

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

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## **Greene King, 24 Crown Street, Bury St Edmunds BSE 225**

A REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING, 2004  
(Planning app. no. SE/04/1278/LB)

John Craven  
Field Team  
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

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Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport  
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

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## List of Contributors

All Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service unless otherwise stated.

John Craven Supervisor  
Sue Anderson Finds Manager  
Kelly Powell Project Assistant

## Acknowledgements

This project was funded by Greene King PLC and was monitored by R.D. Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Conservation Division). The fieldwork was carried out by John Craven from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team. The project was managed by John Newman, who also provided advice during the production of the report.

Finds processing and the producing of site plans and sections was carried out by Kelly Powell, and the specialist finds and environmental report by Sue Anderson.

## Summary

An archaeological monitoring of trenches for the underpinning of two compound walls and the reducing of ground levels at 24 Crown Street, Bury St Edmunds located several features dating from the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century despite heavy modern truncation. One pit of 16<sup>th</sup> century date and a flint wall predate the boundary wall of 24 Crown Street, and a further pit and possible well appear to be of a similar date. Other features were associated with the presence and demolition of buildings that occupied the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## SMR information

Planning application no. SE/04/1278/LB  
Date of fieldwork: 5<sup>th</sup> April -4th May 2004  
Grid Reference: TL 856 638  
Funding body: Greene King PLC

## Introduction

A series of visits was made from 5<sup>th</sup> April- 4th May 2004 to the site, an area of yard within the Greene King compound lying between 20 and 24 Crown Street (Fig. 1), to monitor the excavation of trenches for the underpinning of two sections of the compound boundary walls. For the southern wall, the boundary with 24 Crown Street, this was to fulfil a planning condition on application SE/04/1278/LB. At the same time monitoring of the yard area was also carried out during the reducing of ground levels for the installation of new brewing vessels, this work was not covered by the planning condition.

The two walls being underpinned were originally constructed of flints and mortar; the upper parts have subsequently been rebuilt or raised with brickwork and substantial concrete reinforcement has been added to their bases. The site lies within the medieval core of Bury St Edmunds and the small area of yard between these walls is shown as being occupied by three buildings on the OS map of 1880 (Fig. 2), forming part of a continuous street frontage. The two compound walls were clearly property boundaries at that time.

The southernmost of these three properties, adjacent to 24 Crown Street, is shown as the site of a medieval chantry. This chantry is clearly shown on Warren's map of Bury St Edmunds in 1747, however the gardens to the rear of the chantry and of 24 Crown Street are shown as one block. The south compound wall therefore was built as a property boundary after 1747, sub-dividing these gardens.

The two trenches had potential for observing evidence of the construction date of these walls or earlier structures, while the reducing of levels in the yard had potential for observing evidence of the three buildings of 1880 or of the former chantry that once stood within part of the compound. The work was funded by the developer, Greene King PLC.

## Methodology

The two underpinning trenches were excavated by machine, they were both removed piece by piece in 2m sections, each section was backfilled with concrete before the excavation of the neighbouring section. Each trench extended approximately 2m into the yard from the base of the wall and for 0.5m underneath the walls base. The depth of both trenches ranged from 1m to 1.25m. The level of the yard area was reduced by 0.5-0.6m, this consisted of the removal of the yard surface and 0.3-0.4m of modern rubble and the top 0.1m of natural subsoil by machine. This resulted in the natural subsoil being cleanly exposed across the entire site.

## Results

(Fig. 3)

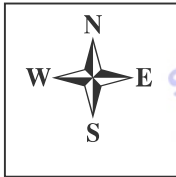
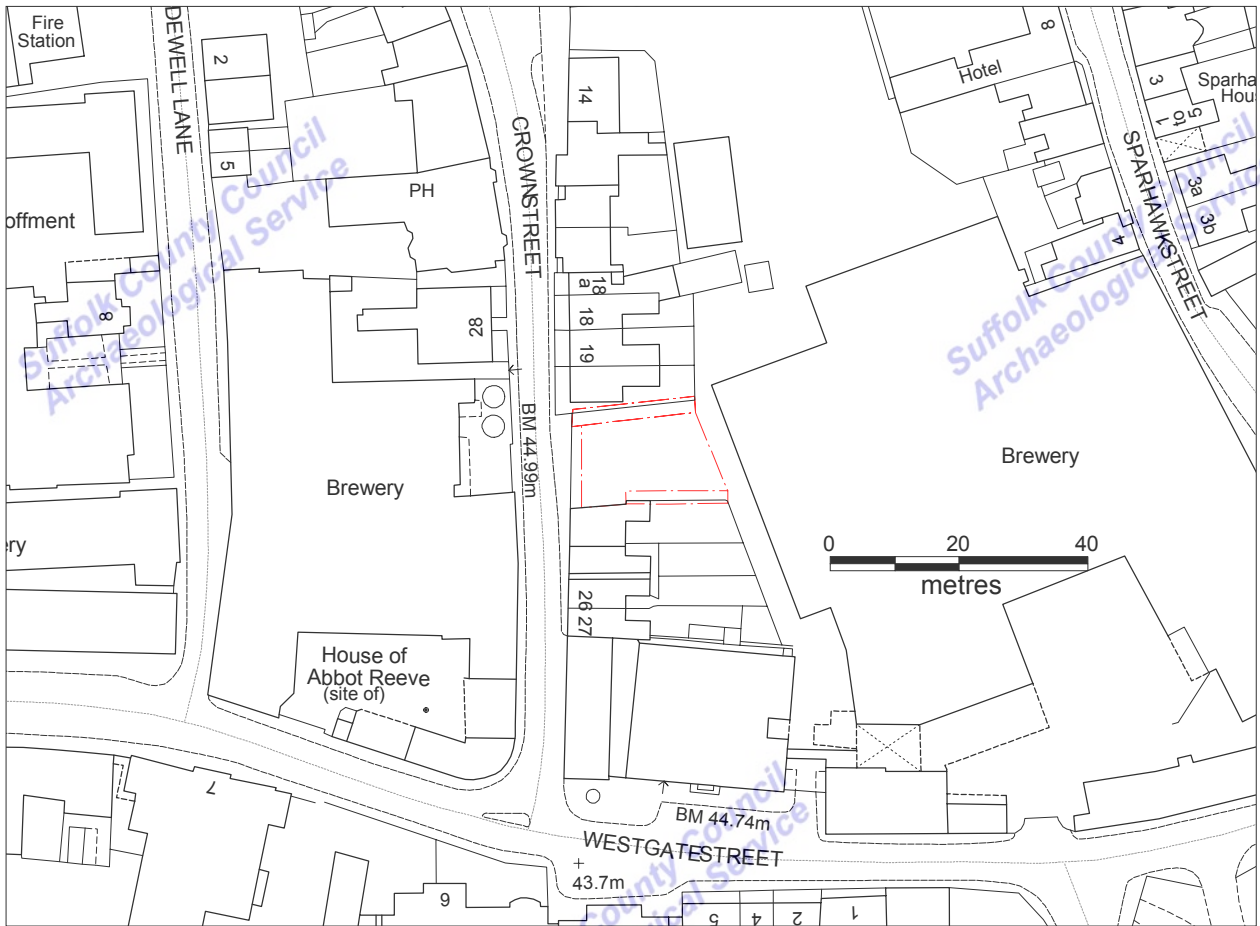
The two trenches both showed that immediately underneath a 0.30m thick layer of foundation material associated with the modern yard surface was the natural subsoil. This consisted of a layer, 0.60-1m thick, of mid orange/brown clay gravel, which overlay the natural clay/chalk.

Several features were observed within the trenches and the yard, once the modern material was removed, and can be tentatively dated to two broad phases of activity.

### Phase 1: Early Post-Medieval

0002 was a large pit, measuring approximately 1.5m in diameter and 1.20m+ deep. It was not fully observed as it extended southwards underneath the south wall and was its base was not





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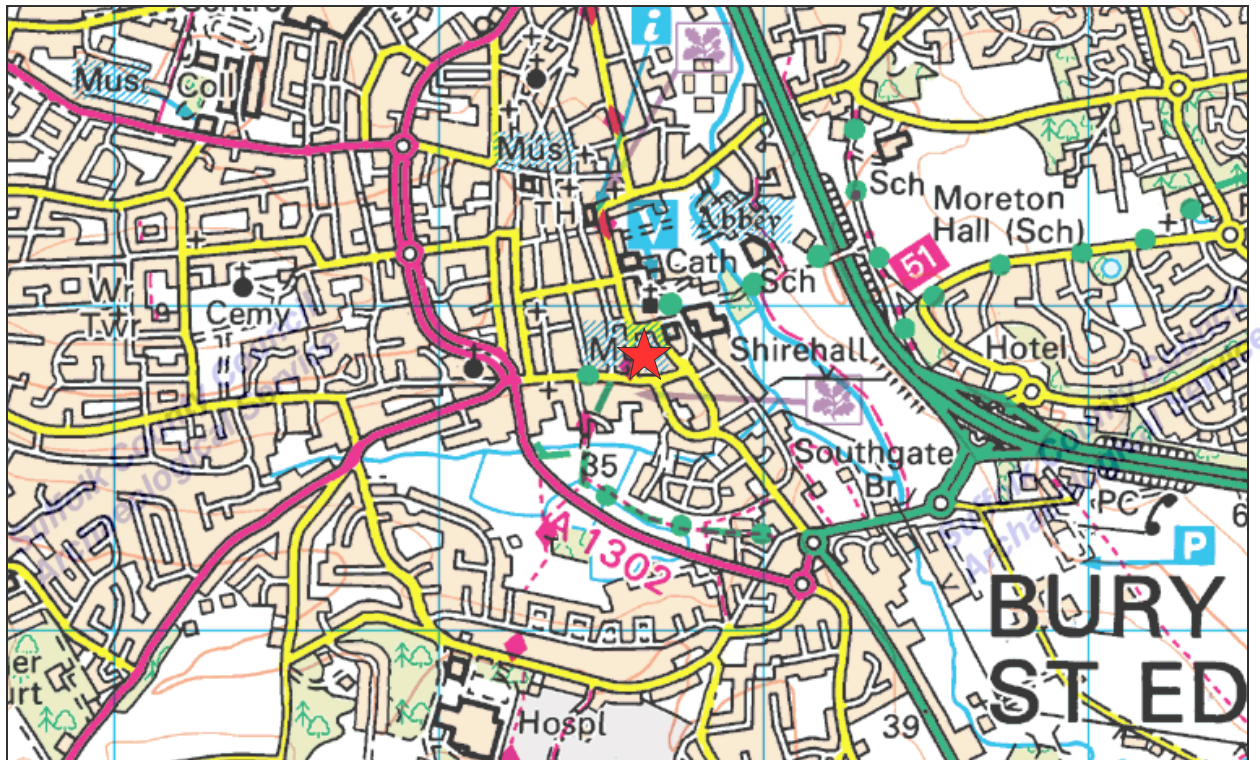


Figure 1. Site location plan

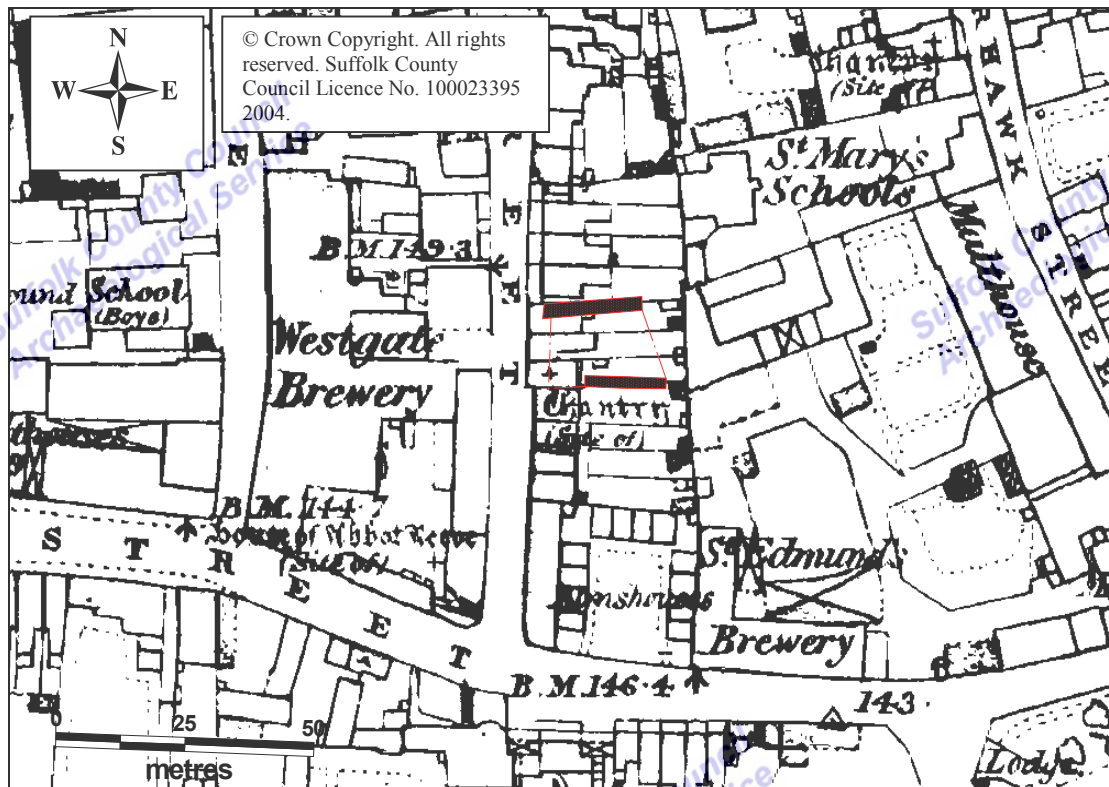


Figure 2. Site on 1880 OS map

fully excavated. Around its edge at the top was a band of mortar and tile about 0.30m thick and deep, this appears to be a reinforcement of the lip of the pit. The fill of the pit was a dark grey silt mixed with ash and bands of charcoal and iron staining. Pottery, animal bone and building material of 16<sup>th</sup> century date were recovered. This pit was cut by a north-south aligned wall of flint and mortar construction, 0003, which extended 0.50m into the yard. This wall was 0.25m wide and its base was 0.60m below the compound level; it also lay under the southern compound wall. Two sections, 0007 and 0008 (Fig. 4), were recorded through pit 0002 and wall 0003.

Another feature in the southern trench lay under the compound wall and so is possibly of a contemporary date with 0002. 0009 was a yellow clay/chalk spread lying immediately underneath the base of the wall, cut into the natural clay/gravel. It was 0.30m thick and approximately 1.5m wide and extended 0.50m to the north of the wall into the trench.

0014 appears to be a well. This circular feature measured approximately 1.30m in diameter and was lined by a 0.20m thick flint and mortar wall. Limited excavation of the topmost course showed that the inner edge of the wall was curved and faced with mortar, it appeared to be descending vertically. The central fill of the feature was a mid grey/brown loam mixed with chalk fragments and small pieces of building rubble. A single sherd of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered and probably dates the final backfilling of the well. This feature must predate the construction of the buildings shown on the 1880 OS map and therefore probably the two compound walls as well. As the fill contained relatively little building debris the feature was probably backfilled well before construction of these buildings.

Finally 0011 has been placed in this phase due to the similarity of its fill with 0014 indicating that it may be contemporary. It was a large circular pit, measuring 2.5m in diameter, with a fill of fine mid grey/loam with flecks of mortar and building rubble.

## Phase II: Late Post-Medieval/Modern

Four features have been placed in this phase as their fills principally contained large quantities of brick and tile building rubble, probably associated with the buildings shown on the 1880 OS map.

Two metres east of 0002 in the southern trench was 0004, a circular pit measuring 1m in diameter and 0.7m deep. Its fill contained building debris and other late post-medieval material such as coal, window glass and china pottery sherds, none of which were collected.

0010 was a circular pit, measuring 1.5m in diameter, lying close to the southern trench. It had a fill of dense charcoal mixed with large pieces of building rubble such as brick and tile. One sherd of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered.

0012 was another large pit, lying partially underneath the site edge. It was approximately 1.5m in diameter and was filled with clay and ash and large pieces of brick and tile rubble. Immediately to the north was 0013, probably a sub-rectangular pit filled with a dark brown clay/loam that contained building debris.

Finally there were two features in the northern trench that appear to be relatively modern. 0005 was a circular brick built structure, probably a soakaway, measuring approximately 1.2m in diameter and 1m deep, while 0006 was another wall aligned north-south, this time constructed of brick, that extended for 2m south into the trench from the northern wall. It was visible under 0.2m of modern material and its base was at a depth of 0.9m. It appeared to end within the trench as it was not observed during the later stripping of the yard.

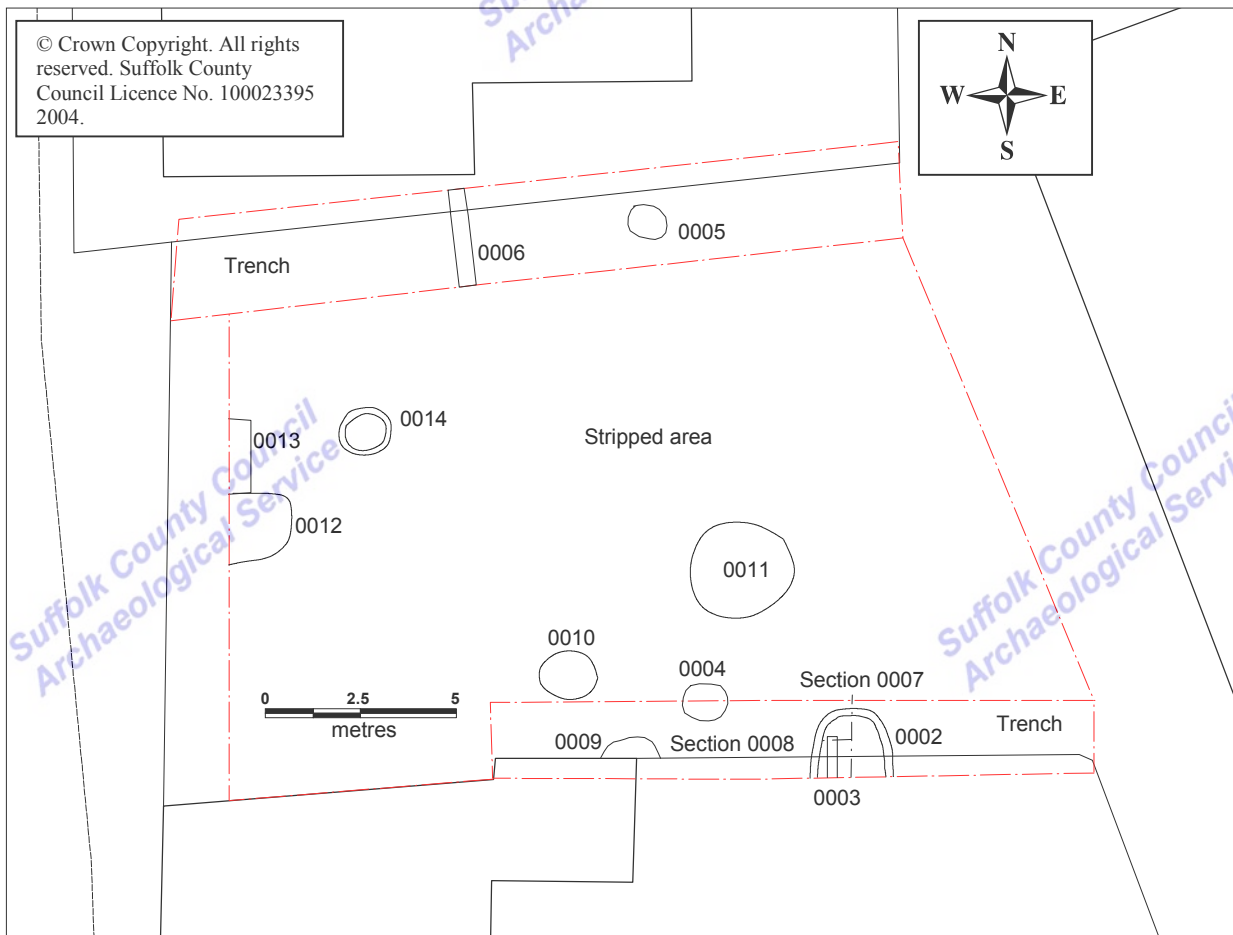
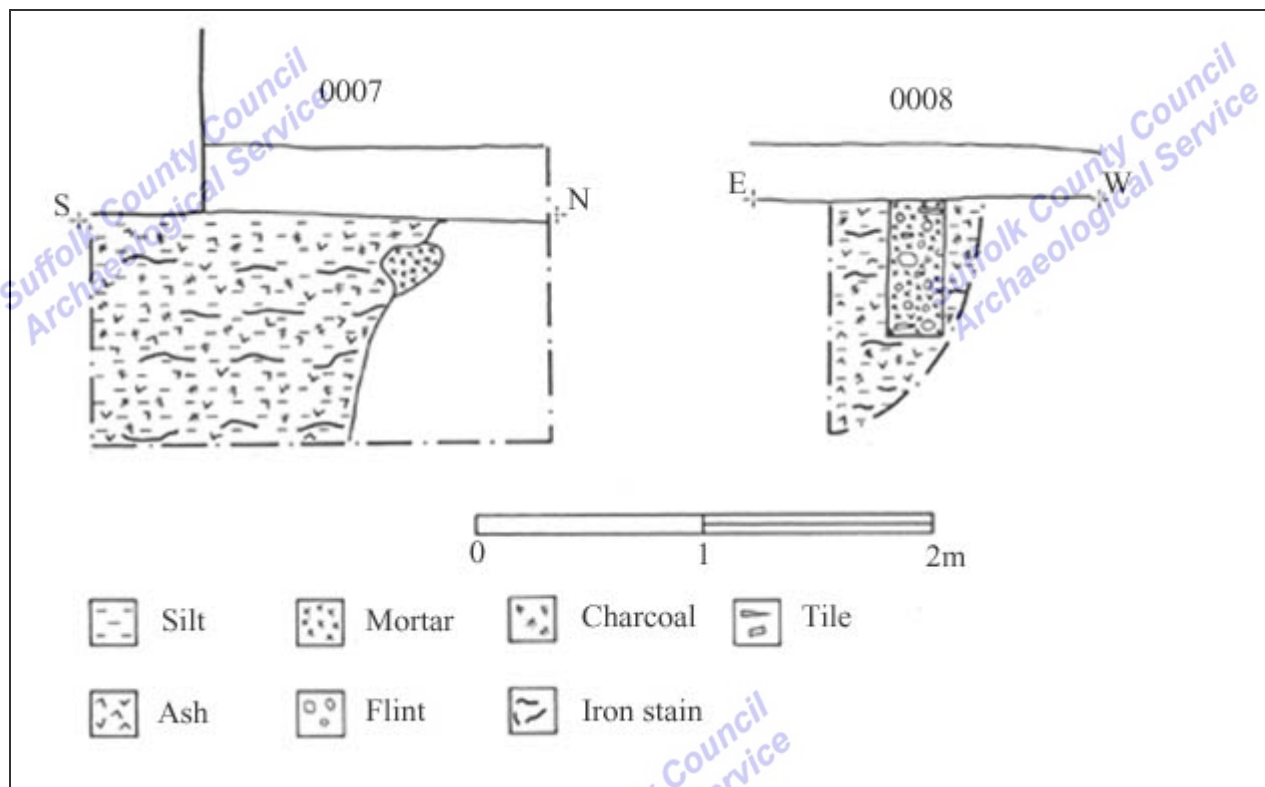




Figure 3. Site plan.



## Finds and environmental evidence

Sue Anderson

### Introduction

Finds were collected from three contexts, as shown in the table below.

OP	Pottery		CBM		Bone		Shell		Spotdate
	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	No.	Wt/g	
0002	5	201	6	1594	9	176	7	33	16th c.
0010	1	23							17-19th c.
0014	1	23							L.18-19th c.
Total	7	247	6	1594	9	176	7	33	

Table 1. Finds quantities

### Pottery

Four sherds of Cologne/Frechen stoneware, representing two small mugs of 16th century date, and a body sherd of late medieval and transitional ware (15th/16th c.) were collected from pit 0002. A fragment of ?late glazed red earthenware (17-19th c.?) was found in 0010. A base sherd of a mocha ware (industrial slipware) bowl of late 18th/19th century date came from 0014.

### Ceramic building material

Five fragments of peg tile and a piece of brick were sampled from pit 0002. The peg tile consisted largely of medium sandy red fragments tempered with ferrous inclusions or grog. A circular peg hole was present in one of the ferrous-tempered pieces, and a square hole in the grog-tempered fragment. These are probably all post-medieval. The piece of brick was in a fine sandy, poorly mixed, red micaceous fabric, and measured 51mm thick. It had been rubbed along

one stretcher face and was only 81mm wide as a result. It is likely to be contemporary with the pottery from this feature.

### **Animal bone and shell**

Fragments of animal bone from pit 0002 included a fragment of large mammal mandibular ramus, a rib and an ulna, medium mammal ribs, femur and ulna, and a fragment of frontal bone. There were chopmarks and cutmarks on several fragments, and the group is most likely to be domestic/butchery waste. Also in the pit were five oysters and a mussel shell, and fragments of a common land snail.

### **Discussion**

The finds from pit 0002 suggest a 16th century date for this feature. As a group they probably represent household refuse, mixed with some building rubble which may have been added as hardcore. The sherds of pottery from the other two contexts were both relatively modern.

## **Discussion**

The area of yard between the two walls has clearly been reduced in level in the recent past. Firstly the ground level within the adjacent properties, on the other side of the two walls, is approximately 1-1.2m above the level of the yard. Secondly, the level of Crown Street is approximately 1m above the yard, and the large gateway onto the street, apparently put in 30 years ago, corresponds to the street level. This indicates that the yard level has been reduced since the construction of the gate. This is further supported by the fact that the rubble foundation of the yard lies directly upon the natural subsoil, indicating the near total removal of the structures shown on the 1880 OS map and of any earlier deposits such as the foundations of the medieval chantry.

Because of this probable heavy truncation of the site the presence of several features was somewhat unexpected. All of these features appear to be of substantial size and depth and this has almost certainly aided their survival while smaller features may have been lost. However it is of note that the apparent reinforcement around the top of pit 0002 may actually be showing the height of the contemporary ground surface, in which case the truncation of the site may not be as severe as previously suggested. It is possible that only the post-medieval levels have been removed by the yard at this point and the surviving subsoil level is similar to the 16<sup>th</sup> century ground level.

The pre-existing concrete reinforcement of the two walls extended from 0.6m above the yard level to their base. This has removed any visible evidence of the walls foundations and construction trenches, with the exception of the 0009 spread which may possibly be a surviving remnant of the south wall's construction trench.

Generally dating of the remaining features is uncertain. Pit 0002 clearly predates the southern compound wall, as does the flint wall 0003. The well 0014 and pit 0011 probably also predate the compound wall and the associated buildings but further dating is not possible and these features may all be of post-medieval date or earlier.

Features 0005 and 0006 are of brick construction similar to the adjacent houses and they are probably contemporary with these structures. Wall 0006 appears to be a last surviving remnant of the houses that stood on the site in 1880 and the remaining four features, 0004, 0010, 0012 and 0013, appear to be rubbish pits filled with the rubble from the demolition of those buildings.

In conclusion it is apparent that the formation of the Greene King yard and repairwork to the compound walls has almost totally removed any evidence of the three buildings that occupied the site in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This has also generally removed all but the deepest features of earlier phases, resulting in a complete absence of evidence for the existence of the medieval chantry and of any other medieval or post-medieval occupation evidence which could have been expected due to the site's location on the frontage of one of the streets of the medieval town.

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