

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**RICHMOND PARK
CARMARTHEN**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON THE
FOOTBALL PITCH**

(Dyfed Project Record 30895)

**REPORT BY N D LUDLOW
FOR CARMARTHEN TOWN COUNCIL**

Dyfed Archaeological Trust
Shire Hall
Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo SA 9 6AF
Tel: (01558) 823121

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

A watching brief was undertaken, at short notice, by Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Operations Section on 17 April 1996 on the excavation of 6 pits intended for floodlight bases, and 2 soakaway pits at Richmond Park, Carmarthen, the ground of Carmarthen Town Football Club.

The site lies over known archaeological deposits lying within the area occupied by the Roman town of *Moridunum*. Previous geophysical survey demonstrated that a Roman Road crosses the area of the football pitch, associated with buildings, some of masonry, possible iron-working features and related deposits.

The floodlight pits were machine dug to a depth of 1.1m, in north-south rows either side of the pitch. Roman deposits were encountered at an average depth of 1m, but no stratified sequence could be ascertained. Those in the 3 pits to the west of the pitch were thin and appear to have been disturbed; the deposits in the eastern row were not bottomed and may be thicker. Concentrations of roofing tile were present in 2 of the pits, and possible rampart clay was observed in the north-east pit. The paucity of Roman deposits in the 2 soakaway pits may be due to their proximity to the western hedgebank - a long-established boundary?

The results should be viewed in relation to the drainage scheme proposed for the football pitch (see below).

1.2 Planning history

Richmond Park - Carmarthen Town FC's football pitch - lies within a large area of the former Roman Town, protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Carm 234). Carmarthen Town Council wish to improve the pitch by the installation of a new drainage system. The archaeological watching brief on the pits for the floodlight bases reported here should be seen within a wider programme of archaeological assessment and evaluation of the possible adverse impact of the drainage scheme on the archaeological remains of the Roman town below the surface of the football pitch. Carmarthen Town Council know that Scheduled Monument Consent as well as planning permission will be required for the drainage works.

In July 1995, the Trust acted for Cadw in arranging for a geophysical survey of the pitch to be undertaken by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford. Discussions have taken place between Cadw, DAT and ADAS, acting as design engineers for the Town Council on possible modifications to the drainage scheme to reduce archaeological damage. It was considered desirable to pursue the normal processes of archaeological assessment in order to decide the best modifications to the drainage scheme and to inform conditions likely to be attached to any Scheduled Monument Consent that the Secretary of State might be minded to grant by a further process of test pitting.

Accordingly, when the Town Council applied to Cadw for SMC for the floodlighting scheme, full consultation was waived in view of the short timetable for the works. It was agreed by Cadw and DAT that the pits for the floodlight bases and the two soakaway pits would also serve as archaeological evaluation pits, thus further reducing the additional costs that the Town Council might incur in satisfying the archaeological requirements for the proposed drainage works.

Carmarthenshire County Council will be advised of this situation and of DAT's Heritage Management Section's response to Planning Application D4/26447/55 made by Carmarthen District Council and received by DAT on 15 April 1996.

1.3 Definition of a field evaluation

An archaeological field evaluation is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeology's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* as:

a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present, Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, and relative quality; and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.

1.5 Acknowledgements

To: Heather James, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, for coordinating the response; Brian Davies, Carmarthen Town Clerk, for his interest and cooperation; Management of Richmond Park and Carmarthen FC for their interest.

2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

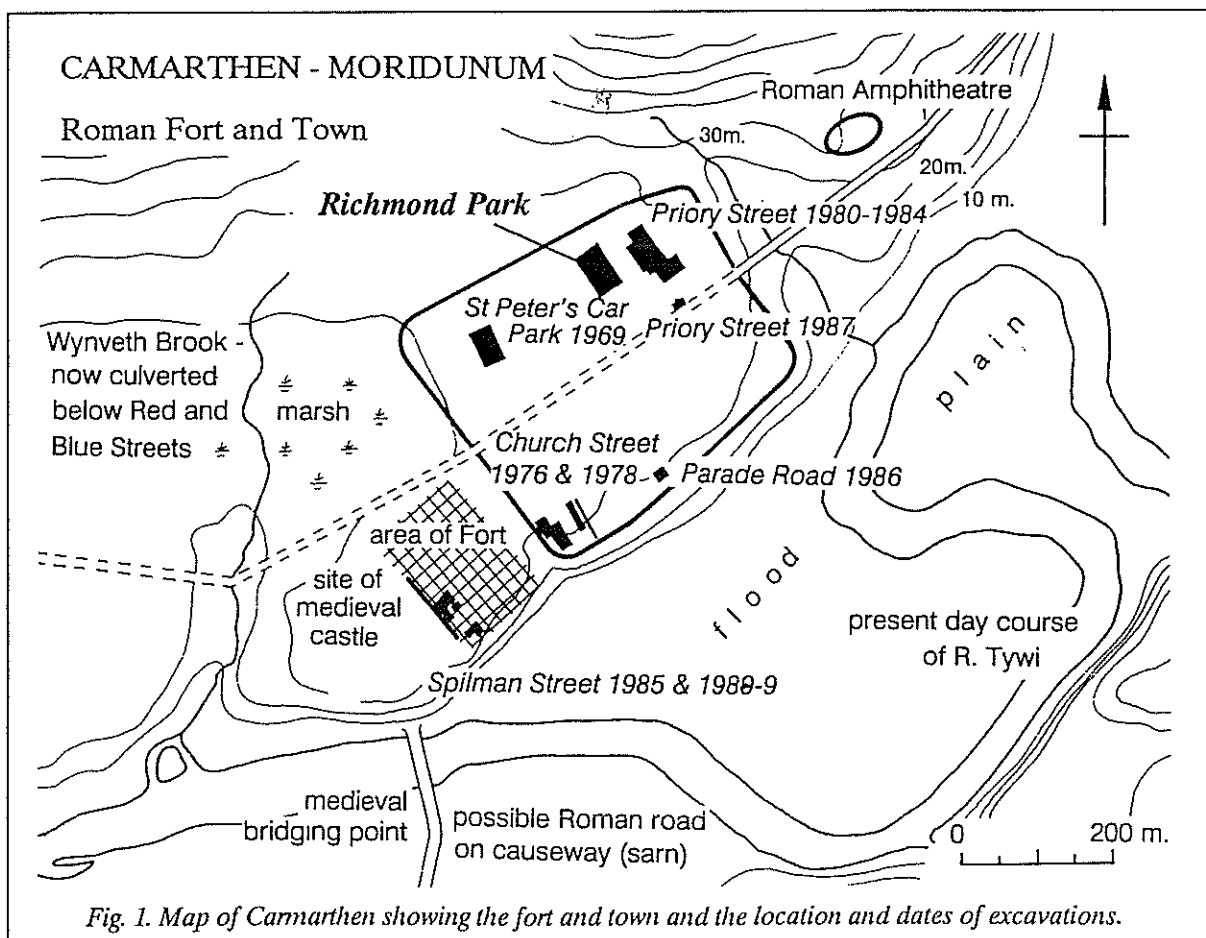
2.1 Site location

Richmond Park lies at NGR SN 4145 2030, towards the east of the present town of Carmarthen. The general trend of the surrounding area is a very gentle downhill slope from south to north, averaging 20m above sea level; the football pitch itself is level.. The solid geology is Ordovician shale, which is overlain by glacial boulder clays and gravels.

According to locals, an intermittent spring is present on the east side of the pitch

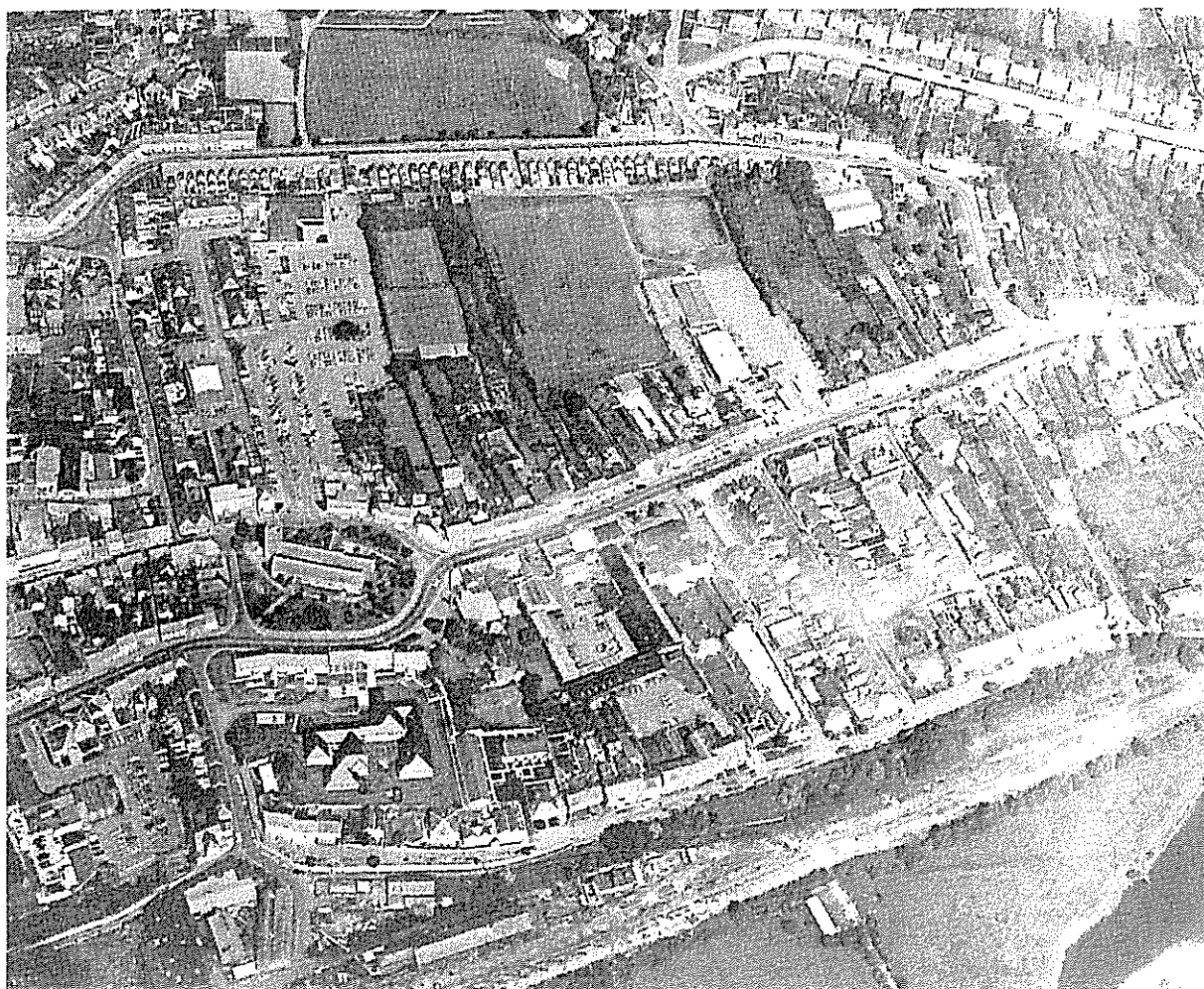
2.2 Site history and description (see fig. 1)

Carmarthen is the site of the Roman settlement of *Moridunum*. Long thought to have represented just a fort, *Moridunum* has been demonstrated through excavation by GDB Jones in the 1960s, and more importantly by a long sequence of excavations and watching briefs performed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust since 1978, to have been a town. Accounts of the Trust's work (and summaries of the earlier excavations) are to be found in James, 1980, and James, 1992. Below is a very short precis based on these two sources.



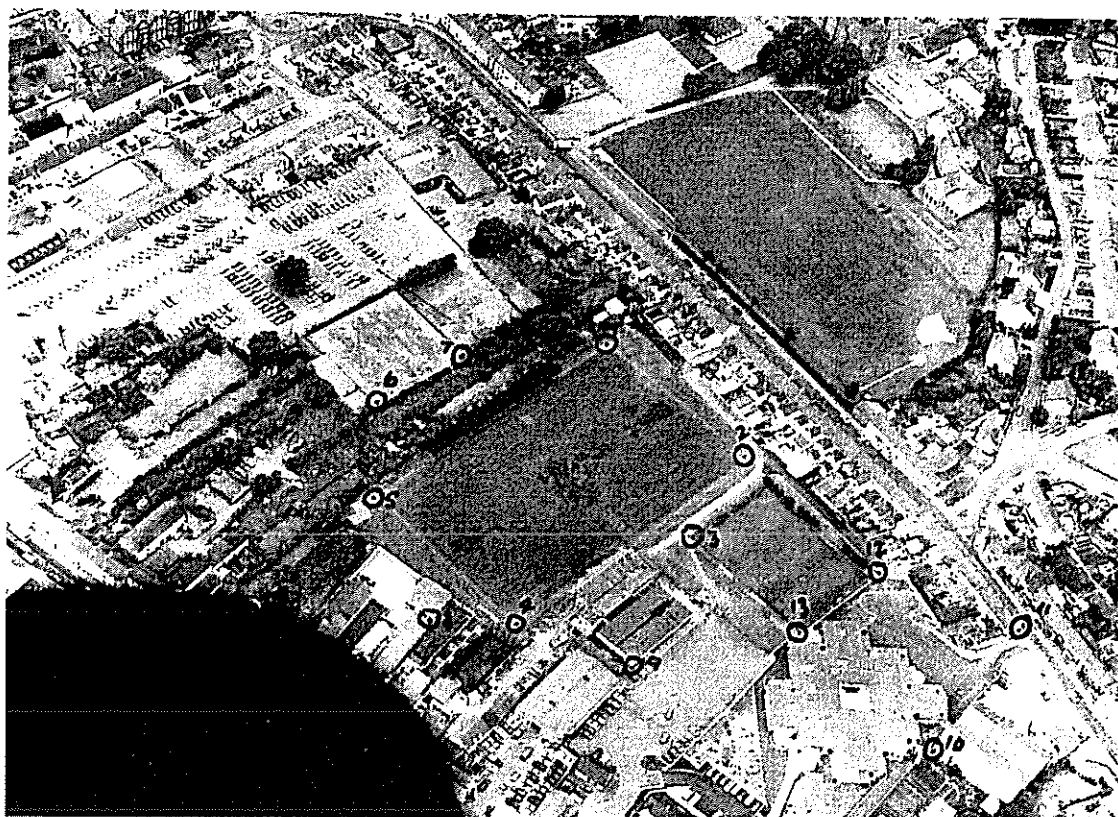
Roman occupation began with the construction of a fort in the King Street/Spilman Street area which was occupied AD 75-c.AD 100. A town was formally laid out by c.AD 110. It was defended by a clay rampart in the late 2nd-3rd century AD, supplemented by a masonry wall in the later 3rd-4th century AD. The course of the Roman defences is preserved in the lines of Little Water Street, Richmond Terrace, Old Oak Lane, the footpath known as Llwybr-yr-ardd, The Esplanade, The Parade, and Parade Road (fig. 2). At least two well metalled streets ran through the defended area from east to west, the southern roughly on the line of Priory Street. A large area in the north-east quarter of the defended area, excavated by Dyfed Archaeological Trust 1980-84, revealed a sequence of timber buildings, a temple, evidence for ironworking, and two metalled roads, including a section of the northern east-west road that ran the length of the town. Urban life in the Roman tradition had collapsed by the 5th century AD, but some form of occupation may have persisted at Carmarthen.

Fig. 2 Carmarthen Roman town looking NNW in 1985



The Richmond Park football pitch site lies at its closest point just 70m west of the 1980-84 excavations. It is an open and undeveloped area through which the excavated east-west road can be seen to continue as a parchmark in aerial photographs (fig. 3). The Richmond Park pitch, and the smaller field to the east, were accordingly subject to geophysical survey in 1995.

Fig. 3 Carmarthen Richmond Park: aerial photograph showing parchmark of Roman road, 1989

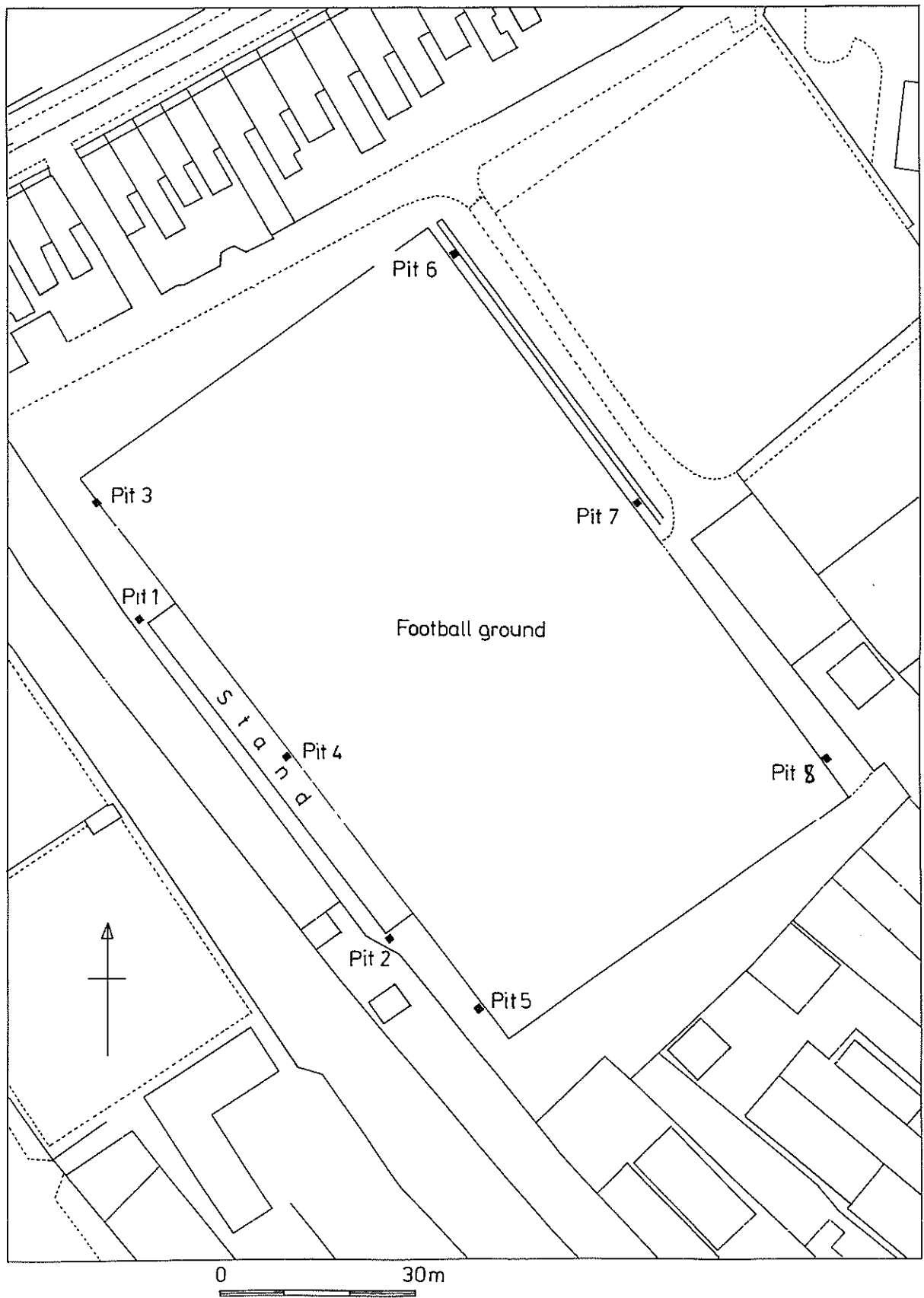


2.3 Geophysical survey (see Appendix I)

A synthesis of the results of the geophysical survey, undertaken by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford in August 1995, is shown in Appendix 6.1.

Briefly, the survey indicates that the road does indeed cross the football pitch, just north of the centre line, as an a resistance anomaly approximately 4m wide interrupted in the middle by modern disturbance. Further resistance anomalies resolve as complexes of possible masonry walling (buildings?), and also indicate recent drainage beneath the pitch. Gradiometer results indicate the existence of magnetic anomalies representing archaeological features (pits etc.) and probable ferrous material (from ironworking activity?). Whilst these features may not all represent Roman activity, the evidence suggests the presence of a significant below ground archaeological resource.

*Fig. 4 Carmarthen Richmond Park showing location of Pits,
April 1996*



2.4 Observations during the evaluation (see fig. 4)

6 pits, all measuring 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.1m deep, were machine excavated for the floodlight bases. The pits are in a series of 3 along each of the long (east and west) sides of the pitch, located at the corners and approximately on the centre-line.

In addition, 2 soakaway pits were dug either end of, and close into, the stand. The northern soakaway pit was of the same dimensions as the floodlight pits, while the southern was excavated to the greater depth of 1.7m.

The locations of all pits are shown in fig. 4.

The sections of all pits were cleaned down and photographed and, with the exception of Pits 1 & 3, one section was drawn at a scale of 1:20 and labelled.

Pit 1 - the N soakaway

Pit 1 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.1 m deep. It lay hard under the north end of the stand and close into the adjacent hedgebank. The section was not drawn.

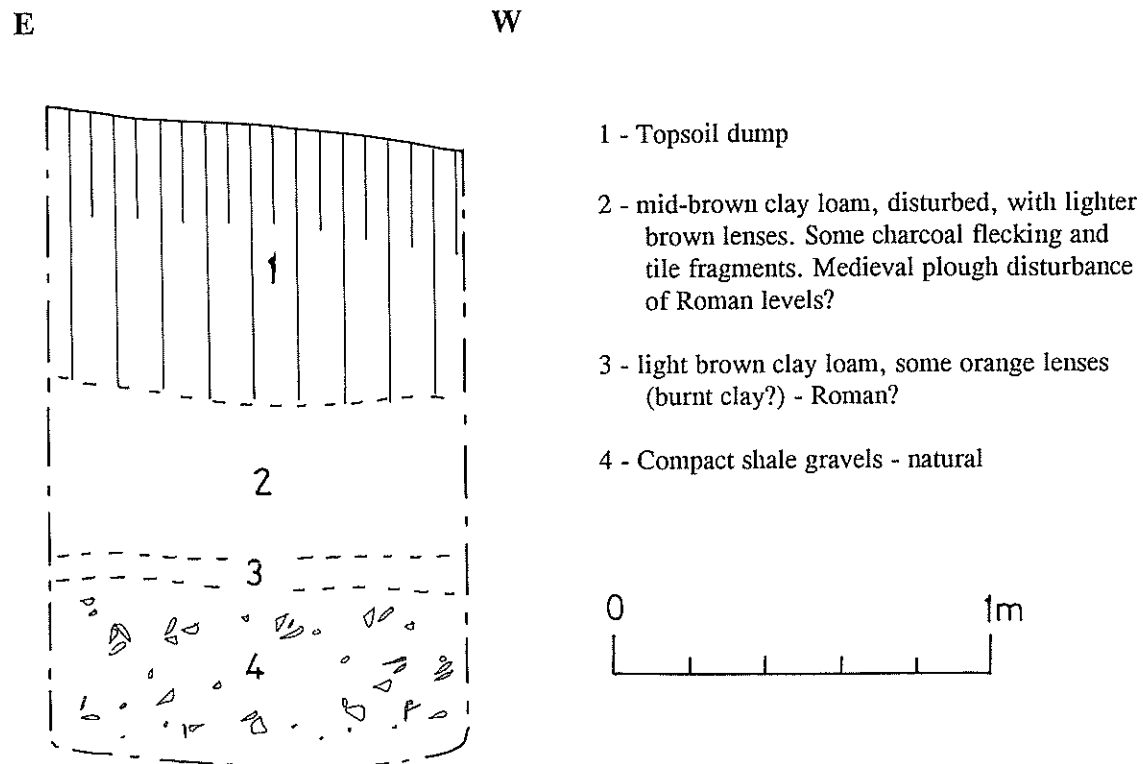
The section comprised a 1m thickness of topsoil dump, lying over a disturbed mid-brown clay loam horizon discernible in the bottom of the pit. The soil may represent a ploughsoil formed on, and disturbing the Roman levels.

No finds were present in Pit 1.

Pit 2 - the S soakaway

Pit 2 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.7m deep. It lay hard under the south end of the stand and close into the adjacent hedgebank. The section is shown below.

Pit 2 - South section



Pit 3 - the NW floodlight pit

Pit 3 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.1m deep. It lay at the NW corner of the pitch in open ground. The section was not drawn.

The section displayed topsoil dump throughout most of its depth. A disturbed natural soil 'B' horizon was present just above the bottom, seen as an undisturbed 'B' horizon in the pit bottom itself.

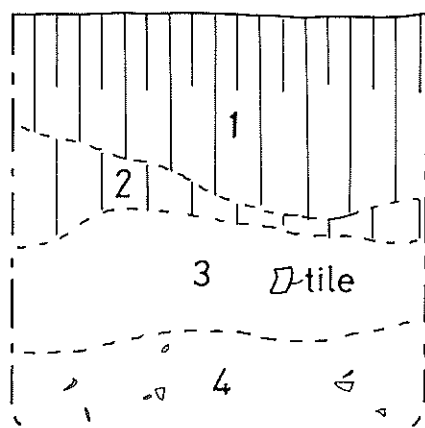
No archaeological deposits were present in Pit 3, nor any finds.

Pit 4 - the W central floodlight pit

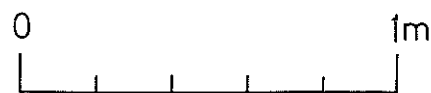
Pit 4 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.7m deep. It lay up against the breeze-block/concrete sill wall of the east side of the stand, near the centre-line of the pitch. The section is shown below.

Pit 4 - East section

S N



- 1 - topsoil dump
- 2 - dark brown loose loam, with coal - earlier topsoil dump?
- 3 - light brown/orange clay loam, fine textured, with charcoal flecks and Roman tile - Roman?
- 4 - like 3 but with angular shale fragments

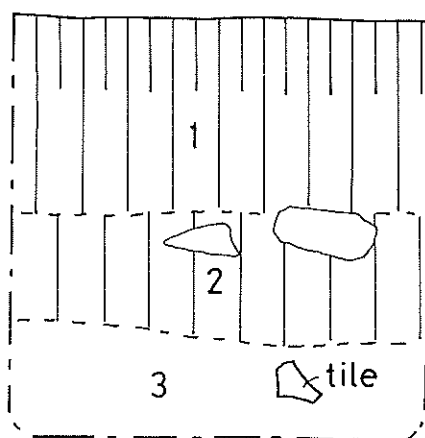


Pit 5 - the SW floodlight pit

Pit 5 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.7m deep. It lay at the SW corner of the pitch in open ground. The section is shown below.

Pit 5 - South section

E W



- 1 - topsoil dump
- 2 - dark brown loose loam, with coal - earlier topsoil dump?
- 3 - yellow-brown clay loam, grading into red-brown ('B' horizon?) at bottom, with charcoal flecks and Roman tile - Roman?

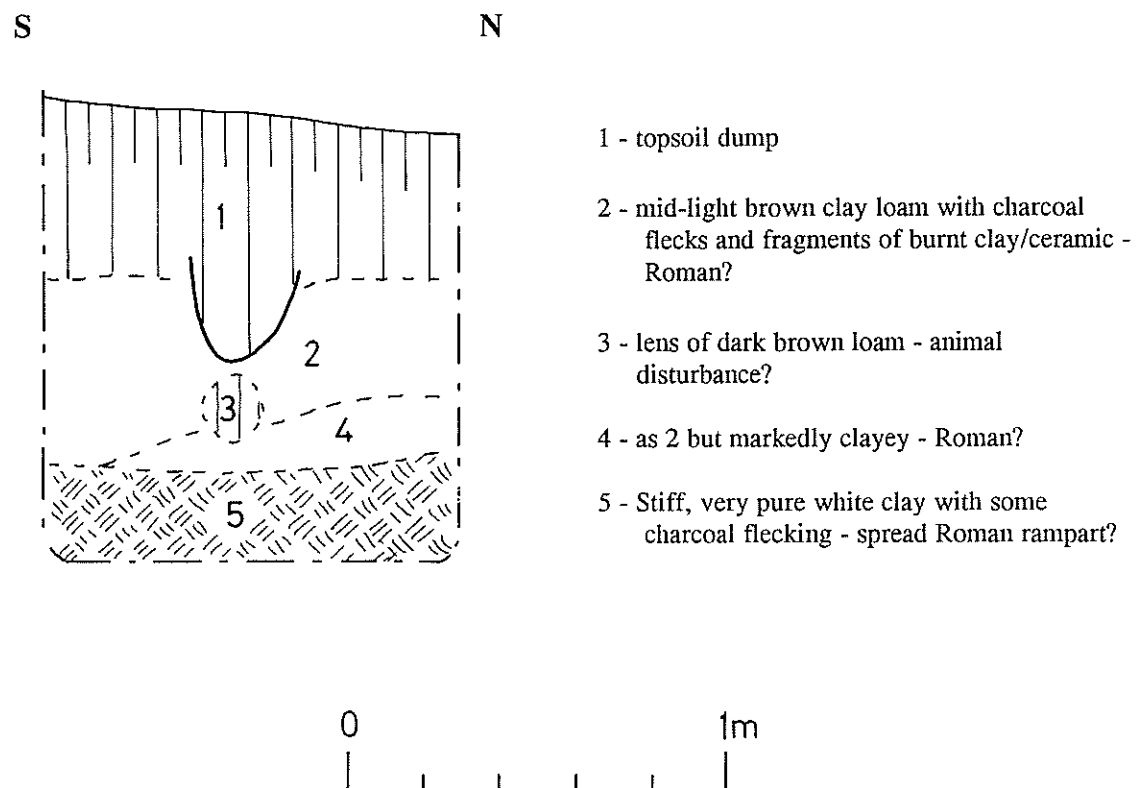


Pit 6 - the NE floodlight pit

Pit 6 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.1m deep. It lay at the NE corner of the pitch in open ground. The section is shown below.

No finds were present in Pit 6 but note the clay - spread Roman rampart clay from the town defences to the north?

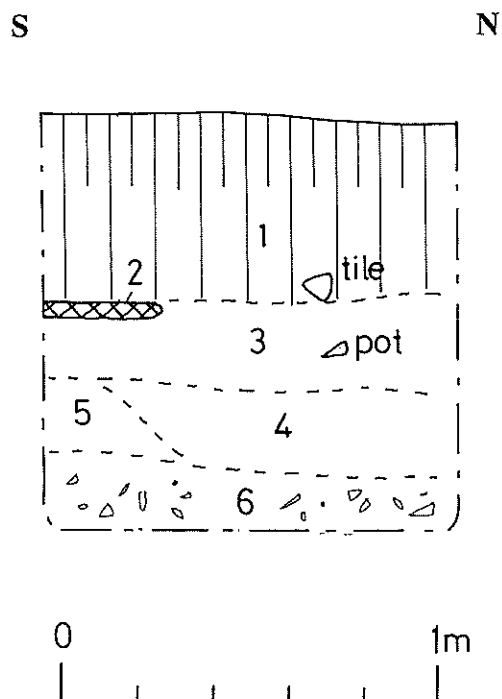
Pit 6 - West section



Pit 7 - the E central floodlight pit

Pit 7 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.1m deep. It lay in open ground alongside the east of the pitch near the centre-line. The section is shown below.

Pit 7 - West section

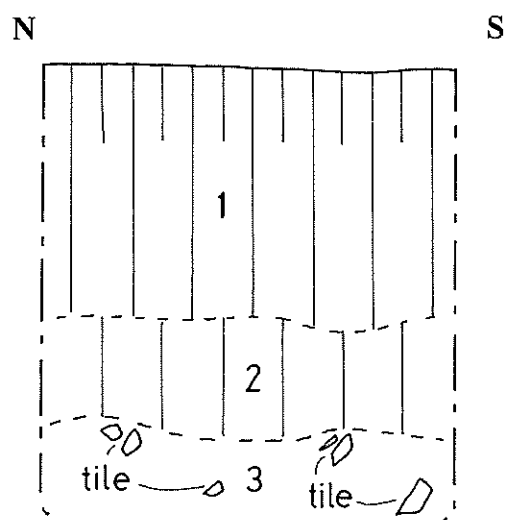


- 1 - topsoil dump
- 2 - C20 water pipe
- 3 - mid-brown clay loam, with charcoal flecks and lenses of yellow clay loam. Post-medieval roofing tile at top of layer, sherd of Samian ware lower down. Plough disturbance of Roman levels?
- 4 - disturbed light brown clay loam, with lenses of darker brown clay loam and some burning - probably Roman
- 5 - red-brown natural 'B' horizon
- 6 - shale fragments in clay matrix - natural

Pit 8 - the SE floodlight pit

Pit 8 was excavated to 1.1m x 1.1m x 1.7m deep. It lay at the SE corner of the pitch in open ground. The section is shown below.

Pit 8 - East section



- 1 - topsoil dump
- 2 - dark brown loose loam, with coal and large ORS stones - earlier topsoil dump?
- 3 - yellow-brown clay loam, with charcoal flecks, burnt clay and much Roman tile - Roman, and may be top of deeper deposits



Roman deposits, where present, were encountered at an average depth of 1m and lay beneath the considerable depth of topsoil that characterised the 1980-84 excavated area and appears to have been deliberately imported into this part of Carmarthen as garden soil.

Roman deposits are thin or absent from the pits on the western side of the football pitch, where the natural soils occur at a higher level probably reflecting a slight natural uphill slope from east to west. A hedgebank runs north-south immediately to the west of these pits; it may represent a long-standing boundary that possibly existed in a variety of forms - a ditch, for example, may have truncated any Roman deposits in their entirety.

However, the pits to the east of the pitch appear to just be cutting into the top of Roman deposits of unknown depth. Their upper levels are disturbed, possibly by medieval/post-medieval ploughing, but evidence suggests that this is superficial and undisturbed deposits lie below. All 3 pits display Roman roofing tile (*tegulae*). The NE Pit 6 displays a very pure white clay which may be rampart clay spread from the Roman town defences just over 10m to the north; alternately, the deposit overlying the clay may be Roman occupational material formed over a rampart tail some distance further south here than has been previously assumed. Some soil development had occurred beneath the Roman deposits in pits 5 and 7.

However, there is little archaeology; no stratification was evident within the deposits and no evidence of features. Neither was there any evidence for the road, which should lie very close to the 2 central pits, nor of the complex archaeological features/structures suggested by the geophysics. Perhaps this is just due to the disturbed nature of the deposits at this level.

The site generally is of importance at a national level.

3.0 THE FINDS

Where possible finds material was left in situ in the sections or the bottoms of the pits. Some finds were, however, removed from the site where they were disturbed.

Pit 5: Context 3 - 1 x *tegula*, good preservation (given to Carmarthen Football Club)

1 x sherd of medieval pottery, type unknown, unstratified

Pit 7: Context 3 - 1 x sherd of Samian ware, Roman

1 x *tegula*, incomplete

The finds will be temporarily maintained with Dyfed Archaeological Trust pending further examination.

4.0 THE ARCHIVE

The archive, indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, is held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Llandeilo, and contains the following:-

- A.** Copy of the final report and disk
- B.** Field notes
- C.** Copies of planning specs.
- D.** Monochrome photographs
- G.** List of references
- J.** Final drawings
- L.** General admin. notes
- M.** Project correspondence

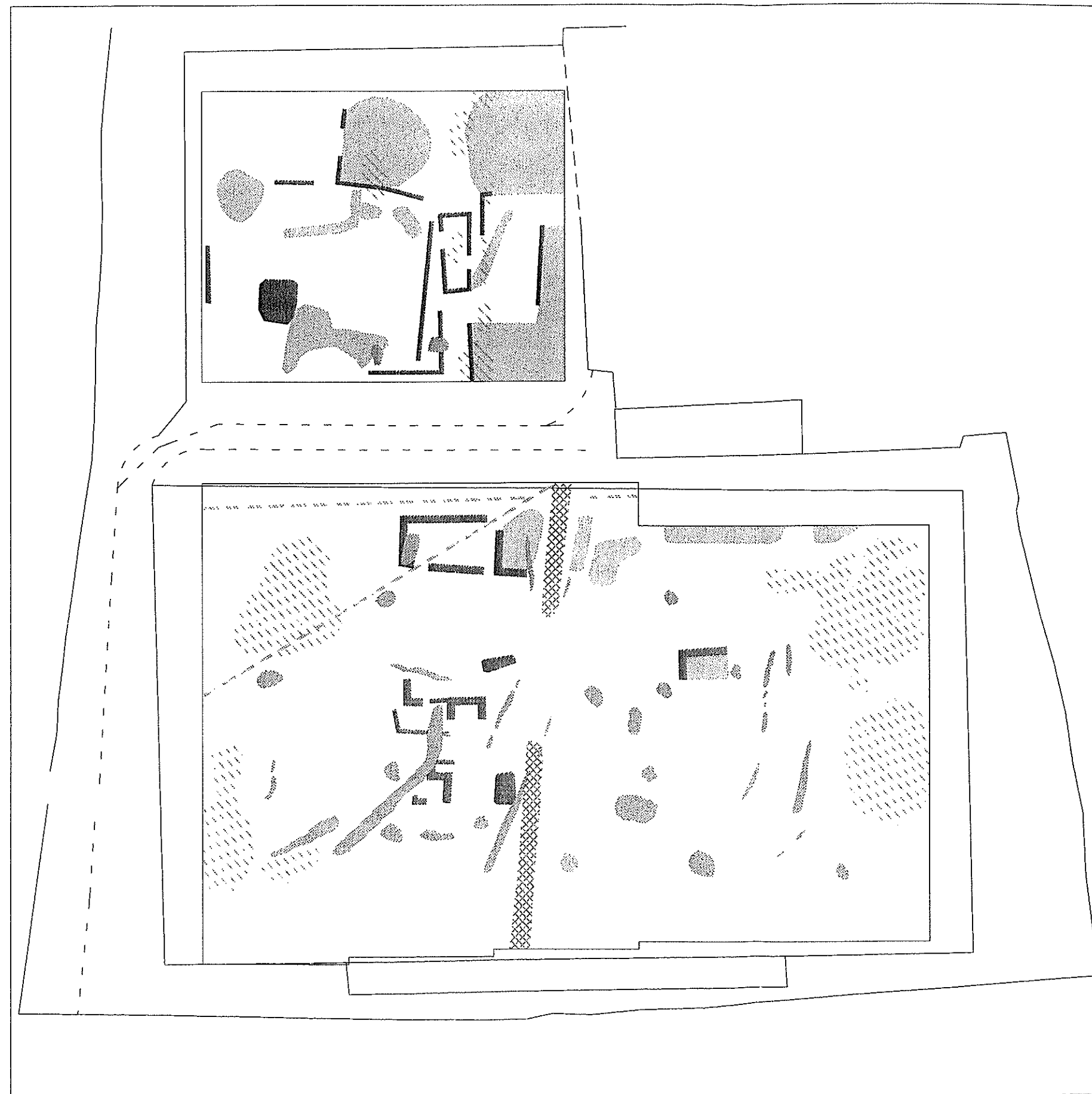
There is no material for classes **E**, **F**, **H**, **I**, **K** and **N**.

5.0 REFERENCES

James, H., 1992, 'Excavations in Roman Carmarthen 1978-1990', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, XXVIII

James, T., 1980, *Carmarthen: An Archaeological and Topographical Survey*

Geophysical Surveys of Bradford, 1995, *Carmarthen Roman Town: Report on geophysical survey of Football Pitch* (Unpublished report for DAT, copy held in Dyfed SMR, Shire Hall, Llandeilo)



GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS OF BRADFORD
PROJECT: CARMARTHEN TOWN FOOTBALL PITCH
TITLE: Summary Interpretation
Based on a plan supplied by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

Gradiometer Anomalies		?Archaeology
		?Burnt/Fired/Ferrous
Resistance Anomalies		?Walls\Rubble
		Roman Road
		Pipe/Cable
		?Drains
		Modern Disturbance

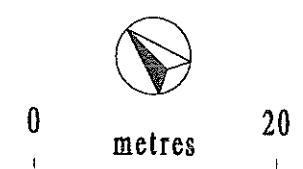


Figure 4