

CAMBRIDGE INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY – CIA14 (NW13)

Nine Wells 2013 excavation report for trenches 4 to 8

Please note: An introduction to the Nine Wells site, when it was discovered and previous historical excavations has been covered elsewhere; both in previous reports and in the 2013 trenches 1 & 3 report so has not been repeated here.

Summary of the 2013 excavation of trenches 4 to 8

The feature found in the SW edge of trench 2 in 2012 was, at that time, believed to be a probable *cold bath*. However, the excavations in 2013 have not enabled us to conclude what the purpose of this feature was. The expected chalk surface at 150cm in fact turned out to be trenches, whose function at this can only be speculated. The term *cold bath* is used in this report simply to refer to this feature and not imply that is in fact what it is.

Trenches 4, 5 and 8 enabled us to identify the NW and SE edges of the *cold bath*, but due to time constraints, and the fact that the spoil heap was in the wrong place, we were unable to determine the SW edge.

The trenches and the nature of the feature will be discussed in detail later, but it is noticeable that the whole of this part of the site, effectively to the NE of the semicircular mosaic bath excavated in 2011, was demolished contemporaneously. Very little remains in the way of structure, with only remnants of a cobble wall on the SE edge together with steps down into the feature. Trenches 6 and 7 revealed a redistributed chalk layer 35-40cm below the surface, with no features apart from one or two post holes. A small test pit extension in trench 5 to the SE revealed that the building probably extends in that direction.

The proposal for trenches 4-8

The trenches

In 2012, trench 2 revealed a feature that was possibly part of a *cold bath* or well. Also, along the very edge on the SW, the level dropped away from a possible walkway which meant it was not possible to investigate further in 2012 apart from a larger cut in the south corner.

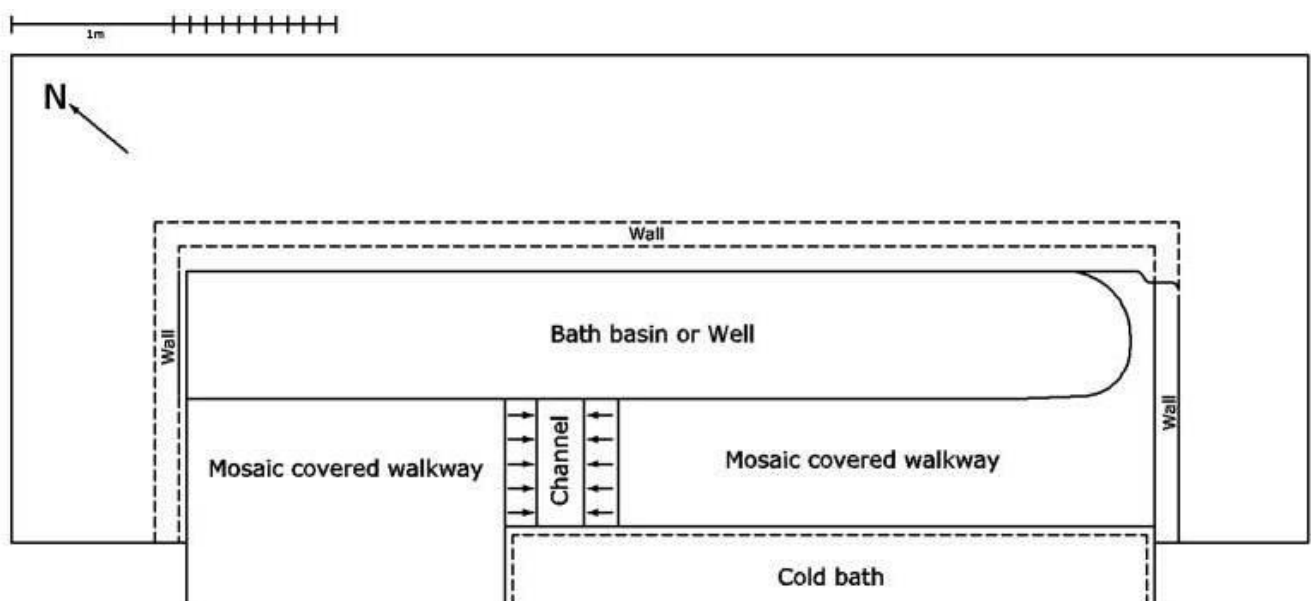


Figure 1: 2012 trench 2 - The potential layout as considered at the end of the 2012 excavations

As a result of 2012 excavations and the possible purpose revealed by trench 2, and from the geophysics results (see figures 2 to 5), it was initially decided to open 2 trenches (Tr4 and Tr5) SW of the 2012 trench 2 to hopefully establish the extent of the possible *cold bath*.

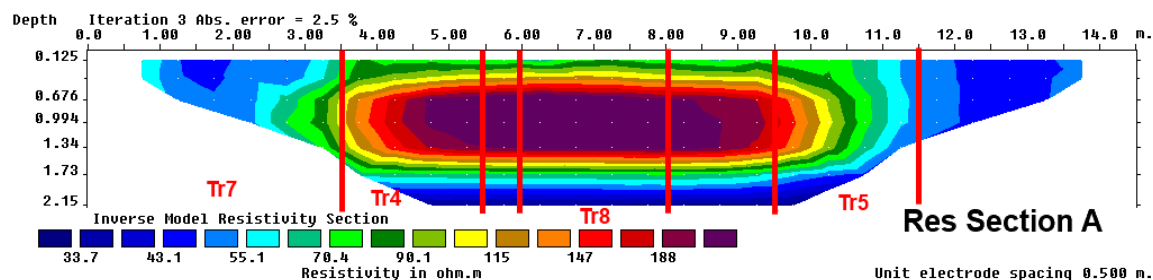


Figure 2: Resistivity section A

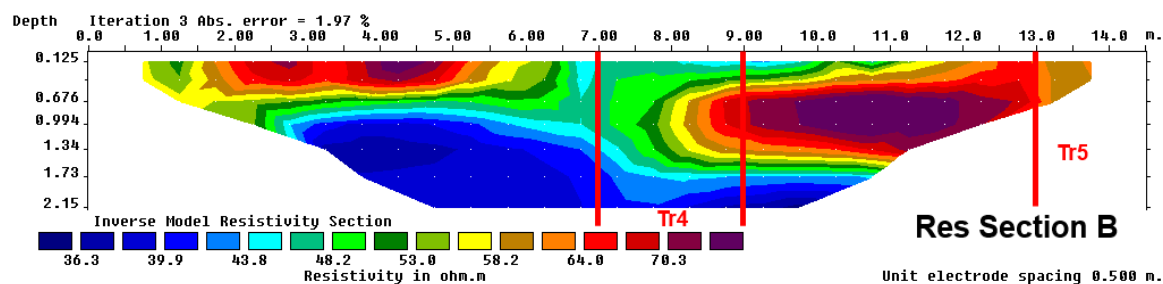


Figure 3: Resistivity section B

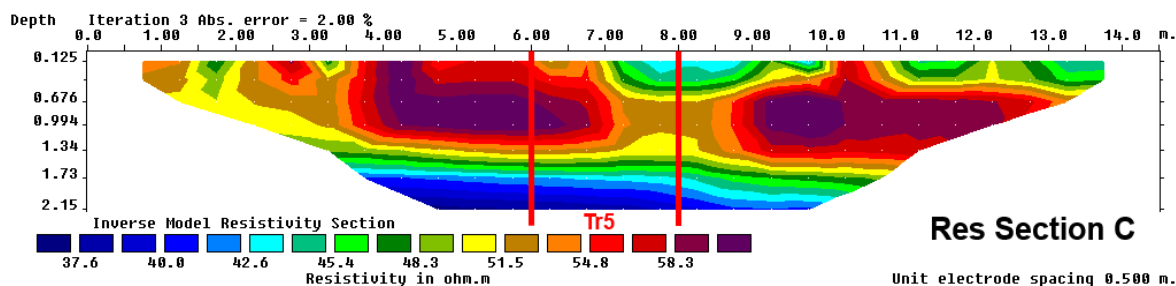


Figure 4: Resistivity section C

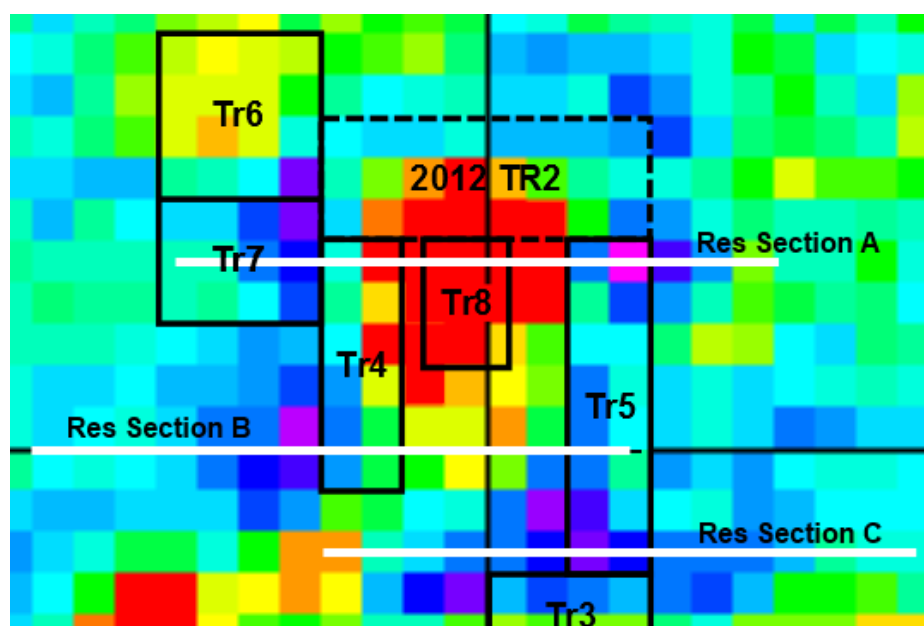


Figure 5: The proposed excavation plan for Trenches 4 – 8
(showing the resistivity survey and section locations)

As can be seen in all the resistivity sections, the high resistance area appears to align with the high resistance areas on the resistivity survey too.

As will be seen later, the assumption that we would find evidence of a *cold bath* could have been misplaced and in fact what we suspected from the evidence uncovered during the 2012 excavations may not have been a *cold bath*. However, this was not substantiated by the evidence uncovered in 2013. What this 'feature' may be is discussed in the conclusions.

Excavating the first contexts of the trenches

Figure 6 below gives the relative location of the contexts for trenches 4 to 8. Context 1 has been omitted from all trenches for clarity as it was the mechanical excavations. For clarity, this diagram is stylized, based upon initial excavation plans rather than an accurate representation.

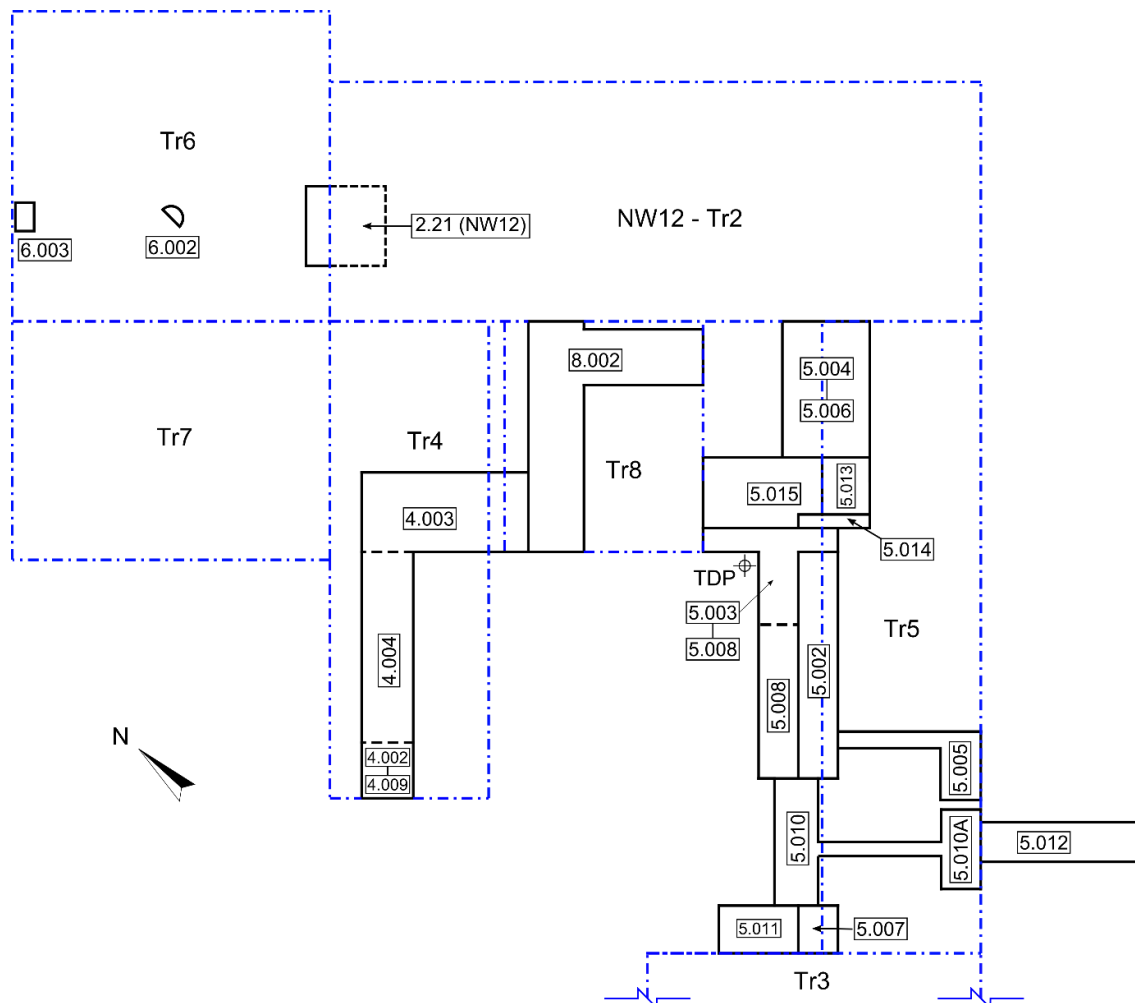


Figure 6: Stylized plan of the location trenches 4 to 8

As in previous years, as the top 30-50cm is disturbed by ploughing, a mechanical excavator was used to remove the top soil in all the trenches. It was supervised at all times and the results were:

Trench 4: at 46cm, a chalk edge was revealed along its full NW edge.

Trench 5: at 40cm, a chalk edge was revealed along its full SE edge.

Trench 6/7: at 40-45cm a chalk surface was revealed over the whole area. Possible post holes were also noted on this surface.

Trench 8: The decision to put in this additional trench was decided upon while the mechanical excavator was on site. It was hoped it would increase the likelihood of revealing the extent and the bottom surface of the *cold bath*. It was carefully mechanically excavated approximately 10cm at a time to ensure no features were missed. All the way down

to 1.05m, the excavation revealed a very mixed, but layered, fill, with no discernible features. At 1.05m a chalk surface was reached, revealing also deeper cuts down into the chalk. The mechanical excavation was halted at that point.

Note that all depth measurements are taken from the surface datum (located near context 5.003 in figure 6).

Trench 4

Context	Depth
4.001	46 cm
4.002	65 cm
4.003	105cm
4.004	101cm
4.009	101-118cm

Context 4.001: The first steps

Trench 4 was mechanically excavated (context 4.001) and revealed a chalk edge which ran the whole SW/NE length of the trench. Apart from this, no other features were noted hence, context 4.002 was location at the SW end of the trench and context 4.003 to join trench 8.



Figure 7: Trench 4 after the initial mechanical excavation

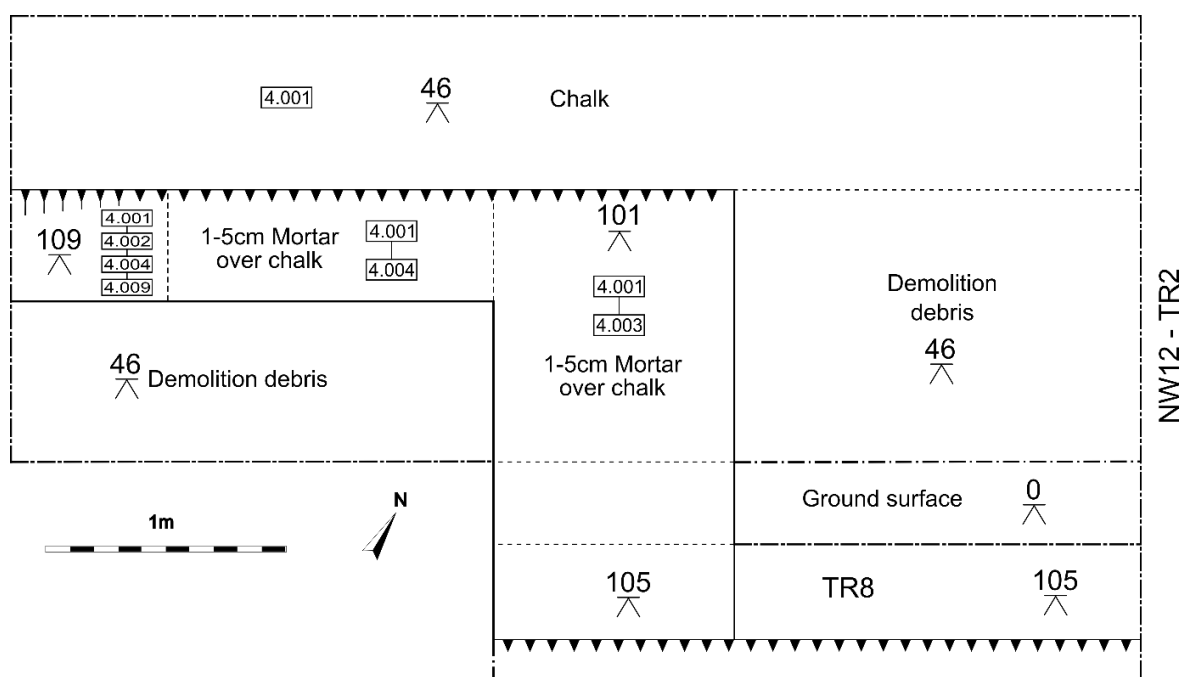


Figure 8: Trench 4 contexts

Context 4.002

This was a small, 0.5m wide, section in the demolition debris at the SW end of trench 4 to see if the chalk edge revealed by context 4.001, and hence the SW edge of the expected *cold bath*. However, no edge was found in this context.



Figure 9: Context 4.002

Context 4.003

Rather than remove the whole of the demolition debris, this 1m wide context was taken from the chalk edge to the junction with trench 8. No features or surfaces were found until approximately 1.5cm from the chalk which had a 1-1.5cm layer of hard compacted mortar. It was not possible to determine if this was a construction layer as a levelling layer perhaps for a tiled floor or was the result of trampling during construction. However, it appears that this mortar layer was cut through after being laid by the deeper cuts seen in trench 8. As no in-situ tesserae or opus signinum was found it did not help determine if this was in fact part of a *cold bath* as originally thought.

Context 4.004

Leading on from context 4.002 and 4.003, context 4.004 was excavated. This joined the two contexts to a depth of 101cm. No in-situ features were found, but did expose the chalk edge along the NW edge was continuous. Also, at the SW end of context 4, it appeared that the chalk edge may in fact turned NW. As a result context 4.009 was excavated.

Context 4.009

This context extended SW beyond the original outline of trench 4 to determine the path of the chalk edge. The chalk edge did indeed turn NW 30cm from the original trench 4 boundary and the bottom was clearly dropping downward. Further excavation is required here to determine the relationship between these edges, the *cold bath* and the 2011 trench.



Figure 10: Contest 4.009

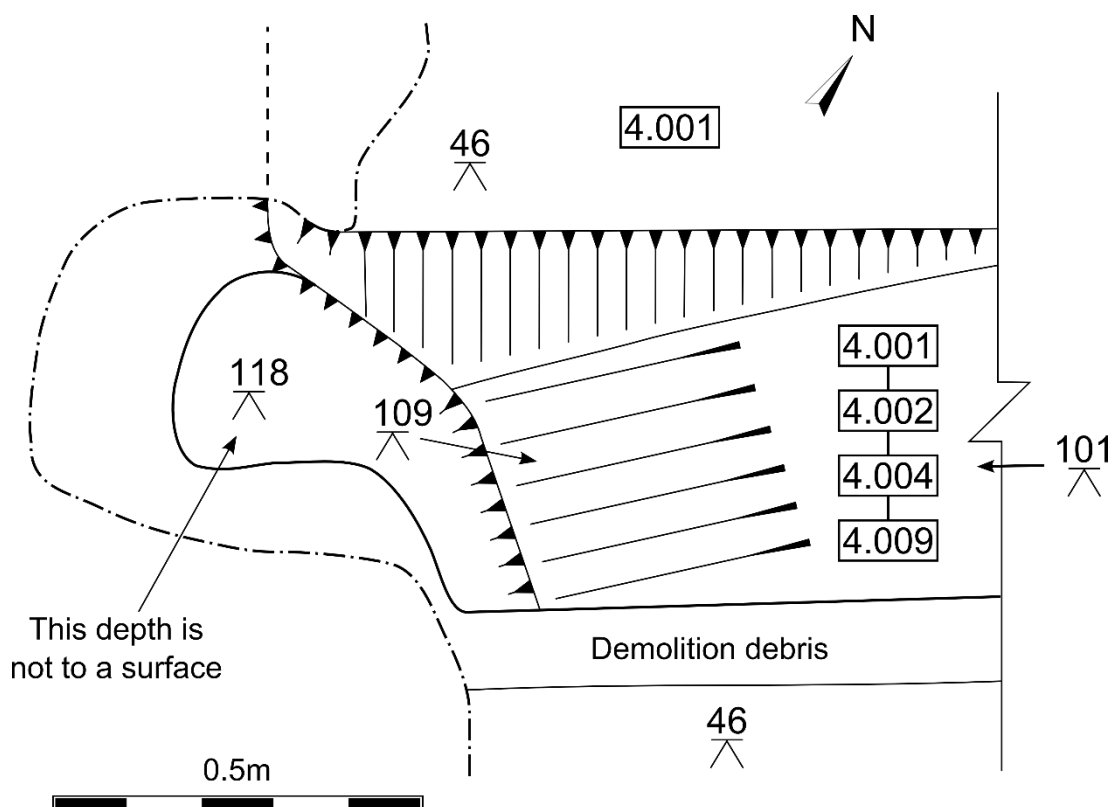


Figure 11: Context 4.009 plan

Trench 4 – brief summary

The chalk edge that runs NE to SW aligns with the deep slot found in the semi-circular bath excavated in 2011 (see 2011 report) although further excavation is required to confirm this. Although the 2011 trench abutted this year's trench 4, the SE/NW edge was not exposed in 2011 or 2013. Further excavation is therefore needed to resolve this part of the site. Demolition debris was the main fill on the trench with no significant finds (see appendix 1). There

was a significant number (over 100) of the red tesserae that are found all over the site, small fragments of wall plaster and well as quantities of opus signinum and CBM (Ceramic Building Material).

Trench 5

Context	Depth
5.001	40cm
5.002	50 - 51cm
5.003	61cm
5.004	100cm
5.005	cm
5.006	150cm
5.007	50cm
5.008	86 - 98cm
5.010	40cm
5.011	54cm
5.012	42cm
5.013	61cm
5.014	80cm
5.015	Various – see text

Context 5.001: The first steps

Trench 5 was initially mechanically excavated (context 5.001), but it was soon realised that it was out of line to the original excavation plan. An extra section was removed to the NE end which revealed the start of the chalk edge. There appeared to be some flint cobbles on the NW edge of the trench, therefore Context 5.002 (see figure 21) was located on that edge to expose the extent of the cobbles and the chalk edge. Context 5.004 was located at the NE end of the trench which was adjacent to the SE end of the 2012 trench 2.



Figure 12: Trench 5 (with trench 3 in the foreground)

Context 5.002

Context 5.002 exposed a line of loosely packed cobbles running along the NW edge of the trench and the chalk edge. The flints were removed, which also exposed more cobbles on the NW side, but these appeared to not be loose. The extent in the NE direction and extent of the cobbles and a lower chalk level (at 50- 51cm) along the length of the context was determined. A large quantity of small unfinished or waste stone tesserae was also found amongst the cobbles.

Context 5.003

Context 5.003 extended the exposure of the chalk edge, extending NE, for approximately 70cm, where the chalk appeared to turn NW. Some of the chalk edge running NW was removed to test if it was in-situ, which it did appear to be. An area of loose gravel/earth to the NW of the context was also exposed.

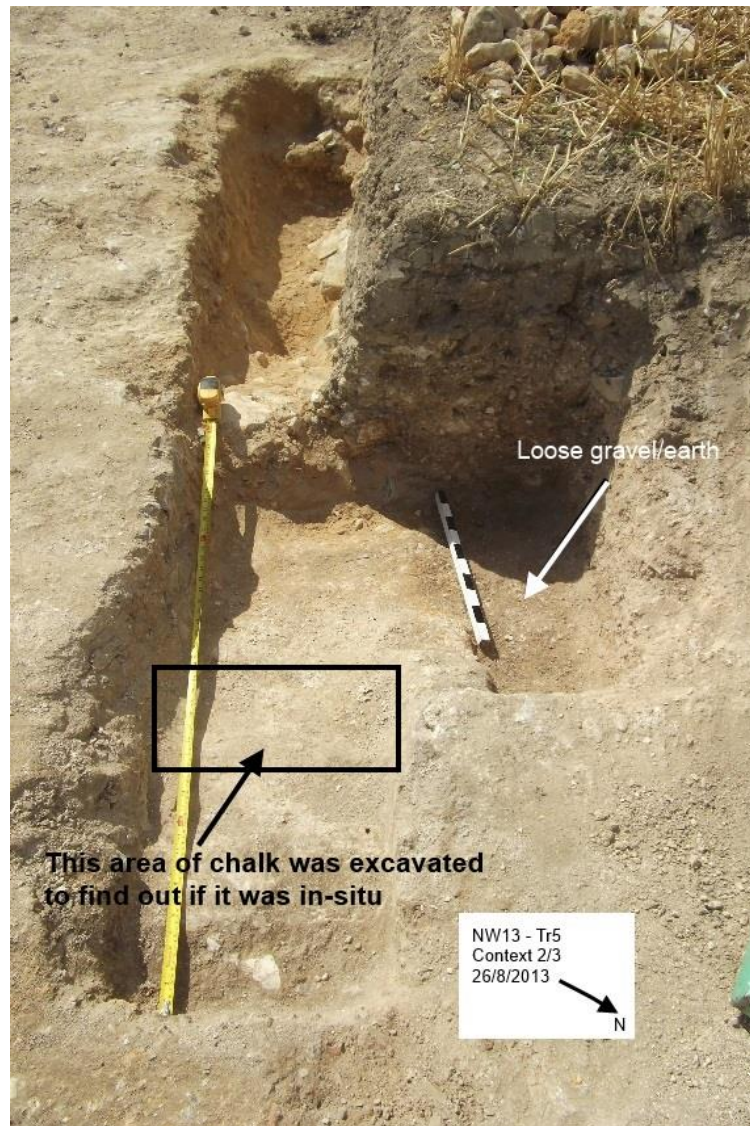


Figure 13: Contexts 5.002 and 5.003

Context 5.008

Context 5.008 initially extended from context 5.003 NW, between the end of the cobbles and the NW chalk edge. Another chalk layer at 92cm was discovered. Further excavation around the edge of the remaining baulk, and joining to trench 8, revealed that this then dropped down to the level of trench 8 (105cm). It was then clear that this was in fact steps leading down from the top level to the bottom of the *cold bath*. The in-situ NW chalk edge found in context 5.003 appeared to be just an edge to these steps as it was only approx. 15cm wide and finishing half way along the step.

Context 5.008 was then extended SW, removing more of the baulk as it was progressed. This showed that the cobbles first exposed by context 5.002 were in fact the remains of a flint cobble wall. It was not by any means a very

solid wall as evident from the loose construction on the SE side (initially thought to be loose flint cobbles as noted in context 5.002), but it did appear to have a yellow/orange mortar brighter than the loose gravel seen elsewhere.



Figure 14: Context 5.008 - Steps



Figure 15: Context 5.008 - Steps

Its surface was uneven and unlikely to have been the visible face. Whatever did cover the wall, if anything, was not found. In one location it was noted that the wall was built on waste or unfinished stone tesserae, the same as found in context 5.002.



Figure 16: Context 5.008 - Wall

One area of this context showed evidence of organic burning with a large number of oyster shells present. It was noted that this area of burning, unlike most of the burning seen so far, was directly on the chalk with evidence that

the chalk itself had been affected. This suggests that this occurred when there was no surface covering on the chalk, the significance of which is discussed in the conclusions at the end of this report. Perhaps lunch for the construction workers, or even the demolition team?



Figure 17: Context 5.008 Burnt organic material directly on chalk surface



Figure 18: Context 5.008 waste and unfinished tesserae

Extending further still revealed more of the wall and at the SW end of the line of cobbles, the chalk again rose back to 40cm from a depth of 92cm. There was a narrow, flatter area, at 60cm, the surface of which had the same bright yellow/orange mortar of the adjacent wall suggesting that this may be a continuation to the NW of that wall.

There was a stone standing proud of the wall structure, which could possibly be a facing stone of this NW wall, but equally it could be where the original wall face came out to if the facing stones had been removed at the time of demolition as there were no significant cobbles in context 5.008.

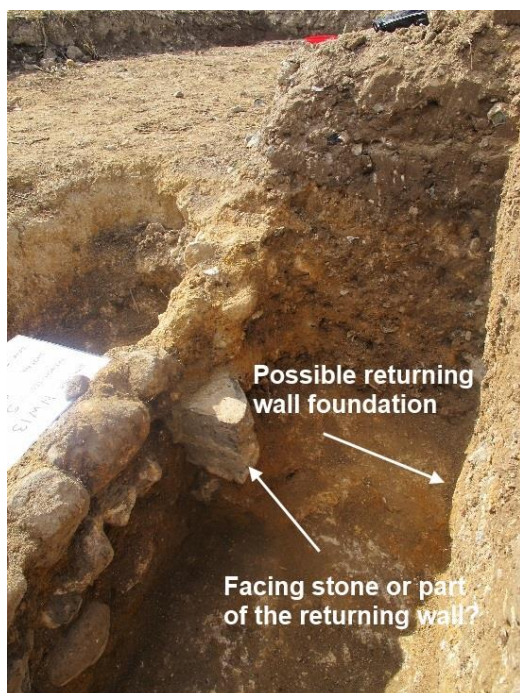


Figure 19 and 20: Context 5.008 – Possible returning wall

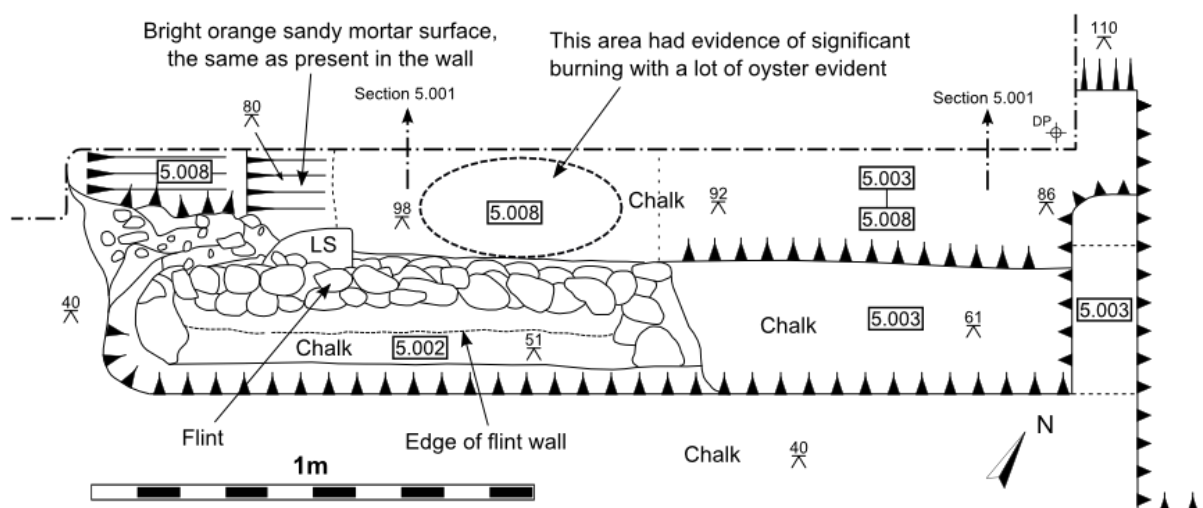


Figure 21: Contexts 5.002, 5.003 & 5.008 Plan

As can be seen in the NW section 5.001 of context 5.008 (figure: 18, as appears in the whole of the area of trenches 4, 5, 8, 2012 trench 2 and 2010 test pits the demolition debris is completely mixed without any evidence of later cuts. This again provides evidence that the demolition was carried out in this area at the same time, during the Roman period.

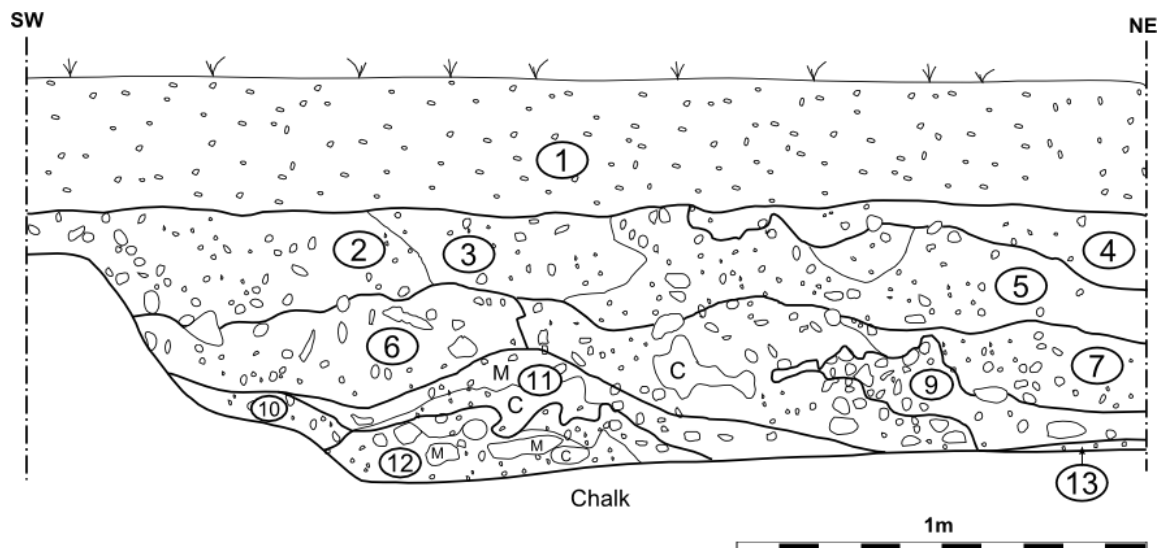


Figure 22: NW Context 5.008 - Section 5.001

Larger inclusions key: M = Mortar, C = Chalk

1. Plough
2. Sand/ gravel
3. Sand/ gravel with some darker soil
4. Lighter sand and gravel with some fragments of CBM
5. Sand/ gravel
6. Darker chalk and gravel
7. Sand, mortar and chalk
8. Lighter chalk and gravel
9. Darker chalk and gravel
10. Brighter loose sand/mortar
11. Some larger pieces of mortar over chalk with smaller inclusions of sand, mortar and chalk
12. Area with burned CBM/chalk/mortar and organic material (inc. oyster)
13. CBM

Note: Stones present in all layers

Contexts 5.004 and 5.006

These contexts were excavated to establish the link with the SE edge of the *cold bath* first identified in 2012 trench 2. It was located partially on and NE of a 2010 test pit (XY235245). The SE chalk edge was evident and at 110cm, with a hard mortar layer over the chalk surface. This is the same depth as the surface in trench 8 and 2012's trench 2. Continuing with context 5.006, a surface was reached at 150cm. Again, this aligns with the cuts in trench 8 and 2012's trench 2. The contemporary demolition layers were again evident through all depths.

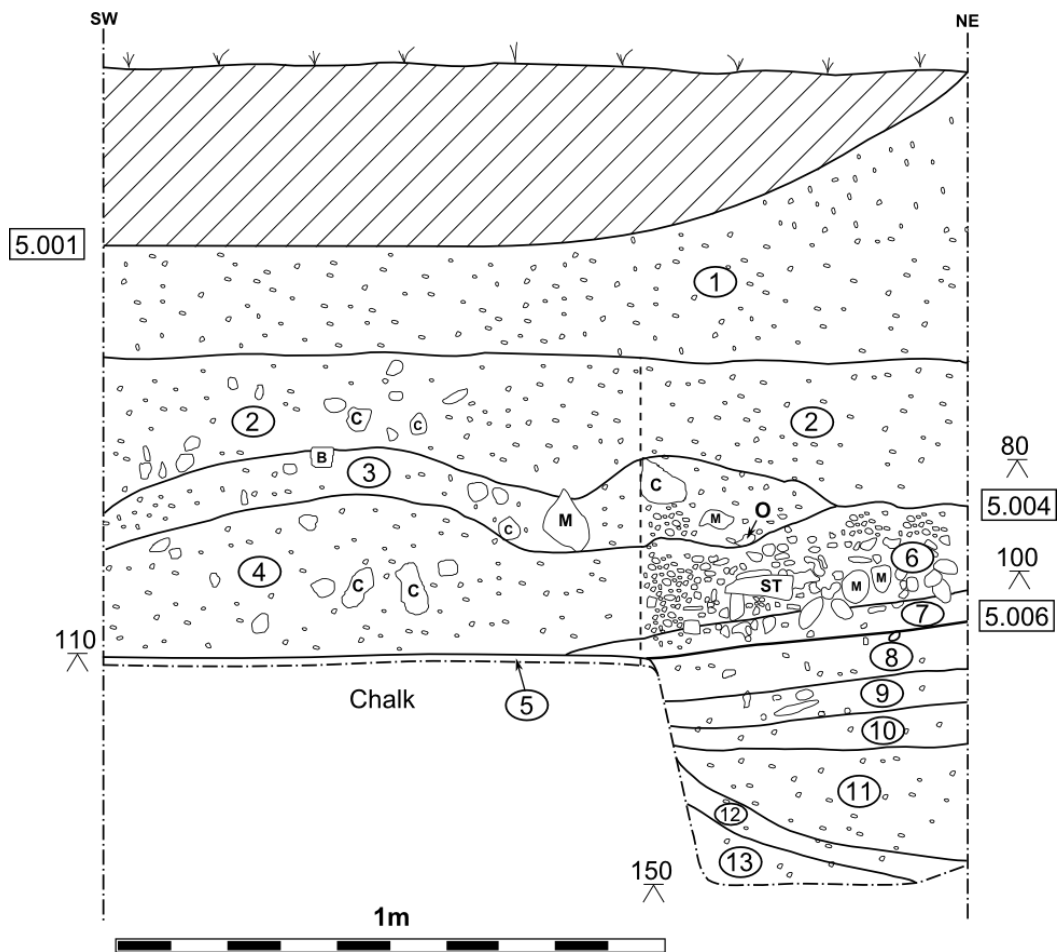


Figure 23: NW Context 5.004 & 5.006 - Section 5.002



= Machine excavated plough

Larger inclusions key: M = Mortar, C = Chalk, O = Oyster, B = CBM

1. Plough
2. Gravel/earth
3. Mortar/gravel
4. Mortar/stone/CBM
5. Harder mortar layer
6. Mainly stone and CBM
7. Darker earthy gravel/mortar
8. Gravel/mortar
9. Darker, burnt material layer
10. Gravel/mortar
11. Darker gravel/mortar
12. Gravel/mortar
13. Darker, burnt material layer

Note: Stones present in all layers



Figure 24: Context 5.006 - Note that SW (left half in image) of context 5.004 was excavated for ease of access and was in fact a 2010 test pit.

Context 5.007

Context 5.007 was placed at the SW end of trench 5, adjacent to trench 3 to see if there was any evidence of wall line found in context 5.008 continuing. Evidence was found of tumbled stone, which together with further evidence of the same in trench 3, does indeed suggest that the wall continued, albeit of a different construction, suggesting it may have been from a different phase of building. It was also noted that to the NW side of this wall line, there was a surface of redistributed chalk appearing which indicates that it is likely to be a floor surface, slightly higher (approx. 5cm) above that on the SE side of the wall line where the chalk surface was at 50cm. This can be seen in the sections.



Figure 25: Context 5.007 – Probable wall remains appearing

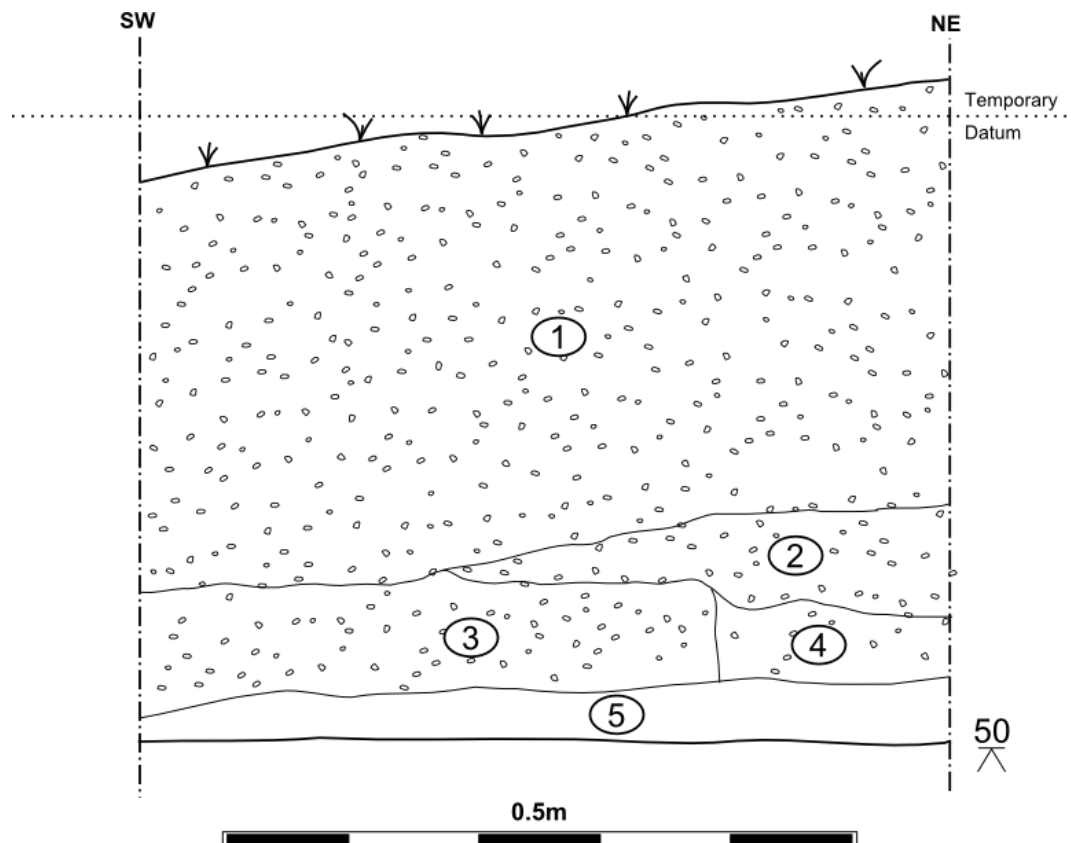


Figure 26: NW Context 5.007 –Section 5.003

1. Plough
2. Earthy/chalk
3. Mortar
4. Mortar/chalk
5. Redistributed chalk

Note: Stones present in all layers apart from lower chalk

Context 5.010 and 5.010A

Context 5.010 was excavated to clarify the link 5.007 with 5.002. The mortar covered chalk surface was found to continue NW, without evidence of wall material suggesting this was probably a doorway, possibly two. With the steps down to the *cold bath* area on the same line, then it is quite possible that this wall was part of a corridor or, possibly a portico, and then these could be entrances to inner part of the building.

While excavating 5.010, a faint perpendicular line embedded in the general mortar of the trench was also noted. It was only to a very small depth or approx. 3-5cm and appeared to run from the wall line SE at a perpendicular angle to the SE edge of trench 5. Context 5.010 was then extended with an area adjacent to the SE edge of trench 5 to see if this feature was perhaps a wall line. The line appeared to extend beyond the edge of trench 5, which led to context 5.012 being excavated. Context 5.010A was excavated and the content of the line was found and it's consisted of earth, CBM and chalk. Over its length, the line was not consistent in its width and could simply be a plough line as it was only 40cm below the surface. However, it could possibly have been a thin wall line where a wall plate may have been which has long since decayed and filled with this material.

5.010A had a chalk surface under the mortar, as well as a compacted layer of CBM, gravel and chalk which may have occurred during demolition. See context 5.012 for a plan of context 5.010A.



Figure 27: Context 5.0101

Context 5.011

Context 5.011 was excavated to clarify the relationship between the SE and NW of the wall line. It revealed that the chalk surface to the NW was probably a solid floor surface. Although no floor covering was found, there was loose mortar present as well as what appears to be a limestone brick.



Figure 28: Context 5.011 – NE

Above the mortar was a layer of redistributed chalk. The remains of the collapsed wall line can be seen in figure 25. This suggests that the redistributed chalk (2) was a later surface above the brick and higher than the surface on the other side of the wall.



Figure 29: Context 5.011 showing stones from the collapsed wall

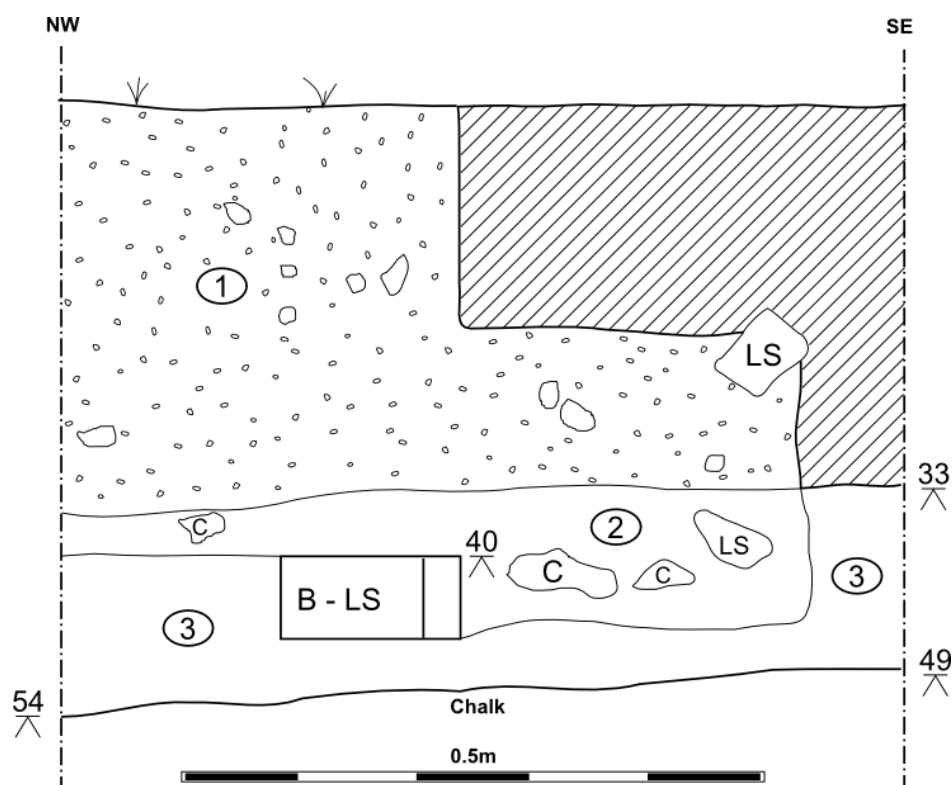
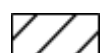


Figure 30: Context 5.011 – NE Section 5.004



= Machine excavated plough

Larger inclusions key: B-LS = Limestone brick, LS = Limestone, C = Chalk

1. Plough – Machine and hand excavated
2. Redistributed chalk
3. Mortar

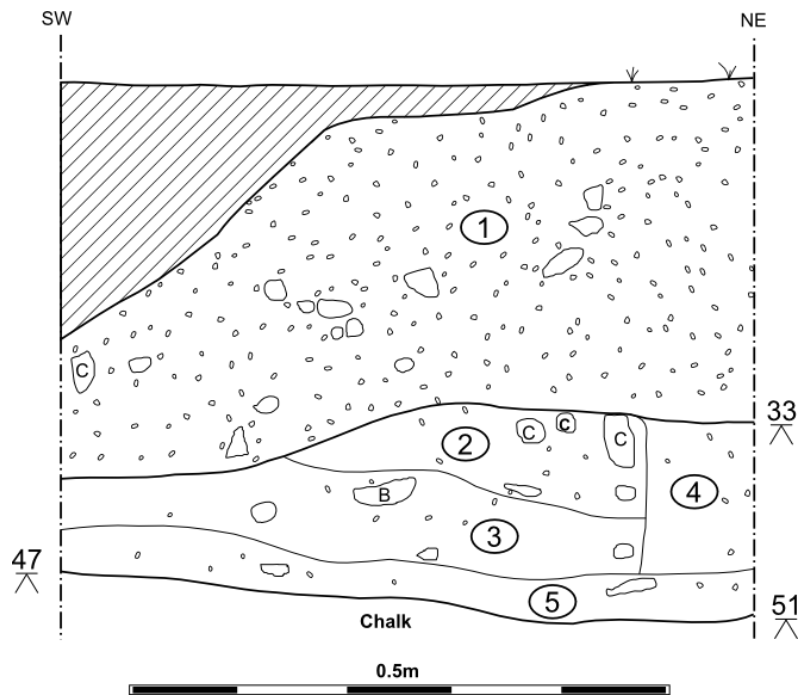


Figure 31: Context 5.011 – NW Section 5.005



= Machine excavated plough

Larger inclusions key: B-LS = Limestone brick, LS = Limestone, C = Chalk

1. Plough
2. Chalk
3. Light brown earth/CBM/stone
4. Darker brown earth
5. Redistributed chalk

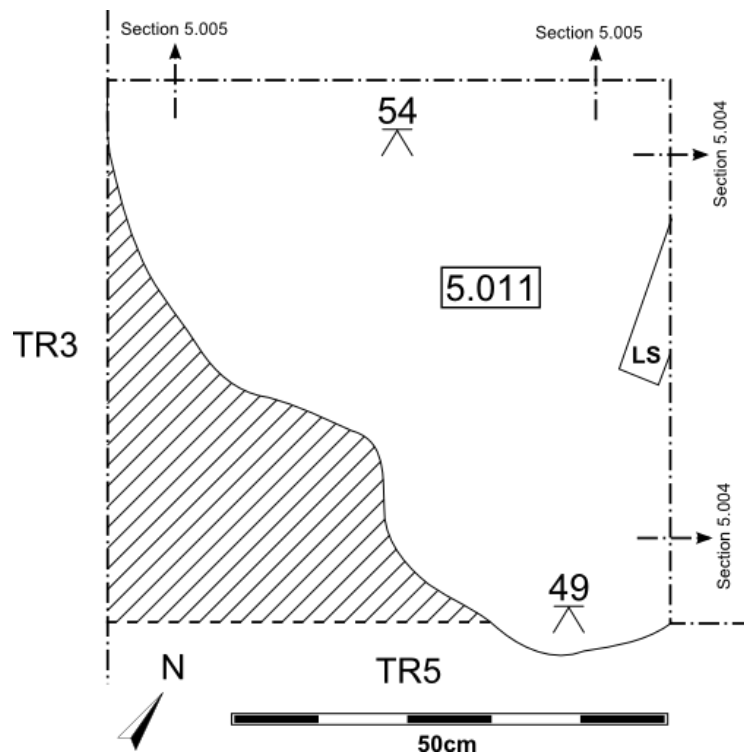


Figure 32: Context 5.011 – Plan



= Unexcavated area below initial mechanical excavation level

LS = Limestone brick, LS = Limestone, C = Chalk

Context 5.012

Context 5.012 was excavated to establish if the line of earth, CBM and chalk found during the excavation of context 5.010 continued SE of trench 5. While it did continue, and it probably was a plough scar, the excavation revealed chalk, tile, opus signinum and other CBM in uneven layers.



Figure 33: Section 5.005 - Context 5.011 – NW Section

The supposition is that the building may continue to the SE, but further excavation will be required to confirm this.

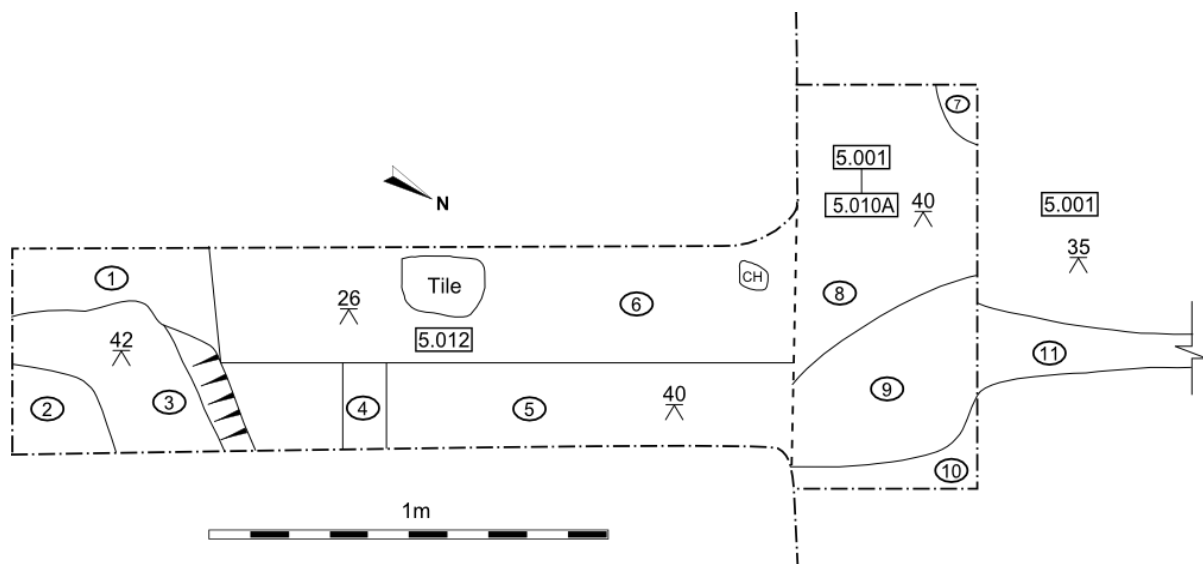


Figure 34: Context 5.010 and 5.012 Plan

1. Very hard mortar
2. Opus signinum
3. Chalk
4. Mortar
5. Chalk under hard mortar
6. Very fragmented CBM
7. Chalk under mortar
8. Chalk
9. Very hard surface under mortar of compacted mix of small fragments of CBM, gravel and chalk
10. Some OS in chalk
11. Noticeable line of earthy material with fragments of embedded CBM projecting from the wall line exposed in contexts 5.007, 5.008 and 5.010

Contexts 5.013 and 5.014

Contexts 5.013 and 5.014 were exploratory excavation to examine the SE chalk edge of trench 5.



Figure 35: Contexts 5.013 and 5.014

Context 5.013 was excavated to a depth of 61cm below the machine and exposed the line of the chalk edge and contained a large amount of burning within which was a number of finds, including a shard of South Midlands Ware, a shard of mortaria as well as quite large quantities of CBM and flue tile. Context 14 was excavated to determine if the lower surface level at the chalk edge was in line with that of the step in context 5.008. The surface was not reached at 60cm proving that the steps start immediately to the SW of context 14.



Figure 36: Shard of South Midlands Ware showing signs of burning (its profile on the right)

Context 5.015

Note: A step was cut in the corner of this area to enable access to the bottom of trench 8 before the decision was made to excavate this context.

This context was an attempt to try and find surfaces, but this proved almost impossible as the surfaces were often very small in area and disappeared almost immediately. It was therefore decided to go down in 10cm steps, leaving a surface whenever possible.

As can be seen from the following drawings (figures 38 to 44), the layers contained very mixed contexts and this goes along with the evidence from the sections showing contemporary tip lines over the whole area of various contexts in trenches 4, 5 and 8. It is the same evidence seen in the test pits from 2010 and trench 2 in 2012. However, it did confirm that the demolition in this area was all carried out at the same time as virtually no latter disturbance of the layers was in evidence. Context 5.015A was the original machine excavation and just used to take the measurements for the following excavation.

An interesting find was some blocks of very friable opus signinum. It was very fine and appeared to be finely crushed terracotta and may have been opus signinum being made rather than the final article.



Figure 37: Context 5.015 – Very friable opus signinum

The following plan drawings show the various layers

Larger inclusions in context 15 (all sub-context) - key:

- B = Evidence of burning, including charcoal
- C = Chalk
- CBM = Ceramic building material
- LS = Limestone
- LS-B = Limestone brick
- M = Mortar
- OS = Opus signinum
- S = Stone/flint
-  = Very friable fragments of opus signinum. Little evidence of mortar inclusion

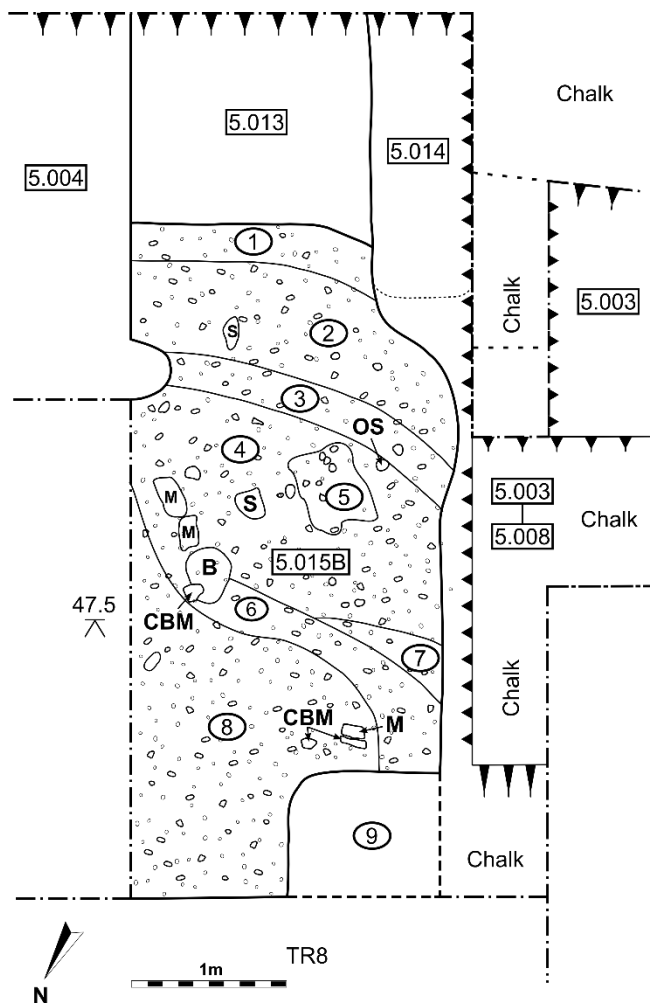


Figure 38: Context 5.015B

1. Loose mortar
2. Earth and CBM
3. Evidence of burnt organic material included in earth and mortar
4. Earthy
5. Loose mortar
6. Evidence of burnt organic material included in CBM and mortar
7. Gravel/mortar
8. Gravel/ mortar and earth
9. Cut for step (see above)

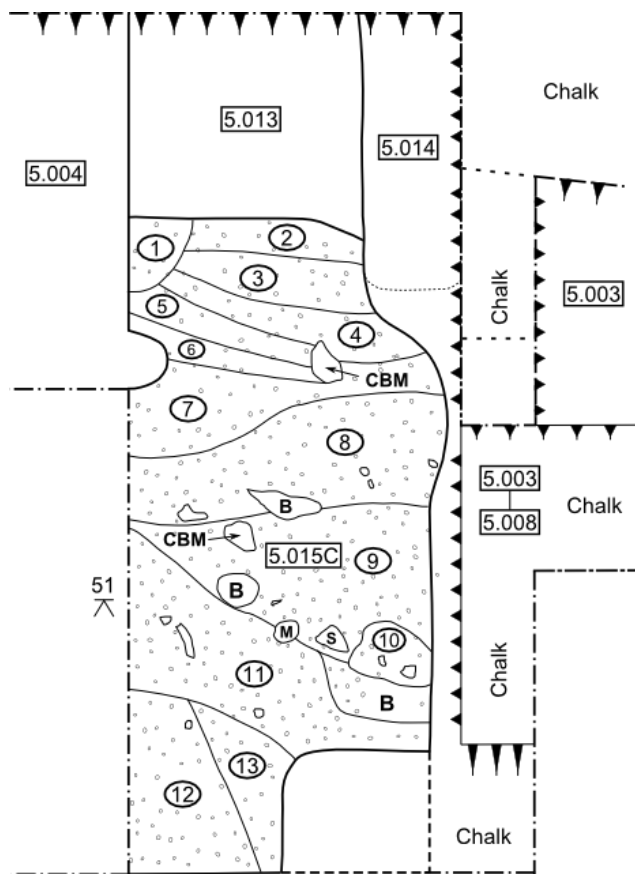


Figure 39: Context 5.015C

1. Gravel/mortar
2. Evidence of burnt organic material included in earth and mortar
3. Loose gravel/mortar
4. Primarily crushed opus signinum with some mortar
5. CBM
6. Evidence of burnt organic material included in gravel/mortar
7. Earth and gravel/mortar
8. Gravel/mortar
9. Gravel/mortar and earth
10. Hard mortar with CBM raised above layer
11. Gravel/mortar and earth
12. Hard gravel/mortar
13. Gravel/mortar

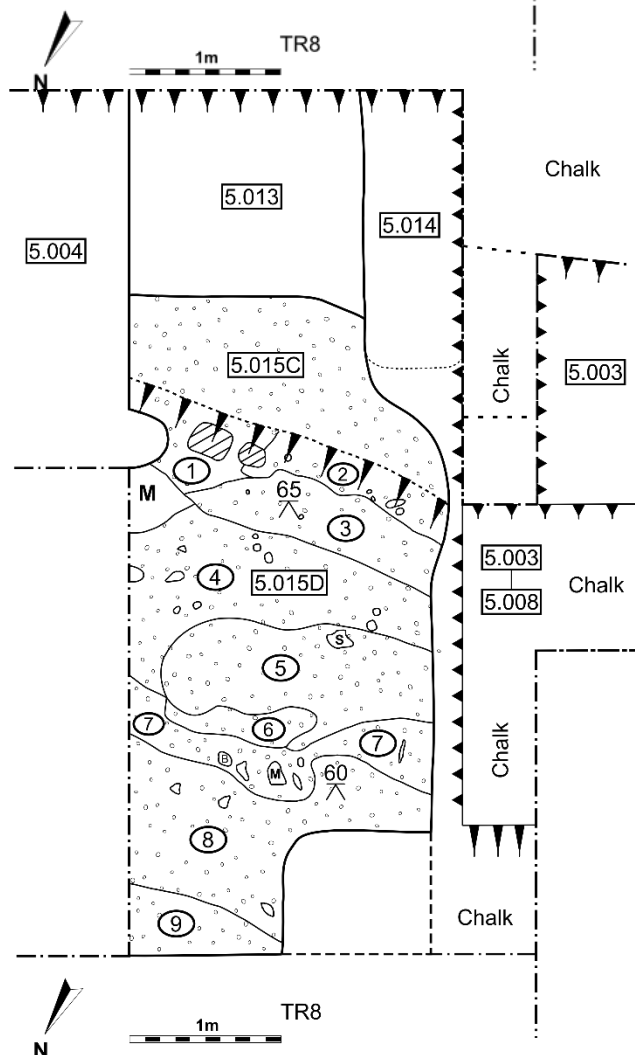


Figure 40: Context 5.015D

1. A mixture of CBM, mortar and opus signinum.
2. Crumbling opus signinum. Note this loose OS is the same as the more formed blocks exposed (shown hatches) in this layer
3. Loose gravel/mortar
4. Primarily crushed opus signinum with some mortar
5. Earthy
6. Evidence of burnt organic material
7. Gravel/mortar
8. Gravel/mortar and earth
9. Gravel/mortar and CBM (crushed)

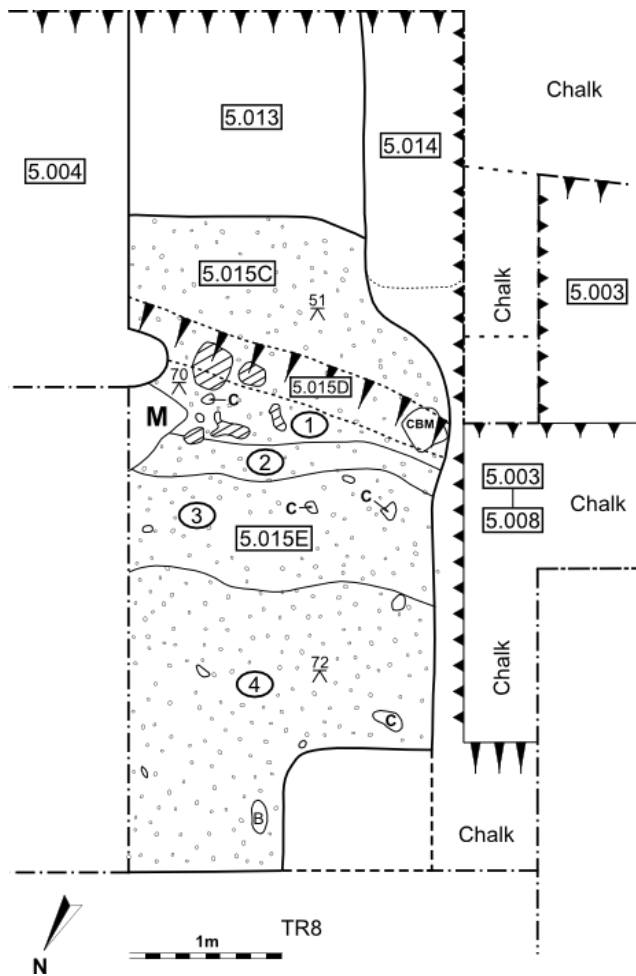


Figure 41: Context 5.015E

1. A mixture of CBM, mortar and opus signinum.
2. Evidence of burnt organic material included in gravel/mortar
3. Gravel/mortar
4. Gravel/mortar and earth

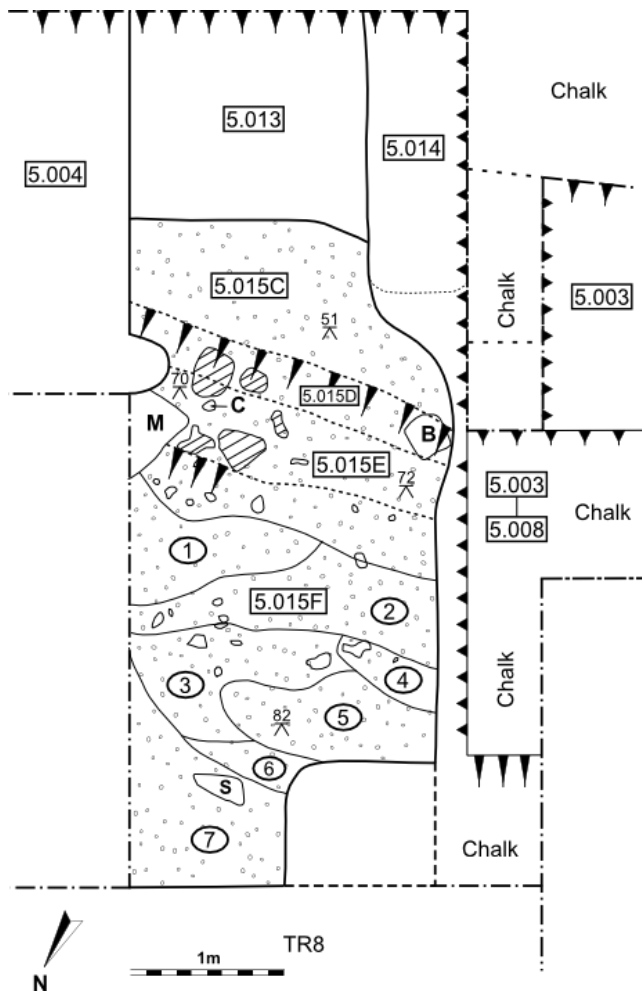


Figure 42: Context 5.015F

1. Earthy with less gravel
2. Gravel/mortar
3. Earth and gravel/mortar
4. Gravel/mortar and earth
5. Gravel/mortar
6. Evidence of burnt organic material included in gravel/mortar
7. Gravel/mortar and CBM (crushed)

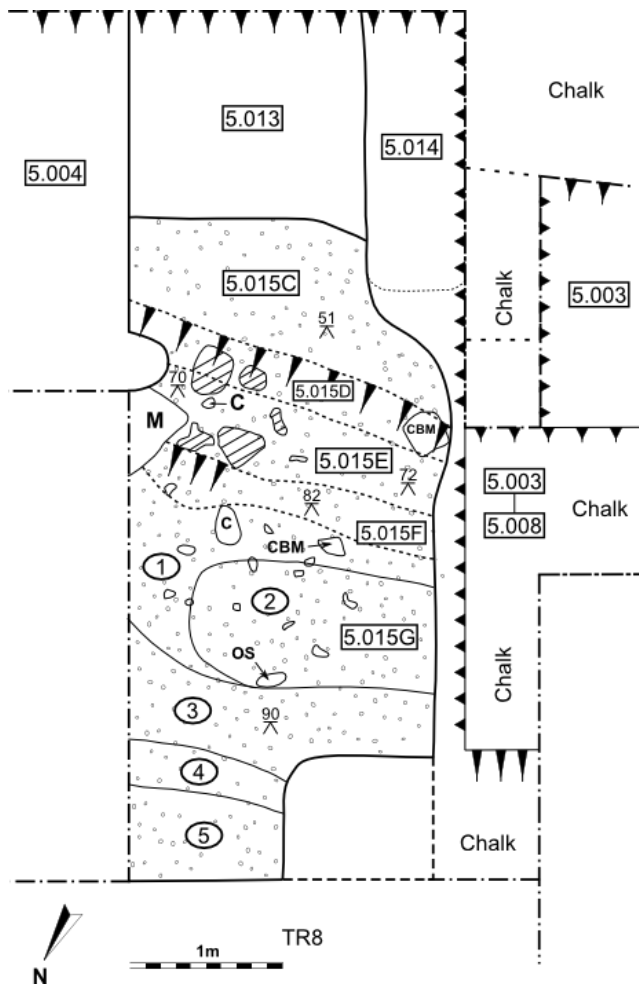


Figure 43: Context 5.015G

1. Earth and gravel/mortar
2. Gravel/mortar
3. Darker gravel/mortar
4. Evidence of burnt organic material included in gravel/mortar
5. Gravel/mortar

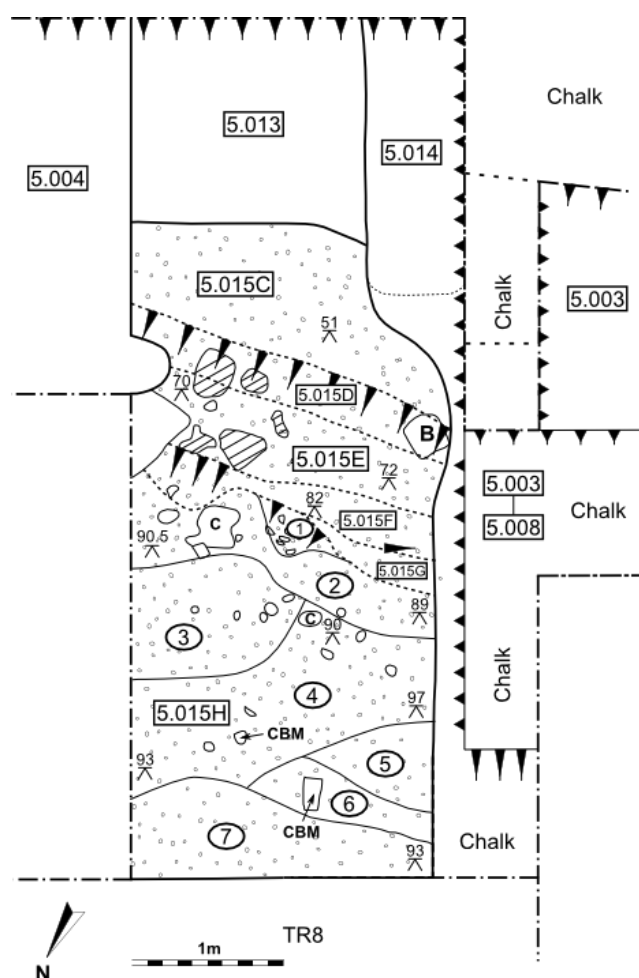


Figure 44: Context 5.015H

1. Larger pieces of mortar and CBM
2. Mortar, CBM and earth
3. Evidence of burnt organic material included in gravel/mortar and chalk
4. Gravel/mortar, flint, earth and chalk
5. Larger gravel/mortar pieces
6. Crushed CBM and earth
7. Very loose gravel/mortar with evidence of burning

Trench 5 – brief summary

Trench revealed the remains of an in-situ wall, steps down from the top chalk layer to the bottom of the *cold bath* area, as well as an extension to the SE indicating that the redistributed chalk and debris continued from the extent of the current excavations. The section of context 5.008 and the excavation of context 5.015 clearly show the multiple layers of contemporary demolition that occurred, almost certainly, when the building went out of use.

Trenches 6 and 7

Context	Depth
6.001	30cm
6.002	74cm
6.003	40cm

Context 6.001: The first steps

The machine excavation of adjunct trenches 6 and 7 was carried out with a solid chalk surface revealed at 30cm.

There were 3 possible post holes visible in the chalk. These were excavated, with one proving to be natural. Of the other two, context 6.002 was certainly a post hole of some kind.

Context 6.002

This circular context was excavated in section with the SE half being removed. It was not very deep at 74cm, just 43 cm in depth from the top of the chalk. There were no deposits at its base however.

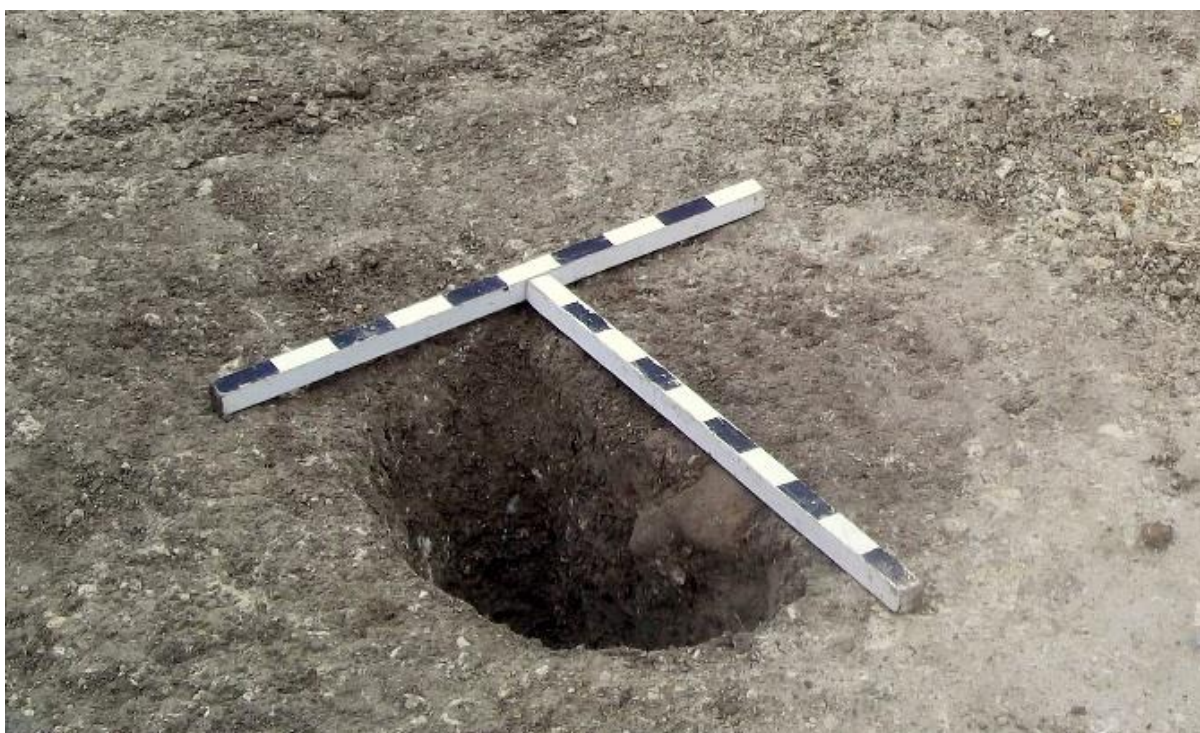


Figure 45: Context 8.001 – The chalk surface appearing

Context 6.003

In this context, a tegula was found just below the chalk and may possibly have been a support for a post, but there was no significant depth to the area.

Trench 6 and 7 – brief summary

Due to time constraints, the excavation of trenches 6 and 7 were not extensive. That said, two post holes, one certain the other possible, were found. One thing to note is that they are in line with the possible shallow post hole found in context 3A of the 2012 trench 2.

The surface was scraped over both parts of the trench, but no other features were found. It was not determined if the chalk was in-situ or redistributed.

The others

Trench 8

Context	Depth
8.001	110cm
8.002	143cm
8.003	143cm

Context 8.001: The first steps

Unlike the other trenches, it was decided, as we knew the whole of this part of the site is contemporaneous demolition debris, to carefully excavate trench 8 down to a feature.

At 110cm the chalk surface was reached with a clear cut in surface running SW to NE and NW to SE. It was not immediately clear what this was, but the mechanical excavation was halted at the point, being the first feature found. It was noted that the fill from the 2012 trench 2 could be seen in the NE and SE corners of the trench. The NE

corner of the cut appeared to continue into be filled with gravel, similar to that recorded in the deep cut in the 2012 trench 2.



Figure 46: Context 8.001 – The chalk surface appearing

Context 8.002

Context 8.002 was the excavation of the cuts. They were generally filled with gravel with some finds, mainly the common red tesserae. The edges appeared to be quite sharp and not worn, suggesting that the cuts were probably made after the mortar surface which is evident over most of the *cold bath* area.

While the trench fill consisted almost entirely gravel, it was noted the SW end was different in that it was filled with compacted demolition debris. This was excavated as context 8.003.

The cut in the NW to SE direction lines up with that exposed in trench 5 context 5.006, hence, even though the section between the two was not excavated, we can assume that the two are connected.

It is also clear that the NE/SW cut extended beyond the trench to the NE and joins the cut (or channel as it was called in the 2012 report) found in the 2012 trench 2 (see Figure 1). This leads to the conclusion that whatever these cuts were for, they included the deep cut excavated in the 2012 trench 2.

Context 8.003

Context 8.003 was the apparent compacted demolition debris at the SW end of the visible cut in trench 8.

On close examination, it appears that this line of debris continued mixed with or over the mortar layer spreading towards the SE towards and over the step (as seen in section 8.001). It can be assumed therefore that the CBM

debris was probably the first deposit of demolition material before the other layers were tipped into the *cold bath* area



Figure 47: Context 8.003 – Demolition debris at the SW end of cut

Section 8.001

This section was recorded after cleaning the SW face of trench 8. It was noted that even with this simple task, the clear demolition tip lines changed with the slightest surface removal. These tie in with the irregular lines seen in section 8.002 and in trench 5 section 5.001.



Figure 48: Section 8.001 showing clear demolition tip lines.



Figure 49: Section 8.002 showing the complexity of the demolition layers.

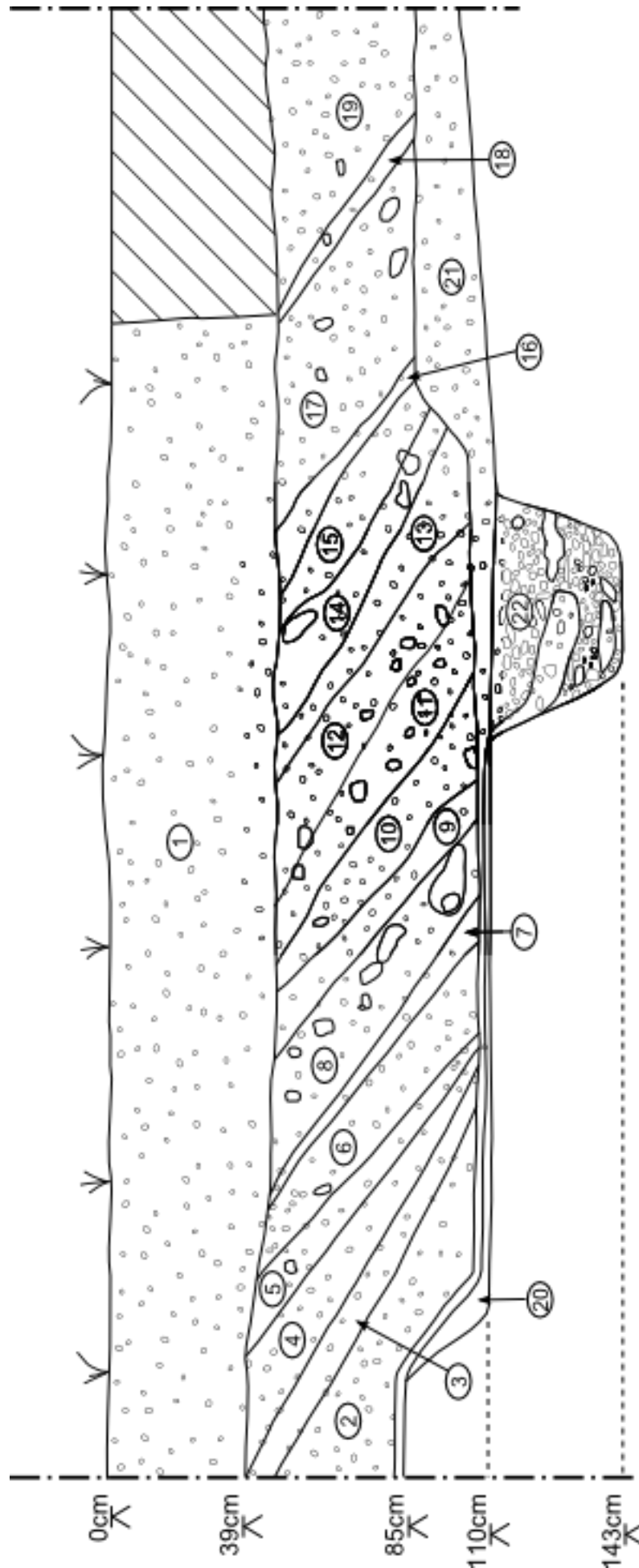
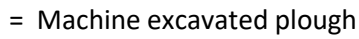


Figure 50: NE Section 8.001



1. Plough – Machine and hand excavated
2. Mortar/gravel
3. Darker mortar/gravel/earth
4. Mortar/gravel
5. Darker gravel/earth
6. Mortar/gravel
7. Burnt layer
8. Mortar/gravel
9. Burnt laye
10. Harder gravel
11. Darker gravel/earth
12. Mortar/gravel
13. Darker mortar/gravel/earth
14. Mortar/gravel with larger chalk inclusions
15. Mortar/gravel with chalk inclusions
16. Darker mortar/gravel /earth
17. Mortar/gravel with chalk inclusions
18. Darker mortar/gravel /earth
19. Mortar/gravel
20. CBM
21. Mortar
22. CBM

As well as the concentration of CBM at the bottom of the cut near to the SW edge of trench 8, there was a trace of a thin layer of similar material lying on top of the surface mortar layer.

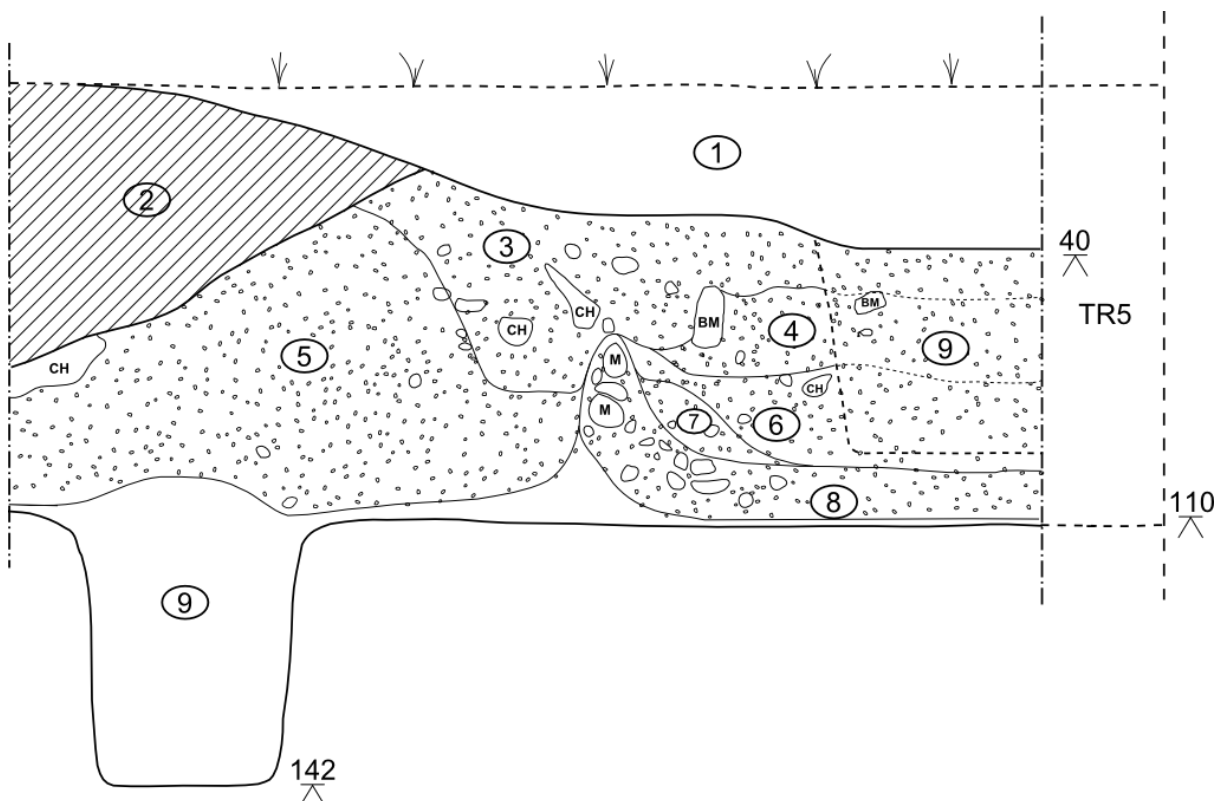


Figure 51: Section 8.002

1. Plough – Machine and hand excavated
2. Plough and backfill from 2012 excavation
3. Mortar/Gravel
4. Mortar/gravel with CBM and Opus Signinum inclusions
5. Mortar/gravel with some chalk inclusions
6. Small CBM and darker mortar/gravel/earth
7. Larger CBM and larger mortar pieces
8. Burnt area with gravel and mortar inclusions
9. Gravel
10. Excavated as part of trench 5 context 5.015

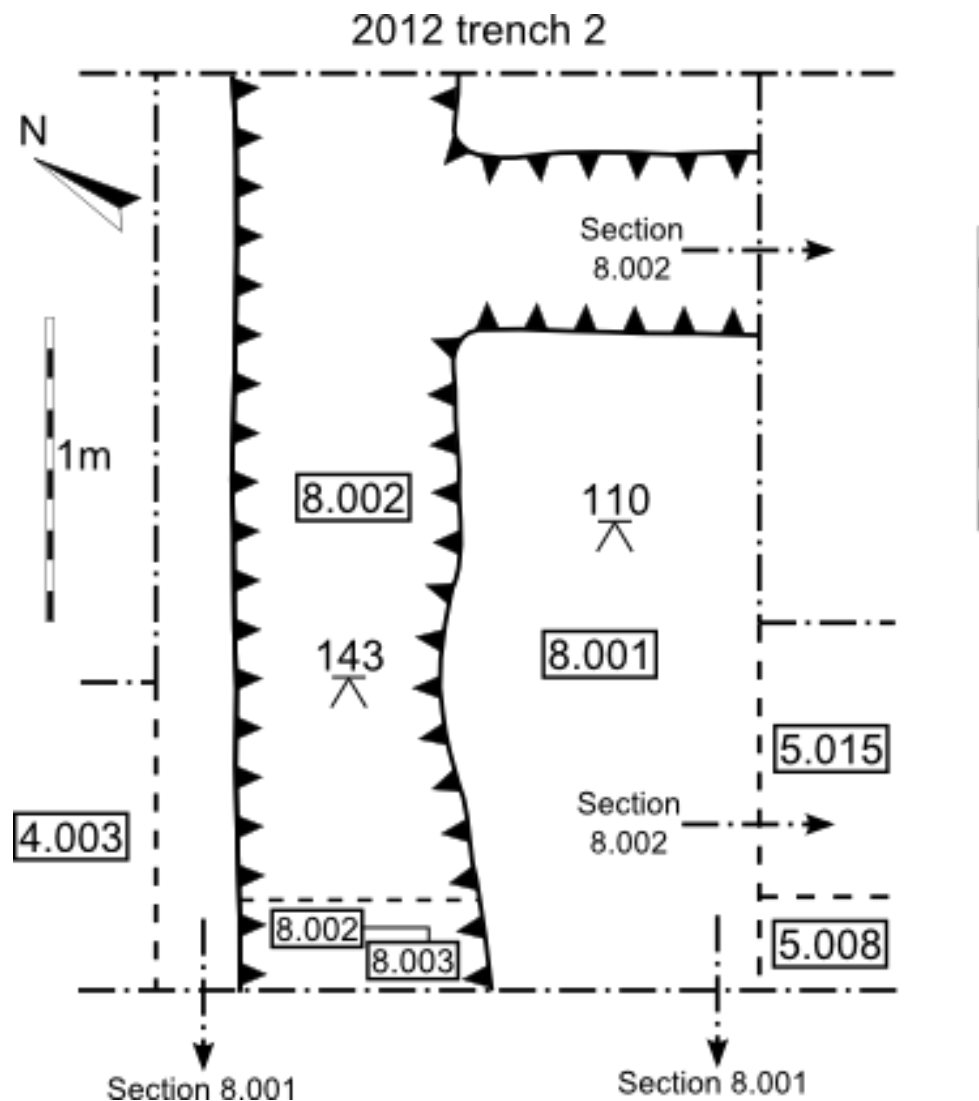


Figure 52: Trench 8 plan

Trench 8 – brief summary

Trench revealed that the feature we thought was a cold bath may not necessarily have been one. There are other theories, discussed in the conclusions about what it may be. Cuts were found and they connect to both trench 5 and the 2012 trench 2. The section 8.001 shows clearly that the fill that has been seen over the entire NE side of the site so far excavated was contemporary and was tipped from the SW end.

Finds

There were no significant finds during this years excavation. Perhaps the most notable was 3 fragments of Neidermendig lava. Looking closely at these, it appears that they were from a quern stone. The right angle cut in one piece suggesting it is the central spindle hole.



Figure 53: Fragments of Neidermendig lava probably from a quern stone

Other finds included some pottery, the most interesting from context 5.008 and 5.013



Figure 54: from 5.008, To be identified



Figure 55: From 5.008, Shelly Ware with evidence of burning



Figure 56: From 5.015, a shard of greyware that appears to have been used to

stir metal or was dipped in metal at some point after breakage.



Figure 57: From 5.013, a shard of TBD mortaria rim.

Conclusion from the 2013 excavations

As have already been stated, the aim for the 2013 excavation in the NE part of the site was to determine the extent of the *cold bath* area and to answer once and for all, whether this really was a cold bath. While the NW and SE extents were confirmed, the SW edge extent was not. Neither was the function of this area confirmed.

What has been confirmed with this years' excavations is that the NE part of this site in the area we called the *cold bath* was filled with building demolition debris contemporaneously. The test pits in 2010, the excavation of trench 2 in 2012 and especially the excavation of trench 8 in 2013 all exhibit the same layer upon layer of debris, all tipped from the SW side and with the same pavement tesserae being found at all levels. This contemporaneous layering has not been found anywhere else in the site.

In the 2012 trench 2 we had the theory that the drop in level, tantalisingly found on the extreme SW edge was the SE edge of the cold bath. There was a channel near to the NW end of the long cut and what could have been steps leading down to it at the S corner. However, in 2013, trench 8 was a surprise. It revealed that this in fact was part of a number of deep cuts, possibly through the mortar surface, which at its lowest is 110cm, down to 143cm (see figure 58). The cut to the NE aligns with that from the 2012 trench 2 and trench 6 context 5.006 showed that the 'steps' went down to 145cm and that the cut SE from trench 8, although the area was not excavated, almost certainly joined it.

So is it a cold bath?

Cold rooms generally have a plunge pool, but ours is probably too shallow for that? Some small ones were 0.7m but were generally only about 1.0m wide and users had water poured on them. Ours is 0.7m at its deepest, so it is possible that this a plunge pool, but if that is the case what are the cuts for? Also, there was no real evidence of opus signinum which must have been used to seal the surface. Cold baths often had a step (pulvinus) where bather would

sit and have water poured over them. Perhaps this was the original function of the small sloping edge on the cut found at the edge of the 2012 trench 2.

Could the cuts be foundation trenches? In cases where the surface was poorly drained or consolidated, foundation trenches were dug to remove a poorly consolidated and/or poorly drained soil which was then replaced with compacted gravel and silt. Our trenches were generally filled with gravel, so it is a possibility. However, surely these would have been at the original chalk level and not starting 110cm down. Not only that, in general, the surface of the area was covered in compacted mortar and the cut in the 2102 trench 2 had evidence of mortar surfaces both in the SE end of the cut, but also in the SE corner we had originally thought of as steps.

Was this area a changing room? Evidence exists that they could have been sunken to reduce the height of ceilings which helped to keep them heated. This could account for the lack of opus signinum and there are steps down to the area from the SE, but why the cuts?

It is possible we will never know what this was, but the evidence of collapsed chalk in the 2012 trench 2 cut, the lack of any surface materials, apart from mortar, covering most of the area, the fact that the whole area was filled at the same time suggests that this part of the building may never have been completed. Certainly it was close to being so, but perhaps the cuts were just part of the building process for a cold bath and, as evident by the numerous areas with evidence of burning, the building burnt down and the building abandoned and this part was back filled with all the debris. The large red 'pavement' tesserae appear at all levels in quite large numbers which also help to suggest that they were lifted from their original location early in the demolition and got mixed into the general debris. Another possibility is that the *cold bath* was being built over a space which was originally an outside courtyard or walkway, where these tesserae were originally located and when building commenced lots of them got mixed up during the preparation.

It is probable that the *cold bath* area is of a later period to the rest of the site, especially if, as suspected it was never completed. This is also supported by the apparent difference in wall construction in trench 5, where to the NE end near the *cold bath*, flint cobbles were used, but at the SW end, towards the hypocaust, flat stone appeared to be used.

Other areas

Trench 5 contexts 5.007 and 5.011 uncovered not only a continuation of the wall line to the SW, but to the NW of the wall a chalk surface. It is possible that this surface is part of the cold bath area, but equally it also a possibility of another room, but that can only be answered by further excavation. The excavation also suggests the probability of there being a later phase where a layer of redeposited chalk created a new floor surface. The NE edge of trench 3 is also the SW edge of this chalk surface, as evidenced by the large deposits of opus signinum and small tesserae found in trench 3. Further excavation in this area is required to determine the extent of this room.

Context 5.012 was a small exploratory test excavation to determine the SE edge of the site, but it in fact revealed the possibility of the site extending further in that direction. The finds were not conclusive as there was a mixture of a chalk layer with some opus signinum and CBM, but no definitive structure or surface. The topography, clearer this year due to no earlier ploughing, shows the ground level platform extends some 10 metres to the SE. Again, further excavation would be required to determine if the site does indeed extend in that direction.

Due to time constraints, trenches 6 and 7 were only minimally excavated. However, one post hole was found, with a possible, but unconfirmed second one with a tile base. The significance is that these two also align with a possible post hole found in the 2012 excavation at the NW end of trench 2.

As a final comment, in 2013 we had hoped to determine a number of parameters of the site and what the *cold bath* area may have been. However, although we have found some extents of the area, a lot more has been revealed that cannot at this stage be confirmed or disproved. A lot more work is required no to resolve the site.

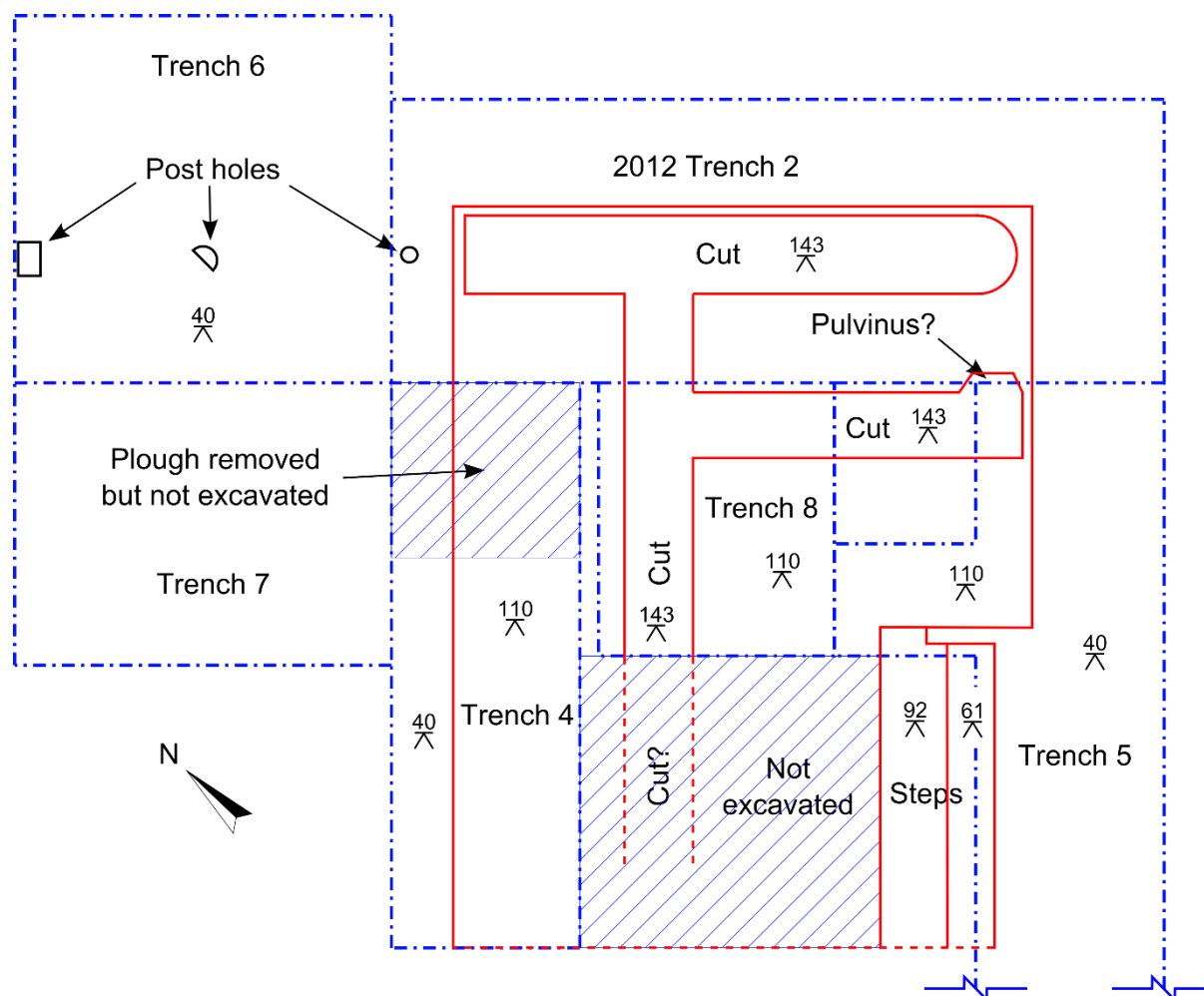


Figure 58: Stylized plan showing the cuts in the *cold bath* area and the possible post holes

References:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
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| The Roman House in Britain | Dominic Perring, Routledge 2002 |
| Roman Baths in Britian | Tony Rook, Shire 2002 |
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Appendix 1: Finds																	
Bag No	Trench No	Context No	Pottery	Tesserae			Painted	Bone	Oyster	Flue	Opus	Mort	CBM			Stone	Notes
			Qty	R	Gr	Wh	plaster		Etc.	tile	Sig.	ar	Unc	Brick	Roof tile -	gm	
22	4	4.002	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
22/2	4	4.002	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	4	4.002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1970	0	0	0	600	
34	4	4.003	0	45	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	tess. inc.r6x1,r4x1,r3x1,r2x1, g6x1
35	4	4.003	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 brown glass(mod?)
36	4	4.003	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	626	284	0	90	837	251	
37	4	4.004	0	48	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	tess. Inc.r2x1,1r small
38	4	4.004	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 curved brown glass(mod?)
39	4	4.004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	324	287	372	0	0	1169	105	
88	4	4.009	1	5	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 x 109	0	INC. 1 OFF RED2 TESS. POT=VICTORIAN EX BACKFILL 2011
80	5	5.002	0	19	108	0	0	0	0	77g	0	0	0	0	0	0	
81	5	5.002	3	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	pot=mortarium 2 joining,+2rim
82	5	5.003	1	2	0	0	3	0	2	248g	92	161	0	0	0	0	
19A	5	5.004	0	22	0	0	0	0	6	75	0	84	0	0	367	0	1 nail
19B	5	5.004	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	503	82	0	0	0	0	NB. bone is burnt
20	5	5.004	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1off large snail
20	5	5.004	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	5	5.004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	848	0	Stone 30g
21	5	5.006	0	14	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	184	139	1 large snail
21/2	5	5.006	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
40	5	5.006	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	tess.inc. 2rx1 small
41A-E	5	5.006	17	0	0	0	3	6	10	20	0	55	0	885	1233	599	oyster inc.1 mussel,1 snail
89	5	5.006	0	8	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 BAG CHARCOAL

Bag No	Trench No	Context No	Pottery	Tesserae			Paint ed	Bone	Oyst er	Flue tile	Opus Sig.	Mort ar	CBM			Stone	Notes
			Qty	R	Gr	Wh	plaste r		Etc.	gm	gm	gm	Unc	Brick gm	Roof tile - gm	gm	
90	5	5.006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	168	0	224	0	268	
43	5	5.008	0	6	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 bag charcoal, tess. Inc r2x1
44	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
45	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	0	586	327	202	
46	5	5.008	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
47	5	5.008	0	35	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
48	5	5.008	1	7	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	3 x 366	0	0	
49	5	5.008	3	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
50	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	263	762	0	698	1133	614	
51	5	5.008	0	7	29	18	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	
52	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Neidermendig lava 3 off
53	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	bone inc. 1off teeth
54	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	694	269	
55	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
56	5	5.008	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
57	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
58	5	5.008	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1 off	0	0	0	0	0	0	
59	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 bag charcoal,
60	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	135	0	3 x 593	972	0	
93	5	5.008	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
100	5	5.008	2	3	3	1	0	0	0	52	0	0	0	90	0	52	
101	5	5.008	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
91	5/3 corner	5.011	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	145	0	6 x4211	1mod gun cartridge
Bag No	Trench No	Context No	Pottery	Tesserae			Paint ed	Bone	Oyst er	Flue tile	Opus Sig.	Mort ar	CBM			Stone	Notes

			Qty	R	Gr	Wh	plaster		Etc.	gm	gm	gm	Unc	Brick gm	Roof tile - gm	gm	
	5	5.013	2	1	0	0	0	1	5	146	0	0	375	197	388	0	Pot inc. 1 x shelly (4g), 1 x mortaria (22g)
	5	5.014	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1045	0	CBM has strange inclusion
	5	5.015A	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	176	0	0	0	Pot inc. 1 x NVCC; charcoal
	5	5.015B	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	206	0	0	109	165	0	548	3 x tess joined; gen cbm is floor tile
	5	5.015C	1	4	0	0	0	1 (14g)	0	0	150		216	0	211	0	1 x tess is small (approx 10mm sq);
	5	5.015D	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	430	121	725	0	2 x 735	1 stone = red tile (283g); charcoal
	5	5.015E	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	300	0	0	0	1 x cbm with poss. paint on one surface; 1 x glass; bone is v. Small (0g)
	5	5.015F	0	6	0	0	0	3 (63g)	0	2 x 504	115	0	434	287	215	3 x 358	1 x roof tile (60gm) has poss plaster overlain with mortar; tess has 2 joined
	5	5.015G	1 (Course 7gm)	11	0	0	0	3	1	175	743	166	451	0	151	361	Mortar has flat surface; General CBM is prob floor tile; Roof has general CBM
	5	5.015H	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 x 590	0	2 x 471	0	192	1 x Mortar has poss. plaster, other has flat surface; Brick has mortar
	5	Below 15H	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 x 97	0	112	1 x l.bone (34g); 1 x snail (not edible); brick has > 90 deg corner
42	8	8.002	0	31	17	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	tess. Inc.1 block Grey + white
29	8	8.003	0	9	2	0	6	0	0	0	224	0	0	0	0	0	Inc. 2 x tess joined
92	8	SW face	0	14	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	