

CONTENTS

List of figures

List of plates

1. **Summary**
2. **Introduction**
3. **Historical and archaeological background**
4. **The excavated pits (Pits 1–3)**
 - Pit 1, East Norman Road at its junction with Fitzwilliam Gate passage*
 - Pit 2, Knight's Road, outside Royal Garrison Artillery Barracks*
 - Pit 3, Knight's Road, opposite the Victorian bread and meat store*
5. **Comments and interpretation of the exposed deposits**
6. **General conclusions**
7. **Bibliography**

List of figures

Fig. 1 Plan of Dover Castle showing location of the excavated pits (Pits 1–3)

Fig. 2 Block sections of stratified deposits exposed in Pits 1–3

List of plates

Plate I Starting Pit 1 in East Norman Road, looking north-west

Plate II Detail of west corner of Pit 1 showing dark soil layer (5) in base

Plate III General view of Pit 1 showing services located, looking south-east

Plate IV Excavating Pit 2 outside the outside Royal Garrison Artillery Barracks, looking west

Plate V General view of Pit 2 showing services and stratified deposits exposed, looking east

Plate VI Starting Pit 3 off Knight's Road, looking south

Plate VII General view of Pit 3 showing services and stratified deposits exposed, looking west

Plate VIII Pot base recovered from Pit 3 (Context 22)

Watching brief in the Outer Bailey of Dover Castle, 2013

1. Summary

Small-scale excavations undertaken at three points along roads within the Outer Bailey of Dover Castle showed that, although there had been damage caused by previous services, some stratified deposits of archaeological significance still survived. A dark, midden-like deposit encountered in Pit 1 close to the Fitzwilliam Gate appeared to be of interest but remains undated. Traces of early chalk and gravel road metalling were exposed in Pits 2 and 3 dug in Knight's Road. These seem to be of later post-medieval date and most probably relate to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century occupation of the site. A pair of iron pipes located in Trench 2 was tentatively identified as Lamson Tubes, forming part of a communications system installed *c.*1943.

2. Introduction

2.1 In connection with maintenance work at Dover Castle (Scheduled as an Ancient Monument, Ref. No. 30281), the Canterbury Archaeological Trust was engaged to carry out a watching brief during excavations to be made at three separate points along roads within the Outer Bailey (Fig. 1), in order to allow repairs to leaking valves on a large water-main.

2.2 Commissioned by Nick Johnston of English Heritage, the purpose of the watching brief was to record anything of archaeological significance which might be exposed during the course of the excavations. Three separate pits were dug at existing valve sites in East Norman Road (Fig. 1, Pit 1) and Knight's Road (Fig. 1, Pits 2 & 3).

2.3 Observation and recording work was undertaken by the writer between 14 and 20 March 2013, generally in cold, dry weather conditions, with light to moderate cloud-cover. All the pits were hand-dug by workmen, who afforded every assistance during the course of their work.

2.4 The excavated pits were all rectangular in shape, measuring between 1.50 and 2.00m across, and were cut to depths of between 1.19 and 1.54m. Each of the pits was dug to dimensions greater than its predecessor so that although the bulk of the ground excavated consisted of disturbed backfill, traces of stratified archaeological deposits were revealed in the sides of all three pits. Natural chalk bedrock was only reached in Pit 2.

2.5 The field records generated by the watching brief included a site location plan (Fig. 1), twenty-two recorded contexts, three block sections (Fig. 2) and twenty-two digital photographs (Plates I – VIII). A small collection of finds, mostly animal bone with one pot-base, was recovered from Pit 3. All this material is presently held by Canterbury Archaeological Trust and will be transferred into the care of English Heritage shortly.

3. Historical and archaeological background

3.1 Dominating the historic town and Cinque Port from its cliff-top position, the medieval castle at Dover constitutes one of the finest in Europe. There seems to have been some sort of defended settlement on the hill from at least the late Anglo-Saxon period. It was during the 1180s, however, that Henry II began a huge new building programme which was to eventually transform the basic Norman earth and timber fortress on Castle Hill into one of the greatest and most powerful Royal castles in northern Europe (Coad 1995, 46). The mid-thirteenth century saw the final completion of the medieval defences, after more than eighty years of work.

3.2 More works followed in the post-medieval period. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries extensive earthmoving was undertaken when the Castle was upgraded to take modern artillery (Coad and Lewis 1982, 145, 154, 179). There can be little doubt that significant areas of below ground, stratified archaeology was removed or damaged during the course of these works.

3.3 The location and extent of surviving archaeological deposits is not easily gauged and any information that can be obtained is of considerable importance. The pits dug in 2013 contributed some further useful, if limited, information to that previously known.

4. The excavated pits (Pits 1–3)

4.1 *Pit 1, East Norman Road at its junction with Fitzwilliam gate passage*, NGR 632478 142010

4.1.1 This pit was dug in the north-east part of the Castle complex, along the northern side of East Norman Road, at its junction with the Fitzwilliam gate passage (Fig.1; Plate I). The surface of the road here lies at about 100 metres above OD. This was potentially a significant location and was closely monitored for traces of medieval activity associated with the adjacent medieval gateway, built in the 1220s (Coad 1995, 20), which provided access through the outer north-eastern defences of the castle.

4.1.2 The excavated pit was rectangular in shape, measuring 1.70m (NW–SE) by 2.00m (NE–SW). It was taken to a maximum depth of 1.19m and exposed a complex network of pre-existing service pipes. Three of these, including the leaking water main, were aligned south-east by north-west, running along the edge of the road, whilst two others, including a modern gas pipe of yellow plastic, lay at a right angle to these and were clearly running on through the Fitzwilliam Gate. Immediately to the north-east of the excavated pit, at the end of the gate passage, lay a deep brick-built, man-hole associated with telecommunications.

4.1.3 The trenches for the various services had destroyed virtually all trace of any stratified archaeological deposits that might once have existed in this area. Exposed in the south-west face of the excavation and extending short distances round into south-east and north-west faces, however, traces of earlier stratified deposits were preserved (Fig. 2; Plate II). Working conditions were generally difficult because water leaking from the main meant that the base of the pit was generally flooded (Plate III).

4.1.4 Where undisturbed, the recorded sequence consisted of a basal deposit of dark grey silty clay, containing moderate amounts of small and medium sized chalk lumps and occasional small brown flint pebbles (Fig. 2, Context 5). The surface of this deposit lay at depth of about 0.97m below present ground level but its full thickness was not exposed. It was at least 0.25m thick but no datable finds were recovered.

4.1.5 Overlying the dark silty clay (5) was a 0.50–0.60m thick dump deposit consisting of a mixed grey loam, chalk rubble, red and yellow brick fragments and pea-gravel (Context 4). It probably incorporated several sub-divisions but these could not be fully defined. On the strength of the brick fragments present, an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century date seems likely but no other datable finds were recovered.

4.1.6 Resting on the dump layer (4) was a 0.15m thick layer of light grey clay loam containing frequent red brick fragments (Context 3). Again no datable finds were recovered but a nineteenth-century date seems likely.

4.1.7 Context 3 supported a deposit of small angular flints in compacted cream chalky clay (Context 2). This was about 0.20m thick and appeared to represent make-up for the present tarmac road

surface (Context 1, see below). It is possible that incorporated into this deposit were earlier, untarred road surfaces but this was not certain.

4.1.8 The present-day surface of East Norman Road (Context 1) sealed Context 2 and comprised two successive, thin layers of tarmac (Plate I).

4.2 Pit 2, Knight's Road, outside Royal Garrison Artillery Barracks, NGR 632536 141658

4.2.1 This pit was dug in the south-west part of the Castle complex, along the western side of Knight's Road, outside the Royal Garrison Artillery Barracks (AKA Stone Hut No. 1), built in 1913 (Fig. 1; Plate IV). The road here presently represents the main vehicular route into the Castle and in the area of the excavated pit lies at about 73 metres above OD.

4.2.2 The pit excavated was square in shape, measuring 1.50m across. It was taken to a maximum depth of 1.21m where the truncated surface of solid chalk bed-rock (Fig. 2, Context 16) was revealed. As in Pit 1, a network of pre-existing service pipes was exposed (Plate V). There were four of these, including the water main, all aligned south-east by north-west, running along the edge of the road. The pair of steel pipes on the eastern side of the pit (Plate V), located some 3 metres north-east of the retaining wall around the Artillery Barracks, have been tentatively identified as Lamson Tubes, forming part of a communications system of c.1943, running from ANNEX to the Keep, via the Stone Hut/Auxiliary air pump house (see below).

4.2.3 The trenches for the various services had destroyed most earlier archaeological deposits that once existed in this area. Exposed in the eastern face of the excavation and again the south-west corner, however, traces of earlier stratified deposits were revealed (Fig. 2; Plate V). Most of these took the form of layers of rammed chalk rubble and are likely to represent earlier road surfaces and their associated make-ups.

4.2.4 Where best exposed, in the east face of the pit (Fig. 2), the undisturbed sequence dipped gently down to the south-east, following the natural fall of the ground. At the base, resting over the natural chalk (16), was a 0.12m thick layer of well-compacted chalk rubble containing moderate amounts of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century brick (Context 15).

4.2.5 Overlying the lower chalk deposit (15) was a more substantial layer of large flint nodules loosely set in a cream chalky silty (Context 14). This was about 0.19m thick and seemed to form a foundation deposit for the overlying layer (Context 13) which consisted of compacted chalk about 0.12m thick.

4.2.6 Resting on the top of the compacted chalk (13) was a 0.10m thick layer of grey gritty loam with much brown pea-gravel (Context 12). Buried at a depth of about 0.70m below the present road surface, this fairly certainly represented the primary surface of Knight's Road.

4.2.7 Sealing the pebble surfacing (12) was another layer of compacted chalk (Context 11). This was 0.10m thick and supported a very thin deposit of grey gritty loam (Context 10) which could represent occupational tread.

4.2.8 Contexts 10 and 11 were overlain by another layer of compacted chalk about 0.05m thick (Context 9). In turn, this was sealed by a 0.33m thick make-up layer of grey gritty loam containing frequent amounts of chalk, flint and nineteenth-century brick rubble (Context 8).

4.2.9 The make-up layer (8) supported a 0.15m thick deposit of modern pebble concrete (Context 7) which in turn provided the base for the present tarmac road surface (Context 6).

4.3 Pit 3, Knight's Road, opposite the Victorian bread and meat store, NGR 632507 141722

4.3.1 This pit was also dug in the south-west part of the Castle complex, in the verge on the western side of Knight's Road, about 70m north of Pit 2, opposite the small Victorian building that originally functioned as a bread and meat store (Fig.1; Plate VI). The ground surface here lies at an elevation of about 82m above OD.

4.3.2 The excavated pit was square in shape, measuring 1.50m across. It was taken to a maximum depth of 1.54m. Again, a network of pre-existing service pipes was exposed, all aligned south-east by north-west, running along the edge of the road (Plate VII). Nothing which could be positively identified as Lamson Tubes was noted. A sequence of undisturbed stratified deposits was revealed in the western face of the pit (Fig. 2; Plate VII).

4.3.3 At the base of the exposed sequence was a 0.55m thick layer of light grey clay loam containing frequent large and medium chalk lumps, chalk grits and occasional carbon specks (Fig. 2, Context 22). This deposit produced a quantity of animal bone and a single large pot base, dated *c.* AD 1450 – 1550. In detail, this pot-base probably represents a local copy (fabric ref: LM4, Wealden buff earthenware type) of a German Raeren jug with frilled base (Plate VIII).

4.3.4 Overlying the clay loam layer (22) was a substantial dump deposit of chalk and flint rubble (Context 21) surfaced with a layer of compacted chalk (Context 20). Contexts 20 and 21 totalled about 0.30m in thickness but yielded no datable finds. Resting on the surface of the compacted chalk (20) was a very thin layer of light grey gritty loam with much brown pea-gravel (Context 19). Fairly certainly this represented an early road metalling.

4.3.5 The metalling layer (19) was sealed by a thick deposit of dumped soil (Context 18). This was 0.44m thick and consisted of a grey-brown clay loam containing occasional fragments of modern tarmac, chalk and flint lumps. It supported a layer of modern topsoil and turf (Context 17), about 0.25m thick.

5. Comments and interpretation of the exposed deposits

5.1 Pit 1

5.1.1 The lowest deposit exposed in Pit 1, Context 5, had the appearance of being of some interest and potentially represented a fairly thick occupation or midden deposit. Whether this was *in situ*, however, could not be determined and it is unfortunate that no datable finds were recovered. The overlying layer (Context 4) seemed to represent a thick levelling deposit supporting the make-up layers (2 & 3) for the present road (Context 1).

5.1.2 The original ground levels in this area are now difficult to understand, but it seems possible that East Norman Road has been deliberately sunken (during the nineteenth century?), removing any original medieval deposits. If this is correct, the potential for Context 5 being an undisturbed stratified medieval deposit is greatly reduced.

5.2 Pit 2

5.2.1 The Lamson Tubes provisionally identified in this pit potentially provide a useful addition to our knowledge of the use of the Castle complex during the Second World War.

5.2.2 The succession of chalk rubble and gritty loam deposits (Contexts 9–15) occupying the lower 0.60m of the stratified sequence appear to represent a succession of early road deposits, relating to the predecessor of the modern Knight's Road. The latest of these surfaces (Context 9) is sealed by a

substantial dump deposit (Context 8) which supports the modern road, seemingly raised to a higher level in order improve the gradient for vehicles.

5.2.3 No useful dating evidence was recovered from the lower road deposits but the presence of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century brick fragments in the basal layer (Context 15) must indicate a later post-medieval date-range for them.

5.3 Pit 3

5.3.1 Pit 3, cut in Knight's Road to the north of Pit 2, also revealed deposits of compacted chalk and pea-gravel (Contexts 19–21) which seem to relate to an early road surface of similar construction to those exposed in Pit 2. The lack of obvious resurfacings may reflect the fact that this section of the road was less intensively used than that further to the south-east.

5.3.2 Although no dating evidence was associated with the road deposits, the late medieval pot-base recovered from the soil layer below suggests that the road itself cannot have been laid before the later sixteenth century at the earliest.

5.3.3 Reference to earlier maps of the Castle indicates that the width of Knight's Road in this area has been greatly reduced. Presently some 3 metres wide, the detailed survey prepared by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in 1958 (revised 1966) shows the width of the road here at that time as being about 9 metres. It then extended westwards up to a wall, now removed, surrounding a garden outside the old Cinque Ports Prison. The same arrangement can be traced back onto maps of the later nineteenth century.

5.3.4 The soil deposits, Contexts 17 and 18 may accordingly be interpreted as deliberate dumps deposited over the early, wider road (represented by metalling layer 19 and the underlying chalk rubble dumps, 20 & 21), when this was reduced in width. The presence of tarmac fragments contained within Context 18 implies that this reduction in width probably occurred sometime during the twentieth century, and this is confirmed by the map evidence.

6. General conclusions

6.1 The small-scale excavations undertaken at three points along roads within the Outer Bailey of Dover Castle have shown that, although there has been damage caused by the fairly numerous services previously installed, some stratified deposits of archaeological interest do still survive in all these areas.

6.2 The dark, midden-like deposit encountered in Pit 1 close to the Fitzwilliam Gate appeared to be of some interest and potentially of medieval date; it is unfortunate that no datable finds were recovered. A further investigation of this deposit would be useful if the opportunity should arise at some stage in the future.

6.3 Traces of early chalk and gravel road metalling were exposed in Pits 2 and 3 in Knight's Road. These appear to be of post-medieval date and most probably relate to the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century use of the site by the military.

6.4 The discovery of surviving stratified deposits in each of the three excavated pits is of some significance and underlines the great archaeological potential still remaining for below-ground archaeology across much of the castle complex. The preparation of detailed maps showing the extent of later post-medieval earthmoving and service trenching would help highlight areas where significant stratified deposits might yet remain and could become a valuable tool for future conservation management at the Castle site.

7. Bibliography

Coad, J.G., 1995 *English Heritage Book of Dover Castle and the defences of Dover* (Batsford/EH, London).

Coad, J.G., 2007 *Dover Castle* (English Heritage Guidebook, London).

Coad, J.G. and Lewis, N., 1982 'The Later Fortifications of Dover', *Post-Medieval Archaeology* **16**, 141–200.