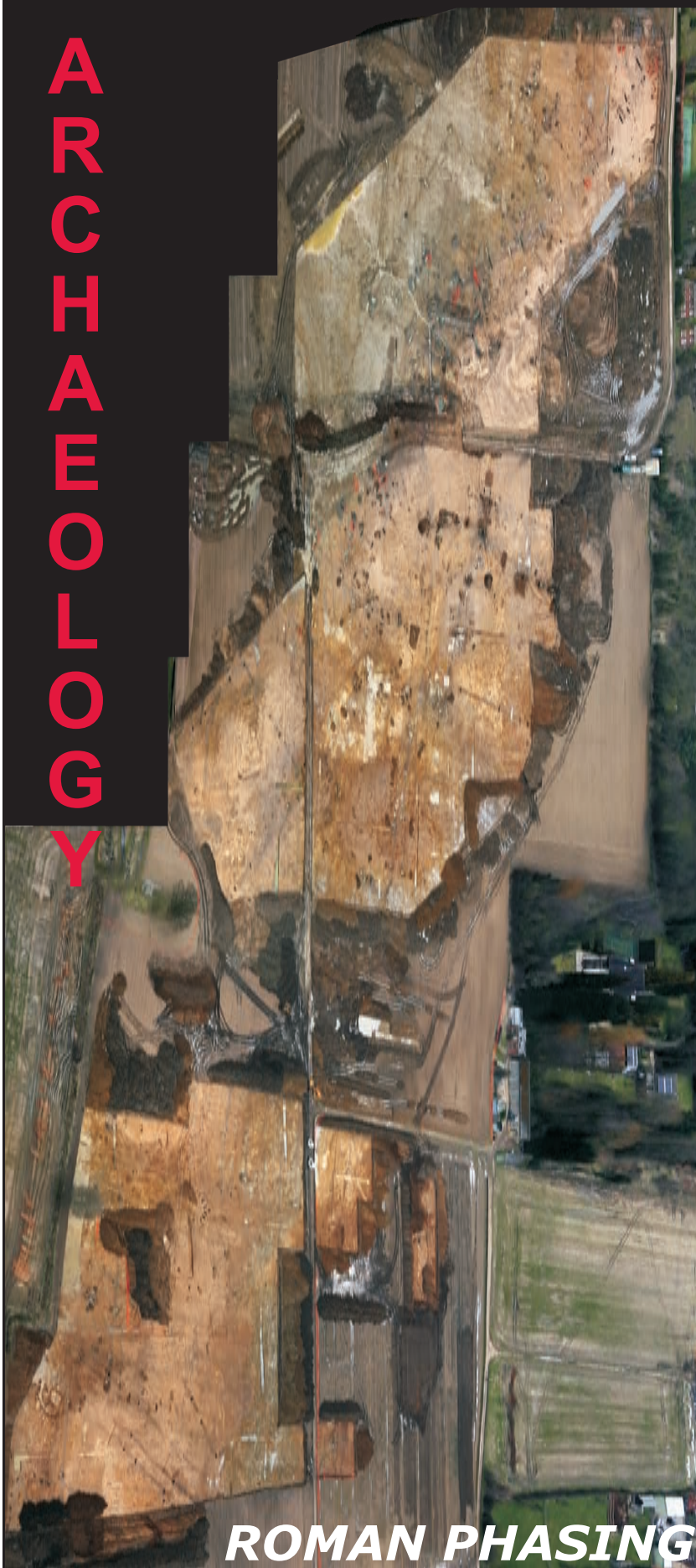


# NORTH WEST CAMBRIDGE

## ARCHAEOLOGY



### *ROMAN PHASING*

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*As shown on Figure 2, unexpected components have emerged from the sites' phasing analysis. While, in the south, the RB1/Site II settlement remains a discrete, near-pristine/-'model' Early Roman farmstead, it is the development sequence of the Site IV complex that has thrown up surprises. Its Late Iron Age/Roman Conquest-period origins lay in the middle of that area (RB2B). Thereafter, the later first century AD saw the establishment of settlement holdings/blocks that must have fronted onto the Roman Cambridge-to-Godmanchester road north of the site-area: RB2D (west) and RB2A (east), the latter of which then extended southwards to incorporate the original RB2B 'core'. During the second century the axes of the northwestern settlement (RB2D) were extended south-westward (as RB2C) to join up with the RB2B core-area, making this a large unified settlement complex. Dating to the mid-third to mid-fourth centuries, the Late Roman settlement – from where most of the sites' coins and iron slag derived – fell within the area of the earlier RB2C paddocks, and from there it clearly extended north-eastwards into the western paddocks of Settlement-block RB2A.*

*What, therefore, is singularly significant of this sequence is that it charts how a poly-focal settlement arrangement eventually became a single (sprawling) complex.*

#### *A Note concerning Phasing Criteria*

After the Romano-British archaeology was sub-divided into large-scale units such as sites, routeways, *etc.* each was independently phased. Some of the entities such as routeways generally lack the necessary body of evidence to allow detailed phasing so this has not been done. The complexity of the archaeology, particularly of parts of sites RB.2A–D, and the organic nature of much of the development mean that phases are in part artificial analytical constructs. Phases are therefore defined as representing major transitions in the overall character of an area. Criteria for defining phases include:

- 1) A shift from using an area principally for burial purposes to occupation or vice versa. In some instances these may effectively represent a form of precursor or successor phase (see below)
- 2) The creation of a ditched enclosure system where one had not existed before
- 3) A major expansion or contraction of the area of a site, typically >50%
- 4) A significant shift in the alignment of a ditched enclosure system, typically >10 degrees
- 5) A change from a curvilinear to a rectilinear ditched enclosure system or *vice versa*.

In the interests of comprehensiveness a number of additional phases have been created. These are principally:

- 1) Precursor phases where there is some extremely limited evidence for Romano-British activity in an area prior to the commencement of occupation.
- 2) Successor phases where there is evidence that a site was largely abandoned, but that a few essentially relict features continued in use. This relates principally to wells and the fact that banks – which had not left any direct surviving archaeological traces – may have continued to exist as significant topographic features after the associated ditches had entirely infilled
- 3) Intermediary phases where there is evidence for a hiatus between significant earlier and later phase of Romano-British activity.

As the phases cover relatively long periods some individual features can be more precisely dated within a phase. As this never exceeds 10% of the features assigned to a phase it was not deemed worth creating formal sub-phases, however this more precise dating has been taken into account where appropriate. These individual site-based phases were then subsequently combined into an overall phasing system; this consists of three broad phases with eight sub-phases (Table 1).

Phasing	Date	Way 1	Way 2	Way 3	D-d bound.	RB.1	RB.2A	RB.2B	RB.2C	RB.2D
1.I	Mid 1st BC–mid 1st C. AD	–	–	Prob.	–	–	–	<b>Est. (2B.1)</b>	–	–
1.II	Mid–late 1st C. AD	Way 1.1	Poss.	Way 3.1	D-D.1	<b>Est. (1.1)</b>	Burial only (2A.1)	<b>Cont. (2B.1)</b>	–	Burial only (2D.1)
1.III	Late 1st–mid 2nd C. AD	Way 1.2	Way 2.1	Way 3.1	D-D.1	<b>Cont. (1.1)</b>	<b>Est. (2A.2)</b>	<b>Mod. (2B.2)</b>	Pre-settlement (2C.1)	<b>Est. (2D.2)</b>
2.I	Mid–late 2nd C. AD	Way 1.2	Way 2.2	Way 3.1	D-D.2	<b>Cont. (1.1)</b>	<b>Mod. (2A.3)</b>	<b>Cont. (2B.2)</b>	<b>Est. (2C.2)</b>	<b>Mod. (2D.3)</b>
2.II	late 2nd–early 3rd C. AD	Poss.	Poss.	Way 3.2	D-D.2	Relict Well (1.2)	<b>Cont. (2A.3)</b>	–	<b>Cont. (2C.2)</b>	<b>Cont. (2D.3)</b>
3.I	Mid–late 3rd C. AD	Poss.	Poss.	Way 3.2	–	Relict Well (1.2)	<b>Cont. (2A.3)</b>	–	<b>Mod. (2C.3)</b>	Relict well (2D.4)
3.II	Early–mid 4th C. AD	–	–	Way 3.2	–	–	<b>Mod. (2A.4)</b>	–	<b>Cont. (2C.3)</b>	Relict well (2D.4)
3.III	Mid 4th C. AD onwards	–	–	Way 3.3	–	–	–	–	–	–

**Table 1:** Phasing of Romano-British sites (bold entries indicate settlement proper;: Cont. – continuity, Est. – established, Mod. – major modification / change to settlement, Poss. – Possibly in existence, Prob. – Probably in existence).

The site phases are broadly categorised in Table 2.

Site	Phase	Date	Description
RB.1	1	mid 1st–late 2nd century AD	Initial ditched enclosure system
RB.1	2	late 2nd–late 3rd century AD	Successor phase: relict well
RB.2A	1	mid–late 1st century AD	Precursor phase: cemetery
RB.2A	2	late 1st–mid 2nd century AD	Initial ditched enclosure system
RB.2A	3	mid 2nd–late 3rd century AD	Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system
RB.2A	4	late 3rd–mid 4th century AD	Contracted ditched enclosure system. Possibly successor phase.
RB.2B	1	mid 1st century BC–mid 1st century AD	Initial ditched enclosure system
RB.2B	2	mid 1st century–late 2nd century AD	Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system
RB.2C	1	mid 1st–mid 2nd century AD	Precursor phase: limited pre-settlement activity
RB.2C	2	mid 2nd–mid 3rd century AD	Initial ditched enclosure system
RB.2C	3	mid 3rd–mid 4th century AD	Modified and contracted curvilinear ditched enclosure system
RB.2D	1	early 1st–mid 1st century AD	Precursor phase: isolated small enclosures and cremations
RB.2D	2	late 1st–mid 2nd century AD	Initial ditched enclosure system
RB.2D	3	mid 2nd–late 3rd century AD	Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system
RB.2D	4	late 3rd–early / mid 4th century AD	Successor phase: relict well
Way 1	1	mid 1st century AD	Ditched routeway
Way 1	2	mid 1st–late 2nd century AD	Banked routeway
Way 2	1	late 1st/early 2nd century– mid 2nd century AD	Ditched routeway
Way 2	2	mid–late 2nd century AD	Banked routeway
Way 3	1	mid 1st century BC/early 1st century AD–late 2nd century AD	Intermittently metallated and ‘ditched’ routeway
Way 3	2	late 2nd century– mid 4th century AD	Intermittently metallated and ‘ditched’ routeway
Way 3	3	mid 4th century AD onwards	Successor phase: routeway
D-D	1	mid 1st– mid 2nd century AD	Double-ditched boundary
D-D	2	mid 2nd–early 3rd century AD	Double-ditched boundary

**Table 2:** Summary of phases of Romano-British sites, routeways, etc.



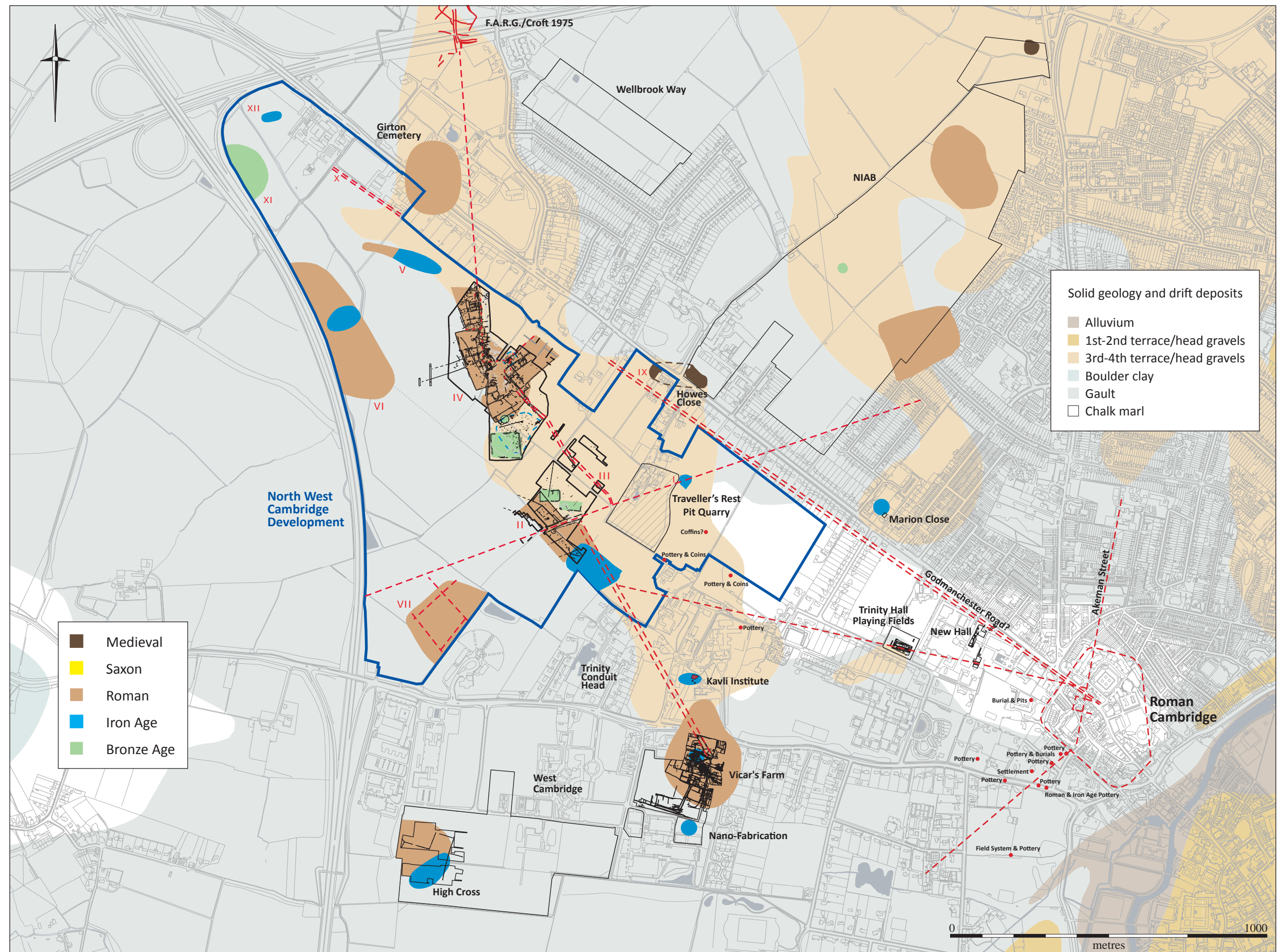


Figure 1. North West Cambridge environs



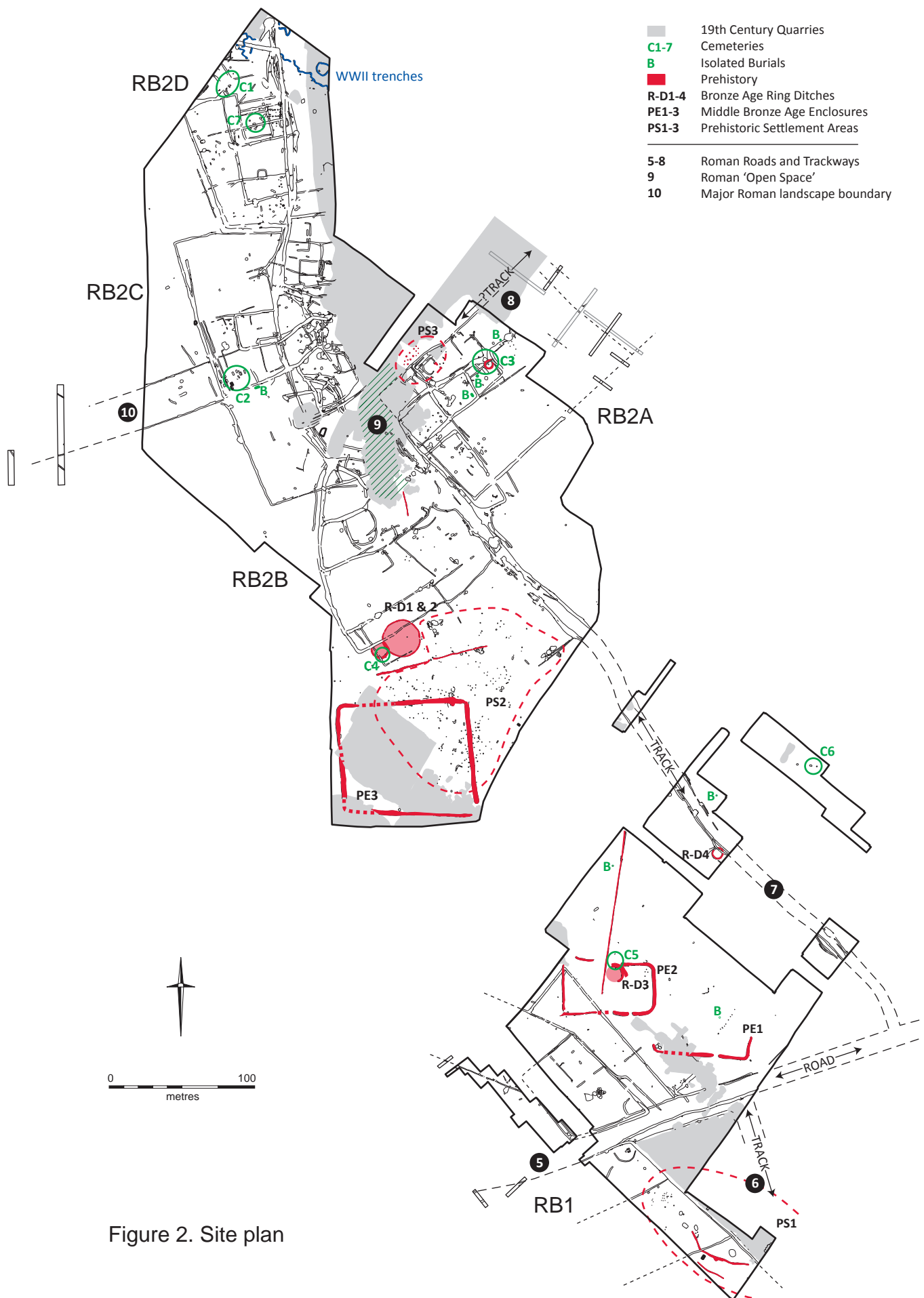




Figure 3. Phase plan



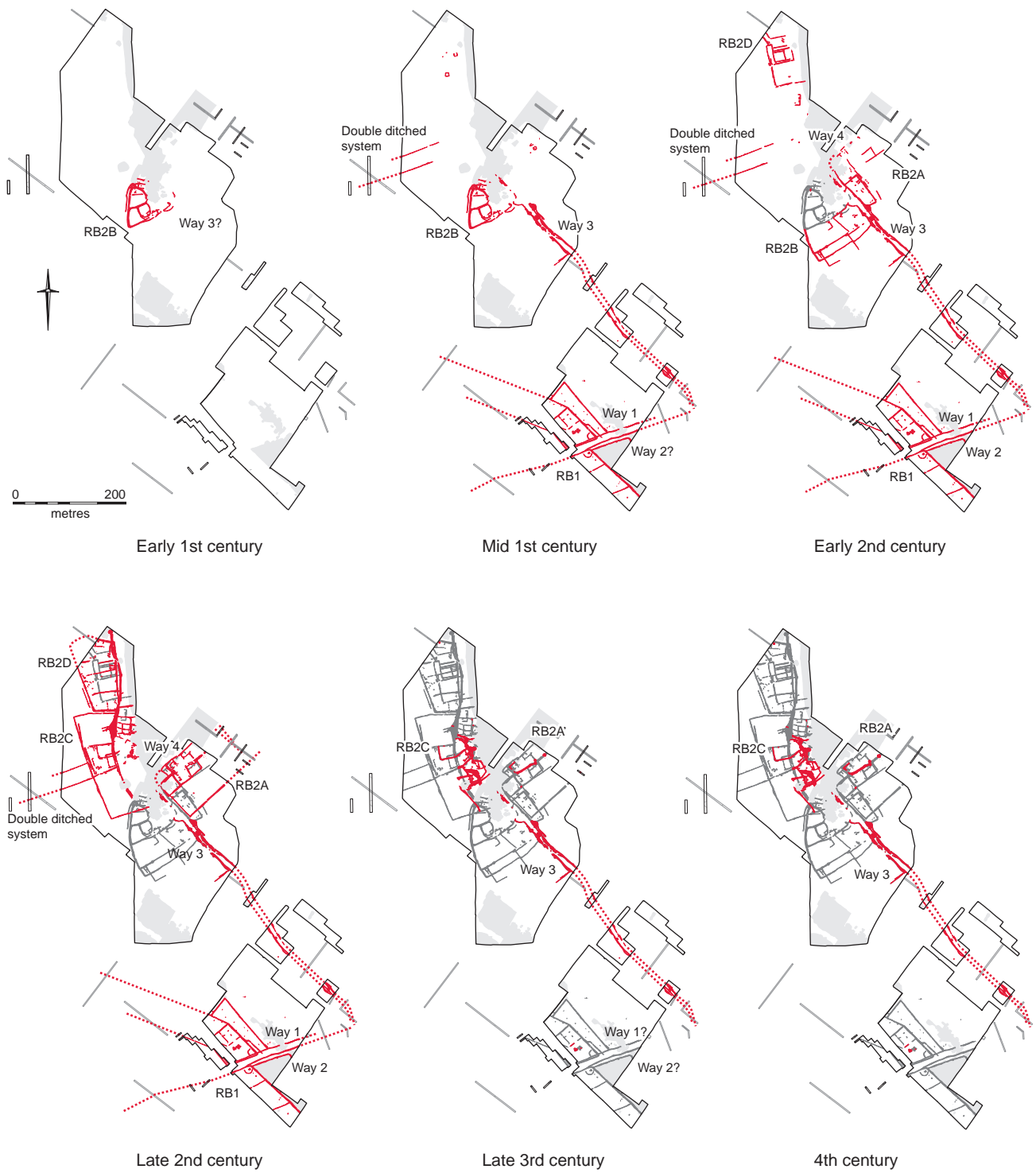


Figure 4. Phased sequence of Roman archaeology

## Routeways and Boundaries

Three routeways were identified (Ways 1–3) plus a fourth putative example (Way 4) and some form of double-ditched boundary.

### Way 1

Way 1, located toward the eastern end of the investigated area, ran in a northeast-southwest direction from the gravel ridge down onto the clay. It was traced for a distance of c. 130m across the excavated area and was also identified in trenches to the southeast, giving a total length of 210m. The relatively straight edges of the road were delineated by well defined continuous ditches typically 11–28m apart; these ditches were c. 1.8 wide and 0.8m deep. There was no convincing evidence of any recuts associated with these ditches and the fill sequences were generally simple. No traces of any metalling associated with Way 1 were identified. Way 1 passed through RB.1, stratigraphically it is clear that the enclosure ditches associated with RB.1 cut through the already backfilled ditches of Way 1, effectively narrowing it by c. 3.5m. The idea that the ditches of Way 1 were backfilled by this time is supported by the lack of material from these ditches, even when adjacent to RB.1. As RB.1 was established in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century this indicates that Way 1 was also established in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century and was extremely brief lived, at least in its ditched phase. It seems probable that Way 1 continued in use after this time, presumably defined by a pair of low banks rather than ditches. The only pottery associated with Way 1 dates to 100–300AD and 150–300AD, however this material derived from where Way 1 met Way 2 (F.2584) and it appears that the junction was defined differently from the rest of the ditches. Way 1 must have existed until at least the end of the main phase of occupation at site RB.1 in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, whilst it may well have continued after this date there is no compelling evidence that it did.

- Phase Way 1.1: ditched routeway (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)
- Phase Way 1.2: banked routeway (mid 1<sup>st</sup>–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)

### Way 2

Way 2 joins to Way 1 and runs perpendicular to it towards the southeast. Only a very short length of c. 8m of Way 2 could be traced before it ran into an area of intensive Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying. It is therefore impossible to describe Way 2 in detail, although the short exposures of ditch revealed were broadly similar to those of Way 1. As already mentioned pottery from this junction dates to 100–300AD and 150–300AD. It is probable that Way 2 led to the Romano-British settlement at Vicar's Farm 750m distant. It is unclear when this settlement was established; this appears to have taken place c. 80–140AD. If Way 2 is solely related to the Vicar's Farm settlement, which is unproven, then it may well have been created after Way 1. As the Vicar's Farm settlement outlived RB.1 then Way 2 probably continued until at least the end of the main phase of occupation at site RB.1 in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. As with Way 1 the lack of re-cuts, *etc.* suggests that an initial



ditched phase was followed by a phase where the routeway was delineated solely by banks.

- Phase Way 2.1: ditched routeway (late 1<sup>st</sup> century or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)
- Phase Way 2.2: banked routeway (mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)

### Way 3

Way 3 was a sinuous but broadly southeast to northwest aligned 'ditched' routeway, whose line was intermittently traced across several excavated area for a distance of c. 480m. In general Way 3 appears to meander probably following the topography of the ridge located around 100m or so back from the actual crest. Way 3 was in existence by the start of the Romano-British period and may well have substantially earlier origins. As Way 3 runs immediately to north of a prehistoric ring-ditch (Ring-ditch 4) and slightly changes alignment at this point it is possible that a low central mound was still extant and influenced the line of the routeway. Indeed there are suggestions of two distinct shifts in the alignment of the routeway, perhaps indicating that it ran between a series of minor topographic points.

To the southeast Way 3 presumably joined to Way 1 beyond the limit of excavation, potentially creating a crossroads as it presumably continued beyond this point. To the northwest Way 3 ran to the southwest of RB.2A and the northeast of RB.2B. It is likely that it continued beyond this point to the northwest into an area of intense Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying. Additionally it probably met with Way 4, a putative routeway running to the northeast along the site of RB.2A.

Way 3 was composed of a series of discontinuous and extremely irregular 'ditches' that were typically c. 8m apart and up to 2.0m wide. In most instances it appears that these 'ditches' are composed of elongated quarry pits that were dug along the sides of the routeway. There is no overall pattern to these and they were potentially dug in an *ad hoc* manner to provide metalling for the routeway in locations where the ground conditions had deteriorated. There is also a suggestion that some of these features may have been deliberately linked together to improve drainage locally. Up to four phases of re-cuts of features were discernible in places along the route of Way 3 indicating repeated quarrying. In most areas no surface associated with the routeway survived. In several locations there were indications that the initial 'surface' consisted simply of removing the topsoil to create a moderately firm and relatively flat surface. Gravel was then subsequently added locally as a metalling where required, although only one convincing area of this survived (F.2668). There is no evidence that Way 3 was a focus for activity, the only features associated with it are what appear to be wheel ruts (F.1721, 1781) at one point suggesting that carts/wagons went from Way 3 to the adjacent fields at this point.

Two wells (RB Wells 17–18) were located within the line of Way 3, at the eastern end of settlements RB.2A–B. No trace of any well lining survived, when allowance is made for the likely extent of the actual shafts of these wells the line of Way 3 would have been somewhat impinged upon but not

seriously compromised as a routeway. Given the absence of wells in RB.2B and the earliest phases of RB.2A (Phases RB.2A.1–2) it is probable that the wells associated with Way 3 supplied these with water until the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The location of the wells also suggests that they may also have helped supply the requirements of the users of Way 3 and agricultural needs relating to nearby fields to the east.

Little material culture was associated with Way 3 and the distribution of the material suggests that it derived principally from nearby settlements. This material is of limited value as dating evidence and any attempt to devise an overall phasing system would be misguided. Despite these provisos there is relatively strong evidence to suggest that some of the features associated with Way 3 were dug as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and that some were still open into the 4<sup>th</sup> century, including the deposition of a coin issued in 330–40.

As was noted during the evaluation (Evans and Newman 2010, 36–37) parts of Way 3 correspond almost exactly with the documented route of *Milnewaye* (or Mill Way), a small Medieval road that was in existence by c. 1360 and that led from the rear of Howes Crofts to the gravel pits in Grithow Field (Hall & Ravensdale 1976, 36). It appears. The evidence from the Romano-British settlements suggests that when these went out of use rather than being simply abandoned the areas passed directly into agricultural usage. It is likely that the area continued to be farmed through the Early and Middle Saxon periods and presumably Way 3 remained as some form of routeway. The extensive survival of ridge and furrow plus headlands and banks in the area until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which have been plotted from aerial photographic evidence (Palmer in Redfearn 2001), indicates that classic medieval open-fieldsystems under arable cultivation as a series large, hedge-less ‘open fields’ farmed in strips were laid out c. 850–1150 (Oosthuizen 2006), although locally there is evidence for 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup>-century intensively cultivated proto-open fieldsystems (Oosthuizen 2005; Oosthuizen 2006). This layout preserved the still extant Way 3, in effect ‘fossilising’ it.

Although the nature of Way 3 makes it impossible to phase entirely convincingly it can be sub-divided to an extent:

- Phase Way 3.1: routeway with some metalling and flanking pits/ditches with wells located on routeway (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century BC/early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)
- Phase Way 3.2: routeway with some metalling and flanking pits/ditches (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century–mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AD)
- Phase Way 3.3: continued existence of routeway after abandonment of settlement RB.2 (mid 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards).

#### Way 4

The existence of Way 4 is speculative, its southeastern side is defined by the enclosure ditches of the northwestern side of RB.2A (Phase RB.2A.2–3), whilst if the other side of it was originally ditched the evidence from this has been obliterated Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying. Given that in Phase RB.2A.3 the principal focus of this site (Enc. 2A.7) appears to have faced onto the putative Way 4 its existence is probable but can not be definitively identified. Due to its nature no features are assigned to Way 4.



### *The Double-ditched Boundary*

The double-ditched boundary runs northeast to southwest from RB.2C on the ridge down onto the clay. It is defined by a pair of straight parallel ditches set 31m apart that were 0.8m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.3m with no trace of any re-cuts. It was traced for a distance of 60m across the excavated area and the southern of the ditches was also identified in two trenches to the southwest – one from the evaluation phase and one from the excavation phase – giving a distance of 120m. After this point it could not be identified in further trenches, it is likely to have continued as a boundary beyond this defined either by ditches that were too shallow to survive or in another archaeologically invisible manner. It is also worth noting that the southern ditch appeared to continue further than the northern ditch, although this may simply represent differential truncation.

The double-ditched boundary was established before the main occupation of RB.2C (Phase RB.2C.2) in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. When this took place the northeastern end of the double-ditched boundary went out of use, pottery associated with this stretch (F.523) dated to 50–100AD. Pottery associated with the length to the southwest which continued in use contained some pottery of the same date (50–100AD) plus later material of 200–400AD indicating that it continued in use until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Although densities are not high the distribution of pre-150AD pottery in the area that became RB.2C does hint at some level of activity at the northeastern end of the double-ditched boundary. The lack of re-cuts and the absence of post 250AD coins and pottery from the area of the double-ditched boundary whilst not conclusive does suggest that it did not continue after the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

If the double-ditched boundary continued on the same alignment beyond the limits of where it could be traced then it would have passed immediately to the south of Site VI, where there is evidence for a Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British settlement and agricultural activity of the 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

- Phase D-D.1: double-ditched boundary (mid 1<sup>st</sup>– mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)
- Phase D-D.2: double-ditched boundary continues to southwest of site RB.2C (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD).

## **Settlements**

### ***RB.1***

RB.1 is located on the southwest slope of the gravel ridge, lying at between 19–21.75m OD. Geologically it sits at the junction between the Gault clay proper and more mixed deposits, although little of the site is located on good quality gravels. RB.1 lies on both sides of Way 1, whilst it is conceivable that the two sides of the routeway are separate entities it is more likely that they are elements of a single site. Way 1 was clearly in existence prior to the creation of RB.1; the site was therefore located on a routeway immediately

adjacent to the flat claylands. The western, eastern and southern limits of RB.1 lay beyond the limits of investigation, additionally a modern drainage ditch meant that a significant area of the settlement has not yet been investigated. There are two phases of activity identifiable at RB.1:

- Phase RB.1.1: initial ditched enclosure system (mid 1st–late 2nd century)
- Phase RB.1.2: relict well continues in use (late 2nd–late 3rd century).

*Phase RB.1.1: Initial ditched enclosure system (mid 1st–late 2nd century)*

RB.1 was established in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the best dating evidence comes from a cremation cemetery (C5) located just to the north of RB.1 and assumed to be associated with it. This has evidence for five burials of 40–100AD, with two dated more closely to 40–70AD. There is a small amount of other pottery of this date from the site, some of this appears to relate principally to Way 1 and a group from the extreme eastern end of the area investigated (F.2583) may conceivably relate to another settlement. The other location to produce early pottery was a well (RB Well 01), supporting the idea that RB.1 originated at this time. The area to the west of Way 1 consisted of three enclosures (Enc.1.1–3). The main focus of activity was Enclosure 1.1, which pre-dates the other enclosures, or at least was the first to be created. It also appears – purely on the grounds of spatial logic – that the creation of Enclosure 1.3 predates Enclosure 1.2. Enclosure 1.1 was sub-divided into at least three areas, with the northwestern sub-enclosure probably the location of a building that has left no surviving archaeological traces. Another sub-enclosure in the northeast corner may have contained some form of structure that has left no archaeological traces and the presence of some disarticulated human bone in its ditches may be significant. The main part of Enclosure 1.1 contained two successive wells (RB Wells 01–02). It is noteworthy that the eastern end of Enclosure 1.1 encroached upon the line of Way 1 to an extent. There was evidence for a narrow ditched routeway running along the southern side of Enclosure 1.1. To the north of Enclosure 1.1 there was another enclosure (Enc.1.2), which contained few traces of internal activity. To the west of Enclosure 1.1 there was a further enclosure (Enc.1.3), this also contained few traces of internal activity but was not fully investigated. These two enclosures (Enc.1.2–3) presumably relate to stock management and/or agricultural activities. In addition to the cremation cemetery to the north of the site that has already been mentioned there was an isolated cremation in a wooden box or casket (F.2606).

To the east of Way 1 there was a single enclosure (Enc.1.4), although this was divided into at least three sub-enclosures. There were few internal features within these sub-enclosures, and these were largely confined to the westernmost sub-enclosure. The northwestern corner of this sub-enclosure had been further sub-divided and contained a structure identified as a corn drier (RB Str. 01). The only other feature of note lay to the north of Enclosure 1.4, this was a clay-lined pit that presumably fulfilled a specialised function.

The pottery evidence indicates that the main phase of occupation at RB.1 ended *c.* 160–200AD, but can not be dated more precisely. This means that Phase RB.1.1 lasted for *c.* 90–160 years, with little evidence for change during that period. Although burial ceased at C5 by *c.* 100AD – and no replacement

cemetery was identified – as RB Well 02 was created after *c.* 150 AD and the corn drier (RB Str. 01) was still in operation at this time RB.1 appears to have still been flourishing at this stage. This phase of RB.1 is best interpreted as a relatively simple rural farmstead. The end of Phase RB.1.1 appears to be associated with the deposition of a significant quantity of pottery, quern and animal bone in two ditches (F.2513–14) that represent the ‘front’ of the sub-enclosure where any buildings were probably located. This presumably represents some form of ‘clearance’ deposit. There is also a considerable quantity of quern in the construction deposits of RB Well 02, whilst it is probable that this well was constructed during Phase RB.1.1 the possibility that it relates to the transition to Phase RB.1.2 can not be entirely dismissed.

### *Enclosure 1.1*

Enclosure 1.1 is broadly rectangular – although its southeastern end is distorted due to the enclosure being on a different alignment to Way 1 – with an internal extent of *c.* 52–73m by 48m covering 3490sqm. The main ditch for Enclosure 1.1 (F.2507–09, 2516, 2519, 2528–30, 2550, 2757–58) showed no sign of any re-cuts in most locations and was up to 2.70m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.60m. On the southwestern side of Enclosure 1.1 there is apparently a *c.* 2m wide routeway of some type (F.2757–58); the nature of this is unclear due to the limited exposure achieved so far. There was evidence for at least two sub-enclosures. A discontinuous curving ditch (F.2523–24) in the northeast corner of Enclosure 1.1 enclosed an area of *c.* 10m by 9m. Although there were no features within this sub-enclosure it is likely that some form of structure existed there. The curving ditch of the sub-enclosure was 1.3m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.63m and was unexceptional apart from the presence of some disarticulated human bone. The other sub-enclosure located in the northwestern corner of Enclosure 1.1 (F.2513–14, 2522) was *c.* 30sqm with ditches (F.2513–14, 2522) up to 0.9m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.35m. There was a *c.* 7.5m wide entrance on the southeastern side of the sub-enclosure and a *c.* 4.5m wide entrance of the southwestern side. The fills of ditches F.2513–14 (also investigated in the evaluation as F.434) contained a considerable quantity of pottery, quern and animal bone – although the latter was heavily decayed and poorly preserved, to the extent that most could not be recovered and existed only as stains. This material appears to represent a single rapid dumping event, with the greatest concentrations located either side of the entrance into the sub-enclosure. With the exception of sherds from a single amphorae plus some largely abraded material little of the material definitely dates to before 150AD. With the exception of a few – probably intrusive – sherds no material need be later than 200AD, indicating a date of *c.* 160–200AD. Over 1,100 sherds of pottery weighing over 21kg were recovered, plus 13.3kg of quern – with five different stone types represented. Although incomplete – due to later truncation – this represents one of the most significant Romano-British assemblages from the excavations. Within this sub-enclosure there were a few relatively nondescript features (F.2517–18, 2534).

In what appears to be the central area of Enclosure 1.1 there was a cluster of relatively nondescript inter-cutting pits (F.2536–45, 2552–62). Located beside these was RB Well 01 (F.2756), a circular steep-sided flat-bottomed feature 2.9m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 0.57m. The original well was *c.* 2.0m in diameter, the additional width is due to post-use slumping and collapse of the surrounding natural. No trace of the well lining survived, but it was probably wattle-lined. There were no finds from deposits that can be related to the construction of the well. The basal fill, which may be use related, contained pottery of 50–100AD and fragments of a nailed shoe bottom. The backfilling of the shaft contained pottery of 50–100AD, but this is probably residual.

To the southwest of RB Well 01 was RB Well 02 (F.2768), a rather irregular roughly sub-rectangular feature 5.3m by 5.1m with irregular steep sides and a maximum surviving depth of 1.25m. The cut for RB Well 02 splays noticeably outwards to the northwest; this appears to represent a crudely stepped ramp that formed the point of access to the well during the construction process. There was evidence for the deliberate spreading of layers of gravel over the exposed natural Gault clay in this ramp area, providing a less treacherous footing. The profile of the base indicated that there was a slightly deeper *c.* 1.0m diameter circular shaft in the centre of the feature, suggesting that the well was wattle lined. Although the bulk of the fills relate to the construction of the well these are problematic to distinguish, as due to later

collapse/slumping they could not be separated from the backfilling of the shaft. The bulk of the pottery (just over 100 sherds weighing 2.9kg) and quern (18.8kg, with four different stone types represented) relates to the initial construction of the well and includes some pottery that is no earlier than 150AD. There is no pottery that can be linked categorically to the use of the well, although some large unabraded sherds from two colour coated beakers of 150–250AD may have been deposited during the use-life of the well. The backfilling of the shaft contained a one-piece leather shoe for a child dated to c. 275–300AD and pottery dated to 150–250 and 150–300AD. Although no trace of the original well lining survived there was some waterlogged survival; the waterlogged plant remains are not numerous and are poorly preserved, but there was good pollen and insect preservation.

Other features in Enclosure 1.1 included a posthole (F.2603) and several ditches (F.2604, 2755, 2761–63). Such short lengths of most of these ditches have been revealed so far that it is fruitless to speculate about them. One exception is F.2755; the alignment of this parallels those of Enclosure 1.3 indicating that it is probably linked to this.

#### *Enclosure 1.2*

Enclosure 1.2 is located to the northeast of Enclosure 1.1 and is broadly rectangular – although with a distinct kink at its northwestern end – and was up to c. 115m long and 28–37m wide covering 2810sqm. Its southwestern boundary was created by the pre-existing northeastern boundary of Enclosure 1.1. Its other boundaries (F.2502, 2620, 2632, 2634–35, 2659; pits F.2525, 2535) show no signs of any re-cuts and are up to 2.12m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.69m. There is some form of sub-enclosure of unknown function at its southeastern end (F.2500, 2546). The only other features within Enclosure 1.2 are some nondescript postholes (3: F.2510–11, 2515) and pits (8: F.2503, 2506, 2512, 2520–21, 2624–25, 2654) that lack direct dating evidence but are probably Roman.

#### *Enclosure 1.3*

Enclosure 1.3 is located to the west of Enclosure 1.1, albeit on a radically different alignment reflecting the curving topography of the slope, and it shares a short length of boundary with Enclosure 1.2. Only its eastern portion has been investigated and it is unclear how large it is, the portion revealed is c. 50m wide by >55m long covering 3440sqm. There are indications from evaluation trenches that the enclosure may continue for some distance but this is uncertain. There is no evidence that its boundary ditches (F.2632, 2659, 2738) were ever re-cut, they are up to 1.2m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.6m. Ditch F.2755, located within Enclosure 1.1, shares an alignment with the ditches of Enclosure 1.3 and is probably related. There only features within Enclosure 1.3 were a nondescript pit (F.2626) and posthole (F.2650).

#### *Enclosure 1.4*

Enclosure 1.4, located to the east of Way 1, is probably broadly rectangular in form – although its northwestern end is distorted due to it being on a different alignment to Way 1 – but has not been revealed in its entirety. The investigated portion is c. 140m long by c. 30m wide, covering 4230sqm. The boundary ditch of Enclosure 1.4 (F.2583, 2735, 2792–94, 2801) shows evidence of at least one and probably two phases of re-cutting. The ditch is up to 2.0m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.85m. Some internal ditches (F.2586, 2728), that are up to 1.15m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.7m, serve to divide Enclosure 1.4 into three sub-enclosures, two of which are c. 41 and 57m long.

The northwestern corner of the westernmost sub-enclosure – located closest to Way 1 – was separated off by a curvilinear ditch (F.2638) that was up to 0.65m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.35m. This created a broadly sub-circular area c. 23–24m in diameter, located within this was RB Str. 01 (F.2567). This consists of a sunken T-shaped feature with ligatured arms 3.5m long by 2.85m wide. This structure appears to have acted as a flue, as traces of scorching were apparent in places. The likelihood is that there was an additional superstructure around this feature, but none of the elements of this were deep enough to leave archaeological traces. Based upon a range of parallels RB Str. 01 was probably a corn



drier. There was a small quantity of charred remains from RB Str. 01, whilst not particularly plentiful when these are compared the general paucity of charred remains from RB.1 this indicates that these may well be meaningfully associated with the corn drier. The structure was deliberately backfilled with sterile clay, the apparent care taken over this suggests that the RB Str. 01 may have continued in use in some manner after this. RB Str. 01 itself produced no dateable material, while the associated gully contained pottery that is no earlier than 150AD.

The only other features within the westernmost sub-enclosure of Enclosure 1.4 were a posthole (F.2588) and a pit (F.2589). In the central sub-enclosure there was a row of postholes (F.2742–44, 2747) that probably represent a fence line.

Lying just to the north of Enclosure 1.4 was a pit (F.2811), this was only partially located within the area of excavation but was rectangular in form with vertical sides, a flat base and traces of a clay lining. It was over 2.0m long by 1.77m long with a surviving depth of 0.4m. There is no sign that the clay lining had been heat affected and it is probable that this pit held liquid. This feature produced no dateable material but is probably Roman.

### *Burials*

Cemetery C5 consists of a cluster of five urned cremations (F.2663–67; Table 3) dating to the mid–late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. These are presumed to relate to RB.1, c. 27m away, however their precise location probably owes more to Prehistoric Ring-ditch 3, as they are located at one end of the its ditch and it presumably still existed as an identifiable relict landscape feature. The cremations were all relatively badly preserved due to later ploughing and no associated cuts could be identified. There was also one isolated cremation, which appears to have been interred within a wooden box or casket (F.2606) and was located c. 60m north of RB.1.

### *Phase RB.1.2: Relict well continues in use (late 2nd–late 3rd century)*

Evidence for continued activity was limited to the central area Enclosure 1.1, although it is unclear whether after c. 160–200AD any of the earlier enclosures survived as relict banks or not. The main feature that continued in use was a well (RB Well 02), which was presumably retained as a useful water supply in an agricultural landscape. Two features in the vicinity of the well (ditch F.2514, pit F.2561) contained pottery that is later than 200AD; it seems likely that this represents material that accumulated in the upper hollows of relict features rather than the features proper.

The shaft of RB Well 01 contained some large unabraded sherds from two colour coated beakers of 150–250AD and a leather shoe of c. 275–300AD. This indicates that the well went out of use in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, after existing as an isolated feature for c. 75–140 years. As the well appears to have been deliberately backfilled this indicates that the area was not abandoned at this point, but continued in agricultural usage. Some level of continued visitation is indicated by the recovery of a stray find of a coin minted in 337–41AD.

### *Material Culture and Environmental Evidence*

In general only low densities of material culture were recovered from individual features at RB.1, producing low to medium sized overall assemblages. The exceptions to this are the substantial groups of material from ditches F.2513–14 and well F.2768. The pottery from the cremations is also inherently significant. The bulk of the environmental samples from RB.1

contained only low densities of charred material, samples from the well fills produced poorly-preserved waterlogged plant remains. There was good survival of pollen and insects from one well.

### Summary

The evidence from RB.1 indicates the existence of a relatively simple predominantly single-phase rural farming settlement plus associated cemetery, established in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD *ca* 40–70AD on a routeway where it reached the flat claylands. These were probably largely utilised for arable production and RB.1 may have specialised in this form of agriculture given the discovery of a corn drier and large quantities of quern. This occupation continued until *c.* 160–200AD, at which point a significant amount of material was dumped and the only feature to continue was a relict well which went out of use *c.* 275–300AD.

Feature	Phase	Cut	Bone weight (g)	Cremation container	Dish 'lid'	Secondary vessels	Additional items	Comments
2606	1.1	[8374]	141	30 nails [3873] indicate some form of wooden box or casket	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Isolated burial, plough damaged
2663	1.1	Not identified	195	[8743] sandy ware jar 50–100AD	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Plough damaged
2664	1.1	Not identified	336	[8705] Coarse sandy greyware jar 50–100AD	[8704.1] imitation terra nigra CAM12 platter 40–100AD	[8704.2] buff sandy ware vessel 50–100AD	Unknown	Plough damaged
2665	1.1	Not identified	1	[8728] sandy ware jar 40–70AD	No	[8729] Coarse sandy greyware beaker 40–70AD	Unknown	Plough damaged
2666	1.1	Not identified	485	[8713] Coarse sandy greyware jar 50–100AD	[8711] Coarse sandy greyware imitation terra nigra CAM12 platter 40–70AD	[8710] Buff sandy closed vessel 50–100AD	Unknown	Plough damaged
2667	1.1	Not identified	261	[8742] Q1 jar 40–70AD	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Plough damaged

**Table 3:** Cremations from RB.1.

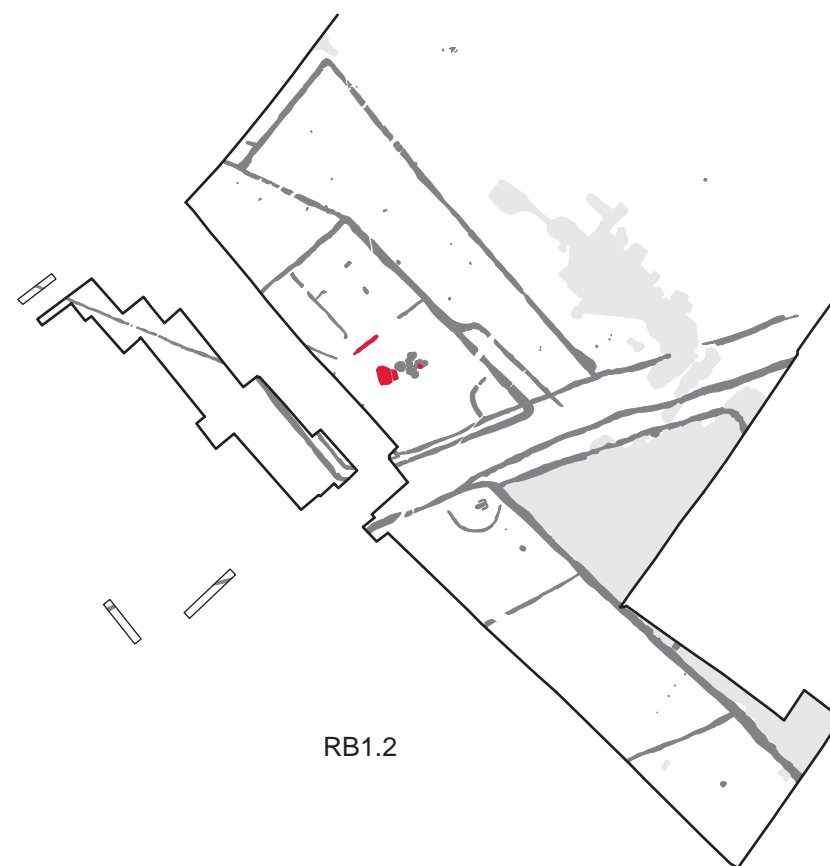
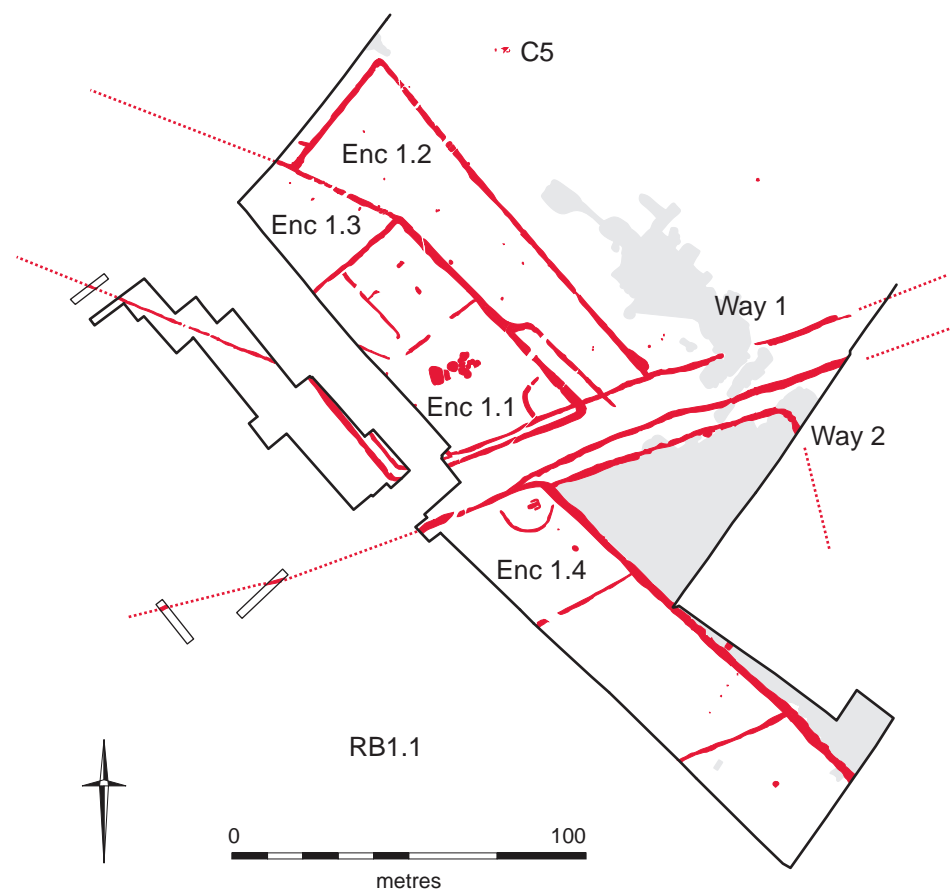


Figure 5. Site RB1: Phase plans for RB1.1-2

## **RB.2**

RB.2 is a rather sprawling entity; which can be split into four sub-sites (RB.2A–D). The degree to which these four sub-sites functioned as independent entities is debateable; it seems likely that they are in fact inter-related elements of a single complex rather than an aggregated group of sites. The degree of inter-relationship is strongest between the pairings of RB.2A–B and RB.2C–D.

Overall RB.2 is located on the western side of the gravel ridge, with its westernmost elements on a slope leading down to the southwest. Most of the area is relatively flat at 22.10–23.60m OD, but some of the enclosures run down the slope to 18.10m OD. It largely overlies gravels, although the westernmost portion extends onto the Gault clay. The northwestern limit of the settlement has not yet been investigated (Site V) and dense Post-Medieval–Modern quarrying to the north and northeast mean that the limits of the RB.2 are unclear. Overall the site spans 425m+ northwest to southeast and 180m+ southwest to northeast, covering 53,900sqm.

RB.2 is partly divided by Way 3, with RB.2A located to the northeast and RB.2B to the southwest, there also appears to have been a routeway running along the northwestern side of RB.2A (Way 4). It seems likely that the routeway represented by Way 3 continued to the north-northwest running by sites RB.2C–D; however truncation means that direct evidence for this is lacking. A double-ditched feature interpreted as some form of landscape division overlapped with part of the site (RB.2C) and ran from there in a southwest-wards direction.

Whilst the spatial distinctions between the sub-sites are not absolute – as some overlap is apparent at their extremities – the distinctions appear to be largely valid. Each sub-site has been phased independently to provide greater rigour. Given the inherent stratigraphic and dating limitations absolute certainty is impossible; nonetheless it does appear that the transitions between phases on different sub-sites are often broadly contemporary. To combine all the phases of all the elements of RB.2 into a single phasing system requires a minimum of six phases. This, however, partially masks a broader pattern whereby activity can be split into three stages; early, mid and late. These can be broadly defined as a series of spatially distinct loci (early), which went through a process of expansion and agglutination (mid) and then contraction (late).

Prior to the beginning of the Romano-British occupational sequence there is no evidence for activity in the immediate environs since the Early Iron Age (800–400 BC), indicating that during the Middle Iron Age (400–100 BC) and Late Iron Age (100–50BC) the area was utilised solely for agriculture. The Romano-British occupational sequence began in the Latest Iron Age (50BC–100AD), with the earliest activity at RB.2B *c.* 50BC–50AD when a settlement was established (Phase RB.2B.1). Some pottery of *c.* 50BC–50AD was recovered from parts of the site, but not in large enough quantities in any location to indicate other areas of activity.



By the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (*ca.* 30–70AD) this settlement was joined by evidence for cremation burials taking place in two other areas (Phase RB.2A.1 and RB.2D.1). This was also the point where a settlement was established *c.* 400m to the southeast (RB.1). In the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century (probably *c.* 70–80AD) the enclosed area at RB.2B expanded, but this was apparently no longer an occupational foci and instead seems to simply be a series of agricultural enclosures (Phase RB.2B.1). There is evidence for a series of enclosures and some occupation at RB.2A (Phase RB.2A.2) and it appears likely that the focus of occupation shifted from one area to the other. At the same time a series of enclosures with evidence for occupation was established at RB.2D (Phase RB.2D.2).

In the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century (*c.* 155–70AD) there were major modifications to the enclosure systems and occupation foci at sites RB.2A (Phase RB.2A.3) and RB.2D (Phase RB.2D.3), with RB.2B continuing unchanged. The area between RB.2A and RB.2D (RB.2C) was also, enclosed with evidence for both occupation and agricultural enclosures (Phase RB.2C.2). This led to the creation of a nearly continuous ‘L’-shaped settlement area with flanking enclosures. Soon after this activity ceased at RB.2B (*c.* 180–220AD), although as this area had ceased to be an occupational foci some time earlier this change may not have been particularly significant.

This pattern then continued until the mid-late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD when the areas of activity contracted, in contrast to the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century transition this appears to be more prolonged process. Activity largely ceased at RB.2D in *c.* 260–70AD with the exception of a single relict well (Phase RB.2D.4) and the occupied area at RB.2C contracted markedly and became noticeably different in character in *c.* 240–70AD (Phase RB.2C.3). At a slightly later date *c.* 280–300AD the area of activity at RB.2A contracted (Phase RB.2A.4), and it appears that it may now have effectively acted as an adjunct to RB.2C. Activity at RB.2A and RB.2C appears to have ended at broadly the same time (*c.* 360–70 and *c.* 355–70AD respectively) with the relict well at RB.2D going out of use before this *c.* 300–50AD. Although archaeologically discernible activity ceases in the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AD it appears that the area was not entirely abandoned, but rather passed directly into agricultural usage with evidence for the continuity of Way 3.

## **RB.2A**

RB.2A is the most northeasterly of the four spatial elements that constitute RB.2. It is located to the northeast of Way 3 and to the southeast of the putative Way 4. The main investigated area covered up to *c.* 115m northwest to southeast by *c.* 115m southwest to northeast covering 9700sqm, however the settlement continued northwards beyond the limit of excavation for a distance of at least another *c.* 50m into an area heavily disturbed by Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying, covering an additional 4900sqm. Our understanding of this northern part of the settlement derives solely from trenches excavated during both the evaluation and excavation phases (Tr. 7, 122–23, 128, 341–44). There is some prehistoric activity in this area (Prehistoric Settlement 3), this all substantially predates the Romano-British period and it is likely that by the time RB.2A originated no visible traces of prehistoric

activity remained. The settlement was entirely located upon gravel geology, although this is locally quite variable, and the site is relatively flat lying at 22.95–23.60m OD, although it is possible that during the Romano-British period there were minor undulations that have been removed by later activities. The sequence at RB.2A can be divided into four main phases, although in many respects the last three phases represent a broad continuum:

- Phase RB.2A.1: cremations of Cemetery 3 (mid–late 1<sup>st</sup> century)
- Phase RB.2A.2: initial ditched enclosure system (late 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)
- Phase RB.2A.3: modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD)
- Phase RB.2A.4: contracted ditched enclosure system (late 3<sup>rd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AD)

#### *Phase RB.2A.1: Cremations of Cemetery 3 (mid–late 1<sup>st</sup> century)*

The earliest phase of activity at RB.2A consists of a cremation cemetery (C3). The primary phase of C3 represents a short-lived mid 1<sup>st</sup> century cremation cemetery – although there is a suggestion of possible earlier activity – with at least four burials (Table 4). Two of these cremations were contained within a ring-ditch and a penannular ditch respectively. Although certainty is impossible this cemetery may have been associated with the contemporary site RB.2B, located just over 100m to the southwest. If this is the case then it is intriguing to note the presence of some disarticulated non-cremated human bone in the ditches of RB.2B indicating the existence of two different rites for disposing of the dead, although as the disarticulated human bone is not closely dated these need not be contemporary. There is no stratigraphic or artefactual way to determine the relative sequence of burials in C3. The distribution of the burials suggests that they were arranged upon the same southwest to northeast axis as the later Romano-British settlement in the area (Phase RB.2A.2); indeed it is likely that the putative low mounds associated with the penannular ditch and more especially the ring-ditch continued to act as landscape features for a considerable period afterwards. These ditches also continued to act as a focus for later burials (Phase RB.2A.2). The duration of Phase RB.2A.1 is uncertain; it may have lasted only a few years but alternatively could have spanned several decades. In broad terms all the elements of C3 fit within the broad regional tradition of Aylesford-Swarling burial (Hill *et al* 1999), and it is a relatively unexceptional example of the type.

The best preserved element of C3 was a circular ring-ditch (F.2025); this was 100% excavated and was 4.9m in diameter and up to 0.82m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.28m. There is some ambiguity about the origins of this feature; the fill of the ring-ditch contained some prehistoric pottery and a Trinovantian/Catuvellani coin (sf.769), which was recovered during pre-excavation metal detecting. Whilst this can not directly associated with any burials and is earlier than the apparent primary burial it seems improbable that its location is purely coincidental. Located centrally within the ring-ditch was a heavily truncated cremation (F.910). The ring-ditch contained some pottery later than 100AD indicating that it was still partly open in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, although a low central mound probably survived for considerably longer and the silted up ditch continued as a focus for burial with a later cremation (F.824) and inhumation (F.2036).

Located *c.* 3.7m to the northwest of the ring-ditch was a penannular ditch (F.2088), this was 100% excavated although its southeastern portion had been removed by later features, and was *c.* 3.6m in diameter with the opening facing to the northeast. It was less substantial than the ring-ditch; up to 0.29m wide, it had a maximum surviving depth of 0.11m. The terminals of the penannular ditch appear to have been elaborated with two postholes (F.2085 and

F.2089), located outside the entrance. Inside the penannular ditch there was an undated posthole (F.2084) and a cremation (F.2109). There was also a single hobnail in the general fill. The penannular ditch probably silted up even more rapidly than the ring-ditch, although again a low central mound may have survived. In common with the ring-ditch the penannular ditch was also a focus for later burial, with an inhumation present (F.2093).

Located c. 7.5m southwest of the ring-ditch was another cremation pit (F.1958); this was broadly circular with a diameter of c. 2.05–2.1m and a maximum surviving depth of 0.35m. Although no trace of a surrounding ditch survived it is conceivable that an insubstantial example could have been entirely removed. The first depositional act was the placement of some articulated sheep ribs ([5426]), which lay under the pots. Then four pots were all broadly similar in character and identifying the cremation ‘container’ is problematic. Only 109g of cremated bone was recovered; of this 38g came from the general fill of the pit and no individual pot contained more than this (weights 1g, 17g, 19g, 34g). Osteological analysis will be needed to clarify the nature and structuring of this burial. The final burial associated with the initial phase of C3 was a heavily truncated cremation (F.2005) located 15m to the northeast of the ring-ditch. Again although no trace of a surrounding ditch survived it is conceivable that an insubstantial example could have been entirely removed.

Given the scale of later features in this area and the extent that ploughing had truncated some of the cremations it is eminently plausible that further examples once existed and have left no archaeological traces. It is possible that a small number of isolated pits and postholes that are either unphased or assigned to later phases may be contemporary with this phase; however there are no specific instances where a compelling case can be made for this.

#### *Phase RB.2A.2: Initial ditched enclosure system (mid/late 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)*

Probably following on immediately from an earlier cemetery (Phase RB.2A.1) the area was sub-divided by a series of ditched enclosures. This system was created in the period c. 50–80AD, as a significant transition occurred at RB.2B some time soon after c. 70AD it is plausible that the two events are contemporary.

Whilst the most substantial of the enclosures of this phase (Enc.2A.1) is relatively well defined the others (Enc.2A.2) are less clear, in large part because of their overlap with the subsequent enclosure system (Phase RB.2A.3). Enclosure 2A.1 runs along the northern side of Way 3 and had an entranceway connecting it to Way 3. There appears to have been another enclosed area to the northwest of Enclosure 2A.1, this in turn had one or more enclosed areas to its northeast effectively creating an L-shaped pattern (Enc.2A.2). This form provides support for the idea that a routeway (Way 4) existed to the northwest. Some rather ephemeral ditches and other features to the northeast of Enclosure 2A.1 suggest the possibility of some form of trackway running beside it. Although a number of internal features were identified within the enclosures these do not form a coherent pattern and there is no clear evidence for occupation or particular activities taking place. No wells were present within the enclosures, indicating that water was probably obtained from a well located within Way 3.

Although certainty is impossible it is likely that some burials in the ditches of the earlier cemetery (Phase RB.2A.1) date to this phase, although it is possible that they are later (Phase RB.2A.3). The circular ring-ditch (F.2025) contained a cremation (F.824) and the inhumation of a child (F.2036), while the penannular ring-ditch (F.2088) contained another inhumation of a child (F.2093).

The ditched enclosure system of Phase RB.2A.2 was substantially modified (Phase RB.2A.3) at some point c. 120–50 AD, having lasted for c. 40–100 years. Given the relative paucity of evidence it is unlikely to have functioned as an independent settlement; one possibility is that it operated in conjunction with RB.2B although even in conjunction they lack a clear focus of occupation/activity. One possibility is that the most substantial enclosure (Enc.2A.1) acted as a stockyard with the other less substantial enclosures fulfilling other agricultural roles.

#### *Enclosure 2A.1*

Enclosure 2A.1 is broadly rectangular with an internal extent of c. 57m by 35m covering 1500sqm. The main ditch for Enclosure 2A.1 (F.1855, 1873, 1883, 1901, 1953, 1984, 2016, 2133) showed no sign of any re-cuts and was up to 2.3m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.8m. There were also several features interpreted as earlier quarry pits on the line of the enclosure ditch (F.1871, 1874, 1987), these probably represent elements of the initial construction of the enclosure. An entranceway on the southeastern side of the enclosure consisted of a series of inter-cutting pits and short lengths of ditch (F.1906–10, 1970–73, 1983). The entrance was c. 4.2m wide; despite the associated features there is no evidence to indicate the existence of an above ground structure.

There were a number of internal features within Enclosure 2A.1, these were all relatively shallow and none displayed any particularly interesting characteristics. These consisted of a ditch that may represent some form of sub-division (F.1880), four postholes (F.1857, 1865, 1866, 1892), nine pits (F.1889, 1891, 1897–98, 1925, 1954–57) and some curving irregular linear features that are probably wagon/cart ruts (F.1911–12, 1926). A possible trackway along the northeastern side of Enclosure 2A.1 is indicated by some shallow ditches (F.1882, 1916, 1921–22) plus some pits (F.1875–76) and a posthole (F.1870).

#### *Enclosure 2A.2*

The other less well-preserved ditches probably represent two to four enclosures extending for c. 93m by 48m covering c. 4200sqm. The ditches for these are generally much narrower and shallower than those of Enclosure 2A.1; they are up to 0.9m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.6m (ditches F.1534, 1549, 1756, 1951, 1968–69, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2024, 2027, 2034–35, 2040, 2052, 2055, 2062–63, 2072, 2076). The ditches of these enclosures were relatively insubstantial at up to 0.98m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.60m.

There were a number of internal features within these enclosures, as with Enclosure 2A.1 these were all relatively shallow and none displayed any particularly interesting characteristics. These consisted of three postholes (F.1894–95, 1905) and nine pits (F.1854, 1893, 1896, 1904, 1914, 1917–18, 1952, 2031).

Several secondary burials located within Enclosure 2A.2 and closely associated with the earlier cemetery (Phase RB.2A.1) probably relate to this phase, although there is no dateable material associated with them and they could conceivably be later. The burials consist of one cremation (F.824) and two inhumations of young individuals (F.2036, 2093; Table 5).

#### *Phase RB.2A.3: Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD)*

At some point c. 120–50 AD the ditched enclosure system of Phase RB.2A.2 was substantially altered and expanded. Although the alignment of the enclosure system and some of the boundaries remained the same the overall pattern was markedly different. The enclosure system covered c. 93m by at least 155m covering 13,700sqm, although a substantial proportion of this lay



outside the area of excavation. This was the most archaeologically visible phase of activity at this site and it was part of this that was recognised in the evaluation phase as a rectilinear network of ditches with four enclosures (Evans and Newman 2010). The overall enclosure can be divided into four zones; a large enclosure to the east (Enc.2A.3), a well defined central strip of three square enclosures (Enc.2A.4–6) and a less well defined western strip of enclosure(s) (Enc. 2A.7) and an area to the north (Enc.2A.8).

The large eastern enclosure (Enc.2A.3) was accessed by an entrance on its eastern side and was largely devoid of internal features, suggesting that it probably functioned as a stockyard. The three smaller enclosures immediately to the west (Enc.2A.4–6) are likely to have fulfilled specialised agricultural roles, although the nature of these is uncertain. The western enclosure (Enc.2A.7) was probably a farm of some kind, and it is notable that the ditch(es) dividing it from the enclosures to the east is markedly wider and deeper than the others of Phase RB.2A.3. The lack of a pronounced slope in the base of the ditch makes it unlikely that this greater scale relates principally to drainage, but it would have made it a much more formidable barrier to livestock. The internal sub-divisions within Enclosure 2A.7 suggest the presence of buildings, although direct evidence for these is lacking.

Although four wells are present (RB Wells 13–16) they are unlikely to have all been created at the same point in time and two went out of use before the end of this phase (RB Wells 13 and 16). Despite this it is difficult to conceive of credible scenarios where less than three wells were in existence at some points in time, suggesting a considerable level of water provision. A partially lined pit (F.1997) indicates that some of this water was for specialised non-domestic purposes. Although this enclosure system maintained the same alignments as the earlier system (Phase RB.2A.2) there appears to have been a shift in emphasis. Whereas the most significant of the earlier enclosures (Enc.2A.1) had been accessed from Way 3 to the southwest, the most significant – or at least utilised – enclosure of this phase (Enc.2A.7) fronted onto Way 4 to the northwest and the largest enclosure (Enc.2A.3) was accessed from what appear to have been open fields to the southeast.

The re-use of building stone in the construction of RB Well 16 and tesserae plus tile in pit F.1997, combined with a general scatter of tile and other material in a range of features indicates the demolition or substantial modification of a major Romano-British building in the general vicinity c. 200–50AD.

This enclosure system certainly survived until after 250AD, and probably until c. 280–300AD with no major changes or modifications indicating that it was in existence for c. 100–170 years. This demonstrates a considerable level of continuity, spanning several generations.

#### *Enclosure 2A.3*

The boundaries that relate to Enclosure 2A.3 include those that relate solely to this enclosure (F.1856, 1861, 1877–78, 1881, 1884, plus F.2125 and 11 in the trenches beyond the limit of excavation), plus those it shares with other enclosures (F.1932, 1986, 1990, 2009, 2019–20, 2030, 2032, 2054, plus pits F.2045–46 which appear to be related to the enclosure ditch). The ditches of this enclosure varied considerable, with its northwestern and southeastern sides being

markedly wider than its southwestern side. The ditches were up to 2.8m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.45m. Enclosure 2A.3 was 53–67m wide (the variation due largely to it being ‘stepped’ on its western side) and 100m+ long, with the evidence from the trenches to the north of the area indicating that it is 140m+ long. It covers at least 5100sqm, but its true size is likely to be over 10,000sqm.

There was a 4.6m wide entrance on its eastern side. Internal features within Enclosure 2A.3 were sparse and consist of a single nondescript pit (F.1879) and a tree throw (F.1913). Even if the un-phased features belong to this phase and some assigned to Phase RB.2A.2 were re-dated the enclosure would still remain largely empty.

#### *Enclosure 2A.4–6*

Ditches that relate to Enclosure 2A.4–6 include those that relate solely to these enclosures (F.1979–80, 2014–15, 2028–29, 2041–42, 2049, 2051, 2053, 2061, plus pit F.2050 marking a corner), those that are shared with Enclosure 2A.3 to the east (F.1932, 1986, 2009, 2030, 2032, 2054) and those that are shared with Enclosure 2A.7 to the west (F.1992–94, 2017, 2037–38, 2043, 2057, 2059–60, 2065–67, 2094, 2110, plus pits F.2039, 2095–96 marking junctions). The ditches varied considerably in size and were up to 2.6m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.74m.

Enclosure 2A.4 had internal dimensions of 33m by 26m and an extent of 790sqm, there were no internal features that could definitely be assigned to this enclosure. Enclosure 2A.5 had internal dimensions of 31m by 24m (660sqm); features within the enclosure consisted of seven pits which form a cluster that was partially investigated during the evaluation (F.1920, 1933–34, 1936, 1941, 1949–50), a ditch (F.1940) and what is probably a wagon/cart rut (F.1937). There was also an inhumation (F.1935) and a disturbed area with human bone (F.1931), which may indicate the location of a second inhumation. Enclosure 2A.6 had internal dimensions of 29m by 22m and an extent of 490sqm; the only associated feature was a pit (F.2081).

#### *Enclosure 2A.7*

The boundaries that relate to Enclosure 2A.7 include those that relate solely to this enclosure (F.1521, 1566, 1579, 1650, 1733–34, 2064) and those that are shared with Enclosure 2A.3–6 to the east (F.1990, 1992–94, 2017, 2019–20, 2037–38, 2043, 2057, 2059–60, 2065–67, 2094, 2110, plus pits F.2039, 2045–46, 2095–96). The ditches varied considerably in size and were up to 2.6m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.74m. The enclosure is 70m+ long and 16–34m wide, covering 1775sqm.

There were numerous internal features within Enclosure 2A.7. These consisted of a number of ditches within the enclosure (F.1560, 1600–01, 1675, 1679, 1717, 1753, 1772–73, 1945, 1965, 1995, 2003, 2007–08, 2071, 2073–74). It is conceivable that Enclosure 2A.7 was in fact several separate enclosures, but the pattern is not coherent enough to convincingly identify these. There were also a number of isolated features, including five pits (F.1602, 1695, 1715, 2004, 2080) and four postholes (F.1716, 1966–67, 2075). In the southeast corner of Enclosure 2A.7 there was a distinct cluster of features; these appear to be associated with RB Well 13 and are within a small sub-enclosure defined by a ditch (F.2011). In addition to six pits that lacked any particular distinguishing features (F.1996, 1998–2000, 2012, 2026) there was a partially lined pit (F.1997). The partly lined pit is a steep almost vertical sided sub-rectangular feature 0.90m by over 0.84m in extent with a surviving depth of 1.2m. There was c. 0.08m thick clay lining across the base of the pit that extended up the lower c. 0.15m of the sides. Pressed into the clay lining the base were a number of tile fragments (26 pieces weighing c. 9kg) and tesserae (34 weighing 546g). The tesserae were predominantly of limestone and had evidence of two earlier phases of use prior to their employment in the pit. The function of this partially lined pit is unclear, given its proximity to RB Well 13 and its clay lining then it is likely that it held water. The tile and tesserae lining would have provided a markedly less easily damaged/disturbed base than clay alone.

Of the four wells belonging to this phase, three are located on the boundary between Enclosure 2A.3–6 and Enclosure 2A.7 (RB Wells 13–14, 16), with a fourth (RB Well 15) located just to the west of this line within Enclosure 2A.7. There are indications that all four wells

were principally orientated towards Enclosure 2A.7, but they may well also have been accessible from Enclosures 2A.3–6.

RB Well 13 (F.2058) is a broadly circular feature *c.* 5.1m in diameter, with a surviving depth of 2.16m. Although indications of the shaft survived no trace of the actual lining was present. The evidence is slightly ambivalent, but on balance the well was probably box-lined. There is no dateable material directly associated with the construction of the well, but on stratigraphic grounds it cannot be earlier than *c.* 120AD. Pottery probably associated with the use or initial backfilling of the well dates to 100–200AD, but this may well be residual. There was a notable concentration of pits and other features immediately to the northwest of this RB Well 13; these appear to be located within a small sub-enclosure defined by a ditch (F.2011). It is likely that some of these are functionally linked to the well. The most notable of these was a sub-circular pit with a lining of tile fragments and tesserae in clay (F.1997). There was good insect preservation from the backfilling of the well shaft.

RB Well 14 (F.2023) is a large broadly circular pit *c.* 4.4m in diameter, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.67m. Although indications of the shaft survived no trace of the actual lining was present. This well was probably box-lined. No dateable material could be directly associated with the construction of this well, however on stratigraphic grounds it must be later than *c.* 150AD. Some pottery that may be associated with the use of the well is no earlier than 250AD, material from the backfilling of the well shaft includes pottery that was no earlier than 300AD, two coins issued in 330–40AD and one issued in 337–40AD.

RB Well 15 (F.2056) lay within a sub-circular construction cut 4.2 by 4.0m in extent, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.7m. Located in the northwestern part of the well was the lower portion of a square box-lined well that was 1.25m in extent. This was constructed from four oak uprights with on-edge horizontal oak boards running between them and horizontal ash poles that held the uprights in position during construction. This lining was constructed from a single tree and it may prove possible to date its felling through dendrochronology. There was no pottery associated with the construction of this well, but stratigraphically it cannot be earlier than *c.* 200AD. Deposits associated with the use of the well contained pottery of 150–300, 150–400 and 200–400AD. The initial backfilling of the well contained pottery of 150–400, 200–400, 250–400 and 300–400AD, plus leather of the later 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. This indicates that the well was in use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and backfilled in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Two leather adult shoes, one of one piece construction the other of nailed construction, were recovered from the backfilling of the well shaft. Also in the backfilling of the well shaft there was good waterlogged preservation of plant remains, pollen and insects.

RB Well 16 (F.2044) is a roughly circular feature 5.4m by 5.3m in extent, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.96m. Although no trace of a lining proper survived the well was probably box lined. There were some large pieces of stone in the base of the well, these appear to have been placed there solely to provide firm/dry footing during construction. Whilst some of the stone is simply large un-worked cobbles, which could have been obtained from the local gravels, others are faced and shaped blocks that must be reused from a substantial stone structure. There were also two *in situ* upright round-wood stakes, these appear to be linked to the placement of the stones in the base of the well. Pottery associated with the construction of the well is dated to 200–400AD, whilst pottery that relates to the initial backfilling of the well dates to 200–300AD. Some material that probably represents the later infilling of a relict hollow after the well had gone out of use dates to 300–400AD. A good assemblage of insect remains was recovered from the backfilling.

#### *Enclosure 2A.8*

A number of ditches from trenches to the north of the excavated areas appear to relate to the Phase RB.2A.3 network, but can not be linked to particular enclosures. These have been designated Enclosure 2A.8, however they may represent more than one enclosure. Associated features include ditches F.128, 134–36, 2112 and 2114–15, 2123, plus pit F.2113.



Figure 6. Site RB2A: Phase plans for RB2A.1-4



#### *Phase RB.2A.4: contracted ditched enclosure system (late 3<sup>rd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AD)*

In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century the focus of activity contracted solely to Enclosure 2A.7. Although a small amount of 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery and a coin were found elsewhere this appears to represent material trapped in relict hollows and tree throws. The ditches of Enclosure 2A.7 were still extant, but much reduced in both width and depth compared to Phase RB.2A.3. Two wells continued into this phase (RB Wells 14–15), indicating a considerable water supply given the reduced scale of activity. One possibility is that the role of Enclosure 2A.7 and its associated wells was to provide water for use at RB.2C.

The final cessation of activity probably dates to the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, none of the pottery need be later than this date and the latest coin was issued in 355–61. Overall a date for the end of activity of c. 360–70 appears likely. As the wells both appear to have been deliberately backfilled this indicates a degree of continuing care rather than straightforward abandonment, perhaps suggesting that the area of the enclosure passed directly into agricultural usage. The environmental evidence from the backfilling of RB Well 15 also presents a picture of broad landscape continuity, rather than decline and abandonment.

#### *Unphased*

A six-poster building (RB Str. 03) and a number of isolated discrete features including pits (12; F.1872, 1890, 1928–29, 1924, 1942, 1944, 1946, 1985, 1988, 2069–70) and postholes (13; F.1885, 1902, 1915, 1919, 1927, 1930, 1938–39, 1943, 1947, 1959, 2048, 2077) can not be assigned to a particular phase. RB Str. 03 is probably a six-poster – with one posthole not surviving – 5.95m by 2.7m in extent consisting of postholes F.1960–64, which are 0.25–0.17m in diameter with surviving depths of 0.15–0.09m. There was no dateable material from any of the postholes and this structure is assigned to the Romano-British period purely because of its proximity to definitely Romano-British features. There is no nearby prehistoric activity, the closest identified being Prehistoric Settlement 3 c. 62m away.

#### *Material Culture and Environmental Evidence*

In general only low densities of material culture were recovered from individual features at RB.2A, producing low to medium sized overall assemblages. This was the only Romano-British settlement where no dense pottery deposits were identified. The pottery and other material associated with cremations is important, apart from that there are few individually noteworthy finds although a copper alloy disc brooch (F.2043) and a lead steelyard weight (F.1856) were recovered. The building materials recovered (tile, tesserae, stone) relate solely to re-use for a range of secondary functions and are therefore of limited interpretive value at a site-specific level. Similarly some of the material, such as the iron slag and coins that were used to manufacture copies, appear to represent ‘overspill’ of material whose principal concentration is found at RB.2C.

Although the bulk of the environmental samples from RB.2A contained only low densities of charred material, samples from several well fills produced well-preserved waterlogged plant remains, pollen and insects that permit

detailed environmental reconstruction. Additionally the preserved timbers from one of the wells provides valuable information about woodworking, *etc.*

Feature	Phase	Cut	Bone weight (g)	Cremation container	Dish 'lid'	Secondary vessels	Additional items	Comments
824	2A.2	Not identifiable	24	[2295] White-slipped closed vessel 70–200AD	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Secondary burial in ring-ditch F.2025. Heavily truncated. Ring-ditch indicated sate of 100AD+
910	2A.1	Not identifiable	201	[2609] Black-slipped medium sized jar, 50–150AD	Unknown	Unknown	Copper-alloy rosette brooch [2623]	Heavily truncated, in centre of ring-ditch
1958	2A.1	Circular, c. 2.05–2.1m, 0.35m+ deep	109	[5870] Grog-tempered beaker 40–70AD [5872] QG1 beaker 40–100AD [5874] QG1 beaker 40–70AD [5876] QG1 beaker 40–70AD	–	[5870] CSGW beaker 40–70AD	Iron disc [5868], sheep ribs [5426]	Largely intact
2005	2A.1	Not identifiable	569	[5988] Q4 butt-beaker 30–70AD	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Heavily truncated
2109	2A.1	Ovoid, 0.81–0.72m, 0.23m+ deep	1098	[7356] Buff sandy butt beaker 30–70AD	–	[7357] Q1 small jar 50–100AD [7357] Coarse sandy greyware flagon 50–100AD [7358] Coarse sandy greyware closed vessel 50–100AD [7359] Fine sandy micaceous greyware butt beaker 40–80AD	Single hobnail, possibly an incidental inclusion	Truncated, in centre of penannular ditch

**Table 4:** Cremations from RB.2A.

Feature	Phase	Cut dimensions	Skeleton	Orient.	Coffin	Hobnails	Grave goods	Dating evidence	Comment
1931	2A.3	Unk.	[5811]	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	150AD+	Heavily disturbed, status uncertain
1935	2A.3	1.9m by 0.6m, 0.25m+ deep	[5824]	NW-SE	–	[5825]	–	60AD+	Aligned to Enc.2A.5, skull removed by ploughing, possible pillow stone
2036	2A.3	0.61m by 0.35m, 0.20m+ deep	[7045]	SW-NE	–	–	–	100AD+ (from ring-ditch)	Secondary burial in ring-ditch F.2025
2093	2A.3	0.71m by 0.41m, 0.05m+ deep	[7298]	NE-SW	–	–	–	–	Secondary burial in penannular ditch F.2088. Heavily truncated

**Table 5:** Inhumations from RB.2A.

### *Summary*

RB.2A consists of a short-lived mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD cremation cemetery (Phase RB.2A.1), which was succeeded by a ditched enclosure system that was probably utilised as stockyards and for other agricultural roles (Phase RB.2A.2). This enclosure system was modified and expanded in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Phase RB.2A.3), although still largely utilised as stockyards and for other agricultural roles the presence of four wells and a partly lined pit indicates that other activities were taking place. In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century the enclosed area contracted, although the majority of the wells continued in use until the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century (Phase RB.2A.4). As enclosures were abandoned during the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries the areas they formerly occupied appear to have passed directly into agricultural usage.

### **RB.2B**

RB.2B is the most southeasterly of the four spatial elements that constitute RB.2, located to the southwest of Way 3. The area of the settlement was completely investigated, although its northeastern portion had been severely affected by Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying. The area was broadly triangular in form and covered up to c. 147m northwest to southeast and 112m southwest to northeast, covering 12,000sqm. There is some Prehistoric activity in this area (Ring-ditches 1–2 plus cemetery C4), whilst this substantially predates the Romano-British period it is possible that low mounds associated with the ring-ditches still survived as features in the landscape. The settlement was located primarily upon gravel geology, with clay along its western side. The site is largely relatively flat lying at 22.10–23.60m OD, with its western edge located on edge of a slope leading downwards to the west. The sequence at RB.2B can be divided into two phases:

- Phase RB.2B.1: initial ditched enclosure system (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century BC–mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)
- Phase RB.2B.2: modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).

*Phase RB.2B.1: Initial ditched enclosure system (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century BC–mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)*

The earliest phase of activity at RB.2B covers a broadly triangular area *c.* 73m northwest to southeast and 98m southwest to northeast, covering 4100sqm. There were two enclosures; a triangular 'inner' enclosure at the northern apex (Enc.2B.1) and an 'outer' enclosure to the south and east of this covering the rest of the area (Enc.2B.2). There are stratigraphic hints that Enclosure 2B.1 may have been established prior to Enclosure 2B.2, this is also supported somewhat by the distribution of pottery dated to *c.* 50BC–50AD but is nonetheless uncertain and may simply reflect the nature of later re-cutting episodes. The origins of this settlement is unclear, although there are no features that can be dated to earlier than the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD there is a quantity of pottery of *c.* 50BC–50AD, indicating that the ditched enclosure system originated at some point during this period. The overall pattern suggests the presence of at least two roundhouses, which have left no direct archaeological evidence. There were no wells located within the site, however water was probably obtained from RB Well 17 located nearby but assigned to Way 3. The ditches on the western side of the site were markedly deeper and are likely to have usually been filled with a considerable depth of standing water.

The presence of disarticulated human bone in the enclosure ditches indicates that some form of disposal of the dead, such as excarnation, took place. It is also possible that the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century cremation cemetery to the northeast (phase RB.2A.1) may be linked to the inhabitants of RB.2B.

The ceramic evidence – plus the complete lack of coins – suggests that the initial ditched enclosure system went out of use some time soon after *c.* 70AD, having been in existence for *c.* 30–120 years. This transition appears to have involved the deposition of several moderately sized groups of pottery in the enclosure ditches (F.1809?1810, plus F.1731, 1688 and 1765). As the establishment of the ditched enclosure at RB.2A (Phase RB.2A.2) dates to *c.* 50–80AD it is conceivable that the two events are contemporary.

#### *Enclosure 2B.1*

Enclosure 2B.1 is broadly triangular, with a maximum internal extent of *c.* 57m by 35m covering 1050sqm. The main ditch for Enclosure 2B.1 appeared to have two distinct phases, but as the later recut was more substantial than the primary phase traces of the earlier phase were highly fragmentary (F.1697, 1706, 1720–21, 1729, 1748, 1782–84, 1818, 1823, 1887–88). The later, better preserved, phase was up to 2.85m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.2m. There were also some pits that are probably elements of the digging of the ditches (F.1858, 1886). To the west and north of the main enclosure ditch there was a smaller outer ditch located *c.* 2.7m away (F.1744, 1765, 1832), this was up to 1.35m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.76m. It appears likely that Enclosure 2B.1 contained a roundhouse, direct evidence for this is lacking and there were few surviving internal features within Enclosure 2B.1. These included some relatively slight ditches (F.1688, 1696, 1714, 1737), plus a single pit (F.1738) and a posthole (F.1705).

## *Enclosure 2B.2*

Enclosure 2B.2 is broadly triangular – with its northern apex effectively ‘removed’ by Enclosure 2B.1 – with a maximum internal extent of c. 98m by 73m, covering c. 3000sqm. The ditches (F.1142, 1574, 1593, 1598, 1645, 1731, 1809–11, 1818, 1853; plus related pit F.1646) are up to 3.15m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.35m. Lying within Enclosure 2B.2 was a broadly oval sub-enclosure c. 30m by 18m in extent, this clearly had at least two phases and the ditches were up to 1.7m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 0.6m (F.1648–49, 1662–63, 1673–74, 1682, 1689–90, 1692, 1698; plus related pits F.1745–46). This sub-enclosure probably contained a roundhouse, direct evidence for this is lacking and the only surviving internal features within the sub-enclosure were three relatively nondescript pits (F.1664, 1693, 1699). Internal features within the rest of Enclosure 2B.2 include a number of narrow and shallow ditches that do not form any coherent pattern (F.1594, 1641, 1672, 1681, 1727, 1730, 1732, 1741), 20 relatively nondescript pits (F.1621, 1624–26, 1635, 1640, 1642, 1647, 1653–61, 1707, 1719, 1747, 1808) and three postholes (F.1728, 1859–60).

## *Phase RB.2B.2: Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 1<sup>st</sup> century–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)*

Some time soon after c. 70AD the ditched enclosure system went through a major modification. The area that had been enclosed previously (Phase RB.2B.1) shows little further evidence of activity, although it is likely that relict banks associated with at least some of the earlier ditches survived meaning that the two earlier enclosures (Enc.2A.1–2) continued to exist in some manner. New rectangular ditched enclosures were established to the southeast of the previous area running up to Way 3; the larger (Enc.2B.3) immediately adjacent to the earlier area of activity was c. 49m wide by up to 15m long with minor internal ditches indicating that it was accessed from the previous area of enclosure to the north (Enc.2A.2). Attached to the southeastern side of Enclosure 2B.3 was a smaller enclosure (Enc.2B.4), this was up to c. 59m long by 15m wide and was accessed from the southeast. Although Enclosure 2B.4 encroached upon the ditches of Prehistoric Ring-ditches 1 and 2. it is plausible that there may still have been low remnant mounds that were respected. As in the preceding phase there was no well present within the site, again was probably obtained from RB Well 17 and subsequently RB Well 18 located nearby but assigned to Way 3.

At some point Enclosure 2B.3 was expanded to c. 59m, this involved incorporating what had previously been part of Enclosure 2B.4. It appears that Enclosure 2B.4 continued to exist, but was reduced to a width of only c. 13.5m. This would still have potentially respected any been low remnant mounds of Prehistoric Ring-ditches 1 and 2.

There were few internal features within the enclosures and only low quantities of pottery and other material were recovered. The evidence of Phase RB.2B.2 could well relate solely to stockyards and other agriculture enclosures, potentially being farmed from RB.2B.A. The Phase RB.2B.2 enclosure system is poorly dated due to a low density of material; there is some pottery of 150AD+ but no categorically 3<sup>rd</sup> century material, and no coins were recovered. This suggests that the ditched enclosure system ended c. 150–200AD, having been in existence for c. 70–130 years. In the mid 2<sup>nd</sup>

century AD the northern c. 18m of the apex of Enclosure 2A.1 was truncated, becoming part of RB.2C.

It is unclear whether after c. 200AD there were any surviving relict banks within RB.2B, or if these had been entirely removed by a combination of natural processes and agricultural activities.

#### *Enclosure 2B.1–2*

None of the major cut features associated with Enclosure 2B.1–2 appears to have continued into Phase RB.2B.2. It is, however, likely that some of the banks associated with the more substantial ditches were still extant. Determining which ditches this applies to is problematic, but a tentative list can be suggested (F.1574, 1645, 1697, 1720, 1729, 1731, 1748, 1809–11, 1818, 1823, 1887). Possibly related to these relict banks some pits were dug near the northern apex of Enclosure 2B.1 (F.1785–86), perhaps marking it in some manner. There was also a pit at the southern edge of Enclosure 2B.2 (F.1634).

#### *Enclosure 2B.3*

Enclosure 2B.3 was initially c. 49m wide by up to 115m long (4600sqm), the ditches are up to 2.35m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.76m with no evidence for any re-cuts (F.1394–97, 1398, 1430–31, 1488, 1639, 1791, 1813–14). There were also some pits along the line of the ditches that appear to relate to their construction (F.1411, 1487, 1498–1500, 1506–07). Within the enclosure some small ditches appear to delineate a c. 26m wide routeway within the enclosure (F.1545, 1586). Enclosure 2B.3 was subsequently extended becoming c. 59m wide (6500sqm; ditches F.1388, 1394, 1420, 1426).

The internal features were relatively nondescript and consisted of 17 pits – some in clusters – plus three postholes (pits F.1399, 1547, 1568–70, 1573, 1587, 1590–92, 1597, 1603–05, 1617, 1623, 1644; postholes F.1422, 1565, 1749).

#### *Enclosure 2B.4*

Enclosure RB.2B.4 was c. 59m long by 15m wide (2050sqm) and was accessed through a c. 45m wide gap to the southeast. The ditches for these are up to 1.0m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.35m with no evidence for any re-cuts (F.1384, 1389, 1392, 1423, 1427, 1535). No internal features were present within Enclosure RB.2B.4, although it is conceivable that low remnant mounds from Prehistoric Ring-ditches 1–2 still survived.

#### *Unphased*

The only un-phased features present within RB.2B were two postholes (F.1571, 1589).

#### *Material Culture and Environmental Evidence*

In general only low densities of material culture were recovered from individual features, although several moderately sized assemblage of pottery were recovered, with RB.2B producing low to medium overall assemblages. The bulk of the environmental samples from RB.2B contained only low densities of charred material samples and no deposits with good waterlogged preservation were encountered.

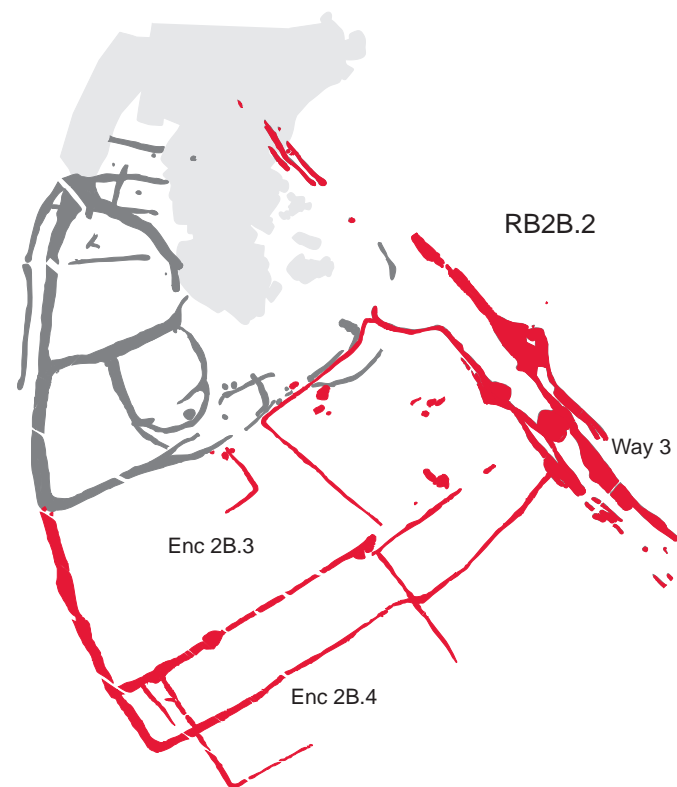
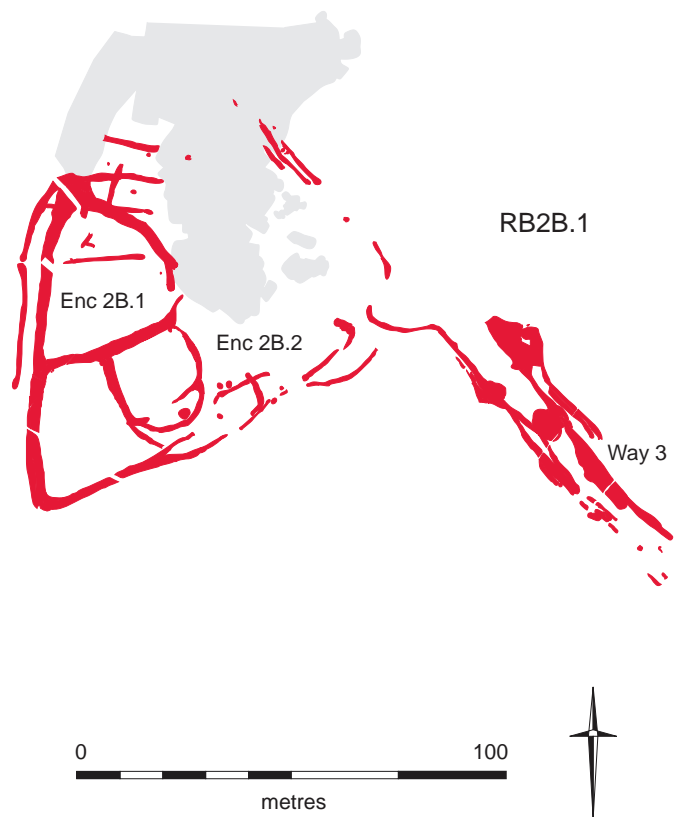


Figure 7. Site RB2B: Phase plans for RB2B.1-2



## *Summary*

RB.2B is the only site investigated that indicates Latest Iron Age (50BC–100AD) settlement securely pre-dating the Roman conquest of the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. There appears to have been a small farmstead with a ditched enclosure system (Phase RB.2B.1) that lasted for c. 30–120 years which ended soon after c. 70AD. The ditched enclosure system was then modified and expanded (Phase RB.2B.2), this transition appears to have been marked by the discard of several groups of ceramics and it appears that the site was entirely given over to stockyards and other agriculture enclosures with no occupation proper. This transition is also noticeable for the shift from curvilinear (Phase RB.2B.1) to rectilinear (Phase RB.2B.2) enclosure forms. This enclosure system was modified once, but went out of use after c. 70–130 years in the mid–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. As activity in the vicinity continued until the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century (at RB.2A and RB.2C) this means that for the final c. 150–200 years of the overall sequence of Romano-British activity RB.2B had ceased to be a distinct place.

## **RB.2C**

RB.2C is the central portion of the western side of the four spatial elements that constitute RB.2. The main investigated area spanned up to c. 193m northwest to southeast by c. 107m southwest to northeast, covering 18,000sqm. The edges of the settlement were well defined, apart from on its northeastern side where there was an area of intensive Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying. The settlement was located upon both gravel and clay geology, with a distinct downwards slope from east-northeast to west-southwest lying at 18.10–23.20m OD. The sequence at RB.2C consists of three phases:

- Phase RB.2C.1: limited pre-settlement activity (mid 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century)
- Phase RB.2C.2: initial ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–mid 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries)
- Phase RB.2C.3: modified and contracted ditched enclosure system (mid 3<sup>rd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> centuries).

### *Phase RB.2C.1: Limited pre-settlement activity (mid 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century)*

By the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD RB.2C had been effectively defined as an area by default; with RB.2D to the north, RB.2B to the southeast and the double-ditched boundary to the west. The area is largely devoid of archaeological features, with just a single pit (F.1082) and two tree-throws (F.976, 1496). A potin coin from the area (sf.121) appears to be an isolated find. There is some pottery that predates 150AD from this area, the only apparent concentration of material – albeit a relatively low one – appears to relate to the double-ditched boundary.

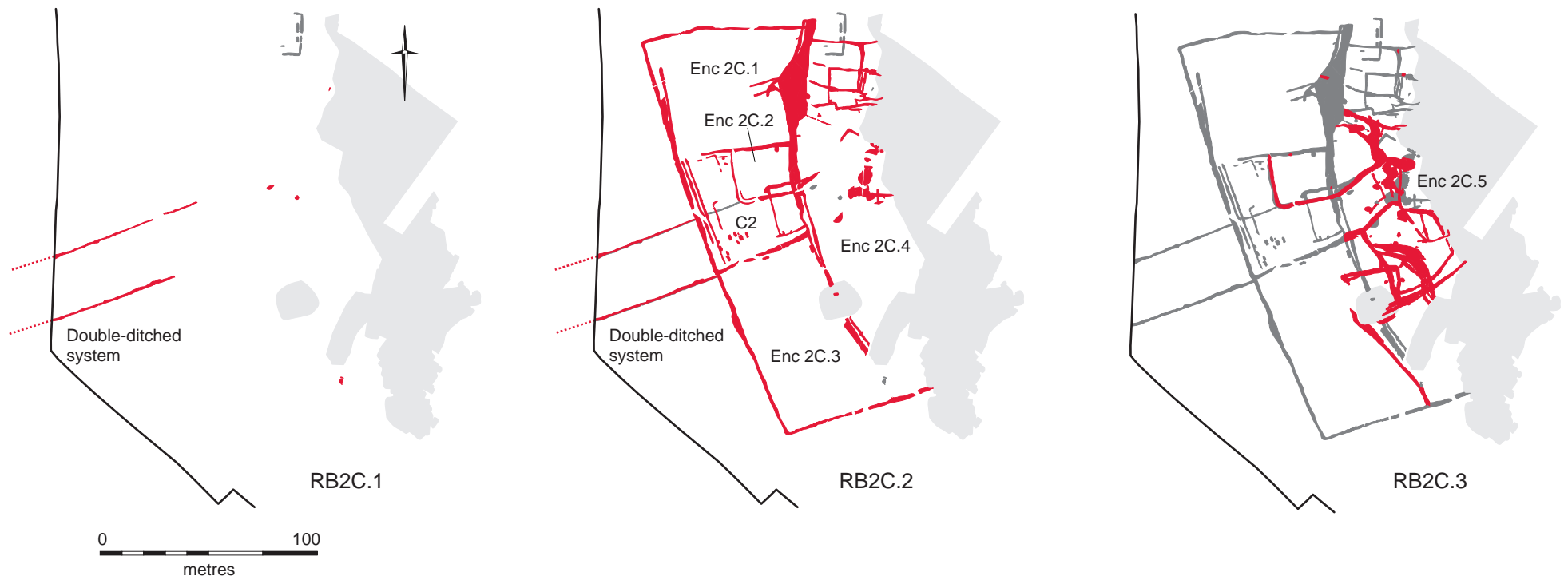


Figure 8. Site RB2C: Phase plans RB2C.1-3

*Phase RB.2C.2 Initial ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–mid 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries)*

The area was enclosed in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century, although this event can not be closely dated directly by evidence from RB.2C there is strong evidence that it corresponds to – or slightly post-dates – the commencement of Phase RB.2D.3 in c. 155–70AD. Overall RB.2C was a large slightly irregular rectangular area with ditches on its southeast, southwest and northwest sides. Due to Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying there is no direct evidence regarding the northeastern boundary. Of particular note is the kinked and stepped form of the northwestern boundary, which indicates a form of primacy to RB.2D. It is also noteworthy that the southern boundary of RB.2C incorporated what had previously been the northernmost area of RB.2B.

This overall area was divided into southwestern and northeastern halves by a multi-phase curving ditch, which is effectively a continuation of the eastern boundary of Enclosure 2D.3 to the north. In the southwestern half of RB.2C there were three well defined enclosures (Enc.2C.1–3), the situation in the northeastern half is less clear. Although zones are apparent – broadly mirroring the threefold division of the southwestern half – these lack clear delineating features and are therefore treated as a single enclosure (Enc.2C.4).

Of the three southwestern enclosures the northern (Enc.2C.1) and southern (Enc.2C.3) have little or no evidence for internal features – although the southern contained a single inhumation (F.527) – and appear to be open spaces, perhaps utilised as stockyards or for other agricultural purposes. The central enclosure (Enc.2C.2) – which is the smallest of the three and also incorporates what had previously been the end of the double-ditched boundary – has much more evidence for usage. Its southwestern side appears to have been re-established in a slightly different location on two occasions and there is evidence for the creation of two successive sub-enclosures, plus evidence for two less substantial sub-enclosures or possibly structures. There was also an inhumation cemetery in its southwest corner (C2).

The northeastern enclosure (Enc.2C.4) had three distinct zones of activity. The northern zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.1 – was intensively sub-divided by a series of small ditches, indicating intensive utilisation, and had evidence for a building (RB Str. 04). The central zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.2 – had evidence for three wells (RB Wells 07, 09–10) and a building (RB Str. 07). Finally the southern zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.3 – was largely devoid of activity. Many features on the eastern side of Enclosure 2D.4 were truncated by Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying and it is likely that the site continued to the east. Indeed it is possible that the primary focus of activity lay to the northeast.

The evidence of Phase RB.2C.2 indicates the creation of a rural agricultural settlement of some kind, with evidence for zoning and a significant water supply. It is unclear to what extent RB.2C functioned independently or if it was simply a spatial element within a larger overall settlement complex. The date for the transition to Phase RB.2C.3 is somewhat uncertain, as pottery that definitely dates to after 250AD and coins of the 260's AD and later are also not present a date of c. 240–70AD appears most likely. There is a suggestion that the very end of this period may be the most likely (see Phase RB.2D.3). This would indicate that Phase RB.2C.2 spanned c. 70–115 years.

#### *Enclosure 2C.1*

Enclosure 2C.1 is rather irregular but broadly square enclosure c. 56m northwest to southeast by c. 46–73m southwest to northeast covering 3800sqm. Its western boundary (F.807, 827–28) appears to have been re-cut up to twice along some of its length, while its northern side (F.696, 807) shows no evidence of any re-cuts. Its eastern side – which it shares with Enclosure 2C.4 – shows evidence for numerous re-cuts (F.686, 742–43, 876, 882, 941, 951–52, 985–88, 1004–09, 1011, 1043–50). The southern boundary of Enclosure 2C.1 appears to be primarily linked to Enclosure 2C.2 and shows evidence for several phases of re-cutting (F.822, 851, 882, 953).

The only identifiable internal feature within Enclosure 2C.1 was a group of relatively slight ditches on its eastern side (F.877–80, 1104, 1129) that effectively create a small semi-enclosed area c. 13.5m by 5m in extent.

#### *Enclosure 2C.2*

Enclosure 2C.2 is rather irregular but broadly square enclosure c. 44–53m northwest to southeast by c. 50m southwest to northeast covering 2600sqm. It shares its northern boundary (F.822, 846, 851, 882, 953) with Enclosure 2C.1. Its main western boundary (F.518, 525, 957) shows no sign of being re-cut, but appears to have been re-established in a slightly different location on two occasions (F.519–20). Its southern boundary – which it shares with Enclosure 2C.3 – shows no signs of any re-cuts (F.517, 957, 1151). Its eastern side – which it shares with Enclosure 2C.4 – shows evidence for numerous re-cuts (F.866, 888, 958–60, 969, 1003, 1063, 1416, 1469, 1541–43, 1548).

On the eastern side of Enclosure 2C.2 there is evidence for two successive rectangular sub-enclosures. The first (F.857, 864, 950, 1076, 1102, 1134, 1136) was c. 30m by 12m in extent. The second (F.836, 851, 881) was c. 32m by 22m in extent. There were also two potential sub-enclosures that were of lesser extent and were much slighter in form. The form of these suggests that they may relate to buildings. One was c.11m by over 2.4m in extent (F.521–22), while the other (F.821) was c. 20m by 20m in extent. In the southwestern quarter of Enclosure 2C.2 there was an inhumation cemetery, this consisted of 11 inhumations plus one possible example (Table 6). The graves are all aligned south-southeast to north-northwest, and the skeletons are extended and supine with the head to the south-southeast. Although there are what might be identified as rows of graves these are not particularly well defined. There is evidence that coffins were used in some but not all instances and the presence of hobnails indicates that some but not all the individuals were buried with shoes. Pots were relatively common as grave goods and there were also a range of iron objects. The cemetery appears to span the period c. 150–250 although it may have continued slightly after that time. Other relatively nondescript minor internal features located within Enclosure 2C.2 included a few pits (F.826, 829, 954), a tree throw (F.1137) and a short length of ditch (F.825).

Feature	Cut dimen.	Skeleton	Orient.	Coffin nails	Hob-nails	Grave goods	Dating evidence fill	Comment
076	1.83m by 0.52m	[205]	S-SE to N-NW	8	23	–	–	From evaluation
500	2.26m by 1.02m	[1202]	S-SE to N-NW	43	–	–	Pottery 150AD+	
501	1.96m by 0.60m	[1207]	S-SE to N-NW	28	45	[1206.1] copper alloy finger ring	Pottery 150AD+	
510	2.15m by 0.80m	[1216]	W-SW to E-NE	–	27	–	–	In different enclosure from others
629	2.43m by 0.75m	[1641]	S-SE to N-NW	19	2	Nene Valley colour-coated beaker [1642] between feet, 150–250AD	Pottery 100AD+	
630	2.35m by 0.55m	[1628]	S-SE to N-NW	8	56	–	Pottery 50AD+	
631	1.99m by 0.97m	[1687]	S-SE to N-NW	8	29	Colour-coated beaker [1690] 120–200AD	Pottery 50–170AD	Skull placed between feet, probably decapitated but head area removed by land drain
658	0.82m by 0.40m	None	S-SE to N-NW	–	–	Colchester colour-coated beaker [1748], 150–400AD	Pottery 50BC–50AD	Small cut with no surviving bone, could be infant or child burial with no survival.
666	2.10m by 0.90m	[1766]	S-SE to N-NW	9	20	? piece of binding	–	
848	1.80m by 0.80m	[2379]	S-SE to N-NW	2	7	Iron lumps and bar near waist	Pottery 50–100AD	
849	1.60m by 0.60m	[2491]	S-SE to N-NW	ca. 25	47	Colchester colour-coated mini bag-shaped beaker beside right tibia [2494] 150–250AD, wooden box to right of head or shoulder, linch pin and knife blade by waist	–	
856	2.15m by 1.00m	[2406]	S-SE to N-NW	12	106	Colour-coated beaker between feet [2423], 100–300AD	Pottery 50AD+	
865	2.31m by 1.30m	[2497]	S-SE to N-NW	53, probably re-used timber	54	Nene Valley colour-coated beaker [2500] by right hand/pelvis 150–300AD	Pottery 150AD+	Fragment of shale bracelet may be incidental inclusion

**Table 6:** Inhumations from RB.2C.

### *Enclosure 2C.3*

Enclosure 2C.3 is rather irregular but broadly rectangular enclosure c. 80m northwest to southeast by c. 44m southwest to northeast covering 4000sqm. It shares its northern boundary (F.517, 957, 1151) with Enclosure 2C.2. Its western boundary (F.511, 956) shows no signs of being re-cut, whereas its southern boundary (F.511–12, 1739, 2128) was re-cut at least once. Its eastern side – which it shares with End. 2C.4 – shows evidence for numerous re-cuts (F.992–93, 995, 2117–21).

There are relatively few internal features within Enclosure 2C.3. On its northern side there is a west-southwest to east-northeast aligned inhumation (F.510) and associated pit (F.527). This burial shares an alignment with the adjacent boundary ditch, which was only c. 1.35m away. The burial is located only c. 12m from the cemetery in Enclosure 2D.2, it may well simply be an outlier of this cemetery. The only other feature was a pit on the eastern side of the enclosure (F.994).

### *Enclosure 2C.4*

Enclosure 2C.4 is a rather irregular rectangular enclosure c. 183m northwest to southeast by c. 45m+ southwest to northeast covering 7800sqm. Its western boundary is shared with Enclosure 2C.1–3 and displays evidence of multiple re-cuts (for feature listings see above). Its northern boundary (F.697, 703, 937) shows sign of a single re-cut plus an associated posthole (F.704), whilst its southern boundary (F.1704, 1708, 1766) has no traces of any re-cuts. No evidence for an eastern boundary was identified, this side may have been open or alternatively the evidence may have been removed by extensive Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying.

Although there were no ditched boundaries Enclosure 2C.4 can be divided into three zones. The northern zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.1 – was intensively sub-divided by a series of relatively slight ditches into small square and rectangular sub-enclosures indicating intensive utilisation (F.761, 885–87, 901, 912–19, 921, 923, 925–26, 963, 970–71, 1000–01, 1112, 1023–24, 1032, 1105, 1113, 1128, 1133). There was also evidence for a building (RB Str. 04), this consists of two sides of a beam-slot structure 10.3m by 8.5m in extent (F.898–900, 920, 922, 924, 927, 1033, 1110–11). The beam-slots are 0.90–0.45m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.30–0.17m. There was pottery in several of the beam-slots, this material appears to relate to the point after the beam-slots had either been removed or rotted and dates to after 200AD, suggesting that the building went out of use in the 3rd century. There were also a few relatively nondescript pits (F.940, 1130–31) and postholes (F.1015, 1025, 1035).

The central zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.2 – had evidence for a building (RB Str. 07) and several wells (RB Wells 07, 09–10). It is unclear to what extent all three wells are contemporary, but there must almost certainly have been points in time when two wells were in existence. There were also some relatively slight ditches indicating that the area was sub-divided (F.1017, 1057, 1416) and three nondescript pits (F.1107, 1218, 1435).

RB Str. 07 consists of two sides of a beam-slot structure 6.7m by 5.9m in extent with a posthole at the junction of the beam-slots (F.1056, 1058, 1073). The beam-slots are 1.30–0.80m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.45–0.30m, whilst the posthole was 0.15m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 0.25m. There was pottery in both the beam-slots, this material appears to relate to the point after the beam-slots had either been removed or rotted and dates to after 200AD, suggesting that the building went out of use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

RB Well 07 (F.1364, 1221–23, 1272–73) was broadly oval 3.0m by >2.0m in extent with a maximum surviving depth of 0.85m. No trace of the original lining survives but the well was probably box-lined. Pottery from the uppermost surviving fill was dated to 150–300AD although this could relate to either the construction of the well or its backfilling. No material of note was recovered from this feature. A rather irregular vertically sided 4.5m long linear feature on the northern side of RB Well 07 (F.1272–73) may well be associated with it and could be a structural beam-slot. The pottery from this feature is not closely dateable, but some is no earlier than 150AD. Also apparently contemporary and related to the well are three

features to the north of the beam-slot interpreted as root-boles and suggestive of a short length of hedge or similar feature (F.1221–23).

RB Well 09 (F.996 plus F.1039–42 and F.1052) was broadly oval 7.55m by 5.95m in extent with a maximum surviving depth of 0.80m. No trace of the original lining survives, but the well was probably box-lined. The pottery from this feature is not closely dateable, although some is no earlier than 150AD, and the well does not appear to have continued in use beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. A series of postholes around the edge of RB Well 09 are probably part of a structure around the shaft (F.1039–41, F.1052). A shallow >3.5m linear feature to the north of the well (F.1042) may be a beam-slot of an associated structure.

RB Well 10 (F.1028 and F.1119–25) represents a complex sequence of inter-cutting features. Although excavated and recorded as seven separate features it probably represents a smaller number of actual wells – perhaps three or four – although it proved impossible to articulate these well enough for certainty. No traces of the linings of these wells survived, it is however likely that they were box-lined. As far as they can be individuated the wells appears to be broadly circular or oval and 3.5–3.0m in extent, with maximum surviving depths of up to 0.85m. None of these features contained any dateable material, however based on stratigraphy and other evidence the sequence of wells begins no earlier than c. 150AD and does not continue beyond c. 250AD.

Finally the southern zone – opposite Enclosure 2C.3 – was largely devoid of activity, with no features that can conclusively be assigned to this phase apart from a general hollow (F.1072).

#### *Phase RB.2C.3: Modified and contracted ditched enclosure system (mid 3<sup>rd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> centuries)*

Around c. 240–70AD the nature of the ditched enclosure system at RB.2C altered markedly. It is possible that this transition included the construction of RB Well 08, if this is the case then it occurred no earlier than a coin issued in 268–70AD. The enclosed area contracted noticeably and became markedly more curvilinear. There was also a marked change in the deposits associated with the settlement, these are much darker and contained greater densities of material culture than in earlier phases. As well as filling discrete features this darker material was identifiable as a localised soil horizon (F.584) and was present as ‘slumping’ in the upper portions of many earlier features. It appears if much of the site was effectively covered by a midden, or at extremely ‘dirty’ soil layer. Although some spatial distinctions are apparent there are no neat divisions into identifiable separate enclosures, as a result this is all defined as Enclosure 2C.5. Within Enclosure 2C.5 up to five zones are apparent, although delineations are not clear enough for these to be independently defined. Three wells were present within Enclosure 2C.5 (RB Wells 08, 11–12), all of which were probably contemporary with one another. Away from Enclosure 2C.5 there is some evidence for limited activity elsewhere, or at least material becoming trapped in hollows created by earlier features.

The nature of the activity at Enclosure 2C.5 is rather uncertain; indeed it represents the most intractable archaeology of the entire site and can not be disentangled to the same degree. Whilst this can in part be interpreted as a failure of analysis, it in part reflects a genuine difference in the nature of the archaeology. The failure to neatly organise the material is because it was in a sense messier than the rest of the archaeology. The existence of three contemporary wells indicates a considerable provision of water. The marked change in deposits, whilst primarily due to changes in refuse disposal



strategies, nonetheless indicates considerable levels of activity. Some of the material in these deposits – especially the considerable quantity of iron slag present – may hint at a specialised industrial role. The key issue with regard to this, however, is to what extent this material was generated at RB.2C and how much was transported from elsewhere to be deposited there. One potentially relevant factor is that it appears that the inhumation cemetery (C2) ceased to be used at the start of Phase RB.2C.3, indicating either that burial shifted to some unidentified location or a change in the nature of the site. A minimum of 28 4<sup>th</sup> century AD coins were recovered from RB.2C, the last issued in 352–53AD, and there is also no pottery from the site that need post date 350AD. Overall a date for the end of activity of c. 355–70AD appears likely.

#### *Enclosure 2C.5*

Enclosure 2C.5 is extremely irregular; its maximum dimensions are c. 183m northwest to southeast by c. 74m southwest to northeast (4500sqm). The northernmost identifiable zone of Enclosure 2C.5 spans the earlier multi-phase curving ditch (Phase RB.2D.2). To the east one of the relatively square sub-enclosures of Enclosure 2C.2 was re-cut continued in use (F.845, 847, 851, 881). To the east the southern boundary continued as a curving sinuous boundary (F.1103, 1138, 1278, 1442, 1444). The northern boundary was 'stepped' on the line of the earlier multi-phase curving ditch to widen the enclosed area (F.962, 965–66, 972, 1030, 1109). There was then evidence for subsequent multiple re-cutting of ditches, which appear to have contracted the enclosed area (F.939, 968, 973–75, 977–82, 991, 1086–87, 1095–96, 1098–99, 1149, 1154, 1189–92, 1443).

The area immediately to the south of this appears not to have possessed its own boundaries, but to be bounded to the north and south by the parallel curving sinuous ditches of other zones. This was the area of Enclosure 2D.4 where wells had been located in Phase RB.2D.2 and the presence of a well (RB Well 08) indicates a level of continuity. There were also some relatively slight ditches that crossed the area creating minor boundaries (F.1010, 1068, 1089, 1225), twelve relatively nondescript pits (F.1002, 1065, 1067, 1088, 1101, 1224, 1226–29, 1437–38, 1520) and a single posthole (F.1401).

RB Well 08 (F.1236) was broadly oval 6.1m by >3.8m in extent, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.14m. No trace of the original lining survives, but the well was probably box-lined. A considerable quantity of material was recovered from RB Well 08. Although stratigraphic differentiation was poor it appears that the bulk of the material was deposited during the construction of RB Well 08. There was a considerable quantity of pottery (>6kg) – little of which was demonstrably residual – some of which dated to after 250AD and two coins issued in 260–74AD and 268–70AD respectively. There were also considerable quantities of animal bone, iron slag and metalwork. Notable items include a gilded copper alloy disc brooch, a copper alloy steelyard and a probable iron awl. The backfilling of RB Well 08 dates to after 300AD – as a small quantity of pottery of this date was recovered – and a layer that seals it contained a coin issued in 337–40AD.

To the south of this there was an area that may represent between one and three zones, however it is impossible to coherently resolve them into a pattern. The area was dominated by a large number of recutting ditches (F.529, 902–05, 944, 946–47, 949, 961, 997–99, 1012, 1018–19, 1022, 1031, 1036, 1053–54, 1060, 1069–70, 1074–75, 1077, 1090, 1092–93, 1108, 1116–18, 1126, 1140, 1143, 1152, 1160, 1169–74, 1214, 1391, 1795, 2082–83, 2086–87, 2090–92, 2097–99). There were also some relatively nondescript pits (F.907–09, 928, 967, 1013, 1037, 1059, 1100, 1114–15, 1144–45, 1468, 2122) plus some postholes (F.942–43, 945, 948, 1219) and an infilled hollow (F.1139). A number of deposits represented general infilling over earlier features (F.989–90, 1051, 1066, 1071, 1155, 1167), this appears to represent localised elements of a general occupation soil (F.584).

There were also two well complexes (RB Wells 11–12). RB Well 11 (F.1020, 1307–08, 1148) was broadly circular and 3.2m in diameter, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.42m. No trace of the original well lining of this phase survived, although the shape of the shaft indicates

that it was made from wattle. A group of reused stone blocks on the south side of the base of the well appear to have been placed there to provide firm/dry footing during construction. The pottery from this well indicates a date for its construction no earlier than 250AD; this is supported by a leather shoe of c. 250–75AD. Also associated with the construction were a fragment of a 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century copper-alloy bracelet, an iron gouge and evidence for antler working. The shaft of the first phase of RB Well 11 was ultimately capped with sterile Gault clay. The well shaft was then re-cut, moving c. 0.8m to the northeast. This re-cut consisted of a 0.9m diameter wattle-lined shaft constructed from a variety of roundwood, some of which had become heavily distorted by post-depositional pressure. The transition between the two shafts of RB Well 11 has some associated pottery that is no earlier than 300AD. How long the second shaft of RB Well 11 continued in use is unclear, its fill was relatively sterile and contained no closely dateable pottery. There was, however, an iron object identified as the shank and head of *pilum* or javelin that was nearly vertical as if it had been thrust into the already partially backfilled well. There was good preservation of waterlogged seeds from both phases of RB Well 11.

RB Well 12 (F.1168, F.1220 and F.1402) was a complex entity that may represent two successive adjacent wells, unfortunately these can not be fully individuated. No traces of the lining of the well shaft(s) survived but it is likely that they were of wattle. Overall the well consisted of a large irregular oval cut 3.3m by 3.2m in extent with a maximum surviving depth of 1.6m. No trace of any lining or other elements associated with the first phase survives. During the construction of the second phase of the well the sides of the construction cut became unstable, necessitating some temporary *ad hoc* revetment involving boards set on edge and held in place by stakes. Additionally some stone and timber was piled in front of one of these revetments to hold it in place. One of the boards set on-edge was part of the seat of a stool and another of the timbers was a reused structural element. One piece of stone may be a crude column base, alternatively it was used as a post pad or a pedestal for a wooden column. No trace of the actual well lining survived, the nature of the temporary revetments makes it likely that the shaft was wattle lined. The pottery from Well RB 12 spans the mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and there is a leather shoe of c. 175–200AD; it seems likely that the first phase of well dates to the mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, whilst a coin issued after 260AD may relate to the backfilling of the first phase. The final backfilling of the second phase took place after 300AD. Finally, to the south of Enclosure 2C.5 the existence of a boundary ditch (F.1702–03, 2124) indicates an enclosed but open area of some type. There is also some evidence for material becoming trapped in hollows created by earlier features outside Enclosure 2C.5 (F.919)

### *Unphased*

A range of features cannot be assigned to a particular phase of the sequence. The majority are isolated relatively nondescript pits (19) or postholes (11), to which no particularly meaningful interpretation can be attached (pits F.837, 875, 1014, 1016, 1078, 1081, 1084–85, 1094, 1098, 1146–47, 1175, 1412–13, 1419, 1450, 1470, 2100: postholes F.1026–27, 1029, 1034, 1038, 1083, 1099, 1132, 1141, 1486, 1774). Although it is conceivable that some of these features belong to Phase RB.2C.1, it is likely that the majority relate to Phases RB.2C.2–3.

### *Material Culture and Environmental Evidence*

In general only low densities of material culture were recovered from individual features of the earlier phases at RB.2C. This changed markedly in Phase RB.2C.3, with large quantities of several types of material being deposited. Several types of material were particularly prominent, including iron slag, although there are significant issues in determining what if any relationship this material has to *in situ* activities. The ceramics associated with the inhumation cemetery are of some importance, particularly with regard to comparing them to those associated with cremations. Individually important items include a copper-alloy disc brooch (sf.212) and bracelet (RB Well 11), an iron *pilum* head (RB Well 11) and ballista bolt-head (F.1278), part of a wooden

seat (RB Well 12). Although the bulk of the environmental samples from RB.2D contained only low densities of charred material, samples from several well fills produced well-preserved waterlogged plant remains. Additionally the preserved wood from the wattle-lined well (RB Well 11) is significant.

### *Summary*

Until c. 155–70AD RB.2C existed principally as an empty area defined by more intensively utilised surrounding areas (Phase RB.2D.1). At that point it was divided into four enclosures (Phase RB.2C.2), this effectively linked the four areas of RB.2 into a single contiguous if not necessarily coherent entity. The evidence indicates that Phase RB.2C.2 relates to a zoned rural agricultural settlement with wells, buildings and an inhumation cemetery. In the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, probably in the late 260's AD, the area of enclosures contracted markedly (Phase RB.2C.3). The character of activity changed markedly; the layout became curvilinear rather than rectangular, deposits became markedly darker with the core of the occupation effectively becoming a quasi-midden and large quantities of material – particularly iron slag – were deposited. This continued until c. 355–70AD.

### **RB.2D**

This is the most northwesterly of the four spatial elements that constitute RB.2. The main investigated area covered up to c. 125m northwest to southeast by c. 130m southwest to northeast, covering c. 9300sqm. On its eastern side there was an area of intensive Post-Medieval/Modern quarrying, additionally the site has not been investigated in its entirety and continues to the northwest, this area will be investigated in 2013 (Site V). The settlement was located upon both gravel and clay geology, with a distinct downwards slope from east-northeast to west-southwest lying at 20.00–22.50m OD. The sequence at RB.2D consists of four main phases:

- Phase RB.2D.1: isolated small enclosures and cremations (early 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 1<sup>st</sup> century)
- Phase RB.2D.2: initial ditched enclosure system (late 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century)
- Phase RB.2D.3: modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–late 3<sup>rd</sup> century)
- Phase RB.2D.4: relict well continues in use (late 3<sup>rd</sup>–early / mid 4<sup>th</sup> century).

#### *Phase RB.2D.1: Isolated small enclosures and cremations (early 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 1<sup>st</sup> century)*

The earliest activity in the area of RB.2D consists of two small square enclosures and two cremation burials. The two enclosures (F.683, 699) appear to be the earliest elements and it is unclear whether they were still in existence when the cremations occurred. Although these two morphologically very similar small square ditched enclosures predate the first phase of Romano-British ditched enclosure they are on the same alignment as the enclosure system and occur on the edges of subsequent enclosures, indicating a strong degree of continuity. The function of the enclosures is unclear, their relatively small size precludes a substantial number of possibilities and, based upon regional parallels, they may have fulfilled some form of mortuary function.

The two cremation burials (F.638, 936; Table 7) appear to be relatively early, based upon the dates of the associated pottery. One possibility is that they are effectively precursors of cemetery C1, located *c.* 35m to the northwest, and that the shift in burial focus relates to the expansion of activity in Phase RB.2D.2. These two burials are different from those of C1, and most of the other Romano-British period cremations at the site, in that they occur in readily identifiable relatively deep pits, which are substantially larger than required for the cremations themselves. There is no indication that these pits were dug for any purpose other than the cremations themselves. The cremations are located in relatively close proximity to one of the small square enclosures (F.683) and the possibility that they are in some way related can not be discounted. There are a number of other pits in the area that could be related to this phase of activity (F.616, 632, 641); all contained no dateable material, had been dug with a noticeably greater degree of care than many of the Romano-British pits at the site and are morphologically relatively similar to the cremations. These pits may equally well be later in date, although with the benefit of hindsight it is unfortunate that they were not 100% excavated. It is possible that some other undated or poorly dated isolated features may belong to Phase RB.2D.1, but this can not be convincingly demonstrated in any individual instance.

The duration of Phase RB.2D.1 is difficult to assess, it could span anything from a few years to several decades falling in the period *c.* 40–70AD. It is also impossible to determine any particular associations between this activity and contemporary settlements. It could conceivably be linked to RB.2B.2 *c.* 200m to the south-southeast, but there is no particular evidence to support this and the features might equally well relate to an unidentified settlement located to the east or north. Overall the evidence suggests that Phase RB.2D.1 represents a direct precursor to Phase RB.2D.2, this is not to suggest any inevitably to the development merely that there was no discernible hiatus between the two phases and alignments, *etc.* indicate that they both existed within the same overall conceptual landscape.

The small square enclosure F.683 was 5.0m by 5.0m in extent, with ditches up to 0.58m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.18m. Stratigraphically this was the earliest feature in this area of the site and the fills were noticeably paler and contained less material than later Romano-British features in the area. The fills of the ditch of this enclosure contained very little material culture, but there was a small quantity of pottery dated to 50BC–50AD. No contemporary features were present within the interior of the enclosure; however a significant proportion of this area had been removed by later ditches.

The small square enclosure F.699, located 31m to the south-southeast of enclosure F.683, is 5.2m by 5.1m in extent with ditches up to 0.72m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.32m. Stratigraphically this was the earliest feature in this area of the site and the fills were noticeably paler and contained less material than later Romano-British features in the area. The fills of the ditch of this enclosure contained very little material culture and produced no dateable material. No contemporary features were present within the interior of the enclosure.

#### *Phase RB.2D.2: Initial ditched enclosure system (late 1<sup>st</sup>–mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century)*

Phase RB.2D.2 began around *c.* 50–70AD, the first act was the creation of two adjacent rectangular ditched enclosures of broadly similar size with a shared

boundary (Enc.2D.1–2). There is little evidence for activity in the southern of these two enclosures (Enc.2D.2), with few features present. The northern enclosure (Enc.2D.1) witnessed more activity, it appears to have rapidly been subdivided. The precise nature of these subdivisions is unclear as there were clearly several different iterations, but they cannot be disentangled. The nature of the enclosure suggests that buildings may well have been present, but none could be convincingly recognised. Located towards the northern edge of Enclosure 2D.1 was a probably wattle-lined well (RB Well 05). Due to localised groundwater issues the northwestern corner of Enclosure 2D.1 was badly preserved, however it appears that rather than being fully enclosed there was a 7.6m wide ditched routeway – with ditches that were markedly less substantial than the actual enclosures – running to the northwest. Located at the junction of Enclosure 2D.1 and the routeway was a small cremation cemetery (C1), with nine burials associated with Phase RB.2D.2.

Lying c. 30m south of Enclosure 2D.2 was a relatively elaborate double-ditched entranceway. Although this lay outside Enclosure 2D.1–2 and effectively straddles the spatial boundaries between settlements RB.2C and RB.2D it appears most likely to be associated with the enclosures of RB.2D, particularly given the lack of evidence for contemporary activity in RB.2C. No trace of any structure or other evidence for activity was associated with this double-ditched entranceway; presumably whatever was present was sufficiently shallow that it left no archaeological traces.

The ending of Phase RB.2D.2 and transition to Phase RB.2D.3 is marked by a number of deposits in Enclosure RB.2D.2. The most notable is a significant quantity of material associated with the creation of RB well 04 (Phase RB.2D.3), there was also a deposit containing a significant quantity of pottery in the eastern terminal of a ditch (F.634). The end of Phase RB.2D.2 probably occurred c. 150–70AD, if the creation of RB Well 03 (Phase RB.2D.3) is also linked to this event then the dating can be narrowed to c. 155–70AD. This gives a duration for Phase RB.2D.2 of c. 80–120 years.

#### *Enclosure 2D.1*

Enclosure 2D.1 was a relatively regular rectangle 49m+ (west-east) by 45m in extent, covering an area of 2350sqm. The eastern boundary of the enclosure is unclear, no ditches on this side were identified and the relatively shallow ditches leading to it simply petered out. On balance it is likely that this side was enclosed by a shallow ditch that has not survived, in terms of the broad layout and orientation of activity along the gravel ridge it is likely that the principal entrance to the enclosure was on this eastern side.

The southern boundary – which was shared with Enclosure 2D.2 – (F.637, 653, 673) displays no evidence for any re-cuts and was up to 1.1m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.6m. The western boundary (F.659, 695, 786) had no evidence for any re-cuts and was up to 1.7m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.4m. The northern boundary (F.832, 897) had no evidence for any re-cuts and was up to 1.25m wide with a maximum depth of 0.18m. The northwestern corner of the enclosure was poorly preserved, however it appears that there was a southeast to northwest aligned 7.6m wide ditched trackway located in the corner. The northeastern ditch (F.565) was up to 0.82m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.08m and the southwestern ditch (F.550–51, 868) shows signs of being re-cut once and is up to 1.25m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.18m.

Enclosure 2D.1 was subdivided by a series of ditches (F.589, 603, 611, 613, 620, 634, 640, 667, 769, 891). These effectively created six rectangular and square sub-enclosures of varying extent, although it is unclear if they are all contemporary and some of the narrower

rectangular enclosures are unlikely to have been functional. In some instances – particularly the southwestern corner of the enclosure – it seems likely that some of the additional ditches that created small enclosures simply represent minor re-alignments due to ground conditions becoming too wet.

RB Well 05 (F.548) is roughly oval 7.6m by 4.1m in extent with a maximum surviving depth of 1.22m and was investigated during the evaluation phase (F.247). The profile of the well suggests that it was wattle-lined, although no trace of this survived. Given the survival of other organic material in the well this suggests that the lining was made from a tree species that does not survive well in waterlogged conditions. Material recovered during the evaluation phase included a considerable quantity of 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century pottery, fragments of a glass cup, a piece of a wooden lathe-turned furniture finial and waterlogged and charred plant remains. Plant remains indicate that the environs were covered in rich, open vegetation with species indicative of a nutrient rich, disturbed landscape such as a settlement. The evaluation had entirely removed the base of the well, but further excavation produced more pottery of similar date plus vessel glass, shale and a 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century coin. There is no material that can be definitely associated with the construction of the well; it appears to have been backfilled at some point in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Cemetery C1 consisted primarily of cremations (12 identified), plus a few inhumations (2 definite and 1 possible). Heavy disturbance by later ploughing, which had almost obliterated several cremations, makes it entirely feasible that some burials have been removed in their entirety. The core of the cemetery consisted of a tight group of nine cremations, covering an area of 5.0m by 4.5m. There were also three outlying cremations, these appear to be somewhat later and probably relate to Phase RB.2D.3 as do the inhumations.

There is no evidence for strong layout or organisation of the cremation cemetery, although there is no inter-cutting of burials. All of the cremations were placed within substantial coarseware vessels and at least seven had inverted Samian dishes used as ‘lids’ to seal the cremated bone. At least nine of the cremations possessed secondary ceramic vessels, these come in a range of forms and fabrics and were typically placed beside the primary container, although in one case it was placed within the cremation container (F.506). Additional items are relatively rare, it is unclear if nails in some of the cremations (F.507 and F.508) are deliberate addition or not. More plausible as deliberate additions are some hobnails and stones (F.506). The dating evidence suggests that C1 spans the mid/late 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, with no evidence for continuity into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

A substantial pit (F.738) just outside the southwestern corner of the enclosure and a connecting ditch (F.741) presumably relate to either water management of the enclosure ditch system or represent some form of light industrial activity that utilised the water supply of the ditches.

#### *Enclosure 2D.2*

Enclosure 2D.2 was a relatively regular rectangle 58m+ (west-east) by 38m in extent, covering an area of 2000sqm. The eastern boundary of the enclosure is unclear, no ditches on this side were identified and the relatively shallow ditches leading to it either simply petered out or were truncated by recent quarrying. On balance it is likely that this side was enclosed by a shallow ditch that has not survived, in terms of the broad layout and orientation of activity along the gravel ridge it is likely that the principal entrance to the enclosure was on this side. The southern boundary (F.657, 662, 688) displays no evidence of being re-cut and is up to 1.5m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.7m. The western boundary (F.669, 791–92) appears to have been re-cut at least once and was up to 1.45m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.7m. The northern boundary – which was shared with Enclosure 2D.1 – (F.637, 653, 673) has already been described (see above).

There is minimal evidence for activity within Enclosure 2D.2; the only features that can conclusively be associated with it are three pits (F.685, 691–2) and a posthole (F.705).

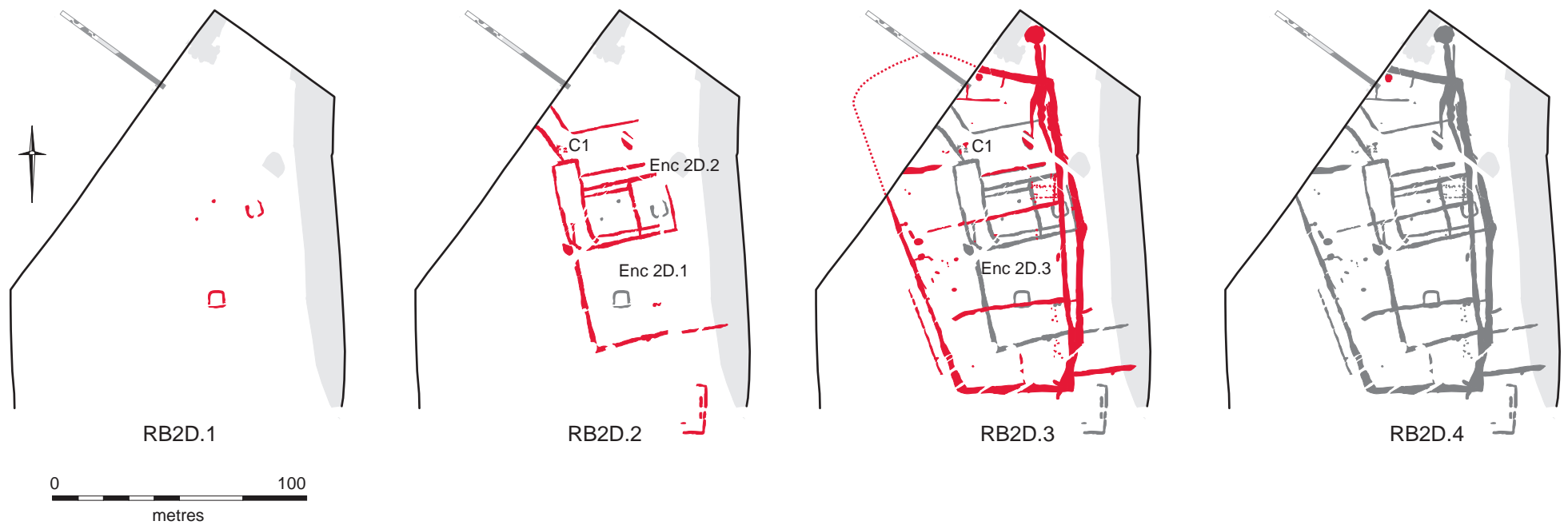


Figure 9. Site RB2D: Phase plans for RB2D.1-4

### *Double-ditched Entranceway*

The double-ditched entranceway consisted of an outer ditch (F.714–15 and 722), an inner ditch (F.712–13) and a beam-slot to the west that is probably associated. The outer ditch was 19.7m north-south – with a 1.6m wide gap in its centre – and its longest east-west arm 8.4m. The inner ditch was 8.6–9.1m long. The ditches were 0.74–1.28m wide, with a maximum surviving depth of 1.28m.

### *Phase RB.2D.3: Modified and expanded ditched enclosure system (mid 2<sup>nd</sup>–late 3<sup>rd</sup> century)*

In the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century the area went through a major re-organisation, various strands of evidence suggest that this occurred *c.* 155–70AD. Although the boundaries of the two earlier enclosures (Enc.2D.1–2) appear to have still exerted an influence – probably as relict banks/hollows rather than as ditches proper – a new much larger sub-rectangular enclosure was established (Enc.2D.3). This enclosure represented an expansion of the area of the two previous enclosures to the south (*c.*18m), west (*c.*19m) and north (*c.*19m) and a contraction of unknown extent on the eastern side. Enclosure 2D.3 was subdivided, principally along its west-southwest to east-northeast axis into three or four areas, although these distinctions appear to be too minor to warrant designating the areas as separate enclosures. Whilst most of the boundary ditches of Enclosure 2D.3 appear to be relatively short-lived – although they presumably continued to exist as banks perhaps with associated shallow hollows – the eastern boundary showed evidence for numerous re-cuts and additionally shifted markedly to the east noticeably changing its alignment at some point. There is good evidence for at least one posthole and beam-slot building (RB Str. 02) located on the eastern side of the enclosure and it is likely that at least two more also existed (RB Str.'s 05–06).

The pre-existing well (RB Well 05) continued in use, although rather than being located near the edge of the enclosure as previously it now lay *c.* 30m from it, with an irregular set of shallow channels – presumably linked to water management – linking the two (F.883–84). Another, probably wattle-lined, well (RB Well 04) was established *c.* 150–70 AD within a small sub-enclosure on the northern edge of Enclosure 2D.3. The construction deposits associated with this well contained a considerable quantity of pottery and quern, this material may well relate to the group who utilised this area during Phase RB.2D.2 and could indicate some form of clearance occasioned by the transition.

A third box-lined well (RB Well 03) was established in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century – dated by a coin issued in 154–55AD – and lay *c.* 27m north of Enclosure 2D.3. Whilst its association with Enclosure 2D.3 can not be categorically demonstrated it appears likely as a group of shallow channels (F.591–92) – similar to those associated with RB Well 05 – ran from the well to the northern ditch of Enclosure 2D.3. There were also some more regular shallow ditches to the east of these (F.593–94), which probably represent a form of boundary. A further well (RB Well 06) was established on the eastern edge of Enclosure 2D.3, but this did not take place until the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

The earlier cemetery (C1) continued in use, at least for a time, although the dating evidence is slightly ambiguous in some cases as to whether particular



burials relate to Phases RB.2D.2 or RB.2D.3. It appears to have changed in character, as the cremations (F.535, 542, 549) are no longer located within the earlier core of the cemetery but some c. 6–9m away. Instead in the area that had formerly been the core there were some inhumations (F.850, 858 and possibly 867; Table 8). Evidence for other activity within the enclosure is limited; however along its western side there are a number of pits (F.739, 740, 744, 770, 776) that suggests some form of specialised activity was taking place.

In general there is relatively little pottery dated to after 250AD from Enclosure 2D.3 and a total absence of the late 3<sup>rd</sup>–mid 4<sup>th</sup> century coins that are present at settlements RB.2A and RB.2C. Overall this indicates an end of activity by c. 260–70AD. Therefore Phase RB.2D.3 lasted for c. 90–115 years. There are indications that the backfilling of one well (RB Well 03) was used as an opportunity to dispose of material, perhaps indicating a form of clearance of the enclosure. There was also a relatively substantial deposit of pottery, including material dated to 250AD+, in the eastern terminal of a ditch (F.693).

#### *Enclosure 2D.3*

Enclosure 2D.3 was an irregular rectangle that is markedly wider at its northern end, it was 120m long north-south, 46m wide at its southern end and 26m+ – but probably c. 83m – at its northern end. It covered an area of c. 8500sqm, representing a 95% increase of the combined area of Enclosures 2D.1–2.

The southern boundary (F.711, 736, 765, 861, 863) appears to have been re-cut at least once and is up to 2.9m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.95m. The western boundary (F.737, 747, 749, 783, 789, 806, 859–60, 862) appears to have been re-cut at least once and is up to 3.1m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.95m. In addition there was a shallower outer ditch c. 3.5m west of the main ditch (F.805), which was 0.8m wide with a maximum depth of 0.2m. The western boundary (F.561) shows no sign of being re-cut and is up to 2.8m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 0.85m. The eastern boundary is the most complex, with evidence of multiple re-cutting up to eight or nine times (F.559, 582, 595, 601, 612, 617–18, 636, 652, 660, 674–75, 680–81, 694, 700–01, 706, 763–64, 766, 771, 810–13, 830, 932). Individual re-cuts of the ditch were up to 1.8m wide with a maximum surviving depth of 1.1m). The central portion of this boundary shifted noticeably eastwards at some point, although the northern and southern corners of the enclosure remained stable. There is also evidence for some shallower ditches, which connected some of the wells (RB Wells 3–5) to the northeastern corner of the enclosure, these presumably relate to water management/ drainage in some manner (F.591–94, 883–84). Additionally some short lengths of ditch leading into this enclosure ditch probably represent *ad hoc* drainage channels dug to deal with local water issues (F.600, 830, 1091). The enclosure was divided into at least four main sub-enclosures, which were predominantly aligned west-east. From south to north the southernmost sub-enclosure (northern boundary F.661, 693, 793) was 30m wide and it seems likely it appears that a possible relict internal mound of one of the Phase RB.2D.1 small square enclosures (F.699) may have influenced its location. The next sub-enclosure (northern boundary F.608) was 40m wide. The third sub-enclosure was rather irregular as it re-used the line of an earlier ditch creating a distinct dog-leg (northern boundary reused ditch F.634, plus new ditches F.670, 676). As a result it was between 24m and 31m wide. The final sub-enclosure was 34m to c. 50m wide, additionally there were one or possibly two small sub-enclosure on its northern side (F.567, 569, 587), one of which contained RB Well 4.

One well-preserved and two much more fragmentary Romano-British structures were identified. RB Str. 02 was the most substantial Romano-British structure discovered at sites RB.2A–D. It is a west-east aligned rectangular posthole and beam-slot structure 9.6m long by 5.2m wide. Although the basic plan of the structure remained stable there is clear evidence for several phases of modification as posts and other structural elements were replaced. 54 features can be associated with RB Str. 2; 49 postholes and five beam-slots (F.590, 621, 623–28, 633, 635, 733–34, 750–60, 778–82, 788, 790, 814–17, 831, 838–42, 853–55, 870–73, 889–94, 1062). The postholes are 0.87–0.21m in diameter with surviving depths of 0.40–0.06m. The beam-

slots are all highly truncated; they are up to 0.26m wide with surviving depths of 0.25–0.07m. The evidence suggests that the eastern end of RB Str. 02 was the most complex and was probably the front of the structure. It seems probable that the structure relates to the phase after the enclosure ditch immediately to the east had silted up and the new ditch several metres to the east was in use. Stratigraphically RB Str. 2 is relatively late in the sequence, cutting through several earlier ditches. The dateable material is very mixed, it all appears to relate to have been deposited at the abandonment of the structure. Some of the pottery dates to after 200AD but none is definitely later than 250AD, suggesting that the building went out of use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Based upon parallels with RB Str. 2, RB Str. 05 probably represents the rather more substantial eastern end of a poorly preserved rectangular timber structure. It consists of five surviving postholes (F.663–64, 795–97) 0.85–0.30m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 0.18–0.08m, forming a line 5.8m long. Although two of the postholes contained pottery none of this was closely dateable. Similarly RB Str. 06 probably represents the rather more substantial eastern end of a poorly preserved rectangular timber structure. It consists of ten surviving postholes (F.671, 702, 716–17, 726, 732, 798–800) 0.70–0.28m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 0.31–0.10m, forming a line 7.6m long. Although two of the postholes contained pottery none of this was closely dateable, although some is later than 150AD.

RB Well 05 continued from Phase RB.2D.2 and three new wells were constructed (RB Wells 03–04, 06). RB Well 03 (F.564) is roughly circular and c. 8.0–7.4m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 2.9m. In the centre of the well there was a square shaft c. 0.85m by 0.85m in extent with a box lining c. 0.9m by 0.9m in extent constructed from thin tangentially sawn oak boards supported by upright in the corners. The pottery associated with the construction with the well is not closely dateable; two coins that probably relate to the construction of the well were issued in 81–96AD and 154–55AD respectively, whilst a third coin also probably related to the well construction was issued in 98–117AD. The pottery associated with the backfilling of the well is not closely dateable, but there were some trimmed discs and quern concentrated in initial backfilling.

RB Well 04 (F.586) was roughly circular c. 2.8–2.6m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of 1.8m. It has a distinct funnel-shaped profile with the lower 0.5m consisting of a vertically-sided circular shaft 0.6m in diameter. This clearly indicated that this was a wattle-lined well, although no trace of the lining survived. After the wattle-lining had been placed in position but before the bulk of the construction cut had been backfilled a considerable quantity of refuse was deposited in a band across the northern portion of the construction cut of the well. This consisted primarily of pottery, including several semi-complete or complete vessels that had broken *in situ*, and substantial fragments from at least two Old Red Sandstone querns. Animal bone was conspicuously absent, although bone survival was relatively poor traces were usually visible and it is likely that if any larger or more robust bones had been present they would have survived. The dumping of refuse into the construction fills of a well appears counter-intuitive, as the water accumulating in the wattle-lined shaft would have percolated through this material. Either those building the well did not care – which appears highly unlikely – or the material was deliberately added perhaps in an attempt to improve the rate of water percolation. If this was the case then animal bone and other material deemed inappropriate may have been deliberately excluded. The pottery indicates a date c. 150–70AD for the construction of the well and of after 300AD for the backfilling. The construction cut for the well is separated from the enclosure ditch (F.610) to the north, which appears to be contemporary, by only c. 0.55m. The implication of this is that there was no internal bank. It should be noted that the actual shaft of the well was a further c. 0.9m from the ditch line, creating a less perilous space but still probably implying the existence of a fence or hedge of some kind. The well appears to have been located in a small sub-enclosure >16m long and 11–9m wide defined by some small ditches (F.569 and F.587), with a 4.7m wide entrance at the eastern end. The western end of the sub-enclosure was not revealed, but there are hints of further sub-division (F.567). The presence of a probably Post-Medieval dice towards the top of the backfilled shaft suggests that this remained a shallow hollow or soft-spot for a considerable period.

RB Well 06 (F.614–15) was roughly circular and c. 4.1m in diameter with a maximum surviving depth of >1.1m. Although initially interpreted as two separate features this is likely to represent a single well whose form suggests that it was wattle-lined and probably c. 1.3m

deep. Some material that can definitely be associated with the construction of the well dates to after 200AD. This well is relatively late in terms of stratigraphic sequence, as it is cut through several phases of ditch associated with Enclosure 2D.3.

Some burials from cemetery C1 appear to relate to Phase RB.2D.3 (Tables 7–8), including cremations F.535 (outlier to southwest with some pottery of 150AD+), F.542 (outlier to southwest with some pottery of 100–300AD) and F.549 (outlier to north with some pottery of 120–300AD+). Also the inhumations F.850, 858 (which contains some pottery of 150AD+) and the possible example F.867. Whilst some of these burials contain pottery of AD150+ the argument is also based upon the fact that inhumations are unlikely to predate the mid–late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and also upon spatial logic. Neither of the inhumations had associated grave-goods or hobnails, but one appeared to have been interred in a coffin (F.858).

Other relatively nondescript features of this phase include pits (F.576–78, 725, 731, 746), postholes F.787, 801–02, 933–35) and a hollow (F.745). A group of five pits located close to the western edge are quite carefully shaped and probably represent some form of light industrial activity (F.739, 740, 744, 770, 776). As these pits were cut into the natural clay it is likely that they held water and several associated gullies probably relate to water management for these features. A number of other pits in the vicinity may also be related, although these generally show less care in their digging. There are also some postholes (F.727–30) that hint at some form of flimsy structure or fence line.

#### *Phase RB.2D.4: Relict well continues in use (late 3<sup>rd</sup>–early / mid 4<sup>th</sup> century)*

The evidence suggests that general activity in Enclosure 2D.3 ceased by c. 260–70AD. The sole exception to this is that RB Well 04 appears to have continued in use until the early / mid 4<sup>th</sup> century, as pottery dated to after 300AD was found in the backfilling of its shaft. One other find that may relate to this period – but requires further analysis – is a large Late Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon leaf-shaped spearhead (ditch F.711).

It is plausible that the banks associated with Enclosure 2D.3 still existed, this suggests that the area of the enclosure and well were utilised for agricultural purposes – conceivably by the groups associated with the continuing activity in RB.2A and RB.2C. This is supported by the care apparently taken to backfill the other wells and some other features plus the deliberate disposal of material in RB Well 03. All of this points to an interest in maintaining the area as a useful space, as opposed to outright abandonment.

#### *Unphased*

A range of features can not be assigned to a particular phase of this sequence. The majority are isolated relatively nondescript pits (17) or postholes (7), to which no particularly meaningful interpretation can be attached (pits F.562–63, 571, 583, 588, 597, 616, 632, 641, 649, 655, 672, 698, 703, 708, 1021, 1061; postholes 580, 599, 650, 818–20, 938) There was also a tree throw (F.684) and a pair of linear features c. 1.5m apart (F.568, 570) are best interpreted as cart ruts, which match the standard width of c. 5 Roman feet.

#### *Material Culture and Environmental Evidence*

In general only low densities of material culture were recovered from individual features at RB.2D, there were however several significant assemblages of pottery and other material the most important being associated with the construction of RB Well 05. The pottery associated with

cremations is also significant. Other intrinsically important material includes a possible *pilum* head (ditch F.674) and a Late Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon spearhead (ditch F.711). The overall assemblages from RB.2D are of low to moderate size.

The analysed environmental samples from RB.2D contained only low densities of charred material, there was good waterlogged preservation from at least one of the wells.

### Summary

RB.2D consists of a short-lived mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD phase of small square enclosures and cremations (Phase RB.2D.1), which was succeeded by a ditched enclosure system (Phase RB.2D.2) with an associated well and cremation cemetery. This enclosure system was modified and expanded in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Phase RB.2D.3), when there is evidence for four wells and at least one moderately sized timber building. Phase's RB.2D.2–3 both appear to relate to a small occupied rural settlement of some type. In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD occupation proper ended, although the continued use of a relict well until the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Phase RB.2D.4) indicates that the area continued to be utilised as part of a wider agricultural landscape.

Feature	Cut	Bone weight (g)	Cremation container	Dish 'lid'	Secondary vessels	Additional items	Comments
502	Not identifiable	1088	[1211] Q3 large jar 50–150AD	[1212] Central Gaulish Samian dish' 150–250AD	[1210] Fine sandy buff ware closed vessel 50–100AD	None identified	Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
503	Not identifiable	129	[1220] Q3 medium sized jar 100–200AD	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Very heavily plough damaged
504	Not identifiable	36	[1227] Coarse, sandy greyware jar 50–100AD	None apparent	Unknown	Unknown	Extremely heavily plough damaged
505	Not identifiable	293	[1224] Q2 medium sized jar 50–200AD	None apparent	[1225] Buff sandy flagon 50–200AD	Unknown	Truncated by land drain and plough damaged
506	ca. 0.6m diameter circle, steep sides and rounded base 0.25m+ deep	226	[1341] Q1 large necked jar 50–100AD	[1320] South Gaulish Samian dish 50–100AD	[1321] Buff sandy small globular flagon 100–200AD	[1267] 20 hobnails and a fragment of a knife or tool blade, [1326] four partly shaped disc-like and natural rounded pebbles, possibly gaming pieces	Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
507	Not	798	[1270] Q1	[1271] South	[1272]	Two nails	Substantively

	identifiable		large necked jar 100–200AD	Gaulish Samian dish 100–120AD	Whiteware flagon 50–150AD [1273] Q1 medium sized jar 50–400AD	[1329] and [1343], probably incidental inclusions	complete, upper portion truncated
508	Not identifiable	672	[1323] Q3 large necked jar 50–200AD	[1276] Central Gaulish Samian dish 150–250AD	[1277] Oxidised sandy flagon 50–150AD [1278] Oxidised sandy indented beaker, 150–300AD	Nail and a small, thin corroded disc [1328], probably incidental inclusions	Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
535	0.59m by 0.54m rectangle, 0.16m+ deep with vertical sides and flat base	1455	[1334] Coarse sandy oxidised medium jar 50–200AD	None	[1336] Colour-coated globular flagon 200–400AD [1337] Black-slipped plain rim beaker 150–300AD	None identified	Southwestern outlier. Substantively complete, upper portion truncated. Nene Valley colour-coated flagon rim [1339] 200–300AD might be deliberate grave good.
542	Not identifiable	150	[1361] Coarse sandy greyware closed vessel. 50–200AD	Unknown	[1361] Colour-coated beaker 150–300AD	None identified	Southwestern outlier. Extremely heavily plough damaged
549	Oval, 0.55m by 0.37m, with steep sides and flat base 0.40m+ deep	645	[1408] Fine sandy micaceous oxidised ware beaker 120–300AD	None	[1409] Fine sandy micaceous greyware closed vessel 70–150AD	Possible spike or nail sf. 71, probably incidental inclusion	Northern outlier. Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
638	Circular 1.3m diameter, 0.3m deep	276	[1669] Buff sandy flagon 50–100AD	[1671] South Gaulish Samian dish with part of rim deliberately clipped 50–100AD	[1667] Coarse sandy oxidised flagon 70–150AD	None	Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
823	Circular c. 0.45m diameter, steep sides and concave base 0.18m+ deep	644	[2304] Horningsea greyware necked jar 100–400AD	[2302] East Gaulish Samian dish 150–250AD	[2305] Oxidised sandy ware small flagon. 70–200AD	None identified	Substantively complete, upper portion truncated
869	Not identifiable	1	[2465] 100–400AD	Unknown	Unknown	None identified	Extremely heavily plough damaged
936	Sub-square 1.1m by 0.9m, 0.3m deep	1103	[2670] Buff sandy flagon 30–70AD	[2706] Fine sandy micaceous greywares platter 30–70AD	[2670] buff sandy closed vessel 50–150AD	None	Complete

**Table 7:** Cremations from RB.2D.

Feature	Phase	Cut dimen.	Skeleton	Orient.	Coffin nails	Grave goods	Dating evidence	Comment
850	2D.3	1.96m by 0.78m, 0.25m deep	[2388]	N - S	–	–	50–100AD	Poor skeletal preservation
858	2D.3	1.80m by 0.73m, 0.25m+ deep	[2426]	ENE - WSW	7	–	150AD+	Poor skeletal preservation
867	2D.3	0.98m+ long by 0.54m, 0.15m+ deep	None	N- S	–	–	–	Possible child burial, but no bone survives

**Table 8:** Inhumations from RB.2D.

### Isolated Romano-British features

Only a single isolated Romano-British features located away from the settlements and routeways was identified (posthole F.2102). In part, this is a reflection of the fact that features located at a distance from the settlements are inherently less likely to contain dateable material, it is therefore plausible that a number of the isolated undated features are in fact Romano-British. It is also possible that some of the features assigned to Prehistoric settlements 1–2 that contained little dateable material may in reality be isolated Romano-British features. Even with these caveats isolated Romano-British features must have been relatively uncommon, as there are fewer than 30 undated features and the bulk of the features from Prehistoric settlements 1–2 are extremely unlikely to be Roman. It therefore appears clear that within the Romano-British landscape the digging of features was restricted to the areas of settlements and routeways.



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