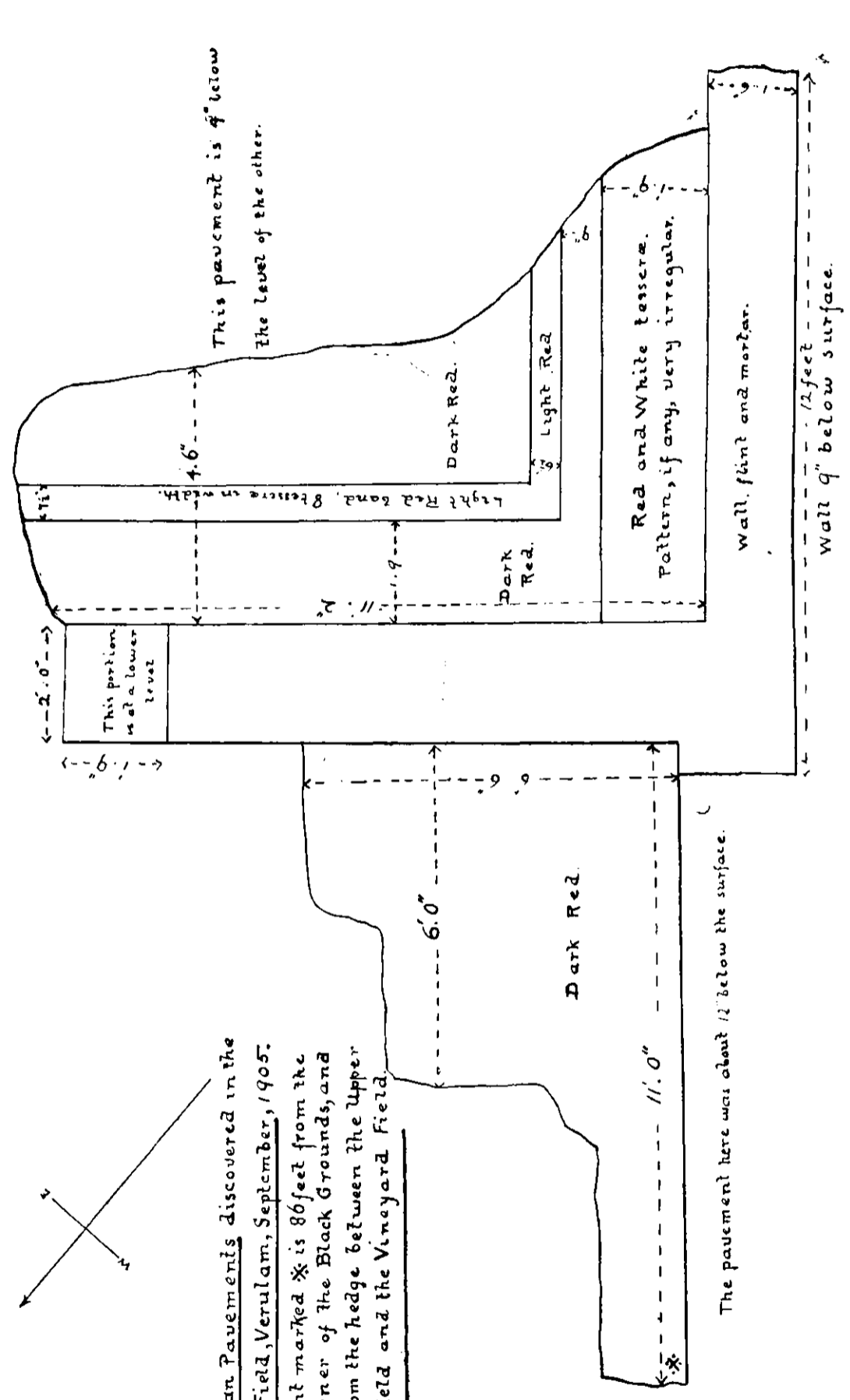


Two Roman Pavements discovered in the Vineyard Field, Verulam, September, 1905.

The point marked * is 86 feet from the N.W. corner of the Black Grounds, and 8 feet from the hedge between the Upper Town Field and the Vineyard Field.



C. M. Ashdown, 1905.

Roman Pavements in Verulam.

BY CHARLES H. ASHDOWN.

During the late autumn (of 1905) Mr. H. Edwards, of Gorhambury Lodge, informed me that a tessellated pavement had been struck by the plough in Verulam, and that a portion had been unearthed. By the courtesy of the Earl of Verulam, I was enabled to take measurements of the exposed part, and the photograph, which will be reproduced on the screen, was secured by Mr. E. S. Kent. In the course of investigation, I was so fortunate as to discover a second and more interesting pavement adjacent to the first, and Mr. Edwards kindly had the earth partially removed in order to expose it for examination. The locality of the pavements is shown on the first slide; they lie in the N.W. corner of the Vineyard Field, at a distance of 86 feet from the S.W. corner of the Black Grounds, and 8 feet from the hedge. The first pavement discovered consists entirely of red tesserae, each being slightly less than one inch square; the surface is very irregular, as regards level, and is injured in places by the plough. The tesserae are embedded in a very fine red mortar, which, so far as I am able to judge, was originally between two and three inches thick. There is no concrete or similar foundation beneath this mortar—only the bare ground. The whole of this pavement now remaining has probably been exposed.

The second pavement is of a more interesting character. It lies at a level of 4 inches below the first, and a step evidently occurred at the north end of the central wall, which is of a slightly different tone in the plan. Only a portion of this pavement was uncovered, but probably

sufficient to prove that no design occupies the centre. It consists chiefly of red tesserae similar in tone to the first, but is relieved by a band of lighter red tesserae $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, parallel with the wall running to the N.W., being respectively 1ft. 9in. and 2ft. 6in. distant from the said walls. Against the southernmost wall lies a band 1ft. 9in. wide, chiefly composed of dark red tesserae, with a sprinkling of white dotted about in a very irregular manner. I tried, but without success, to recognise a distinct pattern in it, but finally concluded that if any design originally existed, it had been obliterated by much repairing. By reason of its lying at a lower level than the other, this pavement had not suffered so much from the plough, and the surface is more level. The remains of the two walls are 2ft. and 1ft. 6in. wide respectively; their upper portions lie at a higher level than the pavements, and have thus protected them.

The pavements are not new discoveries; they were unearthed in 1869, when the British Association visited St. Albans and made excavations in Verulam. The plan made at that time by Mr. Jno. Harris, C.E., and copied by Mr. Grover, shows the sites of two villas at this spot, separated by a road running approximately N.W. and S.E., and another road to the N.W. running at right angles to the first, and touching the villas. As the superincumbent earth is so extremely thin, these pavements will undoubtedly be destroyed by the plough. I have, therefore, thought it only right that the portions recently disclosed should have their measurements and salient characteristics preserved in the archives of our Society. In conclusion, I have to express my appreciation of the kindness shown by Lord Verulam, my indebtedness to Mr. E. S. Kent for preparation of the slides illustrating these notes, and to Mr. Jno. Harris, of Hemel Hempstead, for his kindly help in plotting the plan to scale.
