

CARMARTHEN FOOTBALL CLUB NEW STAND AND FLOODLIGHTS 2004-5 PHASE TWO STAND EXTENSIONS 2006

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared by Cambria Archaeology
For Carmarthen Town Football Club



ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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October 2006

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Gan / By

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Front cover: New stand and area for Phase 2 north extension

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Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau sydd
gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may
have on the content or presentation of this report

SUMMARY

The area for a new football stand at Carmarthen Football Field was stripped under archaeological control in 2004. The surface of a Roman road and part of a building were revealed but not excavated. Later, in 2005, four footing holes for floodlight stands were excavated. Roman deposits were encountered but were not large enough to understand their function. In 2006 soil was stripped from either end of the new stand to extend it, but no archaeological features were disturbed.

INTRODUCTION

Cambria Archaeology Field Operations produced the specifications for Carmarthen Football Club to fulfil the conditions for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), as outlined by R W Kevern, of Cadw, on 22 June 2004 (reference A-CAM1/2/6907/3). These conditions were in the reply for SMC for a new football stand and floodlights and are listed below. Work for extensions to the new stand took place in the summer of 2006, the conditions for which were similar to those below except the stated depth excavated was to be no more than 300mm below the ground surface.

1. Project objectives

- 1.1 An archaeologist to be present during all work involving ground disturbance and to be empowered to stop work to record any archaeological features.
- 1.2 The footings for the Spectator Stand to be excavated under archaeological supervision.
- 1.3 Following excavation to arrange a site meeting with Dr Kathryn Roberts, of Cadw, in order to inspect any archaeological deposits uncovered and to agree and undertake the appropriate level of recording, investigation and protection before construction commences.
- 1.4 The pitch drainage excavation to take place under archaeological supervision and undertake the appropriate level of recording.
- 1.5 The floodlight footing trenches to be excavated under archaeological supervision. Once archaeological levels are encountered to stop any mechanical excavation of the pits and hand excavate and record appropriately the archaeological levels to the depth required.
- 1.6 The archaeologist to be aware of the scheduled status of the monument, the restrictions that this imposes, and the conditions of the scheduled monument consent and to be given copies of this consent letter showing the conditions of the consent before work commences.
- 1.7 The archaeologist to produce an illustrated archaeological report describing in full the archaeological remains recorded and the mitigation methods employed.
- 1.8 The archaeologist to send a copy of the archaeological report to Cadw and the local Sites and Monument Record within three months of completion of works on the site.
- 1.9 Preparation and deposition of site/project archive.

LOCATION

The ground is located between the backs of the houses and buildings of Priory Street to the south and Richmond Terrace to the north (Fig. 1 and 2). The new stand was constructed immediately to the east of St Peter's car park and the Bowling Green, behind the old west stand of the football field (Fig. 3) and centred on Ordnance Survey grid ref. SN4153020410. The new floodlight footings were to be placed on a line behind (west) of the new stand; however the northern and southern ones were later repositioned in line with the front of the new stand.

HISTORY

Given the limited scope and results of this project it is not intended here to provide a detailed historical account. Should more information be required see Heather James' *Roman Carmarthen* (James 2003).

There is no evidence for pre-Roman settlement in Carmarthen. The Roman fort of *Moridunum* (the name meaning 'sea fort') appears to have been established between the line of King Street and the flood plain to the south, and to the west of St Peter's Church. The fort would have been founded AD 74-77 and the military roads would have been first constructed at about the same time. The main connecting roads ran from Llandeilo fort, to the east, and westwards towards Whitland; this road has now been traced as far as to the north of Haverfordwest. In Carmarthen this Roman road ran approximately along the line of Priory Street and indeed its remains have been observed below the current St Peter's Street. It probably continued on the same alignment to the west before turning along the route of Lammas Street.

The Roman town was established to the east of the fort, and is likely to have been on the site of the *vicus* (the native civilian settlement which grew up adjacent to such forts), although evidence for this early occupation is scarce. The military road appears to have formed the central east-west route through the town. The dating for the creation of the formal town is uncertain, but probably between AD120-150, with the suggestion that at least two of the minor roads in the town are being developed c. AD130, with the buildings around them starting nearer AD150.

The town was established as a *civitas* or tribal administrative centre for the *Demetae*, the local British population, and appears to have been provincial in appearance, with none of the finely constructed buildings, such as seen at Wroxeter and Verulamium. Most of the buildings at *Moridunum* were built of 'clom' (rammed earth construction and rendered) and many of these appear to have had thatched roofs. The town did have a surrounding defence of earth and timber, constructed in the late 2nd century. These defences comprised a substantial clay bank, revetted with turfs and fronted by a triple ditch system. These defences were subsequently remodelled and enlarged during the 3rd century with the construction of a stone wall, fronted by a new wide ditch. Moreover, the construction of the amphitheatre, which may have been able to seat 4000-5000 people (Little 1971), points to a town of some status or pretensions.

Moridunum, together with the other Roman towns in Britain, was already in decline in the 300s, retaining administrative functions but losing a large amount of urban activity. The evidence immediately after the Roman period (AD 410) for this town is very small; there are suggestions that it may have retained a Christian community, but was no longer functioning as a town. The town was re-established after the Norman Conquest and was located around the Norman castle. The former area of the Roman town (Old Carmarthen), belonged to the Priory to the east, and had little occupation, the remains of the Roman roads and ruins being robbed for building materials. It is not until the later post-medieval period that any amount of occupation of the Old Carmarthen area takes place. Much of this area remains undeveloped to this day and is a valuable archaeological resource. Reflecting this importance, a large part of the northern Roman town was scheduled in 1988 (Cm. 234), including the remaining garden areas (CM. 235). The defences on the southeast side of the Roman town were scheduled in 1990 (Cm. 243).

There had been some previous archaeological work on the football ground. These consisted of a geophysical survey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995), three

watching briefs (Ludlow 1996, Ludlow 1998 and Tavener 1999) and an evaluation trench of the new stand area (Blockley 2003). All of these reports indicated that there were considerable surviving archaeological features. The most obvious of these were a minor Roman road that bisects the football field and buildings to either side.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The new stand area

On 19th July 2004 an area was stripped under archaeological supervision by a 360° mini digger using a wide toothless bucket. The area stripped was 30.8m long, north to south, and 7.5m, east to west, and to a maximum of 400m below the ground surface. Only in the northern half of the area were archaeological features seen, but not disturbed.

A site meeting to review the archaeology took place on 21st July with Football Club personnel (Ceri Evans, John Evans and Malcolm Williams), plus Kate Roberts, of Cadw, Lucy Bourn, the Archaeological Planning officer for Carmarthenshire, and Pete Crane of Cambria Archaeology Field operations. It was agreed that a Cambria archaeologist and an assistant should spend two days to hand clean and record the archaeology revealed. This work was undertaken over the following two days.

Because none of the archaeological features were excavated they cannot be discussed in strict chronological order, and will therefore be described from north to south (Fig. 4).

The most obvious feature encountered was part of a Roman road (105), although only the southern half of this road was within the stripped area. This road is almost certainly part of that which is known to bisect the football pitch. The lowest visible layer (109) of this road appeared to be an earlier road surface. This layer consisted of orange sandy clay with about 80% smallish flat rounded cobbles and rounded angular pebbles; there was also an area with tiles, which could be a variation in construction or a repair. Along the edge of this layer (109), there was a line of stones, possibly the remains of a kerb. Above the metalling (109) there was a thin layer (108, not indicated on plan), possibly buried soil or mud deposited on the road before re-covering. Over this there was a layer (107) of dull orange compact sandy clay with 20% rounded and flat stones; this was probably a sub-strata or make up for the road surface above. The road surface (106) was made from a few large flat stones along with other large flat rounded cobble interspersed with sub-circular pebbles. Above this (106), at the northwest corner of the trench, there was a linear patch of material (123), similar to the make-up (107) below the road surface, possibly a repair or remaining re-surfacing of the road. Much of the upper road material appeared to have been eroded or disturbed, probably by later cultivation.

More recent cuts through the road (105) consisted of a linear pit (111) with a brown grey silty brown fill that contained material dating to c. 1900-50, and a gully (122) that could be the remains of a post medieval boundary ditch.

Just to the south of the south of the road there were at least two postholes (113 and 115). Both of these were substantial and appeared to have had stone packing. These postholes could be the remains of a roadside building. To the east of the post holes there were two patches (117 and 118) of daub, possibly from a building.

South of the postholes (113 and 115) and west of the daub patches (117 and 118) there was a large patch of very light brown clay (119 and 120), part of which was very heat affected, possibly the remains of an oven or kiln.

Further south there was a layer or deposit (121) of orange sand and gravel with stone, probably cut or disturbed by a number of features. This deposit looked like dirty natural sub-soil; it could be natural or re-deposited natural. Adjacent to this there were a few potential postholes.

Cutting the "natural" deposit (121) and the clay "oven" there was either a post medieval gully or deeper plough furrow. To the east of this, at right angles there was a post-medieval cut and fill, possibly a garden feature.

Overburden to the southeast was removed down to the top of the lower plough soil, and not into the Roman deposits. A very small test pit was placed near the southeastern end of the stripped area. This test pit encountered a possible archaeological deposit at about 120mm down (at Ordnance Datum 22.41) from the bottom of the stripped area. Therefore it is likely that archaeological features exist just below the bottom southeastern part of the stripped area.

Finds – New Stand

All finds found were un-stratified. After discussion with Cadw it was agreed that a specialist report was unnecessary. Only three contexts produced finds:

- 101. Topsoil. These consisted of 1 Samian base and one coarse rim sherd, both of which were heavily eroded.
- 102. Finds from further machining after removal of topsoil and hand cleaning of northern half of trench. These consisted of: 3 sherds of Samian, 2 sherds grey ware, several sherds of black burnished ware, some building material (tile and brick) mostly Roman, 1 fragment of slag, 1 fragment of furnace lining, a number of clay pipe stem fragments and a few bowl fragments. A number of mixed glazed pottery fragments of 17th-19th century, glass bottle fragment 18th-19th century, 2 post medieval metal fragments, and a few bits of bone.
- 103. A group of finds from just to the south of the heat affected area (120) in grey clay loam, probably a disturbed Roman deposit. These finds consisted of: 2 amphora sherds, 4 sherds of Samian, 1 fragment of furnace lining, 1 fragment of Roman glass, 1 sherd of Staffordshire feather ware c. 18th century, and a few fragments of bone.

It is possibly significant that the finds are either of Roman or post-medieval date, and none were medieval.

Location of the floodlight bases (Fig. 3)

The floodlight bases monitored during this phase of works were for the four western lights (numbered in this report WFLB1–WFLB4 from south to north), dug on 30th August 2005. The bases required the excavation of two areas measuring 1.3m x 1.3x 1.5m deep (WFLB1 and WFLB4) and two areas 1.5m x 1.5m x 1.5m deep (WFLB2 and WFLB3).

Results by trench

WFLB1 (Photo. 4)

Roman deposits were reached at a depth of c.1.25m. This area appears to have been built up in the past, as modern plastic, glass and ceramics were encountered down to the top of the Roman layer. The Roman deposit was a brown loose silty clay loam containing charcoal flecks, brick and tile fragments and mortar. A Roman brick was recovered from this deposit.

WFLB2 (Photo. 5)

The top of the Roman deposits were encountered at a depth of 0.45m. The deposit, 58cm thick was a light brown silty clay loam containing pottery sherds, small fragments of brick and tile, charcoal flecks, mortar and a large amount of burnt clay particularly towards the bottom of the layer. A shallow pit filled with charcoal flecks, angular stones, small fragments of brick or tile and mortar was cut into the top of the Roman deposit. It is not clear if the pit was dug in the late Roman period, or sometime later, although a Roman date is likely.

WFLB3 (Photos. 6 and 7)

The top of a Roman road was found 0.6m below the surface, with a gravel surface above large stone foundation extending up to 0.48m deep. This road is almost certainly part of the same road that bisects the football field and was also identified in the northern extent of the new stands area. Below the road foundation there was a layer, 0.1m thick of stiff brown clay with charcoal flecks, possibly a working surface or original ground surface prior to construction of the road. Below this charcoal flecked layer there was a natural subsoil, c. 1.18 below the ground surface.

WFLB4 (Photo. 8)

Possible Roman deposits were found 0.5m below the ground surface. This deposit or deposits were nearly 0.5m deep and overlay the natural subsoil.

The football field extra drainage

Cambria Archaeology has now been informed that the drainage work has not taken place and is now not considered necessary. Unfortunately this delay interfered with our work programme and has caused delay in reporting.

Phase 2. Extensions to the new stand (Fig. 3)

From 10th to 13th July 2006 two areas 15m long and 8.5m wide were stripped at either end of the new stand, in ideal weather conditions. The eastern part of each area was only stripped of recent chippings and a small amount of soil down to a height of about 22.80 Ordnance Datum. The western part of both areas was excavated about 300mm below the former ground surface before it was covered with chippings, with a finished height around 22.55m OD. The edges were battered between the shallower eastern and deeper western parts. The levelling heights were tied in to the benchmark on St Peter's church, to a Temporary Bench Mark on the southeast corner of the higher part of the concrete base on the northwestern floodlight base (TBM 23.15m OD). A height of 23.24m OD was recorded on both ends of the concrete raft for the new stand (these measurements should not be used for planning purposes).

Nothing of archaeological interest was seen in the northern extension area (Photo. 9). Crossing most of the rear (west) of the area there was a service trench, approximately 0.5m into the area. This trench contained three cables, of which at least one was for electricity. The bottom of the trench was approximately level with the finished excavation depth. There was a modern gravel filled trench extending from the southwest corner, which had been dug below the finished excavation depth. This gravel filled trench was joined by a plastic water pipe with a cable immediately below (possibly telephone, as no warning tape), about 4m north of the new stand's concrete raft. At the western edge the water pipe and cable trench was above depth excavated but extended below this depth from where it encountered the line of the gravel filled trench, but probably no more than 100mm or so below the finished depth.

In the south stand area (Photo. 10) part of a possible Roman period deposit was just uncovered, but not damaged, where the machine went a little too deep

(22.46m OD) against the west section (Photo. 11). The deposit contained a large amount of fire-reddened material but no coal flecks, unlike the layer of lower topsoil or plough soil above which contained significant coal flecks. There was a line of modern postholes, running parallel to the football field that may have been for a fence, possibly of the same period as the old stand. There was again a very recent water pipe trench with an electric cable below just in the rear of the machined area. In the higher area, to the east, there was a stone chipping filled trench, 0.5 to 1m west of the pavement alongside the football field. The depth or purpose of this trench was not ascertained but was presumably contemporary with the new stand.

A few fragments of Roman period pottery were found while machining both areas. These were however quite abraded and recovered with post-medieval pottery and modern detritus.

INTERPRETATION

The removal of the topsoil from the new stand area revealed the top of a minor Roman road. This occurred at a minimum of 0.31m below the ground surface (maximum height of road surface 22.59m site datum, approximately equal to ordnance datum). This road is almost certainly the same as that found in WFLB3, and that revealed in the geophysical survey (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995). It is probable that this road has survived standing proud of contemporaneous deposits due to the compact nature of its construction.

There appeared to have been a building or buildings immediately to the south the road as indicated by the postholes and the possible remains of a hearth or oven. These were encountered at a lower level (22.47m site datum) than that of the road surface. The walls of these buildings were probably built of clom or wattle and daub, and were probably reduced by ploughing and gardening in the medieval and post-medieval period.

The densities of finds that are no longer *in situ* are still a good indication of the status, trading contacts and date of activity within areas of the town. These are a valuable resource, and should not be lightly discarded. Any soil stripped from areas within the town should, where possible, be retained within the area, either spread or made into earth banks to enable recovery further in time. In addition, there is a great danger that an archaeological site may be mistakenly recorded should the finds from the site be discovered elsewhere.

The excavation of the footings for the floodlight bases revealed little other than a very small part of the Roman road and the level at which archaeological deposits are likely. These small holes appear not to have destroyed anything of importance. However, such small holes intruding into archaeological deposits may curtail correct interpretations of any later investigations.

The excavation for the stand extensions did not disturb archaeological features but it was evident from an accidental shallow machine scoop in the south area that they are likely to exist just below the depth excavated.

CONCLUSIONS

No damage occurred to the archaeological deposits in the area of the new stand or stand extensions. However, archaeological levels were immediately below the depths excavated. Elsewhere there could be stone structures or building remains that have survived to the same level as the Roman road surface or above. The reduction of archaeological survival by medieval or later activity should not be relied upon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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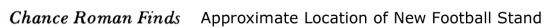
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ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The finds and records will be deposited at Abergwilli Museum, Carmarthen

Figure 2: Roman Carmarthen and new stand from James 1980



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Figure 3: Football pitch, new stand phase 2 locations and Western Flood Light Bases (WFLB)

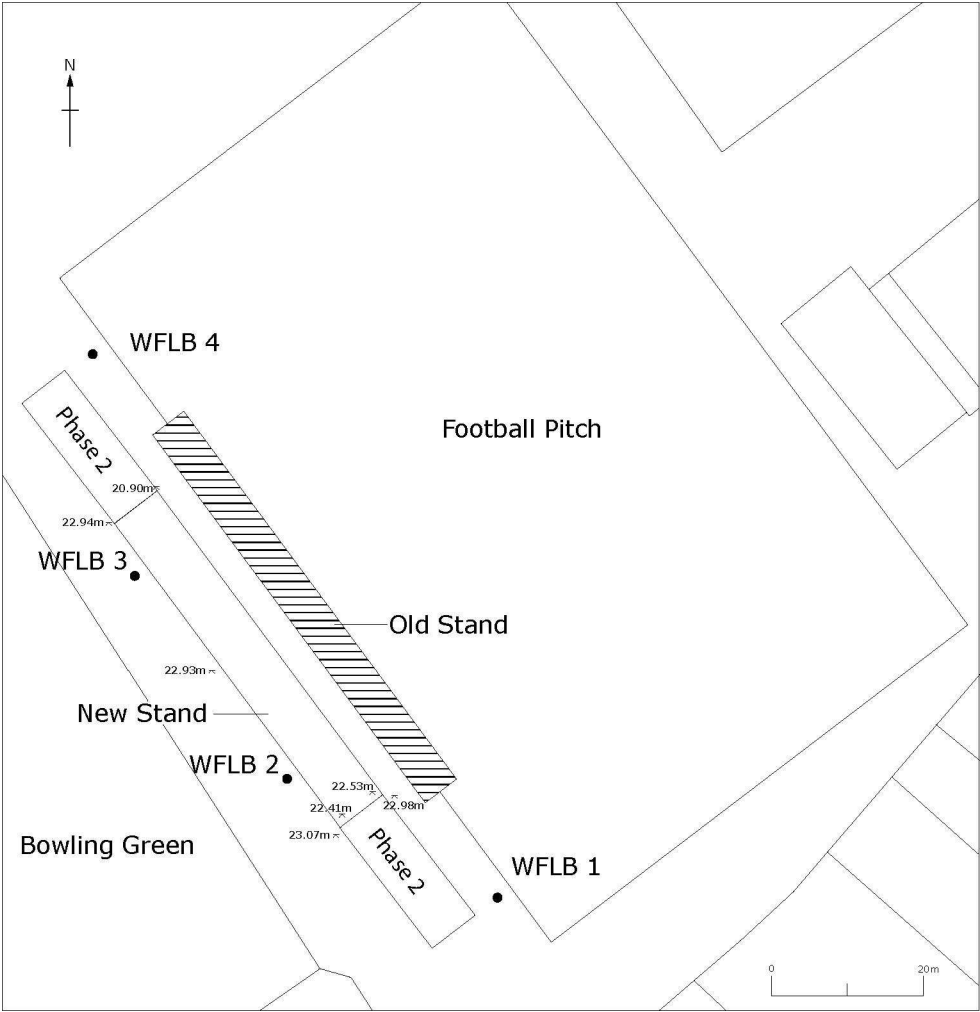


Figure 4: Archaeological features in the area of the new stand 2004

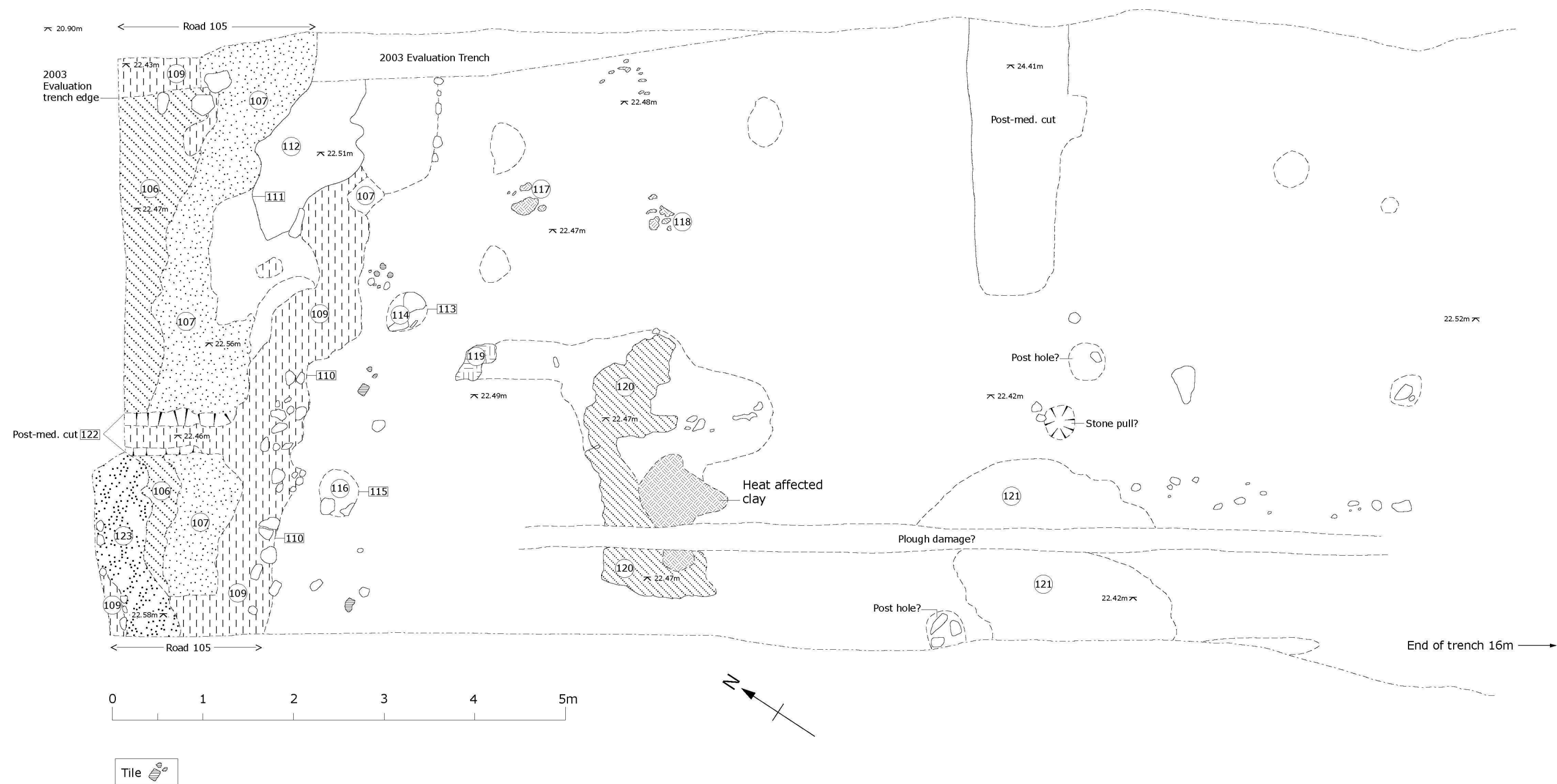




Photo. 1. Roman road (105) far right, heat affected area to left. View NW. Scales 1m



Photo. 2: Detail of Roman road (105) surface. View NW. Scales 0.5m and 1m



Photo. 3: Detail of heat affected clay (120). View SW. Scale 1m



Photo. 4: WFLB1 showing the modern overburden overlying the Roman deposit, visible as the lighter brown material at the base of the pit. View E. Scale 1m



Photo. 5: WFLB2. Roman deposits starting below dark grey layer and modern disturbance. View W. Scale 1m



Photo. 6: WFLB3. Roman road, light covered deposit behind scale. View W. Scale 1m



Photo. 7: WFLB3. Detail of Roman road in section. View W. Scale 1m



Photo. 8: WFLB4. View E. Scale 1m



Photo. 9: North extension area as excavated. View SSW



Photo. 10: South extension area as excavated. View N



Photo. 11: South extension area, detail of west section, with possible Roman deposit just showing at the base of 0.5m scale. View W