

PLATE 1



General shot of the study area as viewed from Water Street

PLATE 2



Vertical shot of the drainage culvert, feature E

Trial Hole No. 1

Type: hand excavation
Class exploratory test hole
NGR: SE 398994 451875

Planform: rectangular
Profile: flat-bottom U
Aligned: east south east

Length: 1.0 m
Width: 0.75 m
Depth: 0.75 m

Context No: 1000 - 1004
Features: A, B

Fig Nos: 3
Plate No: -

Comments:

This excavation was undertaken in order to establish the load bearing capabilities of the sub-soil and the nature of the foundations of the southern boundary wall.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered within this excavation, the base of the excavation terminated on a buried top soil (context 1004) that would appear to be Post Medieval in origin, the layer passed beneath the shallow foundations of the southern boundary wall.

A number of previously unidentified structural features were identified within the trial hole these included the remains of a wall (Feature B) and a cobble surface (Feature A). These features pre dated the construction of the southern boundary wall and would appear to be part of the Post Medieval yard layout to the rear of 4/6 High Street.

A small assemblage of unstratified 19th century and modern pottery sherds were recovered from the excavation.

Trial Hole No. 2

Type: hand excavation
Class exploratory test hole
NGR: SE 398999 451875

Planform: rectangular
Profile: flat-bottom U
Aligned: east south east

Length: 0.90 m
Width: 0.75 m
Depth: 0.88 m

Context No: 2000 - 2003
Features: -

Fig Nos: 3
Plate No: -

Comments:

This excavation was undertaken in order to establish the load bearing capabilities of the sub-soil and the nature of the foundations of the southern boundary wall.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered within this excavation, the base of the excavation terminated on a buried top soil (context 2003) the date of which could not be established, the layer passed beneath the shallow foundations of the southern boundary wall.

No archaeological features were identified within this trial hole.

A small assemblage of unstratified 19th century and modern pottery sherds were recovered from the excavation.

Trial Hole No. 3

Type: hand excavation
Class exploratory test hole
NGR: SE 398971 451877

Planform: rectangular
Profile: flat-bottom U
Aligned: east south east

Length: 0.85 m
Width: 0.84 m
Depth: 0.80 m

Context No: 3000 - 3003
Features: -

Fig Nos: 3
Plate No: -

Comments:

This excavation was undertaken in order to establish the load bearing capabilities of the sub-soil and the nature of the foundations of the southern boundary wall.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered within this excavation, the base of the excavation terminated on a layer redeposited sub-soil (context 3001), this loamy sand with a high quantity of sandstone inclusions passed beneath the shallow foundations of the southern boundary wall.

No archaeological features were identified within this trial hole.

No finds were recovered from the excavation.

The excavation of the strip foundation trenches

The watching brief confirmed that the ground levels within the eastern extent of the study area had been previously heavily disturbed, this would appear to have been associated with the construction of a cellar beneath 4/6 High Street during the early 19th century. However, within the central and western extent of the site a number of structural features were identified these included drainage culverts, cobble floor surfaces, and out buildings.

Trench A

Type: hand excavation
Class: strip foundation
NGR: SE 398991 451876

Planform: linear
Profile: U shaped
Aligned: east south east

Length: 15 m
Width: 0.70 m
Depth: 1.07 m

Context No: 4000 - 4011
Features: C, H, I

Fig Nos: 3, 4
Plate No: -

Comments:

The strip foundation trench was excavated parallel and adjacent to the yards southern boundary wall. The existing ground levels sloped gently downwards to the west.

It was revealed that the deposits within the eastern half of the trench were largely made up of construction debris (context 4001) associated with building works on 4/6 High Street and redeposited sub-soils (context 4005) it is suspected that the deposition of these are the result of the disposal of spoil excavated during the construction the cellars beneath the same property.

These previous works accounted for the displacement and disturbance of the upper 0.58 metres of stratigraphy.

Within the central and western section of the trench the remains of a cobble surface were identified (context 4005, 4010), this surface is suspected to be a Post Medieval occupation layer, the surface had been displaced and disturbed during the 19th century by the excavation of an ash pit.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered during the excavation of this trench.

Trench B

Type: hand excavation
Class: strip foundation
NGR: SE 398990 451876

Planform: rectilinear
Profile: U shaped
Aligned: north

Length: 6.5 m
Width: 0.70 m
Depth: 1.45 m

Context No: 5000 - 5006
Features: D

Fig Nos: 3
Plate No: 4

Comments:

The strip foundation trench was excavated parallel and adjacent to the west elevation of 4/6 High Street, at it's eastern extent the trench doglegs and was excavated upto the cellar wall of the property. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

It was revealed that the deposits within the eastern half of the trench were largely made up of construction debris (context 5001) associated with building works on 4/6 High Street. These deposits have recently been heavily disturbed during the installation of foul water drains.

These previous works accounted for the displacement and disturbance of the upper 0.86 metres of stratigraphy.

Within the south west corner of the trench the remains of a cobble surface were identified (context 5002), this was bisected by a linear drainage feature that was incorporated into the cobble surface. The surface had been disturbed to the east and north during the recent installation of the foul water drains. It is suspected that this surface formed part of a more extensive Post Medieval occupation layer.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered during the excavation of this trench.

The base of the excavation terminated on a buried top soil (context 5003) that would appear to be Post Medieval origin.

Towards the northern extent of the trench within the east facing section a rubble filled pit like feature was identified, the cut was backfilled with sandstone rubble, the fill included 19th century pottery. Upon initial inspection it had been suspected that the feature was a rubble filled drain, however, the steep sided profile and substantial depth of the cut would suggest otherwise. It is possible that it may well have been a backfilled, Post Medieval well, the lining of which had been removed prior to it's backfill, alternatively it is possible that the feature may have been constructed during the 19th century as a soakaway, it's location would have helped to alleviate water seepage into the adjacent cellars.

Trench C

Type: hand excavation
Class: strip foundation
NGR: SE 398995 451883

Planform: linear
Profile: U shaped
Aligned: east south east

Length: 7 m
Width: 0.70 m
Depth: 0.94 m

Context No: 6000 - 6004
Features: E

Fig Nos: 3
Plate No: 2

Comments:

The strip foundation trench was excavated parallel and adjacent to the yards northern boundary wall. The existing ground levels sloped gently downwards to the west.

It was revealed that the deposits within the central and eastern sections of the trench were largely made up of construction debris (context 6001) associated with building works on 4/6 High Street, these deposits increased in depth towards the west, at the eastern extent of the trench the layer had been recently disturbed associated with the installation of the foul water drains.

These previous works accounted for the displacement and disturbance of the upper 0.80 metres of stratigraphy, beneath which the natural sub soil was identified, this layer of loamy sand was revealed to fall away on a moderate slope towards the west south west.

Within the central section of the trench a sandstone box culvert was identified (Feature E) this drainage structure was 19th century in origin and appeared to drain into a subterranean chamber situated within the centre of the study area. This structure was constructed upon a 19th century buried topsoil/landfill (context 6004).

The base of the excavation terminated on this buried top soil (context 6004), it was revealed that this layer had been used during the 19th century to landscape the central area of the yard and compensate for the falling away of the natural ground levels towards the west.

Trench D

Type: hand excavation
Class: strip foundation
NGR: SE 398990 451880

Planform: curvilinear
Profile: U shaped
Aligned: north east

Length: 6 m
Width: 0.70 m
Depth: 1.08 m

Context No: 7000 - 7008
Features: F, G, H

Fig Nos: 3, 4
Plate No: 3, 5, 6

Comments:

The strip foundation trench was excavated within the northern extent of the study area. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy within the northern half of the trench was largely made up of redeposited subsoil (context 7003) and a buried topsoil/landfill (context 7002), the latter contained predominantly 19th century pottery with occasional 17th century sherds, a late medieval lead loom weight was also recovered from this layer.

These previous works accounted for the displacement and disturbance of the upper 0.95 metres of stratigraphy.

Within the southern extent of the trench a number of structural components were identified of a building complex that occupied this area of the site, these included the lower courses of a stone building (Feature H), cobble surface (Feature I), ancillary walls and hearth (Features F,G). I was informed by the Contractor that none of these features conflicted with the required depth of excavation and therefore these remains were left in-situ. From a detailed inspection it became clear that these remains reflected a programme of construction/alteration on this site from the Post Medieval Period to the early 18th century. These features had fallen into disuse and the greater part of them had been demolished prior to the 19th century landscaping within the yard area.

The natural sub-soil was not encountered during the excavation of this trench.

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

A number of archaeological features were exposed during the works, and these included cobble surfaces, drainage culverts, ancillary walls and the lower courses of a building, the earliest of which dated to the post medieval period, with other structural components being added during the mid 18th century.

Feature A

Type: layer
Class: cobble surface
NGR: SE 398994 451875

Planform: irregular
Profile: level
Aspect: -
Aligned: N

Length: 0.50 m
Width: 0.10 m
Depth: 0.13 m

Context No: 1002
Fig Nos: 3
Plate: -

The cobble surface was identified as emerging from the west facing section of the trial hole, traces of this same surface were also discernable within the south facing section of the excavation. The greater proportion of this structure had been removed during the excavation of the trial hole. The upper surface of the cobbles appeared to be level with the cobbles tightly grouped and set on edge. The cobbles were imbedded within what would appear to be a buried top soil (context 1004).

The surface was comparable in form and depth below existing ground level to a cobble surface identified to the north west within Trench A (Feature C) and to the north north east within Trench B (Feature D).

The surface would appear to butt to the lower courses of a sandstone blockwork and cobble wall (Feature B), situated within the western extent of the excavation.

Feature B

Type: structure
Class wall: lower course
NGR: SE 398993 451875

Planform: linear
Profile: level
Aspect: -
Aligned: N

Length: 0.75 m
Width: 0.20 m
Depth: 0.18 m

Context No: 1003
Fig Nos: 3
Plate: -

The lower courses of a sandstone blockwork and cobble wall identified as emerging from the east facing section of the trial hole, the full extent of this structure was not exposed, from the excavation of Trench A immediately adjacent to Trial Hole No.1 it was confirmed that this wall did not continue more than 0.35m on the same alignment to the north.

The exact form and dimensions of the structure could not be accurately determined, however it is suspected that the wall was double skinned with a rubble core. The roughly hewn masonry fragments, upto two courses in height, were bedded within a grey-white coloured lime based mortar.

Whilst it is acknowledged the wall has the capabilities of being load bearing it is suspected that this was a boundary wall or that of a relatively small single storey ancillary building.

The greater majority of the wall had been dismantled and removed from the site prior to the remaining elements structure being buried. From the comparative level of the adjacent cobble surface (Feature A) it is evident that this section of wall was extant and contemporary with this surface, however, it could not be determined if this east facing elevation of the wall had an internal or external aspect.

It is possible that the wall is contemporary with those structural elements identified within the south western corner of the study area (Features F and H), the exact relationship between these features could not be determined.

It can be confirmed that this wall together with the associated cobbled surfaces predate the construction of the existing southern boundary wall of the yard and therefore predates the early 19th century.

Feature C

Type: layer
Class cobble surface
NGR: SE 398991 451876

Planform: irregular
Profile: sloping
Aspect: W
Aligned: -

Length: 2.80 m
Width: 0.70 m
Depth: -

Context No: 4003
Fig Nos: 3
Plate: -

The cobble surface was identified within the base of Trench A, the surface was comparable in form and level with Feature A identified within Trial Hole No.1 to the immediate south east, and comparable in form with the cobble surfaces Feature D and Feature I.

At it's eastern extent the surface terminated abruptly adjacent to Trial Hole No.1 and this may be possibly related to the location of the wall, Feature B. The western extent of the surface can not be clearly determined, as this area of the trench has been heavily disturbed during the 19th century by the excavation of ash pits, these had been excavated through the surface and had resulted in the displacement of the cobbles, unfortunately this disturbance had destroyed the relationship between this surface and Feature I situated within the western extent of the trench.

The surface sloped gently downwards to the west on a constant and gradual gradient.

The surface was imbedded with 19th century pottery these finds were similar to those recovered from the 19th century ash pits. This would suggest that the cobble surface was exposed during the 19th century, but had by this period reached the end of it's useful life and in places been excavated and not reinstated for the disposal of domestic rubbish. This would further suggest that the surface formed part of an external cobble yard rather than internal floor level.

The cobble surface was imbedded into a buried top soil that contained 17th century pottery, it would appear that the surface is late 17th / early 18th century in origin.

Feature D

Type: layer
Class cobble surface
NGR: SE 398997 451880

Planform: irregular
Profile: sloping
Aspect: W
Aligned: SE

Length: 1.30 m
Width: 1.30 m
Depth: 0.12 m

Context No: 5002
Fig Nos: 3
Plate: 4

The cobble surface was identified within the base of Trench B, the surface was comparable in form and level with Feature A identified within Trial Hole No.1 to the immediate south west, and comparable in form with the cobble surfaces Feature C and Feature I.

The surface was situated within the elbow of the rectilinear trench and terminated abruptly to the north and east, it is suspected that in both of these directions the surface had been disturbed during the 20th century during the installation of a foul water drain.

The surface consisted of tightly packed water worn cobbles, one course deep, a parallel arrangement of cobbles set end to end traversed across the surface on a south eastern alignment, it would appear that this structure functioned as a conduit for surface water drainage.

The surface sloped gently downwards to the west on a constant and gradual gradient.

The cobble surface was imbedded into a buried top soil that contained 17th century pottery, it would appear that the surface is late 17th / early 18th century in origin.