

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

ROMSEY

1. INTRODUCTION

English Heritage has initiated a national series of Extensive Urban Surveys. Several counties have commenced such projects including Hampshire County Council who are undertaking the survey of the small towns of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The survey is intended to provide an up-to-date view of the archaeological resource in each of the towns building on earlier surveys (e.g. Hughes, 1976; Basford, 1980) and consists of three phases: Data Collection, Data Assessment and Strategy. The first stage, Data Collection, draws together the accessible history of the town, the archaeological knowledge and historic buildings data. The Data Assessment phase of the survey leads to the production of a report which presents a brief history of the town, (this document is not intended as a definitive history) an analysis of the plan of the town, an assessment of the archaeological and buildings data and the state of modern development resulting in the identification of areas of archaeological importance. Information about the development of the town through the ages, including plan-form analysis and the identified areas of archaeological importance, is also presented in cartographic form at the end of the report. The Strategy phase of the survey, uses the information presented in the Data Assessment combined with current statutory and non-statutory constraints, and present and future planning policy to make recommendations for policies regarding the historic environment. The policies may be incorporated into Local and Unitary Development Plans, non-statutory policies, supplementary planning guidance and for use within development control.

2. LOCATION

Romsey lies on the flood plain of the River Test at a little below 20m OD. Approximately 1 km to the west of the town the valley side rises sharply to over 60m OD whilst to the east the land rises gently over a greater distance. The town predominantly lies on valley and river gravels and brick-earth whilst the surrounding geology principally consists of Bracklesham Beds and Bagshot Sands.

The various branches of the Test that run through the town have played an important role in the development of Romsey, and appear to have often acted as boundaries to settlement. The main courses of the Test flow in three channels to the west of the town centre and re-unite to the south-west. Several other smaller branches of the river run through the town, some of which have been culverted in part and were often utilised as sewers. Of most importance to the understanding of the topography of the town are the streams known as Fish Lake which divides into two streams; Shitlake and Holbrook (marked on Map B). A stream known as Abbey Water branches to the west off Shitlake. To the south of the town a stream called Tadburn flows from the east into the Test near Middlebridge.

Roads from Winchester, Salisbury, Southampton, Stockbridge and Ringwood converge at Romsey and it may be that the braided nature of the river at this point made the crossing of the river in several small steps easier than crossing where the river flowed in one larger course before the construction of larger bridges such as Middlebridge.

3. BACKGROUND

ARCHAEOLOGY

Introduction

Archaeologically, Romsey is probably the most intensively studied of all the small market towns in Hampshire with many excavations, assessments and watching-briefs having been undertaken in the core of the town. Accordingly, there is a mass of archaeological data, some of which has yet to be published. Original excavation archives have not been consulted for this survey.

Prehistoric

Evidence for prehistoric activity from the area of the town includes Palaeolithic material from Latimer Street, a Neolithic mace-head, and Bronze-Age and Iron-Age material found within some of the stream channels. There is also evidence for Iron Age activity to the south of the abbey where a settlement site produced a late Iron Age tuyère, indicating that iron smelting was being undertaken in the vicinity. To the east of the town centre, in the Orchard Lane car-park area, Iron Age material has been recovered that suggests another occupation site.

- A1 Palaeolithic flint tools have been recovered from several sites to the east and north-east of the town centre and a Palaeolithic axe has been recovered from the town centre.
- A2 A decorated horn tine, which is believed to be of Palaeolithic date, was found during construction work at a sewage works to the south-west of the town. The horn is now in the British Museum.
- A3 Some limited evidence of Iron Age activity has been found to the south-west of Romsey. A ditch and several post-holes of Iron Age date have been excavated.

Romano-British

Although Romano-British building materials have been found incorporated into the fabric of the abbey, and small quantities of pottery have been recovered from the town, it is suggested that it is unlikely that there was substantial settlement at Romsey and that the building materials were probably imported from sites in the surrounding landscape (F. Green pers comm). The available archaeological data suggests that there may have been a small settlement, such as a farmstead, to the south of the abbey but there is no direct evidence for any structures on the site.

- A4 Romano-British pottery has been found to the north of the town, near Cupernham.

Anglo-Saxon

There is a substantial amount of archaeological data from the town for the Anglo-Saxon period. Animal bone assemblages recovered from near the abbey are comparable to those recovered from mid-Saxon *Hamwic* and have therefore also been assigned to the mid-Saxon period although radiocarbon date obtained from the bone covers the period 690-1030 (two sigma) (Scott 1996, 32-3). Later Saxon pottery has been recovered from many sites in the town, but particularly in the area to the west of the Holbrook. Excavations have also revealed evidence for iron smelting and some smithing in Romsey in the Saxon period (Scott 1993; Scott 1996). This industrial activity appears to have been concentrated in the area to the south of the abbey, but thin deposits of iron smelting waste have been found beneath the later medieval abbey enclosure and associated with the mid-Saxon animal bone (see below and Map B).

Medieval

There is a substantial corpus of medieval archaeological data from the town and the abbey, especially from the area of the town to the west of the Holbrook.

Post-medieval

To the south of the town is the northern boundary of the park of Broadlands (shown on Map A and see p10 below) which has encroached on some areas of the medieval town and also acted as a limiting factor to the post-medieval growth of the settlement to the south.

HISTORY

Anglo-Saxon

The place-name means '*Rum's island*' (Coates 1993, 140). This 'island' element of the name may be taken to also include drier areas within a marshy area and would probably correspond with the nature of the Test valley in the Romsey area in the post-Roman period. The early history of Romsey is dominated by the history of the abbey which is traditionally thought to have been founded by King Edward the Elder in 907 with his daughter St Elfreda possibly as the first Abbess of the new house (Coldicott 1989, 6). However, it has been suggested that the nunnery was founded in the ninth century (Collier, 1990) and that it may have been created within a pre-existing collegiate minster which, it is suggested, was the monastery of Nursling where St Boniface received his education (Hase 1988, 46). Hase argues that there is no evidence for minster status for the existing church at Nursling whereas the church at Romsey did have some attributes of a minster church and that the name Nursling may have been the name of the area rather than a particular place. Also, during the medieval period there was a small college of prebendaries at the abbey who were primarily responsible for the cure of souls of the parish rather than for the nuns. The early tenth-century foundation appears to have lapsed as it was re-founded in 967 by King Edgar. The abbey church is said to have been burnt during the Danish wars of 1002 (Page 1911, 453).

A charter of King Edgar confirming the privileges of the abbey gives the bounds of Romsey. The document, which is thought to be later than 970, has been described as being both authentic and very suspicious by different experts (Sawyer 1968, 812). There were two manors in the town, Romsey Infra which included the abbey and Romsey Extra, both of which were abbey estates though the latter was within the Hundred of King's Somborne.

Medieval

The abbey continued to hold both the manors of Romsey which appear to have been assessed together in the Domesday Survey. There was a recorded population of one hundred and eighteen including the inhabitants on some small sub-holdings which were held from the abbey. There was also a church and a total of four mills. The whole estate had been assessed at fourteen hides before 1066 but by 1086 was assessed at 10 hides (Munby 1982, fol 43d).

In the early twelfth century King Henry I granted the town a Sunday market and a four day fair and the grant of a second four-day fair in 1272 has been taken to indicate that the town was flourishing at that time (Page 1911, 452). In 1236 Romsey was represented as a borough or vill by its own jury at the eyre (Beresford and Finberg 1973, 120) but it was not until 1607 that the town was incorporated. Romsey was recognised as a corporation in perpetuity in 1544 when the abbey church was granted to the inhabitants of the town after the dissolution of the abbey (Page 1911, 452). It is probable that the economic strength of the town was due to it being a centre for the cloth-making industry (Hinton 1977, 180) and also to trades relating to cloth-finishing.

Post-medieval

The abbey was dissolved in 1539 but there are few documents surviving relating to the surrender (Coldicott 1989, 139). The abbey estates were divided up and sold and several leases exist which relate to parts of the abbey's properties within the precinct.

In 1526 the town suffered an outbreak of plague which forced Henry VIII to cancel his intended visit, and in 1586 it was said that there was a great dearth and want of work which caused an unlawful assembly of the common people (Page 1911, 452). If, or to what extent, the dissolution of the abbey had an economic impact on the town is not known, but the nuns must have been a significant employer in the town. In 1607 the town gained its charter and a third fair was granted (Page 1911, 452).

In 1643, during the English Civil War, Romsey was the scene of a small skirmish when the Royalists who had been holding the town were driven out by Parliamentary forces. The church records note the burial of several soldiers, some un-named, who were killed in the confrontation or who later died of their wounds. In 1645 Romsey was host to 2,200 Parliamentary horse and dragoon (Godwin 1904, 141).

4. ANALYSIS

ANGLO-SAXON ROMSEY (Map B)

The origins of the Anglo-Saxon settlement are clouded with uncertainty. The date of the foundation of the abbey is a matter of speculation as it is suggested that the traditional date of 907 for the foundation represents the date of the creation of a nunnery in a pre-existing religious establishment (Hase 1988, 46). Alternatively, it has been suggested that a nunnery was founded at Romsey in the ninth century (Collier, 1990). Chalk footings excavated at the western end of the nave of the abbey have been interpreted as the foundations of part of an earlier religious or domestic establishment (Scott 1996, 19). However, their similarity to chalk foundations excavated in Winchester have led to the suggestion that the Romsey buildings were either parts of two separate single cell chapels or part of a church that had portici and transepts (*ibid*, 33). Excavations on the site of the abbey crossing have revealed evidence for an apse which may date from the tenth century, and there are some fragments of tenth-century work in the upstanding fabric of the church.

Anglo-Saxon archaeological evidence indicates that iron smelting was being carried out, mainly in the area to the south of the abbey, in the mid- and late Saxon periods (Russel 1987, 18; Scott 1996). The majority of the activity of this period appears to have been concentrated on the island formed by the River Test to the west and by a stream known as Shitlake on the eastern side, on which the abbey stands (Green 1985, 9). The available evidence suggests that the island was the main focus for activity from the Iron Age to Saxon periods but evidence for iron smelting and smithing has also been found on at least three sites on the eastern side of the Shitlake. Other excavations on the eastern side of the Holbrook have recovered residual Saxon pottery and encountered ditches that contained little in the way of dating evidence. The lack of evidence for settlement in the Saxon or early medieval period to the east of the Holbrook may suggest that the area was covered by closes or paddocks.

To date there has been little direct evidence of mid-Saxon occupation in the form of buildings or pits to allow statements to be made about the exact form or extent of the settlement at that date. It appears that the streams that run through the town were used for refuse disposal, and although post-holes have been seen in many excavations, the limited size of the excavated areas has made the identification of plans of complete buildings difficult (F. Green pers comm). What is fairly certain is that there was a relatively high-status element in the settlement, attested to by the rich variety of animal bones recovered (Scott 1993, 42; Scott 1996, 157-8).

There is a similar lack of later Saxon settlement evidence from the town. An excavation at the rear of a property on Bell Street near its junction with Newton Lane revealed timber slots and post-holes which were interpreted as being parts of buildings of late Saxon date (Scott 1993, 9-11) or from the tenth to twelfth century (Green 1991, 371). There was no artefactual dating evidence for the third building and so the dating is, therefore, partially based on typological grounds (Scott 1993, 9-11). However, the recovery of relatively large quantities of Winchester Ware pottery from this site would indicate that there was occupation of higher social status in the late Saxon period (F. Green pers comm)

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL ROMSEY (Map C)

Introduction

The earliest detailed map available of the town studied is a survey of 1818/19 (HRO 10M58/PO26 and PO27) The plan of the town is dominated by two elements: the abbey and the market place situated at the gate of the abbey. The market place appears to have been triangular with the abbey gate approximately mid-way along the western side which would have presented a view across the market and along The Hundred, the road which approaches the market place from the east. The shape of the market area is unusual for Hampshire where the majority of the market areas either utilised a wide main street, for example, Overton, Fareham, Andover, or were situated in squares as at Petersfield. The shape of the market at Romsey may have been dictated by the 'pinching' effect of the bridge over the Holbrook. It

is from that point that the market fans out towards the abbey although it has been suggested that it derives from the fact that three roads enter the area and the bridge over the Holbrook would have been a convenient point to exact tolls on traders entering or leaving the market place (F. Green pers comm). However, many Hampshire towns are located at the junction of three roads without the creation of a triangular area. A close parallel to the shape of the market and its relationship to the abbey is the Saxon phase of the plan of Glastonbury in Somerset (Rodwell 1984, 19).

Although the market is triangular in shape, the plan of the town exhibits a strong rectilinear form. The full extent of the precinct of the abbey is not known. It is suggested that it may have included the area bounded by the market place and Church Street to the east and Horsefair and Mill Lane to the north, and may have extended south as far as Newton Lane and possibly had Shitlake as its eastern boundary. The suggested northern extent of the precinct may have caused the two sharp turns required at the Cherville Street/Horsefair/Church Street junctions. To the east of the northern area of the precinct is an irregular quadrilateral area bounded by Church Street, The Hundred, Latimer Street and Portersbridge Street. The rectilinear nature of the plan is broken in the south-eastern area of the town which is thought to be a later, sixteenth-century, development.

There is, generally, less regularity in the property plots in Romsey than in most of the other towns in the county. This may be due, in part, to the triangular shape of the market area and the fact that some of the plots on the northern side of the market back onto the Holbrook resulting in plots of differing length and, in some cases, orientation. The lack of regularity may also be an indication of the early origins of the property plots. However, along Church Street and Bell Street there is evidence for greater regularity in the property plots.

Market, Streets and Bridges

Market C1

The market was held outside the gates of the abbey in a large triangular area that has been encroached upon in the central area and along its western and south-western sides. Observation of works in the market place have recorded that gravelled surfaces up to 0.6m beneath the present street surface survive. In the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century at least part of the market was known as 'the shoe market' (Himsworth 1984, 16176).

Streets

The principal street of the modern town is The Hundred which runs west - east from the market-place to another, smaller, triangular area at the junction of Latimer Street, The Hundred and Love Lane that has also been encroached upon. It is probable that the present Winchester Street is the line of the medieval route to Winchester as all the available evidence for the medieval leper hospital suggests that it stood alongside this road. Leper hospitals were usually sited alongside major routes into a town so as to benefit from the alms of passers-by. However, it is suggested that there was an alternative route to Winchester out of the town, either along Love Lane, which now forks to the north-west from the eastern end of The Hundred, or along a lane leading from the junction of Latimer Street and Portersbridge Street (Burbridge and Merrick pers comm). Nineteenth-century maps of the town show a path or lane leading to the north-east from the junction of Latimer Street and Portersbridge Street but it is probable that it gave access to the fields rather than being a route to Winchester. The line of this route, which was not shown on Taylor's Map of Hampshire (1759) is now followed by the course of Station Road.

Although The Hundred now appears to be the main street of Romsey, it is probable that the north - south route along Church Street and Bell Street made these streets more important in the medieval period. Church Street leads to the north from the Market Place and was alternatively known as *Churchgatesteet* in the thirteenth century. The route north involved two right-angled turns at the Horsefair to enter into what is now known as Cherville Street but this name formerly also applied to the part of Church Street as far south as the junction with Portersbridge Street (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). Cherville Street was recorded known as *Cherville* in the thirteenth century and as *Cherevyll Lane* in a lease 1422

(Himsworth 1984, 16049 and 16424; HRO 27M74/AE/T212). Mill Lane runs along the northern edge of the abbey precinct and gave access to the River Test and at least one of the mills. The name is recorded from the sixteenth century (Hughes 1976, 126).

Bell Street, formerly Mill Street until the eighteenth century, leaves the southern side of the market area and forks into two at its southern end, near its junction with Newton Lane, to lead into Middlebridge Street, recorded in 1386 (Hughes 1976, 126) and Banning Street, recorded as Bannock Street in the late thirteenth century (Himsworth 1984, 16348). Middlebridge Street, recorded from the thirteenth century, leads to the south-west whilst Banning Street was a former route to Southampton which was superseded by Palmerston Street in the sixteenth century when the park around Broadlands was created. It is suggested that there was an earlier, pre-abbey route to Southampton which took a line along Church Road, through the site of the abbey and along Eny Street which led to the south-east from Middlebridge Street (Burbridge and Merrick pers comm). There is no archaeological evidence for this route within the area to the north of the abbey (F. Green pers comm). However, the idea of an earlier north-south route is given credibility by the present day course of the route from the north along Cherville Street and Church Street which is forced around the north-eastern edge of the abbey precinct, and suggests that an earlier route continued south from Cherville Street.

Latimer Street, which leads north from the eastern end of The Hundred, and Portersbridge Street, which leads east from Church Street, form two sides of a quadrilateral area that has the Holbrook running north - south through the middle. *Lortimerestrete* is recorded from the thirteenth century and may have referred to a foul drain running along the street (Himsworth 1984, 16080; Green 1986a, 43). Portersbridge Street was formerly known as Porters Lane, a name which continued in use until the end of the eighteenth century (Himsworth 1984 28543). The bridge that carried the lane across the Holbrook was known as 'Portersbridge' from the thirteenth century (*ibid.* 16163).

There is a second, slightly smaller, squarish area on the western side of Bell Street formed by Newton Lane along the southern side, Narrow Lane along the western side, and Abbey Water along part of the northern side. It is not known when Newton Lane was a 'new' street in the plan of the town but it was in existence by the fourteenth century at least and a late Saxon date is suggested (F. Green pers comm).

Bridges C2

Middle Bridge, at the south-western end of Middlebridge Street was first recorded in 1380 as the *bridge of Middlebrigge* but it is suggested that the neighbouring estate of Stanbridge, recorded in the mid-thirteenth century, takes its name from a stone bridge at this point (Mason 1975, 50) although it is also suggested that it would have been the Timsbury/Great Bridge crossing that would have influenced the name (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). By the early seventeenth century the condition of the bridge was deteriorating and repairs were undertaken. The bridge was in poor condition again in the late eighteenth century and so it was then decided to build a new bridge which was completed in 1784 and widened in the twentieth century (Mason, 1975).

There was a bridge near the junction of Church Street and Portersbridge Street crossing Fishlake. The exact location and form of this bridge is not known. There was another important bridge called Broadwater Bridge giving access to Banning Street from Bell Street (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm).

At the eastern end of the market place the road to the east crossed the Holbrook *via* a bridge that is known to have been in existence from the second half of the thirteenth century. The bridge, known as Brade or Broad Bridge, and later as The Hundred Bridge, was under the jurisdiction of the Abbess (Scott 1996, 5).

Property plots

Market Place properties C3

The properties on the northern and southern sides of the Market Place may have been laid out with the market area. However, these blocks of properties exhibit the least evidence of regularity of all the town centre plots. The lack of regularity, particularly in the block along the southern side of the Market Place, may be due to the cramped conditions at the rear of the properties as properties along the eastern side of Bell Street would have also demanded some space behind the street frontage or due to their having early, unplanned, origins.

Encroachment onto market area C4

Within the Market Place there are several areas of buildings that represent phases of encroachment onto the market area. These areas include the block of properties along the western side of the Market Place and the area of properties that includes the Town Hall.

Bell Street and Newton Lane properties C5

The property plots along both sides of Bell Street have a relatively high degree of regularity. The plots are generally long and narrow and are typical of planned development. The stream known as Shitlake ran approximately along the rear boundary of the plots on the western side and may have actually been the original rear boundary line. Excavations within the plot on the northern side of the junction with Newton Lane showed that this part of Bell Street was developed from the twelfth or thirteenth century and that there may have been late Saxon occupation on the site (Russell 1983, 15-16; Scott 1993, 9-11) (see above).

It is not known at what date Newton Lane became a new part of the town plan but it is possible that it was a late Saxon development. A property which included a 'stall' was recorded in this street in the fourteenth century indicating that commercial activity was carried out this far from the market place at that time (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm).

Church Street properties C6 & King John's House C7

In the medieval period there were several higher status properties along the eastern side of Church Street including King John's House (C7) which was built in the mid-thirteenth century. It may have been a guest house or part of a guest complex. Heraldic devices and mottoes found inscribed on the walls may be those of knights in the retinues of visiting members of royalty. Excavations have shown that property boundaries in this area have remained relatively static since the fourteenth century (Green 1986b, 43). The street frontage was more intensively developed from the sixteenth century, principally by cloth-workers, and at around the same time the area to the north of King John's House also began to be infilled with housing. The line of the street was realigned between its junction with Portersbridge Street and the area of Abbey Walk, probably in the eighteenth century (F. Green pers comm). Also, the frontage on the eastern side of the street was altered in the nineteenth century by pulling down buildings to make the road wider. The cellars of some of the demolished buildings now lie beneath the street (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm).

On the western side of Church Street, and extending into the western part of the Market Place, there are properties that were developed on the edge of the suggested area of the northern abbey precinct and possibly partly on the market area itself. A recent discovery of part of a timber-framed building of c.1300 indicates that the area bordering the market and abbey precinct was being developed at that date at least, possibly by the abbey as a way of increasing income from rents. Development on the fringes of ecclesiastical areas was a relatively common phenomenon in medieval towns. It is also suggested that Petty House may have been a medieval building that served as a prebendal house (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). Documentary sources of the fourteenth and fifteenth century relating to properties held by Winchester College described some plots as being 'next to the cemetery of the church' (Himsworth 1984, 16219). One grant of a plot adjacent to the cemetery also had properties to the north, south and east which indicates that the plot backed onto a property which faced Church Street. There was a fish-pond in this area in the eighteenth century (F. Green pers comm).

The brewery site, at the northern end of Church Street at its junction with the area called The Horsefair, has produced evidence for a possible ditch/boundary (F. Green pers comm).

The Hundred and Palmerston Street properties C8

The property plots immediately to the east of the Holbrook shown on nineteenth-century maps appear as a series of irregular plots, especially on the southern side of the street. A degree of regularity is given to the plots on the northern side by a lane that ran from Latimer Street westwards to cross the Holbrook and give access to the rear of some of the Market Place properties. This lane may have also functioned as a back-lane. Archaeological evidence suggests that there was settlement along the southern side of The Hundred by the twelfth or thirteenth century and that there may have been an alteration in the alignment of the street in the sixteenth century (F. Green pers comm). Documentary sources from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century record properties, including a shop 'without Bradbridge' (Himsworth 1984, 16002; 16374). Along the southern side of The Hundred from the point it turns towards the south-east there is a block of properties that extends into Palmerston Street. This block exhibits a greater degree of regularity with long, narrow, plots and generally parallel boundaries. Archaeological work within this area has failed to find any *in situ* evidence for the date of development of this part of the town. At the southern end of this block stands the building known as the Manor House of Romsey Extra which dates from the sixteenth century. It is suggested that the building was not the manor house but a merchant's or steward's house. The adjacent building is earlier than the Manor House, dating from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (F. Green pers comm). These buildings indicate that Palmerston Street was in existence at that date, and might give a date for the creation of the street which may be linked with the diversion of the Southampton road from Banning Street in the sixteenth century to avoid the parkland at Broadlands which was formerly abbey farmland (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm).

Cherville Street properties C9

Nineteenth-century maps of the town show regular rows of properties along both sides of Cherville Street. The plots are the typical long, narrow, plots that are usually associated with deliberate planning. Therefore, this area may represent a later medieval suburb to the main core of the town. The area shown on Map C represents the area of settlement derived from cartographic sources. Observations in the area to the north of these blocks of properties have recorded medieval pottery in the area between these blocks and the railway line (F. Green pers comm) suggesting that medieval occupation stretched further to the north than the available map sources indicate.

Middlebridge Street properties C10

Properties were recorded along Middlebridge Street in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (Himsworth 1984, 16143-5). The plots shown on nineteenth century maps can be divided into two parts; those along the northern part of the street which are smaller are less regular, and those along the southern part of the street where the long, narrow, plots lie in rectangular blocks. It is possible that Middlebridge Street developed as a suburb in the medieval period and that, as with Cherville Street, there was a degree of planning in parts of the development.

Banning Street properties C11

Banning Street was formerly on the line of the route to Southampton and as such would have been an important street in the town and so it is to be expected that there was development along the street in the medieval period. Nineteenth-century maps show small but regular plots along the north-eastern side of the street but by that date the street had been superseded by Palmerston Street as the route south was diverted around the former abbey lands that were to become the park of Broadlands (marked on Map B).

Latimer Street and Love Lane properties C12

There is a late fourteenth-century reference to a toft in *Lortmerestrete* (Himsworth 1984, 16082). This reference has been taken to mean that the area was undeveloped at that date (Chadwick 1996, 16) but the land parcel recorded in that grant was said to lie between two tenements. However, the state of development of the entire area should not be assumed on the basis of there being one toft along Latimer Street. A cruck-framed building of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date was demolished prior to the construction of the Royal British Legion building, and other, surviving buildings incorporate timber-framing of sixteenth- or

seventeenth-century date. Nineteenth-century maps of the town suggest that there was a relatively strong degree of planning in the properties on both sides of Latimer Street. On the western side of the street several curving boundaries stretch back to the Holbrook. The curve in these boundaries suggests that they were respecting some feature in the townscape at the date that they were laid out. On the eastern side of the street the property plots exhibit a greater degree of regularity than those to the west of Latimer Street but the plots are much shorter in length and extend the full length of the street. An assessment excavation within some of the plots in this area revealed that there was a substantial layer of loamy soil which probably indicates that the area was primarily used for agricultural purposes, but some Saxon pottery was recovered (Davis and Scott 1994, 11) but as the excavation was within the rear part of the plots it probably only encountered evidence for gardens.

The property plots ranged along Love Lane appear to occupy a rectangular area that is diagonally divided by Love Lane. This may indicate that the property boundaries were respecting earlier field boundaries such as those that existed to the north and east of this area in the mid-nineteenth century. Linden Road, which connects the eastern end of Love Lane to The Hundred, was mainly built-up in the nineteenth century.

Abbey C13

The western side of the plan of the town is dominated by the abbey and its precincts which were probably much larger than is now apparent. At whatever date a religious house was founded at Romsey (see Anglo-Saxon Romsey, p4, above), it is possible that the precinct took on the form of any existing royal estate centre. There is some uncertainty over the extent and development of the precincts. The suggested options for the precinct are marked on Map B. There would have been an inner precinct which would have enclosed the conventual buildings to the south of the church, and an outer precinct where guest-houses and ancillary buildings associated with the abbey would have been located. Given that the abbey is contained on the western side by the Test and by the town to the east, the outer precinct should lie to either the north or south of the church. To the north the route from the north along Cherville Street is forced through two right-angled turns to enter Church Street. This road alignment suggests the presence of an important boundary. The majority of the area to the north of the church belonged to the church and was used as the parish cemetery. Alternatively, it is suggested that the precinct lay to the south of the abbey church and included the area as far south as Newton Lane (F. Green pers comm). Post-dissolution part of this area was occupied by orchards. It is clear that there is a need for more work to be undertaken to resolve this issue.

The existing abbey church dates mainly from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The monastic buildings were located to the south of the abbey church in an inner precinct that was bounded, at least in part, by a wall. Excavations along the northern side of Abbey Water failed to find any evidence for a wall although the earlier northern edge of the Abbey Water stream was located (Scott 1996, 74). Observation of gas board trenches in front of the abbey gateway indicated a flint rubble wall running east - west across the entrance to Abbey Water (F. Green pers comm). It has also been suggested that Abbey Water was widened in the post-medieval period and any alterations may have destroyed the evidence for any boundary (F. Green pers comm). It would, though, be surprising if what was in effect the inner precinct of the nunnery, should have been allowed to be visually accessible from the southern part of the town, especially as the western side of the precinct, which only over-looked the flood plain of the Test, was provided with a wall. It may be that the southern precinct was divided into two as a post-dissolution description of the abbess's lodgings stated that it stood in the 'utter court' (outer court) of the monastery (Scott 1996, 76). This would be surprising as at most monastic houses the abbot's or abbesses lodgings were in the inner court, often in close association with the infirmary and therefore in one of the most secluded and quietest parts of the precinct. The main gate of the abbey gave access into this southern precinct from the market place.

Excavations to the south of the church have revealed evidence for the cloistral ranges and parts of the southern range, together with its late twelfth/early thirteenth-century roof, still stands (Coldicott 1989, 115), but the existence of other buildings in the precinct can only be

assumed to have existed from analogy with other nunneries or from being mentioned in historical documents. For example, the Abbess's lodging was recorded at the time of the dissolution and consisted as having a chapel, kitchen, stable, granary and a barn and there was also an infirmary which was also provided with a chapel (Scott 1996, 76).

Part of a cemetery has been excavated in the area to the north of Abbey Water. The burials, were mainly male. Other burials around the abbey church include two 'charcoal burials' that may be higher status burials of the ninth to early eleventh century (Scott 1996, 41-2).

To the north of the church there was, from the later medieval period at least, a burial ground and was where the parish belfry was located. The belfry was a free-standing structure which is thought to have stood to the east of the present Church Road, possibly near the site of some later cottages known as Belfry Cottages. A property known as The Old Belfry was being leased from the churchwardens until 1941 (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). It is probable that this area formed part of the abbey precinct from the late Saxon period at least.

To the west of the abbey were a number of fishponds. Excavations to the west of the Vicarage encountered deposits that have been interpreted as the fill of the abbey ponds (Scott 1996, 76).

Broadlands (Park marked on map)

The property known as Broadlands was part of the abbey estate until the dissolution of the abbey in 1544. In the later sixteenth century a U-shaped Elizabethan house was built which was subsequently altered in the eighteenth century. The park around the house was probably created at the time of the construction of the Elizabethan house and resulted in the diversion of the route to Southampton which had formerly left the town *via* Banning Street. The new road to the south left the town along Palmerston Street. It was not until the nineteenth century that the park in its present form was created after the 3rd Lord Palmerston had exchanged and acquired several properties to increase the area.

Buildings

There are several surviving medieval buildings in the town including the thirteenth-century King John's House in Church Street. In the fifteenth century there were several inns in the town owned by the abbey and institutions such as Winchester College which invested in the construction of inns in other Hampshire towns at that time. One of the inns of that period is the White Horse where part of the galleried court-yard survives. This building may have been built as an investment by the abbey (F. Green pers comm).

The town hall was located at the eastern corner of the market place adjoining the bridge in The Hundred. The building was described as being of two storeys, the ground floor containing a room for the sergeant, and the jail which was against the water of Fish Lake. A new Town Hall was built in the south-west corner of the market place in the nineteenth century.

The Tudor Rose in the Corn Market, the southern side of the market place, is a fifteenth century building that may have had a ceremonial/public/ guild function when it was built (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm).

Hospital (Not marked on map extent)

A leper hospital, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene and St Anthony, was founded in 1317 and dissolved in 1539 (Hughes 1976, 125) although the date of the foundation of the charity has been stated to have been as early as the tenth century (Coldicott 1989, 123). It is probable that the hospital was founded before 1317 as at that date the proctor was granted a licence to collect alms for the inmates who were then in extreme poverty. Another such licence was granted in 1331 (Page 1911, 460). The foundation was a small one, intended to cater for seven poor and leprous people (Coldicott 1989, 123). The hospital was located to the east of

the town near to the Winchester Road and it is thought that the site is beneath the western embankment of the railway.

Cloth-making/finishing

Hinton (1977, 180) states that the town was a centre for the cloth industry. Excavations in several areas of the town have identified rows of post-holes that have been interpreted as the remains of the racks used to stretch and dry cloth (F. Green pers comm) and tile built hearths of ovens or furnaces have been interpreted as being associated with the late medieval cloth processing trade (Youngs *et al* 1985, 182). The production and sale of cloth continued to be important to the economy of the town in the late eighteenth century although it appears to have had a much lower status in the later period based on evidence from wills and inventories of cloth workers (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). Warner stated that the town was 'much inhabited by clothiers' (Warner 1795, 158).

Mills C14

Domesday Book recorded a total of four mills on the abbey's estates valued at 35s (Munby 1982, fol 43d) which may correspond to the mills leased by the abbey in 1434 that were specified as two mills at Mead Mill and two at Town Mill. A fulling mill that may have been located in the area of Test Mill was recorded in the thirteenth century (Himsworth 1984, 16424). By the post-medieval period there were at least six mills: Town Mills, Mead Mill and Malt Mill, a fulling mill, Stocks Mill, and Abbey Mill were recorded in 1545 (Page 1911, 453). The Tithe Apportionment map shows four mills on the Test to the west of the town: Abbey Mills, Saddlers Mill, Burnt Mill and Test Mill.

The stream called Holbrook provided the water to power the Town Mill which stood near the southern end of Bell Street. The earliest reference to this mill by name is 1363 (Himsworth 1984, 16169) but a late thirteenth or early fourteenth century grant relating to the same property as the 1363 document recorded that the plot was bounded by the stream running to the mill (*ibid.*, 16161). As suggested above, the mill had two sets of mill stones, probably from the eleventh century. They were still in operation in the sixteenth century (Page 1911, 453). Town Mill is shown on a map of 1818 and may have been on the site of a mill in the watercourse called *Chaby* which was granted to the Abbess in 1396 (Page 1911, 455).

There have been two mills known as Abbey Mill. One was located to the south of the abbey and was powered by a water-course known as Abbey Water which formed the southern boundary of the abbey precinct. This mill is believed to have been a post-dissolution development and can only be traced back as far as 1551 (Burbridge and Merrick pers comm). The other mill known as Abbey Mill was shown on the Tithe map and stood to the west of the town and was fed from one of the main branches of the Test. This mill, a paper mill, was built about 1683 and later rebuilt (Page 1911, 455 note 105).

Fox Mill, which lay to the south-east of the town and was powered by the Tadburn Brook, was built in 1799. Saddlers Mill was rebuilt in 1748 on the site of a former grist mill (Page 1911, 455 note 105).

Windmills

In 1298 there was a reference to a windmill (Page 1911, 455).

Tanning C15

Although no sites of medieval tanneries have been located, documentary sources show that tanners were operating in Romsey from the thirteenth century at least (B. Burbridge and P. Merrick pers comm). There were at least two tanneries in the town in the post-medieval period. Tanning was almost certainly undertaken in the Middlebridge Street area of the town. In 1325 a John le Tanner was recorded as holding property in Middlebridge Street (Himsworth 1984, 16057) and a Tanyard Meadow was recorded in the late seventeenth century. To the north of the town centre there was another tannery which used the water of the Holbrook in the tanning process. Large, rectangular, pits found at the corner of Love

Lane and Latimer Street may represent tanning or retting pits (F. Green pers comm). It is probable that the leather produced in the tanneries supported a thriving shoe-making industry. In the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century at least part of the market area was known as 'the shoe market' (Himsworth 1984, 16176).

Brick kilns C16

Romsey lies within an area with good supplies of clay which were utilised for brick making. A map of 1818 (HRO 10M58/PO26) records a Brick-kiln Farm on the eastern side of the road leading to Southampton and so presumably there was a brick-kiln in the vicinity of the farm. The Tithe Apportionment map of 1845 (HRO 21M65/F7/197/2) shows a brick-kiln and yard adjacent to the canal and Winchester Road.

Other trades and industries

A lease of 1843 refers to a garden which was used as a twine walk and shed showing that rope making was also undertaken in the town (HRO 9M61/1). Brewing was also an important industry of the town with the brewery Strong & Co Ltd located to the north of the town centre.

Canal C17

The Andover-Redbridge canal, completed in 1794, ran to the east of the town. The canal does not appear to have been a financial success and the company failed to ever pay a dividend to its shareholders during the time of operation. The canal company was bought out by a railway company intent on using much of the course of the canal for the line of a railway (Spaul 1975, 45).

Railway C18

In 1847 a railway line between Bishopstoke and Salisbury was opened. The Andover-Redbridge railway was owned by the London and South West Railway Company which opened the line in 1865. Along much of its route the railway followed the course of the canal, but near Romsey the railway took a different line. The line closed in 1967 (Mitchell and Smith 1990, 1).

Gasworks C19

The town's gasworks were located at the eastern end of Love Lane. The Romsey Gas and Coke Company acquired property on Love Lane in 1833. Production continued until 1950 and the gasometers were dismantled in 1955 (Chadwick 1996, 17-8).

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENT (Map D)

Although there has been some development in the town centre it has, generally, been on a small scale. It has been claimed that the stratigraphy in Romsey is shallower than in many urban centres due to the extensive truncation in recent times (Rees 1993, 19). The greatest area of change has occurred in the area of Banning Street which has been truncated by the construction of Bypass Road. It is believed that the creation of several car-parks in the town centre has not truncated archaeological deposits (F. Green pers comm).

6. IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL

CRITERIA FOR THE AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Introduction

The primary aim of the Data Collection and Data Assessment phases of the project is to enable the identification of areas of archaeological importance within each town to inform the Strategy phase of

the project. Five such areas of importance have been defined, and the criteria for these are briefly described below. Although they are all described in this introduction, not all towns will have areas within each of these categories.

Levels of Archaeological Importance

The levels of importance are Areas comprising Nationally Important Remains; Areas of High Archaeological Importance; Areas of Archaeological Importance; Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance and Areas of No Archaeological Importance.

As additional archaeological information becomes available, and a greater understanding of the archaeological resource of the town is achieved, it is possible that some areas will be re-assigned to different levels of importance.

Areas Comprising Nationally Important Remains

Areas of identified nationally important archaeological remains, whose location, character and importance have been demonstrably established. These remains merit physical preservation *in situ*. The criteria used to assess national importance are set out in Annex 4 of the Secretary of State's non-statutory guidance note PPG16, and are briefly noted below:

- Period
- Rarity
- Documentation
- Group Value
- Survival/Condition
- Fragility/Vulnerability
- Diversity
- Potential

This category will include Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Areas of High Archaeological Importance

Areas considered to include other important archaeological remains, whose location, character and importance are inferred from observation, research and interpretation. Those remains are likely to merit preservation *in situ*. Where preservation is not justified appropriate archaeological recording will be required.

Areas of High Archaeological Importance may:

- Contain well preserved, archaeological deposits which may not be of national importance, but which are of importance to the understanding of the origins and development of the town;
- Be areas where the destruction, without archaeological record, of well preserved archaeological deposits means that the last surviving elements have an increased value for the understanding of the origins and development of the town;
- Have been identified as having significant water-logged archaeological deposits;
- Have a high number of existing medieval buildings. The survival of medieval buildings may also indicate that there is well preserved stratigraphy beneath the building;
- Be areas which are thought to have High Archaeological Importance due to their proximity to other, recognised, plan elements even though there is little direct evidence to indicate high importance. For example, the area around an isolated church which may have been the focus for earlier settlement may be defined as an Area of High Archaeological Importance.

It is possible that areas that areas of High Archaeological Importance may, through further archaeological or documentary work, be shown to include Nationally Important Remains.

Areas of Archaeological Importance

Areas considered to contain archaeological remains of some importance. Where these remains cannot be preserved *in situ*, they are likely to require appropriate archaeological recording.

Such areas:

- Are significant elements in the plan but where there has been a moderate level of modern development or cellaring;
- Have had little archaeological work undertaken within them but cartographic or documentary sources suggest that they may have been within the historic core of the town or areas of important suburban development.

Surviving archaeological deposits in Areas of Archaeological Importance will probably have a relatively high density but, due to pressures of development over many centuries, there may be a high level of fragmentation.

Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance

Areas considered to include archaeological remains of a character unlikely to provide significant information, or archaeological remains whose integrity has been severely compromised by development. These remains may require appropriate archaeological recording if threatened by development.

Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance may:

- Have a good survival of archaeological deposits, but where there is likely to be a low density of archaeological features;
- Be areas with significant modern development resulting in limited archaeological importance, either due to the scale of development or due to the limited nature of the archaeological resource before development;
- Be areas where the current hypothesis supports only a limited likelihood of encountering archaeological remains.

THE POTENTIAL OF ROMSEY

Areas of Archaeological Importance (Map E)

Areas Comprising Nationally Important Archaeological Remains

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Romsey.

The abbey church, which has its origins in a Saxon nunnery and possibly an earlier minster church, and an area around the church is nationally important. Within this area remains of the Saxon phases of the foundation have been recorded in excavations, and to the south of the church evidence for the cloistral buildings survive, both as buried remains and standing structures.

King John's House and Middle Bridge are both Grade I listed buildings and are, therefore, nationally important. King John's House was a possession of the abbey and probably served as a guest residence for visitors to the abbey. It was built in the mid-thirteenth century but certain aspects of its history and use are unclear. The house and its site will contain important archaeological information about the history and function of the building, and possibly its relationship to the abbey.

Areas of High Archaeological Importance

The suggested areas of the abbey precinct, both to the north and south of the abbey, and the area of the town to the south of the abbey and west of Bell Street, area Areas of High Archaeological Importance. The area approximately corresponds with the island bounded by Shitlake on the east and a watercourse along the western side of the abbey. This island is thought to have been the primary focus for settlement in the Saxon period, and may have also been occupied in the Roman and Iron Age periods. The southern part of this area lies on the edge of the recognised extent of the medieval town but the amount of archaeological information retrieved from this area for earlier periods justifies its inclusion as an Area of High Archaeological Importance.

The property plots within the area bounded by the market area, The Hundred, Latimer Street, Portersbridge Street and Church Street, the area on the eastern side of Bell Street and the southern side

of The Hundred as far as Broadwater Road, and the area along the northern side of Portersbridge Street including part of the brewery complex are Areas of High Archaeological Importance. Within these areas evidence for the earlier phases of settlement, including prehistoric Roman and Saxon occupation, and information regarding the development of the medieval town may survive, together with evidence for the trades and industries undertaken in Romsey. There are surviving medieval buildings within these areas which contributes to the importance of the areas. Detailed survey of standing buildings can contribute greatly to the understanding of the development of settlements and to the social status of the people who built and lived in them. Although there are a number of cellars in the town, some of them date back to the medieval period and are, therefore, of archaeological importance in their own right. Excavations within other historic towns have shown that the presence of cellars does not always mean that archaeological deposits have been completely destroyed as important deposits may remain undamaged between, behind or in front of the cellars. Certain areas of the town within the Areas of High Archaeological Importance are covered by car-parking but it is considered that the construction of the car-parks will not have truncated below ground archaeological deposits.

Archaeologically Important Areas

At the northern end of the town there appears to have been suburban development in the medieval period. It is likely that the property plots along Cherville Street represent part of such development but a recent observation beyond the blocks of regular property plots has also revealed evidence for medieval occupation (F. Green pers comm). Therefore the Archaeologically Important Area extends along Cherville Street as far as the railway. The area also extends across part of the site of the brewery as evidence for industrial process from the Saxon period onwards may survive. The earliest phases of the brewery are also of interest as the buildings contain timber-framed elements. Middlebridge Street, to the south of the town centre, also seems to have developed as a suburb along an important route to the west. Suburbs can be regarded as important barometers of the economic growth and decline of medieval towns as often these areas developed at times of rapid growth but contracted during periods of economic decline. Also, suburbs in other towns have been shown to contain relatively high status buildings therefore, despite the later redevelopments in these areas they have the potential to contain important archaeological evidence for the growth and development of Romsey.

On the western side of the town there are Archaeologically Important Areas that include the property plots along the southern side of The Hundred and along the western side of Palmerston Street, the eastern side of Latimer Street, and the areas between Love Lane and The Hundred. Within these areas evidence for the later development of the town may survive as well as evidence for earlier settlement. Excavations in the area behind the property plots along the eastern side of Latimer Street revealed Iron Age and Saxon activity, although the extent of the activity is not clearly understood. There are some late medieval buildings surviving in these areas, the study of which could add to the understanding of the development of the town.

Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance

Along the southern side of Broadwater Road, a modern road linking Bell Street and Palmerston Street, there is an extensive area of modern development. However, it is possible that fragmentary remains of medieval settlement along Banning Street and Palmerston Street may be encountered within the undeveloped parts of this area. The Area of Limited Archaeological Importance also extends to the south of the by-pass as the southern end of Banning Street extended into what is now the northern edge of Broadlands Park. Valuable evidence for settlement on the southern fringe of the town, and for possible industrial activities utilising the stream that runs through the southern part of the area may survive.

The properties on the eastern side of Palmerston Street probably represent a post-medieval development phase of the town linked with the development of Palmerston Street as the road to Southampton instead of Banning Street. The buildings in this area date from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries but evidence for the earliest phases of settlement may survive beneath and behind the existing structures.

By the early nineteenth century there was housing along Winchester Road to the east of the town extending beyond the line of the canal (now the A31 to the south of Winchester Road). It is possible that this road, leading to Winchester, began to attract development from the late medieval or post-medieval periods. It is known that there were also industrial sites along this road such as a brickworks

adjoining the eastern side of the canal on the northern side of the road. Although there has been much late nineteenth- and twentieth-century development along Winchester Road, it is possible that some evidence for the date of the initial development of these properties survives.

The extent of any medieval settlement along Mill Lane is not known but as this lane led to the site of a medieval mill and a crossing point of the Test, it is possible that there was some occupation along it. The area was also close to the edge of the boundary of the suggested northern precinct of the abbey and so information about the boundary or the use of land immediately adjacent to the precinct may be encountered.

Research framework

As is usually the case with archaeological work, the more work done, the more questions there are to be answered. Outlined below are some of the outstanding questions to be addressed about the origins and development of settlement in Romsey, but this list is by no means exhaustive.

- Roman settlement in the area of the town

Many of the excavations in the town have recovered Romano-British pottery and building material of the period was re-used in the building of the Saxon abbey. It is thought that there was a small settlement or farmstead in the Newton Lane area of the town, but the source of the masonry used in the abbey is not known. Further work is required to define the nature and extent of the occupation in the area of the later in the Romano-British period.

- Mid-Saxon settlement and industry

The quantities of iron slag that have been recovered from various sites in the town suggest that there iron smelting was a significant industry in this part of the Test valley in the mid-Saxon period. However, there is less information about the nature and extent of the settlement that must have accompanied the industrial activity, or the uses to which the iron was put. It has been suggested that there was a link between the smelting at Romsey and the iron working at the mid-Saxon trading centre at *Hamwic* (F. Green pers comm). If there was a link between the two centres, this may imply that the industry was under royal control, and that there was a higher status residence in the vicinity.

- The foundation of the religious establishments

There are significant questions about the date and nature of the foundation of the abbey. It is suggested that there was a mid-Saxon minster church at Romsey which may have been the monastery where St Boniface was educated. Archaeological excavations within and around the existing abbey church have shown that there are buildings that pre-date the tenth-century abbey church, although whether these buildings were religious or secular is not known. It has been suggested that they formed part of the earlier religious establishment. Further work is required to attempt to define the nature of the use of the abbey site before the early tenth-century church was built.

- The development of the town

Although the plan of the town does not exhibit a strongly planned character, there is sufficient regularity in the property plots to suggest that many of the town's properties were the result of deliberate planning. The abbey precinct appears to have forced a diversion in the north-south route along Cherville Street and Church Street and the laying out of the market place at the gates of the abbey indicates that the plan is later than the foundation of the abbey, but how much later and in relation to which foundation date is not known. Only archaeological excavation within the property plots and of the boundaries of the plots will be able to shed further light on the dates that certain areas of the town developed.

7. SOURCES

MAPS AND PLANS

- 1818 Survey of Romsey Extra (South Division) HRO 10M58/PO26
 1819 Survey of Romsey Extra (North Division) HRO 10M58/PO27
 1845 Tithe Apportionment map HRO 21M65/F7/197/2

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8. ABBREVIATIONS

<i>c.</i>	<i>circa</i> , about
HRO	Hampshire Records Office
nd	No date of publication given
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum
OE	Old English
OS	Ordnance Survey
pers comm	personal communication
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
TWA	Trust for Wessex Archaeology
VCH	<i>Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight</i>

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