

Trench 18

The northern half of Trench 18 was re-opened during the 2005 field season, Figure 3, with a 4m by 8m extension to the west. As demonstrated in previous field seasons, this area contained the remains of at least one substantial structure (the ‘north building’), with well preserved interior floor surfaces, suggestions of industrial activity, and multiple layers of well laid stone cobble surfaces on the outside of the structure to the east. The north building was explored in detail in 2005 to determine dating, phasing, and function, with four main objectives: 1) defining the entire floor plan of the structure; 2) understanding the sequence of deposits within the interior of the structure; 3) establishing the relationship between the north building and the temple *temenos* boundary; and 4) determining the extent of the stone cobbling to the east of the building, see also Trench 25 below. All of these objectives were met successfully.

North Building Interior: The excavations in 2005 revealed the entire floor plan of the north building, running east/west, the same alignment as the ‘south building’ reported in the 2004 interim report. It consists of two parallel walls roughly 8m in length and a little over 3m apart [18199 and 18217]. While extensively damaged, the walls survive as up to three courses of mortared limestone blocks on top of pitched stones in a foundation trench, capped by a layer of flat stones. There is a smaller wall [18065] which runs north/south and divides the building into two sections. This wall is built into [18217], but ends about 15cm from [18199]. Like the southern building, there is no wall at the eastern side, suggesting that it was an open-fronted structure, possibly originally with a wooden screen or wall although no evidence survives for this in either building. Of particular interest is a small wall segment [18306] built parallel to, and actually overlapping slightly [18199/18305]. This is constructed with well packed pitched stones, and is rounded at both the northern and southern ends. The main walls of the north building seem to run back to the *temenos* wall, and there is evidence that for a mortar and gravel ‘filler’ within the small gap between the walls and the *temenos*.

Limited excavation on the north building in previous seasons uncovered at least one compacted floor surface [18050] which detailed micro-morphological analysis revealed consist of sediments with significant ash and charcoal content. Furthermore, limited clearance of the destruction layer above this in 2004 exposed the remains of a hearth or small furnace which was explored further in 2005, [18200] which was cut all the way to bedrock and constructed of very solid and regularly shaped limestone blocks. The pink discolouration of the stone suggests they were subjected to very high temperatures. It is directly associated with floor [18050] and is probably the source of most of the burnt material in and on it. Also in 2005, several large pits or postholes were uncovered, for example [18314, 18320, 18340, 18354, 18355], some of which were cut into the pre roman layers below the main floor surface, see Figure 4. The original purpose of these pits or postholes is unknown, some of them are nearly 2m deep and appear to have been re-cut and all were eventually filled with material containing roman artefacts and tightly packed limestone blocks. The stratigraphic relationship between the pits/postholes and the walls of the northern building as well as circumstantial evidence suggest that the pits were filled in with stones in order to consolidate the ground for the construction of the building itself.

Temenos Wall: The 2005 western extension revealed the remains of the *temenos* wall. Like elsewhere, it is largely robbed out [18307] with some traces of rubble in the back fill. While containing Romano-British material, there is a good chance that this occurred after the Romano-British period. Fortunately a small section of the original wall was discovered [18302], which consists of large and well formed limestone blocks mortared together. It is unclear as to why this small section of the wall was not robbed out. As mentioned above, the walls of the north building seem to have butted up against the *temenos* wall – however, the robber trench has truncated the point of physical contact, and so it can only be stated on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Interestingly, the remains of two additional walls [18308 and 18304] were found running from the *temenos* wall inside the temple precinct. These walls are closely aligned with the main walls of the north building, and [18308] had evidence of a mortar ‘filler’

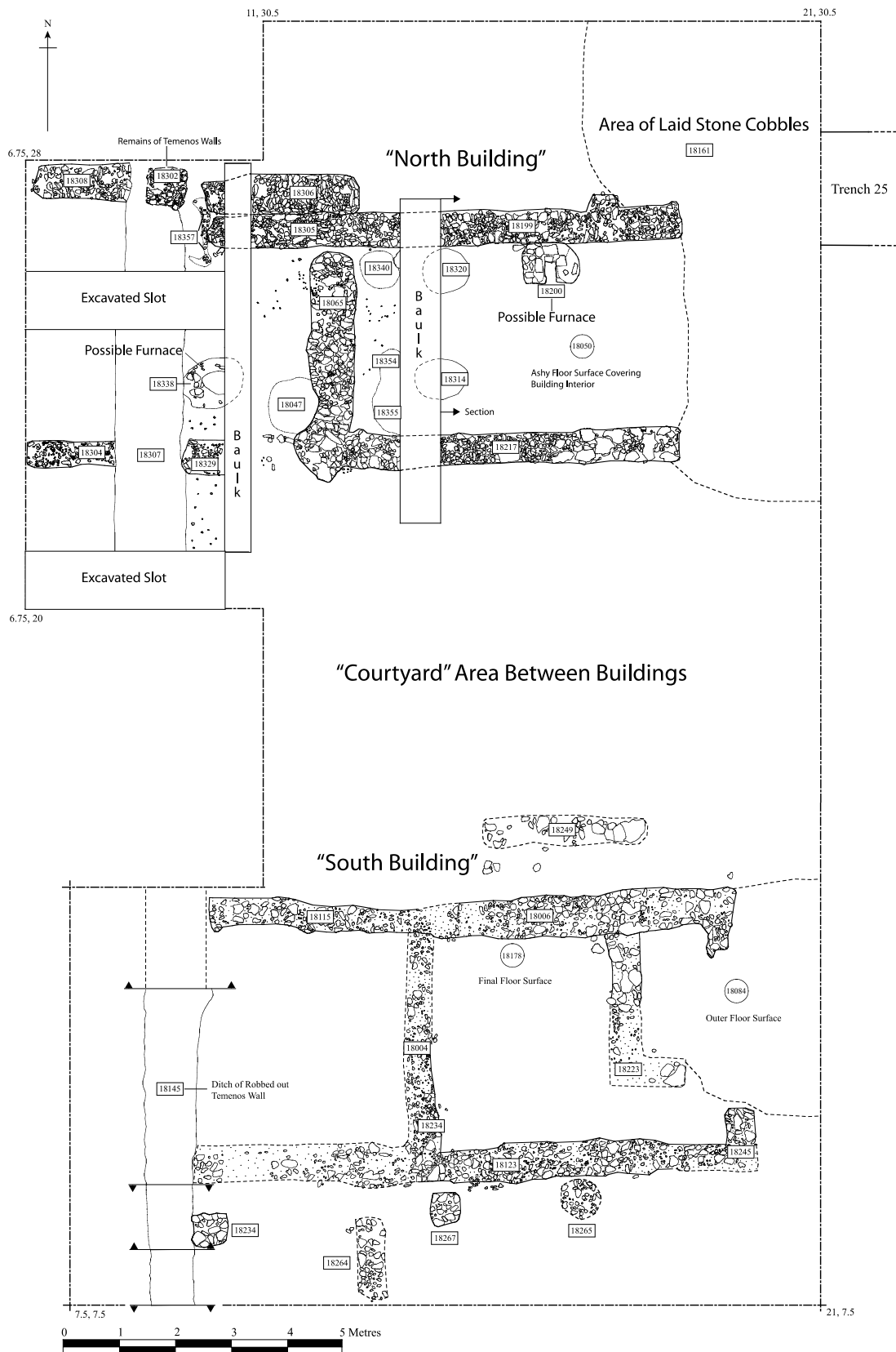


Figure 3. The plan of Trench 18 showing the two buildings built on the outside of the temenos wall south of the entrance.

between it and the *temenos* wall. The deposits on the inside of the *temenos* wall contained relatively little material culture in comparison with those on the outside, with the exception of a very well preserved late 1st century coin.

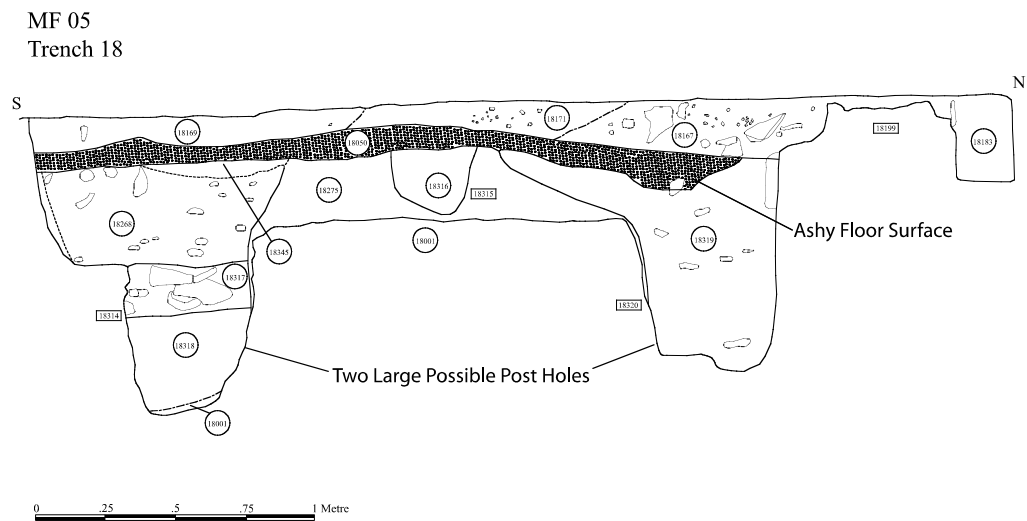


Figure 4. North-south section through the northern building in Trench 18, showing the two large pre-building postholes. Position of section shown in Figure 3.

Discussion: The evidence from the 2005 excavations has shown three phases of activity in the space associated with the northern building. The first is characterised by a number of pre ‘stone structure’ features, survived by cuts into the bedrock. There are clearly several pits, and while no cohesive floor plan has been found, also several possible large postholes. There is evidence that their filling was not just to fill in the holes but to deliberately create a stable surface upon which the north building was built. This can be seen in Figure 4 where the deposits have slumped into posthole [18320] that has a less well packed stone fill. There seem to have been two distinctive phases of use following the construction of the north building. The earlier consisted of several small hearths/possibly industrial features. These were not well built, but clearly were in use inside the building, and produced both some ashy surfaces and dumps of ashy material. One, and possibly two of the well built furnaces were constructed as part of the second phase of the building. These produced the deep charcoal and ash rich floor surface that covered most of the inside of the building. The destruction material from the building was resting right on top of this floor surface, with no indications at all of accumulated sediments or other indications of hiatus. Thus it seems most likely that the building came down onto the floor surface, either immediately after its use ended, or even causing the end of activity there. This is significant as the destruction level neatly sealed in the lower deposits protecting their integrity.

Over the four seasons Trench 18 produced a great deal of worked copper alloy artefacts, ranging from coins, medical implements, and jewellery. Furthermore, when samples from the interior floor surfaces were analysed, small fragments of copper were recovered from the heavy residue. One possible hypothesis is that the north building, at least in its final phase, was used in part for the production and manufacture of small copper votive objects. This remains to be tested in post-excavation although it is worth noting that while there are certainly similarities between the south and the north building in Trench 18, such as lay out, alignment, dating, open eastern fronts, and connection with the *temenos* wall, there are also clear differences in the functions of the two structures. The north building almost