Short articles

Results of archaeological and built heritage investigations along the A27 Southerham to Beddingham and Glynde junction improvements

Adam Brossler, Matthew Pope & Jamie Preston
Adam Brossler, Jacobs, School Green, Shinfield, Reading, RG2 9HL

INTRODUCTION

Jacobs Engineering UK Ltd was commissioned by Carillion Plc, on behalf of the Highways Agency, to undertake a series of archaeological/built-heritage recording actions along the route of the A27 Southerham to Beddingham and Glynde junction improvements. The work was undertaken between December 2006 and July 2008 and comprised a geoarchaeological study, an archaeological watching-brief and the recording of a group of railway cottages prior to demolition.

The work identified evidence of the early Holocene Glynde River and evidence for the development of the landscape in the early prehistoric period. Little evidence for other archaeological activity was identified other than a small assemblage of Mesolithic to Neolithic flintwork, and Iron Age to Roman pottery.

The geoarchaeological report was produced by Dr Matthew Pope of Archaeology South East. The watching-brief text was produced by Adam Brossler (Jacobs) and the analysis and reporting on the railway cottages was undertaken by Jamie Preston (Jacobs). The finds were analysed by Louise Rayner (pottery) and Chris Butler (worked flint).

A more detailed report can be found in the East Sussex Sites and Monuments Record. The written and photographic archive has been submitted to Sussex Archaeological Society's Museum at Barbican House, Lewes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATIONS

The investigations along the route were divided into three separate actions. The geoarchaeological assessment of the geotechnical work, undertaken along Area 4 of the scheme (Fig.1), involved analysis of selected samples from window samples and observations on the cross-valley profile. The watching-brief covered Areas 1 to 6 along the scheme (Fig. 1). The results were largely negative and the only artefactual material of any significance was recovered from Area 2. The drawn and photographic record was made of the railway cottages (Area 4) prior to their demolition.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

PREHISTORIC (7000 BC–AD 43)

Earlier desk-based studies identified the presence of pockets of prehistoric activity in the area immediately around the site. The earliest evidence close to the improvement works was dated to the Bronze Age and comprised two ploughed out barrows north of Ranscombe camp and a possible burial adjacent to Area 2.

The earliest evidence identified during the watching-brief was a collection of five struck flints recovered from a layer of hillwash. These were identified during the excavation of a pipe trench in Area 2. The assemblage comprised three flakes and a small bladelet fragment. The date of the flintwork was suggested to be between the Mesolithic (10,000–4000 BC) to Neolithic periods (4000–2500 BC).

Three broad components were identified in the alluvial lithostratigraphy of Area 4. An initial, deep channel-fill occupied the southeast part of Area 4, which appears to represent the early Holocene Glynde River. To the north, and in the area covered in detail by the observed Window Sample (WS), a shorter sequence of alluvium, with basal organic deposits and an upper sequence of more modern alluvial deposition was recorded.

The start of peat development, correlated on the basis of lithostratigraphy with Burrin's Unit P4 (Burrin & Jones 1991) has been dated in WS114 to between 3950–3660 cal. BC (Beta-226235). It must be noted that this is at odds with a previous radiocarbon date for the P2 alluvium which produced a date of only 3190±125 BP. It is possible to suggest on the basis of lithostratigraphic support that the date obtained from WS114 would be consistent with a date towards the end of the Atlantic period where valley floors are stable under warm and wet conditions favouring peat development. The possible reworking of peat deposits indicates that the alluvium in this part of the valley may have formed as seasonal over bank deposits, which in turn partially dried out during part of the year.

It is further proposed that the alluvium forming the upper part of the sequence relates to late Holocene alluviation under drier conditions of the Sub-Boreal with minimal reworking in the recent sub-Atlantic. No evidence for renewed peri-marine sedimentation is indicated during this phase suggesting that this part of the Vale of Brooks was beyond the tidal limit during the postulated re-establishment of salt marsh during the late Flandrian.

The limited scope of the geoarchaeological investigation was adequate to describe, model and interpret the lithostratigraphy of the Glynde River across the site. The sequence clearly forms part of a continuity with previously recorded cross-valley profiles of the Ouse, but offers the added value of documenting the early stages of one of the Ouse's major tributaries and one which has undergone large changes in hydrological regime during the Holocene.

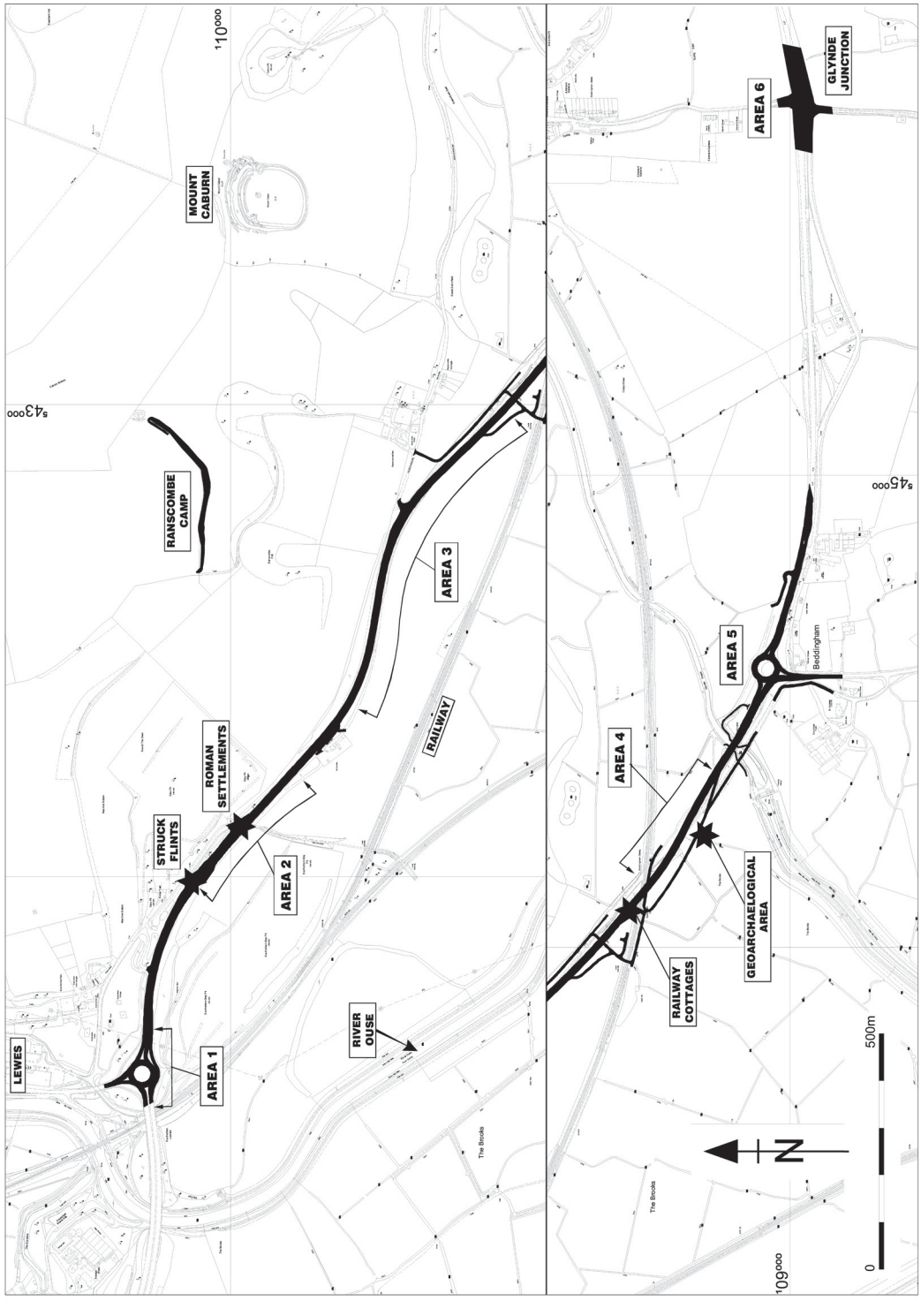

Fig. 1. Scheme location showing areas investigated.

No direct evidence for human activity was located, either in the form of artefactual material or of palaeoenvironmental indicators of human impact. It is, however, important to note that there is evidence for dating the start of peat formation and alluviation. In the possible reworking of alluvium marginal to the main channel, dated to around the beginning of the fourth millennium BC, there appears to be evidence for hydrological changes indicating either an increase in the height of the water table or increased run-off. The latter might be related to early Neolithic vegetation clearance, but this hypothesis would need to be tested through the analysis of well-preserved palaeoenvironmental records. The pollen sequence recorded by Waller and Hamilton (2000) some 500 m to the north of the site is a good example of just such a record and it would appear to confirm, through evidence for deforestation at this time (*c.* 3700 cal. BC) that man might be considered to have been an agent of hydrological change in the Glynde Reach.

ROMAN (AD 43–400)

A Roman settlement was excavated during the construction of the A27 in the 1970s; identified as Area 2 on Figure 1. The site was located on top of Ranscombe Hill and comprised two shallow ditches and a corn-drying oven. The pottery recovered indicated occupation of the site between the first to fourth centuries AD (Bedwin 1978). The aim of the watching-brief in this area was to identify the presence of any features associated with the settlement. Nothing was identified and it became very clear that the site was completely destroyed by the construction in the 1970s. A small assemblage of 12 sherds of pottery was recovered from a layer of hillwash in Area 2. The assemblage included two sherds of East Sussex Ware and two sherds of Gaulish samian giving a date range of mid-Iron Age to second century AD.

THE RAILWAY COTTAGES

The railway cottages at Southerham Crossing were not built during the original construction of the railway line, which was opened in June 1847. From the evidence of the Census Records for the parish, it is clear that three cottages, including a detached and semi-detached building, were constructed between 1851 and 1862. A further detached cottage had been built by 1871. The fully developed plan of the site is noted on the Ordnance Survey first-edition map surveyed in 1873. At the time of the survey only three of the four cottages survived.

The railway cottages were simple dwellings comprising two rooms on each floor. The ground floors of small houses of this period were divided into front parlours and rear living rooms. This configuration was typical of better-off working families, with the room to the rear generally being partially used as a kitchen. In the later Victorian period it would have included a small cast-iron cooking range. This configuration is clear in the ground floor plans of the railway cottages with fireplaces serving the rooms to the rear.

The railway cottages had been much altered in the twentieth century with extensions, window replacements, the insertion of dormers and internal refurbishment. As a result, very few original fixtures, fittings and decoration survived. The main historic elements of interest that did survive were the original plan, including room configurations, and a number of architectural details. The main architectural elements identified in the earliest phase of buildings included overhanging eaves, exposed purlins, and, over window openings, hood-moulds that terminated in stops. These details are typical of mid-nineteenth-century domestic buildings and are characteristic of local examples including the now-demolished railway buildings at Polegate Station (Mitchell & Smith 1985, pls 87–99) and railway buildings at Berwick and Glynde Stations (Mitchell & Smith 1985, pls 76–85).

Overall, the work has provided further information on the development of the Glynde River and the valley during the early part of the prehistoric period. The evidence for activity dating to other periods was limited, which may in part be due to the damage caused during the construction of the A27 during the 1970s. Other factors for the lack of activity may be due to elements of the landscape not being suitable for settlement or other related activities. Based on the data produced during the watching-brief few further conclusions can be drawn. The recording of the railway cottages has provided further information about this type of utilitarian architecture.

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An Iron-Age-style statue of a fertility goddess from Fishbourne

Martin Henig & David Rudkin
Martin Henig: Wolfson College, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX2 6UD
David Rudkin: 16 Grange Close, Denvilles, Havant, Hants. PO9 2QT

The striking image of the fertility goddess discussed in this note was found in Willow Court, Fishbourne in the 1970s, some 600 m east of the Roman Palace. Eventually its finder realized its significance and in 1992 it was placed on long-term loan to Fishbourne Roman Palace. After examination and recording by John Magilton, director of the then Chichester District Archaeological Unit (Magilton 1992), it was put on display at the Fishbourne Roman Palace.

Although the native style of the figure, which stylistically owes little to classical canons, contrasts strongly with the sophisticated art finds from the Palace, it is carved from an

Fig. 1. The Fishbourne goddess.

imported material: oolitic limestone from the Cotswolds, perhaps from the Bath region. It stands 452 mm high and portrays a woman with somewhat rounded head, inset eyes (only the left eye remains), triangular nose and slit mouth. Her arms are clearly shown, the hands are clasped demurely in front. The lower part of the body widens out and presents something of the appearance of a skirt. There is no indication of the lower legs or of the feet.

Effigies in stone are lacking from the immediate region, although there are a few carvings from the Cotswolds, likewise in limestone, which deserve to be cited. Most notable with regard to style is a female image from Cirencester with rather similar head and upper body though lacking arms (Henig 1993, 54 no. 159, pl. 39). Three 'mother goddesses' carved on a plaque of micaceous schist from Bath are perhaps closer in iconography, as they hold their arms in a similar fashion and wear pleated skirts (Cunliffe & Fulford 1982, 11 no. 39, pl. 11). Such images can be related to that of a little figurine of bronze ascribed to the Later Iron Age from the temple site at Henley Wood, Yatton, Somerset, which again shows a goddess, here naked, likewise holding her arms across her body (Henig 1996).

Much less close but likewise displaying analogous naivety as 'village' sculptures are three, evidently male images, roughly shaped as *phalli* from Broadway, Worcestershire, and Guiting Power, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (Henig 1993, 35 nos 156–8, pl. 39). In the other direction, from a ritual shaft in Upper Deal, East Kent, there is the find of a roughly blocked-out male figure carved in a French chalk (Parfitt & Green 1987) and the archaeological context of this find may help us to understand the purpose of the Fishbourne sculpture.

Whoever owned or dedicated the Fishbourne piece was certainly not interested in it as a work of art, though the use of a stone brought to Sussex from a distance suggests that it may have been invested with some considerable power. Whether it was venerated by people of high status like those for whom the Palace was built (perhaps unlikely) or by servants from the establishment or even by the local peasantry, it may be suggested that it represented one of the divine powers associated with fecundity such as that invoked in a far more sophisticated context in a dedication to the *Matres Domesticae* from Chichester (Hassall & Tomlin 1979, 339–41, no. 1).

Such a juxtaposition of native, non-Romanized cult alongside opulent 'Romanitas' was explored by the late George Boon in relation to the shrine containing a native-style sculptured head associated with a sophisticated late-Roman house at Caerwent (Boon 1976; Brewer 1986, 37 no. 53, pl. 20). In the present instance it is not likely that the sculpture was anything like so late and it may well even go back to the first century AD, that is to the time of the Client Kingdom. Thus it may well relate to the continuity of the ancestral religious beliefs of native peoples, here those of the Atrebates-Regni, co-existing with precocious Romanizing influences. However, if as seems probable, Togidubnus' political suzerainty extended as far as Bath and the Cotswolds (Henig 1999), that might go some way towards explaining the presence of what appears to be a Cotswold image in Cotswold stone in a West Sussex context.

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Scandinavian influences in the Late Anglo-Saxon sculpture of Sussex

Elizabeth Norton
17 Effingham Lodge, Surbiton Crescent, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, KT1 2LN

INTRODUCTION

The majority of surviving Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture is found in northern England, particularly in areas of the Danelaw. These northern examples of sculpture frequently show Scandinavian-influenced motifs. Such motifs are rare in southern sculpture and even with the accession of the Danish king Cnut to the throne of England in 1016, Scandinavian iconography rarely appears outside the areas of traditional Viking settlement. The surviving corpus of Anglo-Saxon sculpture in Sussex does, however, provide two separate examples of Scandinavian influence: Tangmere, and Jevington.

TANGMERE (Fig. 1)

Located above a twelfth-century window in the church at Tangmere is a fragment of heavily worn Anglo-Saxon decorative sculpture. This has been dated to the eleventh century (Tweddle *et al*. 1995).

The fragment shows two inward-facing figures. The figure on the left displays clear female genitalia. This figure is barelegged and the hair is worn in a pigtail. The second figure wears a long robe and also has long hair. The figures face towards each other and there are two objects above them in the space between them, one round and one crescent-shaped. The figure on the left also holds a worn object in an outstretched arm.

Tweddle and colleagues (1995) suggest that the round and crescent-shaped objects perhaps represent the sun and crescent moon. No interpretation is given to the object held by the figure on the left. Although the object held by the figure is heavily weathered, it does appear to be horn-shaped, with the horn lying in a horizontal position in the hand. The point of the horn is angled towards the left-hand figure and the wider end towards the right-hand figure. The identification of the object as a horn directly links the Tangmere fragment with Scandinavian iconography.

The Tangmere sculpture is remarkably similar to a scene on the famous Gosforth Cross in Cumbria. The Gosforth Cross shows a mixture of both Pagan and Christian imagery and the figures are clearly Scandinavian in style. The crucifixion scene on the cross shows the figure of Longinus the spearman below Christ and facing a pigtailed woman holding a horn-shaped object. The style and nature of this scene is strikingly similar to the Tangmere scene. The woman in both scenes represents the ideal Scandinavian depiction of a female: hanging pigtail, trailing dress and holding a horn-like object (Bailey 1980). This is also evident in other media, for example metalwork in Sweden and Norway. It also appears on the picture stones of Gotland and artefacts from the Oseberg ship.

The woman on the Gosforth Cross has been identified as Mary Magdalene (Bailey 1980). It is possible that a similar identification might be made for the Tangmere female figure, the panel perhaps being the remaining section of a

Fig. 1. The Tangmere fragment.

Fig. 2. The Jevington fragment.

Fig. 3. Detail of the beasts on the Jevington fragment.

Fig. 4. Detail of the beasts on the Jevington fragment.

crucifixion scene. Given the damaged state of the Tangmere fragment, any attempt to identify the figures can only be speculative. Regardless of identification, what is clear is that the Tangmere sculpture shows heavy Scandinavian influence.

The figures on the Tangmere fragment are represented in a recognizably Scandinavian form. In a study of the iconography of the Gotland cross Bailey argues that, whilst the female depicted on the cross is likely to depict a Christian figure, 'the point remains that she is presented in a manner which was familiar to Scandinavian tradition' (Bailey 1980, 130). By presenting the figures in the Tangmere fragment in this way, the sculptor was seeking to present the work as part of this tradition and it was intended to be recognized and responded to in this way.

JEVINGTON (Figs 2–4)

Set into a wall inside the church at Jevington is the second fragment of Scandinavian-inspired sculpture. The fragment depicts a full-length representation of Christ with two beasts at his feet, interpreted as the asp and basilisk (Talbot Rice 1952).

Whilst the figure is a fairly standard representation, the two beasts, with their complicated interlace, clearly belong to the Scandinavian Urnes style of decoration (Kirby 1978). The Urnes style, which takes its name from the wood carvings at the Norwegian church at Urnes, represents the last decorative phase of Viking art and appears to have developed around the second quarter (Graham-Campbell 2001) or the middle of the eleventh century (Wilson & Klindt-Jensen 1966).

The style is represented by interlace made up of curved lines of various widths and is very noticeable in the beasts at Jevington. The beast to the figure's left is a clear example of an Urnes-style beast with its snake-like body. The second beast, which shows a standing quadruped, is also obviously of Urnes style and its legs extend into the thin interlacing ribbon which is characteristic of the style.

The Urnes style was never widely popular in England and its appearance at Jevington is therefore surprising. Tweddle and colleagues (1995) date the Jevington sculpture to the Saxo-Norman period and suggest that it is likely to be post-Conquest. Talbot Rice (1952) on the other hand considers the piece to be late Anglo-Saxon and perhaps dating to around 1050. The style first appeared in England in the mid-eleventh century, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Jevington piece should be considered post-Conquest. A mid-eleventh century date for the Jevington piece seems plausible, although it would have a date no earlier than the 1050s.

The use of the Urnes style in the decoration demonstrates some Scandinavian influence in the last years of Anglo-Saxon Sussex. Given the relative lack of interest shown in the Urnes style in late Anglo-Saxon England, the Jevington piece is also a rare and interesting example of its use.

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Archaeological investigations at the former site of Parbrook Bungalow, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex

Simon Stevens
Archaeology South-East, Units 1 & 2, 2 Chapel Place, Portslade, East Sussex, BN41 1DR

INTRODUCTION

Planning permission was granted by Horsham District Council for a residential development at the former site of Parbrook Bungalow, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex (NGR 50826 12504) (Fig. 1). A condition was attached to the permission requiring a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of development, owing to the possibility that Stane Street (the Roman road from Chichester to London) might run across the site. The initial phase of this work was a field evaluation by mechanically excavated trial trenches to assess the archaeological and geoarchaeological potential of the site. This was followed by the excavation of further trenches and a small-scale open area excavation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies to the south of the centre of Billingshurst, and to the east of the current alignment of Stane Street, the modern A29 trunk road, which has a noticeable easterly 'kink' in the immediate vicinity of the site. The alignment of the road to the north and south of the site suggests that without this local deviation the road would cross the site (Fig. 1). According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map of the area, the underlying geology at the site is Weald Clay, with a narrow strip of Alluvium close to the former alignment of a local watercourse, the Par Brook.

The origins of the 'kink' in the modern road are obscure, with the possibility either that the Roman road deviated from its alignment to connect with a favourable crossing point across the nearby Par Brook, or that this was a later, perhaps medieval deviation from the 'original' alignment, which would have taken the road directly across the current site (Stevenson 2004, 2). Ivan Margary did not refer to this 'kink' in his *Roman Ways in the Weald*, and simply showed a dashed line across the site in his map of the road (Margary 1965, 58–60). Archaeological work carried out within the boundaries of the current site in 1980 (by John Hurd) and in 1984 (by the Billingshurst Local History Society and the Horsham Museum Society under the direction of John Kirby) uncovered the remains of a feature interpreted as a road surface on the postulated 'original' road alignment. The road was made up of material described as flint, ironstone, ironworking slag and clay. There was a ditch on the western side from which a sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, and it was concluded that the use of the road might have continued into the mid-seventeenth century, based on the presence of the slag (Kirby 1984).

THE EVALUATION

Archaeology South-East (the contracts division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology) was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow Developments to undertake the archaeological evaluation, which was carried out in March 2004. A total of 22 evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated at the site, of which 15 were archaeologically sterile. The possible alignment of Stane Street was encountered in Trenches T1, T2 and T4 (Fig. 2), represented by horizontally-laid layers of manganese- and iron-rich material. In the narrow confines of the evaluation trenches, the excavator was unable to tell if these were indeed part of a road surface, or were simply geological strata in the Weald Clay. There was a ditch to the east, and a gully cut through the deposits forming the possible road surface (Stevenson 2004).

Trenches T16, T19 and T22 contained evidence of a pair of shallow, parallel gullies running across the site broadly from northeast to southwest; medieval pottery of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date was recovered from the gullies. Residual prehistoric struck flint and fire-cracked flint was also recovered.

Given the somewhat enigmatic results of the initial evaluation, it was decided that further archaeological work was necessary at the site. Archaeology South-East was commissioned to undertake this in May 2004. Fuller details of each stage of work are housed with the archive, which includes the Post-Excavation Assessment Report (Stevens 2004).

THE EXCAVATION

AREA A (Fig. 2)
An area was mechanically stripped to the immediate south and west of the evaluation Trench T1 to clarify the nature of the manganese- and iron-rich deposits and to investigate further the possible associated ditch.

The excavation and recording of the deposits by test-pits manually excavated proved that they were geological in origin and not part of a Roman road surface. The deposits included pockets of naturally occurring laminar 'iron pan' intermixed with silt and clay deposits typical of the Weald Clay:

> Weald Clay is considered to have been laid down under lacustrine/deltaic conditions that result in laterally discontinuous laminated beds. Silts and clays contain complex arrangements of mudstones, siltstones, limestone and ferrous clays. Weathered exposures result in modification of a generally mid-dark grey

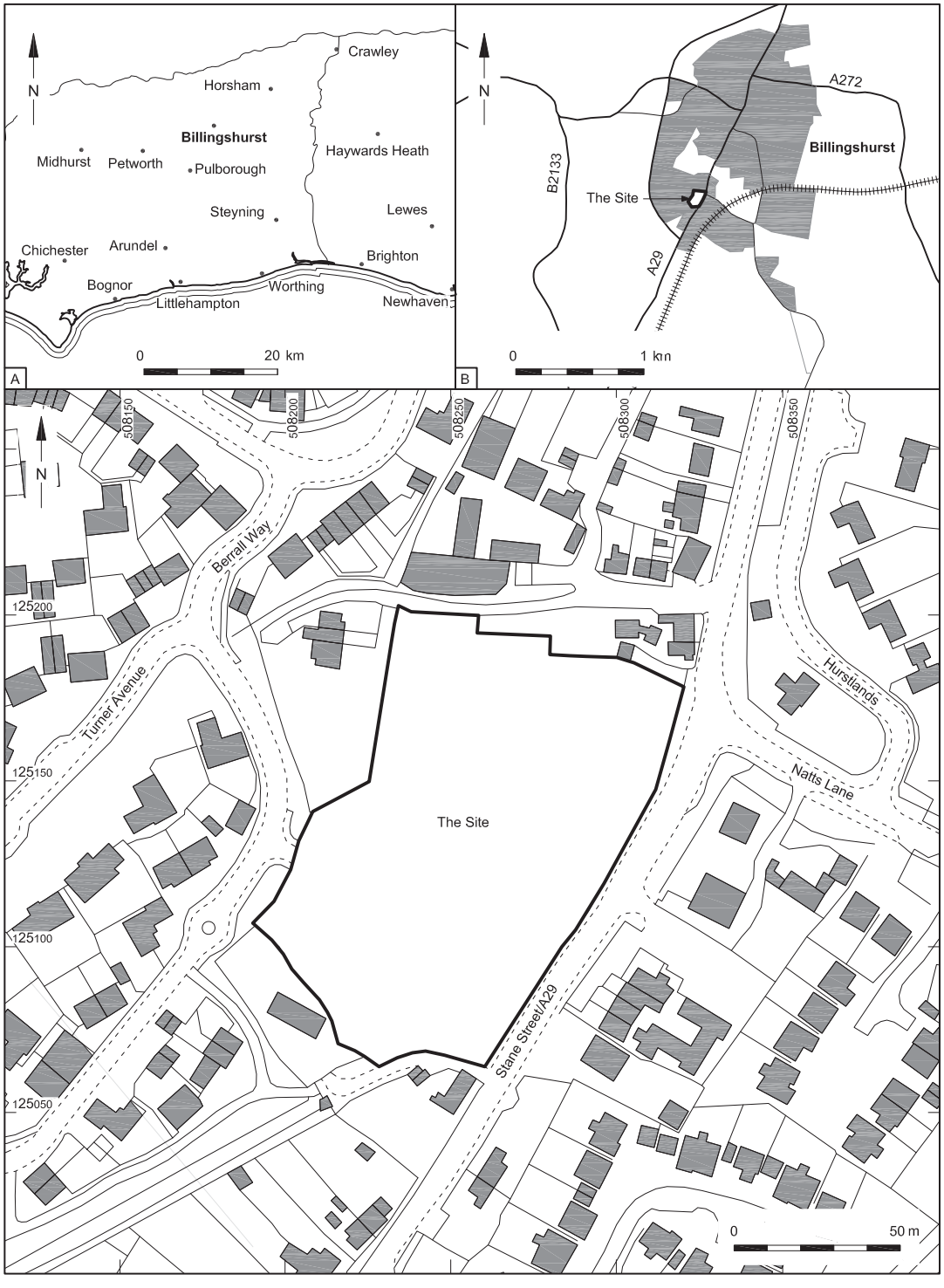

Fig. 1. Site location.

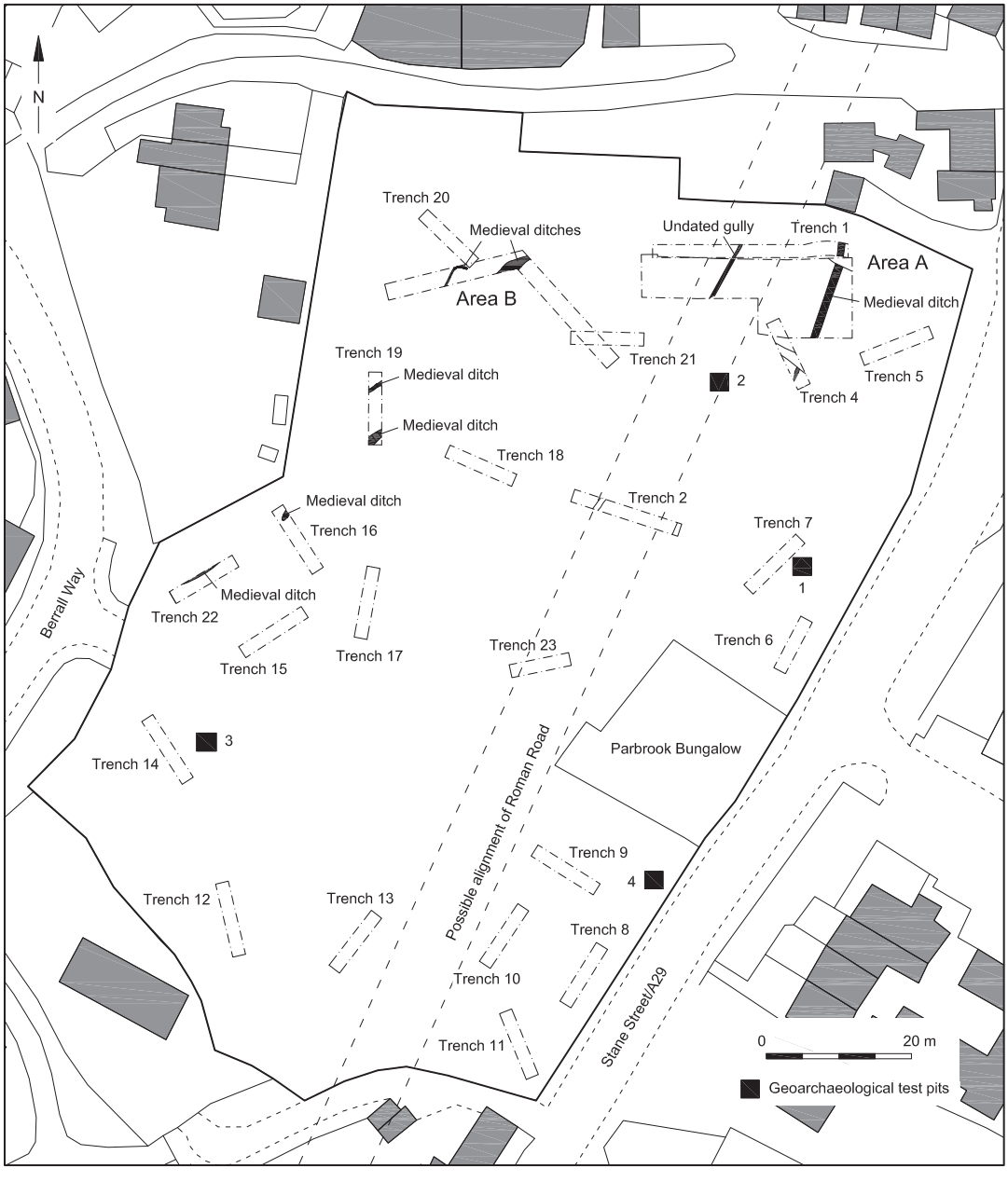

Fig. 2. Trench location plan.

colouration to yellow brown with blocking and fracturing along sediment laminations in a shale-like appearance (Pine 2004, 18)

Two sherds of thirteenth-century pottery weighing a total of only 8 g were recovered from the fill of the ditch previously encountered in Trenches T1 and T4. Samples taken for environmental analysis proved sterile. The gully, which also crossed the open area, remained undated. Residual prehistoric struck flint and fire-cracked flint was also recovered from the open area.

AREA B (Fig. 2)

Two trenches were planned to investigate further the parallel medieval gullies encountered during the evaluation. Only one

of the trenches could be excavated owing to the terms of Tree Preservation Orders.

Further stretches of the gullies encountered in Trenches T16, T19 and T22 were observed and recorded. The westernmost gully turned and terminated in the trench. Five sherds of abraded thirteenth-century pottery weighing 60 g were recovered from the fill. The other gully continued and contained a larger assemblage of medieval pottery of mid/late thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date. A total of 27 sherds of abraded pottery weighing 164 g were recovered from this feature.

DISCUSSION

The excavation at the site of Parbrook Bungalow showed that Stane Street did not run through the examined portion of the site in any clearly recognizable form, suggesting that the 'kink' may have been part of the original alignment of the road, which is believed to date from the first century AD (Margary 1965, 46). However, it is clear that more fieldwork is needed to prove this hypothesis. It is more certain that the struck and fire-cracked flint represents a 'background scatter' of prehistoric material, and is not indicative of permanent occupation at the site.

The manganese- and iron-rich deposits encountered during the evaluation could not be investigated fully in the narrow confines of trial trenches, but in an open area test-pitting was able to prove that they were entirely natural in origin. The complete absence of the flint cobbles and associated deposits of flint gravel encountered on various archaeologically examined portions of Stane Street (e.g. Winbolt 1936; Lowther 1941; Priestley-Bell in prep.), is consistent with the view that the deposits found at Parbrook did not represent the surface of the Roman road. The dearth of ironworking slag also supports this view.

The medieval gullies are of interest and those encountered in the western part of the site in evaluation trenches and in Area B, may represent the remains of side ditches to a medieval trackway, although this is far from certain. The medieval ditch and undated gully, found in evaluation trenches in the eastern part of the site and further investigated in Area A, might form the edges of a medieval droveway, but again interpretation is difficult from such limited surviving evidence.

However, it is clear that these features are on the same orientation as the proposed alignment of Stane Street across the site, and this is clearly worthy of comment. It is possible that they form the side ditches of a medieval droveway which broadly reused the Roman route, the evidence of the older road being in time removed by ploughing and cutting/recutting of the ditches in the medieval period. Equally, the features might form the scant remains of the original Roman road, with intrusive medieval pottery later incorporated in the ditch fill entirely by chance. However, neither of these scenarios is particularly convincing, and based on currently available evidence, the origin of the Stane Street 'kink' remains unproven.

Acknowledgements

The input of John Mills, Archaeological Officer, West Sussex County Council is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to all those who worked on the evaluation and excavation, namely Richard James, Mark Leatherbarrow, Mike Pritchard, Paul Riccoboni, Jim Stevenson (who supervised the evaluation) and Alice Thorne, and to Luke Barber who identified the pottery. The project was managed by Neville Hall, Luke Barber and in the final stages by Louise Rayner. Funding was provided by Taylor Woodrow Developments.

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An archaeological excavation at 94–96 High Street, Shoreham-By-Sea, West Sussex

Simon Stevens
with contributions by Luke Barber, Elke Raemen, Lucy Sibun & Lucy Allott
Archaeology South-East, Units 1 & 2, 2 Chapel Place, Portslade, East Sussex, BN41 1DR

INTRODUCTION

An application for planning permission for the construction of a office/shop with basement at 94–96 High Street, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex was granted by Adur District Council (ref: SU/80/04/TP). A condition requiring a programme of archaeological work was attached to the consent. Subsequently Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of University College London Centre for Applied Archaeology (UCLCAA), was commissioned by The Alexander Partnership to undertake an archaeological excavation at the site in advance of the development. The excavation took place in July 2006.

The site lies to the west of the modern centre of Shoreham-by-Sea, at the corner of High Street and Brighton Road/Old Shoreham Road, opposite the recently constructed Ropetackle development at an elevation of *c.* 4.5 m AOD (TQ 2122 0510) (Fig. 1). According to the British Geological Survey

Fig. 1. Site location.

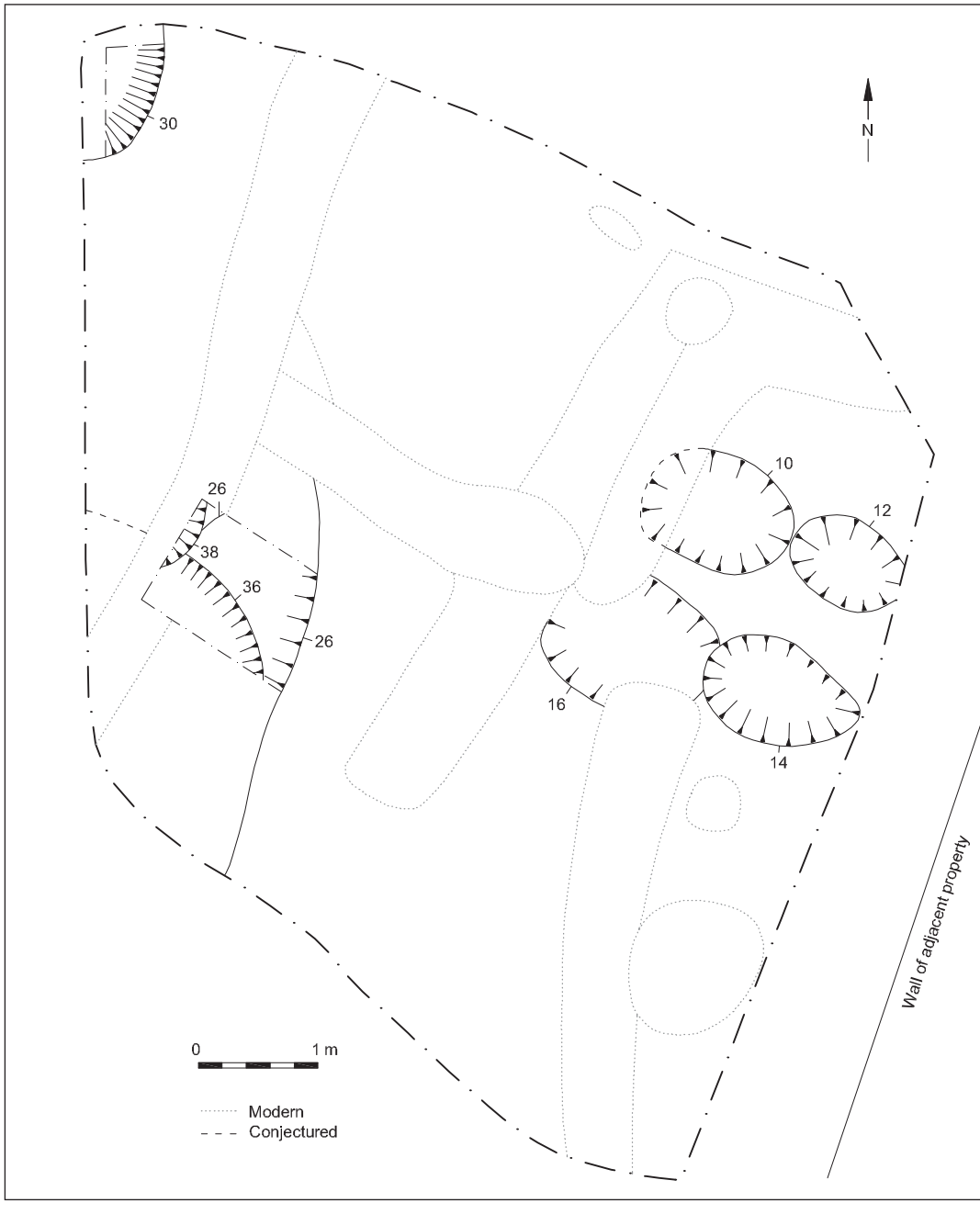

Fig. 2. Feature plan.

1:50,000 map of the area, the underlying geology consists of Head deposits overlying Upper and Middle Chalk.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

New Shoreham was founded close to the mouth of the River Adur shortly after the Norman Conquest to replace the existing port of Old Shoreham further upstream (Aldsworth & Freke 1976). The grid pattern layout of the streets of the Norman planned town has survived, although the exact layout in the vicinity of the site has been obscured by later road widening (Fig. 1).

The medieval port enjoyed great prosperity through the twelfth century, although documentary evidence suggests that Shoreham went into an economic decline in the thirteenth or fourteenth century owing to silting of the harbour entrance, and it has been suggested that the southern part of the port was destroyed by the sea in 1401 (Aldsworth & Freke 1976), although it is also possible that the damage was confined to the eastern end of the High Street (Elrington 1980, 146).

Until recently there had been little published archaeological work in the town, but small-scale excavations adjacent to the Marlipins (Thomas 2005), in John Street (Stevens this volume), and the large-scale excavations directly opposite the current site carried out at Ropetackle in 2003 (Stevens 2009), have provided great insight into medieval Shoreham, showing evidence of occupation from the Conquest to the present day.

THE EXCAVATION

The mechanical removal of overburden *c.* 800 mm deep from an area measuring *c.* 7 m by *c.* 8 m, revealed the heavily truncated remains of a group of archaeological features, mostly consisting of shallow medieval pits (Fig. 2). Much of the stripped area had been disturbed by the laying of services and the excavation of concrete-filled footings. The level of truncation was problematic, it had resulted in the survival of what appeared to be only the bases of the medieval features (most were only 100 mm to 300 mm in depth), but had also lead to intrusion of modern material into the majority of the pits.

Despite these problems, small assemblages of medieval material were recovered from a series of pits: [10] fill [11], [12] fill [13], [16] fill [17], [26] (filled by [25] and [27]), [30] fill [31], [36] fill [37] and [38] fill [39]. Later material was recovered from pit [14] fill [15], and mixed material from the overburden (contexts [1], [28] and [29]) (Fig. 2). These assemblages included pottery, clay tobacco pipes, ceramic building material, glass, metalwork, stone and animal bone, although little of significance was recovered and in some cases material of mixed date was present due to the truncation and later disturbance.

Pit [36] produced the largest assemblage of material, which as well as pottery (discussed below), included a group of medieval nib-tile fragments. These appear to be of thirteenth-century date and as such are likely to be old tiles dumped in fourteenth-century contexts.

Also of note amongst the finds, was a single fragment of worked bone (SF2) recovered from the overburden. It consists of part of a split cattle metapodial, which had been smoothed, and had a hole drilled through the distal end. Too little is present to be certain of function but it could be part of a large net needle.

Full descriptions of the contexts, artefacts and environmental material are contained with the site archive, which is housed in Worthing Museum.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY by Luke Barber

Introduction

The excavations recovered only 97 sherds of pottery, weighing 1132 g, from nine individually numbered contexts. The material shows only slight signs of abrasion despite some residual material being present. Context groups are always small with the largest group consisting of only 30 sherds (Pit [36], Fill [37]). An overview of the medieval assemblage is given below. Details of the small nineteenth-century assemblage are housed with the archive. Codes in brackets refer to the West Sussex medieval fabric series.

Early thirteenth century

The earliest material consists of a few medium fired early-thirteenth-century cooking-pot sherds tempered with sand and moderate flint/shell grits to 0.5 mm (e.g. WS: Q+f/M2). These are usually residual (i.e. two in Pit [26], Fill [27]; three in Pit [30], Fill [31], including a beaded flaring rim), though the four sherds from Pit [16], Fill [17] may not be. These four cooking-pot sherds are in a similar fabric and form to those noted above. The earliest pottery clearly shows activity on the site in the first half of the thirteenth century, a similar pattern has been noted at Ropetackle (Barber 2009).

Mid/late thirteenth–fourteenth/early fifteenth centuries

The majority of the medieval pottery can be dated to the later thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, with some possibly extending into the very early fifteenth century. The fabrics are harder fired and the majority consist of undecorated cooking-pot and bowl sherds in fine/medium sand-tempered fabrics, most with rare/occasional angular flint or shell inclusions to 0.75 mm (e.g. WS: Q+f/c/M1). These are obviously a development from the earlier thirteenth-century fabrics. Cooking-pots and bowls with club rims predominate.

Some of these vessels, most notably from Pits [26] and [36], have patchy internal glazing on their bases suggesting a fourteenth- to early-fifteenth-century date range. Glazed jug sherds are present in the larger fourteenth-century contexts: Pits [26], [30] and [36] contained five, seven and five sherds respectively. All are in well-fired, fine, sand-tempered fabrics and are usually glazed green with thumbed bases and incised combed line decoration (e.g. WS: Q(f)/M2). These vessels are typical of the 'West Sussex Ware' tradition of the late thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries. The only imported sherd present is from a developed Rouen jug (WS: UWW/M5) with applied triangular-sectioned clay strip below the green glaze (recovered from the overburden).

DISCUSSION

The site at 94–96 High Street, Shoreham-by-Sea was small in area and in the number of encountered archaeological features

and finds, but adds further information to the corpus of data resulting from recent excavations in the town. Road-widening has destroyed the exact context of the site, but it appears to represent the remains of a plot to the rear of a medieval building fronting onto the High Street (Fig. 1)

The pottery assemblage, although limited, suggests thirteenth-century activity in this part of the settlement, with evidence of continued utilization of the area into the fourteenth/early fifteenth centuries, mirroring the distribution of the medieval assemblage from Ropetackle, immediately to the west (Barber 2009). The position of the plot on the commercially central High Street would suggest continual occupation from the foundation of the town through the medieval period and beyond. Saxo-Norman material recovered from the Ropetackle site strongly suggests that the western end of the surviving grid pattern of streets was occupied shortly after the foundation of the town (Barber 2009). No pottery of this date was recovered from the current site, but this might be a result of the size of the site and/or of the extent of later truncation.

The virtual absence of later material is interesting, again probably resulting from the limited area examined, or perhaps suggesting that the site was covered by a building from a relatively early date, and was therefore unavailable for the deposition of domestic refuse. Unfortunately, a map of 1622 is not detailed enough to prove this hypothesis, although a map of 1753 appears to show buildings on the site (Gifford and Partners 2000). Alternatively this paucity of later material might suggest a different refuse disposal regime (cf. Stevens 2004, 91).

Clearly, drawing detailed conclusions from the results of the excavation of the current site would be unwise given the small area concerned and the problems with truncation (especially the effect of this disturbance on the integrity of the environmental samples). However, the smaller sites recently excavated in Shoreham do have something to offer in aiding our understanding of the medieval town, individually and as a whole, especially when their results can be considered in conjunction with those from the large-scale site at Ropetackle (Stevens 2009).

Acknowledgements

The input of John Mills, Archaeological Officer, West Sussex County Council is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to all of the specialists who contributed to the post-excavation assessment of the material from where information is drawn, namely Elke Raemen, Lucy Sibun and Lucy Allott, and to Leonie Pett, Jim Webster, Deon Whittaker and Christopher Billin for their work in the field. The project was managed by Neil Griffin (Projects Manager), Darryl Palmer (Senior Project Manager) and by Louise Rayner (Post-Excavation Manager). The work was funded by the Alexander Partnership.

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