

TP 5 Summary of primary findings

The following document states the current findings from the test pitting at 24 High Street over the week of the 27th October to 2nd November 2012. Each spit/feature or group of spits/features will be described in turn, including the finds material, provisional date and provisional interpretation.

Spit 1 and 2

Spits 1 and 2 were each 10 cm thick (20 cm full depth). The spits were a loose to friable, mid yellowish brown sandy silt with granule to pebble sized limestone inclusions. The finds materials within the spits consisted of: animal bone (cattle and sheep); CBM including, brick (509 grams), floor tile (52 grams), roofing slate (27 grams) and mortar (1 gram); four fragments of vessel glass (1 gram); metal, including 7 grams of nails and 19 grams of iron objects; 14 grams of charcoal; one left hand oyster shell; clay pipe, including bowl and stem fragments dating to the 18th C; and 3 grams of glass slag; flint material including, burnt flint (33 grams), flint debitage (21 grams), and one worked flint which is thought to be Neolithic in date. Also seven fragments of plastic were recovered from spit 2, including plastic toys such as a horse, pair of binoculars and a small plastic model of the Nieuw Amsterdam ship. This model ship is thought to date to between 1937 and 1974, as these are the dates for the first and last sailings of the actual vessel. The pottery material recovered from the test pit dates from the following periods: medieval (4 grams) and modern (59 grams). Spit 2 also contained one small find, a solid silver brooch with flower and foliage decoration. From the hallmarks on the brooch it can be seen that it is Birmingham, sterling silver, with a date stamp letter of 1896. The exact maker of the brooch is currently unknown as at present the makers mark has not been identified, due to it being poorly stamped into the brooch surface. The spits were mainly made up of the modern grass and top soil from the garden, and most likely postdate the construction of the adjacent property, during the period postdating 1937.

Spit 3

Spit 3 was 4 cm thick (24 cm full depth of the Test Pit). The spit was compact, mid-yellowish brown sandy silt and pebble sized limestone, with pebble sized brick inclusions. Very little finds material was recovered from the spit, with only one fragment of animal bone, one fragment of mortar, 304 grams of brick (which was also part of the deposit's make up), and one clay pipe bowl from the 19th C. This spit has been interpreted as being a stone surface or path laid down the southern edge of the garden. This surface is thought to be 19th or early 20th C in date, so may either pre date the construction of the adjacent property or be a garden feature associated with the property.

Spit 4, 5 and 6

Spit 4, 5 and 6 were each 10 cm in depth (full depth of test pit 50 cm). The spits were a friable, mid grey-yellowish brown sandy clay, with pebble sized limestone inclusions, and granular sized flint and charcoal inclusions. The finds material within these spits consists of: animal bone (cattle, sheep, pig, bird, rabbit); flint, including burnt flint (30 grams), flint debitage (200 grams), and two fragments of worked flint thought to be fragments of knife blades either Neolithic or Bronze Age in date; metal including 12 grams of nails, 28 grams of iron objects, and one possible fragment of iron working debris; 11 grams of iron slag and 9 grams of iron ore. Shell material was also recovered from these spits including three left hand oyster shells and three right hand oyster shells, with identifiable infestations including *Polydora ciliate*, *Polydora hoplura*, *Cliona celata* and Calcareous tubes. Six small fragments of brick were also recovered from spit 4 (top spit), but these are thought to have been brought into the spit by the overlying later activity, and by bioturbation. Spit 5 also contained one small find, a fragment of iron knife blade, thought to date from the medieval period. Pottery material was also recovered from the spits from multiple periods, including: Roman (11 grams); Saxon (8 grams); and medieval (203 grams). From this evidence this spits have been interpreted as being a deposit relating to medieval activity on the site. This activity is thought to include metal working due to the slag material recovered from the spits.

Feature Spit 7 and 8

Spits 7 and 8 (cut and fill) were a linear feature running NE - SW cut into spit 9 within the test pit. The feature had sharp brakes at the top and base and a flat base. The feature measures 60 cm wide by 1 m long by 10 cm deep, and was seen to run parallel to the adjacent road (High Street). The fill of this feature was a friable, mid greyish brown clayey silt with charcoal inclusions. The finds material which was recovered from the feature include: animal bone (cattle and sheep); burnt daub (7 grams); flint material, including burnt flint (12 grams), flint debitage (27 grams), and two fragments of worked flint, one Mesolithic microlith and one Bronze Age scraper; one iron nail; and six left hand oyster shells and four right hand oyster shells, with *Cliona celata* and Calcareous tubes infestations. The feature also contains pottery material dating from the Roman period (3 grams); Saxon period (5 grams); and medieval period (22 grams). From this evidence the feature has been interpreted as being a possible timber slot for a structure or building fronting the High Street, dating to the medieval period. Furthermore, it is thought that the structure may be a shop or industrial building fronting the High Street.

Spit 9

Spit 9 was 10 cm thick (full depth 60 cm). The spit was composed of friable, light brownish yellow sandy clay, with granular sized limestone inclusions. Only a small quantity of finds material was recovered from this spit including animal bone (sheep and deer) and 9 grams of flint debitage. No pottery material was recovered from this spit, although due to the

adjacent feature (cut 7), it is thought to date to the medieval period. Also, due to the adjacent feature and the lack of finds material, the spit has been interpreted as being the internal floor surface of the possible adjacent structure explained above (Feature Spit 7 and 8).

Feature Spit 11, 12 and 13

Spits 11, 12 and 13 (cut and two fills) was a linear feature running E – W, cut into spit 10, within the test pit. The feature had a rounded break of slope at top and base, with the sides being at a 45° angle and slightly concave, with the base of the feature also being concave at an angle of about 5°. The feature measures 70 cm wide by 1 m long by 25 cm deep. The fill of this feature was a friable to compact mid grayish brown sandy silt, with pebble to granular sized limestone and charcoal inclusions. The finds material which was recovered from the feature include: animal bone (cattle, sheep and bird); burnt daub (19 grams); flint material, including burnt flint (6 grams), flint debitage (18 grams), and one fragment of worked flint, a Bronze Age scraper and one possible flake; and four left hand oyster shells and one right hand oyster shell, with *Cliona celata*, Calcareous tubes and Bore hole infestations. The feature also contains pottery material dating from the Roman period (2 grams); Saxon period (32 grams); and medieval period (232 grams). From this evidence the feature has been interpreted as being a possible ditch or gully either fronting the structure stated below (cut 17) or a road side ditch running alongside the High Street, located adjacent to the test pit location. The feature is thought to date from the medieval period, but pre date the structure or building stated above (cut 7).

Feature Spit 17 and 18

Spits 17 and 18 (cut and fill) was a rectangular feature running NE - SW cut into spit 10, within the test pit. The feature had a sharp brake at top and at base and also had a flat base. The sides of the cut were nearly vertical, at an angle of 85-90°, and the feature is thought to have been horizontally truncated by feature 7 (cut) which overlies it. The feature measures 23 cm wide by 38 cm long by 20 cm deep, and is seen to possibly run parallel to the adjacent road (High Street). The fill of this feature was a friable, mid greyish brown sandy silt, with granular sized limestone and charcoal inclusion. The finds material which was recovered from the feature include: animal bone (cattle); one fragment of worked burnt stone (34 grams); and flint debitage (3 grams). The feature also contained only one fragment of pottery dating to the Roman period (3 grams). From this evidence the feature has been interpreted as being a possible timber slot for a structure or building fronting the High Street. Even though the feature contained no medieval pottery, due to it being adjacent to a feature dating to the medieval period, this feature is thought to be contemporary with it. Furthermore, it is thought that the structure, like that of the one stated above, may be a shop or industrial building fronting the High Street.

Spit 10, 15 and 19

Spits 10 and 19 were each 10 cm thick and spit 15 was 20 cm thick (full depth 1m). The spits were friable-compact, with spit 10 being mid yellowish brown, spit 15 mid grayish brown, and spit 19 mid brownish orange, sandy clay, with pebble to granular sized limestone and charcoal inclusions. The finds material recovered from these spits include: animal bone (sheep); flint material, including burnt flint (5 grams), flint debitage (24 grams), and one possible flint core; and two left hand oyster shells and three right hand oyster shells, with *Cliona celata* and oyster shell attached infestations. Pottery was also recovered from the spits from multiple periods, including: Roman (45 grams), including Greyware and Oxford Ware; Saxon (10 grams); and medieval (25 grams). The interpretation of these deposits are currently unclear, but may be one of three options: 1. a levelling layer; 2. a surface outside or within a structure (like that of spit 9); 3. alluvial deposits showing a lack of activity in this area of the settlement during this period. The deposit is thought to date to the early medieval period. Also, it should be noted that this type of deposit has been seen at the base of other test pits and trenching previously, and until now has been thought to be a natural deposit. From the findings within the base of this test pit, it can be seen that this is not the case, and may be masking earlier archaeological features from the Roman period or earlier. This may also be the reason why very few Roman features have been found in the village, but pottery and cremations have been found, showing that there was settlement from this period in the current settlement area.

Spit 14 and 16 – Natural

Spits 14 and 16 were the natural underlying geology. The natural geology was found to be made of two types: spit 16 was Stanford Limestone Formation in the W half of the test pit; spit 14 was a mid-yellowish orange clay with granular sized limestone inclusions in the E half of the test pit. This level was reached at a depth of 1 m from the top of the test pit. No archaeological features were found to be cut into the natural geology.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the evidence presented above from both the spits and features, it can be seen that the area surrounding the test pit was heavily used during the medieval period. This can be seen from many areas of evidence including that of multiple structures overlying one another (as one went out of use, it was then replaced by a later one), all of which are thought to have fronted the High Street. Evidence of possible industrial processes, such as iron working, occurring close to the site can be seen through the recovery of iron slag. It can also be seen that activities occurred over a long period of time as the medieval deposits can be seen to have a total depth of 76 cm with 101 fragments of medieval pottery being recovered. Lastly from the medieval period it can be seen that all the deposits from this period are located at a height higher than the current adjacent road surface (High Street). This shows evidence for the use of the road over a long period as it shows that the surface of the road would have been worn down for this height difference to have occurred.

Furthermore it may show that the road may have been in existence and use from the Roman period to the present day.

Evidence was also found for earlier activities within the test pit area, through the finds material recovered. Although the finds material from these periods was not found in features that can definitely be dated to these periods, they are thought not to be in situ. Due to the volume of the earlier finds types and as only some of them have worn edges, it is likely that they were deposited either in or close to the test pit location. Pottery was recovered from both the Saxon (8 fragments) and Roman (23 fragments) periods from the test pit, which is the largest quantity of pottery from both these period, from all test pits dug in the current settlement to date. This is a significant find as it shows that both the Saxon and Roman settlements were located close to the area of the test pit, and may also show that the area was within the centre of the settlement area, rather than on the edge. Also material recovered has shown that there was human activity on the site during the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (8000 BC – 2300 BC), from the worked flints and flint debitage. Lastly from all the evidence presented above, it can be seen that there has been human activity on the site from 8000 BC to the present day, the road adjacent to the property (the High Street) has been in use since possibly the Roman period, but definitely the medieval period, and the garden may possibly have structures below it fronting the medieval High Street.