

Site name: School Street

Site ref: IAS 4801 HER ref: IPS 355 CIMS Accession No: IPSMG:R.2009.46.

NGR: TM 16634431 Extent: 3369 sq m

Circumstances of excavation

The 1979 excavation was encouraged by Ipswich Borough Council, the landowners, in advance of potential development and the 1983-85 excavations were commissioned by Ipswich Borough Council, as a result of planning consent and scheduled monument consent (SM county number 32) being granted for redevelopment of the site by Habinteg Housing Association. All excavation work was undertaken by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit.

Site constraints

There were no constraints on the area excavated but the parcels of land were released for excavation in seven phases (Areas 1-VI).

Funding bodies

The 1979 excavation was funded by the Department of the Environment (Ancient Monuments Branch) and the MSC Youth Opportunities Programme. The remainder of the site, excavated between 1983-1985, was funded by English Heritage and the MSC Community Programme.

Stratigraphic sequence (by period)

(Note: The text describes a site North direction somewhat to the east of OS Grid North.)

Prehistoric

There were 7 prehistoric pottery sherds residual in later contexts.

Romano-British

There were 129 sherds of pottery, 4 coins (one pierced) and 3 brooches (two 1st and one 4th century) of this period, residual in later contexts. The only possible feature of this date was the undated ditch 2661.

Early Middle Saxon: c.600-700 (EMS)

There were 100 handmade sherds, probably of 7th century date.

Undated

There were two significant features of uncertain date.

Ditch 2661

This ditch ran north to south along the western edge of the site and was cut by MS pit 1436. The ditch produced an early cruciform brooch fragment (0378/4801Cu) (West 1998, 67, fig. 96.4) dated 400-450 AD, which suggests that it is late Roman or EMS in date.

Ruts 3154

Three 'ruts' (3154), either plough ruts or wheel ruts, of unknown date, were recorded under the ELS road surface 0272.

Middle Saxon: c.720 - c.850(MS)

This period was represented by 19 pits, spread across the whole site, three probable wells and only one recognisable building. These features were associated with 2975 sherds of Ipswich ware and 49 imported sherds (1.6%). However, the site as whole produced 17,421 sherds of Ipswich ware in total and 482 imported sherds i.e. 83% of the MS pottery was residual in later features. 475 of the imported sherds were split

equally between Frankish blackwares and Badorf ware, with just a few sherds of Merovingian type wares, Beauvais type wares and Tating ware.

The site also produced 9 sceattas, most of which were deposited c.750-65, but only one (0035/4801N was found in a MS context (pit 1724). Truncation by dense later activity makes any detailed understanding of the period difficult.

Building 3153

Only part of the west (slot 1474) and south (slot 3086) walls and areas flooring survived of this surface-laid building as it was truncated to the north and east by later features. It was over 5m long and c.3.2m wide. Dating isn't straightforward but it was probably of late MS construction but not abandoned until the ELS period.

The Wells

Well 1668 had oak timbers surviving below the water-table (1.52m O.D.): an outer ring of seven upright timbers and an incomplete inner ring of staves used to strengthen the outer ring. Tree ring analysis of the timbers was not possible (Groves 1987).

Well 2722, 2.5m deep (base at 3.08m OD), had layered tip lines suggesting a well but no organic remains.

Well 2885, 2.7m deep, had no organic remains but evidence of an infilled central shaft.

Pits

There were 19 pits scattered across the site. All three wells had been back-filled with large amounts of domestic refuse and had MS pits in close proximity to them. Well 2722 had 0279 and 2827 close by, and cut earlier MS pit 2731. Three pits (2893, 2900, 2904) lay to the east of well 2885. Seven pits lay north of well 1668 (0828, 1436, 1442, 1564, 1566, 1590 and 1655). In addition there were two pits (0125, 0785), at the south end of the site, and four at the north end (0998, 1027, 1059, 1196).

Early Late Saxon: c. 850-c.900 (ELS)

During this period, a road (the precursor of Fore Street) crossed the north-east corner of the site and it is assumed that Foundation Street bounded the west edge of the site.

Fore Street Frontage (North)

Two phases of ELS occupation can be established at the north end of the site.

ELS Phase 1

Road 0272

In its first phase the road (0272) was either a dirt road or a narrower metalled road, not defined by the excavation.

Building 1691a

The south-east corner of a surface-laid building, 2.5m to the north of and parallel with the road 0272, was sealed below the MLS town bank layer 0317. There were post voids in most of the postholes and traces of a floor surface and hearth (0411) with lead residues. In front were surfaces (0413, 0434) of a yard linking the building with roadway 0272.

Building 1691b

The south-west corner of a surface-laid building alongside building 1691a. There were post voids in the postholes.

Two pits (0267 and 0270) lay between the building and road 0272.

Structure 3157

This surface laid building lay south of the first phase of road 0272 and included postholes 1200 – 1207, 2009. Only the east wall and possible returns of the north and south walls lay within the excavated area.

Well 0309

This well, just south of the road 0272, partially sealed by the adjacent metalled yard, was only 2.4m deep (base at 3.45m OD), but had with traces of a lining. An environmental sample was removed from the base of the feature.

Pit 0491

This pit lay under the line of road 0272.

ELS Phase 2

Road 0272

This road (0272) was moved southwards or widened and metalled in this phase. The metalling included iron slag and pottery, exclusively of ELS date.

Yard 1195

On the south-west side of road 0272 lay a rectangular metalled area, 14m by 8m, which appeared to be a yard contemporary with road 0272 (the road and yard was numbered 1195 in the north-west corner). The southern half of yard 1195 was covered by building 1690.

Building 1690

This surface-laid building, c.3m south of and parallel to road 0272, was 6m long by 4m wide, with an internal partition at its mid point. The south-west corner had been removed by MLS hearth 0284. It comprised postholes 0440 – 5, 0448 -54, 0457 - 8, 0475 – 83.

Pits

Ten pits (0286, 0300, 0301, 0307, 0409, 1317, 1334, 2774, 2777, 2846), and a probable well (0304) lay mainly south and east of the building 1690, just beyond the edge of the yard, and are undoubtedly associated with it. Two small pits (1194, 2010) lay north-west of building 1690.

There were nineteen pits, scattered from midway along the north end of the site eastwards towards road 0272 (0958, 0968, 0979, 0993, 0994, 0995, 1015, 1047, 1061, 1351, 1729, 1733, 2111, 2151, 2161, 2162, 2186, 2314, 2337). They were all heavily truncated by LMED graves and presumably relate to occupation fronting Fore Street. Pit 2162, 6m north-south, 5m east-west, and 70cm deep was a possible pond for livestock.

Fence 3162

This boundary fence (postholes 2730, 2754-6, 2764, 2766-7, 2769, 2771, 2937) ran SW/NE, south of the building 1690 complex, at right angles to the precursor of Fore Street, and appears to separate it from the next tenement, going south along the street.

Fence 3164

This fence (postholes 2723-4, 2726, 2728, 2933, 2935), ran c.3m south-east from posthole 2937, in fence 3162.

Fore Street Frontage (South)

Only the western half of this southern tenement was exposed with from 9-12m of the east half, up to the projected street frontage, outside of the excavated area. Only one phase of ELS occupation could be identified.

Fence 3163

This fence (postholes 2749-51, 2781, 2915), ran parallel to and some 2.5m to the south-east of the northern tenement boundary fence (3162).

Building 2826 (see scanned plan IAS4801_2826.tif)

This sunken featured building was over 3.8m long and 3m wide, with a pit cut to a depth of 50cm below the surface of the natural. One very large post hole (2836) was found at the west gable end.

Building 2828 (see scanned plan IAS4801_2828.tif)

This sunken featured building, in the north-west corner of the tenement, was a simple two post structure, 3m long, 2.4m wide and 70cm deep.

Building 2854 (see scanned plan IAS4801_2854.tif)

Only the north-west corner of this two post sunken featured building survived, parallel to and 9m back from the Fore Street frontage. The pit was 3.4m wide and 90cm deep with traces of clay floor on the base.

Pits and wells

Two wells (2738 and 2872) and eleven pits (2739, 2785, 2797, 2813, 2823, 2843, 2856, 2876, 2890, 2905, 2906) clustered in the open area lying north of building 2826, west of building 2854 and south of building 2828. Another group of six pits (2717, 2853, 2894, 2895, 2910, 2939) lay south-west of building 2826. The pits 2905 and 2906 appear to have been connected and related to an industrial activity.

Well 2872

The well pit, was 3.16m deep with an off-centre well shaft. Organic matter from the base was analysed for environmental residues (Murphy *et al* 2003).

Well 2738

This well, 3.3m deep, had no evidence of a timber lining.

Foundation Street/Fore Street frontage

Building 0140 (see scanned plan IAS4180_0140.tif)

This sunken featured building, was 40m east of the Fore Street frontage and the same distance from the Foundation Street. Only the west end survived. The pit, 80cm deep and 3.6m wide, survived for 2.5m east-west, with a hearth on its base but no evidence of post holes. The orientation of building and its location imply that it did not relate to either Fore Street or Foundation Street but to an east-west road south of the excavated site.

The Foundation Street frontage

There is evidence for at least three phases of ELS period occupation on the Foundation Street frontage.

Iron smithing (ELS phase 1)

A red burnt clay hearth (1644), subsided into the upper fill of MS well 1668 produced ash, charcoal, pottery and 2.7kg of iron slag. A layer (1571) below the hearth also produced nearly 34kg of slag and nearby pits 3090, 3128 and 3130 produced 2.3kg, 4kg and 1.2kg of iron slag respectively.

Structure 3127 (ELS, phase 2)

This possible surface laid building fronted Foundation Street. Twelve post holes (3115-20, 3123, 3138, 3143-8) appear to form the north end with three postholes (3113-4, 3122) surviving of the north end of the east side.

Structure 3161 (? ELS, phase 2)

In the south-west corner of the site, a concentration of postholes (0865, 0867-72, 0879-81, 1557, 1561-3) appears to represent the south end of surface laid building. A line of six postholes remained of the west wall, two of the east wall and seven of the south wall.

The area between structures 3127 and 3161 was entirely occupied by large EMED, LMED and LMT pits apart from a small area midway between the two where more postholes were recorded. A line of seven postholes were recorded cutting MS pit 1668 and hearth 1644, and to the west, two postholes were recorded close to Foundation Street. It must remain a possibility that structure 3127 is the north end of the same building as structure 3161, to the south, and that these postholes are all that remains of the side walls between the two. If this is the case, the resulting building would be 19m long by 5m wide at either end and 6m wide at the mid point.

Road or yard 3142 (ELS phase 3)

A metalled surface, 2.5m north-south and 1m east-west, survived on the west edge of the site, adjacent to Foundation Street. It had a similar make-up to the road surface (0272) at the north-east of the site. The surface was overlaid with a layer of heavily burnt fill (3139) which produced iron slag.

ELS Unphased

Building 3165

This sunken featured building, at the north end of the site, 13m east of Foundation Street, was represented by only eight postholes, sealed under the phase 1 floor of MLS/EMED building 2376. They indicate a building 1.8m wide and at least 2.8m long, with a 1.3m deep pit.

Structure 3166

A group of postholes, south-west of building 3165, at the north end of the site, might be remnants of another surface laid building. Although undated, it shares the same orientation as structures 3127 and 3161, and could be contemporary. It comprised a north-south line of five post holes (2339, 2684-7), and an east-west line of four (3002-3, 3012-3).

Pits

Five pits (2303, 2314, 2530, 2597, 3011) surround building 3165, at the north end of the site.

There were thirteen pits at the south end (0581, 0593, 0665, 1443, 1444, 1546, 1584, 1597, 1621, , 3140).

Middle Late Saxon: c.900-1000 (MLS)

In the north-east corner of the site, four phases of the MLS occupation can be identified. This phasing can be applied to the whole eastern third of the site.

MLS Phase 1

North of Fore Street (Road 0272)

Building 1691

This ELS building appears to have survived into the MLS phase 1, at least as ruin. The survival of the postholes as voids implies that the posts, or at least their stumps, must have been left *in situ*, either cut off at ground level or incorporated within the later town bank in order to have survived as voids.

Pits

One of the three pits (0258) to the south and probably associated with building 1691, was MLS phase 1 and produced a coin (0024/4801N) of Charles the Bald (843-877), most likely deposited by 900/910.

The Northern Tenement south of Fore Street

Occupation virtually ceases at the beginning of this period. The ELS building 1690 is replaced by an unusual sunken featured building (0296) with a contemporary well (0306) and two pits (0290, 2782).

Building 0296 (Phase 1) (see scanned plan IAS4801_0296.tif)

This is the only square sunken featured building excavated in the town to date. It was 2.5m by 2.5m, with a pit 60cm deep. The pit had a timber lining of horizontal planks and all nine structural posts were observed as voids. No evidence of any flooring was found on the base of the pit, and no external means of entry.

The Southern Tenement south of Fore Street

The ELS boundary fences (3162, 3163 and 3164) are assumed to continue into the brief MLS phase 1 but the three ELS buildings were replaced with one, more sophisticated, sunken featured building (2741), set back c.20m from the street frontage and with its long axis parallel to the street.

Building 2741(MLS phase 1) (see scanned plan IAS4801_2741.tif)

This sunken featured building had a pit 4.3m by 3.5m, and 1m deep, with a clay floor and a sloping entrance at the north end of the east side.

Pits

Only two pits (2732 and 2899), near to building 2741, belonged to this phase.

MLS Phase 2

The town defences

A ditch (3160) ran north to south at the east end of the site. It was excavated in ten sections (0257, 0260, 0261, 0297, 0370, 2708, 2715, 2787, 2803, 2927). Layers of the bank, on the inside (west of the ditch), survived only in the north section. The entire late Saxon town bank and ditch was buried under later town banks. The ditch was a maximum of 2.6m wide and reduced from 1.7m deep, at the south end, to less than a metre at the north end.

There is also evidence for the width of the late Saxon town bank. The north section of the site, where bank layers survive, shows that it exceeded 4.4m wide. The later, MLS phase 3 smithing hearths (0284 and 0342) and the MLS phase 4 cemetery do not extend east of a line 7-8m west of the town ditch implying that the bank was there as an obstacle. The bank was an earthwork about 70cm high, with four layers recorded in section (0314, 0315, 0316, 0317) overlying the ELS building 1691 (a and b).

The ditch fill of gravelly-loam contained an MLS pottery assemblage throughout indicating that it had been filled by the end of the MLS period (i.e. by c.1000). There was only one coin (0045/4801N), an obol of Charles the Bald, from the ditch fill (2803), which provides a *tpq* of c.910.

Building 0296 (Phase 2) (see scanned plan IAS4801_0296.tif)

In this phase, the sunken feature of this building was filled in and capped with two layers of clay, the base of which was burnt red-brown. All nine structural posts of the original building were observed as voids through the clay capping and had clearly been left *in situ* with the clay capping forming the floor of the phase 2 building. How this second phase of building relates to the town bank construction is uncertain. It was either burnt at the time of the bank construction, or was incorporated into the bank and burnt down at a later date.

Fence 3158

This was a possible fence, cutting the yard surface north of building 1690. The line of posts (0382, 0438, 0447) were not parallel to the street.

Boundary fence 3159

This boundary ran parallel to, and 4-5m west of, the town bank and ditch, from north to south across the whole site.

At the south end of the site it was represented by a foundation trench (2833), with postholes on both sides and by 19 postholes at the north end of the site (1291-8, 1303-4, 1308, 1310-2, 1315, 1325-6, 1330-1, 2834, 2867-8, 2901, 2925, 2944). It is most likely to be MLS phase 2, marking the western boundary of the 'land-take' for the construction of the town defences and allowed an access route behind, c.4m wide.

MLS Phase 3

At the north end of the site, immediately behind the MLS phase 2 town bank, road 0272/1195 was re-metalled with cobbles and the area behind the bank was used for iron smithing. Four separate hearths were recorded (0284, 0342, 0379, 1137). The bases of all four hearths are associated with ELS pottery assemblages but the stratigraphy implies an MLS date and the layers around the hearths do have MLS pottery assemblages (0281, 0285, 0295)

Iron Smithing Hearths

Hearth 0342

The most southerly hearth had the base of an iron stained Thetford ware pot (0363) with a large quantity of concreted iron oxide in its base and probably indicates a plunge pot for cooling objects from the forge. This implies smithing rather than smelting as suggested by Starley (1993).

Hearth 0379

This second hearth, going north, appears to predate the most northerly hearth (0284). As with hearth 0342, a Thetford ware pot (0380), was set into an adjacent area of fired clay.

Hearth 0284

This third, large hearth area, was two phased with hearth 0378 lying below 0284. The oven of red burnt clay, 2.7m long by 1.3m wide, was orientated NW/SE and surrounded by unburnt yellow clay indicating the walls of the oven, other than on the NW side which was the open part of the oven. Extending from this entrance in a NW direction was linear pit 0419. 3.8kg of iron slag was directly associated with hearth 0284. Much higher amounts were found in the layers around the hearth and overlying the metalled road surface (1195), which was west of the rear edge of the town bank. A second layer of metalling (1177), above 1195, produced 23 kgs of slag from an area of only six square metres. A further 18 kgs was recovered from an area of some 20 square metres of silty fill excavated between the upper and lower street level. Layer 0285, adjacent to hearth 0284, produced nearly 33kg of slag.

Hearth 1137

At the far north end, a fourth hearth, c.1.5m by 90cm, lay above the metalled yard (1195).

Pit 0419

This linear pit, 4.1m long, 1.2m wide and 1m deep, must relate to the iron smithing ovens 0284/0378 as it extends outwards from the front of the oven, with an overlap at the junction and both oven floors had subsided into it. Its relationship to the ovens suggests that it was a tunnel-like feature drawing air into the base of the oven.

MLS phase 1, 2, or 3

Palisade boundary 2201

This palisade trench, 30cm wide, was traced for 6.5m running NNW/SSE from the remaining stretch of road 0272. It had ten postholes, roughly 40cm apart along its length.

The Lower Orwell Street Frontage

Pit 2786

This shallow pit was cut into the west edge of ditch 3160. Although, it contained an ELS pottery assemblage it is more likely MLS 3, 4 or EMED.

MLS Phase 4

The North Cemetery

95 burials were excavated at the north end of the site immediately west of the MLS town bank (Mays 1989). No boundaries around the cemetery were recorded. Although its southern extent was established, the northern limits were clearly outside of the excavated area. There were no burials cutting the short stretch of road 0272, which it is assumed remained west of the town defences, and this may have formed a northern boundary to the cemetery. The orientation of the burials changed gradually going eastwards. On the west side, they were W/E but this changed to NE/SW at the eastern edge, giving the impression that they were surrounding a focus further to the north. The density of burials also increased going north. Preservation of the skeletons was poor as they were buried in shallow graves, often disturbed by later features and, in many instances, tightly packed together with the inevitable result that later burials had disturbed the earlier ones, apart from on the east edge where the burials were better spaced, and less disturbed by later graves. The majority of the inhumations were laid out in a supine position, although three crouched burials were also found. Two of these (1249 in grave 1265 and 1253 in grave 1254) were buried side by side. The third (1180) lay only some four metres to the north, and all three appear to form a group, deliberately buried on the south-east edge of the cemetery, but not segregated from other burials. A close date for the life of the cemetery isn't possible. Four burials had MS pottery only, but most (25) had ELS assemblages, four had MLS (i.e. with St Neot's ware) and five (graves 1078, 1256, 1392, 2077, 2176) had EMED pottery in association. This indicates a start date later in the 10th century and an end date sometime in the 11th century.

MLS Unphased

The South Cemetery

Ten burials were excavated at the south end of the site west of the MLS town bank (Birkett 1979). There is no indication whether this cemetery is contemporary with the north cemetery (MLS phase 4) or earlier MLS.

The Foundation Street Frontage

Two buildings (0825, 1535) lay at the south end of the site, fronting Foundation Street and one to the north (2376, phase 1), probably representing two separate tenements.

Building 0825 (see scanned plan IAS4801_0825.tif)

This sunken featured building lay 12m back from the street frontage. It was 3m long from east to west, by 2.7m wide, with a pit 1.45m deep and a clay floor surface, 15cm above the base of the pit.

Building 1535 (see scanned plan IAS4801_1535.tif)

This sunken featured building was 7m north-east of 0825 and 20m from the street front. It was 2.9m from west to east, by 2.25m wide, with a pit 70cm deep and a clay floor, with traces of burning. No post holes were recorded along the east wall raising the possibility that it was open-fronted. The sunken pit extended westward past the likely end of the building suggesting a sloping entrance.

Building 2376 (Phase 1) (see scanned plan IAS4801_2376.tif)

This sunken featured building, which lay at the north end of the site, 13m east of the Foundation Street, had evidence for two phases indicating that it had been rebuilt. The first phase building was a widening of the cellar of the ELS building 3165 and the clay floor sealed the post holes of that building. Few structural remains survived the construction of the phase 2 building. The lack of pottery associated leaves it uncertain whether this phase of the building is an ELS adaptation of building 3165, or MLS.

Pits

Twelve pits were scattered between buildings 0825 at the south and building 2376(phase 1) at the north end of the site (0810, 1462, 1467, 1547, 1555, 1559, 1583, 1589, 1670, 2648, 3052, 3080). Pit 1520 cuts MLS building

Early Medieval: c.1000-1200 (EMED)

During this period there were five buildings, the town defences were enhanced and an east-west ditch (1088) was cut across the site. At least three phases can be identified. At the north end, building 2678 is cut by pit 2668, which is cut by pit 2667, and ditch 1088 is cut by pit 1930. In the south-west corner, building 0818 is cut by pits 0800 and 1527 which are both cut by pit 0817.

The South Tenement

Building 0713 (see scanned plan IAS4801_0713.tif)

This sunken featured building, in the south-west corner of the site, lay 14m from the Foundation Street frontage and immediately north of building 0818. The pit was 2.6m long, 1.9m wide, and 1m deep, with a clay floor laid 20cm above the base of the pit. The form of this building implies an outbuilding associated with building 0818 alongside it.

Building 0818 (see scanned plan IAS4801_0818.tif)

This sunken featured building lay 10m back from, and with its long axis at right angles to the Foundation Street frontage. It was 6.2m long by 4.2m and 1.1m deep with a clay floor (1530), 20cm above the base of the pit. No evidence of any external entrance was found but both the east and west ends of the building had been removed by later pits.

There was abundant evidence that the building had been systematically dismantled during the 11th century.

The North Tenement

Building 2376 (Phase 2) (see scanned plan IAS4801_2376.tif)

This sunken featured building, 13m east of Foundation Street, was a rebuilding of MLS building 2376, phase 1, and had been burnt down. The pit was 3.7m east-west, 2.4m north-south with a clay floor inserted 20cm above that of the phase 1 building. A large Thetford ware storage jar (2304) had been inserted into the south-east corner of the pit, with its rim protruding above the level of the new floor. The fire that destroyed the building had preserved the post and plank lining of the pit. The low proportion of EMED pottery in its fill indicates that it was burnt down early in this period and may have had a short life.

Building 2486 (see scanned plan IAS4801_2486.tif)

Only the eastern 2.7m survived of this sunken featured building, right on the street front. The base of the pit survived intact, indicating that it was 3.9m wide and 1.3m deep. Traces of horizontal planking, lining the walls of the cellar, were visible in section. The quantity of burnt and unburnt clay and charcoal in the fill, may indicate a fire above ground level, leading to a collapse of the structure. The final filling of the building was probably in the late 11th or early 12th century as the ceramic assemblage included 347 sherds of Early Medieval Ware and nine sherds of Andenne Ware.

Building 2678 (see scanned plan IAS4801_2678.tif)

This sunken featured building, 2.8m long, 1.85m wide, and 40cm deep, lay at right angles to, and 9m east of the Foundation Street at the north end of the site. The evidence indicates two phases of build. The first phase building appears to have been dirt-floored but the second phase building had a clay floor, 15cm above the base of the pit. The ceramic assemblage in its final fill implies abandonment early in the 11th century, especially as it was cut by a sequence of EMED pits.

The East End of the site

Town Defences

There is evidence that the town defences were improved in the later 11th or early twelfth century with the excavation of a borrow ditch to provide material for raising the bank and probable cutting of a new, larger town ditch.

Borrow ditch 1132/bank 0311-0313/ditch 0251

To the rear of the MLS town bank, a north-south ditch (1132) cut through the MLS phase 4 cemetery. The ditch was roughly 3.5m wide and 1.7 deep, although its profile varied along its length. In many sections the ditch was more like a series of intercutting borrow pits. The fill excavated from the ditch was no doubt used to heighten the town bank, lying adjacent and to the east.

The main section through the defences, along the north-east edge of the site, shows the silted up MLS ditch section 0257 and bank layers (314-317) covered by the same layers (0311- 0313) which include three sherds of Early Medieval ware in their fill. These EMED layers, presumably made with material from borrow ditch 1132, are clearly cut by LMED town ditch 0251. This must indicate that the edge of the EMED town ditch, alongside the heightened bank, was further east and the LMED ditch was either cut further west or made much wider than its EMED precursor.

There is little evidence as to when, during the EMED period, borrow ditch 1132 was excavated, or how long it was open. Burial in the MLS Cemetery, which it cuts, did continue into the EMED period and one EMED pit (1144) lay east of the borrow ditch 1132 and west of the MLS town bank, confirming that there was some EMED occupation prior to the borrow ditch construction. Ditch 1132 was presumably filled after 1087 as a penny of William 1 was found in the fill. The paucity of Early Medieval pottery in its fill certainly rules out it being filled over many years during the EMED period with town rubbish. The vast quantity of earlier pottery must indicate that it was filled with soil scraped up from the land to the west and most likely by the Blackfriars as preparation for their redevelopment of the site after 1263.

The 31 LMED pottery sherds from 1132 confirm that this final levelling took place in the last quarter of the 13th century.

Ditch 1088

The west end of this curving ditch begins in a butt end, in the north-west corner of the site, 5.5m to the south-east of building 2376, and runs east for 30m before being lost just before the "borrow" ditch, 1132. The ditch was, on average, 1.8m across, with a V-shaped profile and 90cm deep. The pottery assemblage in its filling suggests a late 11th/12th century date for its final filling but as the ditch was also cut by EMED pit 1930, the filling date must be before c.1150.

Ditch 0653

A heavily truncated east-west ditch, 1.7m wide, ran just north of the south excavation edge. It could only be traced for c.10m. The pottery associated suggests that it was filled at the same time as ditch 1088, parallel to it and 30m to the north.

Pits

Four EMED pits lay at the far south of the site (0133, 0154, 0619, 0688) and only one (1144) at the east end. This was east of the borrow ditch 1132, and west of the MLS town bank, confirming that there was some EMED occupation prior to the borrow ditch construction. Of the 342 sherds of pottery associated with it, only one was Early Medieval ware suggesting that it was very early in the EMED period.

Most of the EMED pits lay at the west end of the site. Some of them must be associated with the buildings in the north and south tenements fronting Foundation Street but others are clearly later than the buildings and have no associated building evidence.

North tenement pits

To the north, building 2678 was cut by EMED pit 2668, which was cut by EMED pit 2667 which also cut EMED pit 2662.

18 pits had no stratigraphic relationship with any building (1042, 1438, 1912, 1916, 1930, 1940, 1963, 1976, 1997, 2410, 2444, 2509, 2621, 2645, 2669, 2694, 3062, 3066).

South tenement pits

To the south, six pits cut building 0818 (0784, 0788, 0800, 0817, 1517, 1527). Pit 0788 was cut by pits 0784 and 1517 and 1517 also cut pit 1527 and was cut by well 0690. Pit 1527 was also cut by pit 0817 which is cut by pit 0800. Building 0713 was also cut by pit 0800.

There were also 23 pits not stratigraphically related to the two buildings. Eleven of these intercutting pits lay in a group immediately north of the two buildings (0753, 0758, 0808, 0819, 0890, 0894, 1502, 1539, 1544, 1554, 1608). A further nine lay to the south and east of the buildings (0590, 0604, 0619, 0680, 0681, 0688, 0734, 0802, 0882) and three to the west (1614, 1624, 1642).

There were three pits (0133, 0154, 0155) further east, south of structure 0121.

Wells

There were two wells on the south tenement (0690, 1503) both close to buildings 0713 and 0818.

Industrial Features

Structure 0121

This structure lay west of the town defences, in the otherwise unoccupied zone east of the built-up Foundation Street frontage. It cut grave 0110 of the MLS south cemetery.

It comprised a rectangular pit, 3m north-south, 2.3m wide and 35cm deep. At its south end the pit tapered to a neck with a post hole on each side of the gap and which opened out again into an oval pit (0131), 1.8m by 1.5m, the base of which was at a similar level to the floor of the rectangular pit to the north. Soil staining revealed the existence of a circular organic lining around the pit. The pottery assemblage associated suggests an early 11th century abandonment. No direct parallels have been found for the structure but an industrial use seems likely.

Structure 1628

This structure lay in south-west corner of the site, alongside and parallel to Foundation Street, and 2m west of contemporary building 0818. It was rectangular, over 7m long, over 3m wide, and 80cm deep with a flat base and sloping sides. The pit was not lined but there was a thin silt layer, of off-white sand, on its base. The associated pottery assemblage of 1941 sherds included 510 EMED sherds securely dating it to this period. An industrial use is assumed.

The "Norman" Doorway

A drawing made by Henry Davy, on a visit to the site in April 1846, clearly shows a Romanesque doorway on the north face of the north wall of the south range of the LMED Friary cloister, close to where it joined the east range.

This raises the question of whether this range incorporated a pre-existing Norman stone building. Unfortunately, only the northern 4-5m of this range fell within the excavated area and this was crossed by the south corridor of the WW2 air-raid shelter, which had removed the location of the Norman doorway. No evidence of a Norman building was recorded.

Clearly a Norman building cannot be ruled out but the location is peripheral for a Norman stone building, being 35m east of Foundation Street and 14m west of the town bank. It is more likely that the Norman arch was salvaged from the demolition of a building prior to construction of the Friary and reused.

Late Medieval: c.1200-1450 (LMED)

Phase 1 (c.1200-1263)

The Town Defences/Ditch 0251

Ditch 0251 ran from north to south along the very eastern limits of the excavation, adjacent to the Lower Orwell Street frontage. At the north end, up to 6m of the west side of the ditch was exposed on both sides of the eastern precinct wall of the LMED, phase 2 Friary. With the exception of a small trench (0287), to the east of the precinct wall, excavation of the ditch was solely restricted to the two metres wide strip lying on the west side of the wall.

The west edge of the ditch cut the eastern layers of the EMED bank (0311-0313) implying an enlargement of the EMED ditch. No bank layers associated with ditch 0251 had survived the post-medieval (16th-17th century) filling of the ditch and slighting of the upper levels of the bank. Some silt layers (0299, 0330 and 0332) of ditch 0251 survived west of the construction trench for the Friary precinct wall. A single sherd of Ipswich glazed ware in layer 0299, and a sherd of Scarborough I ware in layer 0330, confirm a late 13th/early 14th century date for the silting. Ditch 0251 must be the 'Magna fossata' or great ditch constructed in 1204 with help of the people of Cambridge as recorded in the Ipswich Domesday (Charman 1963).

Building 2368

This cellared building fronted Foundation Street in the north-west corner of the site. The west side had been cut by the footings for the west wall of the friary church and only a one metre strip of the east end of the structure survived.

The cellar walls, c.27cm thick, were extremely fragmentary and comprised flint cobbles in a sharp sand matrix, reduced to 10cm in height. When the west wall of the LMED church was constructed, the cellar was infilled with horizontal layers of fill up to the new floor level of the nave. Eight sherds of London glazed ware were recorded in the backfilling, and an absence of Ipswich glazed ware is consistent with a filling in the 13th century and pre c.1270.

Ditch 2456

This ditch ran in a curve for 12m across the north-western corner of the excavated site. It ran south-west from the edge of the excavated site, 12m east of Foundation Street, and terminated at the east wall of building 2368, which either cut it or was contemporary with it. It was 2.7m wide and 1.5m deep with fairly steep sides and a flat bottom.

The ditch cuts EMED pit 2509 and building 2486. The fill of ditch 2456 had a similar pottery assemblage to building 2386, including London Glazed ware but no Ipswich Glazed ware, indicating that it was also finally filled in the 13th century, prior to c.1270, but earlier than building 2468, if it is cut by it, or contemporary if they abutt each other.

Pits

Pit 0768, in the south-west corner of the site, is cut by the west foundation trench (0520) of the LMED phase 2 friary refectory. The associated pottery assemblage is very similar to that in building 2368 and it was probably filled just prior to the friary occupation.

Phase 2: c.1263-1450: The Dominican Friary

In 1263, Henry III purchased a messuage in Ipswich which was given to and settled by the Friar-Preachers or Blackfriars. In 1265 they were granted a further messuage by the Crown and work on their house and a church dedicated to St.Mary was begun. Further land acquisitions were recorded in 1269, 1309, 1333-34, 1346, 1348-49 and 1350-51. The Friary was suppressed in 1538.

A large amount of documentation exists on the later usage of the site, the most useful of which is Joshua Kirby's plan and prospect of the buildings on the site in 1748.

Despite this, misconceptions about the friary plan continued until R.Gilyard-Beer's

review of the evidence (Gilyard-Beer, 1977), in which he proposed a far more credible plan. In 1976, five trenches were excavated which confirmed the accuracy of his proposed ground plan. Also in 1976, a watching brief on a building contractor's hole (IAS 6902), on the east side of Shirehall Yard revealed a previously unknown friary building (Blatchly and Wade, 1977). The first area excavation on the School Street site (Area 1), in 1979, confirmed the location of the south end of the east range of the north cloister.

The remainder of the site was excavated 1983-85 producing a complete plan of the north half of the friary, which included the church, north claustral ranges, and an "external chamber", built into the town bank. The Friary occupied the whole site west of the town defences.

Pre Construction works for the friary

To achieve a level site, the Friars reduced the ground surface was reduced over the north half of the site and used the spoil to raise levels in the south and infill the EMED ditch (1132) behind the town bank. As a consequence, some walls in the northern part of the friary, such as the chapter house, rested straight on to the natural subsoil, whereas in the south, they had to be cut deeper.

Only four LMED pits (0584, 0624, 0627, 3064) were recorded on the site and they were all large pits in the cloister garth, Their location, in the area least disturbed by earlier pits, and which was not be used for substantial building by the Friars, suggests that they were primarily used as extraction pits for gravel, to be used in the foundation trenches for the friary buildings, and then back-filled with rubbish.

The Church

The Friary Church, at the north end of the site, was 54.6m long and comprised a nave 31.6m long by 15.5m wide, with north and south aisles separated from the nave by six bay arcades, a choir 23m long by 7.5m wide, including a walking space 3.5m wide at its west end, and a tower on the south side.

The church was built predominantly of septaria blocks, with Caen stone the used for quoins and mouldings. Generally, the walls only survived to a fairly low height, providing little evidence for the location of doors and windows. Some moulded stonework was found *in situ*, but most was recovered from the demolition layers, or was unstratified.

The Nave

The north nave wall survived for a 12.8m stretch, 1.55m in height, built into the brick wall of the Unicorn Brewery which formed the north boundary of the site. It stood to a height of 60cm above the tiled nave floor surface and rested on a wider plinth of larger septaria stones. Plaster covering the wall existed down to floor level. The south wall of the nave had been damaged by a series of later trenches cut through it but four changes of build could be discerned. The eastern 7m of wall (1878) was of post Dissolution date. A buttress, at a right angles to the wall, marked the south-west corner of the church. The west wall was 1m wide and constructed predominantly of septaria, faced externally with limestone above a wider plinth. Two responds marked the western ends of the nave arcades. The southern one retained the mortar impression of a semi-circular column base, comprising two separate segments. Outside the building, two buttresses were built to support the wall opposite the ends of the arcading. No trace of a door through the west wall was recorded. Demolition rubble lying on the higher floor level adjacent to the west wall, included window tracery (0912, 0913, 0914), above grave 1950, and a large quantity of stained glass, presumably derived from the demolition of a nearby window.

The north and south aisles were separated from the central nave by six-bay arcades. The best surviving pier bases (3025, 3026 and 3027), were roughly square, indicating a pier spacing of 4.88m(16ft) from centre to centre. The aisles were 3.6m (12ft) wide and the central nave 8.1m (27ft). There were no piers left in situ, but there was an

imprint of a half-circular pier on the westernmost respond of the south aisle, and an apparently octagonal one (3023) on pier base 1947, and half of an octagonal pier was recovered from demolition layers.

The choir was clearly the first friary building to be erected and its west end had closed with temporary walls (1046, 1050, 1053, 1055), which had been demolished and floored over once the nave was joined to it.

Further wall footings (1877, 1879) lay either side of the pier bases between the first and second arcades going westward, indicating the arch across the east end of the nave.

Two roughly square septaria and mortar structures, assumed to be altar bases, lay at the east end of the nave with a walkway, 1.7m wide, between them providing access from the nave to the walking place.

Small areas of the tiled floor surface survived throughout the nave. The earlier tiles were small and, where graves had been cut through them, they were commonly patched with larger tiles.

At the west end of the nave there was evidence for an earlier clay floor, 45cm lower, but only between the west wall and the first pair of columns, the bases of which conformed to the level of this lower surface.

Burial within the nave was dense and presumably spanned most of the active life of the church (Mays 1991). A remnant of a Purbeck marble slab, built into a post-medieval re-use of the west wall, and two Lombardic-style bronze letters found in the demolition layers indicate that some graves had been covered with grave slabs but most were covered with re-laid tiled flooring. Many burials within the nave had evidence of coffins and they were distributed fairly evenly throughout the church, with an apparent concentration in the line in front of the eastern altars, down the centre of the nave, and in the north chapel. Skeleton 1793, in grave 1792, was encased in a lead and placed in a wooden coffin. Only three graves were brick lined (1823, 1881, 1917).

The Walking Place and North Chapel/Porch

The west end of the choir was partitioned off to form a north-south walking place 3-3.5m wide and 7.2m long, with doorways into the tower (and cloister beyond) to the south and the porch/chapel to the north.

Remnants of tiles and tile impressions indicate that this area was probably floored with small sized glazed tiles.

Six burials were laid out in a single line, stretching from south to north from the entrance, and out through the north doorway with two, in the same line, in the northern porch.

The Choir

The choir, 7.43m wide and long, had a seating area at the west end whilst the east end was reserved for the altars.

The east choir wall (1111) was the best surviving feature of the friary church, standing to a height of up to 1.55m, with an angle buttress on the south-east corner. Above the septaria and mortar footing, there were courses of limestone blocks forming the plinth on the outside face of the wall. The contemporary ground surface outside the church was presumably level with the top of the septaria footing and residual traces of the intramural road (1129), to the east of the footing, confirms this. A remnant of a limestone door jamb, in the south wall, indicated a doorway into the vestry. A low bench, or sedilia, of septaria and mortar had been built along the south wall from the west end of the choir to the doorway in to the vestry.

At a later date, low walls were inserted parallel to and restricted to the western halves of both the north and south choir walls, forming resonance chambers 1.5m wide.

A clay floor base ran to within 3.5m of the east chancel wall, where it turned upwards, denoting a rise in level consistent with an altar at the far east end. Only one burial (1377), lying centrally placed within the chancel, definitely pre-dates this surface.

Only five graves survived later damage at the west end but the floor surfaces and eleven graves were intact at the east end. The graves cutting the extended altar were an interesting group comprising either babies or adult women (Mays 1991). Burning of the clay floor surface in both the chancel and adjoining vestry indicate a serious fire which required significant renovation of the interior. In this renovation, the altar area was extended westward, to 7.3m from the east wall.

The Vestry

This building lay in the angle between the chancel and the eastern claustral range. It had been completely rebuilt during the course of its life. The earliest building, 7.4m east-west by 2.5m north-south, had burning on the floor surface, indicating a serious fire which necessitated a rebuilding. In the aftermath of the fire, the south and east walls were demolished and new walls built further east and south of the first building, with a diagonal buttress at the south-east corner. As a result, the northern sacristy window and the original west door (2353) was blocked and a new doorway constructed further to the south (2354) and more central to the building.

The Tower

The tower was 5m square with 1.1-1.2m thick walls, and angle buttresses at the south-west, south-east and north-west corners. There were doorways in the north and south walls with their limestone jambs and internal features substantially intact.

THE NORTH-EAST CLAUSTRAL RANGE

This range, c.31m long by 8.7m wide, ran south from the choir, forming the east side of the north cloister. The function of the two most northerly of the ground floor rooms are certain as they conform to the standard Dominican layout (Gilyard-Beer 1977). Directly south of the chancel was the sacristy, with the chapter house beyond. South of the chapter house, the function of the ground floor rooms is uncertain, but the whole first floor was the dorter.

The north end of the west wall was joined onto the south-east buttress of the tower and the north end of the east wall butted up against the south wall of the choir. Only the most northerly sections of the east and west walls survived later robbing and disturbance but the rest were represented by footing and robber trenches.

The Sacristy

The sacristy, 8m long by 7m wide, comprised the most northerly apartment in the range. The east wall stood to first floor height as part of the 'Standing Wall', with its lower half below the modern ground surface. The wall, above the Victorian ground level had been rebuilt. In the lower part of the wall, the bases of two door and two window apertures were preserved. There was little remaining evidence of the tiled floor surfaces. A grave-shaped feature (1706) in the south-east corner, contained two vertical sarcophagi stones either side of three stacks of decorated glazed tiles.

The Chapter House

The chapter house had two distinct building phases. In its original form, it had been contained within the width of the range as a whole (7m, east-west) but it had been extended east in the second phase to 10.3m. It was 6.6m north-south in both phases. Much of the west and all of the south walls had been robbed. The Kirby (1748) and Davy (1846) elevations of the west wall show that it had a central doorway with windows on both sides, which was the standard arrangement for Dominican chapter houses.

The tiled floor, which survived over much of the western two thirds, ended in a distinct north-south line 7m from the west wall, corresponding to the original east wall line. The remnant of a low wall on the same line at the north end, indicates a raised floor level, for the remaining 3.2m within the eastward extension. The original tile floor, composed of smaller tiles, had been replaced with larger tiles over seven graves.,

South end of east range

Nothing remained of the southern 15m of this range. The Kirby plan (1748) shows that it contained two rooms both with medieval doorways onto the east cloister walkway. The northern room appears to have a chimney stack projecting from the east wall and might have acted as the warming room for the dorter above. A lead pipe trench (0059) crossed the south end of the south room. It must have originated from building 2947 to the east with the speculated water tank/tower (2887) adjacent. It wasn't located further west but would have run down the south cloister walkway towards the refectory and domestic buildings.

The Rere-Dorter Range

A complex of three structures, to the south-east of the of the north cloister, appears to have functioned as a rere-dorter.

Building 2947

This building ran eastwards from and at right angles to the south end of the east range. The west end of the building and the south-east corner of the east range had both been removed by the WW2 air-raid shelter destroying the stratigraphic relationship between the two buildings.

The building was rectangular with wall footing trenches on the north, east and south sides, with fragments of septaria walls upon them. The south trench was a later recut of a parallel footing to the south.

Adjacent to the building, the fill was a moisture retaining light greyish brown silt consistent with human waste and similar to the fill in the cess tank of building 2946. The floor of building 2947 had been sunk below ground level, and some remnants of a possible clay floor were found on the base. The location adjacent to the dorter in the east range and the organic residue on the sunken floor is highly suggestive of a rere-dorter. This use of the building appears to cease in the late 15th century when the building had been narrowed and probably joined to the 'external chamber'.

Structure 2887

A solid block of flint and mortar approximately 2.1m x 1.95m and 60cm thick was removed from the area to the north of building 2947 during machining of the site. This was found to have sat on a much larger rectangular area of footing (2887) measuring some 4m x 2.6m. The massive foundation must imply that whatever structure was built on it needed to carry considerable weight, such as a tower. Its location might suggest that it held a water tank or water tower servicing the reredorter and possibly other friary buildings.. A water holding tank at first floor height could have collected rainwater from adjacent roofs and supplied water by gravity. The latest pottery associated implied a late 13th/14th century date of construction.

Building 2946 (the external chamber)

In its first phase, this was a simple north-south rectangular building, parallel to the north-east range, and presumably two-storied. It was over 11m long (the south wall was not located within the excavated area) by 4.4m wide. The walls were septaria blocks, dressed on both the external north and west and all inside faces, with limestone quoins. The outside face of the east wall was undressed septaria blocks, confirming that the building was built into the western slope of the LMED town bank and would not have been visible. The only recorded doorway, in the north wall, had a threshold 50cm above the inside clay floor level. The floors were associated with 46 LMED glazed sherds and six stoneware sherds suggesting that it was in use by the late 14th/early 15th century.

The Friars were allowed to construct an external chamber extending from their dormitory to the dyke of the town in 1275 (Charman 1963, 301-2). In 1349, the Corporation granted them a piece of land 123ft long abutting 'super medium fonce muri nostri communis' provided that the Friars should maintain the walls and also the two gates at the north and south of the priory to allow free passage for the Townspeople with their horses and carts in time of trouble (Charman 1963, 302). This implies that the Friars had wished to construct a chamber into the town bank from early in their occupancy of the site but that it wasn't possible until after 1349.

Building 2946 is almost certainly the 'external chamber' referred to in the documents but the function of the building in its first phase is uncertain.

THE SOUTH CLAUSTRAL RANGE

Only the north wall and traces of floor layers of this range lay within the excavated area.

Wall foundation trenches were recorded running for over 33.5m east-west, just north of the south edge of excavation. This trench also formed the foundation for the south wall of the north-east range and the south wall of the west range (refectory). On the basis of the few surviving fragments, which had survived robbing, the wall was 80cm wide on a plinth up to 1.2m wide. Two areas of mortar floor surface on clay lay south of wall stub 0588. One short length of wall (0040) survived of the east end wall of the range. This location of the south range does not agree with Gilyard-Beer's proposed plan (Gilyard-Beer 1977, 17), which places it further north.

North Cloister

The north cloister was 26m north-south by 19.2m east-west with evidence for roofed walkways against the south and east ranges, leaving a garth 23.5m by 15m.

The East and North Walks

A robbing trench, running for 9.5m south of the nave and two wall fragments, parallel to the east range, defined a roofed walk at least 3.8m wide. As the wall line crosses graves 1460 and 1493 at the north end, the covered way was clearly not an original feature and presumably replaced a paved walk on the east and north sides of the garth. A single line of thirteen graves stretched south for 8.6m from the entrance to the tower along the east cloister walk. A further ten graves lay in a 2m corridor on the south side of the nave presumably buried under an un-roofed but paved north walkway. After a break, where the parlour joins the nave, a further three graves were found just south of the nave, to the west of the parlour.

The South Walk

A 5m length of wall and a linear band of mortar, parallel to and north of the north wall of the south range, indicated a south cloister walk, 2.1m wide. Two small areas of mortar floor base lay south of wall. There were nine graves, clustered in two groups: five in the eastern group and four in the western group. All were adult males (Mays 1991), predominantly laid out with their hands folded across their chest or stomach.

THE WEST CLAUSTRAL RANGE

The west caustral range comprised the refectory with what was probably a parlour to the north (Gilyard-Beer 1977).

The Parlour

This building, roughly 9m east-west by 4m north-south, was defined by two north south footing trenches and remnants of a south footing trench. A stub of the east wall survived, where it abutted a buttress at the mid point of the south nave wall. In south-west corner, there were remnants of the south wall and an angle buttress which had been pierced by a later soakaway.

The Refectory

All of this building, with internal dimensions of c.21m by 6m, lay within the site, apart from most of the south wall footing. Unfortunately post-demolition grading of the site had removed the demolition layers and upper levels of the medieval and post medieval stratigraphy and the truncation increased from north to south. Even at the north end of the building, only about 15cm of vertical stratigraphy remained and the sequence was difficult to resolve without the aid of the useful plan made by Kirby in 1748, some 19 years before the demolition of the building.

Only three fragments of the external walls survived robbing along the west wall line, but substantial footing trenches indicated the location of the walls.

There was a gap of 10-20cm between both the east and west wall footing trenches and the south wall of the parlour, indicating that the refectory had been joined on to a

pre-existing parlour. No relationship could be established between the east and west foundation trenches and that underlying the south wall or that between the south foundation trench and that of the north wall of the south range which was roughly on the same east-west line to the east.

There were two phases recorded in the east and west footing trench indicating a modification of the original structure.

In its first phase, the refectory was a simple rectangular building and, in the second phase, both east and west walls were widened on the outer face. The widening on the west foundation trench included three western projections indicating the projecting pulpit, at the north (0698) and two buttresses to the south (0716, 0815). The widened eastern trench has two projections indicating buttresses (0692, 0706).

The earliest floor was clay with two areas of burning indicating hearths in the centre of the building and towards the north. A second clay floor survived above the earlier floor in the northern half of the building and was overlain by a tiled floor on a bed of mortar, on a clay layer.

Precinct Wall

The Friary precinct was surrounded by a boundary wall. The west precinct wall undoubtedly lies under the pavement on the east side of Foundation Street. The east wall (1681) was exposed for 42m, running north-south along the east edge of the site, built into the west edge of the LMED town ditch (0251). It had been previously recorded further south in 1959 (West 1963).

The construction trench for the wall was cut into layers of silt on the west side of ditch 0251 and then backfilled on the west side of the wall. The northern 18m of the septaria wall was straight, with a change in orientation at a small buttress or mock turret (1693), which lay 7 metres south of the northern limit of excavation. This was semi-circular on its outer face, with a triangular indentation to the rear.

At the south end of this section, there was a butt joint and change in build. This section of wall was fractionally wider on its inner face and composed of rounded cobbles set into a mortar matrix, interspersed with horizontal bands of pintile. Although this change from septaria to flint continued for 24m to the south limit of the excavation, a reversion to a septaria wall appears to have occurred before reaching West's 1959 trench, further to the south (West 1963). This section of wall is undoubtedly a late or post-friary rebuild, presumably after a collapse of the original wall.

The Intramural Road (1129)

A gravelled road surface, 4m wide, lay between the east end of the church and the town bank. Although no road surface was located further south, its existence is evidenced by the gap between the south-east range and external chamber. This intramural road ran between the north and south gates of the friary.

Structure 3156 (Builders compound?)

A complex of features, which lay close to Foundation Street, in the south-west corner edge of the site, was probably associated with the friary construction works. It comprised an L-shaped strip of mortar (0554), surrounding a clay layer (0806) with small stones/gravel embedded in it and an area of limestone chippings and mortar (0551) on its east side. This was bordered on the north side by a line of eight postholes running east, and predating the refectory.

The complex of features all have the appearance of a building contractor's compound, where mortar was mixed and stone carved. The post line could be the north side of a timber shed or a boundary fence.

Pit/tank 1534

This pit/tank lay in the south-west corner of the site just north of the builders yard (3156). It was over 8.4m from east to west (the west end was outside the excavated area), by 3.8m from north to south, with sloping sides, and 1.1m deep. The pottery

assemblage indicates that it was filled in the late 13th or 14th century. Its proximity to complex 3156 may indicate a pond for the builders.

Discussion: the medieval Friary

The whole church, and ranges on all four sides of the north cloister, appears to have been built by 1330, and probably earlier, based on the architectural fragments which were recovered (Samuel 1992). There were only 12 fragments in the Early English style (to 1275) and the bulk were in the Decorative style (1250-1330) with only 8 in the Perpendicular or Tudor style.

The first buildings to be erected, after the arrival of the friars in 1263, were the choir and the tower to the south. In the second phase, the nave was built, with north and south aisles either side of six bay arcades. It is highly likely that the piers alternated between circular and octagonal along each arcade. This combination is typical of late 13th/14th century churches of which Hintlesham, near Ipswich is a good example, of the mid 13th century (Haward 1993, 120-121, 258-259). The joining of the choir to the nave involved the demolition of the temporary west end walls of the choir. It was also at this stage that the west 3.8m of the choir was partitioned off to form the walking place.

No evidence was revealed in excavation to suggest that the construction of the east range was phased. Certainly work did not commence on the main body of the range until after the construction of the church as the west sacristy wall abutted the south side of the tower. At a later phase, the chapter house was extended eastward, projecting out from the eastern wall of the north-east range.

No relationship between the south-east wing (2947) and the main body of the range was ascertained.

Two hundred and sixty five burials contemporary with or later than the occupancy of the friary were recovered from the excavated area. The majority were located within the church, with the others either in the cloister walks or chapter house. A watching brief in the cellars of the ex-Unicorn Brewery building in 1974 (IAS 4702) also indicated the former existence of a burial ground to the north of the church.

The north cloister had walkways on the north, south and east sides but only the east and south walkways were roofed. All three walkways had underlying burials. There were 10 burials in the north walkway, 13 in the eastern, and in the southern. A further 3 burials were recorded west of the parlour and the south of the nave. Two of the burials in the north walk were cut by robbing trench of the wall of the east walk indicating that the roofing was a later phase. There was no evidence for a west walk alongside the refectory. Within the the cloister garth, there was no evidence for any activity after the very early pit digging associated with the friary construction.

Late Medieval Transitional: c.1450-1600 (LMT)

Pre Dissolution (c.1450-1538)

Very few modifications to the Friary can be identified from the archaeological evidence between 1450 and 1538 when it was dissolved.

The south-west buttress of the parlour had been pierced by the insertion of a rectangular brick and septaria lined soakaway pit (1610), presumably taking rain water from the roof of both the parlour and refectory. The backfilling of the pit was associated with LMT pottery which could indicate either a pre or post-dissolution date for its abandonment.

Building 2946 (The External Chamber/Reredorter)

In this period, building 2946 was converted into a reredorter with a ground floor garderobe, in a north chamber, and a large cess tank inserted in the floor of the newly created south chamber. Presumably, the privies were in a line on the first floor over the ground floor cess tank. Access to clean out the cess tank was via steps at the south end of the tank and a (presumed) doorway in the south wall. At some point the doorway in the north chamber was blocked and its walls were plastered.

The building was divided into the two chambers by an east-west wall with a garderobe built into it. A drain from the garderobe ran south-west through the wall to

drain into the south chamber, which had a central linear tank/cess pit, lined by two parallel north-south walls, built in a trench, c.35cm deep, cut through the floor surface of the phase 1 building.

A possible bottom step lay at the south end of the tank and may indicate the access to the tank for periodic cleaning and also suggests a doorway in the mid point of a south wall just south of the excavated area.

The lack of any foundation between this building and building 2947 to the west and the plaster rendering on the outside face of the west wall confirms that the building was not joined to it at ground level but it is highly likely that they were joined at first floor level. This allowed the Friars easy access from their dormitory to the latrines and unimpeded access along the intramural road running along the inside of the LMED town defences. In this period, building 2946 either augmented or more likely superceded the original latrine facilities in building 2947 to the west.

The dating evidence for this phase comes from the pottery in the backfill behind the inserted tank walls, which was 5 LMT sherds. As it is highly unlikely to be post Dissolution, a date in the late 15th or very early 16th century is likely.

The Dissolution onwards (1538-c.1600)

The church, parlour and vestry were certainly demolished soon after the Dissolution in 1538 but the other friary buildings remained and were put to alternate uses.

The Church

A general spread of demolition material (0903), up to 60cm thick, was found sealing the remnants of the upper floor surfaces throughout the church. The rubble mostly consisted of loose mortar and small fragments of septaria and pintile, but included remnants of moulded stonework and window glass. Near the west end of the nave, layer 0915 contained a large quantity of stained glass and some moulded window tracery (0912, 0913, 0914). From its location it would appear to have derived from the west window.

A shallow, circular pit (1898), 1.1m in diameter and 40cm deep, towards the centre of the nave and cutting floor level 1048, contained ash and lead dross in its lower layers. Lead stripped from windows was presumably melted down before being removed from site. The top layers of the pit were filled with demolition debris.

Cloister Garth

8 large pits in the garth belonged to this period (0578, 0583, 0622, 1487, 1587, 1588, 3075, 3093). They were filled with demolition rubble, mainly broken roof tile, which must relate to the church, vestry and parlour as these were the only buildings demolished during this period. The roof tiles included glazed ridge tiles with crest decoration from 0578 and 3075.

Water Management

During the 16th century a system for the collection and distribution of rain water was constructed, consisting of three large tanks connected by pipes, presumably so that overflow from one went to the next one further south (downhill).

The tanks presumably supplied fresh water to Christ's Hospital which occupied the south claustral range, south of the excavated site, after the Dissolution.

Tank 1486

This tank, 3.7m long by 2.4m wide, lay on the south side of the nave wall and was supplied by pipe trench 1051, which ran for 13m north-south across the nave. A small stretch of pipe trench leaves the south end of the tank and is in line with a short stretch of trench (1550) 10m south which, if continued, would reach tank 0638. Pipe trench 1051 was associated with 2 LMT sherds and tank 1486 with 11 PMED sherds indicating that it was abandoned after 1600.

Tank 0585

This tank, 5.2m long by 3m wide, lay just west of centre at the south end of the cloister garth. Only a remnant of its internal wall survived at the west end, built of

mortared stone set in clay with a rendered inside face. The final filling was dated by 3 LMT pottery sherds. It was supplied by three pipe trenches (0650 collecting rain water from the refectory roof, 0594 from the north-east range and 0643, connecting with tank 0638).

Tank 0638

This tank, set in a pit over 2m long by 3.5m wide and 45cm deep, lay at the west end of the south cloister walk, at its junction with the refectory. The inner face was brick lined and rendered with the space behind filled with rounded flints set into a clay lining. Located as it was across the width of the cloister walk, blocking access into the refectory, it must be post Dissolution. Pipe trench 0643 appears to connect it with tank 0585.

Post Medieval: c.1600-1900 (PMed)

Although generally minor, certain structural changes to the remaining Friary buildings were recorded in excavation.

The Refectory Schoolroom

Ipswich Grammar School moved its schoolroom into the refectory building, from Felaw's House, across the road, by 1614 (or possibly 1612). The schoolroom remained here until 1767, when it moved into the north-east range (Blatchly 2003, 86-89). The excavation provided detailed evidence of the modifications.

A wooden dais, c1.5m wide, was constructed around the perimeter of the inside walls to take a row of elevated seating. Low walls, predominantly of flint and mortar, were built along the inner edge of the dais onto which the joists for the raised flooring rested. These walls had vertical posts at 2.4m intervals, to support furniture of that length, and 1m gaps to allow access from the centre of the room. There were three sets of two desks/forms in the both rows. The walls only survived later truncation in the north half of the building but the postholes survived throughout.

At the north end of the room there were two parallel dwarf walls, probably the bases for a double dais at the north end. The rear wall also appears to have a vertical timber screen on it, for the length of the dais only whereas the earlier posthole line runs all the way across the north wall and is presumably represents an earlier screen in front of the north wall.

At the south end there was a further small dais.

A 17th century token (66/4801/N), found above dwarf wall 0561, presumably dropped through cracks between the floorboards above.

The medieval tiled floor surface of the refectory respected the edge of the low walls and some border tiles were found where the tiled floor met the dais and the floor and it may have continued in use by the school. There certainly had been another floor surface on top of the tiled floor as it was covered in mortar, implying a replacement floor which had been robbed during demolition of the building in 1767.

The water supply for the school was provided by a pipe in trench 1870, which ran 15m north-south across the demolished nave, terminating at the refectory.

The North East Range

Ipswich Grammar School moved into the north-east range in 1767 using the first floor (ex friars dorter) as a schoolroom, and the ground floor sacristy as their library (Blatchly 2003). The Kirby plan and elevation indicates that a new doorway was inserted to gain access to the sacristy and that a staircase to access the first floor was built against the north-west corner of the range. A rectangular (2m x 1.5m) slab of mortared flint (0909), almost certainly the base of a new staircase, was found in the excavation abutting the base of north-south flint and mortar wall (0908), 50cm wide and 5.6m long, which created an enclosed yard area to the north of the range.

To the east of wall 0908, the demolition of the church had left the east wall of the choir standing to 1.55m high so that it could be re-used as a boundary wall. At the south end of the wall, the buttress had been partially rebuilt in brick and septaria,

ending in a corner stone composed of a large block of sarcen stone. A poorly consolidated flint and mortar wall (1110), with shallow footings, abutting the rebuilt corner, ran 6m eastward, forming the northern property boundary of this yard to the north and east of the range, which is also shown on the Ogilby map of 1674. The yard was presumably used by occupants of the range and probably as a yard for the Bridewell, which is shown occupying the two southern ground floor rooms of the north-east range on Kirby's plan (1748).

This use of the yard is confirmed by two post-Dissolution burials (1163, 1164), located in the yard, just east of the north-east corner of the range, which must be Bridewell casualties. Coffin nails were retrieved from the filling of both, but no other traces of coffins.

The Bridewell had moved to the east range of the south cloister by 1813 and a plan of the site at that time by John Bransby clearly shows a 'Bridewell Yard' east of that building. It was in this location that, in 1959, West excavated two intact burials and a number of disturbed burials (West 1963, 297).

The school moved out to its current site in Henley Road in 1852 and the north-east range was demolished soon after.

The Cloister Garth

Only four pits of this date lay in the cloister garth. Pits 0606 and 1514 contained large quantities of demolition debris, derived from the claustral buildings.

The External Chamber

This building may have survived demolition at the Dissolution but was certainly demolished by the early 17th century.

The filling of the north and south cells of this building differed and the north cell may have survived longer than the south chamber.

The 19th century redevelopment

After the last of the friary buildings (the east claustral range) was finally demolished c.1852, the site was redeveloped. The First Edition OS map (1884) shows the newly laid out School Street and Tooley Street, linking up with Shirehall Yard to the east, and the area developed with terraced housing and Christ's Hospital School (constructed c. 1861).

Brick building remains found in the excavation were fragmentary, as most of the footings were shallow and had been cleared away with the machining of the site. The exception was a row of cellars on the south side of School Street. Sewer trench 2651, inserted in 1893 under School Street, cut through the south-west corner of the nave and destroyed some graves in the Chapter House, before exiting through a hole in the east precinct wall. Other service trenches below the street were shallower and did little damage.

Footings for Christ's Hospital School, constructed on the north side of School Street in c.1861, inflicted a limited degree of damage to some of the column bases between the nave and aisles, as well as cutting a large trench through the west wall of the tower. Because the graves within the church were buried deeper than the school footings, damage to the underlying deposits was fairly limited.

The Standing Wall (2351/2352)

Prior to the excavation, this was the only above ground wall of the Friary and was assumed to be entire medieval. It had been scheduled as an Ancient Monument (SAM32) in 1949. The confirmation in 1976 of the friary plan, proposed by Gilyard-Beer, cast doubt on its authenticity. On the 1884 OS map it is shown as the eastern boundary of the playground belonging to Christ Hospital School. The excavation demonstrated that it was mainly a Victorian creation, constructed to reflect a friary theme. The south half was a rebuilding of the Sacristy wall above ground level with the tops of the genuine arches being recreated, but less care was taken over the east side, where the lack of authenticity is clear.

The north half of the wall was totally artificial. Although built of septaria and mortar, it rested on a concrete footing below the Victorian ground level. Both halves of the wall contained four arches, using moulded limestone blocks derived from the demolition of the friary. The rear, eastern elevation of the north half of the wall was totally faced with brick.

At some time after 1884, a brick wall had been built a few feet parallel to its west side presumably to protect the wall from damage.

English Heritage gave permission for the north half of the wall to be demolished during the 1983-85 excavation.

Following the excavation, the walls of the friary church and the north end of the east claustral range were consolidated and left exposed as a monument, with a clear view from west to east, along the length of the church.

Modern

Two air-raid shelters were constructed to the south of School Street, during World War II. The largest (0017) was made of four corridors, forming a square, with entrances at the corners. The walls were brick with a reinforced concrete slab roof. A second shelter (0600), comprising a single corridor with entrances at its north and south ends, lay 13m to the west.

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Recommendations

Further analysis.

- The MLS iron working complex merits full analysis along with similar evidence from other sites.
- Samuel recommends that the Decorative style stone architectural dressings associated with the Friary merit detailed study for their art historical value. Groups of this period are rare and this group is of high quality, comparable with the better French work of the period. There is good reason to link such work in this period with the king's mason, Robert of Beverley.

Publication

- Clearly this site merits full publication. The Blackfriars should be extracted and published in a volume with the Whitefriars (Buttermarket site) and the evidence for the Greyfriars.

Keith Wade
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