

Report on Archaeological Excavations
The 'John Robinson Building'

Oatlands Works Depot

Church Street, Oatlands, Tasmania

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1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction and statutory requirements

This document reports on archaeological works which were implemented by Southern Midlands Council as part of the 2013 summer archaeology fieldschool as a voluntary training exercise for tertiary archaeology students.

The rationale for this excavation was to investigate the possible presence of the remains of a large masonry building in the Southern Midlands Council works depot in Church Street, Oatlands (South Parade frontage).



Figure 1.1 – The place (denoted in red). Adapted from GoogleEarth.

The place is not listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, nor is it included on the Heritage Schedule of the *Southern Midlands Planning Scheme 1993*, therefore there are no statutory heritage requirements which relate to archaeology. Southern Midlands Council had initiated the project both as a means of contributing to the archaeological training program as well as part of understanding the site in preparation for any future redevelopment.

1.2. Implementation of archaeological program.

The archaeological program was undertaken over nine days during January 2013. Trench supervision was provided by volunteer archaeologist Sylvana Szydzik, with volunteers Christ Sylvester, Christian Fielder, Bronwyn Woff and Fiona Shanahan.

2. Historical background

2.1. The early settlement of Oatlands

The following is a brief overview of the history of the establishment of Oatlands, in order to contextualise the early sites proposed as part of this research program/

Nineteenth century Oatlands

The first European documentation of the Oatlands district was on the map of Surveyor James Meehan in 1811, who, under the instruction of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, undertook the first survey between Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple (Launceston). Oatlands itself was named by Governor Macquarie on June 3, 1821;

At ¼ past 12, halted at the great lagoon [now Lake Dulverton] (about six miles from Knight's in Westmorland Plains), and fixed on the site of a township on the banks of the said lagoon, naming it "Oatlands" (Macquarie 1821:91).

Bent's Almanac of 1825 describes Oatlands as an 'undeveloped site' (Bent 1825:53), however, the founding of Oatlands was formalised in 1826, when Governor George Arthur divided the colony into nine Police Districts, and appointed Thomas Anstey as Police Magistrate of the Oatlands district (see below). The first formal survey of the town site was undertaken by Surveyor William Sharland in August 1827 (DELM map M19). In 1829, Widowson (1829:108-10) described the township as;

The original road runs through the township of Oatlands, a few sod huts mark the site of the place. Only a few soldiers are to be seen, and a miserable gang of prisoners working in chains.

In a more optimistic account, Dr. James Ross described the township in 1829;

Several cottages are already erected, also an excellent soldiers' barracks and officers quarters. These were built by the Royal Staff Corps, and a church and gaol are in progress (Ross 1830:29-30).

By 1829, there were several permanent buildings on the town site, and the Royal Staff Corps were recalled to New South Wales, the tradesmen being left under the control of Captain Mackay of the 21st Fusiliers (von Stieglitz 1960:43) to further establish the township. Sharland re-surveyed the town in 1832 (DELM map O/20), and the greater optimism in its established was evident, as Sharland surveyed 500 acres of allotments, with 50 miles of streets. Sharland reasoned that being half-way between Launceston and Hobart Town, Oatlands would one day be proclaimed the capital (Weeding, 1988:9). The census of December 1835 revealed that Oatlands had a free population of 598 plus 695 convicts (Statistics of Tasmania 1824-35, table 18).

During the 1830's, Oatlands was booming, with seven hotels, stores, two breweries, wind and steam driven flour mills all thriving off the rural economy. Two hundred buildings were erected during this decade, predominately of sandstone (Weeding 1988:9). Oatlands continued to grow past the middle of the nineteenth century, and became one of the primary woolgrowing regions of Tasmania. This prosperity gave Oatlands a great foothold as a primary centre of the colony and the district was proclaimed a rural municipality in 1861, that year seeing Oatlands with a population of 2333 (Stat. Tas. 1866).

Gradually, following the end of the nineteenth century, with a decline in the wool industry, and a regained confidence in the urban economy, the Oatlands district ceased its rapid rise. Whilst it has always remained the centre of the southern midlands, by the late nineteenth century with the advance in the transport systems in the colony, expected need for Oatlands to become Tasmania's central capital had passed.

2.2. John Robinson – an early pioneer

Little is known about John Robinson himself. He was born in Bristol, England in 1799. In 1819 while living in Bromley, Kent, England he committed an act of forgery. He was convicted on March 15, 1819 and sentenced to transportation to Australia, left England in September and arrived in Tasmania, Australia in 1820.

During the period 1820 - 1831 he entered into a relationship with Ann Hardy, who was married to William Hardy. Over the decade it is believed he fathered 6 children with Ann. He married Johannah Kellow on 31 August 1831 in Oatlands. They had at least one daughter Jane. They probably also had two daughters Barbara and Mary who passed away in infancy. His wife Johannah died in 1842. At the age of 41 he married 19 year old Mary Ann Higgins at Oatlands, Tasmania on December 18, 1843 and had 3 children. Mary Ann died in 1859. He later married Eliza Crossin on 4 January 1860 at Oatlands, Tasmania. He was 55 years of age, she was 37.

During the 1840s, Robinson owned three large landholdings in central Oatlands. One being what is now Provincial Interiors which extended from High Street to the Esplanade, which included a substantial stone residence (still standing) and the tannery complex at rear. He also owned what was later more commonly known as the 'Button Brothers' building on the corner of High and Gay Streets, running to South Parade. It is likely that portions of his early buildings still remain within the later extended commercial complex. He owned the entire town block bounded by High Street, Gay Street, South Parade and Church Street. In 1837 he built a small timber cottage on the High Street frontage (still standing as Robinson Cottage accommodation) as well as a row of cottages (colloquially known as 'Robinson's Row' – at least part of this row (possibly representing an original two small cottages) remains standing.

The building being investigated here is somewhat of a mystery in terms of its use. It is depicted as a similar size to 'Robinson's Row and runs parallel to that row of buildings. It appears that there was a series of small buildings (probably privies) running

between these two larger buildings. It is possible that the building in question was also a row of cottages, however there has been no corroborating historical data to support (nor refute) that theory. See further discussion below.

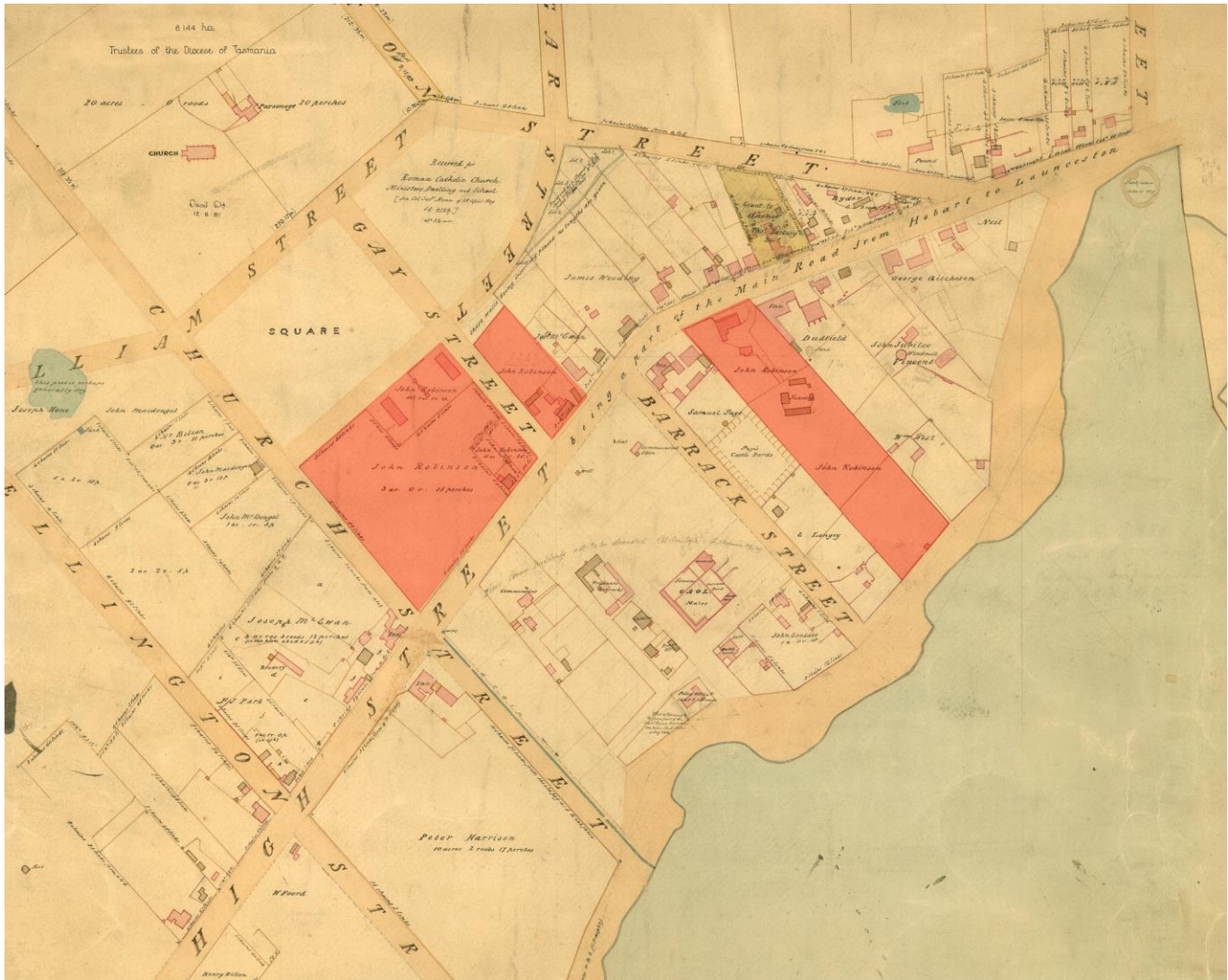


Figure 2.1 – Land owned by Robinson in central Oatlands c1846.

2.3. Robinson’s South Parade building

A very substantial stone building, possibly some form of industrial building, once stood on the western side of Southern Midlands Council’s Oatlands works depot. The building was probably constructed during the mid-1830s and was demolished prior to 1876. Extensive historical research has failed to find any information on the building apart from the likelihood that it was built by John Robinson, a prominent and early Oatlands entrepreneur who had various industries on the town.

Very little is known about this building – and the only known depiction of it is on Calder’s 1846 survey of Oatlands as well as a scant sketch of the building (as part of a panorama of Oatlands) from 1845. Sharland’s 1827 and 1832 surveys of Oatlands do not show this building, so it is assumed to be constructed post 1832 and pre 1846 – which is a time when Robinson was known to be undertaking building activity at Oatlands.

The land upon which the building was situated was part of a grant to Robinson in 1836. Prior to that he held land elsewhere in Oatlands, having established several buildings, including stores and cottages in High Street and the tannery complex in what is now Callington Park.

Robinson’s career as an entrepreneur at Oatlands appears to have spanned several decades, ending in his death in 1876. Shortly after that, Robinson’s holdings were offered for auction, with an advertisement in the Mercury dated 20th September 1876 giving descriptions of the 10 allotments on offer and the buildings thereon. Although his holdings appear to have been subdivided and further developed between 1846 and 1876, it is possible to read the auction descriptions in conjunction with the 1846 survey and gain an idea of the development of those allotments. His allotment fronting South Parade, which is very likely to contain the site in question is described as *‘a really capital paddock fronting South Parade..... This is a capital allotment for building purposes’* which suggests strongly that the area was vacant land (noting that the sale notice listed great detail of improvements on other allotments as a means of promoting the developed value of the land). It is therefore a safe assumption that Robinson’s building on that lot was demolished (or lost by some other means - e.g. fire) sometime between 1846 and 1876.

No depictions of the area during the late nineteenth century have been found, however panoramas of Oatlands taken from Burbury’s Hill (c1910) and the Anglican Church tower (c1930s) show the area devoid of development. Similarly the 1946 aerial photograph of Oatlands, and subsequent aerials from each following decade indicate that there was no development on the land through the twentieth century and these give no hint as to the former presence of any building on that part of the site.

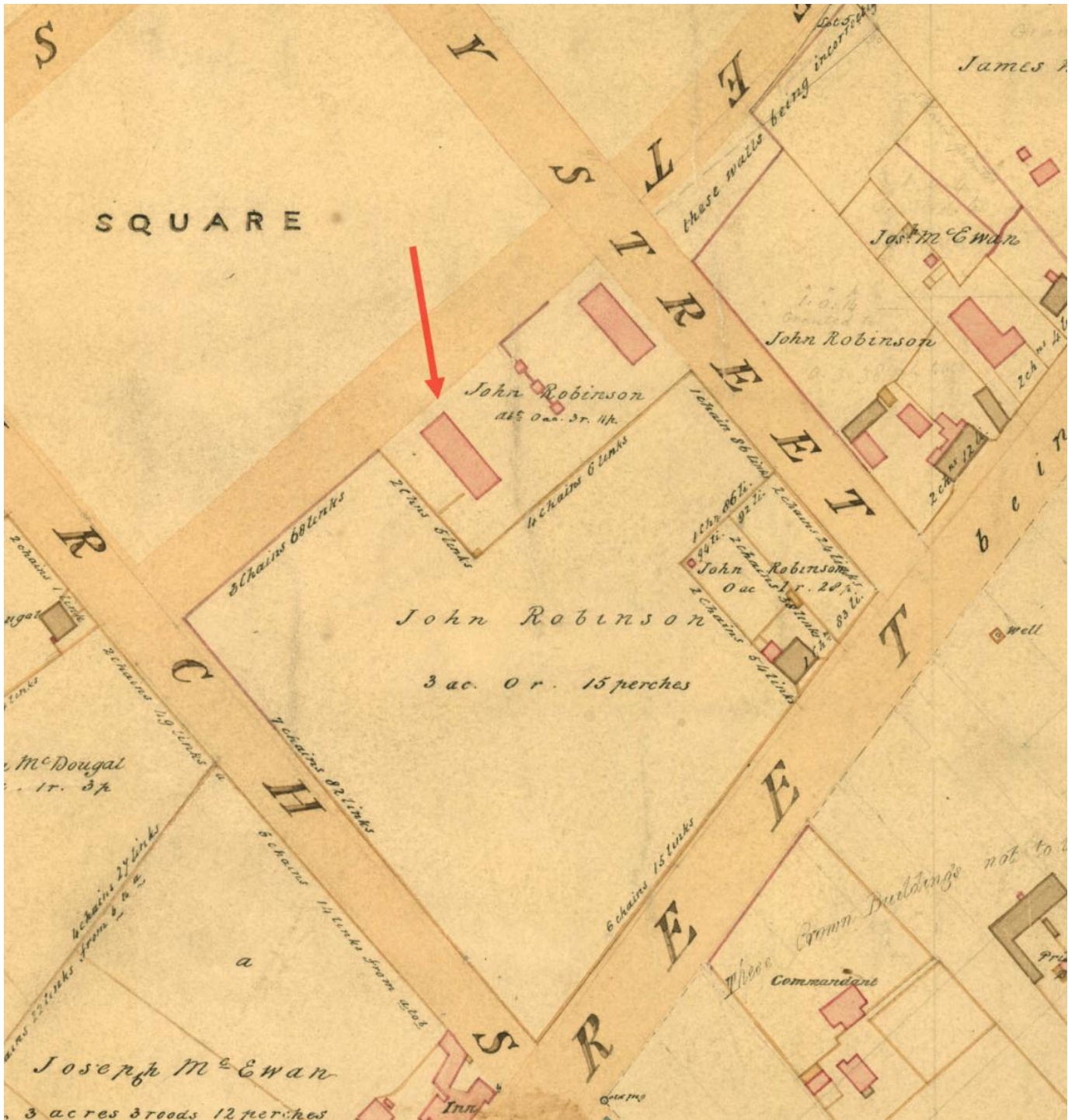


Figure 2.2 – Excerpt from Calder’s 1846 survey of Oatlands, Robinson’s building depicted by red arrow (DPIPWE O/19).



Figure 2.3 – Excerpt of an 1845 panoramic sketch of Oatlands showing some of Robinson's buildings (Mitchell Library).

3. Approach to archaeological works

3.1. The location of the building (hence archaeological works location)

The location of Robinson’s building are documented on Calder’s 1846 survey of Oatlands, which has proven to be highly accurate in other archaeological projects in Oatlands. This assists in the planning of archaeological investigations.



Figure 3.1 – Overlay of the footprint of Robinson’s buildings over a 2010 GoogleEarth image, the building in question denoted by red arrow.



Figure 3.2 – Approximate location of Robinson's building in the SMC works depot yard (facing east).

3.2. Expected archaeological remains

As so little is known about the building it is difficult to predict the nature of the remains. We know that the building was a very substantial – measuring approximately 20 x 10 metres and constructed from masonry. We also know nothing about its demolition – e.g. how thoroughly it was demolished – or was it burnt?. If it were an industrial building then there may also be associated infrastructure. Robinson was a very prominent and early businessman in Oatlands – during the 1830s and 1840s he is known to have owned several houses, stores and was the proprietor of the tannery in what is now Callington Park (the subject of test excavations in 2012). The 1846 survey shows some odd features to the north of this building – a row of three small buildings and a stone wall – it is unknown what these buildings were or if they were related to this building. Nonetheless, it is expected that at least the demolition of the building would have left substantial foundations.

Recent historical investigations surrounding the development of the works depot site have failed to reveal any development in this vicinity since the pre-1876 demolition of this building – the area having been vacant land until the expansion of the works depot into this area in the 1970s, accordingly post-demolition disturbance is expected to be minimal

Apart from structural remains of Robinson's building and any associated infrastructure, there may be artifacts relating to the use/occupation of that building. These may offer diagnostic properties which would contribute to the research objectives outlined below.

3.3. Research questions

Tier 1 questions

- Are there any archaeological remains of Robinson's pre-1846 building and are they in the location depicted on Calder's survey?
- What is the nature of those remains?
- What is the depth of those remains?
- Do these remains give any indication about the type of site?

Note that these questions are important when considering the conservation of archaeological remains during the future development of that site as the swimming pool carpark (and associated infrastructure),

Tier 2 questions

Note that it is difficult to frame Tier 2 and 3 questions in the absence of knowing anything initially about the site itself (e.g. history, function, duration etc.).

- If the site type is identifiable, does this give any insight into the commercial activities of Robinson or the general commercial activities of early Oatlands?

Tier 3 questions

- Subject to the findings of Tier 1 and 2 questions, does this site provide any comparable datasets or assemblages which might be compared with similar sites regionally, thematically or temporally? A further review of comparative site types would be required once more about this site is known.

3.4. Specific archaeological rationale and methodology

Methodology

It is proposed to excavate a 1-metre wide strip across the footprint of the building as depicted on the 1846 Calder survey – this trench is likely to be approximately 10-12 metres long. This area may be widened in a perpendicular direction either eastwards or westwards should remains indicate definite structure any cross walls etc. The trench will be located to the western end of the building – subject to the requirements of maintaining use of that area of the works depot.

After marking out, the trench will have gravel stripped by a mechanical excavator (guided by an archaeologist) until such time as the more recent fill (gravel etc) is cleared. Excavation by hand will follow as per the general methodology detailed above.

Excavation will continue until either: significant remains are found and investigated sufficiently to enable research questions to be addressed, or until such time as it is concluded that the trench is devoid of any structure or diagnostic artifacts.

It is not intended to remove any significant structure (if found) as it is proposed that research questions can be addressed without the need to remove such structure. Any artifacts removed will be managed according to the general artefact methodology as detailed above.

Note that recent tests for contaminants have cleared this section of the works depot of the likelihood of contaminated material – this area having only been used in recent decades for parking of vehicles and machinery.

Post excavation site treatment

Following excavation, it is intended to cover any structural remains and ground/floor surfaces with geofabric and backfilled with clean fill. The area will be re-gravelled. Any necessary conservation works to structural remains (e.g. stone repairs) will be done in consultation with Heritage Tasmania's Heritage Advisory Team and the Centre for Heritage at Oatlands stonemasonry team.

Analysis of contexts

As there is very little history known of this site, it is difficult to propose likely contexts for the analysis of the site until excavation occurs. At this stage the following only can be proposed:

- Indigenous/pre European period (pre 1830's)
- Robinson's occupation (c1840s-pre 1876)
- Post Robinson's occupation (pre 1876-1970s)
- Works depot (1970s-present).

Analysis of structure, fill and artifacts will be undertaken within the contexts of those periods and any other contexts that can be determined archaeologically in-line with the key research questions as outlined above.

The thematic analysis and interpretation of artifacts will be guided by the research question framework as outlined above. Depending on the types and quantities of artifacts excavated, post- excavation analysis of artifacts is expected to be done both within the contexts of the above research questions, as well as comparison against other available artifact assemblages of relevant type, or from comparative sites nationally (and/or internationally).

4. Results of excavations

4.1. Field Supervisor Journal entries.

22.01.2013

Selected trench location based on aerial and overlay provided in the research design. Trench is located 13m east of the works depot cyclone fence along South Parade, 5.5m north of the northern fence (+ depot boundary), approx. 9.5m south of wooden fence (+ depot boundary).

Mechanical excavator used to remove car park gravel layer. Initially a tooth bucket was used, however, this ripped up the fill and gravel, so it was changed to a 1.7m wide mud bucket. Gravel, road base and stone (not local) fill was removed to all approx. depth of 200 – 450mm across the trench, where a brown sandy silt layer with roots was identified.

A baseline was established to determine the trench and numbering system. The metal post forming the NW square property boundary of the works depot was designated '0', with numbers running E/E along the north '0' property boundary and letters running N/S down the west boundary. The trench is located at squares 14J to 14AC. Trench north oriented with property boundary and trench, not true north.

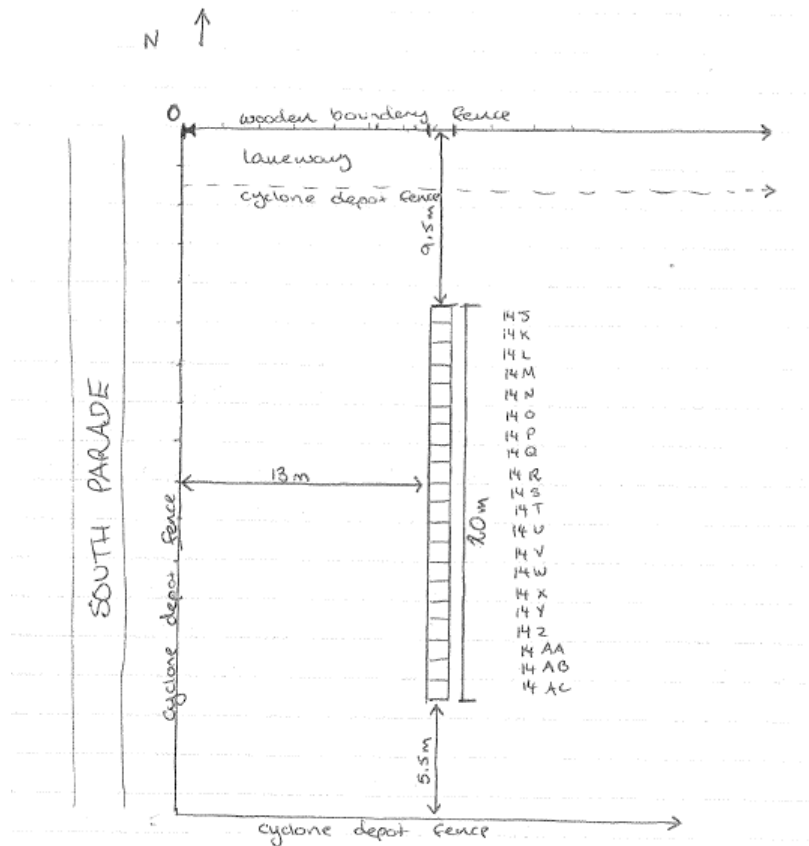


Figure 4.1 – Trench location and area key.



Figure 4.2 – Pre-excavation overview of the trench location (facing south).



Figure 4.3 – Initial clearance of modern surface material (facing North).

What was initially considered as a possible south wall was identified in squares 14Y – comprising loose orangey sandy deposit and fragile sandstone pieces – very obvious and different to surrounding dark brown sandy silt. Possible wall measured approx. 800mm across and appears 150mm below current car park surface. Olive green glass bottle fragment identified in silt next to possible wall.



Figure 4.4 – Initial clearance of a linear feature in Y (later proved to be fill but may represent a filled foundation trench).

Clear glass, olive green glass and ceramic rim fragment identified in dark brown silt in square 14O. Silt in the northern portion of trench has orange, yellow and red sandstone flecks throughout.

Porcelain cup rim fragments identified in situ in square 14T and one clear glass fragment. Some charcoal flecks through dark brown silt context.

Clay pipe stem, brown bottle glass and blue glass fragments and slate fragment identified in situ in square 14S

- Clear glass fragment in 14U
- Green glass fragment in 14K at 220mm depth
- Brown glass (jar?) rim fragment 14R at 300mm depth
- Silver ceramic (jar?) rim fragment 14V at 400mm depth
- 2 ceramic frags – unprov, just west of trench

23.01.2013

Began excavating by hand, in squares 14X and 14Y.

14X

Started removing context 102 (dark brown sandy silt) across entire square. The upper levels of this contained gravel and rubble from context 101 above.

Context 102 approx. 50 to 500mm in depth across square and overlies mid brown sandy silt (context 105) in the SW corner of the square and sandstone and rubble? In the remainder of the square. Some of this rubble may form a possible linear feature?



Figure 4.5 – Initial exposure of sandstone rubble in X (later proven to be displaced rubble fill and not structure).

Finds in context 102 include – glass, wood, possible lino fragment, flow blue ceramic fragments, glass bottle stopper – ‘GEORGE WHITBROW’, slate, and brown transfer ceramic fragments.

14Y

Started removing context 103 (orange sandstone linear feature), very loose, crumbling and on wall – like as initially thought to be. Loose sandy soil with gravel throughout, small to medium sized sandstone pieces and patches of brown, black and white sandy clay and small rootlets. One large sandstone piece in centre of square. No artefacts in context 103.

Soil in linear feature becoming darker and more brown than orange in colour – assigned new context number to be safe – number 104.

Removed context 102 in 14Y, contained metal back of pocket watch and large glass fragment. Context 102 overlay context 105 in NE corner of trench and sandstone and stone possible linear feature (as discussed above) in NW of trench.

24.01.2013

Began excavating in squares 14T, 14U, 14Z, 14O and 14AC, continuing excavation in 14X and 14Y.

14T

Started removing what we think is still context 102, that extends across the whole trench. 2 squarish sandstone blocks – large – seem to be in alignment NW/SE visible on surface. Context 102 appears to be the same here and elsewhere across trench, containing orange, red and yellow sandstone flecks.



Figure 4.5 – Initial exposure of sandstone rubble in T (later proven to be displaced rubble fill and not structure).

Textile - nylon stocking – identified in NW corner of square and plastic – possibly a bristle from a scrubbing brush.

Context 102 contains a more frequent amount of medium sized pieces of sandstone than other squares, this is located between and around the large sandstone pieces. Very compact and increasingly so with depth. Patch of context 102 in the NW corner that does not contain frequent sandstone pieces like the remainder of the square, this patch is deeper than the surrounds and contains much glass. Artefacts decreasing with depth, they appear to be on surface of square after machine scrape.

14U

Began removing context 102, found to overly mid brown sandy silt, named context 106. Context 102 contained slate (fairly thick), green glass champagne style bottle top and ceramic. Digging in this trench ceased at lunch.

14X

Continuing to remove context 102, artefacts decreasing with depth. Under context 102 lies context 107 – brown silt with 90% rock – small to medium sized chunks of sandstone and larger pieces of unidentified rock.

Removal of context 105 in the SW corner of trench – context 105 is brown sandy silt, mottled with darker patches containing small to medium chunks of white sandstone which is red inside when broken and infrequent rootlets.

14O

Started removing context 102 around medium sized sandstone blocks, apparently random rubble. Context 102 is similar to other squares, flecks of charcoal appearing across square. Digging In this square ceased at lunch.

14AC

Started removing context 102, similar to remainder of trench – sandy silt containing sandstone. Much glass in upper levels of context, and some plastic. Large stones appearing approx. 50mm into context 102.

*Linear feature in square 14Y unlikely to be related to the structure we are investigating... at this stage.

25.01.2013

Began with excavation of squares 14J and 14K with mechanical excavator, council needs roadway back. Excavation identified 5 contexts and base of sandstone bedrock. These were assigned contexts 1 – 5 and will be reassigned later.

Context 1 (101)

10YR 6/2 very dark grey coarse grained sandy gravel – car park fill. Compact and dry.

Context 2 (102)

2.5YR 3/1 very dark grey fine grained sandy silt, friable and moist. Orange and red sandstone flecks and pieces and charcoal flecks throughout.

Context 103 (106)

2.5YR 4/2 dark greyish brown, fine grained sand, friable and moist.

Context 104 (108)

10YR 5/8 yellowish brown, fine grained sandy silt, moist mottled with 2.5Y 5/4 light olive brown sand. 10R ¾ dusky red patches of sand at the into phase between context 3 and 4.

Context 105 (110)

7.5YR 5/6 strong brown fine grained sandy clay, moist mottled with GLEY 1 6/1 grey.

Sandstone bedrock – 7.5YR 5/6 strong brown mottled with GLEY 2.5/1 bluish black.

Green glass bottle top identified during mechanical excavation – labelled misc.

Continued excavating 102 in squares 14V, 14AA and 14AC, and 105 in square 14X.

Excavation of 105 in 14X revealed large concave sandstone blocks at base of 105 – looks to be randomly placed and not structural at this stage.

Rained off site at 12:30. Cleaned artefacts to date, then continued excavation from 3:30 to 4:30 .

14V

Removal of context 102 revealed 106 and possibly 107.

14J, 14K, 14L, 14M, 14N and 14O were backfilled without excavation and recording to allow the council to use the car park.

It was not thought the structure would extend into these squares.

27.01.2013

Worked on squares 14W, 14V, 14AA, 14AB and 14AC.

14V

Continued to remove context 102. Photographed then moved onto next square.



Figure 4.6 – Sandstone rubble in V – concluded as being insignificant fill.

14W

Started to remove context 102. Identified charcoal patch in NE corner of square.

14X

Removed 107 in the remainder of square. Becoming rockier and context 105 – orangey sand appearing beneath the rocks.

14AA

Chris removing context 102. Contexts 106 and 107 appearing below. Very rocky.

14AB

Removing context 102.

14AC

Removing context 102, 107 appearing below. Fragments of brick appearing at top of context 107.

Clustered together but shallow. 107 appears to overlie light brown/ grey sand. 107 removed completely in NW corner.

28.01.2013

Set out to remove context 102 across entire trench, to see if context 107 (and 106) appears below.

14W

Began to remove 102.

14X

Removing context 107 – and larger rocks within it. These appear to be randomly placed large sandstone rubble. 107 contained brick and mortar/ plaster fragments – similar to yesterday. Coming down onto lighter context – becoming orangier and clayier – this was assigned context 108 – orange clayed sand.



Figure 4.7 – Completion of X revealing a mix of natural sandstone and some rubble fill.

14AB

Began removing remainder of context 102. Decided to concentrate on two squares and 'aggressively' excavate to see what is below the rubble squares. 14X and 14AC were chosen.

Context 106 identified in south side of square AB and 107 in north side.

14T

This square also chosen for 'aggressive' removal. Began removal of 107 with mattock – very compact with frequent sandstone pieces and rubble. Identified several large 'cut' sandstone blocks, however, they do not appear to be in any real alignment and are likely fill.

14AB and 14AC

Removal of context 107 revealed large sandstone rubble beneath, overlaying lighter sand – context 106. Seems to be sandy (106) gap between large 'cut' block in 14Ac and context 107 in 14AB.

Continued excavation of 106 and 107 in squares AB and AC.



Figure 4.8 – Completion of AC revealing a mix of natural sandstone and some rubble fill.

14X

Concentrated on removal of context 107 – including large sandstone rubble, followed newly identified context 108 and identified continuation of concave sandstone feature.

Have not yet identified any evidence of use/ purpose or existence of the Robinson building. Domestic items in 102 suggest fill over entire site/ trench and larger sandstone cut blocks suggest fill.

Sandstone feature (concave flattish feature) in 14X could be natural.

Linear feature (103 and 104) is likely to be a trench excavated through this area at a later time – it appears in the E and W profile, cut through context 101.

29.01.2013

After discussion and not finding any conclusive evidence for the John Robinson building in the concentrated excavation in squares 14AB/ AC, 14T and 14X it was decided to cease excavation at this site.

Worked to remove context 102 across most squares and to undertake required final cleaning, photographing and levels data.

Each square was cleaned, photographed (plans and west profile), and a plan drawn, then levels taken for each context at the NW, NE, SE and SW then the centre. Squares were not done in order.

Dumpy was set up west of the centre of the trench. 2 back sites were chosen and the height of the dumpy was taken from the bottom of the eye piece.

Refer to Appendix A for survey data and context summaries. Context sheets are archived with Southern Midlands Council.

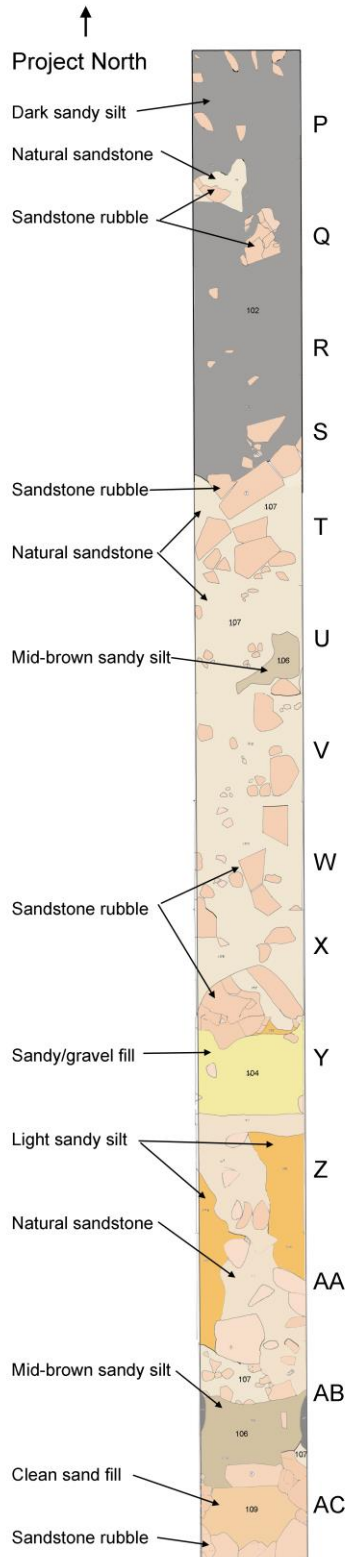


Figure 4.9 – Overview sketch of features as per trench layout.

4.2. Discussion and archaeological conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the excavations described above (read in conjunction with the project archive):

- The site offers a very limited lens of any form of survival of early cultural material - limited to a thickness of (max.) 200mm between the sub-base of the existing parking/roadway surface and the top of bedrock.
- Accordingly, there is limited chance of the physical presence of historical/archaeological material on (at least) this part of the site.
- No definitive evidence of John Robinson's building, nor any other early building was found in the trench – which according to historical sources would certainly have intercepted at least one wall of the building if those remains had survived.
- No artifacts that could be definitively associated with Robinson-era occupation were found – in fact most were later-c19th and c20th, which suggests site disturbance post-demolition/loss of the Robinson building.
- It appears that Robinson's building was very thoroughly demolished and/or the site has had extensive disturbance post-demolition which has removed any substantial surviving archaeological material to which archaeological potential could be ascribed.
- The only possible archaeological signature of the Robinson building may be the linear filled trench in segment Y of the trench. This may be a filled foundation trench and does approximately coincide with the southern wall of the Robinson building. With scant but more modern artifacts found within this fill, it is also possible that it is a later service or drainage channel which has been filled. This in itself is not sufficient to draw any firm conclusion on the presence/location of the Robinson building.

5. Addressing research questions

Consistent with the 'Tiered research question' approach outlined in the Tasmanian Heritage Council's *Guidelines for Historical Archaeological Research on Registered Places*¹, the following questions were considered in the current investigation program:

Tier 1 Questions: These questions outline the essential knowledge base needed for any site research or significance evaluations. Such questions are often empirical in nature, and straightforward answers can be sought and often identified – generally limited to a physical knowledge of that particular place. Questions relevant to the place may include:

- Are there any archaeological remains of Robinson's pre-1846 building and are they in the location depicted on Calder's survey?
 - o No definitive evidence of the Robinson building was found in the course of these works.
- What is the nature of those remains?
 - o Although substantial masonry remains were expected, no such remains were found.
- What is the depth of those remains?
 - o The nature of the site leaves little depth for the survival of archaeological material and it is likely that the Robinson building has been demolished or subsequently disturbed to below historic ground level.
- Do these remains give any indication about the type of site?
 - o Not applicable to the lack of definitive remains.

Answers to these questions provide a foundation of information about the structure, type, use and duration of site occupation which enables the researcher to consider a second tier of questions.

Tier 2 Questions: Conclusions that can be drawn about a site that connect the material remains found on a site to specific behavior. For instance, how do artifacts relate to the lifeways of the household that lived on the site? For instance, do any artifacts represent class, gender, taste and health/hygiene of those living on the site? Particularly if artifacts can be specifically dated and with supplementary historical research artifact assemblages from this site may contribute knowledge and provide tangible connectedness to known early Launceston residents and workers and their families, and how they lived.

- If the site type is identifiable, does this give any insight into the commercial activities of Robinson or the general commercial activities of early Oatlands?
 - o The lack of diagnostic artifacts and/or structure means that this question cannot be addressed.

Tier 3 Questions: These questions represent the highest level of inquiry. Such questions associate the activities and behavior at individual sites with broad social, technological and cultural developments – which can be of interest on local, national or global lines of enquiry. Whilst these questions posed for a single site may not reach conclusions in the short term (as Tier 1

¹ <http://www.heritage.tas.gov.au/media/pdf/Archae%20ResGlines%20%20FINAL%20-%20June%202009.pdf>

and 2 questions might) – the collection of data can contribute to future research by the provision of a comparable dataset. The goal of such research is to develop increasingly refined and tested understandings of human cultures within broader theoretical or comparative contexts. Lines of wider enquiry that findings from investigations at the place may contribute to are:

- Subject to the findings of Tier 1 and 2 questions, does this site provide any comparable datasets or assemblages which might be compared with similar sites regionally, thematically or temporally? A further review of comparative site types would be required once more about this site is known.
 - o The lack of diagnostic artifacts and/or structure means that this question cannot be addressed.

6. Remaining archaeological potential, interpretation & recommendations for future works

The archaeological program has tested a substantial cross-section running N-S across the site and is considered to have given a good indication of localised site conditions insofar as they relate to the Robinson building footprint.

It is concluded that the likely footprint of Robinson's building and the near environs have no little or no further archaeological potential.

Value has been gained from these works as a training exercise, which has provided 8+ days of field training and recording for tertiary archaeology students.

The story of John Robinson as a colonial entrepreneur at Oatlands is a valuable one, and there may be archaeological linkages from investigation of his other sites. This may guide future archaeological initiatives at Oatlands.

Whilst the footprint and environs of Robinson's building are likely to have little or no archaeological potential, there is still a chance of other deeper features which may have survived the demolition of the building and subsequent disturbance (e.g. wells, cesspits etc.). For that reason any future works in the immediate vicinity which require major (either deep or widespread) excavation should be archaeologically monitored or at least have a call-in provision to brief works crew to call-in archaeological input should any such remains be encountered. Note that under the current statutory heritage requirements, there is no legislative requirement to do so – any such monitoring should be undertaken by Southern Midlands Council as a proactive example of archaeological management. If the site were ever to change hands, then archaeological input by a private or commercial owner might not be equitable in the absence of a legislative requirement to do so.



APPENDIX A: LEVELS DATA AND CONTEXT SUMMARY

LEVELS DATA

Height of dumpy: 1.45m

Backsight 1: top of concrete at posthole forming NW corner of property (0 point used for grid) 2.260

Backsight 2: centre of sewer cap. 18m west of trench 1.805

14P

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.650 | 1.520 | 1.420 | 1.510 | |
| Base (102) | 1.830 | 1.775 | 1.725 | 1.715 | 1.770 |

14Q

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.515 | 1.420 | 1.305 | 1.515 | |
| Base (mix of 102 and 107) | 1.735 | 1.720 | 1.710 | 1.725 | 1.760 |

14AC

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.145 | 1.080 | 1.090 | 1.110 | |
| 102 | 1.490 | 1.480 | 1.485 | 1.455 | |
| 107 | 1.600 | 1.590 | 1.550 | 1.560 | |
| 106 | 1.700 | 1.650 | 1.615 | 1.635 | |
| 109 | 1.720 | 1.735 | 1.735 | 1.735 | 1.765 |

14AB

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.147 | 1.088 | 1.090 | 1.141 | |
| 102 | 1.502 | 1.950 | 1.478 | 1.489 | |
| 106 | | | 1.619 | 1.615 | |
| 107 | 1.589 | 1.561 | | | |
| Base (106) | | | 1.709 | 1.709 | 1.681 |
| Base (107) | | | | | 1.568 |

14AA

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.239 | 1.109 | 1.106 | 1.148 | |
| 102 | 1.518 | 1.539 | 1.528 | 1.515 | |
| 106 (Base) | 1.632 | 1.618 | | | |
| 107 (Base) | | | 1.555 | 1.602 | 1.598 |

14Z

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.220 | 1.085 | 1.085 | 1.205 | |
| 102 | 1.575 | 1.580 | 1.530 | 1.575 | |
| 106 | 1.630 | 1.605 | 1.580 | 1.600 | |
| 107 (Base) | 1.665 | 1.605 | 1.605 | 1.635 | 1.700 |

Dumpy height: 1.440m

Back sight 1: 2.245

Back sight 2: 1.635

14X

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.220 | 1.160 | 1.160 | 1.210 | |
| 102 | 1.600 | 1.590 | 1.575 | 1.585 | |
| 107 | 1.725 | 1.600 | | 1.630 | |
| 105 | | | 1.680 | | |
| Base (108 and rock) | 1.855 | 1.800 | 1.765 | 1.865 | 1.810 |

14R

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.515 | 1.380 | 1.360 | 1.450 | |
| 102 | 1.700 | 1.685 | 1.650 | 1.680 | 1.675 |

14V

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.325 | 1.395 | 1.345 | 1.295 | |
| 102 | 1.630 | 1.585 | 1.630 | 1.580 | |
| 107 (base) | 1.730 | 1.785 | 1.650 | 1.600 | 1.680 |

14U

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.331 | 1.297 | 1.300 | 1.251 | |
| 102 | 1.640 | 1.643 | 1.628 | 1.572 | |
| 107 (Base) | 1.730 | 1.732 | 1.662 | 1.617 | 1.680 |

14T

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.320 | 1.398 | 1.350 | 1.251 | |
| 102 | 1.610 | 1.582 | 1.642 | 1.572 | |
| 107 (Base) | 1.615 | 1.692 | 1.735 | 1.728 | 1.632 |

14S

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.371 | 1.450 | 1.405 | 1.325 | |
| 102 (Base in N) | 1.652 | 1.680 | 1.641 | 1.603 | |
| 107 (Base in S) | | | 1.708 | 1.627 | |

14V

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.178 | 1.218 | 1.223 | 1.080 | |
| 102 | 1.575 | 1.582 | 1.559 | 1.556 | |
| 104 (Base) | 1.752 | 1.789 | 1.655 | 1.642 | 1.742 |

14W

| | NW | NE | SE | SW | Centre |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Surface (101) | 1.220 | 1.172 | 1.218 | 1.262 | |
| 102 | 1.545 | 1.545 | 1.556 | 1.583 | |
| 107 (Base) | 1.598 | 1.652 | 1.648 | 1.608 | 1.645 |

CONTEXT SUMMARY

| CONTEXT | DESCRIPTION | EXTENT |
|---------|---|---------------------|
| 101 | Gravel and rubble car park fill | Entire Trench |
| 102 | Dark (almost black) sandy silt | Entire Trench |
| 103 | Linear feature – orange sandy gravel rubble | 14Y |
| 104 | Linear feature – orangey brown, (becoming browner...0 sandy gravel fill | 14Y |
| 105 | Brown sandy silt below 102, mottled with darker orange/ brown patches and becoming darker orange (bronze sandpit) | 14X |
| 106 | Mid brown (light) sandy silt below 102 | 14U, 14Y, 14Z, 14AA |
| 107 | Mid brown rocky layer under 102 (sandstone rubble) | 14X, 14Z, 14AA, 14U |
| 108 | Browny orange clayed sand below 107 | 14X |
| 109 | Orangey clean 'builders' sand below 106 | 14AC |