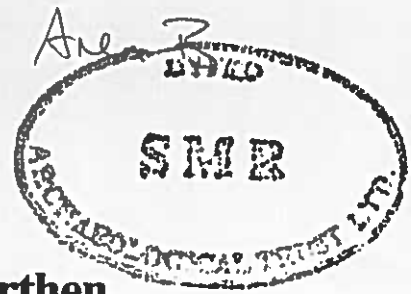


PRN 45073



**Priory Street Infirmary, Carmarthen,
Carmarthenshire**

**to include:
Archaeological Watching Brief and Top Soil Stripping Programme**



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November 2001

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Watching Brief /Top Soil Stripping Programme at Priory Street Infirmary, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was commissioned by Mr Dorian Davies of Plas Cwrt Hir Carmarthen to conduct an archaeological watching brief on land formally the Priory Street Infirmary (NGR SN 4170 2027). The agents for the programme of works were Keith R. Pearce Chartered Quantity Surveyors. The watching brief was issued by Cambria Archaeology in respect of the development of the Infirmary site and formed part of an overall design Brief for archaeological works issued by Cambria Archaeology on 22nd October 2001.
- 1.2 Due to the advanced position of site works and demolition prior to the commencement of work on site, it was agreed that this specific component of the archaeological work and the ensuing full programme of works was to be abandoned by agreement at a site meeting on Wednesday 14th November attended by Ms Louise Austin and Ms Lucy Rowley-Williams of Cambria Archaeology, Mr Dorian Davies, Mr John Bailey and Mr Neil Shurety of Border Archaeology. It was consequently agreed that Border Archaeology would clean back an area of archaeological concern that had already been impacted upon by the development works and observe any other site activity in the agreed sensitive areas. It should also be noted that Mr Davies was most concerned about such works as there is no budgetary allowance for archaeological works and that this information was relayed to Cambria Archaeology. ! what component?
- 1.3 The purpose of this limited programme was to assess the nature of any archaeological remains and to indicate any mitigation requirements. It was considered by Cambria Archaeology that this development have significant archaeological implications and that possible archaeological remains, in particular Roman deposits, features and structures were to be uncovered during ground clearance operations.
- 1.4 This limited archaeological programme required stringent on-site procedures that complied with present Health and Safety standards set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). However, it should be noted that machine operators employed by the client ignored requests by Border Archaeology staff to cease work around the site and as a result site work was halted. This incident in conjunction with the completion of the cleaning back work produced a meeting with the monitoring authority on site on Friday 16th November 2001.
- 1.5 A copy of this report will be submitted to the developer of the plot and Cambria Archaeology. Further copies of this report will be deposited with the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The programme, so designated as a watching brief/top soil stripping programme, commenced on the 14th November 2001 and was completed to the 16th November 2001, at which time Border Archaeology withdrew from site.

2.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This section of the report will identify the major sites that are within the vicinity of the Priory Street Infirmary. Concerning Roman remains, this part of Carmarthen can be considered as archaeological sensitive. Discoveries include a number of Roman buildings and streets which have been Scheduled as nationally important. The bulk of the research for this area has been undertaken by Heather James and as result a monograph entitled: 'Excavations in Roman Carmarthen 1978-1992' will be published shortly. Previous intrusive work supported by limited desk-based assessments have been undertaken by Border Archaeology. The following summary provides the necessary information in order to assess the importance of features and structures uncovered during recent grounds works activity within the boundary of the Priory Street Infirmary site.
- 2.2 The Roman and old Medieval town of Carmarthen is located on a substantial [peri-glacial] moraine plateau on the northern side of the Afon Tywi. The Roman town known as *Moridunum Demetarum*, and associated fort are located underneath what is referred to as 'Old Carmarthen' (Grid Ref SN 4120). Within Old Carmarthen town there are 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). All sites are located within immediate area (500m radius) of the site and include:

Site Name	Street Name	Grid Ref.	SAM No.
Carmarthen Castle	N. of Coracle Way	SN413199	CM008
The Bulwarks	S. of Lammas Street	SN409199	CM009
Roman Amphitheatre	N. of Priory Street	SN419206	CM206
Roman Town	S. of Priory Street	SN415204	CM234
Roman Fort	Spilman Street	SN415204	CM235
Priory of St John	S. of Priory Street	SN419204	CM236
Roman Town Defences	Priory Street	SN418204	CM243

- 2.3 The main concentration of Roman activity is centred around the Old Carmarthen. However, to the south-west of the Roman Town defences, around Spilman Street and King Street is the Roman fort - immediately east of Medieval castle (SAM CM235 and PRN 39). Constructed around AD77 under Julius Frontinus (Governor between AD 74-77), the fort has an internal area of around 2ha(?) (James 1980; James - forthcoming:12). The size of the fort is believed to have shrunk later to roughly half its original size whilst maintaining its southern and eastern flanks. Up until recently the exact whereabouts of the fort have remained unknown. A series of trenches around the Royal Ivy Bush Hotel in 1968 uncovered a substantial ditch section which appears to belong to the fort defences. According to the SMR, finds around this area are meagre. It is more than probable that the fort was the first Roman presence on the site, followed shortly by the settlement. Prior to the Roman occupation, the site may have been a civitas capital of the Demetae tribe, who occupied all of south-west Wales. Judging by the swift settlement of the Romans plus the shrinkage in the fort size, the occupation and relationship between the Demetae and the Romans was probably a peaceful affair. Concerning the early Roman occupation, there is still debate to whether Moridunum was a vicus settlement (James 2000:42).

- 2.4 The Roman town of Moridunum was of a considerable size, encompassing an area of between 5.7 and 6.1ha. It is more than probable that the town layout is built on a centralised grid system; possibly part of the grid system runs through the Priory Street Infirmary site, between North Parade and Parade Road (see Border Archaeology Report BA/GN/051 - Map 2). Wachter has suggested that

parts of the present Old Town road layout delineate previous Roman thoroughfares (1981:390). However, according to James (forthcoming:16), and more importantly, archaeological investigations around SN 4145 2038 (PRN 34) [between Priory Street and Richmond Terrace], the layout is different. A Roman road surface uncovered in 1923 west of North Parade (PRN 21) and a road referred to as [Roman] Lammas Street ran through the middle of the town and north of the fort. The town's grid system appears to be more symmetrical (see James Plan 1.6, forthcoming). Associated with the grid system is the formal layout of civic, commercial and domestic buildings. Extensive research on this aspect of the town is covered within the forthcoming volume by James. It should be noted that Moridunum is probably similar in layout as other Roman towns in the west and northern Britain. This being the case, the more prestigious civic buildings would have been located along, or just off the main street - [Roman] Lammas Street. Therefore, land either side of Priory Street and within the confines of the Roman town is archaeologically highly sensitive - for example the northern extents of North Parade, The Avenue, Peniel Street, land north of Priory Street, St Peter's Car Park and land around Church Street. One should also not ignore land around the Amphitheatre and the southern slopes of Park Hall.

- 2.5 The Medieval find spots and sites of Carmarthen are concentrated around the castle area (County Hall), especially in and around (north of) Coracle Way, Guildhall Street, Hall Street, King Street and Nott's Square. Other areas of Medieval activity exist to the north-east of the town. Underlying a football ground at SN 419 204 is the Priory of St John. The remains of the priory wall (PRN 210 and locally referred to as 'Nun's Walk') exist on the northern side, between the football ground and the rear gardens to properties along Priory Street.
- 2.6 Concerning recent archaeological investigations around the site, two projects undertaken by Cambria Archaeology (CA 2000; Crane 2001) have revealed further Roman activity. The adjacent Lidl site (NGR SN 4155 2025), Roman activity albeit much disturbed was found along the frontage of Priory Street. The evidence revealed a series of residual and *insitu* finds including a large quantity of Roman 1st to 4th century pottery (both local and imported wares) as well as a small assemblage of Medieval wares. Not surprisingly, recent (19th and 20th century) building activity within the immediate area of the site had removed all traces of any Medieval and Roman buildings/structures.
- 2.7 The Sites and Monuments register revealed that up to eleven sites are within a 250m radius of the Priory Street Infirmary. Included within this inventory are: Roman finds from Elm Lodge (NGR SN 4176 2026) - PRN 14; Roman finds (black and red wares, CBM, coin hoard, glass and metal objects) and a Roman road from the Priory Street Infirmary (NGR SN 4170 2027) - PRN 20 and 21□; Roman finds (pipe clay statuette fragment) from The Parade (NGR SN 4168 2021) - PRN 24; Roman finds (large red stones) from Priory Street (NGR SN 4166 2034) - PRN 38; the Post-Medieval Carn's War Memorial (NGR SN 4165 2032) - PRN 142; Post-Medieval inscribed stone from the Free Grammar School (NGR SN 4164 2030) - PRN 178; Medieval finds from North Parade (NGR SN 4170 2026) - PRN 202; The Eagle public house in Priory Street (NGR SN 4164 2034) - PRN 338; The Globe public house in Priory Street (NGR SN 4163 2033) - PRN 355; and Roman finds from the Lidl Food store evaluation (NGR SN 4165 2025) - PRN 37673.
- 2.8 The Priory Street Infirmary frontage which has a date plaque of 1848 can be considered of building recording value (RCHAME). The frontage, designed in a semi-classical form with symmetrical window and door openings is of historical importance to the 19th century fabric of Carmarthen.

3.0 GEOLOGY

- 3.1 The drift geology present in the southern and eastern parts of Carmarthen relate to riverine deposition, what the Soil Survey of England & Wales (1983) refer to as a Teme 561b. Generally, these soils consist of light yellow-brown deep stoneless permeable silty soils (as described as [004]). Some soils are variably affected by ground water. Naturally lain gravelly sub-soils provide a sub-base for particularly Roman and Medieval urban deposits.

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4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The aim of the programme of archaeological work was to locate and record any archaeological remains revealed during the course of the ground works phase of the development. It was initially considered by the monitoring authority that the site required a watching brief within areas where possible impact of significant archaeological remains may be encountered but for reasons outlined within section 1 of this Report, this was subsequently amended. The nature in which insignificant deposits were removed by mechanical excavator, suggested that a top soil stripping programme was necessary in order to fully assess the area. By applying this process, a total of fourteen features - mainly Roman in date - were uncovered. Also incorporated into the programme of works was a limited desk based assessment which included sites within a 250m radius of the site.

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- 4.2 For the limited desk-based assessment, only secondary documentary sources were used including cartographic and pictorial records were used in order to provide an overview of the site. Sources of cultural heritage information was obtained from: The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthen-shire, SA19 6AF.

- 4.3 Additional information was taken from the yet unpublished draft 'Excavations in Roman Carmarthen 1978-1992' by Heather James (supplied with kind permission by Cambria Archaeology). Cultural Heritage information focused around The Parade, North Parade, The Avenue and Priory Street.

- 4.4 After an initial inspection of the site, the area of the proposed development was excavated by mechanical excavator under strict archaeological supervision. The excavation of the area continued to a required depth of roughly 0.30m below the existing ground level (in order to fulfil the verbal requests of the monitor). This depth was maintained across the majority of the site.

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- 4.5 All spoil was scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and will later be archived.

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- 4.6 The depth and complexity of deposits across the whole site was assessed. Written and photographic records of all machine-excavated areas were made in accordance with best archaeological practice. Records included an overall plan of the site.

5.0 THE WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 The area of the watching brief/top soil stripping programme was located around the eastern part of the site; to the south of North Parade and the west of The Parade. The frontage of the Priory Street Infirmary, and a sizeable proportion of the [old] 19th century fabric of the building will be incorporated into the proposed new building.

5.2 Concerning the removal of soils from the area where the watching brief was to occur, approximately 0.30m to 0.40m of soils were removed. This depth of soil removed was due to contamination of overlying rubble deposits which had been driven into these soils by previously mechanical excavator during demolition. A total of three soil contexts were removed prior to top soil stripping. All Roman and Post-Medieval deposits, features and structures cut into the fourth deposit [004]. It should be noted that as deposits, features and structures cutting into [004] were not excavated, their full extent (including depth) could not be assessed.

5.3 The first context [001] encountered extended across the site and consisted of a coarse rubble spread. This deposit formed part of the recent demolition of infirmary buildings which date from the 20th century. Included within the spread was extensive concrete rubble, modern ceramic building material and occasional Post-Medieval pottery (tin glazed earthen wares, cream wares [incl. blue transfer wares] and Staffordshire Brown and Black wares). Underlying [001] was a loosely compacted dark brown to black humic [garden] soil [002] (2.5Y/3). This deposit extended across the site. Recovered from this deposit was a single Medieval galena green glazed pottery sherd. This was located close to a Roman cobblestone stone surface (Feature 14). Underlying [002] was a moderately compacted yellow to ochre coarse clayey soil [003] (2.5Y/6) with occasional quantities of Post-Medieval pottery (including glazed white and cream wares - 19th century in date). This deposit extended across the site and provides the interface between modern accumulated soils and underlying Roman deposits, features and structures. Context [004] consisted as tightly compacted orange to brown silty clay (10YR/6). Exposed on the surface of this deposit was a small (but significant) assemblage of Roman and Post-Medieval artefacts including pottery and CBM. All features numbers within the text correspond to numbers on the location plan (Figure 1).

5.4 Feature 1 [005] is located within the south-west corner of the site and measures in plan 3.45m x 0.85 (rectangular in plan). The fill [006] consists of a moderately compacted dark brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones, burnt daub, Roman CBM and modern slate. This feature is interpreted as being Post-Medieval in date, possibly associated with 19th century [hospital] building activity.

5.5 Feature 2 [007] is located within the south-west corner of the site, next to feature 3 and measures in plan 2.2m x 1.3m (rectangular in plan). The fill [008] consists of a moderately compacted grey to brown coarse clay with occasional large round pebble inclusions, bone, burnt daub and Roman pottery. This feature, which cuts into feature 3, is interpreted as being Post-Medieval in date, possibly associated with 19th century [hospital] building activity.

5.6 Feature 3 [009] is located immediately next to feature 2 and measures 2.8m x 1m (rectangular in plan). The fill [010] consists of a moderately compacted brown silty clay with occasional large rounded and sub-angular stones, burnt daub and Roman CBM. The date of this feature is unknown.

- 5.7 Feature 4 [011] is located east of feature 2 and 3 and measures 0.95m x 0.60m (sub-circular in plan). The fill [012] consists of a moderately compacted mid brown silty clay with bone, CDM, concrete and a iron bolt. The finds suggest that this feature in Post-Medieval in date.
- 5.8 Feature 5 [013] is located to the north of feature 2 and measures 1.45m x 0.45m (rectilinear in plan). The fill [014] consists of a tightly compacted grey coarse clay with occasional stone inclusions. Artefacts recorded from this feature include burnt daub, Roman ceramic tile and occasional slate and charcoal flecking. Finds from this feature suggest a Roman date.
- 5.9 Feature 6 [015] is located to the north of feature 1 and adjacent to feature 7. This feature measures 1.15m x 0.65m (sub-circular in plan). The fill [016] consists of a high quantity of sub-angular stone which are embedded into a tightly compacted brown silty clay. This feature forms part of a substantial wall, probably Roman in date.
- 5.10 Feature 7 (structure) [017] is located within the western part of the site and measures approximately 4m x 0.60m. The structure is constructed of a tightly compacted rubble spread [018] which is embedded into a tightly compacted brown silty clay. This structure forms part of a substantial wall (oriented north-west/south-east, probably Roman in date and was partially destroyed by mechanical excavator.
- 5.11 Feature 8 [019] is located to the east of the wall (feature 7) and measures 1.5m x 1m (sub-circular in plan). The fill [020] consists of a moderately compacted mid brown silty clay which contained charcoal flecking, plaster, Roman CBM, slate and sub-angular stones. This feature is probably Roman in date.
- 5.12 Feature 9 [021] is located within the central area of the site and measures 1.05m x 1.15m (circular in plan). The fill [022] consists of a tightly compacted mid brown silty clay with frequent quantities of large stones and moderate quantities of charcoal flecking and Roman CBM. This feature is probably Roman in date.
- 5.13 Feature 10 [023] is located within the central area of the site and is possibly cut by feature 9. The feature measures 3.5m x 2.8m (D-shaped in plan). The fill [024] consists of a tightly compacted mid brown silty clay with frequent quantities of Roman CBM and charcoal flecking. The extent of this feature was not fully defined. This feature is probably Roman in date and possibly represents part of a Roman kiln.
- 5.14 Feature 11 [025] is located within the central area of the site, east of features 9 and 10. It is possible that this feature, which measures 2.7m x 0.70m cuts into feature 10. The fill [026] consists of a tightly compacted coarse brown clay with frequent quantities of charcoal flecking and Roman CBM. This feature, which was not fully defined is probably Roman in date.
- 5.15 Feature 12 [027] is located east of feature 11 and north of feature 13. This feature measures 3.2m x 0.45m (sub-rectangular in plan). The fill [028] consists of a tightly compacted black to brown coarse clayey soil with frequent quantities of charcoal flecking and Roman CBM. This feature, which was not fully defined is probably Roman in date.

- 5.16 Feature 13 [029] is located immediately south of feature 12 and measures 3m x 1.95m (rectangular in plan). The fill [030] consists of a tightly compacted mid brown silty clay with frequent quantities of charcoal flecking and Roman CBM. This feature is possibly cut by feature 12 and is probably Roman in date.
- 5.17 Feature 14 (structure) [031] is located to the south of all the above feature and was exposed due to excessive machine activity within that area of the site. The structure, a cobblestone surface measures 2.1m x 1.3m. The full extent of this surface was not fully exposed. However, it is the opinion of Border Archaeology that it is extensive. Several Roan black and grey burnished sherds were found *insitu* on the surface).
- PAR 5-13

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 It is an unfortunate but unavoidable fact that no adequate budgetary provisions or time allowed were made for archaeology. Furthermore, the client informed Border Archaeology from the outset that no funds were available for any future archaeological programme of work (including full excavation, as proposed by Cambria Archaeology). As a result of this information, Border Archaeology limited its involvement on site to the exposing and recording of those significant archaeological deposits, features and structures. Context [004] marks the upper extent of the significant archaeology. Exposed within this context were a number of features that date from the Roman period and can be considered as being (Roman) industrial in nature. Concerning the cobblestone surface (feature 14), this feature may extend across the site and possibly forms a thoroughfare between (Roman) buildings.
- 6.2 It is the opinion of Border Archaeology that sufficient protection to the integrity of the known deposits of the site can only be offered by a redesign of the structural foundations.

7.0 COPYRIGHT

- 7.1 Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

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FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION

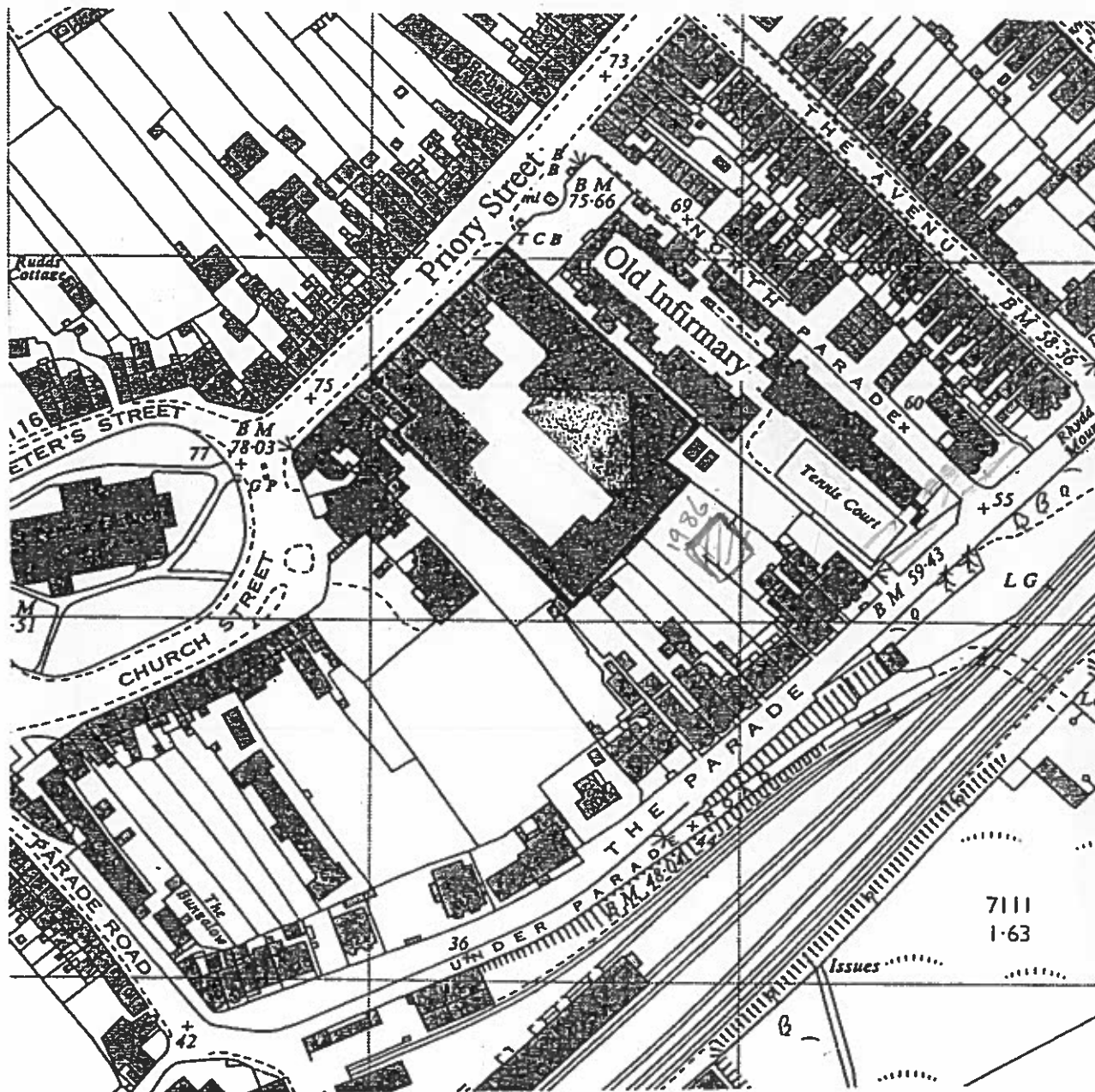


FIGURE 2 ARCHAEOLOGY FROM THE PRIORY STREET INFIRMARY SITE

