



Figure 2 Site plan

Results

A plan of the monitored trenches showing the position of a number of large pits and recent (Victorian) brick structures are shown in figure 2 and listed in Table 1. The ground surface over the entire site had been truncated removing the potential for any archaeological surface deposits; this appeared quite severe at the northwestern end where the site seems to have been terraced into the slope.

Context	Identifier	Description
0001	finds	Unstratified finds
0002	pit	C19th rubbish pit, 1.2m deep filled with loam and household debris
0003	pit	Pit filled with loam and clay, 1.1m x 60cm deep. No finds
0004	Pit	Large pit, (?)gravel extraction. Clean pale silt/sand fill. No finds
0005	Pit	Large pit, (?)gravel extraction. Clean pale silt/sand fill. No finds
0006	Pit	Large pit, (?)gravel extraction. Excavated to flint seam, cut by 0010
0007	Pit	Pit filled with loam 60cm deep. No finds
0008	structure	Brick lined tank/box, modern
0009	structure	Brick lined tank/box, modern
0010	cellar	Cellar, brick and flint C19 th brickwork built into 0006
0011	well	Brick lined well
0012	finds	Over fired bricks, wasters or furnace debris

Table 1 List of features

The pits were all large cut into the underlying geological gravel. Pits 0002 and 0003 were filled with dark loams and clay and included household and building debris dating them to the 19th century. Pits 0004, 0005 and 0006 had clean silt and sand fills, were archaeologically sterile and undated. These pits were extensive and up to 2m deep. The trench section along the frontage of the street showed that pit 0006 was excavated to a seam of naturally washed gravel and large flints at c.1.50m below the surface. The cellar, 0010, for the tavern that previously occupied this part of the site was built into pit 0006, which had possibly been infilled around it. The dimension of the cellar closely follows the pit suggesting that the cellar builders may have taken advantage of an already open hole, the cellar and pub date to the mid-late 19th century and therefore pit 0006 may have existed as an open feature until this date. Other structures include brick-lined tanks or boxes 0008 and 0009, and a brick and flint lined well 0011. All of these were Victorian in date but appeared to pre-date and be unrelated to Tayfen terrace. It was not possible to interpret the tanks 0008/0009 and they may indicate an earlier industrial use of the site. Tayfen terrace itself appears to have been built off nominal foundations and these were not apparent in the trenches.

A large quantity of brick waste was recovered from the eastern side of the footing trench at 0012. The material consisted of a mass of over fired bricks, which had fused together. This material had been broken up into big lumps (too heavy to lift) in antiquity, and used as a rubble infill within an earlier foundation trench. The bricks were so intensely fired that some had become molten and vitrified making it impossible to identify individual bricks. Where identifiable there were no mortar beds between the faces of the bricks and they were not arranged in a recognisable bond pattern suggesting that they were not part of a bonded structure when subjected to the intense heat that amalgamated them.

The bricks themselves were in a white firing clay with clinker slag inclusions, they measured 9½ x 2¾ x 4½ inches and had a shallow frog.

Conclusion

The site shows no evidence of medieval occupation, this is perhaps unsurprising given the site's position outside the town walls, although the truncation of the ground surface has meant that the potential for finding any had been lost. The pits were probably excavated for the extraction of

gravel and infilled with the unwanted spoil, which would explain the absence of occupation debris. The gravel extraction is undated but the possible reuse of one of the pits for the pub cellar suggests that this may have been as recent as the early–mid 19th century. The washed gravels and large flints at the base of the section alongside pit 0006 may have been what the quarrymen were seeking. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely in view of the site location (on the course of Tayfen Water), this could be the former line of the aquifer and the excavation may have become waterlogged at this depth. A similar band of gravels were observed at the base of the town ditch at the BSE 137 site suggesting that the ditch diggers may have also struck the water table (Tester 1997).

The bricks used to as rubble infill are interesting and may represent the spoil contents of a disastrous brick kiln firing. There was no indication of a brick kiln on site, and there are no known brick works in the immediate area, but the site's proximity to the railway yards means potentially that the bricks may have been imported from out side the town.

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References

Tester, A., 1997, 'Archaeological Excavation Report: BSE 137 Tayfen Road Bury St Edmunds', SCCAS Report No 97/55.