Trench MF22 narrative

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Introduction

Trench 22 was first opened in 2004 and revealed the southern end of at two roomed building BU8. The main and earliest phase of the structure was a square room which contained a well-preserved oval hearth [22006]. To the south of the main building a series of postholes recognised from the remains of stone packing suggested the presence of a veranda or lean-to building. The second room which was rectangular in shape, was butted against the west wall [22002] of the main room. Due to the paucity of finds in 2004 significant dating material for this building was not obtained nor was its use determined. This left the size and use of the buildings open to question, along with its relationship to other structures on the site. However, it should be noted that at least two similar hearths were found in nearby trenches 12 and 18. Therefore in 2006 the trench was extended northwards by 7 metres to address issues of scale and use of the buildings.

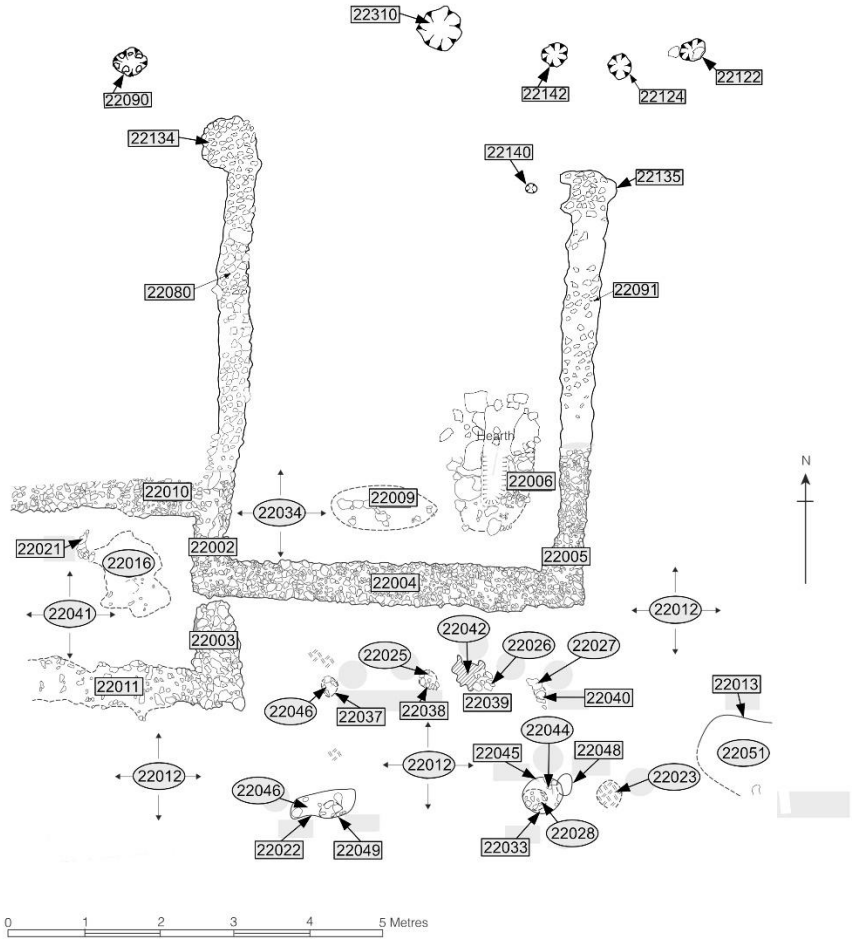
In season 2006 the complete plan of the stone foundations of a three-sided Romano-British rectangular building open to the north was revealed. The north end of the of the western north-south wall [22002] was finished with a sub-circular terminal [22134]. To the south of wall [22002] an extension on a west to east axis [22010] together with a short north/south wall [22003] which turned to form an east/west wall [22011] formed an adjoining building to the main three walled structure.

To the north of wall [22010], a plough damaged line of stones suggested the possibility of additional wall [22085] on an east-west axis running in line with the northern terminals of walls [22002] and [22005]. Doubt on the validity of structure [22085] as a wall was noted as the construction of this line of stones was very different to the other walls excavated and a foundation cut for the wall could not be found. This line of stones had a shallow foundation of no more than 8cm and therefore not contemporary with the main structure. Possibly structure [22085] was a later feature, however its relationship with the main building is difficult to determine.

A group of stones directly east of the northern terminal of wall [22005] was recorded as a possible wall [22095] although evidence for this is poor. If it had proved to be a wall it may have been a later addition and perhaps contemporary with wall [22085] which lay on the same east/west axis.

To the southern end and within the three-sided room, known as BU8, a well-preserved oval hearth [22006] formed by carefully placed pieces of limestone of varying size which was open at its northern end. Excavations beneath the hearth showed a series of stake holes and cut from various levels. Possibly evidence of a former structure before the hearth was established.

On the south side of BU8 wall [22004] there was a series of possible postholes [22032], [22038], [22039] and [22040], recognised through the remains of stone packing [22037 – 22040] which may have supported a veranda or lean to structure or possibly a fence line.



Trench MF22

Possible connections with features in Trench 34

Trench 34 was opened in 2007 after the completion of activity in Trench 22 and formed a narrow slot trench running N/S just to the west of Trench 22 (see trench MF34 narrative for a full description). It was hoped that this trench would determine the western limits of the building in Trench 22. All the archaeology in this trench was severely truncated by ploughing, so only the foundations of structures and the lower occupation deposits survived.

In the southern part of the trench was a very short fragmentary NE-SW stone wall [34020]. It appeared to be the corner of a building, with only part of it appearing on the eastern edge of the trench and running onwards in a NE direction. The position of this wall aligns to a potential E-W end wall for the western room of BU8 in Trench 22. Set to the west of this wall and its suggested NE trajectory was a line of four postholes which could be postulated as

running parallel to the suggested NE-SW western wall end of the Trench 22 building. These four postholes [34016], [34019], [34024] and [34038] created a line *c.* 7m long and ending approximately where we might expect the northern end of Trench 22 building to finish. If the wall and postholes are part of Trench 22 building it suggests that the western annex was like the main structure, open on one side with a line of postholes marking a veranda or roof line on the open side.

The foundation of two substantial smithing hearths [34004] and [34009] were found in the southern half of the trench and both hearths had three to five lower courses remaining up to a depth of *c.* 0.5m compared to the single course that defined the hearth [22006) in Trench 22. Also, the hearth in Trench 22 provided very little evidence to determine its purpose whereas the Trench 34 hearths small fragments of slag in [34004] and hammer scale in [34009] provided a strong indication for iron smithing activity.

Roman Structures Phased

22002. Wall. 1.78m in length x 0.5m wide. South-west section wall foundation. Limestone and rubble packing.

22003. Wall. 1.4m in length x 0.5m wide. Wall abutting the south-west part of the west wall. Second phase of building creates another room. The west room. Possibly associated with the creation of the putative veranda etc.

22004. Wall. 5.3m in length x 0.55m wide. South wall/foundation of the main building. Forms part of the structure with [22002] and [22005].

22005. Wall. 2.1m in length x 0.55m wide. Depth of foundation 13cm. South-east part of end wall/foundation forms part of structure with [22002] and [22004] main room.

22006. Hearth. 1.2m E/W x 1.1m N/S. Hollow in the centre 70cm long x 38cm wide. Made of various sized limestone blocks that had been mortared in place.

22009. Oven/kiln. 73cm long x 34cm wide. The evidence for this oven/kiln is rather ephemeral, consisting of a line of limestone blocks with some showing evidence of burning the hearth being set on the surface.

22010. Wall. Foundation of east – west wall 2.57m long x 0.47m wide.

22011. Wall. Foundation (same as [22003]). Possible extension to original build creating another room to the west of main structure.

22021. Hearth. 0.4m x 0.2m. Stones set in a curve with feature set on the surface.

22080. Wall. North to south running wall foundation.

22085. Wall. Possible foundation of a wall running E-W in the N/W corner of trench 22. Determined as a possible late feature and not contemporary with the other walls.

22091. Wall. Mid-section of N/S wall on the east side of the trench. Eastern wall of BU8

22092. along with parts of the same wall [22005] with foundation cut [22032] and wall [22092] with foundation cut [22141].

22134. Wall. Terminal of north/south, western wall of BU8 [22080] 70cm x 70cm. This terminal was approximately round in structure and bedded in with mortar.

22135. Wall. Truncated structure. Terminal of the north/south, eastern wall of BU8 [22091/2]. One course of stones with mortar and 5cm deep. Due to its truncated nature it was not possible to assess whether it was similar terminal end [22134].

Feature in trench 34 that may have a connection with structures in trench 22:

34020. Wall. An ephemeral part of a structure thought to be part of a wall and possibly the western most end of wall [22011] which has shown up in trench 34. This feature forms the corner of a wall and is situated north-east/ south-west and east-west.

Cuts, fills and layers: Phased
The following six cuts relate to BU8 and its adjoining rooms:

22029. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22003]. The eastern, N-S wall of room abutting BU8.

22030. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22002]. The N/S wall of BU8 in the S/W corner that separates BU8 from the possible third room.

22031. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22004]. The E/W wall of BU8.

22032. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22005]. The southern end of the N/S eastern wall of BU8. Further excavation in 2006 additional cut number applied [22141].

22035. **Foundation cut.** Cut for foundation of wall [22010]. The E-W wall between the two adjoining walls to BU8.

22036. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22011]. The E/W wall on the southern side of the third room adjoining BU8.

22045. Post hole. Cut of posthole 44cm in diameter x 26.5cm deep.
(22044) single fill.

22048. Posthole. Cut for posthole, oval 34cm x 24cm x 7.5cm deep.

22050. Posthole. Shallow cut 36cm diameter x 6cm deep. Cuts into stone scatter (22022) and its associated burnt area. This could also be associated with the series of veranda cuts [22037 – 40].
(22049) single fill. Containing a vessel fragment and a piece of Iron Age pottery.

22112. Tree bowl/ Hearth. Probably a tree throw that was later used as hearth. Sub-circular in shape 1.8m N/S x 1.2m E/W with an undulating base and various Depths, 30cm at its deepest down to bedrock. Evidence of burning within the fill with flat burned stones at the base. Hence the possibility that it was used a hearth.

22114. Post pad. A possible post pad. 25cm wide x 5cm deep. Contained packing of limestone pieces with evidence of mortar.
(22113). Single fill. Stone packing co-mingled with both Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds, animal bone and a lump of lead. This post pad was situated just north of BU8.

22129. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of putative wall [22128] in the north-east corner of trench 22 which may have abutted the eastern wall of BU8. Structure [22095] is part of this wall or stones tumbled from it.

22131. Foundation cut. Cut for foundation of wall [22085], the east-west most northerly wall that runs to the western edge of the trench. This cut was somewhat ephemeral and difficult to determine.
22130. Single fill. A sandy fill containing a Cu-Alloy stud and sherds of Roman pottery.

22134. Wall. Terminal of wall [22080]. 70 cm c 70 cm.

22135. Wall. Truncated end/terminal of wall [22092]. 5 – 10 cm wide, limestone with mortar. 1 course of stones 5cm deep.

22138. Posthole. Under wall [22092] 10cm x 15cm x 35cm deep. Possibly a post supporting a structure before the wall was built.

22141. Foundation cut. Very ephemeral cut of wall [22092] foundation.

Feature in trench 34 that may be connected to the structures in trench 22:

34106. Posthole. This posthole is situated approximately 1m due west of the structure in trench 34. Further postholes [34038], [34024] and [34019] lie to the north of the structure [34020] and in line with posthole [34106]. Similar features were excavated on the south side of wall [22004] and considering their alignment may suggest that a possible structure such as a veranda or lean to may have been supported. If structure [34020] is part of the trench 22 structure then a similar veranda structure may have been present along bits western side.

Roman Phased layers

22081/2. Layer. Both cleaning layers for the 2006 northern extension of the trench. Both layers contained Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds and a fragment of a Copper-Alloy tool.

22083. Layer. Within main part of BU8 containing a high level of Roman and

Iron Age pottery sherds of which the latter accounted for 76.7% (56 sherds) of the total.

22086. Layer. This layer situated in the north-west corner of the trench was very rich in material culture finds, containing three vessel fragments three iron objects, two bone pins, a Copper-Alloy Roman coin, a stylus, a Copper-Alloy pellet, several Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds and a mixture of animal bone including sheep, horse and bird.

22087. Layer. A layer in the southern adjoining room floor to BU8 containing various metal objects together with both Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds.

22088. Layer. A layer close to the main hearth [22006] containing an iron strip and both Iron Age and Roman pottery sherds.

22097. Layer. A layer to the east of the Eastern N/S wall of BU8 in an area extensively damaged by ploughing containing six Iron Age sherds and four Roman sherds.

22098/9. Layers. Two layers along the edge of hearth [22006] with (22098) overlain by (22099). Both layers contained pieces of iron.

22102. Layer. This is a significant layer with evidence of plough damage and containing a very high level of Roman pottery sherds. In total 1,913 pottery sherds were recovered, primarily of coarse wares but included 105 Samian pottery sherds together with three Iron Age sherds.

Roman unphased cuts

22033. Posthole. Shallow posthole or scoop 30cm in diameter which cuts into fill (22044). This cut also cuts [22045] and [22048] suggesting a number of recuts. This cut is in line with series of posthole cuts on the southern edge of the trench.
22028. Single fill. Contained a flint tool.

The following four post holes [22037 – 40] were in line situated on the south side of wall [22011] the southern wall of BU8. and interpreted as the possible supports for a veranda or other structure.

22037. Posthole. Cut of a poorly defined possible posthole with stone packing.
22024. Single fill. Stone packing.

22038. Posthole. Cut of possible posthole set in context (22012). 27cm diameter.
22025. Single fill. Stone packing.

22039. Posthole. Cut of a possible posthole with stone packing.

22026. Single fill. Stone packing.

22040. Posthole. Cut of possible posthole. Poorly defined and shallow with stone packing. Could just be scoop.
22027. Single fill. Stone packing.

22043. Posthole. Cut of possible posthole 26cm in diameter x 8cm deep. Possibly associated with [22039 – 40] the veranda post holes.
22042. Single fill. A chalk and soil fill.

22059. Small pit. 8cm in diameter x 16cm deep (possibly a stake hole) Pit lies on the edge of the possible hearth [22006].
22058. Single fill. No finds recorded.

22072. Posthole. Possibly a shallow scoop. 25cm diameter x 12cm deep.

22073. Wall. Possibly part of the foundation cut and fill of wall [22011]. 2 – 3cm x 12cm deep.

22075.Posthole. South-east side of the trench. Circular cut. No dimensions recorded. Contained stone packing.

22090. Posthole Possibly a natural feature. 56cm in diameter. Ephemeral in nature being cut into sandy soil.

22108. Stake hole. 10cm wide x 25cm deep. Cut not clear. Situated in the S/E corner of the trench.
22107. Single fill. No finds recorded.

22110. Posthole. Cut difficult to determine being damaged through ploughing. 25cm wide x 12cm deep.

22115. Stake hole. In the southern half of BU8.
22116. Single fill. No finds recorded.

22117. Stake hole. In southern half of BU8.
22118. Single fill. No finds recorded.

22119. Stake hole. In the southern half of BU8.
22120. Single fill. No finds recorded.

22122. Posthole. Possible posthole in the northern half of BU8.
22121. Upper fill.
22123. Lower fill. No finds recorded.

22124. Posthole. To the north of BU8.
22125. Single fill. Contained pieces of bone.

22138. Posthole. Under wall [22092] 10cm x 15cm x 35cm deep. Possibly a post

supporting a structure before the wall was built.

Iron Age Phase Cuts

22056. Scoop. Shallow scoop although recorded as a possible post hole. 15cm in Diameter x 2.5 m deep.
22055. Single fill. Contained two pieces of Iron Age pottery.

22142. Posthole. Cut in the north-east part of the trench.
22143. Single fill. Contained two sherds of Iron Age pottery and fragments of animal bone.

Iron Age layers

22034. Layer. Within BU8 at its southern end containing six sherds of Iron Age Pottery.

Pottery Analysis

Trench 22 yielded a very high level of pottery fragments totalling 9,235. This was made up of 407 Iron Age sherds (4.4%) and 8,828 Roman pottery sherds (95.5%).

Iron Age pottery.

Despite Iron Age pottery being a small proportion of the mass of pottery collected at 4.4%, it does represent a high level of Iron Age pottery compared to some other trenches on the Marcham site. The make of the Iron Age pottery is predominantly coarse wares (PCW) at 402 sherds (98.7%) with four sherds of fine ware (PFW) (0.9%) and one piece of decorated ware.

There were 6 contexts that yielded large amounts of Iron Age pottery.

(22001) (subsoil).	28 sherds 6.8%.
(22079).	153 sherds 37.5%. An open area to the west of BU8.
(22083).	56 sherds 13.7%. An area within the BU8.
(22084).	30 sherds 7.3%. Same as 22079.
(22086).	46 sherds 11.3%. An area at the entrance to BU8.
(22087).	22 sherds 5.4%. Same as 22079.

Contexts (22079), (22084) and (22087) form a group of contexts in the open space to the west of the main building BU8.

Roman Pottery.

Of the total 8,828 Roman pottery sherds 7,744 came from a single layer (22102) within the main building BU8 which represents 87.7% of the overall total. This context is part of the group of contexts that yielded high levels of pottery. Three other contexts (22001) subsoil, (22079) and (22086) also yielded high levels of Roman pottery being 1,374 and 153 sherds respectively.

It should be noted that all these contexts for both Iron Age and Roman pottery were extensively disturbed by modern ploughing.

Roman pottery by type.

RCWO. 668 sherds. (7.5%). RFWOX. 1664 sherds. (18.8%). RCWR. 3710 sherds. (42%).
RFWR. 1362 sherds.(15.4%). RFWDS. 31 sherds. (0.3%). SM. 284 sherds. (3.2%).
IMPCC. 18 sherds. (0.2%). RWW. 1096 sherds. (12.4%). RFWW. 157 sherds. (1.7%).
BWW. 81 sherds. (0.9%). DOR. 67 sherds. (0.7%). OXFRS. 77 sherds. (0.8%).
GR. 341 sherds. (3.8%). ROBSH. 107 sherds. (1.2%). D. 368 sherds. (4.1%).
O. 50 sherds. (0.5%).

Spot dates for the following contexts.

(22012) From mid 3rd century to 4th century.
(22079) Mid to late 4th century. This sample included medieval/post medieval pottery.
(22084) Mid to late 2nd century, with sherds of early Oxford ware.
(22086) Mid to late 4th century with post medieval pottery.

Small Finds Analysis
There was a very low level of small finds in trench 22 totalling 84, 20 of which came from topsoil and subsoil contexts, which is 23.8% of the overall sample. This is of course set against a background of extensive plough damage in many areas of the trench. Soil depths in places were less than half a metre over bedrock therefore much of the trench had been greatly disturbed over time, including contexts below subsoil levels. Therefore, the remaining contexts normally regarded as archaeologically significant must be regarded with a degree of caution. In these contexts, 64 finds (76.2%) were made.

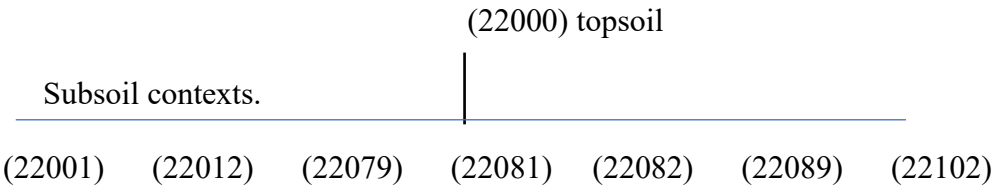
Within the topsoil and subsoil contexts the following 20 finds were recovered.

Cu-Alloy 3rd – 4th century Roman coins.	7
Animal bone game counter.	1
Cu-Alloy earing/finger ring.	2
Vessel glass fragments.	2
Iron objects miscellaneous	6
Cu-Alloy objects miscellaneous.	2

Finds of 64 items from the remaining contexts are as follows.

Cu-Alloy 3rd – 4th century Roman coins.	15	
Flint flakes including 1 scraper.	8	
Vessel glass fragments.	5	including 1 window glass fragment.
Jewellery. 2 beads/1 iron brooch.	3	
Bone. Including 1 bone pin.	3	
Iron objects.	14	
Cu-Alloy objects miscellaneous.	10	
Lead. Miscellaneous objects.	3	Including 1 stylus.
Stone. Quern stone fragment.	1	

Stratigraphic Sequence.



Plough damage.
These are contexts where extensive plough damage was recorded.
[22080]. Wall. Plough damage across the wall.
(22083) a layer that overlies [22092] Wall both exhibiting plough damage.
(22102) a general layer exhibiting extensive plough damage.
(22104) a general layer to the north of the trench in which several long plough marks were recorded.
(22106) as 22104 above.