

Report № 1739

**An Archaeological Evaluation
at
1–3 Market Hill, Saffron Walden, Essex**

HER SW 54



Peter Eric Crawley

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BAU 1739

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Project checklist		Date
Project overseen by	David Whitmore	
Draft complete	Peter Crawley	21/05/2008
Graphics complete	Michael Feather	27/05/2008
Edit complete	Richard Hoggett	27/05/2008
Signed off	Andy Hutcheson	04/06/2008

NAU Archaeology
Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

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Location: 1–3 Market Hill, Saffron Walden
District: Uttlesford, Essex
Grid Ref.: TL 5385 3854
HER No.: SW 54
Date of fieldwork: 19–23 November 2007 & 25 February–31 March 2008

Summary

In November 2007 NAU Archaeology undertook a single trench evaluation on a plot of land at the rear of 1–3 Market Hill, Saffron Walden. The work was undertaken in the historic centre of the town, close to the present market. Five relatively large pits were uncovered within the trench which dated to the post-medieval period. All of the pits were probably chalk quarry pits, perhaps used during the 16th–18th centuries. Four small probable post-holes were found on the site, although they appeared to form no coherent pattern and some of them truncated the fills of the quarry pits. The lack of any medieval pottery may indicate that the entire area had been truncated prior to the post-medieval development of the area.

Following the evaluation a watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the installation of a tower crane and the levelling of an area prior to the construction of a warehouse. A possible ditch, a probable medieval quarry pit and two undated wells were uncovered, amongst other more recent quarry pits. The wells had been capped in the 20th century. A part of the wall of the listed building (1–3 Market Hill) was also recorded during the watching brief.

1.0 Introduction (Figs. 1 and 2).

The site was situated on a relatively small plot of land at the rear of 1–3 Market Hill, Saffron Walden. The single trench was designed to evaluate 32m², around 5% of the proposed development area.

The fieldwork and this report were funded by Monument Group and the work was instigated by Monument Group manager Mike Barnes. This programme of archaeological work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Essex County Council Historic Environment Management Team (Richard Havis, October 2007). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref: BAU1739/DW).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority regarding the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the relevant museum in line with guidance from the Historic Environment Branch of Essex County Council. The relevant policy on archiving standards will be followed in preparing the archive.



Figure 1 Site location

Local Authority No. 100019340

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2.0 Geology and Topography

Saffron Walden lies on part of the low, drift-covered escarpment which marks an extension of the Chiltern Hills into East Anglia, and is contained within the drainage basin of the upper course of the River Cam. Its tributaries in the Walden area have cut deeply to expose the chalk which elsewhere underlies thick deposits of glacial drift. The site itself is situated on one of these exposed chalk ridges. There was a mixture of 'bright' chalk natural and in places the chalk, where it was weathered, was mixed with a sticky light grey clay (Medleycott 1999, 3 and Essex RIGS Group).

The drainage on the site was of average quality, possibly due to the site being situated towards the base of Market Hill. The soils encountered during the evaluation were generally clayey silt and no true topsoil was present, due to the urban nature of the site. Many of the more recent deposits had been disrupted by late 19th- and early 20th-century drainage. The upper, machined deposits varied in depth from 0.70m to 0.50m. A temporary bench-mark placed immediately next to the site had a value of 56.34m OD.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric and Roman period

There is some archaeological evidence of early, scattered prehistoric activity around Saffron Walden in the form of Neolithic, Bronze Age and 'Beaker pottery'. There are notable Iron Age sites known to be situated around the town, such as the Ring Hills camp. During the Roman period the main local centre of activity was at nearby Chesterford, although in a western section of Battle Ditches at Saffron Walden, over 200 Roman graves were found (Bassett 1982, 5).

Early medieval period

The area seems to have been little settled between the Roman period and the Middle to Late Saxon period when there was a small Saxon settlement in the south-west quadrant of the present town. A Saxon cemetery was excavated in 1876 and the vast majority of the burials were thought to be Christian. There is then a gap in the archaeological evidence until the Norman Conquest (Bassett 1982 pp 9-14). The town is first mentioned in Domesday Book as *Waldena*, 'valley of the Britons or Serfs'. The Mandevilles were granted the town of Saffron Walden which became the centre of their Essex and Suffolk holdings and they built a castle on a defensible spur of chalk (Bury Hill) at the confluence between two streams. The prosperity of the settlement was further increased in 1141 when the Mandeville family received the right to move the main local market from Newport to Saffron Walden. At the same time a priory belonging to the Benedictine order was built on the site that is now occupied by Audley End House. By 1190 the establishment had become an abbey (Medleycott 1999, 15–16).

Late medieval/Post-medieval period

By 1328 the settlement was referred to as Chipping Walden. Saffron Walden is the only town in the country to be closely associated the crop saffron. Saffron was in great demand for the woollen industry and brought wealth to the town. At the height of its prosperity the industry extended across the surrounding countryside. The town was first called Saffron Walden in 1582. The church also benefited

greatly from this commodity as spare gardens were used to grow saffron to provide money for the church.

The De Bohuns family acquired the town in the 13th century and a large town enclosure was laid out. This activity may date to the time a new charter was granted (Medlycott 1999, 16). The enclosure ditches were known as the Battle or Repell ditches and they enclosed an area of around 20 hectares. New streets were laid out in the newly delineated town, in particular the High street and Gold Street, and the new market place. By the 13th century the centre of the town was focussed around King and Market Streets, Mercers' and Butchers' and Drapers' Rows (Medlycott 1999, 16–17).

Recent Archaeological Work

A search of the relevant HER information was undertaken using the <http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk> online resource. The most relevant HER records to this work pertained to the Market Row/Hill Street site (EHER 1932–3). Five small trenches were excavated to the south of the 13th-century marketplace. A series of stone surfaces probably belonging to the earlier market place were revealed. The southern part of the marketplace was built over in the 14th century and in the 15th or 16th century a framed and jettied house was constructed to the east of the excavations (Medleycott 1999, 6).

4.0 Methodology (Plates 1, 2 and 3)

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that 32m² (around 5% of the development area) be sample excavated by trial trench. It was deemed not unsafe to go within 2m of the walls at the edge of the site and this reduced the length of the trench from 18m to 16m. This slightly affected the overall percentage of the sample excavation.

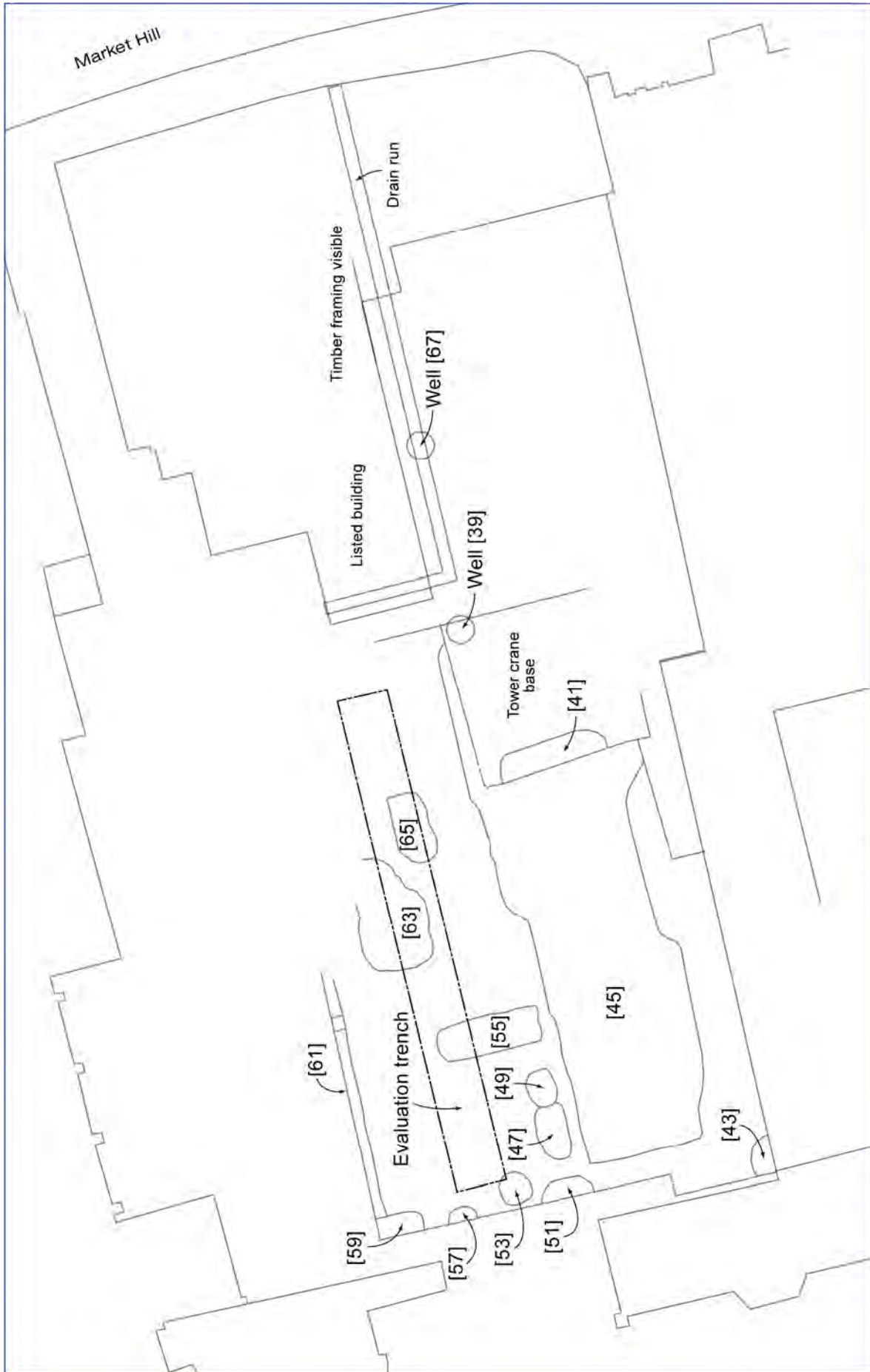
Machine excavation was carried out with a small 1.5-tonne, tracked, hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. During machining, the line of the trench was moved slightly to the north to accommodate wall [33] and use it as the southern edge of the trench.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal-detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern were retained for inspection.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

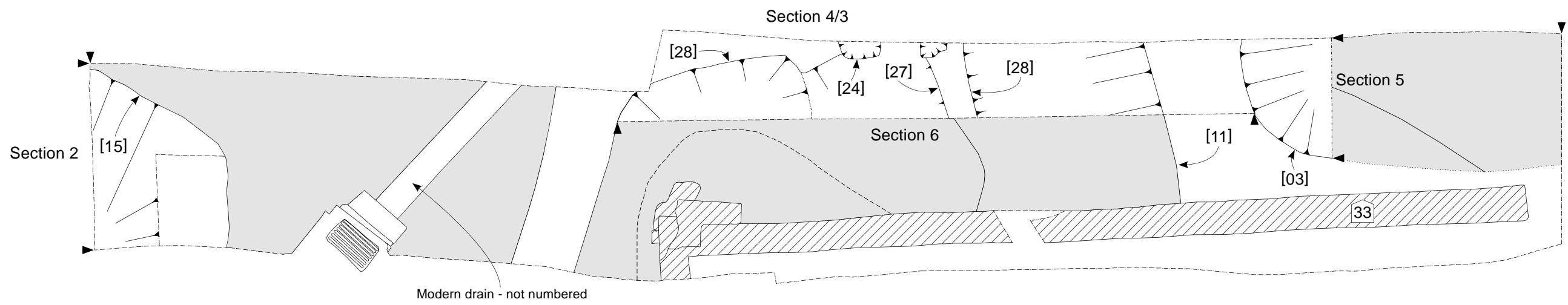
The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark with a value of 59.44m, located at the centre of Emson Drive, linked to the Market Square in Saffron Walden.

No environmental samples were taken.



0 10m

Figure 2 Trench location



0 5m

Figure 3 Trench plan

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in generally fine, but cool, weather. Any rain was brief though the ground remained sticky through the duration of the project.

As part of the project brief, a further period of watching brief was to be undertaken following from the evaluation. There were four distinct elements to the watching brief: monitoring groundworks prior to the installation of a tower crane, groundworks prior to the construction of a warehouse, observation of a new drain run and an examination of part of the historic building.

5.0 Results (Figs 2, 3, 4 and 5)

5.1 The Evaluation

The two earliest deposits encountered in the trench were [21] and [35]. The first of these, [21], was a light greenish-grey clayey silt and crushed chalk mixture. It was observed towards the centre of the trench at the base of the sequence (Fig. 6). The layer was 0.16m thick where it had not been truncated. At the western end of the trench was a naturally occurring hollow in the chalk which contained a similar chalky and silty clay ([35]). The layer contained more chalk than [21] and had probably accumulated naturally in the hollow.

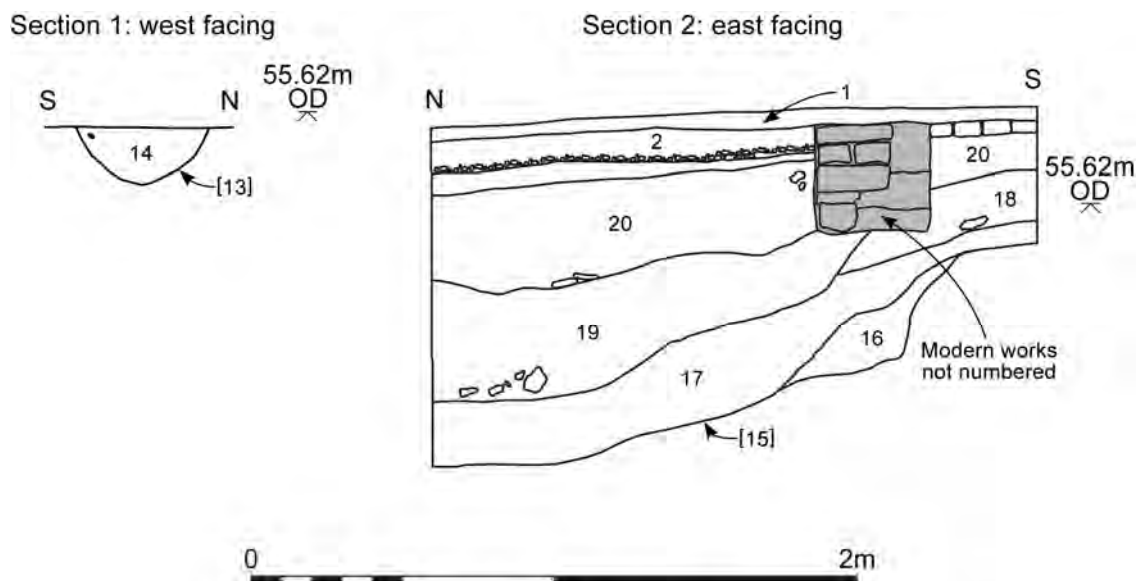


Figure 4 Sections 1 and 2

It was only located in the hollow and was 0.30m thick. Above [35] and confined to the western end of the trench was a relatively thick layer of light brown silty clay ([34]) which contained occasional chalk flecks and small flints. It was 0.44m at its thickest and was observed to be truncated by pit [15]. Layer [34] was probably an original subsoil which would have covered the entire trench, but which had been truncated by drain [22]. It was probably naturally deposited over a long period of time. At the western end of the trench, layer [34] was seen to have been cut by a large pit [15] (Plate 4). The pit was fairly irregular in appearance with undulating uneven sides and a relatively shallow angle of slope. This pit has a sufficiently defined profile to have been a deliberately dug feature. The feature was interpreted as a quarry pit. It contained 5 distinct fills, which indicated that it had

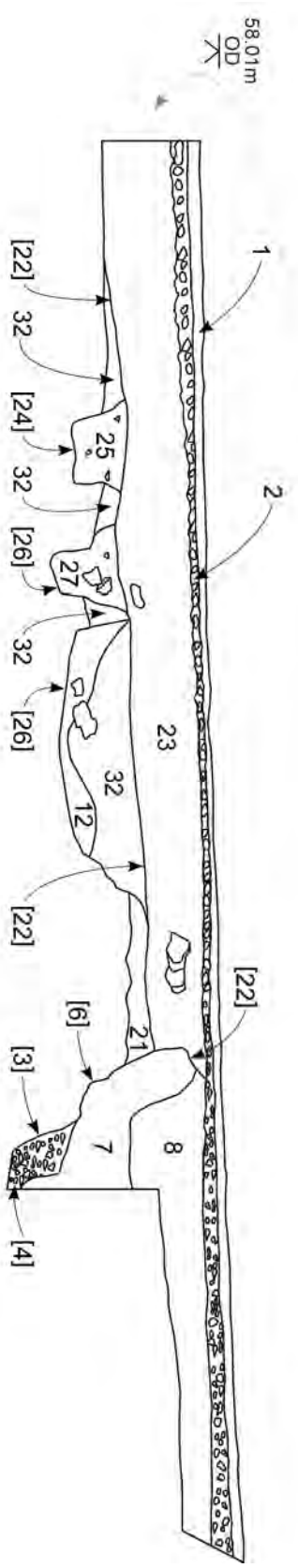
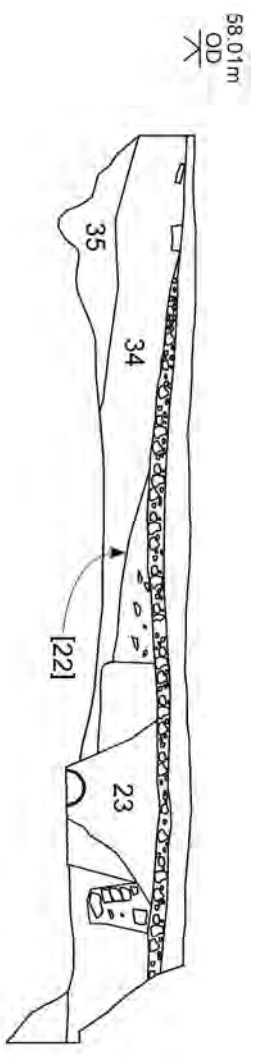


Figure 5 Section 4, south facing

been deliberately backfilled in stages. The lowest of these was a friable light orangey-brown clayey silt [16] which included occasional chalk fragments and occasional small sub-round and sub-angular stones 1–20mm. It was observed lying on the northern side of the pit. The next fill in the sequence was a friable light orangey-brown clayey silt [17] which contained frequent chalk fragments and flecks and occasional gravel. It was 0.30m thick. A very similar layer [18] of a darker shade was observed higher on the northern side of the pit and it was 0.20m thick. At the centre of the pit was fill [19] which was 0.34m deep. It was composed of a friable light orangey-brown clayey silt with moderate chalk inclusions and occasional flints. The upper layer within the pit [20] was composed of a mid-brown clayey silt which included small and medium-sized flints and late/post-medieval tile fragments. Layer [20] was observed to extend over several metres at the western

end of the trench. There was a potsherd within the deposit which dated from the 16th–18th century.

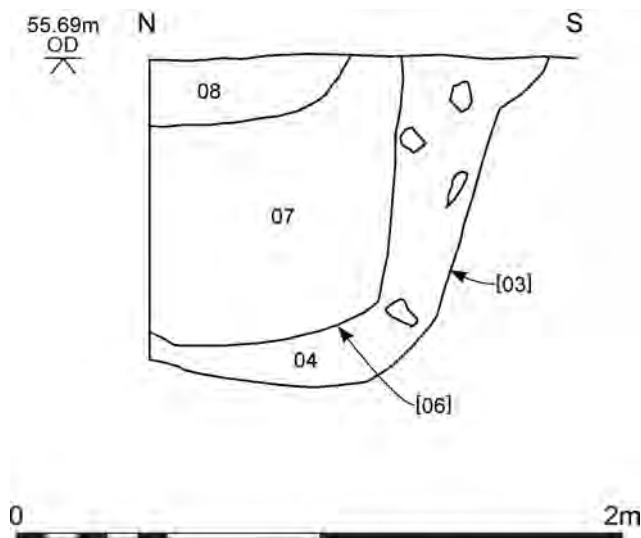


Figure 6 Section 5, west facing

At the western end of the trench was possible post-hole [13], observed cutting the natural chalk. It was 0.18m deep and 0.44m in diameter. It had a regular appearance with concave base. Its single fill [14] was composed of a friable light brown clayey silt which contained small fragments and flecks of chalk and 16th–17th-century pottery.

(Figs 6 and 7; Plates 5, 6 and 7)

At the central part of the trench two pits truncated deposit [21]. The most easterly of them [11] had a regular appearance with a concave base and sides, a non perceptible break of slope at the base and a gradual break of slope at the top. It was 0.60m thick and had two fills. The primary fill was a light greenish-grey clayey silt and crushed chalk mixture [12]. It held frequent small chalk fragments and occasional flints. The fill was 0.30m thick and contained one very abraded Prehistoric potsherd amongst tile fragments of late and post-medieval date. The second fill [36] was of a greener shade, more homogenous and with less inclusions and was 0.40m thick.

The pit was truncated by a more extensive pit on its western side [28]. Pit [28] was more irregular in appearance and was 0.70m deep, becoming shallower on its eastern side. The base of the pit and the majority of its sides were concave. The pit had four fills. The primary fill [31] was a mid-grey clayey silt which held frequent amounts of small and medium sized flints. The fill was 0.20m thick and was situated in the deepest part of the pit. A similar deposit was located in the eastern half of the pit [29] although it contained a higher proportion of silt and had a more greenish hue. It was confined to the shallower part of the pit and was 0.34m thick. The third fill [30] situated at the central part of the pit, which was again of similar composition to [31] except that it was a greener shade and had virtually no

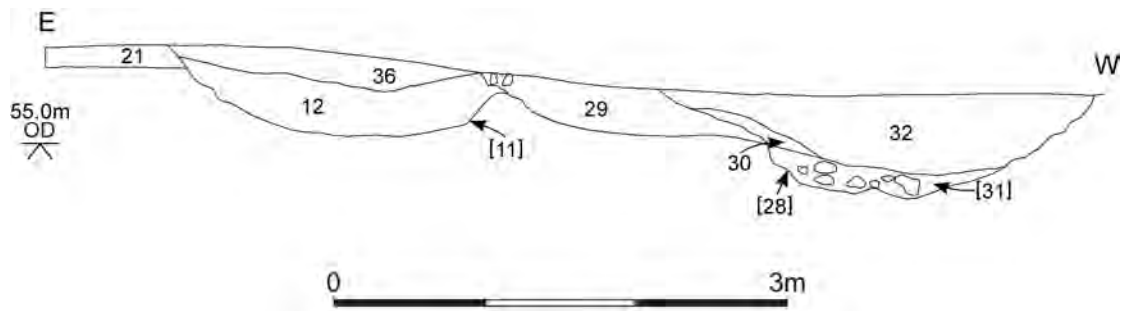


Figure 7 Section 6, north facing

inclusions. The last fill was a thick (0.52m) mid-grey clayey silt [32] which contained frequent chalk flecks and fragments, giving it a whiter hue than the other fills in the pit. Fill [32] also contained a potsherd of probable 17th-century date and a fragment of post-medieval tile. Both of the pits [11] and [28] were identified as small quarry pits. All four of the fills were probably deliberate backfilling.

The upper fill [32] of pit [28] was cut by three possible post-holes, two of which were observed in the main south-facing section of the trench. The most westerly of these post-holes [24] was flat based and steep sided (Plate 8). It was 0.40m deep, 0.52m in diameter and contained fill [25], which appeared to have been deliberately dumped into the feature. The fill was a crumbly and dry dark brown slightly clayey silt. It contained occasional post-medieval brick and tile fragments, occasional coal fragments and frequent roots. The easterly post-hole [26] was 0.50m deep, 0.50m in diameter and had an irregular appearance. The single deliberate backfill of the feature [27] was a light grey clayey silt which contained occasional large brick fragments dated to the 15th/16th centuries. The third of the post holes [9] was 0.20m in diameter and only 0.08m deep. The single fill was a friable dark grey-brown slightly clayey silt which contained tile of late medieval and post-medieval date.

At the eastern end of the trench was a very large and deep pit [3] (Plate 9). It measured at least 5m east–west and at least 1.80m north–south. This pit had an observed depth of 1.30m although its bottom was not reached. The pit had steeply angled sides and appeared to be tapering towards a concave base. It contained two original fills and appeared to have been re-cut [6]. The earliest of the fills was a loose ‘dirty’ crushed chalk deposit [4] which was 0.50m at its thickest point. Above this was a light grey chalk and silt fill [5], which was 0.80m thick. Both fills had been dumped into the feature to backfill it. Fill [5] contained sherds of ceramic which dated from the 16th to 18th centuries and a fragment of 16th-century brick.

The re-cut [6] was vertically sided with a concave base. The recut pit was 0.90m deep, at least 0.80m wide north–south and had an unknown east–west extent. It also contained two distinct fills. The lowest of them [7] was a gritty mid-brown sandy silt which was 0.90m thick. It contained a potsherd which dated from the 16th–18th centuries, general post-medieval tile fragments, moderate charcoal flecks and patches, occasional stones and flints. There were also frequent small roots and occasional coal fragments. The fill was very homogenous, slightly fibrous and was a deliberate backfill of the pit cut. The upper fill of the pit [8] was a very white and pure re-deposited chalk, which had probably been dug up from

quite a low depth. The chalk was 0.25m thick and was only seen in the top of the feature.

The upper deposits of the trench had been truncated by the presence of at least 4 salt-glazed ceramic drainpipes running NE–SW across the trench towards a large brick drain. One context number was allocated for the cuts and the fills of these various intercutting drains. This ‘cut’ [22] was flat based with irregular sides. It was 8.60m across and 0.48m deep. The drains cut across the trench at an oblique angle. The drain context [23] was composed of various and widely differing fills, although generally the deposit was a chalk and grey sandy silt backfill. Above the drains was a well laid cobble surface [2]. The cobble surface seemed to be contemporary with the brick drain and it probably indicated that the drains were associated with the re-surfacing of the yard. The cobbles were between 0.80 and 100mm in size. The last event in the sequence was the laying of a very recent loose orange sand and gravel layer across the yard [1].

5.2 The Watching Brief

Thirty-one contexts were recorded during the watching brief. Due to the nature of the work the pits and the wells remained unexcavated, though a small slot was placed through probable ditch [61].

Tower Crane base (Plates 10 and 11)

A large sub-rectangular chalk quarrying pit [41] was probably the earliest feature encountered in this area. It was sealed beneath layer [38] in the western edge of the tower crane footprint. The pit extended to 2.2m below ground level and was 3.96m north–south by at least 1.0m east–west. The two distinct parts of the fill were given one context number [42]. The base of the fill consisted of loose waste flints (c.75mm across on average) probably a waste product of the chalk quarrying and above this was a slightly humic garden soil which was very similar to deposit [37]. The fill had been deliberately dumped into the feature. No finds were recovered from this, but oyster shell was noted.

Next in the sequence was a 0.40m to 0.60m deep deposit [38] composed of layers of chalk rubble and garden soil, with layers and frequent inclusions of CBM. The layer probably represented post-medieval landscaping of the plot at 1–3 Market Hill. The fact that well [39] truncated the layer may have indicated that it had an earlier post-medieval date.

A well [39] was observed in the same general area cutting layer [38] in the north-eastern corner of the trench. This was seen in cross-section in the eastern side of the trench. It was not bottomed. Its fill and its domed, brick capping was of early 20th-century date, though the date of the structure itself remained unknown. It was unlined where it cut through the natural chalk. Its fill [40] consisted of loose masonry, including frogged 2½ inch brick and some gritty silt. The well had a diameter of 1.0m.

Wall foundations (19th–20th century) were also seen along the northern edge of the trench. These were left unrecorded in the watching brief as they were part of wall [33], also seen during the evaluation.

The final deposit was a 0.40m deep garden soil [37] which was probably a recent landscaping of the plot at 1–3 Market Hill (probably 19th century).

Warehouse Footprint

This was essentially the plot of land at the rear of the property which had been sample excavated as part of the evaluation. Twelve individual features were encountered, two of which were probably seen previously at the evaluation stage. As they were generally separate features with no complex stratigraphy they will be presented in order from south to north. Many of the following pits, though unexcavated and undated, were probably of 16th–18th-century date like those found during the evaluation.

A small pit [43] was observed in the south-western corner of the site. It had a visible size in plan of 1.31m by 0.79m. It contained a dark brown chalky clay fill [44] with frequent CBM and bone inclusions.

A large shallow cut [45] was observed in most of the southern half of the site. The pit measured 19.30m east–west by 5.06m north–south. It was filled with a very recent deposit composed of frequent CBM rubble and gritty silt, which contained frequent wire and metal inclusions. This was the probable ‘footprint’ of the former warehouse on the site, the northern wall [33] of which had been seen on the southern side of the evaluation trench.

A further pit [51] was observed a little to the north. It was at least 0.68m east–west by 1.87m north–south. It was filled with a mid-brown chalky clay [52] with frequent CBM inclusions which had been deliberately dumped into the feature.

Immediately to the east, another pit [47] was observed to truncate the natural chalk. It was oval in plan and was 2.03m by 1.11m. The fill consisted of a mid-brown chalky clay [48] with occasional peg tile fragments and one sherd of pottery. The pit may have been medieval. Its fill was pale with a very low proportion of cultural material, including one fragment of Early Medieval Gritty Ware from the 11th–13th centuries.

At this point the pit was truncated by a further oval-shaped pit to the east [49]. This pit had similar dimensions, 1.32 east–west by 1.0m north–south. The fill was composed of a dark brown chalky clay with occasional CBM fragments. Both of the pits appeared to have been deliberately backfilled.

An elongated sub-rectangular pit [55] was situated 1.0m metres to the east. The dimensions of the pit in plan were 3.70m by 1.31m. It had a single fill [56], formed of crushed and fragmentary brick rubble. The fill was a deliberate backfill exercise.

A small sub-rounded pit [53] was observed a little further to the north. The size of the pit was 1.17m by 1.15m. There was a single deposit within the feature which was composed of a mid-brown chalky clay with frequent CBM inclusions.

Towards the eastern side of the area was a further oval pit [65]. It measured 2.50m east–west by 1.26m north–south. The single fill of the pit [66] was a mid-grey silt with frequent chalk lumps and occasional flints. The pit had been backfilled. The feature may have been the same as pit [11] encountered in the evaluation.

A very large pit [63] was located just to the north. It was irregular and slightly sub-rectangular in plan. The dimensions of the pit in plan were 4.17m east–west by 2.53m north–south. The fill of the pit was a greyish green silt with frequent chalk

lumps. The pit may have been the same as [27] or [28] seen previously in the evaluation.

A small rounded pit [57] was seen at the western end of the site. It was filled with a dark brown garden soil [58] which was full of roots and no other inclusions. This feature may have been a garden feature, possibly a pit used for planting a small tree or shrub. It was at least 0.50m by 1.01m and was only partly observed as it went beyond the western limit of excavation.

A further pit [59] was observed next to the western edge of the site just to the north. It had an oval shape and truncated an earlier possible ditch [61]. The pit was 0.75m east–west by 1.64m north–south and had been deliberately backfilled. The single fill of the feature consisted of a mid-brown chalky clay with frequent flint inclusions.

Of most interest was a probable ditch [61], which was observed on the northern side of the development plot (Plate 12). It was 0.55m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It was at least 9.0m east–west and 0.37m north–south. The single fill [62] was a pale brown clayey silt with frequent chalk lumps and occasional flints. Only one side of the feature was visible within the site, which does allow for the possibility that the feature represented a large straight-sided pit, however the length and straightness of the feature does suggest otherwise. Ditch [61] was possibly the earliest feature encountered. Its pale fill had no visible cultural component, suggesting a medieval or earlier date.

Finds reference number [68] was allotted for two sherds of pottery recovered from unstratified deposits disturbed during the groundworks.

Listed building (Plates 13 and 14)

Part of the southern wall of the listed building was visible, showing a portion of the timber framing, including part of the sill beam, three uprights for the trusses, some wall studding and the first floor beam. The three truss uprights were labelled I, II and III, suggesting that the western most one (labelled I) may have been the rear of the building. Further exposed timbers were visible within the building. These wall elements show close studding, a timber-rich form of walling intended for display. There was no evidence of the type of infilling used between the studding. The building is thought to date to the 15th–16th centuries (Medleycott 1999, 32).

Drain trench

The new drainpipe trench ran down the southern and western sides of the listed building. Only post-medieval deposits were encountered, including the brick capping of a disused well (67).

6.0 The Finds

The finds and environmental material from the site are presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in the appendices.

6.1 Pottery

Twelve sherds of pottery weighing 254g were collected from seven contexts. Table 1 shows the quantification by context.

Context	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Notes	Date
5	GRE	2	8	brown glaze, slightly speckled	16th–18th c.
	IGBW	1	66	narrow tankard base	16th–18th c.
7	GRE	1	24	short strap handle	16th–18th c.
12	UNHM	1	5	heavily abraded, tempered with unburnt flint, oxidised surfaces and reduced core, incised lines on external surface	Preh?
14	GSW4	2	29	one vessel	16th/17th c.
20	IGBW	1	2		16th–18th c.
32	IGBW	1	39	chamber pot rim (type E5)	17th c.?
48	EMWG	1	7	abraded body sherd	11th–13th c.
68	MCW	1	46	jar rim (type H3/E5)	L.13th– M.14th c.
	GSW5	1	28	scratch-decorated floral pattern with blue glaze	17th/18th c.
Total		12	254		

Table 1. Pottery catalogue.

Key: UNHM – unidentified handmade; EMWG – early medieval ware gritty; MCW – medieval coarseware; GRE – glazed red earthenware; IGBW – iron glazed blackwares; GSW4 – Cologne/Frechen stoneware; GSW5 – Westerwald stoneware.

One heavily abraded handmade sherd may be of prehistoric date. A handmade coarse gritty sherd (EMWG) was probably early medieval, and there was a rim sherd of a local medieval coarseware jar (type H3 or E5, Drury 1993).

The assemblage was largely post-medieval in date. This period group consisted of regionally-produced red earthenwares with brown lead or black iron glazes (GRE, IGBW) and German stonewares. Identifiable vessels comprised a blackware tankard or tyg base and a chamber pot with a type E5 rim (Cunningham and Drury 1985). A 17th-century date for most of this group seems likely.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material

By Sue Anderson, CFA Archaeology

A total of 33 fragments of CBM weighing 4758g was collected from eight contexts. Table 2 shows the quantification by context.

Twenty-eight fragments of roof tile were recovered. All were in oxidised fabrics, generally with a dense matrix containing fine, medium or coarse quartz sand and occasional grog, flint, ferrous fragments or mica, sometimes with fine clay pellets. A few were not fully oxidised, having reduced cores or surfaces. Ten fragments had peg holes, of which nine were circular and one was square. One fragment from [7] was 158mm wide, which falls into Drury's 'RT4' category, dated 15th-century or later in Norwich (Drury 1993). The other fragments were not closely

datable, but most were probably late or post-medieval. No glazed examples were present.

Five brick fragments were present, all red firing fine to medium sandy types. Those which could be measured were all less than 2” in thickness, which is often indicative of an early date. At least one had a reduced surface, and two were over-fired. Another showed signs of burning with surface cracking. One piece from [20] appeared to be moulded, or possibly rubbed. It had an acutely-angled corner and the inner surface was concave. Overall, this group appears to be of ‘Tudor’ type and may indicate the presence of a 15th/16th-century brick structure in the vicinity.

Context	Fabric	Form	No.	Wt/g	Notes	Date
5	msf	LB	1	505	45mm thick, slightly reduced surface	16th c.?
7	ms	RT	1	459	158mm wide, 2 round holes	L.Med/P-Med
	msfe	RT	3	241	1 round peg hole, 2 with upper surfaces laminated	P-Med
	fsm	RT	1	269		P-Med
	ms	RT	3	412	round peg holes	P-Med
	cs	RT	1	123		P-Med
10	cs	RT	1	58		P-Med
	ms	RT	1	17	reduced/vit surfaces	L-Med?
12	fs	RT	1	10		L.Med/P-Med
	msm	RT	1	77	reduced core	L.Med/P-Med
	ms	RT	4	105	=3 tiles, 1 with round hole	L.Med/P-Med
	msfe	LB?	1	36	abraded, overfired?	L.Med/P-Med
20	ms	RT	6	568	orange, occasional mica and clay pellets, 1 round hole	L.Med/P-Med
	msf	LB	1	394	v dense, overfired, moulded, 48mm thick	16th c.?
24	msf	RT	3	123	=1 tile, round hole	P-Med
	fs	RT	1	83	square hole	P-Med
27	msf	LB	1	579	burnt? 100mm wide, 50mm thick	15th–17th c.
	fsf	LB	1	667	v dense, 105 x 40mm, covered in thin lime mortar	15th/16th c.?
32	fsm	RT	1	32		P-Med
Total			33	4758		

Table 2. CBM by context.

Fabric codes: cs – coarse sandy; ms – medium sandy; fs – fine sandy; +f – flint-tempered; +g – grog-tempered; +m – micaceous; +fe – ferrous inclusions.

6.3 Small Finds

By Andrew Barnett

The site produced a Charles I Royal Farthing. These coins were minted between 1622 and 1632.

6.4 Other Metal Finds

By Julia Huddle

Context [32] produced an iron nail for which little further information could be found due to its relatively un-diagnostic form.

6.5 Flint

By Sarah Bates

Three pieces of flint were recovered from the site, all from context [16]. There is a very small, quite sharp, flake. It has a residue, probably mortar, adhering to it and is probably an accidental chip off a building flint. The other two pieces are patinated irregular fragments. One of them has been struck at one end and the end of the piece has been removed. The crude hard-hammer-type platform and bulbar scars suggests that it may be a fairly recent break, possibly having occurred during use as building flint or perhaps accidentally damaged. The other fragment does not appear to have been struck.

6.6 The faunal remains

By Julie Curl

Methodology

All of the bone was examined to determine range of species and elements present and the amount of material that could produce measurable, ageable bone. Bone was scanned to determine if evidence for bone-, horn- or antler-working was present in the assemblage. Instances of butchering and any indications of skinning, horn-working and other modifications were recorded. When possible a record was made of ages and any other relevant information, such as pathologies. Counts and weights were noted for each context and each species identified. All information was input directly into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The assessment was carried out following a modified version of the guidelines written by English Heritage (Davis 1992). A catalogue of the assemblage is included in Appendix 8.

The assemblage and discussion

A total of 0.545kg of faunal remains, consisting of fourteen pieces, was recovered from four contexts.

Two contexts, [7] and [24], yielded cattle bones. Both bones, a femur and pelvis, were from quality cuts of meat and had been butchered. Pig was produced from context [10]. The femur was butchered and, as with the cattle, suggests consumption of good-quality meat.

A single adult cat humerus was found in context [12], no butchering was seen on this bone. It is probable that this is the remains of a natural death of a domestic or feral cat.

All of the bone is in reasonable to good condition, although it is fragmentary due to butchering and wear. The butchered pig femur in [10] was much darker in colour than the other remains. This mahogany-brown colour is typical of bone that has lain in organic waterlogged conditions for some time. Canid gnawing was observed on the cattle pelvis from [242], this may suggest some scavenging activity or simply butchering and food waste given to domestic dogs.

6.7 Clay Tobacco Pipes

By John Ames

The clay tobacco pipe assemblage consisted of bowls, stems and mouthpieces, recovered from three contexts. These deposits produced seven fragments with a total weight of 32g. The dating of the assemblage has been principally based on the London-type series of bowl forms (Oswald 1975). No attempt was made to

employ stem bore dating techniques. The clay pipe assemblage recovered from the evaluation produced one bowl that could be dated to the 18th/19th centuries.

7.0 Conclusions

The very heavily abraded un-diagnostic potsherd of possible prehistoric date found in layer [12] indicates that there was some earlier settlement in the vicinity, though the extremely worn appearance indicates that it may have travelled some distance before being re-deposited.

In addition to assessing the development plot it was hoped that the evaluation at the heart of Saffron Walden would yield some extra information on the development of the town. In particular it was thought that a trench behind one of the properties at 1–3 Market Hill could reveal the extent of the original medieval market which was known to have been infilled with houses during the later medieval period. It seems significant that there were only very limited, possible medieval features and only two pottery sherds from that period. This would appear to suggest that there may have been a considerable amount of truncation in the area rather than the usual build up of levelling/occupation layers that are to be expected in an historic town. The relatively high level of the observed natural chalk would seem to confirm this. The bricks found on the site suggest that there may have been a building of probable Tudor date in the vicinity.

Possible ditch [61] was the most interesting feature found during the watching brief. Due to its lack of finds the feature may have an earlier date than some of the other features, though this cannot be confirmed. The feature may be the edge of a large straight-sided pit rather than a ditch, because only one side of it was observed. If the feature is a medieval ditch, it may provide evidence of the initial laying out of the town c.1300. Its was orientated perpendicular to Market Hill and in line with the northern wall of the listed building, suggesting that it may be an early burgage plot boundary. However, this alignment is identical to the prehistoric grid pattern field-system identified by Bassett (1982). Medieval towns were often planned with regular burgage plot widths based on chains or perches (Hickling 2001). A further detailed examination of early mapping for regularly occurring property boundaries in Saffron Walden may reveal further information on this issue. The ditch could also date from development of the site in the 16th–18th centuries.

The fact that the site lay at the lower part of the Market Hill may suggest that when some of the larger post-medieval houses were built, the building plots had to be excavated into the slope of the hill. The pits all appear to date to the 16th–18th centuries and this would tally with their being chalk extraction pits used during the building process. The date of the pits seems to tie in with the general date of many of the buildings (in some cases probably later renovation work) in the immediate vicinity. Many of the pits found during the watching brief are probably of the same period and were dug for chalk extraction.

The coin of Charles I whilst rather common is indicative of the type of find to be expected next to a historic market and ties in with the date of the pits. It should be born in mind that the sparse amount of pottery found during the evaluation may have been re-deposited into later features, however, the similar date range across all of the ceramic and CBM does lend strength to them providing good dating evidence for the features.

The probable post-holes do not seem to form a coherent pattern and may relate to posts put into the garden plot at the rear of the property 1–3 Market Hill after the chalk extraction pits had been filled in. They might possibly be fence posts. In some cases these post-holes do contain dating evidence which suggests that they are of a relatively early post-medieval date.

The long wall [33] which was observed to run down the length of the evaluation trench belonged to a 19th/20th-century warehouse building which was only been demolished in 1996. The watching brief uncovered the southern side of the wall [33] and the large previous warehouse 'footprint' [45].

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by the Historic Environment Branch of Essex County Council.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	Deposit	Modern loose orange sand and gravel	–
2	Deposit	Cobble surface	–
3	Cut	Pit	16th–18th century
4	Deposit	‘Dirty’ crushed chalk fill of [3]	16th–18th century
5	Deposit	Mixed chalk and silt fill of [3]	16th–18th century
6	Cut	Re-cut pit	16th–18th century
7	Deposit	Gritty mid-brown sandy silt fill of [6]	16th–18th century
8	Deposit	Crushed chalk fill of [6]	–
9	Cut	Possible post-hole	–
10	Deposit	Dark grey-brown slightly clayey silt fill of [9]	–
11	Cut	Pit	–
12	Deposit	Light greenish-grey clayey silt/chalk mix fill of [11]	–
13	Cut	Possible post-hole	16th–17th century
14	Deposit	Gritty mid-brown sandy silt fill of [13]	16th–17th century
15	Cut	Pit	–
16	Deposit	Orangey-brown clayey silt	–
17	Deposit	Orangey-brown clayey silt	–
18	Deposit	Orangey-brown clayey silt	–
19	Deposit	Orangey-brown clayey silt	–
20	Deposit	Mid-brown clayey silt	16th–18th century
21	Deposit	Light greyish-green clayey silt/chalk layer	–
22	Cut	Combined number for 19th/20th-century drain cuts	–
23	Deposit	Combined number for the deliberate backfill of ‘cut’ [22]	–
24	Cut	Possible post-hole	–
25	Deposit	Dark brown slightly clayey silt fill of [24]	–
26	Cut	Possible post-hole	–
27	Deposit	Light grey clayey silt fill of [26]	–
28	Cut	Pit	17th century
29	Deposit	Mid-grey clayey silt fill of [28]	17th century
30	Deposit	Mid greyish-green clayey silt fill of [28]	17th century
31	Deposit	Mid grey clayey silt fill of [28]	17th century
32	Deposit	Mid grey clayey silt fill of [28]	17th century
33	Structure	Brick Wall	19th/20th century
34	Deposit	Light brown silty clay	–
35	Deposit	Chalky and silty clay	–
36	Deposit	Last fill of [11]	–
37	Deposit	Garden soil	Modern
38	Deposit	Chalk rubble, CBM and Garden soil	Post-medieval
39	Structure	Well	Unknown
40	Fill	Fill of [39]	Unknown
41	Cut	Quarry pit	Unknown
42	Fill	Waste flint and Garden Soil fill of [41]	Unknown
43	Cut	Pit	Unknown

Context	Category	Description	Period
44	Fill	Dark Brown Chalky Clay fill of [43]	Unknown
45	Cut	Footprint of former warehouse	20th century
46	Fill	CBM, Rubble and wiring fill of [45]	20th century
47	Cut	Pit	Medieval?
48	Fill	Mid brown chalky clay fill of [47]	Medieval?
49	Cut	Pit	Unknown
50	Fill	Dark brown chalky clay fill of [49]	Unknown
51	Cut	Pit	Unknown
52	Fill	Mid brown chalky clay fill of [51]	Unknown
53	Cut	Pit	Unknown
54	Fill	Dark brown chalky clay fill of [53]	Unknown
55	Cut	Pit	Unknown
56	Fill	Brick rubble fill of [55]	Unknown
57	Cut	Pit	Unknown
58	Fill	Dark brown Garden Soil full of roots. Fill of [57]	Unknown
59	Cut	Pit	Unknown
60	Fill	Mid brown chalky clay fill of [59]	Unknown
61	Cut	Probable Ditch	Medieval
62	Fill	Pale brown clayey silt with chalk lumps. Fill of [61].	Medieval
63	Cut	Pit	Unknown
64	Fill	Grey-green silt with frequent chalk lumps. Fill of [63].	Unknown
65	Cut	Pit	Unknown
66	Fill	Mid-grey silt with frequent chalk lumps. Fill of [65].	Unknown
67	Structure	Capping of post-medieval well	19th/20th century
68	Finds Reference	Allocated to finds from the Watching Brief	–

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Medieval	Pit?	1
	Ditch?	1
Post-medieval	Pit	16
	Post-hole	3
	Well	1
	Well Capping	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
02	Pottery	1	0.001	Post-medieval
02	Ceramic Building Material	7	0.998	Post-medieval
05	Pottery	3	0.075	Post-medieval
05	Ceramic Building Material	1	0.520	Post-medieval
07	Pottery	1	0.024	Post-medieval
07	Clay Pipe	3	0.011	Post-medieval
07	Animal bone	–	0.268	–
10	Ceramic Building Material	2	0.076	Post-medieval/Late medieval
10	Animal bone	–	0.045	–
12	Pottery	1	0.005	Prehistoric?
12	Ceramic Building Material	7	0.233	Late medieval/Post medieval
12	Animal bone	–	0.005	–
14	Pottery	2	0.030	Post-medieval

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
16	Flint – worked	3	–	Prehistoric
23	Clay Pipe	1	0.015	Post-medieval
24	Ceramic Building Material	4	0.212	Post-medieval
24	Clay Pipe	3	0.008	Post-medieval
24	Animal bone	–	0.227	–
27	Ceramic Building Material	2	1.318	Post-medieval
32	Pottery	1	0.039	Post-medieval
32	Ceramic Building Material	1	0.033	Post-medieval
32	Iron Nail	1	–	–
48	Pottery	1	0.030	Medieval
68	Pottery	1	0.030	Medieval
68	Pottery	1	0.030	17th/18th century

Appendix 2b: HER finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Unknown	Faunal Remains	14
?Prehistoric	Pottery	1
Late-Post-medieval (1540 to 1900)	Pottery	11
	CBM	33
	Coin	1
	Flints	3

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Notes	Date
5	GRE	2	8	Brown glaze, slightly speckled	16th–18th c.
	IGBW	1	66	Narrow tankard base	16th–18th c.
7	GRE	1	24	Short strap handle	16th–18th c.
12	UNHM	1	5	Heavily abraded, tempered with unburnt flint, oxidised surfaces and reduced core, incised lines on external surface	Prehistoric?
14	GSW4	2	29	One vessel	16th/17th c.
20	IGBW	1	2		16th–18th c.
32	IGBW	1	39	Chamber pot rim (type E5)	17th c.?
48	EMWG	1	7	Abraded body sherd	11th–13th c.
68	MCW	1	46	Jar rim (type H3/E5)	L.13th–M.14th c.
	GSW5	1	28	Scratch-decorated floral pattern with blue glaze	17th/18th c.
<i>Total</i>		12	254		

Appendix 4: Ceramic Building Material

Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
5	msf	LB	1	505	16th c.?
7	ms	RT	1	459	Late medieval/post-medieval
7	msfe	RT	3	241	Post-medieval
7	fsm	RT	1	269	Post-medieval
7	ms	RT	3	412	Post-medieval
7	cs	RT	1	123	Post-medieval
10	cs	RT	1	58	Post-medieval
10	ms	RT	1	17	Late medieval?
12	fs	RT	1	10	Late medieval/post-medieval
12	msm	RT	1	77	Late medieval/post-medieval

Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
12	ms	RT	4	105	Late medieval/post-medieval
12	msfe	LB?	1	36	Late medieval/post-medieval
20	ms	RT	6	568	Late medieval/post-medieval
20	msf	LB	1	394	16th c.?
24	msf	RT	3	123	Post-medieval
24	fs	RT	1	83	Post-medieval
27	msf	LB	1	579	15th–17th c.
27	fsf	LB	1	667	15th/16th c.?
32	fsm	RT	1	32	Post-medieval

Fabric codes: cs – coarse sandy; ms – medium sandy; fs – fine sandy; +f – flint-tempered; +g – grog-tempered; +m – micaceous; +fe – ferrous inclusions.

Appendix 5: Small Finds

SF	Context	Material	Object	Description	Object date
1	7	Copper-alloy	Coin	Charles 1st Royal Farthing.	1622–32
2	10	Iron	Strip	x 3; badly corroded fragments, cross-section at broken ends is v-shaped, suggesting possible knife blade fragments.	Undiagnostic

Appendix 7: Flint

Context	Type	Quantity
16	small, quite sharp, flake probably an accidental chip off a building flint The other two pieces are patinated irregular fragments	3

Appendix 8: Faunal Remains

Ctx	Qty	Wt(kg)	Spp	Spp Qty	Age	Butchering	Comments
7	11	0.268	Cattle	1	Juvenile	Chopped	Distal femur, large cattle
7			Mammal	10		Butchered	Fragments, inc. carpal fragments, probably cattle
10	1	0.045	Pig	1	Juvenile	Chopped/cut	Femur, dark stained, some time waterlogged
12	1	0.005	Feline	1	Adult	None	Humerus, small (?female) cat
24	1	0.227	Cattle	1	Adult	Chopped/cut	Pelvis, heavily chopped/cut, canid gnawing

Appendix 9: Clay Tobacco Pipes

Context	Description	No	Date	Discussion
7	Pipe stems	3	-	Not dateable
23	Bowl/stem	1	18th to 19th Century	One large bowl with pedestal spur
24	Pipe stems	3	-	Not dateable



Plate 1 Trench, looking east
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 2 Trench after machining, looking west
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 3 Excavation in progress, looking west



Plate 4 Pit [15], looking west
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 5 Pits [11] and [28], looking east
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 6 Pits [11] and [28], looking south-west
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 7 Main trench section, looking north-west
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 8 Post holes [24] and [26], looking north
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 9 Pit [3] and Re-cut [6], looking east
Scale bar = 1m



Plate 10 Pit [41], facing west



Plate 11 Well [39], looking east



Plate 12 Ditch [61], looking north



Plate 13 Detail of timber framing, showing mortice-and-tenon joint with peg and carpenter's assembly mark



Plate 14 South wall of listed building, facing north