcoal flecks present, but little else.

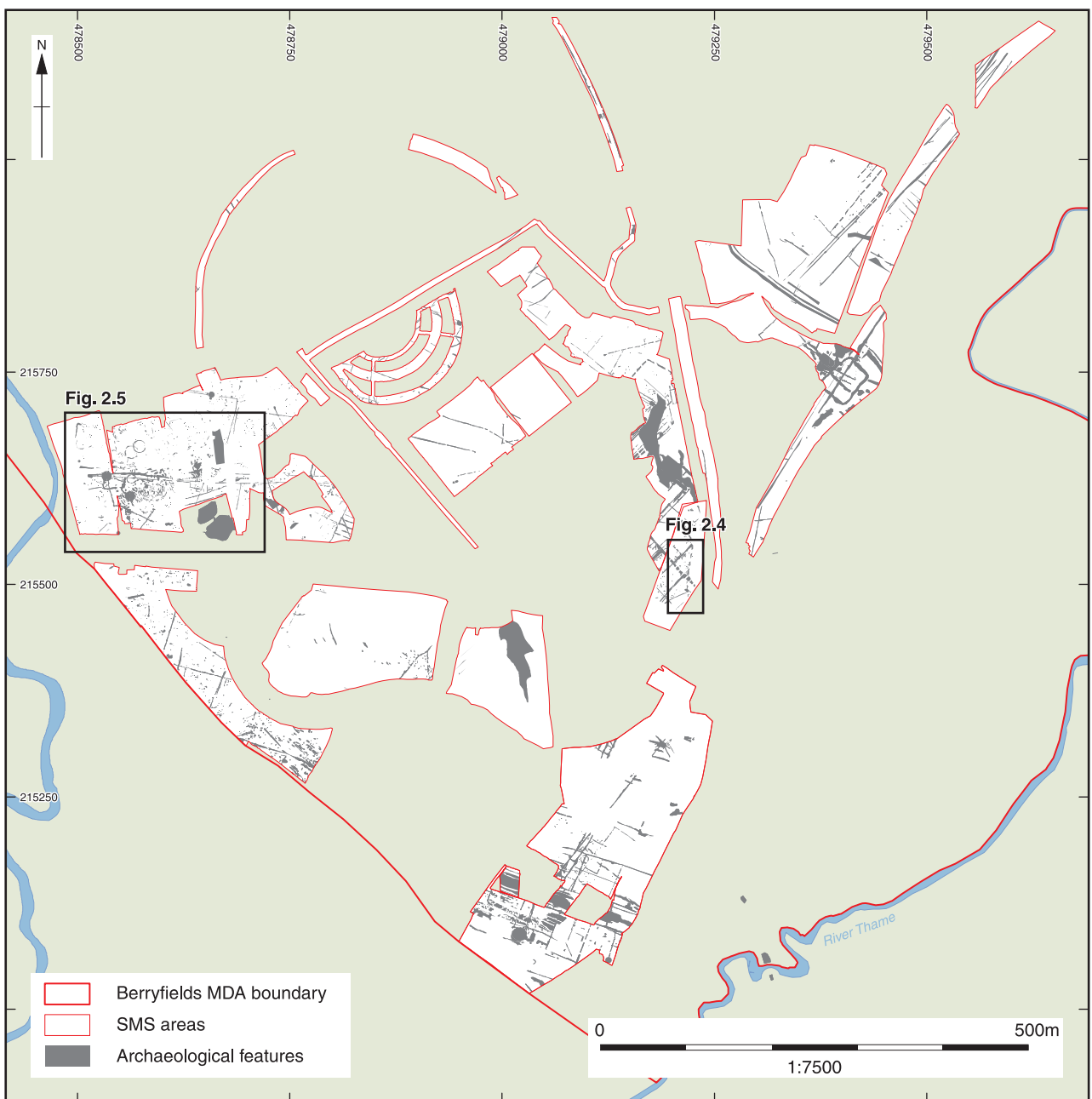


Fig. 2.3 Location of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and Iron Age features (Phases 1/2 and 2)

### Waterhole 9204 and associated features

Some 650m east of the pit alignment was an isolated waterhole (9204), situated at the junction of two ditches (SG8144 and 9220), which it cut (Fig. 2.4). The ditches contained no datable material, but given their relationship with the waterhole and the fact they were on a different alignment to the Roman-period ditches in the vicinity they must also be prehistoric in date. The waterhole was an irregular oval in plan and measured 5.6m long and 3.5m wide. The full profile of the feature was not obtained, but the part of the feature that was excavated demonstrated that the feature had a

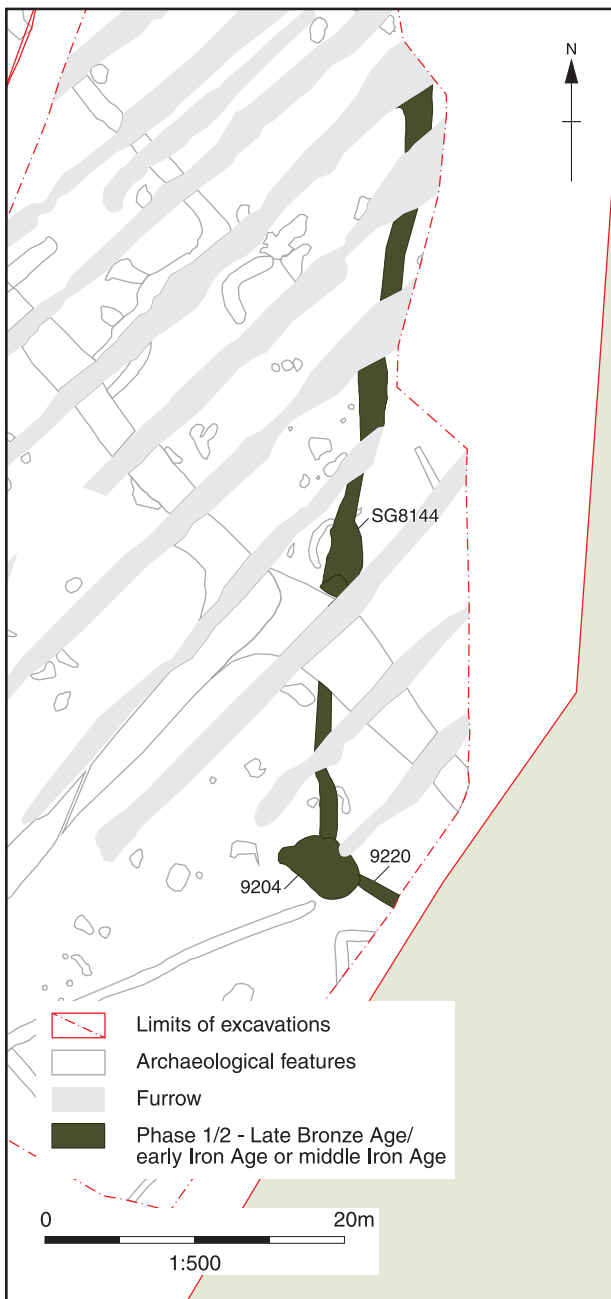


Fig. 2.4 Plan of waterhole 9204 and associated features (Phase 1/2)

relatively shallow slope at its west end and was at least 1.2m deep. Three fills were recorded, the middle of which contained a small amount of pottery of broad late prehistoric date (c 1100-50 BC). Although the amount is small, its presence combined with the ditches on a different alignment to the surrounding Roman enclosures suggests that these features are late prehistoric in date.

### PHASE 2: LATER IRON AGE (Figs 2.3 and 2.5)

The main focus of later prehistoric activity was in the north-western part of the site in the area of middle Bronze Age activity. The evidence consisted of two phases of enclosure and roundhouse construction and a small amount of peripheral activity represented by pits and postholes.

#### Phase 2a: Middle Iron Age

##### G3: Middle Iron Age settlement (Fig. 2.5)

##### Boundary ditch and enclosure

A large boundary ditch (SG8104) extended on an E-W alignment across the area. The ditch was fairly irregular in plan, but was substantial, measuring c 2.2m at its widest and up to 1m deep. It generally had a profile of steep sides and a concave base. The ditch extended for at least c 97m. It narrowed to a gradual terminus to the east, but appears to have been truncated by later activity to the west. Interventions through the ditch revealed that the feature was filled by up to three deposits, which had formed through a combination of natural silting and deliberate deposition, the latter generally identified in the upper parts of the sequence. Some 185 sherds of pottery were recovered from the feature. The assemblage spanned the early-middle Iron Age to late Iron Age/early Roman period, but most of the pottery – some 70% by sherd count – dated more certainly to the middle Iron Age. The ditch cut a pit (1583) and ditch (1585), which contained pottery of early to middle Iron Age date alongside residual Bronze Age material. Taken together, deposition within the ditch is likely to date to the middle Iron Age. Small quantities (six sherds) of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery collected from the upper fills are likely to have been deposited incidentally, having been incorporated into a hollow at the top of the ditch or trampled into the soil through the use of the later trackway (G1).

A sub-rectangular enclosure (SG8105 and SG8116) adjoined the south side of the ditch. The terminal of the west arm of the enclosure cut the ditch, and two possible entrances were located on the enclosure's south and east sides. The enclosure measured 22.3m E-W by 15.4m N-S. The ditch was V-shaped in profile, measuring c 1.2m wide and 0.5m deep. It contained a single fill, which appears to have accumulated slowly. The gaps in the ditch



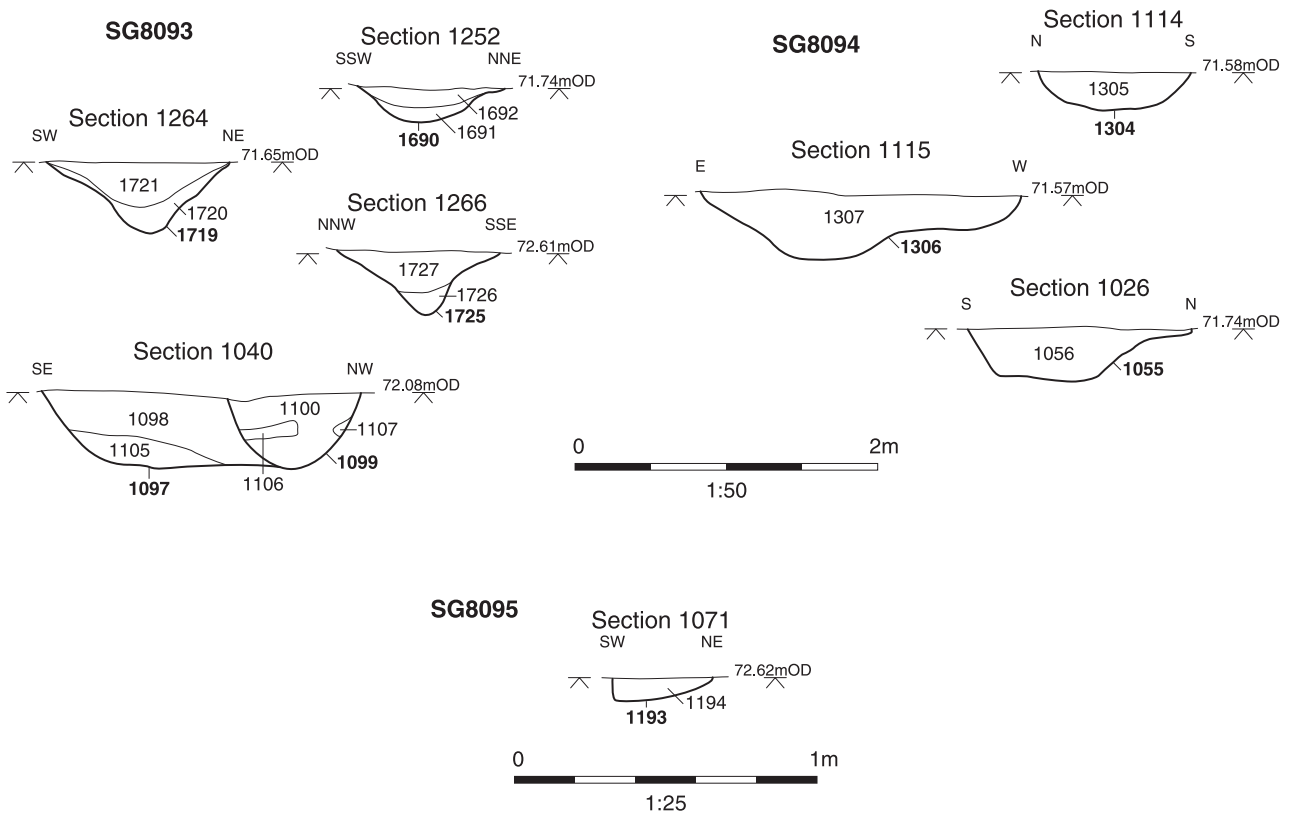
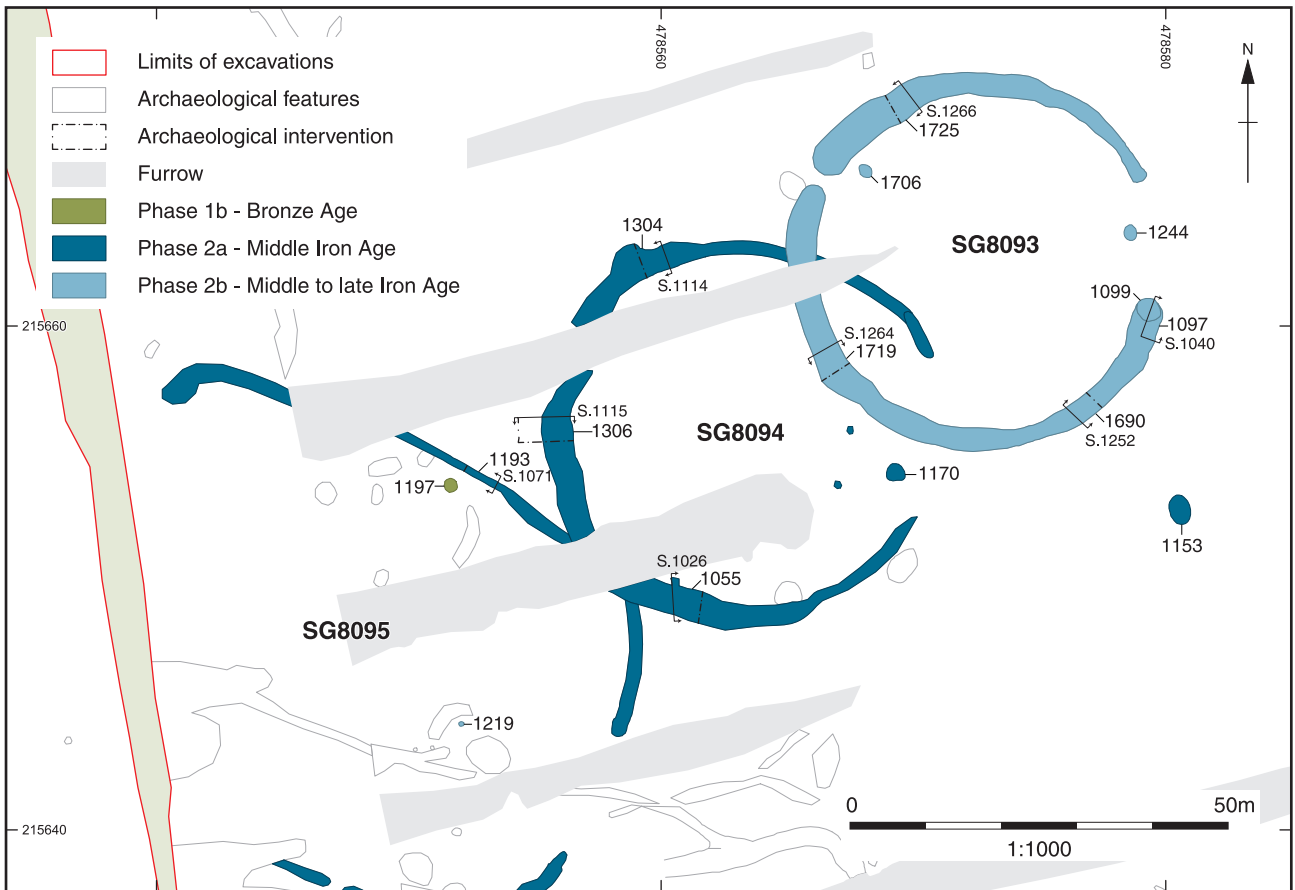


Fig. 2.6 Sections and plan of groups SG8093, SG8094 and SG8095

were not defined by formal termini and it is possible that they had been created through later ploughing. Early to middle Iron Age pottery and pottery dated more definitely to the middle Iron Age were recovered from the ditch. With the possible exception of pit SG8114 (see Phase 3, below), no internal features were identified.

An unusually high number of horse bones were found in ditches in this settlement area. Some 21 bones were recovered from SG8104, while 14 were collected from enclosure ditch SG8105 and a feature of uncertain function, SG8113.

#### *Roundhouses (Fig. 2.6)*

Roundhouse SG8094 was situated to the north of the boundary ditch. It measured 13.8m in diameter and had an entrance on the eastern side which was 6.5m wide, although later disturbance may have made this wider than it was originally. The gully measured *c* 1.3m wide and 0.2m deep and was concave in profile. Five interventions were made through the ditch, one of which produced pottery of middle Iron Age date. A posthole (1170) was situated inside the entrance. Two other postholes to the west may form with 1170 part of an internal structure, though neither was excavated. A pit (1153), which contained middle Iron Age pottery, was east of roundhouse SG8094.

An oval-shaped enclosure (SG8095) was attached to the south-west side of the roundhouse. A plough furrow removed the relationship between the two, but they appear to have been conjoined. The enclosure measured *c* 21.8m NW-SE and 16.8m NE-SW. Although there is a gap through the south-east side, this is likely to have been caused by truncation by later ploughing, since the ditch was very shallow. Several internal postholes or small pits were present, but only one could be securely dated to this phase. This feature (1219) contained pottery of middle to late Iron Age date.

The gully of a smaller roundhouse (SG8100) was found just to the south of ditch SG8104. It measured *c* 9m in diameter and had a possible entrance in the east. No internal features were identified. Pottery from the six interventions was dated broadly to the early prehistoric period and to the middle Iron Age. The partial remains of another smaller roundhouse (SG8151), consisting of two short segments of curvilinear ditch, were situated *c* 20m to the south-east of roundhouse SG8100 and suggest a structure with a diameter of *c* 6.5m. The remains of the gully were shallow, measuring 0.2m in width and 0.1m in depth. Pottery recovered from three of the five interventions dated to the middle Iron Age. There were no associated postholes or other features. A curving gully (1512) to the west of enclosure ditch SG8105 may represent another roundhouse. Four sherds of middle Iron Age pottery with fine incised-line decoration were recovered from the feature. Pits 1537 and 1531/1533, which contained middle Iron Age pottery, were located nearby, but it was uncertain whether the features were associated. Posthole

1374, further west, may represent another structure, though what form is unknown.

#### *G25: Middle Iron Age features in the far north-west of the site*

A number of features (G25) were recorded to the north-west of middle Iron Age settlement G3. A ditch (SG8096) may have represented the west and north sides of an enclosure. No dating evidence was recovered, but the east terminus of ditch SG8108, which may form the south end of the enclosure, contained middle Iron Age pottery. Three intercutting pits (1480, 1481, 1482) were filled with deposits indistinguishable from each other, making the sequence of cutting unclear, but the southernmost pit (1480) contained pottery of broadly Iron Age date. Just to the east of this were two groups of postholes identified as four-post structures. One (SG8099) was regular in form, measuring 2.5m by 2.5m, with postholes measuring *c* 0.45m in diameter. The other (SG8167) comprised postholes forming more of a trapezoidal shape, but also *c* 2.5m apart. One posthole in this group contained pottery of middle Iron Age date. A posthole (1519) to the south of these structures also contained middle Iron Age pottery.

### **Phase 2b: Middle to late Iron Age**

#### *G4: Enclosure and roundhouses*

Rectangular enclosure SG8105/SG8116 was replaced with a larger, sub-rectangular enclosure, SG8108/SG8109 (Fig. 2.5). This later group consisted of a ditch that formed the west, south and part of the east sides of an enclosure that defined an area of some 47m (NW-SE) by 38m (NE-SW). The north side of the enclosure was not identified, but it is possible that ditch SG8104 remained a visible part of the landscape (possibly with a bank) and served as the enclosure's north side. An elaborate entrance was incorporated into the middle of the south side and, assuming this served as a means of controlling movement in and out of the enclosure, suggests that the east side continued beyond the end of terminus of the ditch in some other form, possibly a fence. The ditch was fairly irregular in form and was shallow, measuring *c* 1.1m wide and 0.25m deep. It had a broad V-shaped profile, and its single fill appeared to have derived from slow silting. The west side of the enclosure cut ditch SG8105, while the east side cut Phase 1 ditch SG8110. Redeposited pottery of middle Bronze Age date was recovered from its fill along with middle Iron Age pottery.

Roundhouse SG8094 was replaced by roundhouse SG8093 (Fig. 2.6). The ditch of the later structure measured 13m in diameter and had an entrance in the east measuring 4.6m wide. The circuit was not continuous; a small gap of *c* 0.5m was recorded on the west side of the structure. Interventions through the ditch revealed a V-shaped profile. The



ditch was filled in two episodes and contained some 130 sherds of pottery, dated largely to the middle Iron Age, but including smaller quantities of transitional middle-late Iron Age material. Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from posthole 1099, which was cut into the ditch terminus on the south side of the east entrance. The posthole's function is uncertain, but it may relate to a potentially much later phase of rebuilding or reuse. A posthole (1244) situated within the east entrance may have formed part of a porch structure. Another posthole (1706) was located at the edge of the west side of the roundhouse.

Another roundhouse was represented by a curving ditch SG8106, which cut Phase 2a enclosure ditch SG8105 (Fig. 2.5). Eleven sherds of middle Iron Age pottery, including fragments from an ovoid jar, were recovered from the feature.

### PHASE 3: LATE IRON AGE OR EARLY ROMAN

The phasing scheme was created at the beginning of the stratigraphic analysis based on ceramic spot-dates. Groups that contained pottery of late Iron Age or early Roman date only – typically grog-tempered and lacking definite post-conquest material – were assigned to Phase 3. However, as these groups by themselves did not generally form a coherent pattern and are better understood in relation to surrounding – and Roman-period – features, the features are discussed under Phase 4; indeed, their ceramic dating does not preclude an exclusively early Roman date. A single landscape feature, a trackway, offers one exception to this rule and is described below. It should be noted that some finds and environmental analyses (Chapters 3 and 5) retain Phase 3 as a distinct unit.

#### G1: Western trackway (Fig. 2.5)

Trackway G1 extended E-W through the area of middle Iron Age settlement in the north-west part of the site. The two ditches that defined it – SG8157 and SG8126 to the north and SG8107, SG8115, SG8119 and SG8124 to the south – were traced for at least 290m. The trackway may have continued further east, but was not visible in any of the excavated areas. There were many gaps in the ditches, especially on the north side. While much of this was the result of later truncation through ploughing, termini were recorded at the ends of several ditch segments and so it is likely that the trackway was defined by intermittent ditches rather than continuous features. The north and south sides were *c* 9m apart. The north ditches, where preserved, had concave profiles and measured *c* 0.55m wide and up to 0.16m deep. The south ditches were better preserved. They had concave profiles and measured up to 1.4m wide and 0.6m deep. Little pottery was recovered from the ditches. The latest piece, from the north side, was a fragment of a bowl in South Gaulish samian ware dating to

the middle to late 1st century AD. A *Camulodunum* 28 platter (Hawkes and Hull 1947, plate L) in grog-tempered ware was collected from a ditch segment on the south side. The south ditch was cut on its west end by pit 1702, which contained Roman-period reduced ware and beaker sherds in a fine oxidised grog-tempered ware.

Pit SG8114 was situated between segments of Phase 3 trackway ditch SG8115. It was oval in plan and measured 2m long and 1m wide. It was excavated in three sections. One intervention contained ten fragments of middle Iron Age pottery and a small assemblage of animal bone, including a sheep bone radiocarbon dated to 410-210 cal BC (95.4% confidence; SUERC-76716; 2280±32BP), placing deposition in the middle Iron Age and therefore potentially associating the pit with enclosure SG8105/SG8116. Of particular note was a chicken bone from the same context, which has implications for the introduction of chickens in Britain (Broderick, Chapter 5). However, three body sherds of Roman-period reduced ware were recovered from another section of the feature. Given this later material, and the pit's location, the feature may well form part of the trackway, with the middle Iron Age material being residual, although if redeposited from an earlier feature, the finds appear to have retained their integrity as a group. Indeed, the possibility that the feature is unrelated to the trackway and that the Roman-period pottery is intrusive cannot be dismissed.

#### PHASE 4: EARLY ROMAN (Figs 2.7-2.16)

In the early Roman period activity expanded beyond the focus of the prehistoric settlement to form a wider landscape of fields, trackways and enclosures either side of the major Roman road of Akeman Street (Fig. 2.7).

#### G8 and G9: Akeman Street (Figs 2.7-2.9)

Akeman Street extended through the southern part of the site on a NW-SE alignment. Excavations across the road revealed surfaces (G9) and a sequence of flanking ditches (G8). The road in the excavated area did not appear to originally have had the two pairs of ditches – inner and outer – that are typically associated with Roman roads, the inner ditches (SG8164 and SG8017) in this instance being later additions (see Phase 5, below).

In its first phase, the road was flanked by a single pair of ditches, SG8016 to the south and SG8018 to the north. Ditch SG8016 measured up to 2.42m wide and 0.82m deep. It had a V-shaped profile and in parts a narrow slot at its base (eg cut 2675; Fig. 2.9, section 1474). Some 75 sherds of pottery were recovered from cut 2675. The assemblage included a Drag. 29 bowl in South Gaulish samian ware and platters (*Cam* 26 and *Cam* 30) in grog-tempered and sandy fabrics, pointing to deposition before *c* AD 70. Another slot through the ditch produced 21 sherds

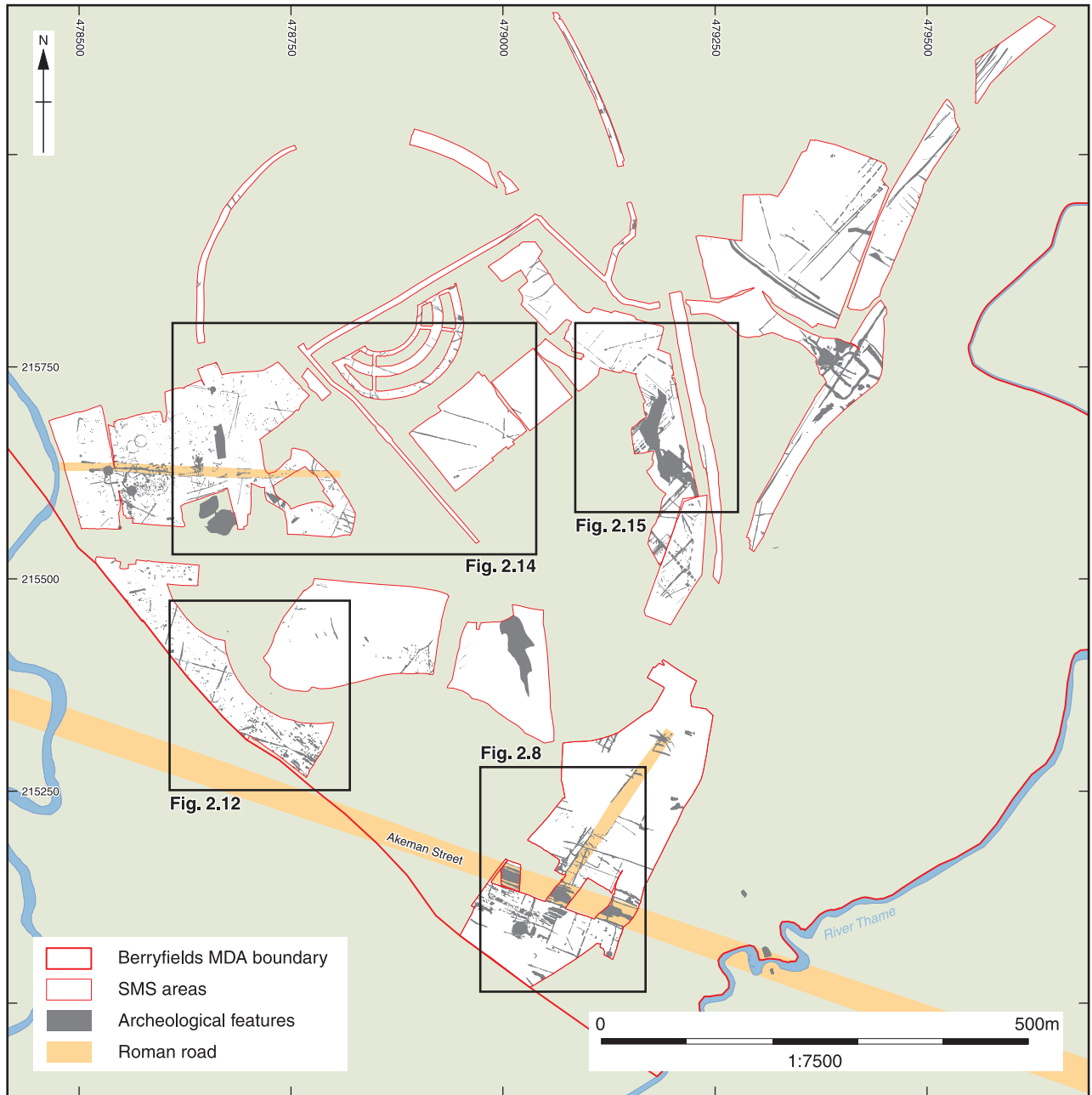


Fig. 2.7 Location of early Roman features (Phase 4)

of pottery, including grog-tempered ware and Verulamium-region white ware, dating to the second half of the 1st century AD. Sections through ditch SG8018 on the north side showed a more complex sequence. The ditch as seen in interventions through its eastern end (Fig. 2.9, sections 1474 and 1481) was at least 0.6m deep and 0.5m wide; it was cut on its north edge by recut SG8019, which in turn was cut by ditch SG8137. A single sherd of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery was recovered from a fill of cut 2730 (SG8018; Fig. 2.9, section 1481). Another cut (2689, SG8018; Fig. 2.9, section 1474) contained Alice Holt reduced ware of late Roman date, although, assigned to the cut, rather than a fill, it is possible that the piece is intrusive, having been

recovered from the surface. Curiously, the sequence of ditches further west (Fig. 2.9, section 1651) was reversed, with SG8137 identified as the initial cut. It was recut on its southern edge by SG8019, then SG8018. The anomaly cannot be easily resolved, but SG8137 is at least consistent with SG8016 as regards ceramic chronology. Fifty-seven sherds of pottery were recovered from the feature, most of which were grog-tempered and also included South Spanish amphora fabric and body sherds from a North Gaulish white ware butt-beaker, together pointing to pre-Flavian deposition. Whether in a sequence running south to north or vice versa, three recuts were recorded in all three sections through the north ditch. The first recut in section 1474

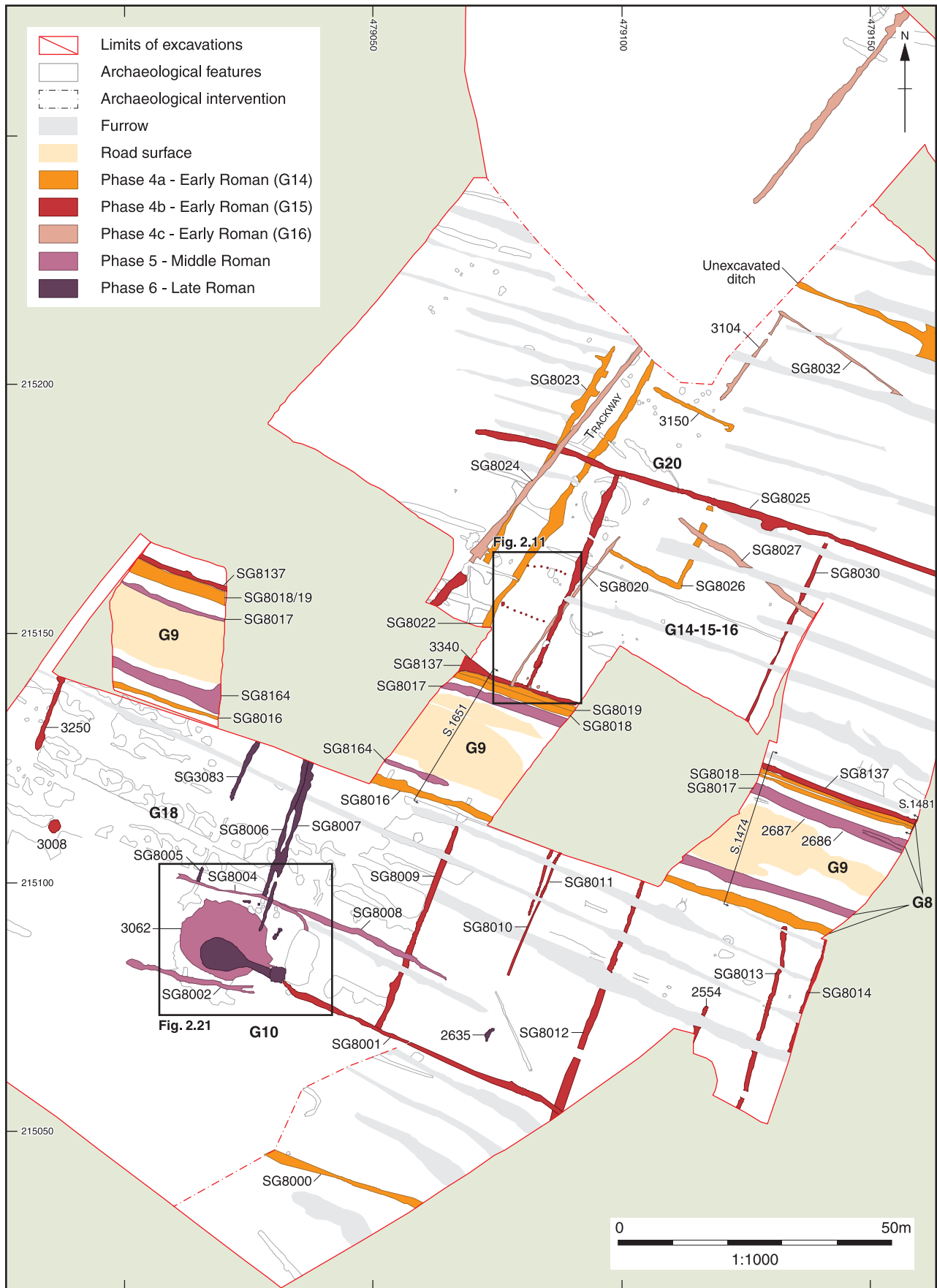


Fig. 2.8 Multi-phase plan of features in south-east of site to north and south of Akeman Street

Berryfields

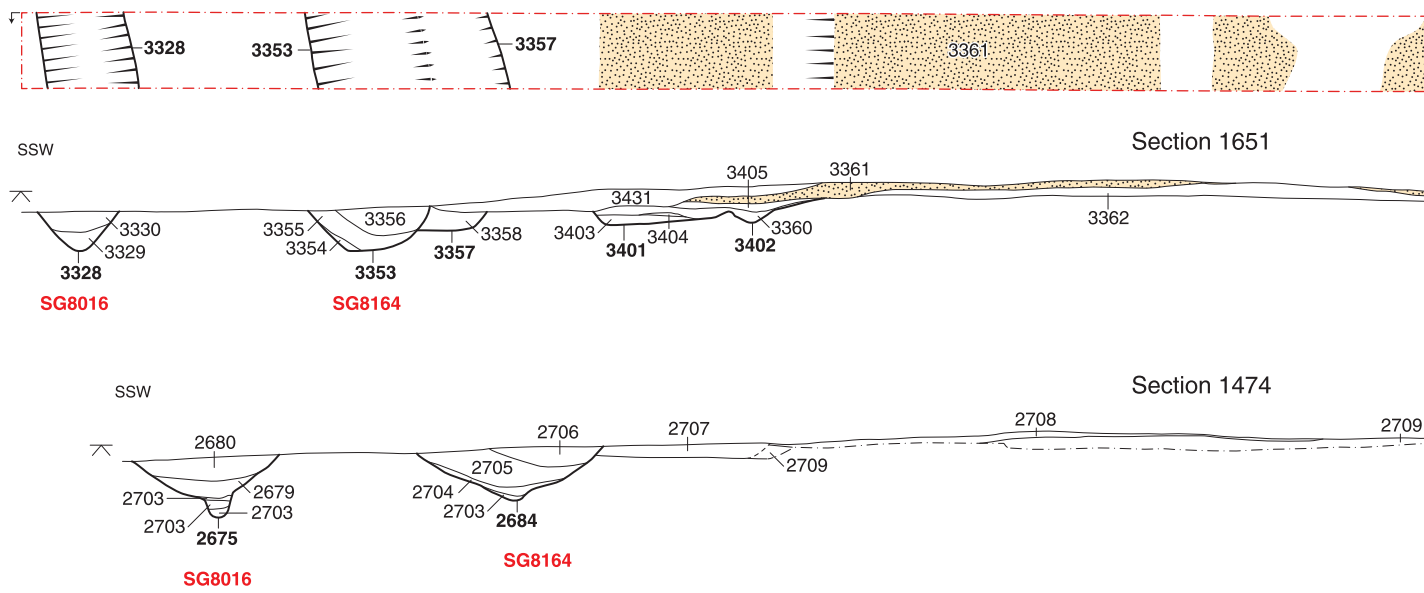


Fig. 2.9 Sections through Akeman Street, with photographs showing road surface

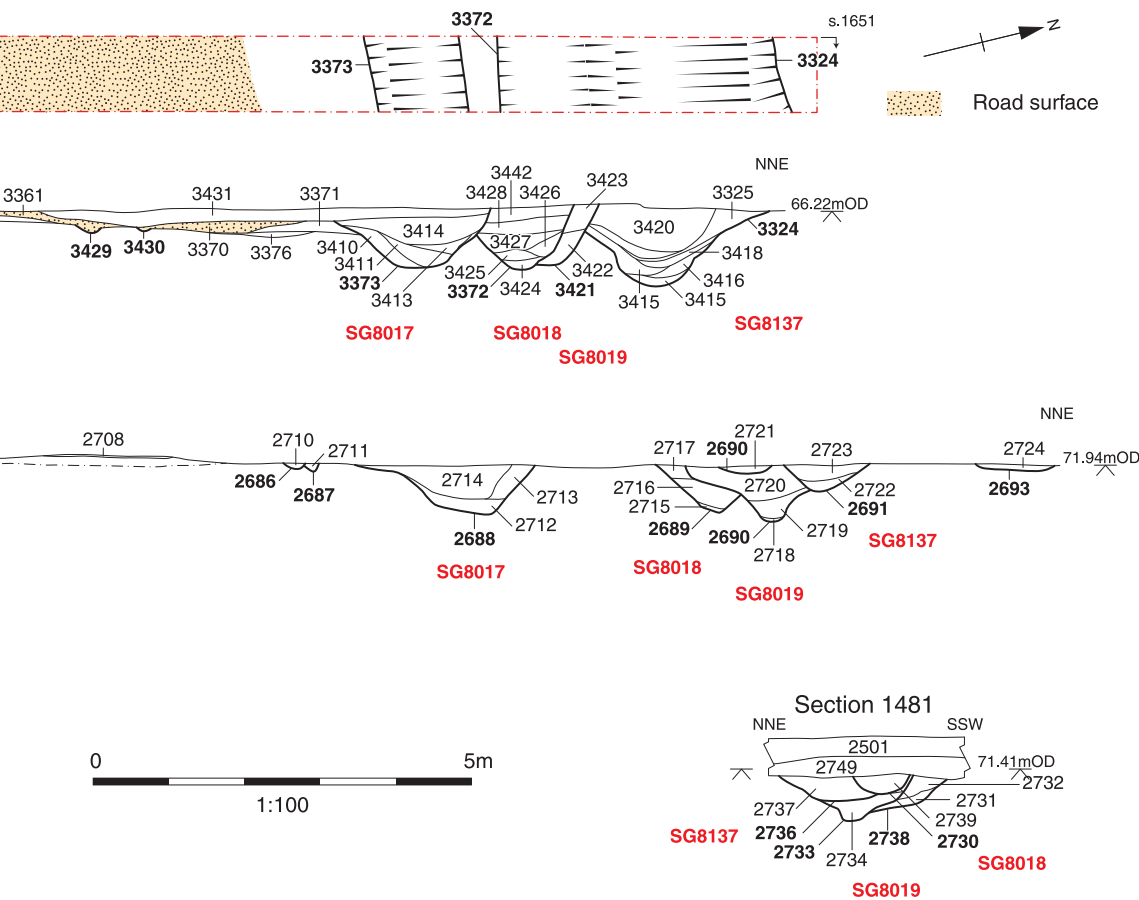


Fig. 2.10 Burial 3340 within fill of ditch SG8137

(SG8019) had a similar profile to SG8016 at the south end of the section: wide at the top, narrowing to a slot at the base; the recut measured 1.62m wide and 0.74m deep.

Removal of the subsoil across SG8137 revealed an inhumation burial (3340) within the ditch's upper fill. Although this upper fill was dated by pottery to c AD 43-70, it is not clear when the burial was inserted into it. No clear cut was identified and it may be that the burial was deposited while there was a depression in the upper fill. The burial had been disturbed by machining, but may also have originally been a disarticulated deposit, having been moved from elsewhere. The neat placement of the bones in a pile suggests that this is likely (Fig. 2.10). The remains were of an adult aged 26-35 years, most likely a woman.

The road surface, originally c 25m wide, consisted of a base layer (eg 3362) up to c 0.2m thick of common gravel set within a clay matrix, sealed by an upper layer (eg 3361), similarly c 0.2m thick, of abundant gravel and occasional limestone



blocks, also set within clay. The surface is likely to have been truncated to some extent, but a slight rise in the centre of the road could still be seen. A sherd of grog-tempered pottery, along with three hobnails, were recovered from layer 3360, a gravel layer that filled a scoop or drain (3402) on the edge of the road. A sherd from a Drag. 29 South Gaulish samian ware bowl and a body sherd from a South Spanish amphora, together dating up to *c* AD 85, and a two-piece Colchester (or perhaps Polden Hill) brooch of late 1st to early 2nd century date were collected from layer 2708. Wheel-ruts or drainage slots (2710/11, 3402, and 3429/30) were recorded.

#### Field system flanking Akeman Street (Fig. 2.8)

A sequence of enclosures or fields and a perpendicular trackway extending to the north-east were laid out on the north-eastern side of the road. A single phase of field system was recorded to the south of the road

#### G14: Trackway and field system, Phase 4a

A trackway *c* 7m wide defined by ditches SG8022 and SG8023 extended for at least 65m on a NNE-SSW alignment, not quite at right angles with Akeman Street. The ditches had concave profiles and measured *c* 1m wide and *c* 0.2m deep. Four sherds of pottery – two grog-tempered and two

from an amphora (?Dressel 1) in a 'black sand' Campanian fabric – were recovered from ditch SG8022 and date to the later 1st century BC or 1st century AD. Ditches 3150 and SG8026 defined a rectangular enclosure measuring *c* 30m by 25m that was aligned with the trackway. Some 690 sherds of pottery were recovered from ditch SG8026. The assemblage exclusively contained grog-tempered ware and South Spanish Dressel 20 amphora fabric dating to the mid to late 1st century AD. There is a return on the north side of an unexcavated ditch 30m to the north that could indicate another enclosure beside the trackway. Given the slight misalignment with Akeman Street, it is possible that the trackway and field pre-dated the road.

#### G15: Field system, Phase 4b

The field represented by G14 was replaced by a new arrangement of enclosures or fields, which was traced both on the north and south sides of Akeman Street. The ditches to the north of the road were aligned with the Phase 4 roadside ditch (SG8018/SG8019/SG8137), which formed the south side of the enclosures. The north side was formed by ditch SG8025, which ran parallel to the road and was traced for over 100m before terminating. Ditches SG8021 and SG8030 extended laterally between these boundaries and divided the area into

three rectangular enclosures. The central enclosure measured 45m by 40m; the enclosures on either side were of similar length, but their widths are unknown. The trackway does not appear to have functioned during this time, its ditches having been cut by ditch SG8025. More than 300 sherds of grog-tempered pottery were recovered from ditch SG8025, and a larger assemblage of some 600 sherds was collected from ditch SG8021. It was similarly dominated by grog-tempered pottery, though with post-conquest material including Verulamium-region white ware and South Gaulish samian also present. A butt-beaker in a sandy fabric was recovered from ditch SG8030. The pottery points to deposition in the mid/late 1st century, probably not extending much beyond *c* AD 70/80.

The enclosures to the north of the road were largely mirrored by enclosures to the south. Roadside ditch SG8016 formed the north side of the southern enclosures, which extended perpendicular to the road. The southern boundary was defined by ditch SG8001, which was traced for *c* 60m, and the area between was sub-divided by ditches SG8009, SG8012, SG8013 and SG8014 to form four enclosures, each measuring *c* 50m long. The enclosure defined by SG8009 and SG8012 was *c* 40m wide, though ditches SG8010 and SG8011 suggest internal division. The width of the enclosure defined by SG8012 and SG8013 was a little narrower at 30m and was internally divided by ditch 2554. Ditches SG8013 and SG8014 were only 6m apart and may have defined a trackway. The ditches were all similar in profile, with moderately sloping sides and wide flat bases, and measuring *c* 1m wide and 0.25m deep. Ditch SG8000, to the south of ditch SG8001 and parallel to it, may also have been part of this group of fields. Fifty sherds of pottery were recovered from ditch SG8001. Most was grog-tempered, but the group also included Verulamium-region grey ware and a fine white ware flagon. North Gaulish white ware and a 'Hofheim' flagon in Verulamium-region white ware, as well as grog-tempered ware, were collected from ditch SG8009, and similar material was found in SG8012. Ditches SG8013 and SG8014 contained grog-tempered ware and a small amount of Verulamium-region white ware. Overall, a date for deposition within the third quarter of the 1st century AD is suggested.

Ditch 3250 further to the west may have been a continuation of this series of enclosures. It had the same orientation as the enclosures and contained pottery, including a grog-tempered butt-beaker, likely to have been deposited between AD 43 and 70. Pit 3008 to the south was contemporary with the ditch. It measured 2.8m in diameter and 0.9m deep and had a wide V-shaped profile. The lower fills of the feature comprised redeposited natural soil, but two dumps of pottery were recorded in the upper fills. A layer of charcoal had been deposited above the pottery in the middle part of the sequence, and animal bone fragments were also recovered. The pit appears to have been the focus of waste deposition,

possibly after serving a primary function, perhaps a waterhole. The pottery assemblage, totalling some 350 sherds, dated to *c* AD 50-70.

#### *G16: Trackway and field system, Phase 4c*

The Phase 4b field system to the north of the road was in turn replaced by a new layout set at a slightly different alignment. Ditches SG8020 and SG8024 appear to have formed a new, wider trackway orientated NE-SW and measuring *c* 20m in width. Ditch SG8020 was traced for *c* 35m, though continued further north as ditch 3104. Interventions through ditch SG8020 showed that it cut Phase 4a ditch SG8026 and phase 4b ditch SG8020. Ditch SG8024 extended for *c* 210m. Two ditches, SG8027 and SG8032, extended perpendicular to SG8020 to define two enclosures *c* 45m long. Their eastern termini were not identified. The ditches belonging to this phase were of consistent profile, being steep-sided, V-shaped cuts *c* 1m wide and up to 0.5m deep. Grog-tempered pottery and post-conquest reduced and oxidised wares consistent with a mid/late 1st century date were recovered from the trackway ditches.

#### *Possible roadside structures* (Figs 2.8 and 2.11)

A group of eight small pits or postholes (SG8159) was uncovered immediately north of roadside ditch SG8018/SG8019/SG8137 and may represent a structure *c* 4.5m long and up to 2m wide. The features were interpreted on excavation as cremation burials owing to the presence of abundant charcoal and what appeared to be burnt bone in their fills. However, although five of them contained cremated bone, the amounts of bone were tiny, with all four containing less than 1g of cremated bone and the fifth containing only 2.7g. Moreover, analysis was unable to confirm whether the bone was human or animal. The postholes were all circular in shape and the smallest was 0.24m in diameter and the largest 0.6m. They were between 0.05m and 0.14m deep, although all had undoubtedly suffered from horizontal truncation as the surface of the features had been disturbed. Two of the features contained pottery dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period and one contained pottery dated more firmly to the early Roman period. One posthole (3337) cut ditch SG8021, indicating that the putative structure was later than the enclosure formed in part by the ditch.

More postholes were recorded *c* 20m north of the road. These were in the form of two alignments (SG8031) that extended between trackway ditch SG8022 and enclosure ditch SG8020. They were orientated NW-SE and parallel with the road. The south alignment was some 9m long and consisted of eight postholes. The westernmost posthole was larger than the others, measuring 0.8m across its widest extent, compared with diameters of up to 0.2m for the rest. The north alignment was 8m long



Fig. 2.11 Plan of posthole structures SG8031 and SG8159

and comprised seven postholes, each *c* 0.2m in diameter. That the alignments extended up to Phase 4a ditch SG8022 and were perpendicular to it suggests that they were contemporary with the ditch. Alternatively, as they also appear to respect Phase 4b ditch SG8021, it is possible that the alignments are contemporary with that ditch, but that ditch SG8022 remained visible within the landscape.

**G6: Western continuation of the roadside field system** (Figs 2.12 and 2.13)

Group G6 is defined as an early Roman field system that extended across the western part of the site. The southernmost part of the group, recorded in the

Aylesbury Vale Parkway area, represents a continuation of the G14-G16 roadside enclosures seen to the east and so are described here (Fig. 2.12). The pottery recovered from the G6 features here was exclusively Roman, but was not sufficiently diagnostic to enable the dates of the features to be refined any further than this. However, given their similarity to the field system to the east, an early Roman date seems appropriate. In their earliest form these features comprised a pair of insubstantial parallel ditches (329, 355/357) aligned NE-SW and *c* 50m apart. Ditch 329 was exposed for a total length of 28m and extended further to the south beyond the edge of the excavation. Its greatest surviving dimensions were at the southern end, where it measured 1.35m wide and 0.3m deep, and at the northern end it petered out rather than ending in a clearly defined terminus. This is likely to indicate that its northward extent had been destroyed by plough truncation. Ditch 355/357 similarly continued to the south beyond the excavation. Although it measured 1.04m wide and 0.38m deep at the southern end, it was considerably less substantial for most of its recorded length. It extended into the excavation area for some 47m, and had been truncated at its northern end by a later plough furrow. A break in this ditch 15m from the southern edge of the excavation is likely to be the result of later ploughing and not an original feature. No artefactual material was recovered from either ditch.

Ditches 329 and 355/357 were superseded by ditch SG332, which defined a boundary that extended laterally across both earlier ditches. Ditch SG332 was recorded for a distance of *c* 70m, although it may originally have extended further as the ends petered out due to plough truncation rather than ending in deliberate terminals. It varied from 0.6m to 1.2m wide and was 0.23m deep, and yielded a small assemblage of 11 sherds (36g) of Roman pottery (Fig. 2.13, section 212). Ditches 354 and 657 branched off its southern side and extended for 10m, perhaps indicating that the presence of fields or enclosures adjoining the main boundary.

The final phase of this sequence of features was represented by a single ditch (356), which cut ditch 332 and appears to represent a re-establishment of the boundary formerly defined by ditch 355/357. Ditch 356 could be traced for a length of *c* 30m, petering out at its southern end and truncated at its northern end by a plough furrow. As with the other ditches in this sequence it was rather shallow, measuring 0.8m wide and 0.32m deep. It contained two small sherds of Roman pottery.

One other ditch may have formed part of this group of boundaries, but did not have stratigraphic relationships that would enable its place within the sequence to be established. Ditch 320 was located to the north-west of the main group of ditches and extended for at least 48m on a NE-SW orientation, continuing beyond the northern edge of the excavation. It thus lay approximately parallel to the

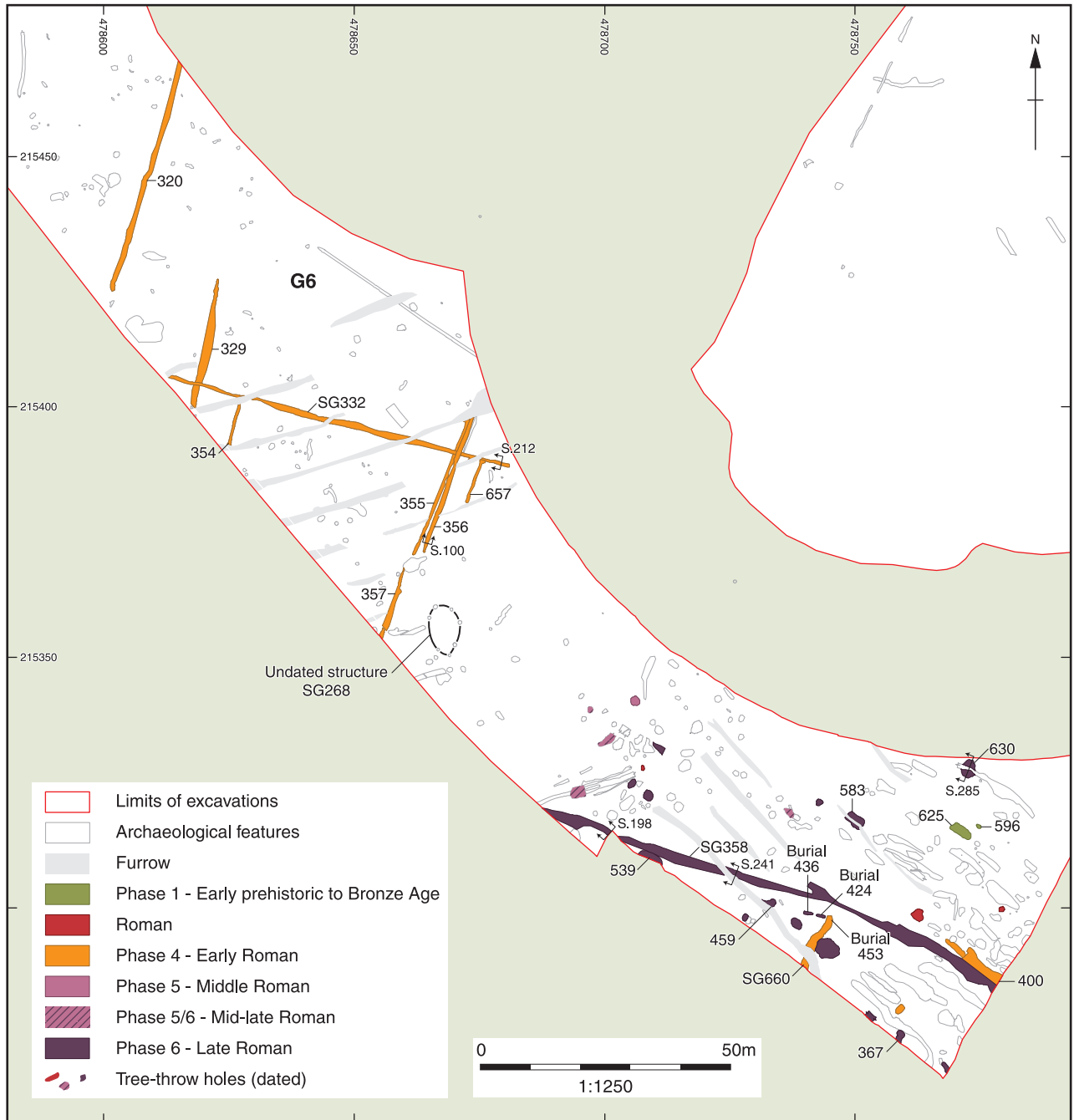


Fig. 2.12 Multi-phase plan of features in east of site (Aylesbury Vale Parkway)

boundaries of the earliest and latest phases in the sequence and at right angles to ditch 332. It was of similarly modest dimensions to the other features, measuring 1.2m wide and 0.18m deep, and a single scrap of Roman pottery was recovered from its fill.

Two ditches (400 and SG660) identified to the south-east lay at right angles to each other and may have defined two sides of a rectilinear enclosure. Ditch SG660 was orientated NE-SW and measured up to 1.5m wide and 0.3m deep. A small assemblage of pottery was recovered from the ditch, including rims from at least three grog-tempered jars dating to the late Iron Age or early Roman period and some

smaller sherds of post-conquest type. Ditch 400, which was also dated by pottery to this phase, was recorded some 15m to the east. The edge of the feature was disturbed by a later tree-throw hole, but the depth was similar to ditch SG660.

#### G6: Field system to the north (Fig. 2.14-16)

Field ditches on the same prevailing alignment as Akeman Street and the roadside enclosures were recorded in the northern part of the site and may have formed part of a more extensive field system laid out at broadly the same time. Four groups of



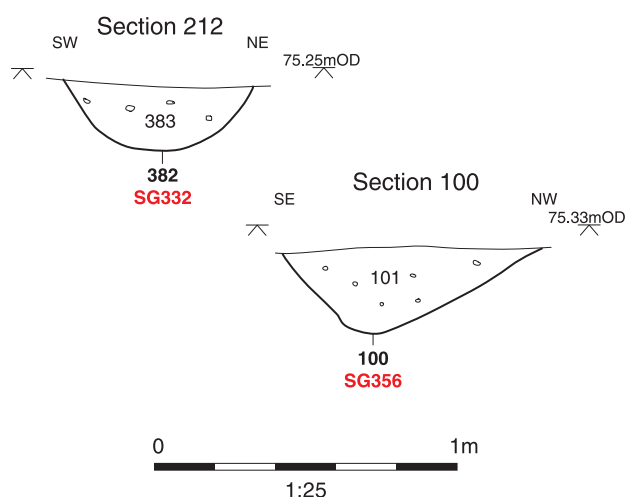


Fig. 2.13 Sections through ditches SG332 and SG356 (G6; Phase 4)

ditches were exposed. Ditches SG8091, SG8092 and SG8087 were recorded to the north of Phase 3 trackway G1 (Fig. 2.14). Six sherds of pottery, including grog-tempered ware and Roman-period reduced ware, were collected. Features enclosed by the ditches were limited to short segments of ditches, hinting at internal division, or tree-throw holes.

The main group of ditches south of trackway G1 comprised ditches SG8127, SG8128, SG8129, SG8130 and SG8131. Ditch SG8128, orientated NE-SW, formed the principal axis. Ditches SG8129 and SG8130 extended perpendicular from its east side to form enclosures *c* 10m wide. Ditch SG8127 extended from its west side, and sub-divisions or small enclosures were suggested by other ditches, including SG8131. Pottery from ditches SG8128 and SG8130 included grog-tempered ware, South Gaulish samian ware and Verulamium-region white ware, pointing to deposition in the second half of the 1st century AD. However, black-burnished ware and Central Gaulish samian ware were recovered from SG8129, suggesting that the enclosures remains in use to some extent in the later 2nd century.

A group of ditches further north and east comprised ditches SG8080, SG8081, SG8082, SG8083, SG8085, SG8086, SG8087 and SG8088. The area exposed here was much more restricted, and so the pattern of the field system was fragmentary, but alignments matched those to the west. Pottery was restricted to a single sherd of grog-tempered ware from ditch SG8082 and three sherds of Roman-period reduced ware from ditch SG8087.

The easternmost area of the field system included ditches SG8060, SG8065, SG8066, SG8067, SG8068, and SG8069 (Fig. 2.15). These were on a slightly different alignment to the boundaries to the west, and in fact were more closely aligned with the Phase 5 (middle Roman) ladder settlement, suggesting that these features belong to a different system. Ditch SG8060, orientated NW-SE, provided

a principal axis. Ditches SG8065 and SG8066 extended from SG8060 to the north at right angles to form an enclosure 30m by 30m and open at the north end. Some 60 sherds of pottery were recovered from SG8060. This included South Gaulish samian ware and Verulamium-region white ware, dating deposition to the second half of the 1st century or later. Another enclosure was formed by ditches SG8067, SG8068 and SG8069. No pottery was recovered from them, but the ditches are presumed to be early Roman in date, given their relationship to ditch SG8060. Another enclosure, in between the two described, was defined by ditches SG8060, SG8066 and SG8067.

#### G24: Enclosure and roundhouse (Fig. 2.15)

A square enclosure (G24) set within the early Roman field system (G6) in the northern part of the site may represent the earliest incarnation of the Phase 5 ladder settlement. The enclosed area measured *c* 40m NE-SW and 40m NW-SE. The ditch (SG8062) that formed the north-west and north-east sides was *c* 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep (Fig. 2.16, section 1720). Ditch SG8063, which was narrower than SG8062, appeared to form the south-east side. The south-west side of the enclosure has not been identified, but it is possible that Phase 5 ditch SG8162 was originally dug in the early Roman period to form the south-west side and may even have been a continuation of ditch SG8060. Alternatively, the enclosure may have been open at this end.

A roundhouse (SG8061) was built within the southern part of the enclosure. The structure had been cut by Phase 5 ditch SG8060A and then by plough furrows. (Ditch SG8060A had been recorded in the field as a continuation of ditch SG8060, but on the grounds of the stratigraphy and the finds recovered from it is likely to be a separate feature.) The surrounding gully, presumably dug for drainage, consisted of two arcs. The location of the entrance was not clear, but it is likely to have been in the east; two large postholes and a slot (SG8161) may have functioned as part of doorway or porch. Stake-holes between the northernmost posthole (3757) and the terminus of the gully arc may be part of the walling. The gully had a diameter of *c* 11m. It had a concave profile, measuring *c* 0.5-0.6m wide and *c* 0.3m deep (Fig. 2.16, sections 1724, 1726 and 1729). One of the gully terminals cut an earlier posthole, 3732 (Fig. 2.16, section 1726). Some 260 sherds of pottery were recovered from the gully. Most of it dated to the second half of the 1st century AD, though the fill of one intervention contained a group of pottery dated to the 2nd century. However, this was dated on the basis of a single flanged dish in fine reduced ware, and it is possible that this piece is intrusive or more properly belonged to an earlier dated form. Pottery from SG8062 was dated to the second half of the 1st century AD on the basis of Verulamium-region grey ware and grog-tempered ware present. Several

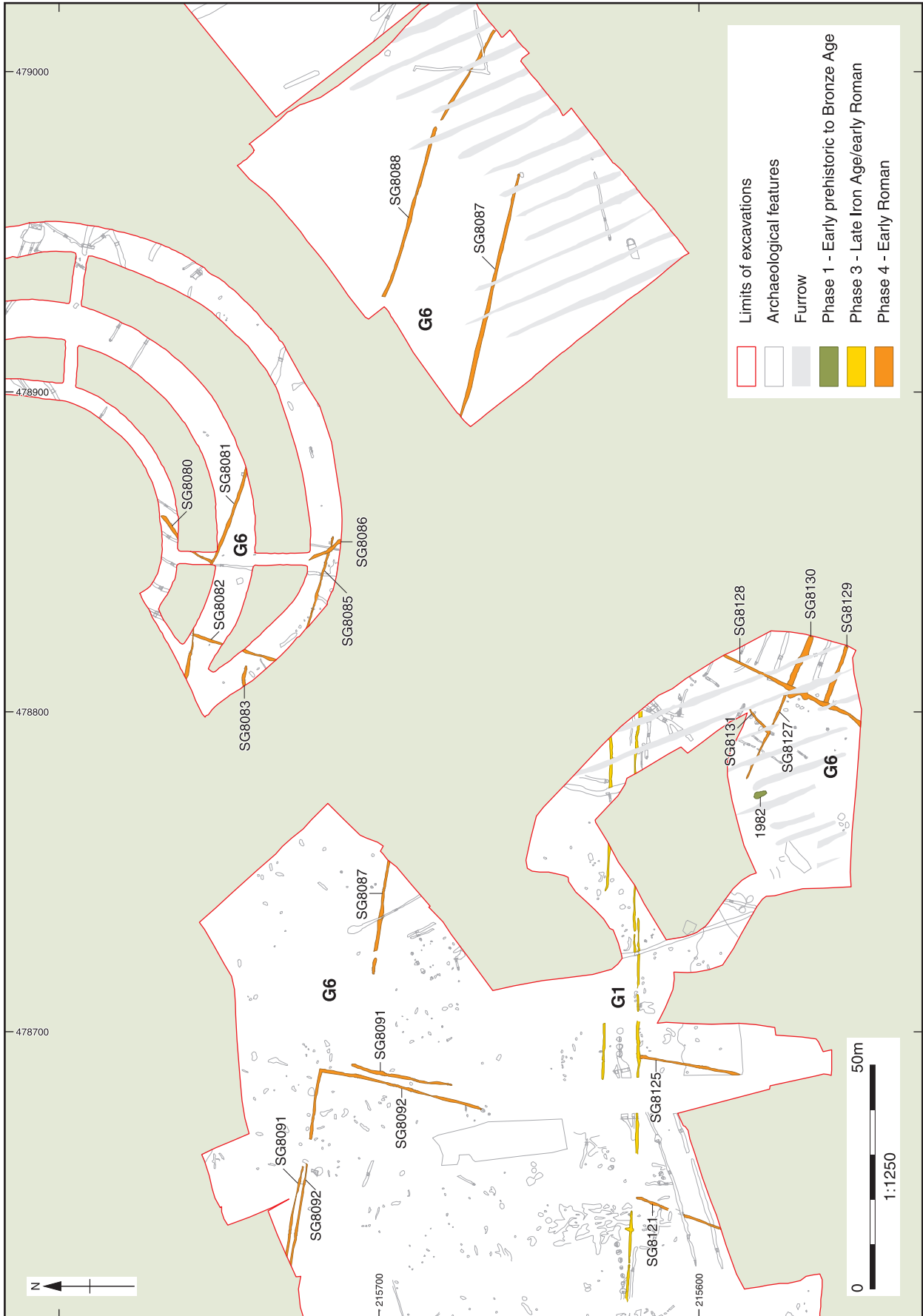


Fig. 2.14 Plan of early Roman field system (G6) in the north-west of the site



Fig. 2.15 Multi-phase plan of features in central part of site, including ladder settlement

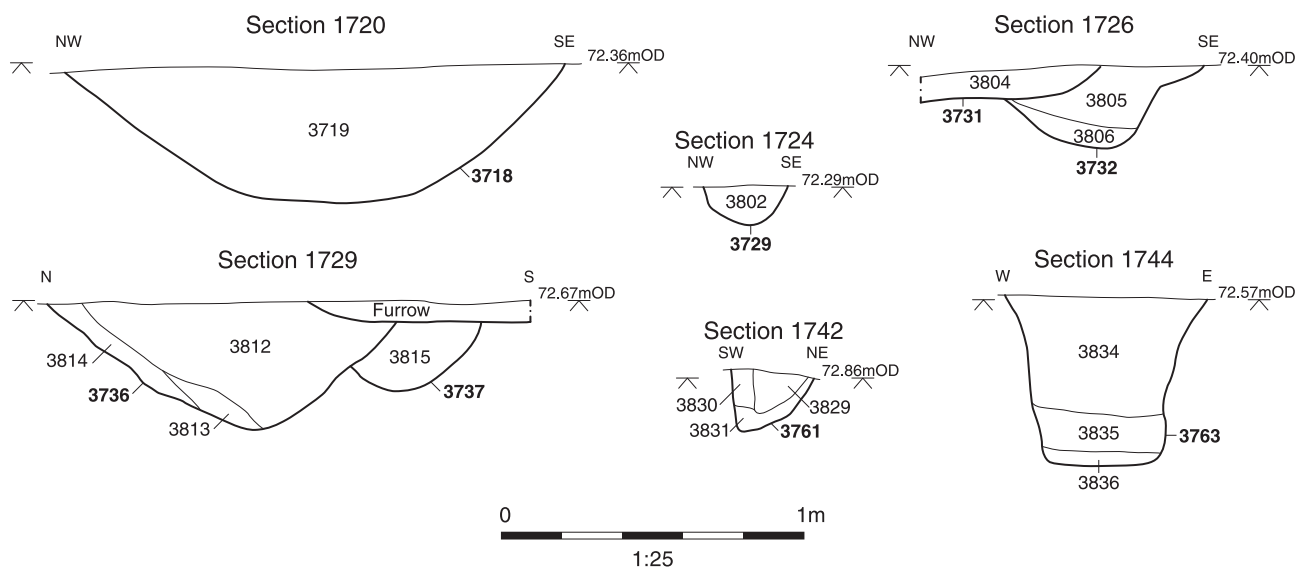


Fig. 2.16 Sections through G24 enclosure and roundhouse

features located within the roundhouse. The possible doorway or porch consisted of two relatively large postholes up to 1m in diameter and 2m apart connected by a narrow slot *c* 0.15m wide. Other postholes within the structure may relate to internal division.

Postholes to the west of the structure (3960, 3962, 3957 and 3763) may form part of a fenceline. One of the postholes (3763) contained fired clay and daub, probably from the adjacent building. A loose group of three postholes lay in the northern part of the enclosure. These may have formed part of a structure, possibly a pen or fence. The substantial remains of a jar (SF 2788) in a granular reduced fabric, blackened probably from cooking, was recovered from one of the postholes (3857).

It is worth drawing attention to curvilinear anomalies south of group G24, identified by geophysical survey. One was a horseshoe-shaped feature that encroached on Phase 5 trackway G11 (Fig. 2.24). Another was what appeared to be a short length of a ditch or gully within the southern part of the Phase 5 ladder settlement. Both may be structural, possibly roundhouses, and would extend the area of domestic settlement represented by G24 further south. However, neither need be contemporary with G24, though the horseshoe-shaped anomaly presumably pre-dates the trackway.

## PHASE 5: MIDDLE ROMAN (Fig. 2.17)

### Ladder settlement

The outline of a ladder settlement in the central part of the site was revealed by geophysical survey (Fig. 2.17). The results showed a row of regular, rectangular plots that formed a linear alignment based around a trackway orientated NE-SW. These regular trends were predominantly located on the north-west side of the trackway with evidence on

the opposite side limited to what appeared to be field systems. The individual plots all appeared from the geophysical results to show internal partitions and a number of pit-like responses were also detected. Fieldwalking in this area produced 40 sherds of pottery attributable to the Roman period (Foundations Archaeology 1999). The settlement has largely been preserved *in situ*, but evaluation in 2002 allowed limited investigation of the anomalies (Fig. 1.3C). Three trenches (22, 27 and 29) exposed parts of the settlement.

Trench 22 exposed a pit 0.75m in diameter and 0.51m deep. It contained three fills, two of which – the second and top fills – held pottery of mid-1st-2nd century date. The fills contained charcoal fragments and a high proportion of burnt stone, suggesting an episode of *in situ* burning. Trench 27 extended across the trackway and the east side of the plots. It uncovered two pits, a curvilinear gully and a second ditch or gully. Finds included pottery and a fragment from a copper alloy brooch dated to the 2nd century. Trench 29 was located across the west side of the plots. A single feature was observed – a roughly L-shaped ditch or gully.

### G7 and G11: Trackway

Part of the ladder settlement extended into the excavation area and these features were duly investigated. The main feature revealed was the trackway (G11), which was orientated NE-SW and extended south presumably to meet Akeman Street, though it was not quite perpendicular to the road. The trackway was defined by ditches SG8054 and SG8057, approximately 20m apart (Fig. 2.15). Smaller gullies noted between the ditches are most likely wheel ruts. Ditch SG8054, on the south-east side, was 2.9m wide and 0.85m deep. It had steep sides and an undulating, though generally flat, base, and was filled in four episodes (Fig. 2.18).

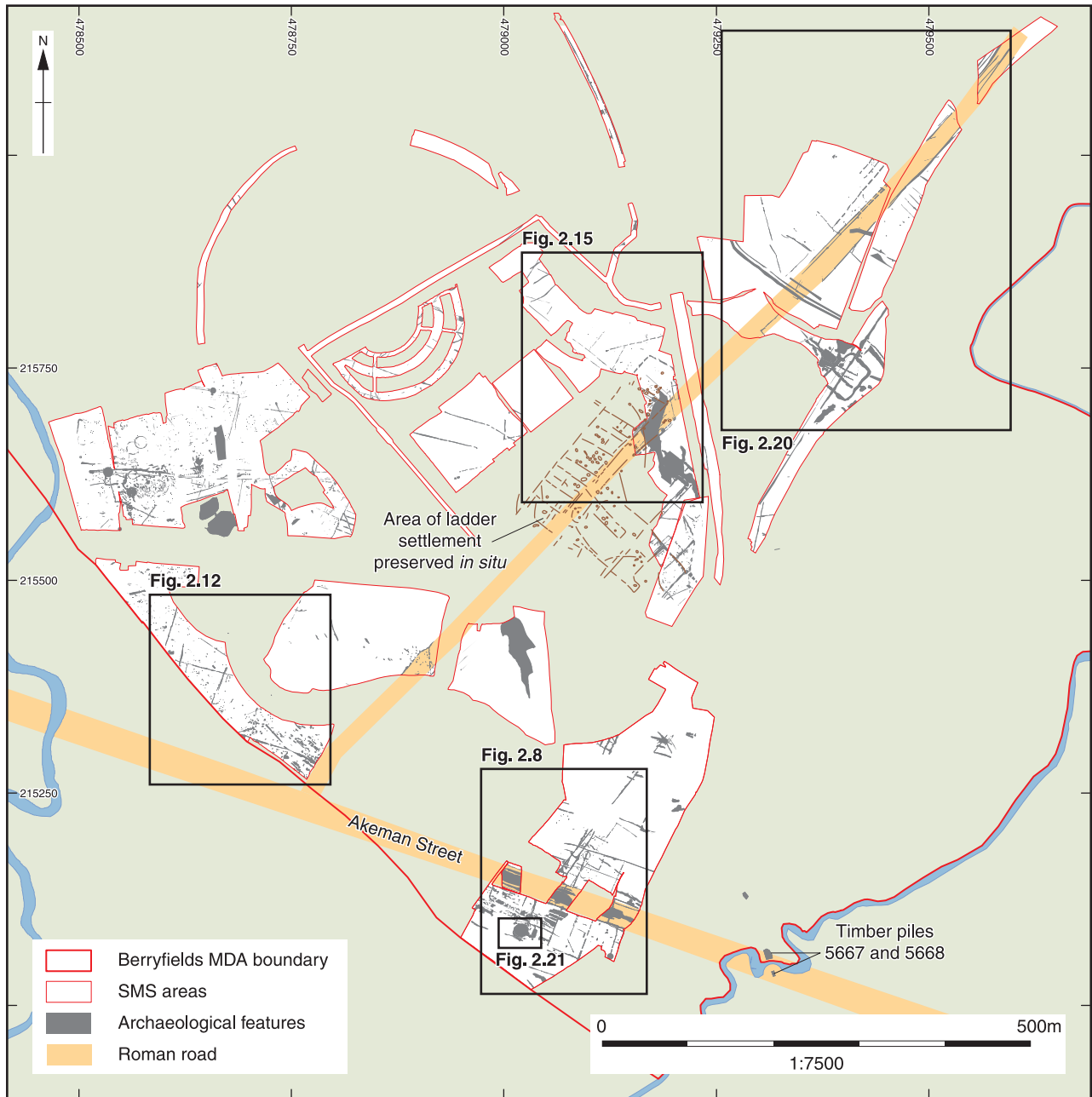


Fig. 2.17 Location of middle Roman features (Phase 5)

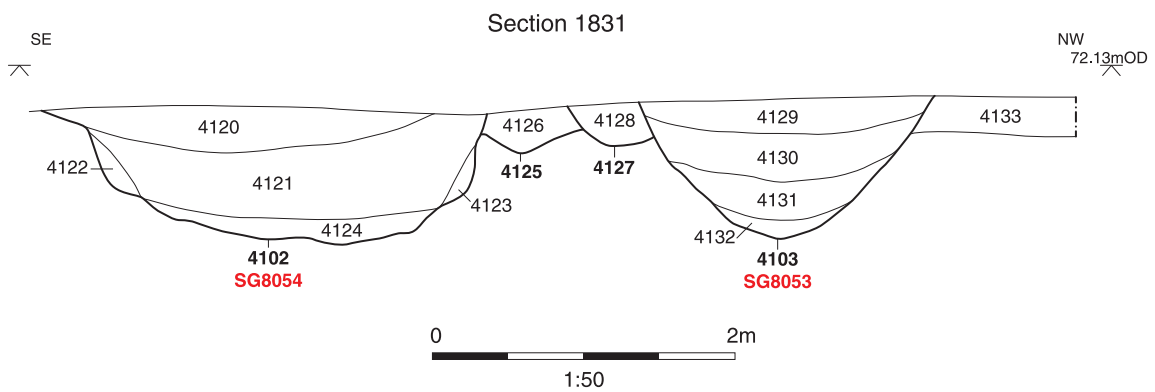


Fig. 2.18 Section through ditch groups SG8053 (G23) and SG8054 (G11)

Ditch SG8057 was up to *c* 1.5m wide and *c* 0.3m deep with a concave profile.

The remains of a cobbled surface (4117) were recorded between the trackway ditches (Figs 2.15 and 2.19). The surface indicates that the trackway was at least partially metalled, though the roughly linear pattern of the layer suggests that the metalling was limited, possibly to create a causeway. The surface consisted of a compacted layer of gravel within a silty clay matrix, measuring up to 0.1m thick. An arrangement of square and rectangular stones (4118), *c* 2.5m square, cut the surface and so was a later feature. Its function was unclear, but it may represent a heavily truncated stone-lined pit or an oven-type structure.

The trackway continued (G7) to the south (recorded as SG8132) and to the north (Fig. 2.20), where it comprised two ditches on the west side (SG8050 and SG8051) and one, or possibly two ditches on the east side (SG8052). A total length of *c* 1km was therefore traced.

The trackway's relationship with Akeman Street is unknown, but its west side was not seen at the west end of the Aylesbury Vale Parkway site, into which the course of the ditch projects, suggesting that the trackway turned before meeting the early Roman fields in this area and joining the road. The trackway's putative relationship with the roadside fields suggests that the trackway was the later feature. Small amounts of pottery were recovered from various interventions along the trackway

ditch, but none of the context-groups were dated closer than mid-1st to mid-2nd century.

### G12: Ladder settlement

The north-east corner of the northernmost plot of the ladder settlement was exposed (Fig. 2.15). The boundary of the plot was defined by ditches SG8058 and SG8059. Ditch SG8058 appears to have continued further west to form the south side of a trackway. Phase 4 ditch SG8060 formed the north side of the trackway, creating a route *c* 8m wide. Ditch SG8060A cut Phase 4 roundhouse SG8061. Ditch SG8162, which was parallel with SG8058, may have been a replacement of ditch SG8058 or was replaced by SG8058 or alternatively together formed a double-ditch arrangement to the boundary. The latest pottery from SG8058 was a bead-rimmed dish in a sandy reduced ware and a fragment from a Curle 11 dish in Central Gaulish samian ware, dating deposition to *c* AD 120-200 or later. Among the pottery from SG8162 was a Drag. 33 cup and Drag. 18/31 dish in Central Gaulish samian ware and Oxford fine white ware, pointing to a mid-2nd century date for deposition.

Ditch SG8162 was cut by waterhole 3924. The waterhole was 4.05m in diameter and at least 1m deep (the bottom not having been reached). Five fills were excavated. The lower fills were blueish grey in colour, suggesting formation in standing water. Eighty sherds of pottery were recovered from the feature. The latest material included a fragment from a Drag. 27 cup in Central Gaulish samian ware and a hook-flanged mortarium in Oxford white ware (Young 1977, type M2), suggesting a mid-2nd century date for deposition. Pits 3848 and 3846 and waterhole 3993 were situated a short distance south-west of waterhole 3924 and also date to this period. These features appear to be just some of the pits or waterholes within the ladder enclosures represented by the circular anomalies recorded in the geophysical survey. A few linear features, representing subdivision within the plot, were also recorded.

### Akeman Street and associated features

#### G8 and G9: Flanking ditches

Ditches SG8017 and SG8164 were dug either side of Akeman Street. While these appear on plan to represent the road's inner pair of flanking ditches (Fig. 2.8), they are better regarded as a replacement for the ditches dug in the early Roman period, reducing the width of the road to *c* 15m. Both ditches had similar U-shaped profiles and measured *c* 1.8m wide and 0.6m deep. Ditch SG8017, on the north side, represented a recut of earlier roadside ditch SG8018 (Fig. 2.9, section 1651), although as noted above, there were difficulties with the sequence of ditches here, and both ditches cut the Phase 4 road surface. The later

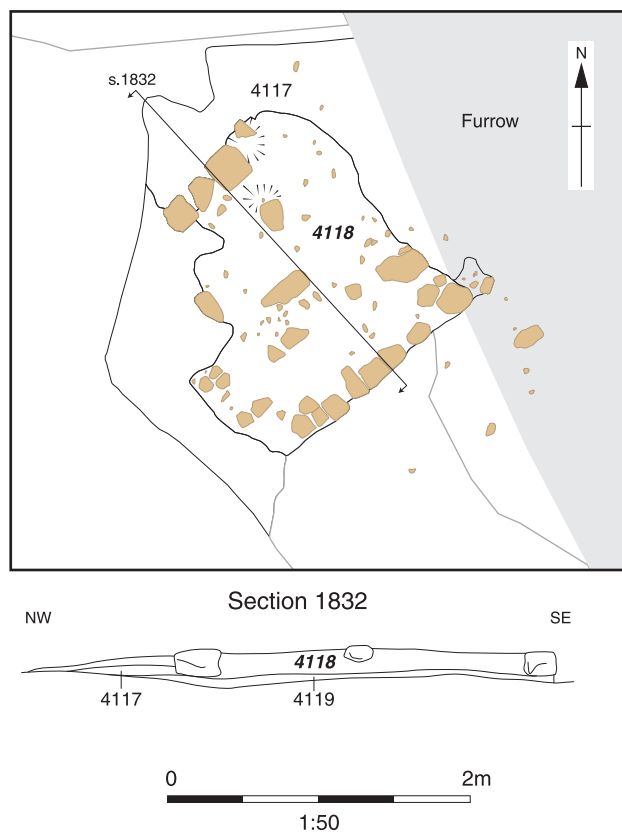


Fig. 2.19 Plan and section of 4117/4118

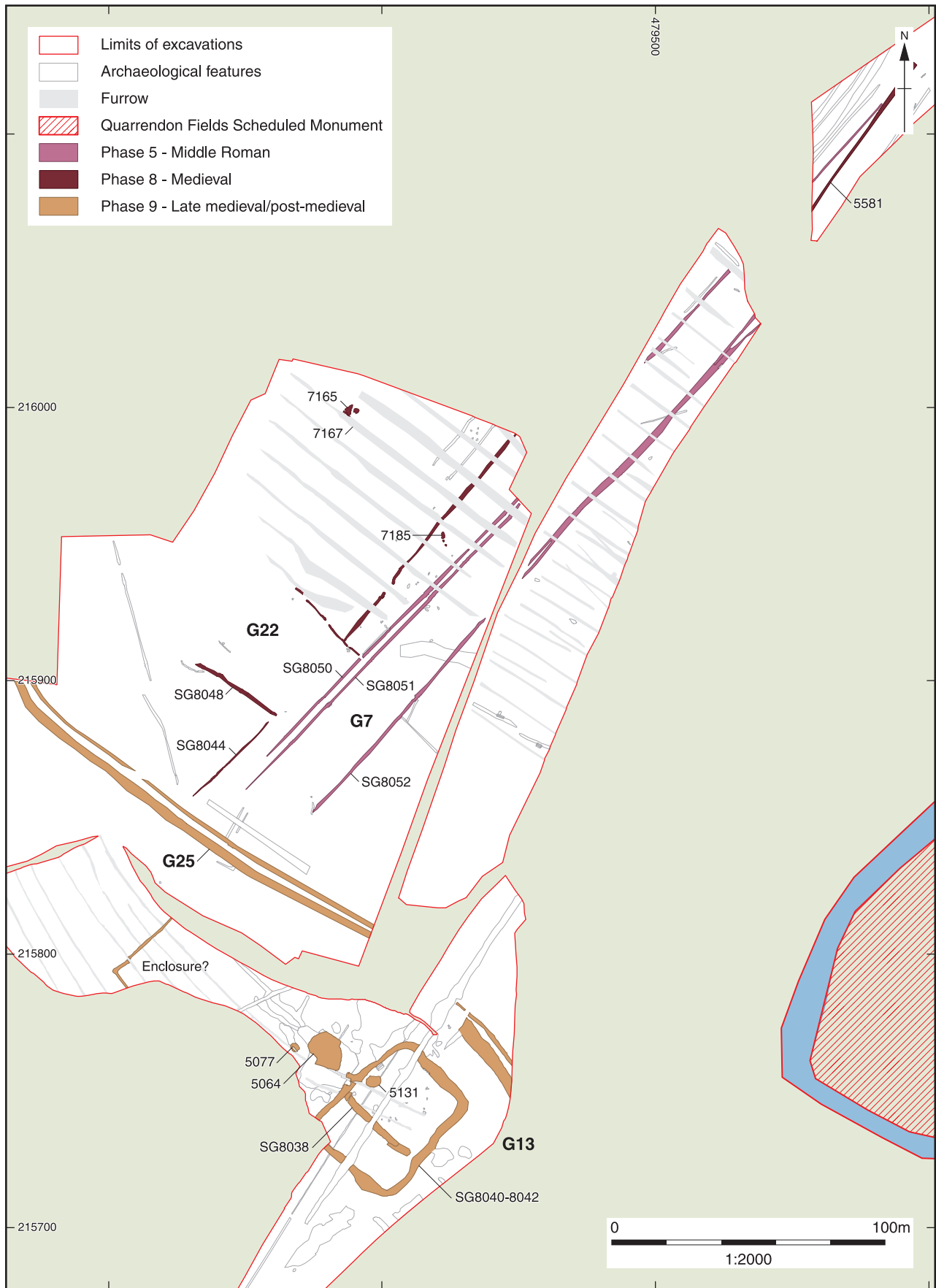


Fig. 2.20 Multi-phase plan of features in north-east tip of site

phasing of these ditches is supported by the small quantities of pottery recovered from the features. Two sherds of pink grogged ware, a fragment from a copy in fine oxidised ware of a samian ware flanged bowl (Drag. 38), and body sherds in Oxford fine reduced ware were recovered from SG8017, while a substantially complete indented beaker in a fine reduced ware was collected from SG8164. Together, the pottery suggests a date from the mid/late 2nd century for deposition. A road surface (3431) attributed to this phase comprised sandy silt

containing *c* 10% gravel. A concentration of animal bone (3310), found to be the remains of a single dog, was found in the upper fill of ditch SG8017.

**G17: Field system south of Akeman Street**

Ditches south of Akeman Street were later additions to, or replacements of, the early Roman field system south. Ditches SG8002 and SG8008 were orientated NW-SE (Fig. 2.8). The latter cut Phase 4 ditch SG8009 and was in turn recut by SG8136, which

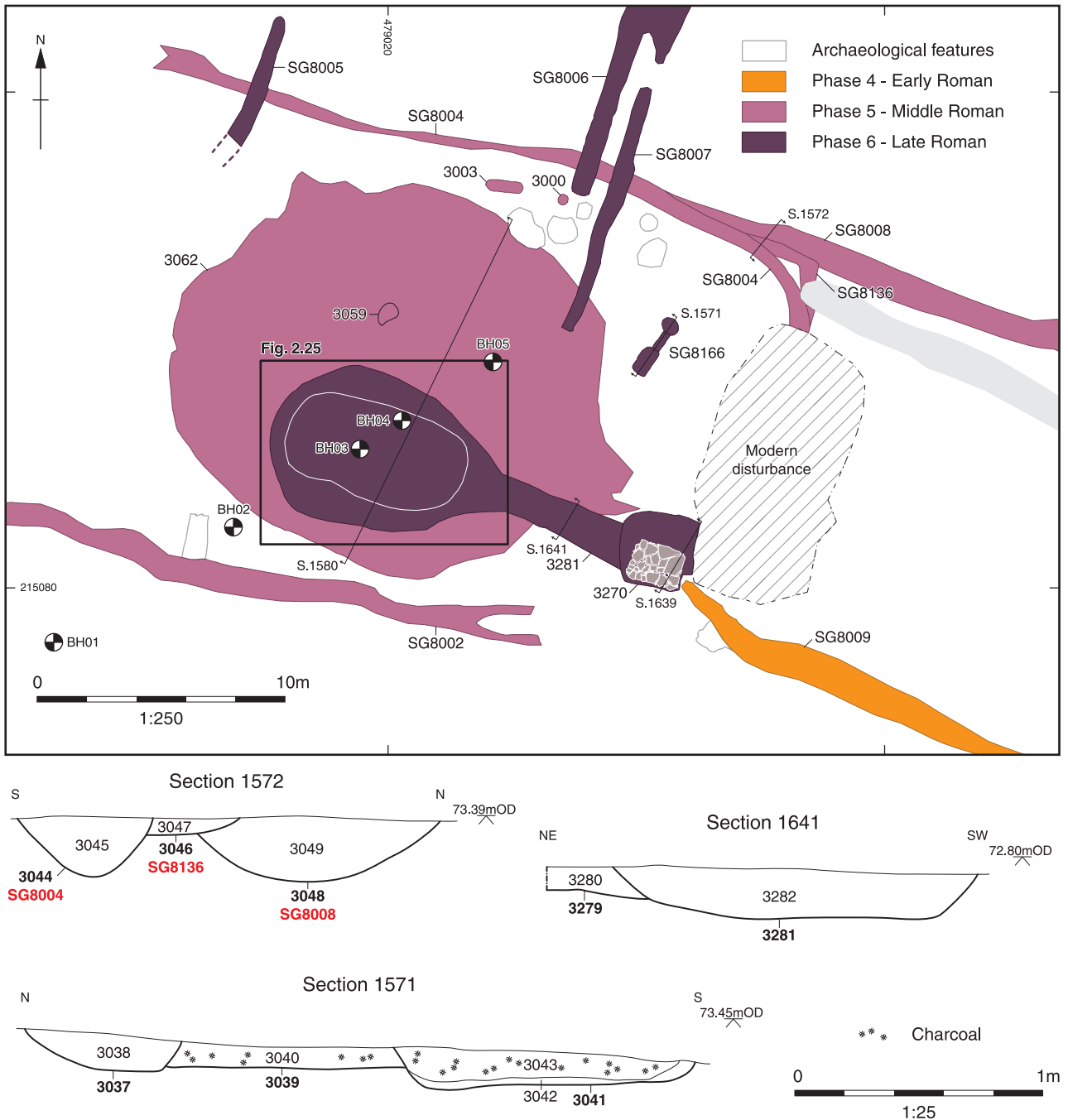


Fig. 2.21 Plan and sections of features in groups G10 (pond 3062, pit 3067 and associated features) and G18 (field ditches)



curved to the south at its east end, possibly to enclose pond 3062. The ditch cannot be traced further south owing to modern disturbance. Ditch SG8136 was subsequently recut by ditch SG8004, which also curved to the south at its east end (Fig. 2.21, section 1572). A plain-rimmed dish, the rim delineated by a groove, was recovered from SG8008, while a sherd of Lower Nene Valley grey ware was collected from SG8002. Ditch SG8004 contained pink grogged ware and Central Gaulish samian ware. Together, the pottery suggests deposition spanning the mid-2nd to mid-3rd century.

### G10: Pond 3062

Pond 3062 was situated between ditches SG8002 and SG8008 (Figs 2.8 and 2.21). While evidence from the auger survey and environmental analyses, particularly land and freshwater molluscs, suggests that the feature had formed naturally through processes that are not entirely understood (see Chapters 5 and 6), for convenience, the description of 'pond', assigned to the feature during excavation, is retained in this report. The feature measured 15.1m wide (NE-SW), 19.1m long (NW-SE) and 1m deep. It had a shallow bowl-like profile, with a long, gentle slope on its north side and a slightly steeper slope to the south (Fig. 2.26).

The feature filled with naturally accumulated deposits of silt and clay. The earliest fill (3063) was a pale blue grey clay, 0.6m in depth. A coin (SF 2635), identified as a dupondius/as of 1st-2nd-century date, was recovered from this fill. The remainder of the pond was filled with mottled blue, grey and orange clay, with the top fill a little siltier. This upper fill (3066) contained 11 sherds of pottery that included a plain-rimmed dish in black-burnished ware, a Gauloise-type amphora in Verulamium-region white ware, and a ring-necked flagon in fine oxidised ware, which together dated the final phase of deposition to *c* AD 120-160 or later. A small pit (3059), measuring up to 1.18m wide and 0.46m deep, had been cut into the upper fill of the pond. This contained a complete grog-tempered butt-beaker, which, dating on typological grounds to the 1st century AD, was almost certainly residual on deposition. The vessel had been broken and repaired in antiquity and it is possible that the vessel had been curated, having been retained in the household over several generations, although its association with fragments of other 1st-century pottery suggests that it represents redeposited waste. While the dating evidence suggests that the feature was receiving material during the 2nd century, it is possible that the earliest deposits were older still, possibly dating to the later 1st century (Phase 4).

### G26: Timber piles beside the River Thame (Figs 2.17 and 3.25)

Development contractors uncovered two large and

*in situ* timbers or piles (5667 and 5668) by the River Thame on the line of Akeman Street while machining on the south-east edge of the mitigation area (Figs 2.17 and 3.25). OA was alerted and the timbers were recovered by the site team. Both piles were made of oak and hewn by axe to a point (Goodburn, Chapter 3). The larger of the two (5667) is some 2.5m long and *c* 450mm by 400mm in cross-section. The other pile (5668) is 1.85m long and *c* 430 by 370mm in cross-section. A Roman date was suspected, but a later date, or even a prehistoric one, was not impossible. Unfortunately, the piles could not be dated by dendrochronology, despite the survival of many annual growth rings, and so a sample from each timber was submitted for radiocarbon dating. The results confirmed a Roman date: cal AD 80-250 for 5667 (SUERC-75478; 1834±30BP), cal AD 80-320 for 5668 (SUERC-75477; 1826±30BP). Both determinations are at 95.4% confidence; the date ranges at 68.2% confidence are confined to the middle Roman period.

### Human burials

Immediately to the north of pond 3062 were two human burials: one cremation burial and one inhumation burial (Fig. 2.20 and 2.22). The cremation burial (3000) was urned and there were also two ancillary vessels within the cremation pit. Unfortunately, the vessels could not be closely dated, but a sample of femur from the cremated bone was radiocarbon dated to cal AD 80-250 at

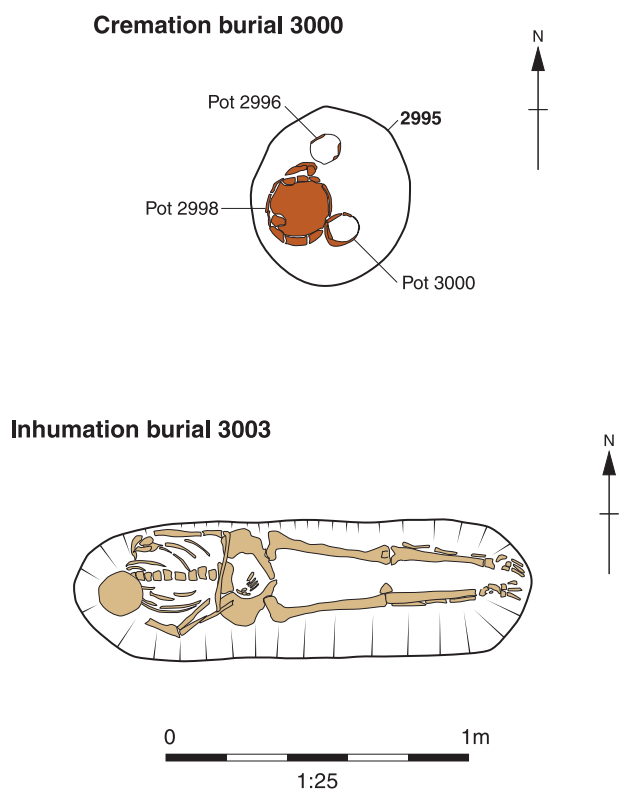


Fig. 2.22 Plans of burials 3000 and 3003

94.5% confidence and cal AD 130-220 at 68.2% confidence (SUERC-75476; 1837±30BP), potentially making the burial contemporary with deposition in the pond. The skeleton was of an adult, but sex could not be determined.

Inhumation grave 3003 lay immediately to the north-west. The grave cut was aligned W-E and measured 1.5m long and 0.5m wide. The skeleton was supine, with its head at the west end. Pottery from the backfill of the grave dated to AD 50-150 and is broadly contemporary with the cremation burial. A sheep/goat pelvis was also found in the fill of the grave.

The remains of a cremation burial (453), consisting of the burnt bones of an adult individual (455) and fragments of a shelly-ware jar (456) that may have served as an urn, were recovered from Phase 4 ditch SG660 near its northern terminal in the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area (Fig. 2.12). No grave cut could be discerned, and it was not entirely clear whether these remains had been incorporated into the fill of the ditch or represented a discrete burial that had been dug into the ditch after it had infilled. Given the fragmentary nature of the vessel, it is perhaps more likely that the remains had been re-deposited. A radiocarbon determination on a sample of cremated bone indicated a date for original burial of cal AD 80-240 (95% confidence; NZA-33951; 1840±25BP).

## PHASE 6: LATE ROMAN (Fig. 2.23)

### Ladder settlement

#### *G23: Roman enclosures and fields to the south-east of the ladder settlement* (Fig. 2.24)

The south-eastern ditch of the Phase 5 trackway (G11) and the metallised road surface or causeway 4117 were cut by a large ditch (SG8053). It was on the same alignment as the trackway ditches and measured 2.5m wide and 0.8m deep. At its northern extent, the ditch turned to the south-east, forming with (unexcavated) ditches to the south-east an enclosure some 50m NW-SE and at least 30m NE-SW. The feature appeared to correspond with the northern part of an enclosure or field recorded in the geophysical survey, which measured some 75m NE-SW. Ditch SG8053 contained two silty fills, the upper main fill contained a small pottery assemblage dated by an Oxford red colour-coated ware mortarium (Young 1977, type C100), an Oxford white ware mortarium and pink grogged ware and dated to c AD 300-350.

To the south-east, ditches SG8163 and SG8167 formed enclosures on the same alignment, representing a continuation of the field or enclosure system and the south-eastern extent of the ladder settlement. Ditch SG8163 formed an enclosure c 24m by 11m; ditch SG8167, onto which SG8163 butted, formed part of a larger enclosure or field. Pottery from the feature included two sherds of

Oxford red colour-coated ware dated to the mid-3rd century onwards. Few features in this area were excavated, but one pit, 9133, has been assigned to this period on the basis of its proximity to SG8163 and the pottery – two sherds of pink grogged ware – recovered from its fill.

### Akeman Street and associated features

#### *G18: Ditches south of Akeman Street* (Fig. 2.8)

Three parallel ditches (SG8005/SG3083, SG8006 and SG8007) were orientated NE-SW and extended to the road, although the relationship between the ditches and the latest flanking ditch of the road (SG8164) lay beyond the area of excavation. A 15m gap was recorded in the course of SG8005/SG3083 and ditch SG8007 was shown to be a recut of ditch SG8006. The gap between ditch SG8005/SG3083 and ditch SG8006/8007 measured 10-15m; the features may represent an enclosure of the southern end of a trackway that continued north, possibly beyond Akeman Street. Pottery from SG8005 included a bead-and-flanged white ware mortarium (Young 1977, type M18) dated from AD 240 onwards. Necked jars in late Roman shelly ware were recovered from the upper fills of both SG8006 and SG8007. It should be noted, however, that the lower fills contained middle Roman pottery, suggesting that the ditches were open and receiving material at this time.

#### *G10: Pit 3067 and associated features* (Figs 2.21 and 2.25-2.28)

##### *Pit 3067* (Figs 2.25 and 2.26)

Pit 3067 had been dug into the infilled pond 3062 south of ditches SG8005/SG3083 and SG8006/SG8007. The pit was oval in plan and measured 8m by 4.5m and 1.5m deep (Figs 2.25 and 2.26). It had steep sides, which flared at the top, and a flat base. Excavation towards the base of the feature became increasingly challenging, as water seeped into the bottom fill, necessitating the use of a pump (Fig. 2.27). An auger hole sunk through the edge of the pit recorded the inflow of water at c 1m below ground level, higher than the base of the feature.

The pit contained a sequence of fills, which contained a rich assemblage of finds, including organic objects preserved in the feature's water-logged deposits. The lowest fill (3074) was a blueish grey clay, suggesting formation in standing water. A number of oak and ash stakes had been preserved within this fill and suggest that the pit contained a structure, possibly forming part of a platform or partitions associated with the function of the feature. Some of the stakes appeared to be *in situ*, such as SF 2684 to the west and SF 2715, SF 2717 and SF 2718 to the east and found underneath basket SF 2687 (Fig. 3.23), having been driven to some extent into the base of the feature. The stakes

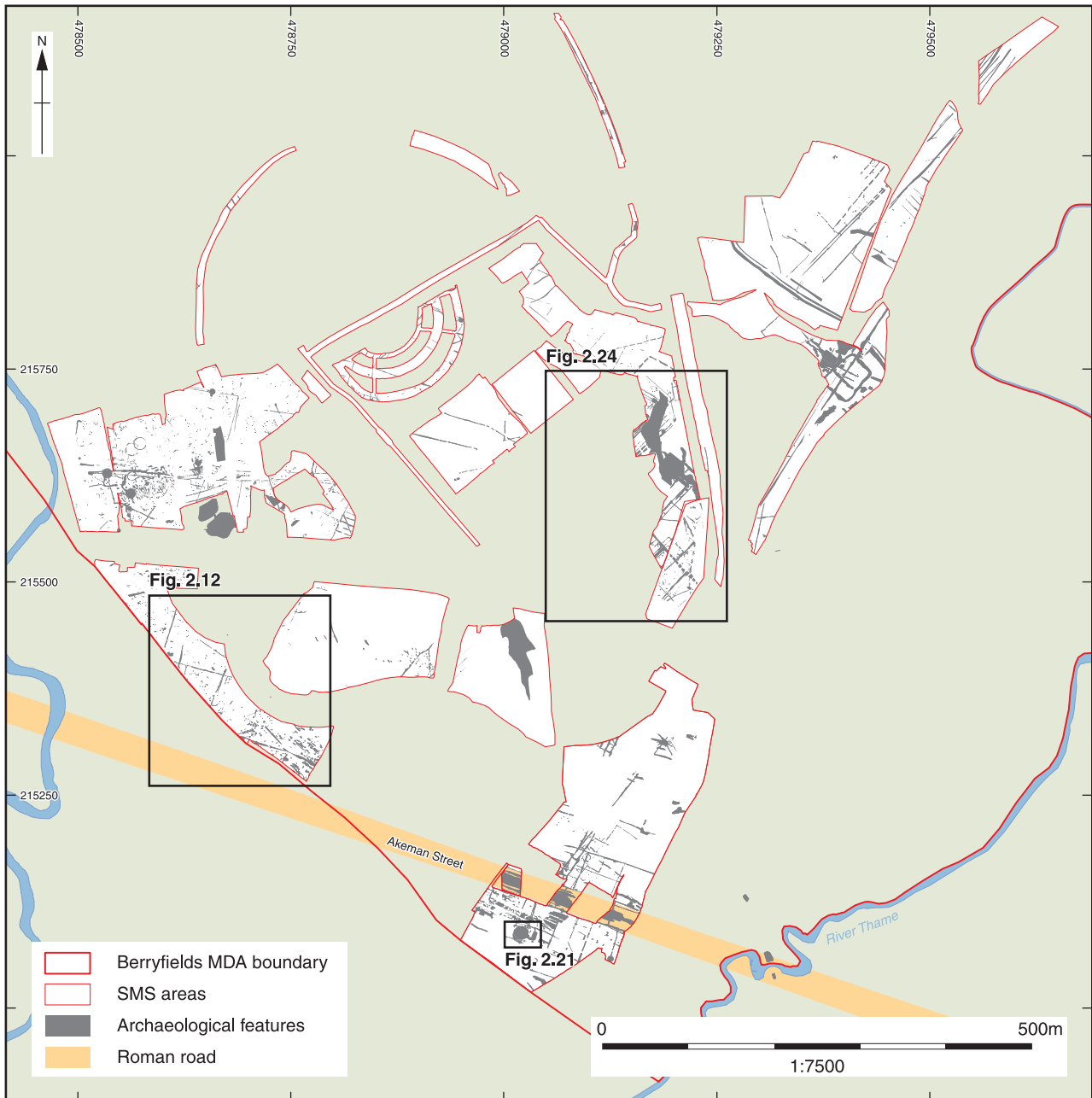


Fig. 2.23 Location of late Roman features (Phase 6)

were concentrated at the east and west ends of the pit and there was also a lateral alignment of four stakes nearer the middle. The deposit contained other wooden items. A partially worked oak saw baulk (SF 2685) comprising two thin planks was found lying horizontally and aligned N-S across the east end of the pit. Part of a broken but carefully made ash mallet head (SF 2678) and handle were found in the central area of the pit. In addition, two small fragments of a carved wooden vessel, possibly a bowl (SF 2731), and small handle, possibly made of a fruit wood, were recovered. At the eastern end of the pit was the remarkable discovery of a basket tray (SF 2687), placed the right way up, but slightly flattened. It was

made of interwoven bands of oak and small whole willow rods woven into a band around the edge. Other discoveries include an incomplete leather shoe (SF 2628), a worked bone pin (SF2672), and fragments of an egg (SF 2679), probably that of a chicken. Deposit 3074 contained a relatively large pottery assemblage, which included four near-complete ceramic vessels (SF 2654, SF 2655, SF 2656, SF 2686), among them an indented beaker dating to the late 2nd to mid-3rd century (Figs 3.3 and 3.8, nos 22-30). While the assemblage as a whole generally fits this date range, the latest piece was a complete lower half of a black-burnished ware jar (SF2656), whose obtuse lattice decoration identifies the vessel as a later type in the sequence

Berryfields

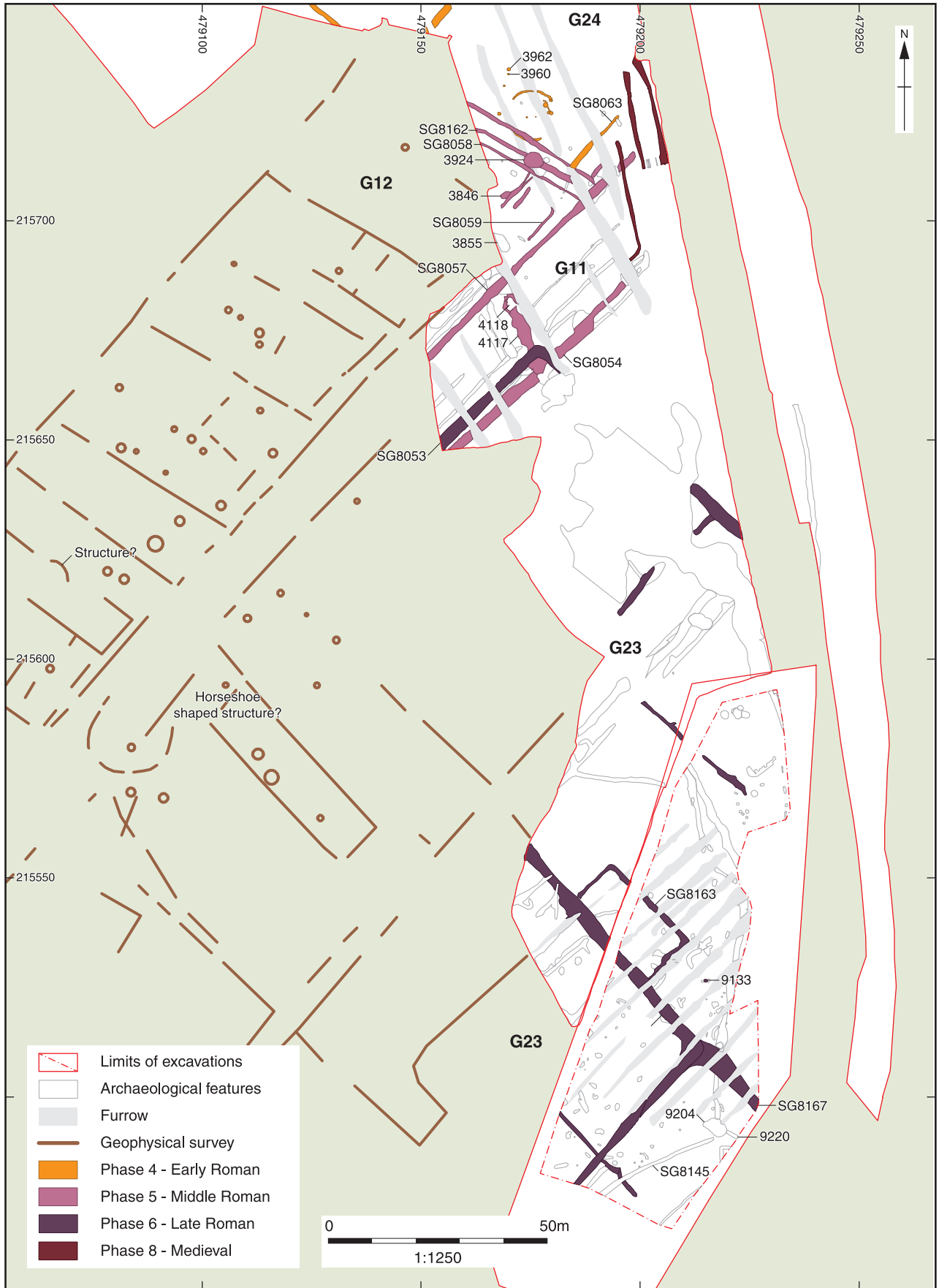


Fig. 2.24 Plan of late Roman ditches (G12 and G23) to south-east of ladder settlement

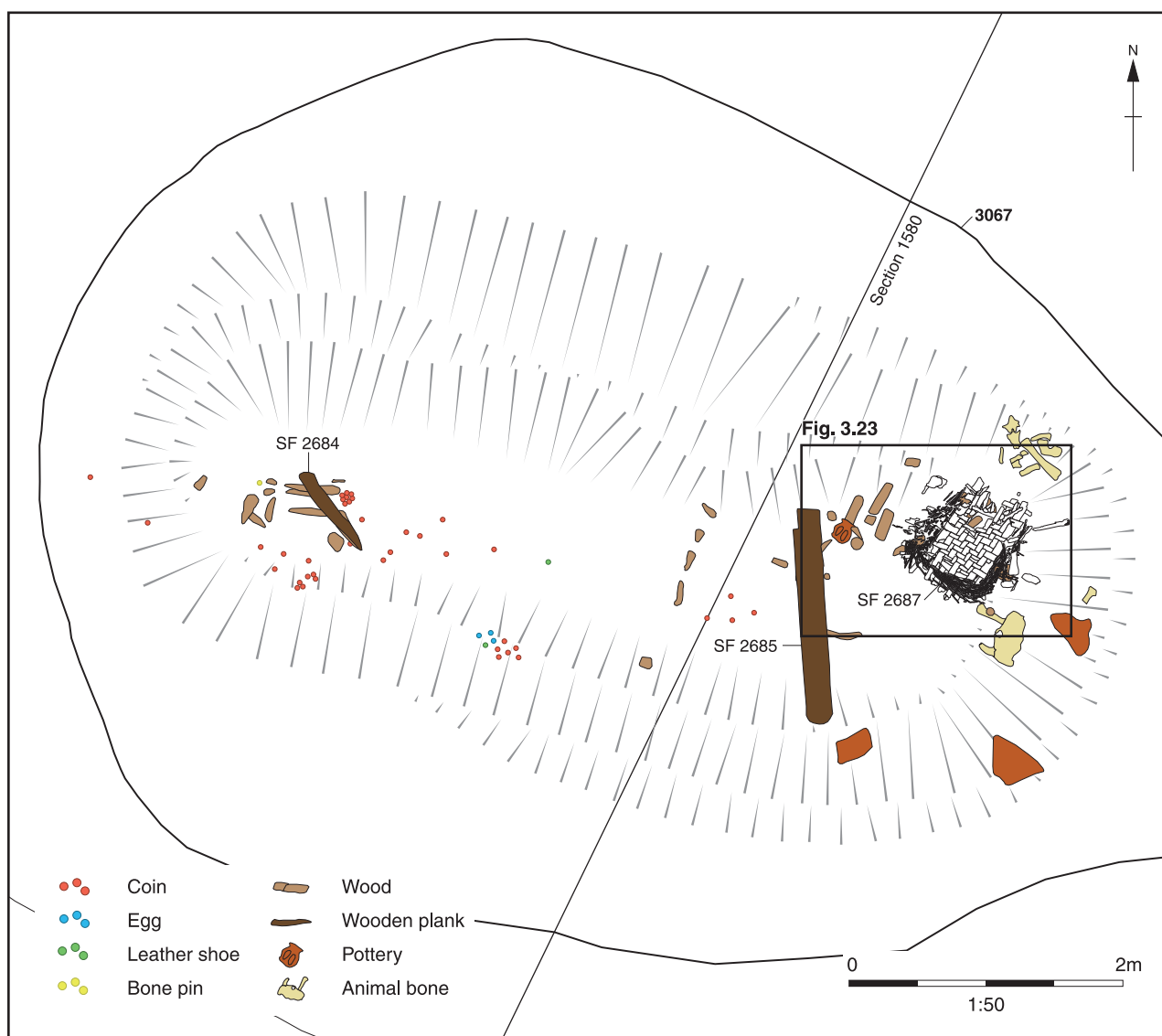


Fig. 2.25 Plan of pit 3067 (G10)

of such vessels, dating after AD 270/80 (Gillam 1957, nos 146-8). This is consistent with the dating of the majority of the 31 coins collected from the fill, which date to the second half of the 3rd century AD. However, it should be noted that the latest coin (one of only two 4th century coins from the deposit) is dated to AD 364-375, and early Roman coins were also present.

Just as interesting was the environmental evidence from the deposit. The remains of beetles from the fill were indicative of standing water, but also the input, perhaps only occasionally, of clean, clear, running water (Allison, Chapter 6). Plant remains included abundant sprouted spelt wheat grains, glume bases, detached embryos and coleoptiles (Meen, Chapter 6). The evidence is characteristic of malting and brewing and indicates that such activity had been undertaken in the vicinity of the pit, the original function of the feature possibly being related to it.

The second fill (3072) comprised a similar dark blue grey clay soil, which produced a further quantity of sprouted grains, glumes and coleoptiles, as well as a pottery assemblage of 25 sherds, the latest of which was from a funnel-necked beaker in Nene Valley colour-coated ware dating to the late 3rd or 4th century.

The third fill (3073) of the pit also contained a significant finds assemblage. Eight coins were recovered, the latest of which dated to AD 275-296. Three birds' eggs, probably from domestic fowl (Nicholson, Chapter 6), were found whole in the southern part of the pit alongside a group of coins. Despite great care, two of the eggs (SF 2613 and SF 2614) were broken during excavation but one was recovered intact (SF 2615). A second leather shoe was also found in this fill (not of a pair with the shoe in 2074, but of similar style), as well as another wooden stake (SF 2617).

The upper fills of the pit were also blueish grey clays and there was also a layer of iron panning

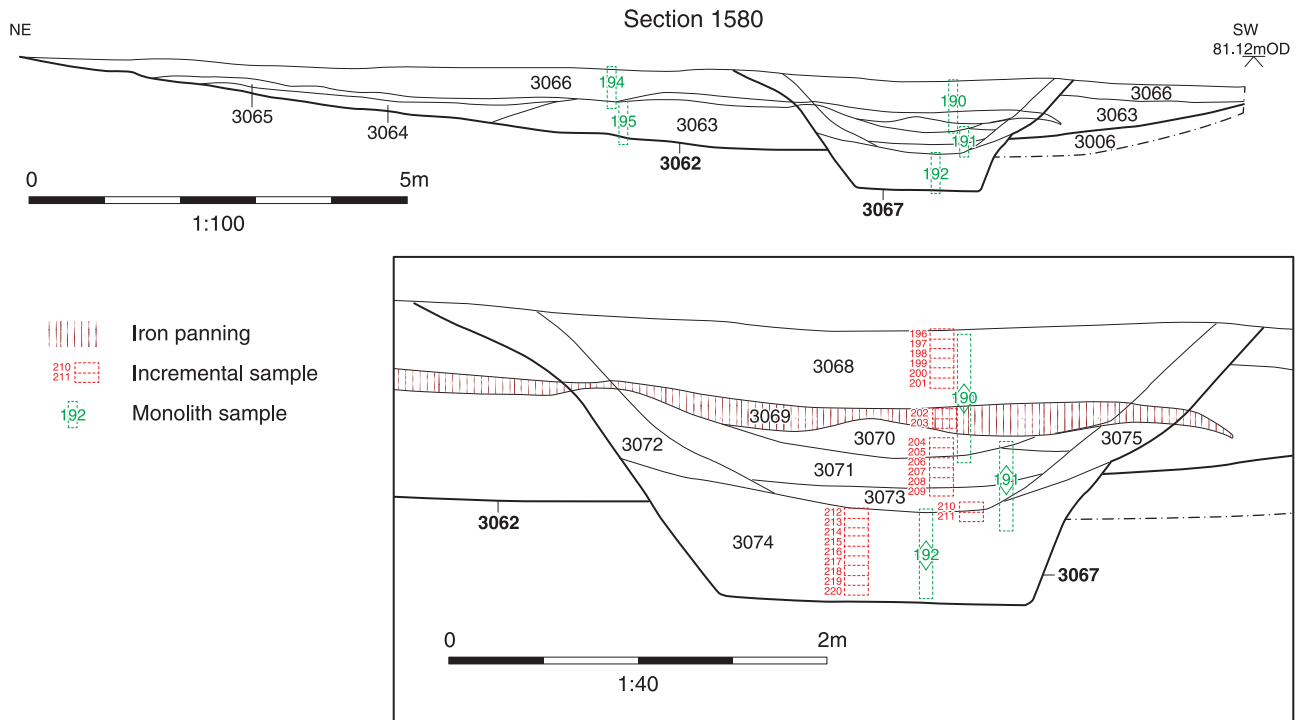


Fig. 2.26 North-west-facing section through pond 3062 and pit 3067 (G10), showing locations of monoliths and incremental samples

(3069) which extended beyond the pit and also into the pond feature, again attesting to the waterlogged conditions. A fragment of a millstone was recovered from middle fill 3075. The uppermost fill of the feature contained pottery dated to the mid/late 2nd century and a single coin, dated to AD 348-350.

The dating of the feature is not straightforward. The pit cut pond 3062, which had filled by the mid-2nd century AD. The pottery within the lowest fill of pit 3067 continues the ceramic sequence, spanning the mid-2nd to late 3rd century, and the remaining pottery in the feature is consistent with



Fig. 2.27a Excavation of pit 3067



Fig. 2.27b Excavation of pit 3067

this range. However, the picture from the coin evidence is different. While the majority of the coins from the lowest fill of 3067 date to the late 3rd century, consistent with the latest ceramic dating, 4th century coins were found throughout the stratigraphic sequence. On face value, the

dating evidence suggests that the feature filled in the 4th century, the earlier material having been brought up from the underlying pond or relocated from other parts of the site. The absence of unequivocal 4th century pottery, though, is curious. One explanation might be that the feature fell out of use by the late 3rd century, but continued to receive occasional deposits, principally of coins, well into the 4th century, passers-by perhaps being attracted by the watery character of the feature. Some of the coins may have then been displaced within the feature, sinking to the bottom through the relatively soft fills or being moved by the action of water.

*Stone-lined pit 3270 and ditch 3281*

A square pit with a stone-lined base (3270) was uncovered to the east of pit 3067 (Fig. 2.28). The pit measured 3m square and 0.38m deep, although its east side was cut by a modern feature, and so the feature may originally have been larger. A limestone surface (3276) was recorded in the base of the pit. It was constructed of irregular, roughly hewn slabs with occasional packing stones in between, creating a flat surface measuring 2.1m (E-W) and 1.6m (N-S). In some places the surface was two courses thick in order to maintain an even surface. A large portion of bowl or dish with a flanged rim in a sandy reduced ware, as well as sherds in pink grogged ware and Central Gaulish samian ware, together dating to the mid/late 2nd

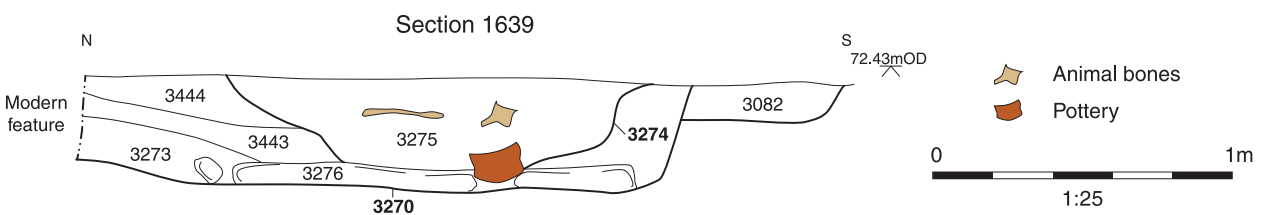
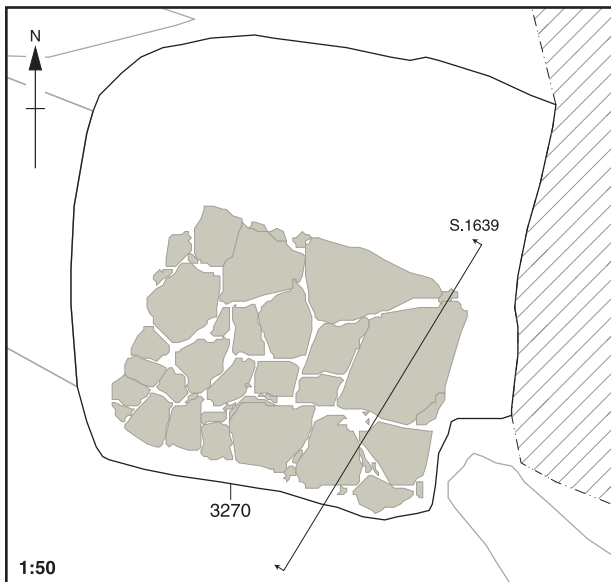


Fig. 2.28 Stone-lined pit 3270

century AD, was recovered from the bottom fill of the pit.

The pit was cut by an irregularly-shaped feature (3274; Fig. 2.28, section 1639). Pottery recovered from the feature (Fig. 3.8, nos 31-36) included two bead-and-flanged mortaria in Oxford white ware (Young 1977, type M17 and M21), a necked jar in late Roman shelly ware, and a near-complete necked bowl, which had been found upturned on the base of the cut, effectively resting on the limestone surface. The pottery was deposited in the mid/late 3rd century AD, when the pit, which is likely to have been in use during the later 2nd and early/mid 3rd centuries, fell out of use.

A shallow ditch (3281) extended from the western edge of pit 3270 (Fig. 2.21, section 1641). The feature's relationship with pit 3062 or pit 3067 is unclear, but it is possible that it connected the two. Indeed, the three features together may have formed a single group of contemporaneous, related features. The ditch had steep sides and a flat level base and measured 1.5m wide and 0.2m deep. Its single fill contained a small amount of pottery with a broad Roman date.

#### *Oven SG8166 (Fig. 2.21)*

Two pits (3041 and 3037) were connected by a small gully or slot (3039), which together may have formed a single feature (Fig. 2.21). Pit 3041 was situated to the south-west and was rectangular, measuring 1.2m long, 0.35m wide and 0.15m deep (Fig. 2.21, section 1571). It had steep sides and a flat base and was filled by two deposits, the upper of which was a dark greyish, charcoal-rich fill. Gully 3039 extended from the north-eastern side of the pit and was 1m long, 0.2m wide and 0.1m deep. Its single fill was also a dark grey silty charcoal-rich deposit. At the end of the gully was pit 3037, which was sub-circular in shape with moderate sloping sides and a flat base. It measured 0.6m in diameter and 0.15m in depth. No finds were recovered from any of the three cuts but the shape in plan of the features combined and the presence of charcoal in the rectangular pit and the gully suggest that the features served as an oven, pit 3041 being the stoke-hole and the gully the flue that transferred the heat to 3037, which served as the oven floor. No dating evidence was recovered, but its location within the mid/late field system G17/G18 suggests that it is of similar date.

#### *Soil layer 3082*

A soil layer (3082) was recorded on either side of pond 3062. It was removed by machine to expose any archaeological features underneath it. The layer was recorded over a large area to the south of the road and measured some 70m NW-SE by 50m NE-SW. It comprised a dark, greyish blue and mottled clayey-silt soil, and is likely to have been water-borne, representing an area of marshy ground adjacent to the pond or a dump of pond deposits. The layer was cut by ditch 3083 to the north of the

pond and by pit 3270 to the south. A relatively large assemblage of Roman metal finds was retrieved from the deposit. The assemblage included three objects of possible military origin – a copper alloy tongue from a buckle (SF 2540), an armlet of 1st century date (SF 2542), a horse pendant from a cavalry harness (SF 2698), and some 81 coins largely spanning the mid-3rd to late 4th century AD. Also recovered were a decorative lion-headed stud (SF 2545), four bow brooches (SF 2549, 2575, 2722, 2759), a plate brooch (SF2696), a fragment of a Bronze Age socketed axe (SF 2578), and several lead offcuts, including three that are folded at the edge. A fragment of lead sheeting with a nail hole at one end (Scott, Chapter 3, Cat. no. 28) is also likely to have come from this deposit, having been recorded as an unstratified find, but being found, like many of the other objects, when the spoil was metal detected. The possibility that the sheet formed part of a curse tablet was considered. The fragment, along with some of the folded lead pieces, was examined by X-radiography by archaeological conservator Dana Goodburn-Brown ACR, but no writing or other deliberate marks or incisions were revealed, and therefore on current evidence, all the lead must be regarded as waste. While the finds retrieved from the deposit are of mixed date, the latest coins suggest that the deposit formed during the late 4th century. However, assuming that the layer's recorded relationship with 3083 and 3270 is reliable, then this presents a chronological anomaly. One possibility is that the layer formed gradually through largely natural processes (such as periodic flooding) over a long period of time. The watery character of the location may have attracted deposition of metal objects throughout the Roman period.

A feature of uncertain function was recorded some 50m east of pit 3067. Feature 2635 was crescent-shaped and approximately 3m long, 0.84m wide and 0.14m deep (Fig. 2.8). A fragment of a flanged bowl in Nene Valley colour-coated ware was recovered, along with a rich deposit of charred plant remains (Meen, Chapter 3).

#### **Features in the western part of the site (Fig. 2.12)**

A large pit (539), located at the southern edge of the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area (Fig. 2.12), may have been a quarry used to extract the clay into which the pit had been dug. The full extent of the feature was not established as it continued beyond the edge of the site, but it measured at least 5.2m across and was 0.76 m deep. Late Roman pottery, including Oxford red colour-coated ware, was recovered from its single fill. Another quarry pit, 446, was recorded in the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area, though unfortunately it cannot now be located on plan. However, pottery from the feature belonged to the 4th century.

Quarry pit 539 was cut by ditch SG358, which extended across the southern part of the excavation, forming a boundary parallel to Akeman Street. The ditch was considerably larger than the early field



ditches in the central part of this excavation area, measuring up to 1.85m wide. It was distinctly V-shaped towards its western end and as much as 1m deep, with a primary fill of light brown silty clay and upper fills of dark grey soil from which most of the finds assemblage was recovered (Fig. 2.29, sections 198 and 241). To the east the profile changed to a wide, flat base and the ditch was between 0.4m and 0.8m deep with only one or two fills. Although a coin (SF 5) of 1st or 2nd century date was recovered from its lower fill, a more reliable date for its infilling is likely to be indicated by the associated late 3rd and 4th-century pottery, which includes late Roman shelly ware and colour-coated wares from the Nene Valley and Hadham. An Oxford colour-coated ware bowl dating from AD 325 and a coin of Constantine (SF 9) dating to AD 330-335 suggests that the fill was accumulating

after the second quarter of the 4th century. Hammerscale recovered from the ditch is potentially significant, as it indicates that an area of iron smithing was situated nearby, although no *in situ* evidence for metalworking, such as hearths or furnaces, was identified.

A layer of brown silty soil (602) c 0.2m thick was recorded at the upper, south-eastern end of the Aylesbury Vale Parkway site, where it overlay ditch 358 and was observed to be cut by the later plough furrows. A metal detector survey carried out resulted in the recovery of 116 coins of Roman date from this deposit (Fig. 2.30). These were generally worn, making precise identification difficult, but were mainly of later 3rd and 4th century date.

Tree-throw holes were excavated and recorded sporadically across the site and produced few finds but a concentrated area of them (93 in total) was

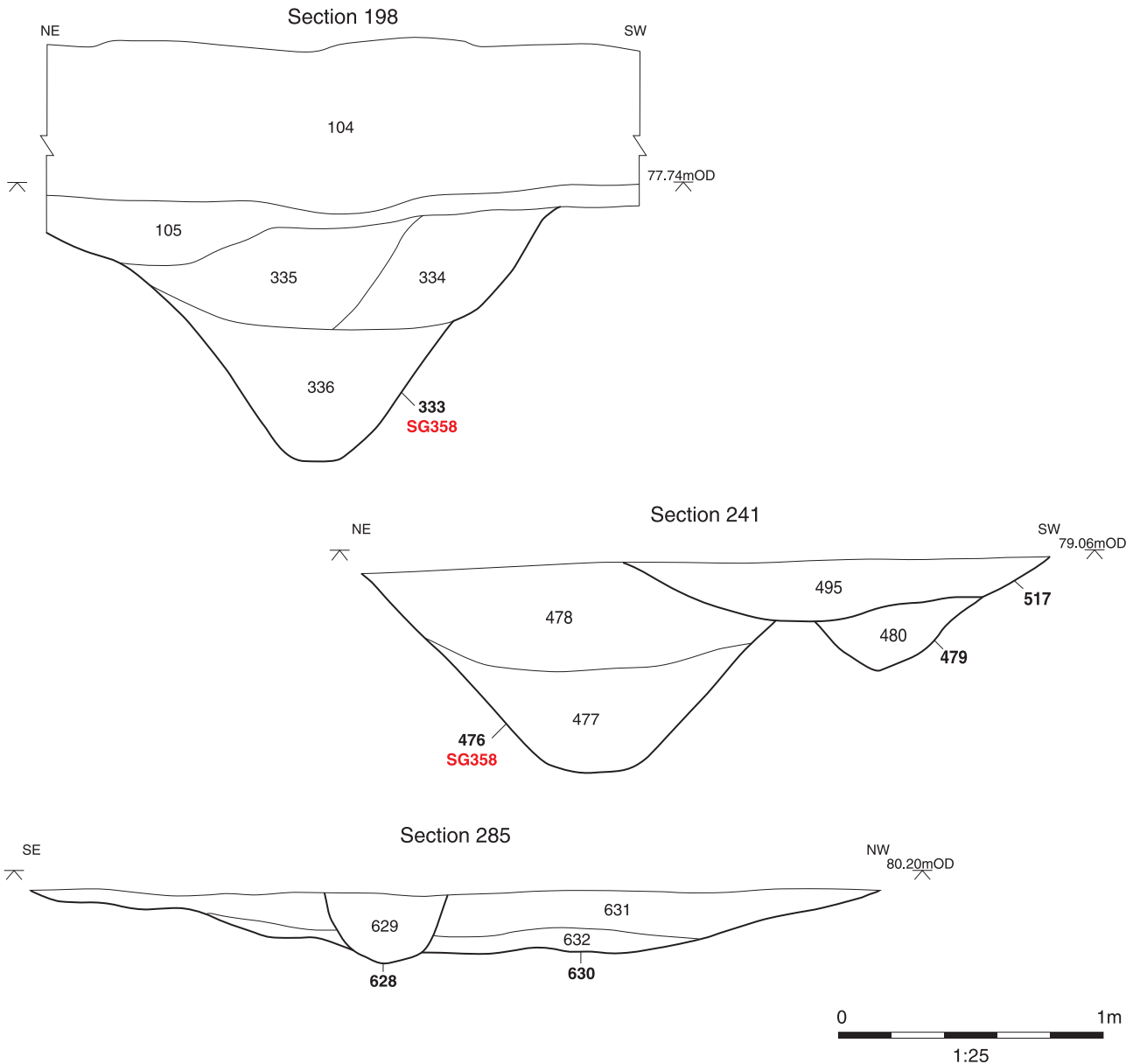


Fig. 2.29 Sections through ditch SG358 and tree-throw hole 630 cut by plough furrow 628

recorded within the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area (Fig. 2.12). The dates at which these features formed are uncertain, and it is possible there was accumulation within the voids of cleared or felled trees over a prolonged period. Tree-throw holes 583 and 630 were

cut by medieval plough furrows (Fig. 2.29, section 285). Roman pottery was recovered from various tree-throw holes. The latest sherds date to AD 250-410, while others have an early to mid-Roman date. A radiocarbon determination from an animal bone

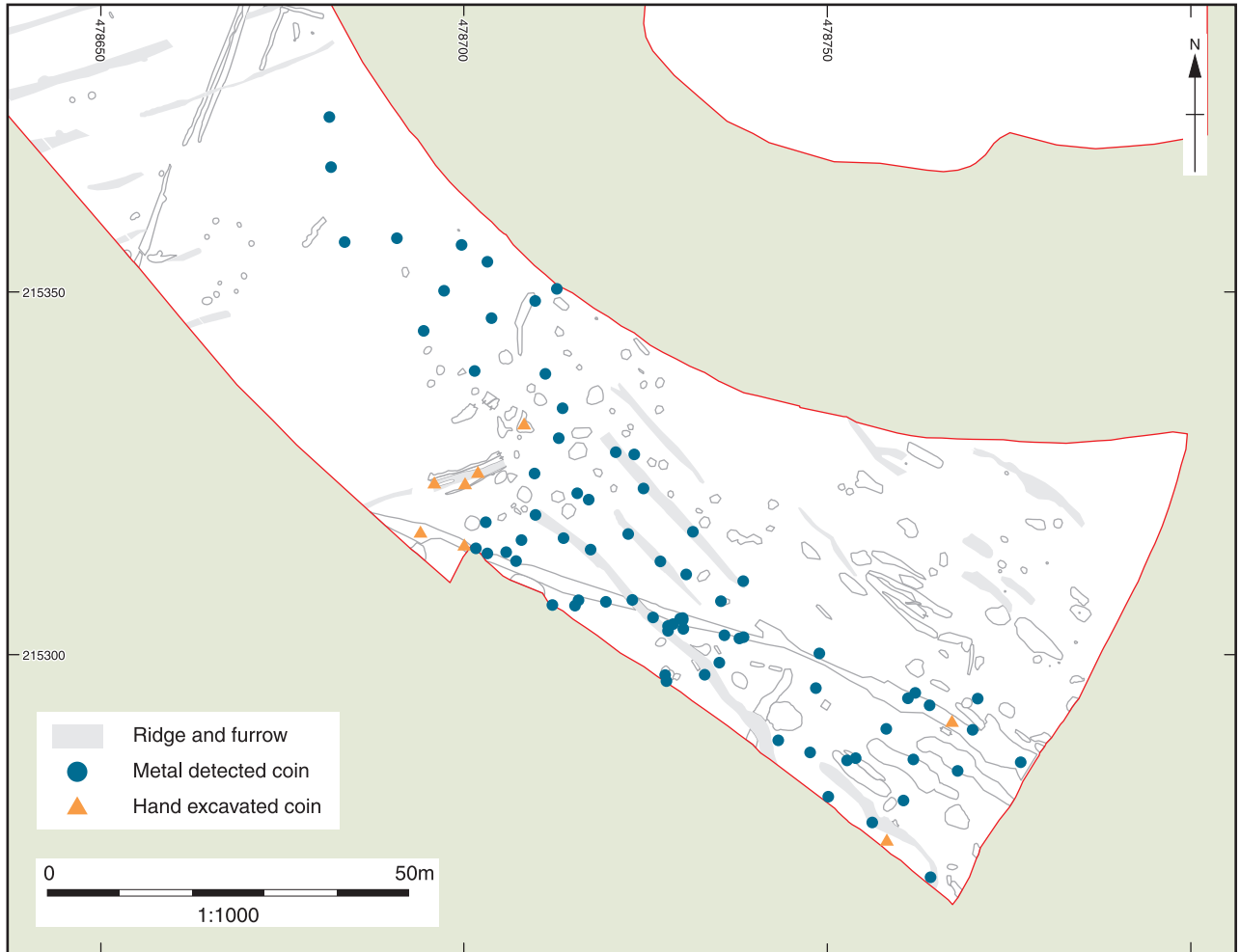


Fig. 2.30 Distribution of Roman coins in the southern part of the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area

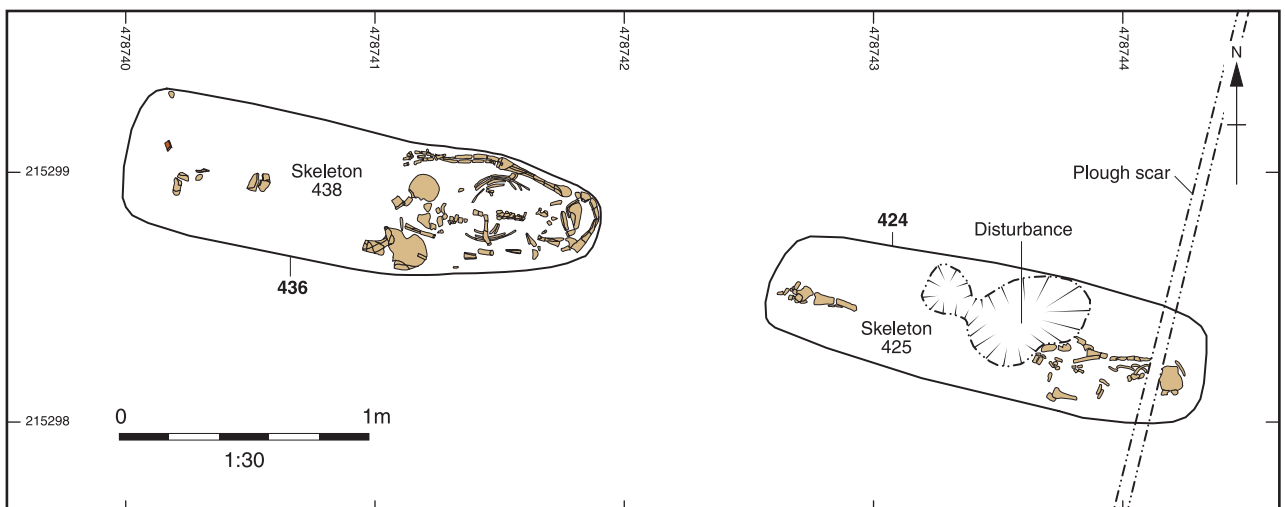


Fig. 2.31 Plan of graves 424 and 436

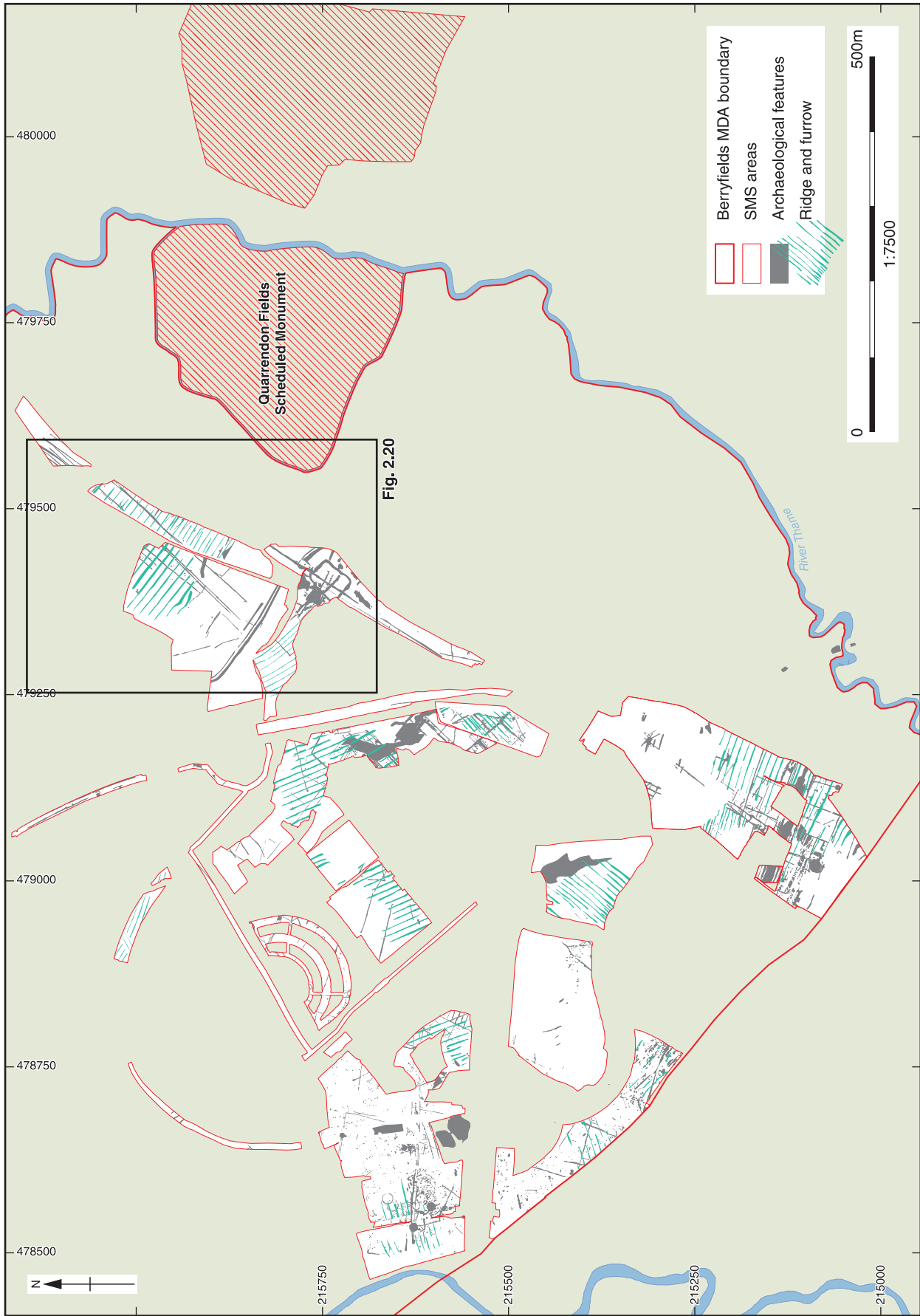


Fig. 2.32 Location of medieval and post-medieval features (Phases 8 and 9)

from tree-throw hole 367 provided a date of cal AD 60-240 (95% confidence; NZA-33929; 1874±35BP), and a sample of charred seeds from pit 459 – interpreted as a tree-throw hole – gave a date of cal AD 80-250 (95% confidence; NZA-33906; 1862±25BP).

Two inhumation burials were located adjacent to the southern side of ditch 358 (Fig. 2.12 and 2.31). They had been placed close together, lying end-to-end on a parallel orientation to that of the ditch. Both graves had been heavily disturbed by later ploughing and in neither case was it possible to accurately define the cut of the grave. Grave 424 contained the remains of an adult individual (425), possibly a woman, orientated WNW-ESE and placed supine with the head to the east. A coin (AE3, SF 10) recovered from the backfill indicated that the burial dated from the second quarter of the 4th century or later. Grave 436, located next to 424 and sharing orientation, contained a woman (438), aged over 40 years at death, interred in a similar position to the skeleton in grave 424. A radiocarbon determination on a sample from the right radius returned a date of cal AD 250-420 (95% confidence; NZA-33936; 1706±35BP). Pottery from the backfill of this grave was not closely datable, but was consistent with a late Roman date.

## PHASES 8 AND 9: MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL (Figs 2.20 and 2.32)

### G22: Medieval ditches

In the far north-east of the site, the ditches (SG8051/SG8052) belonging to the middle Roman trackway (G7) contained pottery of medieval date, suggesting that the trackway continued in use to a certain extent into the medieval period (Fig. 2.20), possibly connecting to fields or domestic areas related to the medieval settlement of Quarrendon to the east.

To the west of the trackway a small number of other ditches dated to this period. Ditches SG8044 and SG8048 were on a slightly different alignment to the trackway and contained small amounts of medieval pottery, suggesting that these are medieval field ditches. They are also aligned with or on a perpendicular alignment to the medieval plough furrows in this area. There were also two pits in the immediate vicinity that dated to this phase (7165 and 7185) and adjacent plough furrow 7167 contained a copper alloy buckle of late medieval or early post-medieval date. Further, the subsoil in this area yielded two further buckles of medieval date (including SF 7004) as well as a similarly dated clasp and horseshoe nail of medieval type among other less closely datable items. Ditch 5581 contained a dump of slag, including a smithing hearth bottom, attesting to metalworking nearby during this phase. The

subsoil further to the south also yielded part of a holy water ampulla, also probably related to activity within the wider landscape of the settlement of Quarrendon.

### Ridge-and-furrow

Ridge-and-furrow cultivation was identified across all areas of the site (Fig. 2.32). Occasionally, the furrows obscured the relationships between earlier features, but in most cases, they were fairly shallow and earlier features survived below this level of truncation. Several areas of furrows were identified, mostly on NW-SE or NE-SW alignments, and presumably represent cultivations of neighbouring furlongs. Notably, an area of furrows by Akeman Street was aligned with the road. The furrows were cut by a small number of features in the north-east of the site, namely enclosure G13 and trackway ditches G25.

### Enclosure G13 and trackway G25

A sub-rectangular enclosure, possibly an oxpen or paddock, was situated to the east of the middle Roman trackway (G7) and truncated several medieval furrows (Fig. 2.20). The enclosure measured 43m (NE-SW) by 33m (NW-SE). It was defined by a ditch that appears to have been recut on at least two occasions (SG8040, SG8041, SG8042) and the interior appears to have been divided into two by ditch SG8038. No pottery was recovered from the enclosure ditches and the only other find recovered was an iron horseshoe of post-medieval date. Only one feature, a pit (5131) was identified within the enclosure, and two large pits (5064 and 5077) were situated immediately to the west.

Two parallel ditches extended for *c* 160m on a slightly sinuous NW-SE alignment to the north-east of enclosure G13. The ditches were *c* 3.8m apart and the ditch to the north was narrower. The alignment was continued to the south-east by a field boundary outside the excavation area. Part of an enclosure, perpendicular to the south side of the trackway, was recorded, but not excavated. It cut furrows in this area and is likely to be post-medieval in date.

### UNDATED STRUCTURE

A group of eight features was identified east of ditch SG357 in the Aylesbury Vale Parkway area that may represent the bases of a timber structure (SG268; Fig. 2.12). The features were all circular or sub-circular in shape, measuring 0.5-0.8m in diameter, and were very shallow, none surviving to a depth of more than 0.1m. They did not form a clearly defined structure, but lay in a rough oval measuring *c* 9.3 by 6.7m. No artefactual evidence was recovered from these features.