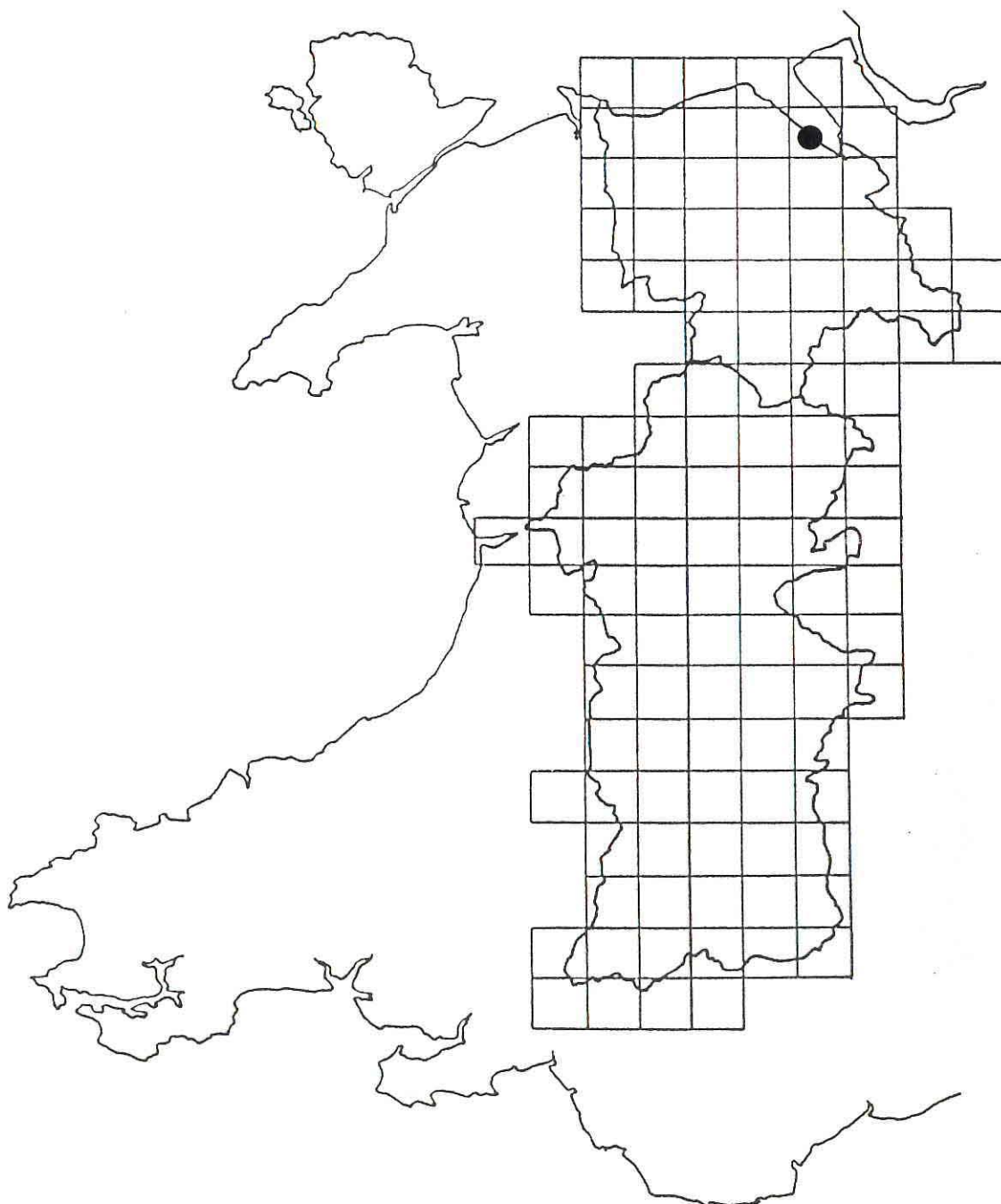


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

261 Chester Road, Flint, Clwyd

EVALUATION REPORT

September 1991



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Introduction

The following archaeological evaluation was carried out in response to a planning application, received by Delyn Borough Council (no 0530/91, July 1991), for a small-scale housing development on land adjacent to 261 Chester Road, Flint. The site's proximity to a known Roman occupation complex, necessitated the examination of the archaeological potential of the area in order that Delyn Borough Council might take this into consideration when assessing the planning application.

The archaeological significance of the Pentre Farm area of Flint is focused on the Roman period, and is based on the evidence provided by previous excavations (Fig 1). During the Roman occupation, the region was an important source of lead, the ore being mined on Halkyn Mountain and processed in the Pentre - Oakenholt area, where several furnaces have been excavated (Blockley 1989, 8). An extensive building complex was excavated at Pentre Farm in 1976-7 and 1981, consisting of a series of timber buildings constructed around AD 120, with subsequent alterations in stone including the addition of a bath suite. The site appears to have fallen into disuse around AD 240. The complex has been interpreted as the residence of an army officer responsible for the management and policing of the local lead industry (O'Leary 1989).

The Roman building as excavated in 1981 lay directly to the north-west of the plot proposed for development, and evidence from those excavations indicated the possibility that Roman remains might extend into the plot.

The Evaluation

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to conduct the evaluation which was carried out between 20-24 August 1991. Four trenches were to be excavated in accordance with the project brief from Delyn Borough Council to determine the presence of and to evaluate any features of archaeological significance. On site, it was found that a building marked on the layout plan was no longer standing and this enabled one continuous L-shaped trench to be excavated parallel to the boundary wall in place of the three originally prescribed (Fig 2). It was not possible to extend the long arm of the trench as far to the SW as originally anticipated because of problems of access.

The results from the trenches were as follows:

Trench ABC (L-shaped 20m x 1m and 6m x 1m)

The top 50cm of mixed overburden, composed of ash, gravel, brick debris and topsoil, was machined off revealing a continuous layer of dark grey-brown clay-silt. Hand removal of this, recovered some pottery fragments. The underlying layer of reddish-brown silty clay contained more pottery fragments, some of known Roman type and a chert blade of prehistoric date. This layer was removed to a depth of 95-110cm.

Several features of interest were identified at this level, notably two 30-40 cm-wide linear features, possibly sill-beam slots, which were on approximately similar alignments to the nearby Roman structures. The features lay at the SW end of the trench. Elsewhere various concentrations of stones at and above the level of the linear features were recorded but could not be interpreted or dated.

Trench D (8m x 1m)

Trench D was cut by machine through recent deposits of topsoil and yellow gravel to a buried topsoil which overlay red-brown alluvial deposits. No archaeological features were recognised.

Conclusions

The results of the evaluation work revealed evidence for the existence of archaeological features, some certainly of Roman date, within the area of the proposed development.

Recommendations

Archaeological features are present within the development area, and may well be affected detrimentally by the proposed development. However, these remains appear to represent only a small part of the southern end of a substantial Roman building, the majority of which has already been totally excavated and recorded. It is thus felt that the features identified during the evaluation do not in themselves warrant preservation in situ; preservation by record (ie excavation) would be more appropriate.

It is recommended that a period of time for archaeological excavation be agreed (within the area specified on Fig 4), preceding the commencement of the development, in order that this record can be made. Thereafter the development should be allowed to proceed under an archaeological watching brief.

Should this recommendation prove unacceptable, the only alternative would appear to be the exclusion of the archaeologically sensitive area from all ground disturbance (eg wall footings, underground services, etc) relating to the development.

Either course may be achieved through the use of a suitable planning condition, or by means of a planning agreement (eg Section 106), drawn up by the planning authority with reference to their archaeological advisers.

Acknowledgements

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R Parry and R J Silvester
September 1991

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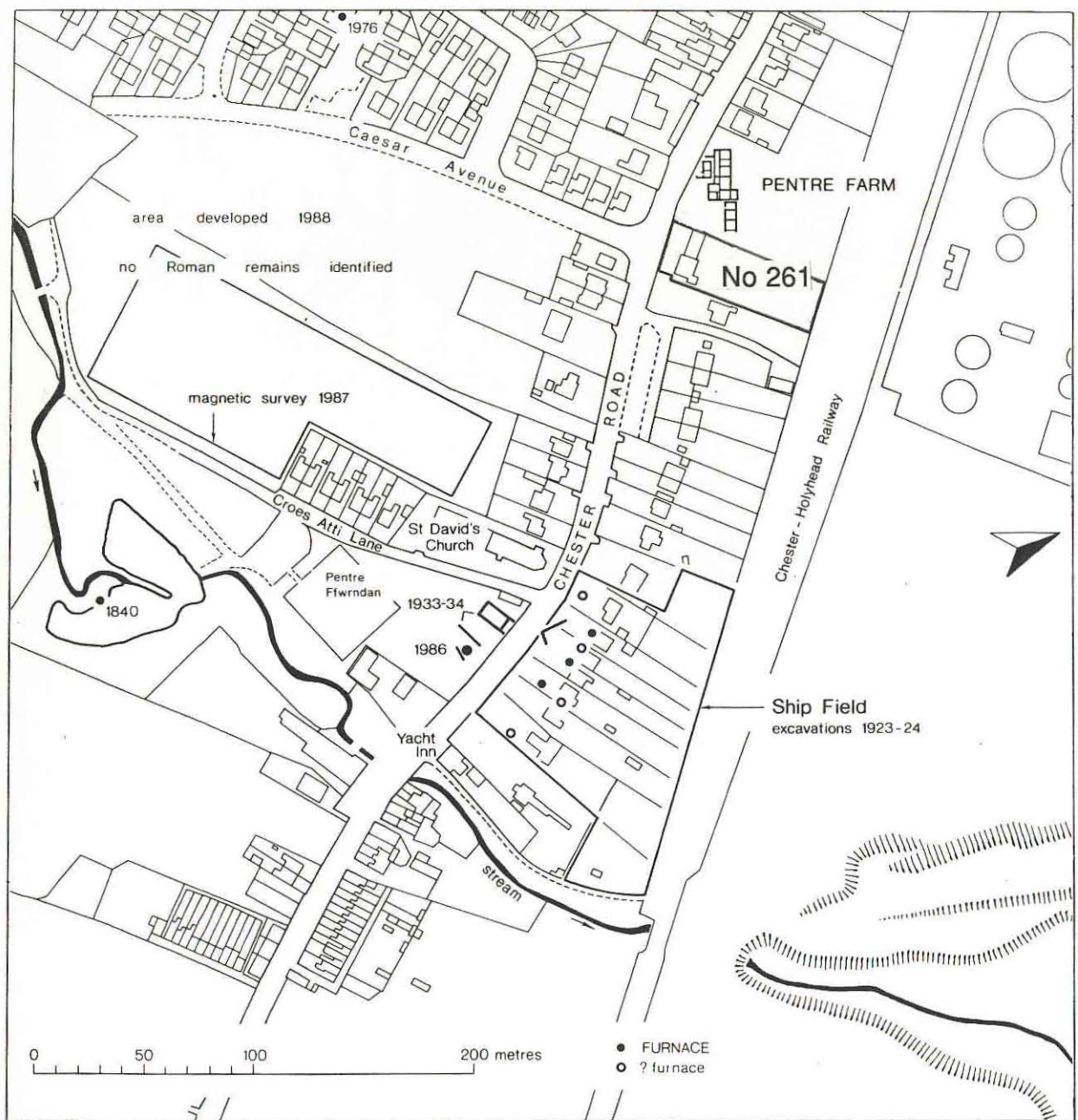


Fig 1
Roman sites near Flint, Clwyd

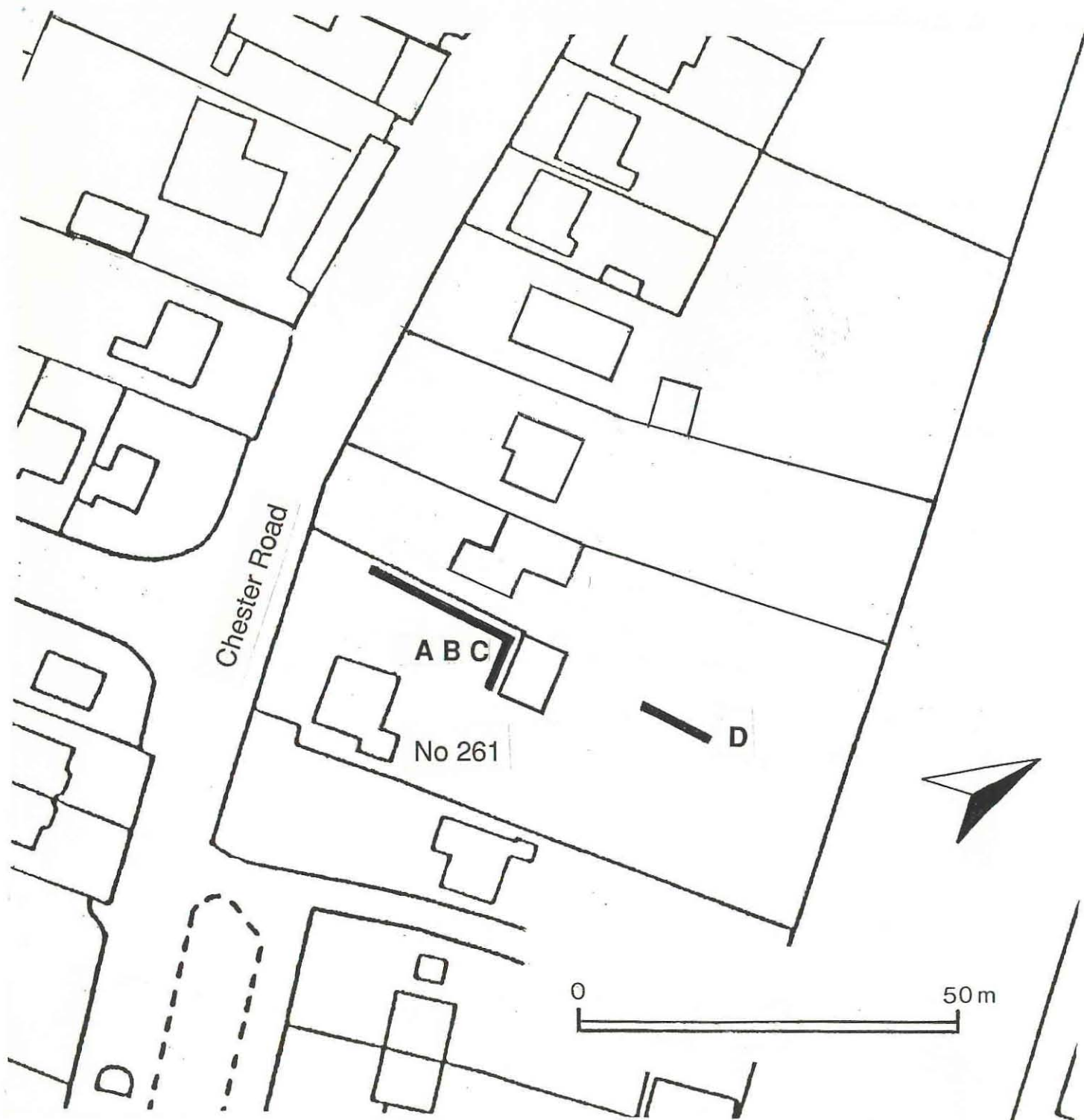


Fig 2
261 Chester Road, Flint: location of excavation trenches August 1991

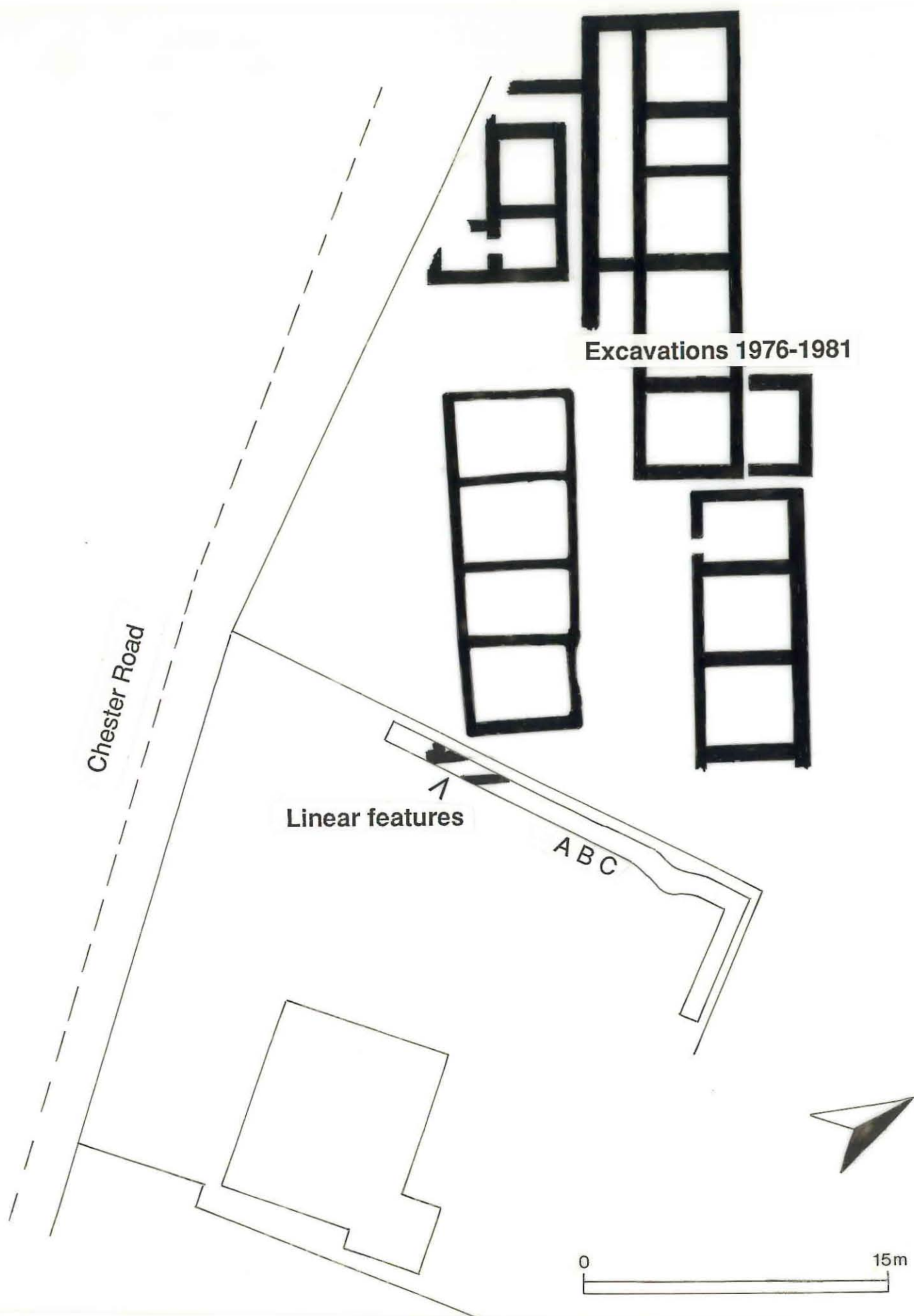


Fig 3
261 Chester Road, Flint: trenches A, B & C in relation to known Roman building

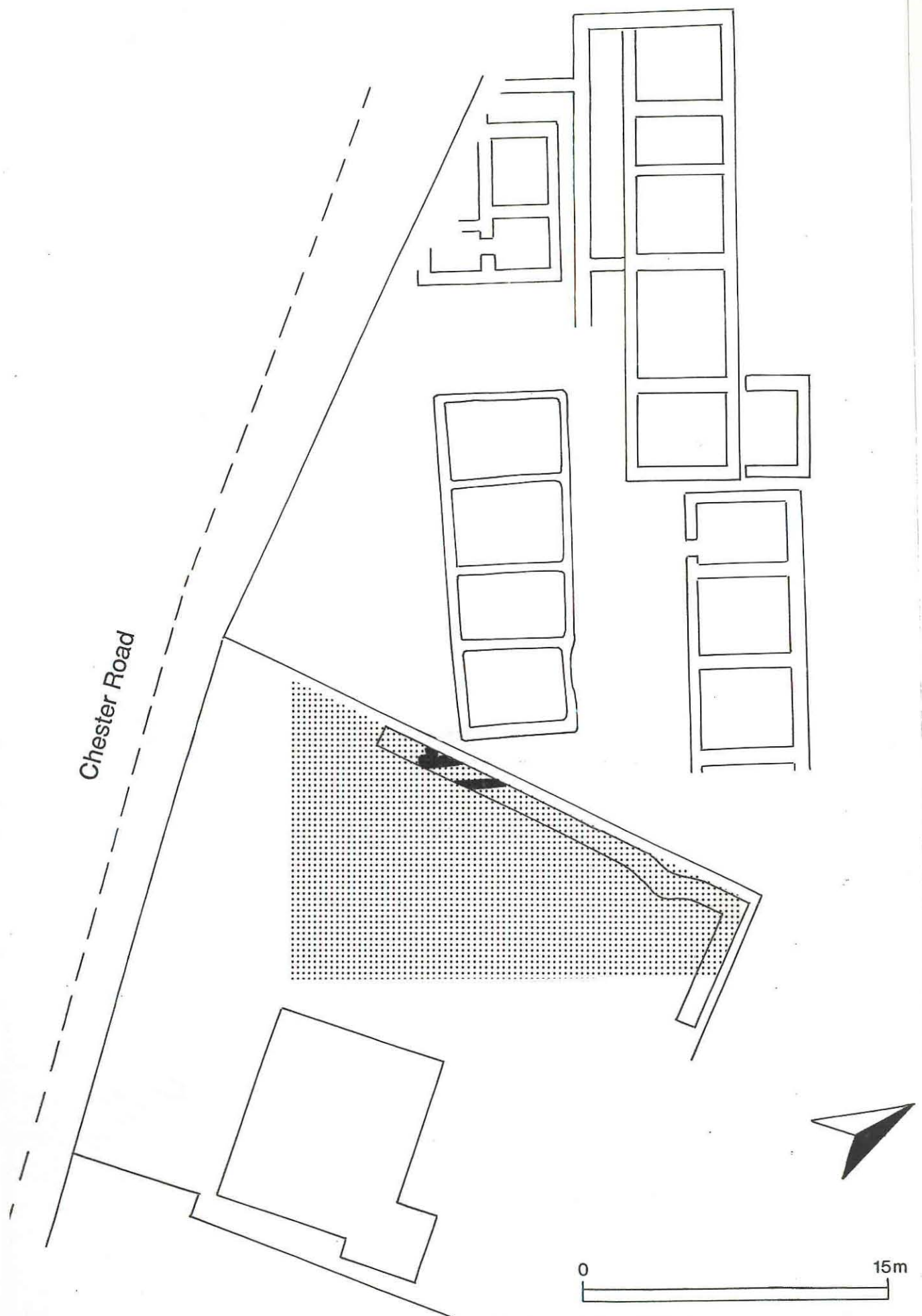


Fig 4
261 Chester Road, Flint: proposed area of further excavation