
Planned Redevelopments in Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Chesterton

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Previous excavations conducted in and around the periphery of Chesterton have revealed details of the settlement's origins and early development. More recent work undertaken within the settlement core provides additional information pertaining to its subsequent medieval and post-medieval reorganisation and expansion. Here, c. 1200, a series of burgage-type plots were established. Probably occupying former strips within the preceding open fields, their establishment marks the culmination of a wider process of village nucleation that may have been initiated by nearby Barnwell Priory. Numerous medieval features, including a stone-lined well, were investigated. In c. 1560 an extensive redevelopment was undertaken; the existing buildings were demolished, the ground-surface raised and a series of narrow tenements established. This latter event most probably represents a property speculation undertaken following the sale of the Priory's former demesne.

Situated a mile to the northeast of the historic core of Cambridge, medieval Chesterton lay within the physical and economic hinterland of the adjacent town. Today, the former village has been incorporated into Cambridge's extensive suburban fringe (Fig. 1). Between 1998 and 2009 a number of archaeological investigations were conducted in and around the periphery of the medieval settlement. The results of this work – which have been detailed in two previous papers (Cessford with Dickens 2004; Mackay 2009) – revealed important information pertaining to its origins and early development, c. 900–1200. Building upon this foundation, the current paper presents the results of investigations conducted in Chesterton between 2011 and 2014. This complements the earlier data in two regards. Spatially, the new information pertains directly to the core of the village; an area that has not previously been investigated. Temporally, it focuses upon the succeeding period, c. 1200–1700. As a result, significant information regarding the settlement's later development and expansion is revealed.

Historically, Chesterton was most probably founded as a royal *vill* – the feudal term for a village or township – during the 8th century (Wright 1989, 5). A polyfocal settlement then developed. Dispersed Late Saxon foci have been identified to both the east and west of the later medieval centre, complementing a postulated core situated in the vicinity of St

Andrew's Church (Cessford with Dickens 2004, 127). Subsequently, during the late 11th or early 12th century, a series of nucleated northwest-southeast aligned enclosures were established parallel to present-day Union Lane (Cessford with Dickens 2004, 135). Concomitantly, a three-field system developed in association with the *vill* that was separate from the larger Liberty of Cambridge (Oosthuizen 2010). Chesterton remained a royal demesne until 1194, when it was assigned to Saher de Quincy. Subsequently, it was granted in fee farm by King John to Barnwell Priory c. 1200 (Clark 1907, 75). Following the dissolution of the priory in 1538 its lands were dispersed amongst several private and collegiate landowners (Wright 1989, 13–15). During the post-medieval period the village continued to expand. The rate of its expansion increased exponentially following the enclosure of the parish in 1838, as at this time a new and substantial suburb was established (Blackmore 1981).

Archaeologically, four investigations have been conducted in Chesterton by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit since 2011. Three of these – situated within the grounds of Elizabeth House (Patten 2014; Fig. 1.5), within the garden of Chesterton House (Newman 2014b; Fig. 1.6) and on Green End Road (Newman 2011a; Fig. 1.7) – produced only limited results. In each instance, evidence of extensive post-medieval gravel quarrying was encountered. Moreover, at the first and last locations little or no evidence of pre-quarrying activity was identified, while at Chesterton House a small number of Saxo-Norman features had been heavily truncated by numerous extraction pits of 17th century date. Much the most significant investigation was conducted at 169–73 High Street (Fig. 1.8). Here, an excavation extending over 375sqm was conducted during November and December 2013 (Newman 2014a; Fig. 2). Despite its relatively restricted size, this investigation produced a number of important results.

169–73 High Street

Two principal phases of activity were identified, both of which pertained to a series of long-lived and intensively occupied plots. Prior to their establishment,

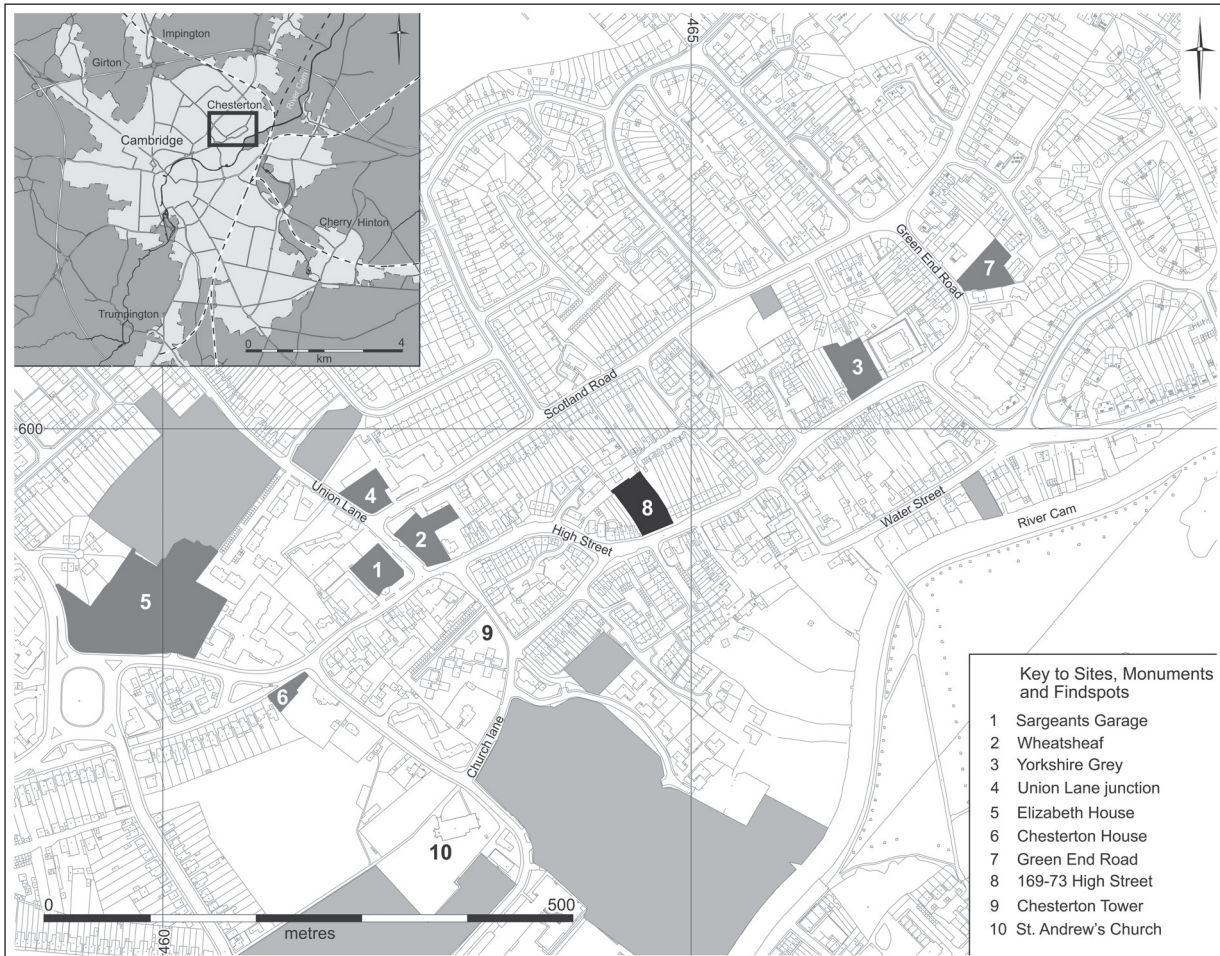


Figure 1. Plan of Chesterton, showing the location of sites discussed within the text (earlier investigations are indicated in pale grey; see Cessford with Dickens 2004).

little activity appears to have occurred at the site. A small quantity of residual material culture of Middle Bronze Age to Roman date was recovered, all of which was probably introduced to the site via manuring. More significantly, the presence of four residual Middle Saxon pottery sherds – which exclusively consisted of Ipswich ware, a fabric-type that was prevalent in Cambridgeshire c. 725–850 (Blinkhorn 2012) – reinforces the probability that Middle Saxon occupation occurred in the general vicinity (see also Cessford with Dickens 2004, 127).

Medieval

Around the turn of the 13th century a minimum of three plots was established at the site (Fig. 3). Occupation commenced around two centuries later than it had begun nearby at the Yorkshire Grey, Sargeants Garage, Wheatsheaf and Union Lane Junction sites (for locations, see Fig. 1). This disparity can be demonstrated via a comparison of the ratio of 10th–12th century versus 13th–15th century ceramics that were recovered from each site. At 169–73 High Street, the 10th–12th century material (totalling 47

sherds) comprised only 5.3% of the combined medieval assemblage, whereas at Sargeants Garage it comprised 20.2% (148 sherds), at Union Lane Junction 31.5% (31 sherds), at the Yorkshire Grey 73.5% (495 sherds) and at the Wheatsheaf 82.5% (340 sherds) (data from Cessford with Dickens 2004; Mackay 2009). In addition to its low relative proportion, none of the 10th–12th century material identified at 169–73 High Street occurred in isolation. Instead, the fragments were exclusively associated with 13th century and later fabrics. This combination of evidence strongly suggests that occupation commenced here around the beginning of the 13th century; the approximate date at which the transition in ware types occurred (see Cessford 2015).

Of the three identified 13th century plots, only *Plot II* lay predominantly within the area of investigation. As Fig. 3 shows it was relatively narrow in form with a distinctive bend, or twist, at its head (the head being the portion situated in closest proximity to the street frontage). This is similar to the pattern generated by the individual strips – known as *lands* – that are characteristic of medieval open field agriculture (Hall 2014). The systematic and repetitive practice of



Figure 2. The exposed post-medieval (top) and medieval (bottom) archaeological horizons at 169-73 High Street, facing northwest. The former shows the extent of the surviving structural remains at the site, the latter the extent of below-ground cut features. See also Plate 3.

ploughing these lands generated a distinctive, elongated reverse 'S' shape. In this particular instance, although the bend does not follow the typical reverse orientation it is still most likely to be agricultural in origin because the site was previously unoccupied and a non-linear layout is otherwise highly unusual in plots of this date (Palliser *et al.* 2001). Further circumstantial support for this interpretation can also be found in the perpendicular layout of the High Street and Scotland Road (formerly Back Lane), as these may have first developed as headlands within the open field before later becoming laneways. Although it is unlikely that the lands themselves would have

been directly occupied, their impact upon the landscape may well be reflected in the form of the plots that succeeded them.

Plot II itself closely resembled a 'burgage-type' plot; a long, thin property-type that occurred almost ubiquitously in urban and suburban contexts across England during the Middle Ages (Conzen 1960; Slater 1981). Within a typical burgage plot the head of the property was occupied by the primary dwelling, behind which lay any associated accessory buildings (such as a kitchen or workshop). Extending to the rear of these structures lay the tail of the property; this was frequently sub-divided into an 'innerland zone',

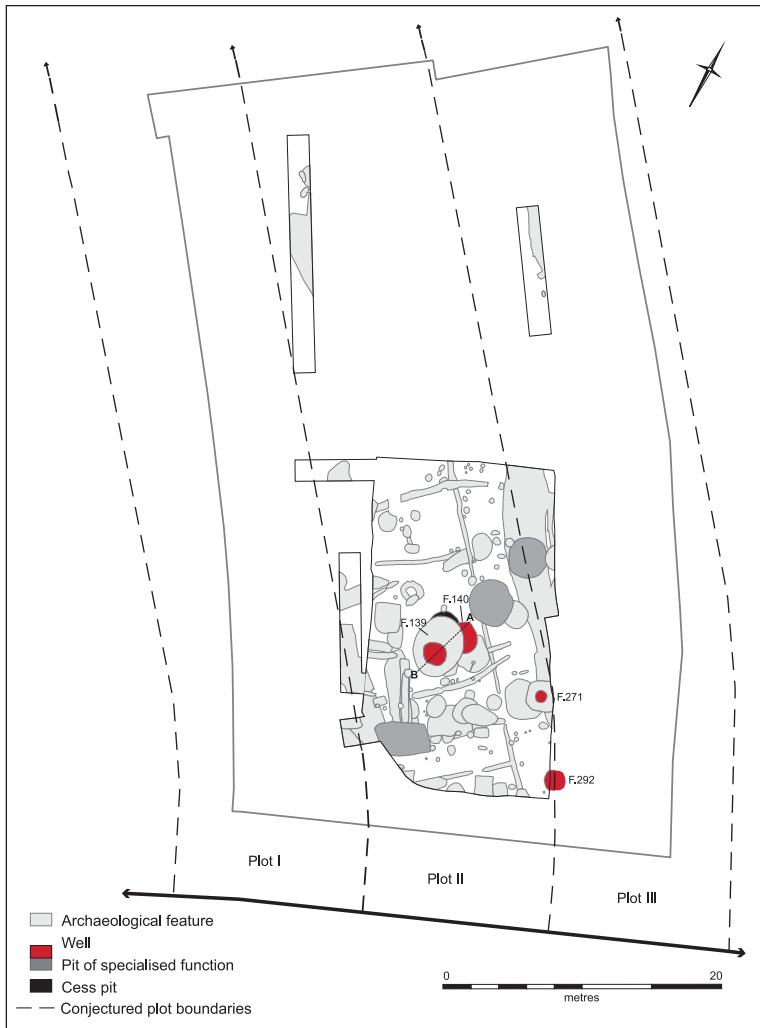


Figure 3. Medieval features and conjectured plot boundaries.

within which a variety of domestic or craft-based activities were undertaken, and a 'backland zone' that was often reserved primarily for horticultural use. At the present site, the frontage structures themselves appear to have lain outside the area of investigation. Within the tail of *Plot II*, however, a well-preserved sequence of boundary-related features was identified (Fig. 4).

As was common at this date, the plot was initially demarcated by ditches. Over the course of the succeeding century these boundaries were recut a minimum of five times, although the active division itself never appears to have measured in excess of 1.1m wide by 0.6m deep. The recuts occurred in a regular sequence that extended gradually from east to west. Consequently, while the width of the original property plot remained relatively consistent its position shifted incrementally to the west by some 3–5m. The continued employment of ditches, as opposed to more ephemeral boundary features such as fences or hedges, suggests that the area remained semi-rural in character throughout this period. By the early 14th century, however, a number of changes had occurred (Fig. 4). Firstly, the ditched boundaries had fallen out of use and been replaced by fence-lines. This repre-

sents a relatively common developmental pattern, the occurrence of which has been linked to a rise in the overall level of activity being undertaken (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002, 810).

Consonant with such an interpretation, a rectilinear system of internal subdivisions was also established. Defined by gullies that measured a maximum of 0.38m wide by 0.20m deep, these subdivisions represent the formal demarcation of differing zones of activity that were undertaken within this space. A very similar pattern of spatial segregation also predominated during the 15th century (Fig. 4), although by this date the gullies had been succeeded by irregular, curvilinear hedges. Moreover, the level of subdivision increased still further during this period when a distinct sub-plot was established. Rectified to a linear alignment perpendicular to the street frontage, and defined by a series of frequently recut gullies, this latter area represents a marked escalation in the density of occupation at the site.

In addition to boundary demarcations, the inner-land zone of *Plot II* also contained an array of domestic feature-types. The most prolific of these were pits, which served a variety of purposes such as gravel extraction and refuse disposal. A third use, indus-



Figure 4. Medieval boundary development sequence, as broken down on a century-by-century basis.

trial/craft-based activity, was also represented by three 15th century pits of specialised function (Fig. 3), which were shallow in form with revetted sides and flat bases. Evidence of associated staining/mineralisation indicates that they were employed in a water-based process wherein material was soaked or rinsed on a frequent basis, although the precise nature of this process remains unclear. Finally, four wells and a cesspit were also present (Fig. 3).

Two of the wells lay close to the midline of *Plot II* (F.139 and F.140) whilst two lay on its eastern boundary (F.271 and F.292); the latter may thus have been associated instead with *Plot III*. Due to their close proximity to extant standing buildings, the latter pair could not be intensively excavated and their precise dates were not determined (although the remnant of a stone-lining was encountered within F.271). By way of contrast, both of the fully investigated wells were 14th century in origin. The earliest, F.140, was most probably wattle-lined – by far the most common lining-type of the period – although no organic material had survived. It was replaced by the close of the 14th century by F.139, a more substantial stone-lined example (Fig. 5).

Composed of clunch, a locally occurring fine-grained chalk, the blocks employed in F.139's lining were most probably transported by river from Reach or Burwell before being shaped to fit on site (see Newton 2010). As such, they represent a relatively substantial investment. At the base of the well, the blocks rested upon a timber baseplate (Fig. 6). 'D'-shaped in form, measuring 1.57m in length by 1.20m in width and a maximum of 0.08m thick, the baseplate was composed of three purpose-cut oak timbers (Fig. 6). Two of these timbers represent portions of the same, sharply bent branch that had been sawn longitudinally; the two halves were then conjoined

via a simple square-pegged lap joint. Unusually, and uniquely for the remainder of the baseplate, this joint demonstrated toolmarks characteristic of an adze. The third timber represents a portion derived from a forked branch. It had two square-pegged joints, one a simple lap and the second a notched lap; all of the pegs were composed of oak. Unfortunately, insufficient growth rings were present to permit dendrochronological analysis.

The presence of a baseplate indicates that the well was most probably caisson-built. This technique, which continued to be used in Cambridgeshire into the 19th century (Warboys 2003), involved the gradual lowering of a partially-constructed section of lining by means of successive stages of undermining; at each stage, an additional course of stonework was introduced. The employment of a baseplate was central to this process. Although relatively uncommon at this date, a small number of comparable clunch-lined wells have been identified at sites situated in and around Cambridge. A similar, albeit cruder, 15th century example was excavated at the Sargeants Garage site in Chesterton, for example (Cessford with Dickens 2004, 132–35) whilst additional 14th–15th century comparators are known from Cherry Hinton (Cessford and Slater 2014, 52) and Barnwell (Newman 2013, 32).

Within the first few decades of F.139's existence, repeated cleaning – allied with the effects of natural water movement – resulted in the partial undermining of its base. Consequently, during the early 15th century the lowest portion of its shaft was infilled (Fig. 5). Anaerobic conditions resulted in the recovery of a relatively sizable assemblage of organic material from this deposit. Amongst this group, thirty-six leather fragments – including the remains of two turnshoes and two straps – were identified. Overall,

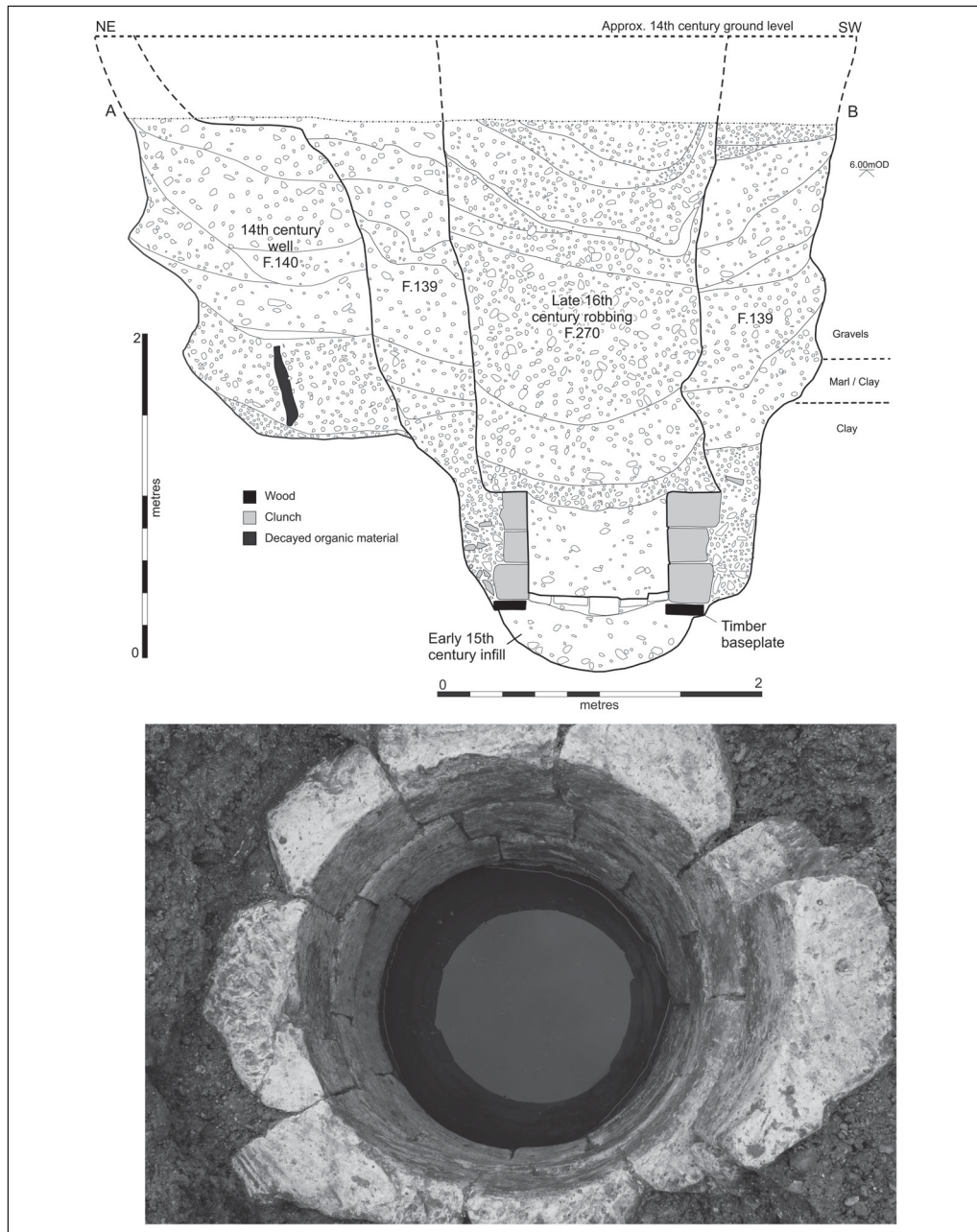


Figure 5. Southeast facing section of wells F.139 and F.140, with inset photograph of F.139's remnant clunch-lining (the section's location is shown in Fig. 3).

the fragments appear to represent the disposal of domestic rubbish as no secondary cutting was present that would indicate the recovery of leather for recycling. The larger shoe, of adult size 9 (43), had a sole with a pointed toe and a small extension (Fig. 7.2). While it had a small hole worn at the toe, the rest of the sole is relatively unworn; though it had repair patches (clumps) originally sewn to both the tread and seat and attached to the rand with tunnel stitching. These features suggest a date in the late 14th/early 15th century. Part of the calfskin upper survives, indicating an ankle shoe with a principally one-piece upper (Fig. 7.1). The oval fastening suggests

it may have laced up the instep, a style popular at that time (e.g. Grew and de Neergaard 1988, 66–7).

A second turnshoe sole, to fit a child, was of the same date, with fragments of shoe upper of a thicker leather (cattle hide) likely to have been derived from it. A small clump sole repair piece may have come from either of the two shoe soles as both had been repaired before being discarded. The remains of two straps of cattle hide were also present. One comprised a strap 1 ¼ ins. wide with a series of buckle pin holes running down the centre, which may come from harness or a belt. The second strap was narrower, being less than ½ inch wide, suggesting it may have been a

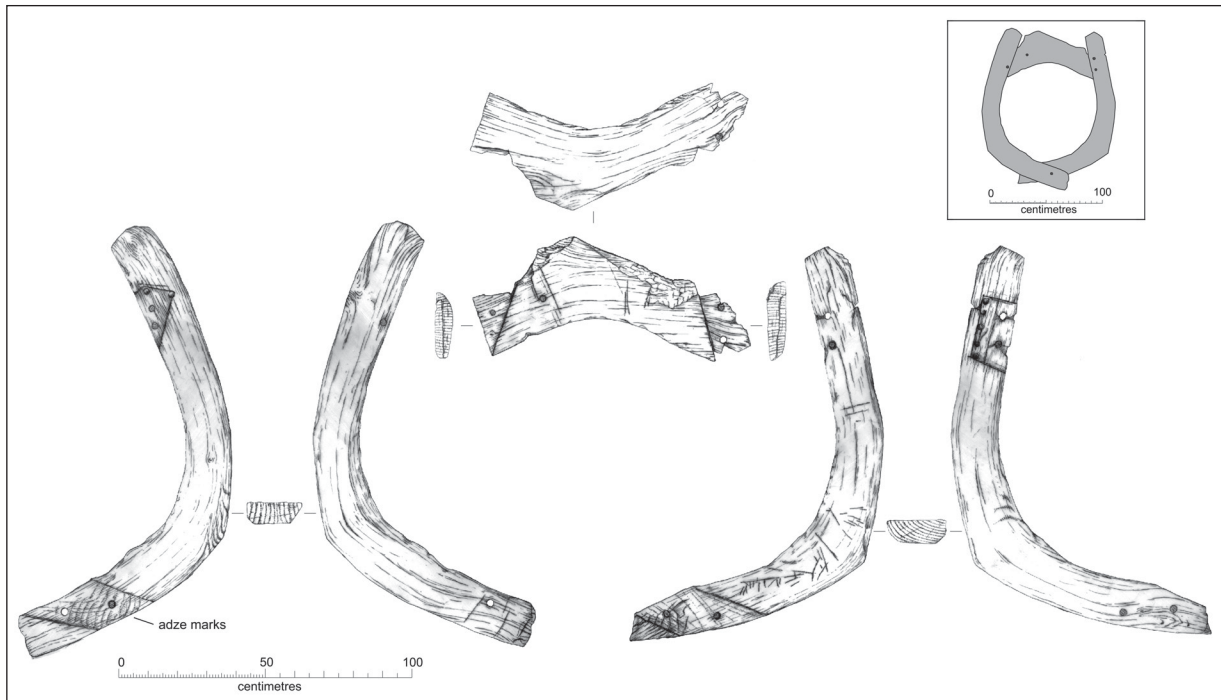


Figure 6. 14th century timber baseplate from well F.139.

spur leather.

Two wooden artefacts were also recovered from the well's basal deposit. The first comprised the terminal of a composite knife handle (Fig. 7.3). The handle's two scales were affixed via a copper alloy suspension loop, while the terminal was completed via the addition of a copper alloy end cap with simple, corrugated 'ridge' decoration. Alongside the handle was found a fragmentary double-sided comb of one-piece construction (Fig. 7.4). This was of a common, utilitarian design that conforms to Ashby's Type 14b (dated c. 1400–1700; Ashby 2011). In addition, the waterlogged deposit also contained a relatively well-preserved assemblage of botanical remains. This material revealed some evidence for the inclusion of sewage, including grape seeds and walnut shell fragments, along with seeds indicative of rough, poorly maintained grassland.

During the later 15th century, a layer of flat-laid hardcore was introduced above the primary infill in order to prevent further erosion (Fig. 5). This layer consisted of six near-complete handmade bricks and three fragments of worked stone. Alongside two fragments of Mayen lava quernstone, the latter included a near-complete grindstone composed of micaceous sandstone grit derived from the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures of Derbyshire/South Yorkshire. The grindstone most probably dates to c. 1480; the approximate date at which a treadle and crank rotation mechanism for such stones was widely adopted (White 1962, 162). Its small diameter (205mm) and large central axle-hole (70mm square) are typical of the period. This particular example demonstrates a substantial degree of even wear, suggesting the habit-

ual sharpening of a wide or long bladed object such as a large knife, sword or axe.

Across the site more generally, thirteen non-waterlogged environmental bulk samples of medieval date were analysed. The majority of these were small (<0.1 litres in volume) and relatively limited in composition. Nevertheless, in each instance cereal grains, chaff, seeds of common weeds and wetland plants plus tree/shrub macrofossils were recorded at a low to moderate density. Wheat occurred most frequently. Chaff was generally scarce, but bread wheat-type rachis nodes and individual barley/rye type rachis nodes were noted, along with a single cultivated oat and rare fragments of waterlogged cereal bran. Other potential food plant remains included charred bean seeds and waterlogged grape 'pips'. Finally, weed seeds were generally uncommon, with most occurring as single specimens. Overall, the recovered assemblages were very uniform in composition, and appear most likely to have been predominantly derived from midden waste.

Economically, a relatively small medieval faunal assemblage was recovered; only 167 specimens were identifiable to species or family level. In part a result of the limited scale of the investigation, this paucity was also compounded by the absence of any large, discrete groups. The domesticate assemblage was dominated by sheep/goat (48.3% by count), with smaller quantities of cow (34.3%) and pig (7.7%) also present. Such proportions are most frequently interpreted as being 'rural' in character, since during the medieval period urban sites are often associated with a higher prevalence of cattle; this pattern was by no means universal, however (Albarella 2005). Low

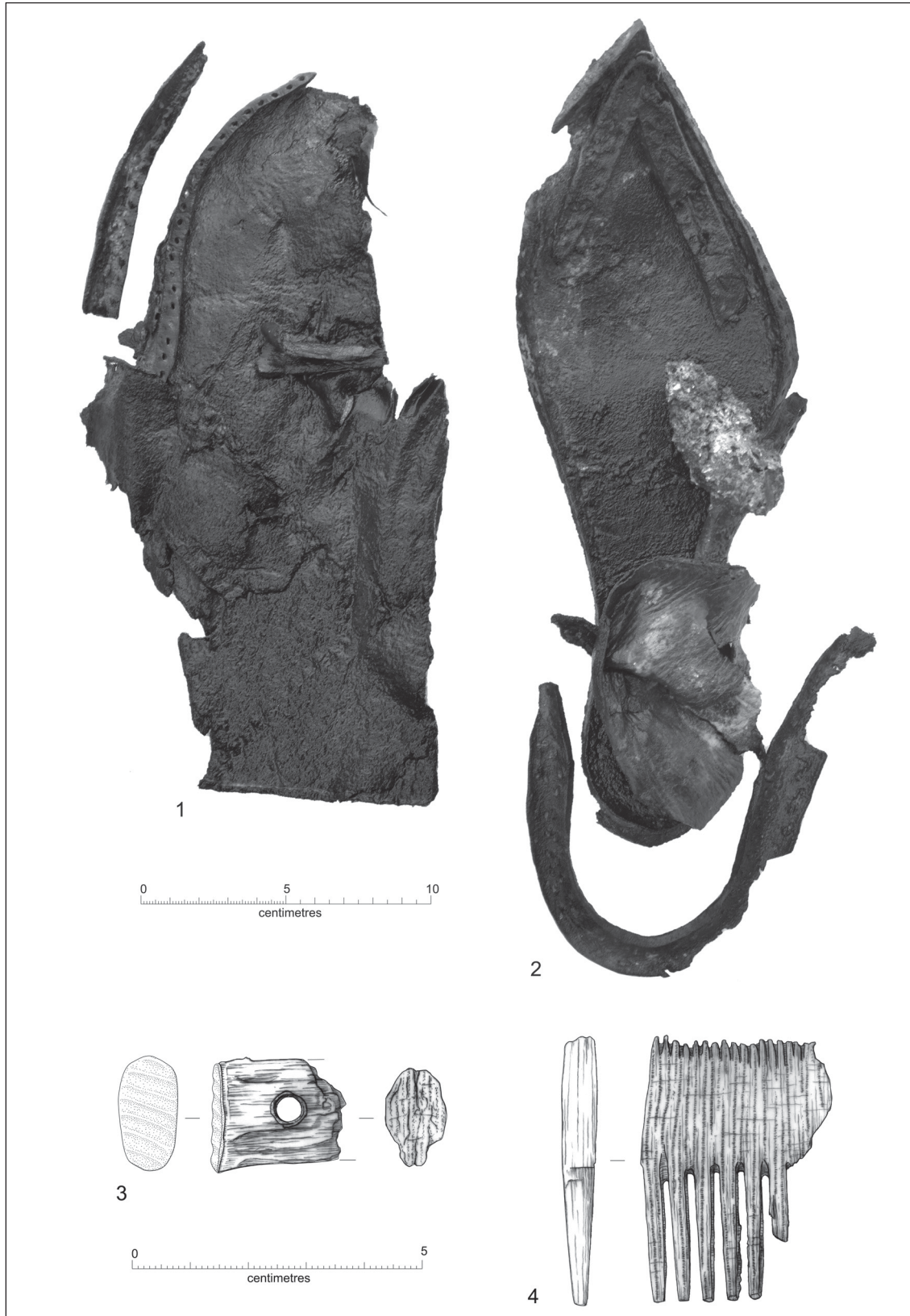


Figure 7. Organic artefacts recovered from the anaerobic early 15th century basal infill of well F.139, including: 1) the fragmentary remnant of a calfskin turnshoe upper; 2) the sole of the same shoe; 3) a composite wooden knife handle remnant with ridged copper alloy end cap; 4) a wooden double-sided comb fragment.

quantities of horse, dog, rabbit, red deer, chicken, goose, fish and frog/toad were also recovered. In general, the composition of the assemblage is consistent with the disposal of butchery and/or kitchen waste.

Finally, the site's ceramic assemblage was dominated by medieval material, with this period representing 69.7% of the overall assemblage by count (Table 1). Both the Saxo-Norman and medieval assemblages were composed of the typical range of fabrics and forms that are found consistently across Cambridge and its environs (Table 2; Fig. 8). The former was dominated by St. Neots-type ware, with a smaller quantity of Thetford-type ware and Stamford ware. The disproportionate dominance of St. Neots-type ware is relatively unusual, and supports the interpretation of a late depositional date for the material. The medieval assemblage, in contrast, was composed

of the usual range of coarsewares (68.2% by count, 78.7% by weight), finewares (29.8% by count, 18.0% by weight) and material that is intermediate between the two (2.0% by count, 3.3% by weight). Few significant vessels were identified and the range of ware-types was relatively low, especially in comparison to contemporary suburban sites such as Grand Arcade and Eastern Gate Hotel (Cessford and Dickens *in prep.*; Newman 2013); although this may simply reflect the limited sample size as opposed to a true pattern of consumption.

Post-Medieval

Around 1560 a major alteration occurred in the usage of the site. The preceding pattern of medieval occupation was swept away in an extensive *tabula rasa*; build-

Table 1. 169-73 High Street ceramic assemblage by period.

Period	Count	Weight (g)	Mean Sherd Weight (MSW) (g)
Middle Bronze Age (1500 to 1000 BC)	1 (0.1%)	28 (0.1%)	28
Roman (43 to 410 AD)	4 (0.4%)	9 (<0.1%)	2.2
Middle Saxon (725-900 AD)	4 (0.4%)	67 (0.4%)	16.7
Saxo-Norman (1000 to 1200 AD)	43 (3.9%)	519 (2.7%)	12.0
Medieval (1200 to 1500 AD)	764 (69.7%)	7452 (41.4%)	9.7
Post-medieval (1500-1700 AD)	78 (7.1%)	5668 (31.2%)	72.7
Modern (1700-present)	202 (18.4%)	4403 (24.2%)	21.8
Total	1096	18186	16.6

Table 2. Saxo-Norman and medieval wares from 169-73 High Street by fabric.

Ware	Date range	Source	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
Stamford	10th-late 12th century	Stamford	2	28	14
St Neots-type	Late 9th-late 12th century	Various sources	31	282	9.1
Thetford-type	Late 9th-late 12th century	Various sources	10	209	20.9
Saxo-Norman Total			43	519	12.1
Brill/Boarstall	13th-15th century, predominantly 13th century	Buckinghamshire	3	65	21.7
Cambridge-type sgraffito	15th century	North Essex or South Cambridgeshire	1	2	2
Developed St Neots	13th-14th century, predominantly 13th century	Various sources	2	56	28
Developed Stamford	13th-14th century, predominantly 13th century	Lincolnshire	3	49	16.3
Ely-Grimston	14th century	Cambridgeshire	2	63	31.5
Essex redware	Late 13th-15th century, predominantly 15th century	Essex	222	1263	5.7
Grimston	12th-15th century, predominantly 14th century	Norfolk	6	48	8
Lyveden/Stanion	13th-14th century, predominantly 13th century	Northamptonshire	2	15	7.5
Medieval Ely	13th-15th century, predominantly 14th century	Isle of Ely	37	392	10.6
Pink shelly ware	13th century	Northamptonshire	2	27	13.5
Unprovenanced coarsewares	Late 12th-early 16th century	Various sources	484	5472	11.3
Medieval Total			764	7452	9.8

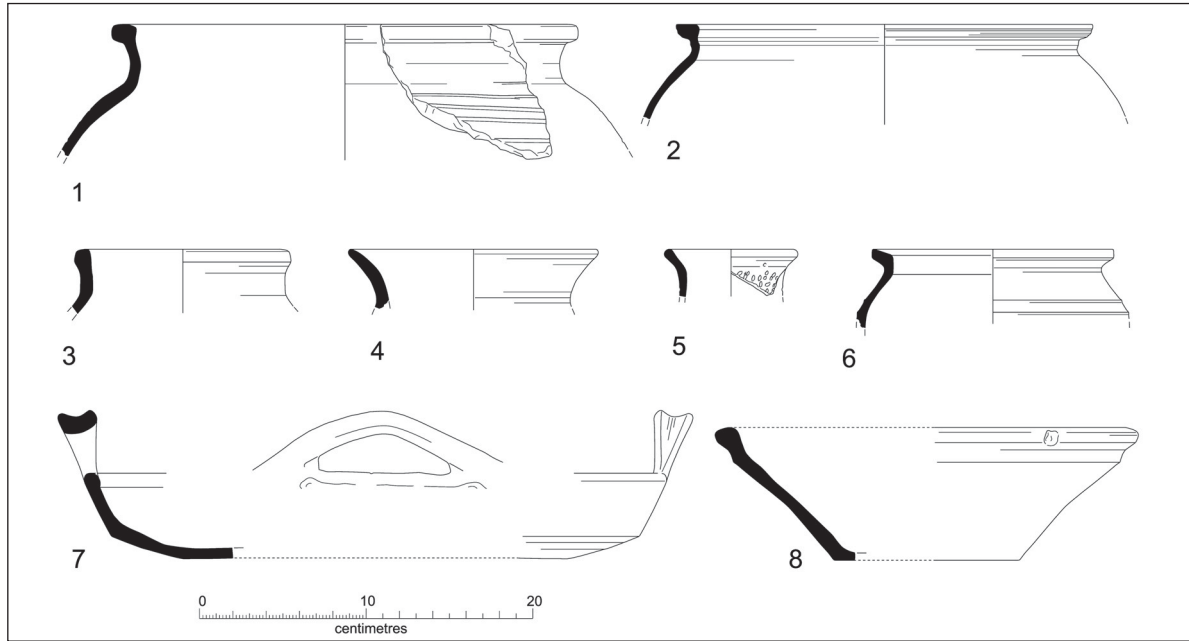


Figure 8. Ceramic assemblage, including: 1) grey coarseware jar with incised decoration, 15th century; 2) pink gritty jar rim, 14th century; 3) Ipswich-type jar rim, Middle Saxon; 4) Ipswich ware jar rim, Middle Saxon; 5) St Neots-type ware jar with stabbed decoration, 10th-11th century; 6) Medieval Ely ware jar rim, 14th-15th century; 7) grey coarseware basting dish with looped handle, late 15th century; 8) buff coarseware bowl, 15th century.

ings were levelled, wells infilled and a widespread ground-raising deposit introduced (which increased the ground-height by c. 0.5m). It was at this time that the stone-lining of well F.139 substantially robbed. Then, above the remains of the three original plots, a minimum of eight new tenement-style properties were established, each around 4m in width (*Plots A-H*; Fig. 9). Although broadly respecting their predecessor's layout, the alignment of these new plots was partially rectified to a more perpendicular arrangement relative to the street frontage. The High Street itself also appears to have been widened at this time, with the resultant loss of some 2–4m from the plot heads.

Archaeologically, perhaps the most striking element of this period comprised the number and density of buildings that were now established. Overall, the degree of building coverage – or relative percentage of the site covered by buildings (Conzen 1960, 123) – was much greater during this phase than it had been previously, with the result that the area was now much more characteristically 'urban' in form. Three long-lived buildings were investigated; Building 1 in *Plot C*, Building 2 in *Plot D* and Building 3 in *Plot F* (Fig. 9). All three initially appear to have been of relatively uniform design. Each consisted of a timber-framed structure that rested upon earth-fast timber sill beams. A minimum of two, and probably three, rooms were present on the ground floor of all three buildings, and within each room a sequence of rammed clay floor surfaces was identified. Altogether, this tenement-style layout represents one of the most common forms of vernacular architecture

of the period (Johnson, M 2010).

Despite the buildings' uniformity, a number of differences were nevertheless identifiable. These primarily pertained to their later usage and modification. Within Building 1, for example, an 'I-shaped' mortared clunch footing was present, forming the eastern wall of its rearmost room. This footing represents the foundation for a substantial brick-built chimney; notably, no equivalent foundation was present in either of the adjacent structures. Within Building 2, meanwhile, the rearmost room was constructed differently to the remainder of the dwelling. Here, clay beampads had been employed to raise the sill beams above the surrounding ground surface, thereby prolonging the lifespan of the constituent timbers. This evidence implies that the rear portion of the building comprised either a replacement or an extension to the original build. Yet the greatest differences were observed within Building 3.

Although initially near-identical in form to its neighbours, during the 17th century Building 3 was rebuilt in brick. As part of its transformation the structure was also substantially extended (Fig. 9). In all, four separate rooms were investigated, the most northerly of which was partially cellared (Fig. 10). Incorporated into the footings of the rebuilt structure were five fragments of reused medieval moulded stone, including a Romanesque voussoir with chevronic decoration and the remnant of a probable stoup, plus five refitting fragments derived from a large millstone. Composed of Pennine Millstone Grit, the combination of a convex rim, substantial diameter (c. 2.1m) and limited thickness (0.12m+) indicates an

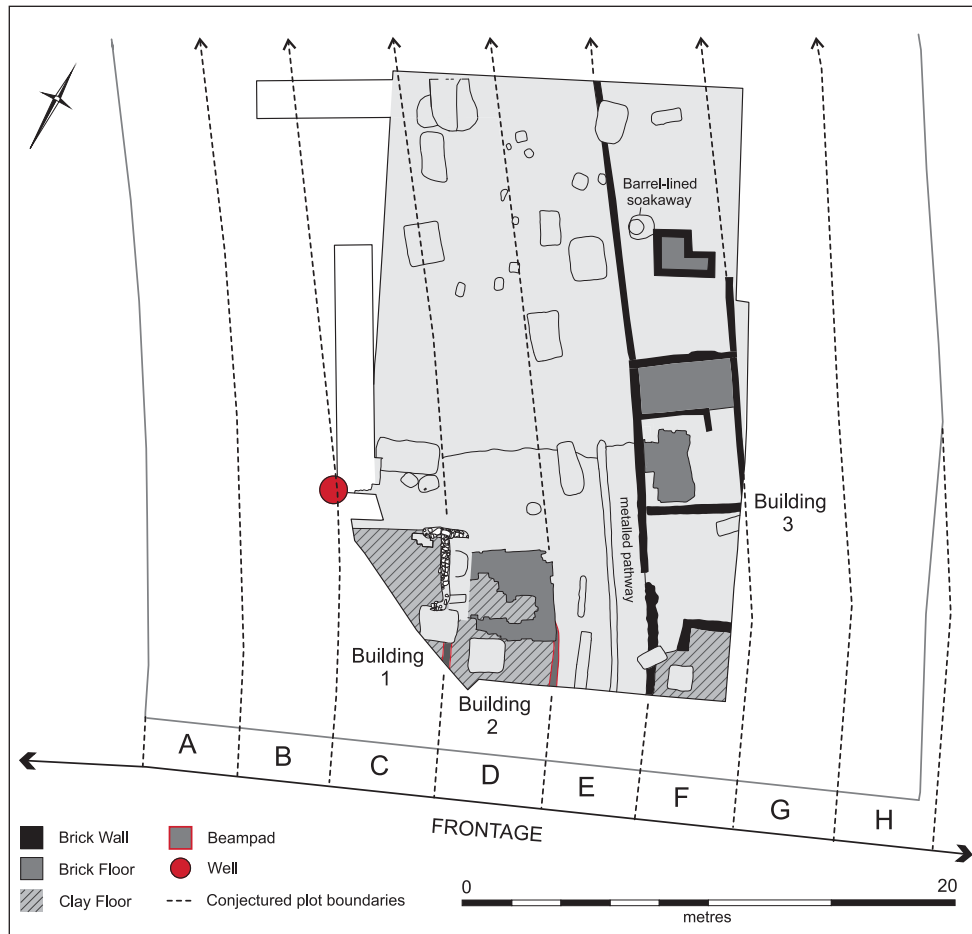


Figure 9. Post-medieval features and conjectured plot boundaries, showing in particular the extent of Buildings 1, 2 and 3.



Figure 10. The rear portion of Building 3, facing southwest, showing the partially sunken cellar and adjacent brick floor.

'early', pre-1700 date for this latter stone (see Tucker 1985; Johnson, D 2010). The conversion of Building 3 formed part of a much wider, national pattern of rebuilding (Brunskill 1990; Schofield and Vince 2003, 104–9; Johnson, M 2010, 87–112). Such transitions – which have been referred to as constituting a 'Brick Threshold' (Lucas 1997) – were particularly common during the 17th century, with significant episodes of 'Great Rebuilding' occurring both before and after the English Civil War (Platt 1994).

Over the course of the 17th–19th centuries all three buildings were repaired and updated on numerous occasions. By c. 1870 an average of around 0.2m of internal floor deposits had accrued in each instance, with rammed clay, tile and brick surfaces all represented. Yet alongside this evidence of long-lived domestic occupation, a rather different pattern appears to have predominated within *Plot E*. Here, no trace of a frontage structure was identified. Instead, a metalled pathway was present, beside which lay a number of shallow beamslots that were probably associated with a series of ephemeral timber-built structures (Fig. 9). This suggests that additional, non-settlement related activities may have been undertaken contemporaneously with domestic occupation at the site.

Coeval with these developments in Chesterton's core, relatively intensive gravel extraction activity was being undertaken on the peripheral fringes of the village. Numerous post-medieval quarry pits were encountered during the Green End Road and Elizabeth House evaluations (Fig. 1.5 and 1.7), for example, whilst similar features have previously been identified at the Yorkshire Grey (Cessford with Dickens 2004, 136) and 132 Scotland Road (Patten 2003). But much the most significant extraction-related evidence was recovered from Chesterton House (Fig. 1.6). Here, alongside a small assemblage of 17th century pottery, a silver halfcrown of Charles II (*r.* 1660–85) was recovered. Belonging to the third hammered issue of 1660–62, this coin would not have circulated after the Great Recoinage of 1696–98 (North 1991, 209). Such a date closely accords with the broader pattern of 17th century extraction activity in Cambridge, as highly comparable quarry pits have also been identified on both the western and southern outskirts of the town; at the Kavli Institute for Cosmology (Evans and Newman 2011) and Parkside Fire Station (Newman 2011b) sites respectively.

Finally, around 1870 the majority of tenement buildings at 169–73 High Street were demolished and a substantial new frontage building was erected. Initially functioning as a domestic dwelling, this structure was converted into the Dog and Pheasant public house in 1891. Associated with its initial con-

struction was a second, widespread ground-raising event (of c. 0.4m). Unlike the preceding episode of plot reorganisation, however, this particular transformation did not represent a single, one-off event. Instead, it marked the culmination of a long-term process of dispersion and amalgamation that had commenced at least thirty years earlier. In 1838, when the site was auctioned as part of the broader process of Chesterton's enclosure, it consisted of only three plot-units. The first of these equated to former *Plot A*, the second to amalgamated *Plots B–E* and the third to amalgamated *Plots F–H* (see Fig. 9). It thus appears that the pattern of individual household occupation had remained consistent throughout the preceding phase but that the number of landholders had steadily increased, as the formerly cohesive development became increasingly subdivided.

Discussion

In a densely occupied suburban locale such as Chesterton, where continued expansion has precipitated frequent redevelopment, modern archaeological practice is predominantly iterative in nature (e.g. Cessford and Slater 2014). A piecemeal process of excavation ensues, such that it is often the cumulative results of multiple small-scale projects, as opposed to a single large 'type-site', which provides the clearest insight into patterns of past activity (Thomas 2013). This is demonstrated very clearly in the present instance. The excavation conducted at 169–73 High Street lay close to the centre of Chesterton. Consequently, its excavation has revealed nothing of contemporary activities undertaken on the fringes of the *vill* and little even of those that occurred within nearby plots located outside the immediate area of investigation.

In addition to building upon the results of earlier fieldwork, any analysis of the settlement's later development should also take account of its local, regional and national context.

To facilitate this, a wide range of sources – including archaeological data, documentary material and morphological analysis – can be adduced; an excellent example of the results that can be achieved via such a holistic approach is provided by the Shapwick project, Somerset (Gerrard with Aston 2007). At a local level, the growth and expansion of medieval and post-medieval Chesterton can be charted historically via the number of recorded households over time (Table 3). This data commences at Domesday, when the settlement was still polyfocal in form, and continues through until the 19th century. The surviving information contains several significant gaps

Table 3. Number of recorded households in Chesterton over time (data from Otway-Ruthven 1938; Illingworth 1818; Wright 1989).

1086	1225	1279	1327	1563	1676	1728	1794	1801	1821	1841
24	c. 50	85	c. 80	69	c. 100	c. 100	116	150	216	316

and omissions and, as it was gathered for differing purposes at differing times, it cannot be presumed that the data for each period is directly comparable. Nevertheless, it provides a useful starting point for further discussion.

Augmenting the household dataset are a small number of more detailed records. The most pertinent of these is the Hundred Roll of 1279, which recorded 80 *messuages* and five crofts in Chesterton (Illingworth 1818, 402–05). A *messuage* is defined as a dwelling house together with its outbuildings, and each *messuage* can therefore be reasonably equated to an individual property plot similar in form to that investigated at 169–73 High Street. A *vill* containing 80 such properties was relatively large for the period. By way of comparison, the Hundred Roll recorded 380 *messuages* within Cambridge itself at this date, with *c.* 60 additional *messuages* split between the town's Barnwell Gate, Trumpington Gate and Newnham suburbs respectively (Cam 1959, 109–10). Nearby, however, across the river Cam at Barnwell, an additional *vill* was present that contained 95 *messuages* (Illingworth 1818, 393–401). Moreover, like Chesterton, this settlement also lay within the demesne of Barnwell Priory (Lobel 1974, 11); their possible relationship is discussed further below.

Archaeological evidence indicates that, following an initial phase of redevelopment during the late 11th or early 12th century, a substantial alteration occurred in the layout of Chesterton *c.* 1200. Shifting from a pattern of intensively subdivided enclosures aligned northwest-southeast, parallel to present-day Union Lane (Cessford with Dickens 2004, 135), a series of nucleated property plots were established along a new orientation parallel to the High Street. Significantly, a very similar process of nucleation is known to have occurred at many villages located within a broad north-south swathe termed the 'Central Province' of England during the 12th and early 13th centuries (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000). Cambridgeshire itself was situated on the southern periphery of this zone. Despite its prevalence, the process of nucleation – which has also been referred to as the 'Great Replanning' (Lewis *et al.* 1997) – does not appear to have represented a uniform, unilinear or mono-causal developmental progression (Taylor 2002; Jones and Page 2006).

At Chesterton itself it is particularly notable that the date at which this shift occurred, *c.* 1200, closely corresponds to the date at which control of the *vill* passed into the possession of Barnwell Priory (Clark 1907, 75). During this period it was common practice for many monasteries to establish or reorganise an associated settlement as a means of generating additional revenue (Beresford 1988, 128–35; Aston 2000, 149–52). This raises an important question: was a deliberate, planned redevelopment also undertaken at Chesterton? Unfortunately, due to the limited nature of the current evidence, this issue is difficult to resolve. For by virtue of the consistent form and regular disposition of the strips within the former open fields, their adoption as the basis for a series of do-

mestic property-plots could potentially have given rise to a misleadingly regimented, 'planned' appearance. Consequently, even if the process of nucleation were to have occurred in a relatively organic, piecemeal fashion – without the aegis of a direct, organising agency – little evidence of this would necessarily be apparent at a morphological level.

No direct historical evidence survives in relation to the early 13th century redevelopment of Chesterton. Nevertheless, circumstantial evidence does indicate that a planned development is likely to have occurred. Firstly, at almost exactly the same time that an area of former arable land was being transformed into a series of residential plots in Chesterton, a near-identical process was also being undertaken at Barnwell (Newman 2013, 9–33). As both settlements lay within the agricultural demesne of Barnwell Priory, at the very least the monastery's permission would have been required in order to enact their conversion. Secondly, the two *vills* expanded very rapidly following their reorganisation, both physically and economically; indeed, such was their success, by 1279 they contained a combined total of 175 households (the equivalent of 39.8% the number in contemporary Cambridge itself). This would have conveyed a significant economic benefit to the Priory. It thus appears that during the early 13th century the monastery was able to capitalise upon Cambridge's growing success as an inland port (Lobel 1974, 6–7) – and the concomitant growth in the town's population – by converting a portion of its substantial agricultural holding for residential use.

By the late 13th century Chesterton's physical reorganisation was complete, but the scale and intensity of settlement activity within the *vill* continued to increase. By the late 13th/early 14th century, for example, the earlier ditched plot-boundaries at 169–73 High Street site had fallen out of use and a much more intensive array of internal features had been created. This pattern of increasing growth was probably augmented by outside immigration; of *c.* 320 surnames of Chesterton residents recorded between 1275 and 1325, for instance, "almost 100 were derived from places elsewhere, a third of them outside the county" (Wright 1989, 7). Moreover, this phase of rapid development occurred during what has been termed the 'long' 13th century (*c.* 1180–1310), a period of marked population growth and settlement expansion all across England.

A similar pattern of increasing intensification is also replicated within 169–73 High Street's ceramic assemblage. This contained a number of closely-datable fabric types whose periods of greatest prevalence can be defined on an approximate century-by-century basis. Although caution must be exercised when using this data, since relatively few fabric-types can be dated with sufficient precision to be included in such an assessment, the technique nevertheless provides a valuable 'guideline' indication. Of the total of 93 sufficiently diagnostic sherds from the site, 12.9% were 13th century, 49.5% 14th century and 37.6% 15th century in date. Overall, therefore, there is little ap-

parent indication of a reduction or diminution in activity during the later Middle Ages. Yet this is, in part, counterintuitive. Following the cumulative impact of the agrarian 'crisis' of 1315–22 and the Black Death of 1348–49 the population of the country as a whole is known to have declined sharply (Hinde 2003, 25; Dyer 2010). This pattern was particularly marked in rural contexts, although a comparable pattern of late medieval 'urban decline' also appears to have occurred (see Dyer 1991; Britnell 1993, 166–7; Astill 2000).

Archaeologically, in the absence of marked settlement contraction or abandonment such temporally-discrete changes have often proved difficult to discern. In some instances, for example, it has been observed that while during the late 14th and 15th centuries the overall number of features declined, the quantity of material culture being deposited increased and several new and innovative feature types were introduced. A very similar pattern of change and development appears to have occurred at 169–73 High Street. On the fringes of the *vill*, however, at both the Yorkshire Grey and Wheatsheaf sites, a degree of 14th century decline followed by 15th century recovery was identified (Cessford with Dickens 2004), while at Union Lane Junction little activity post-dating the 14th century was identified (Mackay 2009). This implies that although the core of the settlement remained relatively stable, its purlieu was much more susceptible to fluctuations in the levels of activity being undertaken.

In addition to its chronological development, consideration should also be given to Chesterton's composition. Subtle differences existed in the hierarchy of settlements during the Middle Ages and determining the character of the *vill* allows its place within this spectrum to be discerned. In this regard, a number of archaeological and historical indicators can be employed. These include the presence/absence of a marketplace, the number of burgage-type plots, the density of building coverage along the principal frontage and the occupations of the inhabitants (see Holt and Rosser 1990; Dyer 2003; Dyer and Lilley 2011).

Yet the various categories of settlement were by no means absolute. Chesterton itself, for example, met many of the diagnostic criteria for a village but also demonstrated several of the characteristics of a higher-order settlement (see Dyer 2003, 102–105). These included the size of its population (which was probably in excess of 300 individuals in 1279), the presence of numerous burgage-type plots (as typified by those identified at 169–73 High Street) and the range and density of the material culture that was recovered (which was closely comparable to that encountered at suburban sites located in much closer proximity to the town core). A further, significant determinant of a *vill's* character comprised the occupations of its inhabitants (Holt and Rosser 1990, 4; Dyer and Lilley 2011, 83). This is because only a relatively successful settlement, with a solid economic foundation, would have been capable of supporting a substantially non-

agrarian population.

Usefully, at Chesterton a broad indication of the occupations of the *messuages'* principal tenants can be obtained via surname evidence contained within the 1279 Hundred Roll. Although the use of such evidence is fraught with issues, since by this date many individuals were known by more than one name that could relate to a place, an occupation and/or a patronym (for a critique see McClure 1979, 168–73), an important study has been conducted using this same source for the villages of rural Cambridgeshire (excluding Cambridge itself). This determined that at a broad level names indicative of metalworking trades were the most commonly occurring, representing 33% of the total, whilst woodworking trades were also relatively common, representing 16% (Miller and Hatcher 1995, 132). Using an identical methodology, in Chesterton in 1279, of the 85 named householders 12% had surnames indicative of their occupation. Of these the most commonly cited were smith (four instances) and merchant (three instances); additional examples included a carpenter, a cooper and a shipwright. Metalworking activity thus represented 40% of the total, woodworking trades 30% and mercantile activity 30%. Whilst only providing a general guideline indication, this pattern is comparable to that of Cambridgeshire generally with the notable exception of the high proportion of merchants; a possible suggestion of the *vill's* association with the nearby town.

Overall, these various strands of evidence indicate that medieval Chesterton comprised a thriving and relatively populous *vill*; one that was situated on the periphery of, but nevertheless was not incorporated directly into, Cambridge's wider suburban hinterland. As such, it can be viewed as a physical manifestation of the 'fluid and dynamic' relationship that prevailed between town and country during the Middle Ages (Giles and Dyer 2005; Astill 2009).

Post-Medieval Redevelopment

The extensive post-medieval reorganisation of the plot layout at 169–73 High Street occurred within the half-century following the dissolution of Barnwell Priory in 1538. During this period, the dispersion of the Priory's former demesne provided an opportunity for a second phase of speculative redevelopment. That just such an event took place is indicated by the fact that a uniform, *en masse* transformation was undertaken across a minimum of three adjacent plots. A development that crossed multiple property boundaries in this way is unusual. It strongly implies that the stimulus for the transformation arose from an external (i.e. landowner) as opposed to internal (i.e. tenant) source. The regularity of newly-established plots, and the apparent uniformity of the timber-framed frontage buildings they contained, are both consistent with such an interpretation.

Two particular questions arise in relation to this second episode of planned redevelopment: what was its extent, and who was responsible for its implementation? Pertaining to the first of these issues, a

minimum of eight new plots were identified. Given the scale of work that was required in order to realise their transformation, it seems unlikely that a development restricted to so few plots would have been considered worthwhile. This suggests that the redevelopment area probably exceeded the boundaries of the present site. Conversely, however, the cost and disruption that would have been engendered by redeveloping a substantial proportion of the *vill* would almost certainly have been prohibitive. Usefully, some indication of the development's extent can be gained via a consideration of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (Fig. 11).

Although this plan was surveyed in 1885, some three centuries after the transformation occurred, a number of relict topographical 'blocks' can nevertheless be discerned. These appear to represent residual traces of the medieval plot layout, which may have become 'fossilised' in the landscape via their partial incorporation into a series of post-medieval tenements. Throughout most of the remainder of the village, the pattern of contemporary plot development – albeit complex and multi-faceted – was generally more organic in nature. Whilst morphological evidence of this kind is by no means conclusive, it is nevertheless strongly suggestive. It would thus appear that somewhere between eight and forty plots were redeveloped at this time; either in a single phase, or as part of the incremental expansion of a successful venture.

One potential instigator of this development comprised the new occupant of Chesterton's principal manor. Sold by the Crown in 1540, the manor and its demesne – which included the majority of the adjacent *vill* – was purchased by Thomas Brakyn, three-time mayor of Cambridge (Wright 1989, 13). Although Thomas himself died in 1545, his son and heir Richard continued to control the estate. It is thus possible that the redevelopment comprised an early attempt to increase the rental income derived from the *vill*. Subsequently, during the 1560s and 1570s, the majority of the demesne was split-up and alienated to a variety of lessees. Alternatively, therefore, this latter event might have precipitated a programme of localised redevelopment. Finally, a number of additional, smaller estates were also present in Chesterton at the Dissolution. Their owners included wealthy families such as the Cooks and the Batisfords as well as the Cambridge college King's Hall (Wright 1989, 17). A number of potential developers were therefore present around the middle of the 16th century for whom such a property speculation might have appeared an attractive proposition.

Conclusion

This latest iteration of archaeological investigation in Chesterton has shed considerable light upon the *vill*'s medieval and early post-medieval development. In



Figure 11. Detail of the 1st Edition 1:500 Ordnance Survey map of 1885, with potential evidence of the relict medieval plot layout highlighted in red. The 169-73 High Street excavation is shown in grey.

addition to the particular features and material assemblages that pertain directly to 169–73 High Street, two phases of wider planned redevelopment have been identified; one of c. 1200 and one of c. 1560. The first most probably represented a substantial investment by Barnwell Priory, the second a smaller-scale property speculation made possible by the Priory's dissolution. Both episodes are significant. Not only do they contribute to a particular understanding of the later stages of development in Chesterton itself, complementing the previous focus upon its origins and early expansion, they also permit a broader understanding of the pattern of Cambridge's later suburban growth as well as contributing to the wider debate surrounding the interrelationship of 'town' and 'country' in the Middle Ages.

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