SAXON AND MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY AT WALTON STREET, AYLESBURY

PIP STONE

with contributions from
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In October and November 2005, May and June 2006 and September 2008, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigations at 82–84 Walton Street, Aylesbury. The investigations identified four phases of land use spanning the late Bronze Age through early modern periods, but the main periods of activity were from the middle Saxon to medieval periods.

Activity dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age comprised a single pit situated in the northern corner of the site. Three further pits contained late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age pottery, but in all instances this is thought to have been residual. Activity dated to the middle Saxon period was represented by a group of large quarry pits thought to have been related to chalk extraction. These large pits were situated in the central part of the site and were cut by an extensive boundary system thought to have been constructed in the late Saxon/ medieval period. This rectilinear boundary system represents the formal organisation of the land around Walton Street. It is thought that the boundaries were constructed for the containment of livestock, as documentary sources reveal that both manorial and peasant owned sheep were grazed in the area during the medieval period. Activity dated to the early modern period comprised a small number of ditches and pits relating to the development of Walton Street as a modern urban settlement.

INTRODUCTION

In October and November 2005, May and June 2006 and September 2008, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out a programme of archaeological investigations at 82–84 Walton Street, Aylesbury (centred on NGR SP 8225 1325; Figs 1 & 2), the results of which are presented in the following report. The work was commissioned by Crest Nicholson Ltd and was undertaken prior to residential development, in response to a brief issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service. Full archaeological descriptions of all features and contexts can be found in the Interim Site Narratives (Pozorski 2008 and Hallybone and Newton 2006) and Research Archive Reports (Stone 2009).

Extensive development along Walton Road in the 1970s, 80s and 90s resulted in a series of rescue excavations (Table 1, Fig. 3). Although not all of these sites have been published, they demonstrate substantial Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon settlement in the area and have enabled a detailed picture of the topography of the early Saxon settlement and later town to be compiled. Few excavations have taken place to the south-west of Walton Road; however, the Police Houses excavation in 1987 identified late Saxon and medieval remains within the site itself.

BACKGROUND

Site description, topography and geology

The site lies at an elevation of *c.*80m OD (Fig. 1). It slopes down to the north-west, into the shallow valley of the California Brook, and rises slightly towards Walton Street. The historic core of Aylesbury is situated on an outcrop of soft Portland limestone; the geology of the surrounding area is largely Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay. Although the soils of the urban area are not mapped, the local drift geology comprises soils of the Denchworth association, derived from the underlying clay, with

TABLE 1 Significant archaeological interventions in the Walton Street/ Walton Road area

Year of excavation	*Site name*	*Results*	*CAS*	*Reference*
1973	Walton Court	Two SFBs, Saxon palisade trench, medieval manorial boundary and linear mound	0093	Farley 1976
1973	Walton Street Vicarage	Two SFBs; ditch adjacent to manor; 13th-century rectangular plots;	2163	Farley 1976
1994	Walton Lodge Lane	Bronze Age cremations, pits, medieval pits	6107	Bonner 1994
1985-6	Walton Lodge	Bronze Age ?roundhouse, Saxon hall and SFBs	5499	Dalwood *et al.* 1989
1986	Walton Road Teachers' Centre	Medieval boundaries, pits, well	5500	Hawkins 1989
1987	Croft Road Teachers' Centre Area A	Roman field boundaries and possible Saxon buildings	5593	Dalwood & Hawkins Unpublished
1987	Croft Road Teachers' Centre Area B	Co-axial Roman field boundaries, Saxon hall and SFBs	5593	Dalwood & Hawkins Unpublished
1987	Police Houses	Late Saxon and medieval boundaries	5555	Dalwood & Hawkins 1987
1994	The Orchard	Bronze Age roundhouses and Saxon halls	6108	Ford & Howell 2004
1994	Walton Road Stores	Six SFBs and two halls; late Saxon boundaries	6145	BCMAS unpublished
2000	Aylesbury High School	Iron Age and Roman farm	6377	Babtie 2001 unpublished

Grove association chalky drift soils to the south, both of which are suitable for growing winter cereals with some dairying (SSEW 1983). To the south-east is a band of clay upland, beyond which is the clay-with-flints of the Chiltern Hills (SSEW 1983).

Archaeological background

Prehistoric

There is little evidence to suggest that there was any significant activity around Aylesbury during the early prehistoric period. Evidence of Neolithic activity is present but not extensive in the area directly surrounding the site; finds include a flint side scraper, two stone axes and a few sherds of pottery. The mid to late Bronze Age is better-attested with roundhouses identified *c.*110m east of the present site (Figs 1 and 3; CAS[1] 6724, 6732; Ford and Howell 2004, 62–4, 84–7), and a small cremation cemetery, pits, postholes, hearths and a boundary gully were found during excavations *c.*220m east of the site in 1993 (CAS 6107; Bonner 1994). An Iron Age hillfort was located on the rounded outcrop of Portland limestone which underlies the historic core of Aylesbury. There is substantial Iron Age evidence from this area including human and animal remains and pottery, although the main area of prehistoric activity lay to the south, east and west of the defended area. A possible late Iron Age to Romano-British farmstead and agricultural settlement has been excavated *c.*300m east of the site (CAS 6377).

Roman

Aylesbury lies on the line of Akeman Street (presently the A41; CAS 10500), the Roman road that branched from Watling Street south of *Verulamium* (St Albans) and ran north-west, linking London to Chester (Margary 1973). Excavations

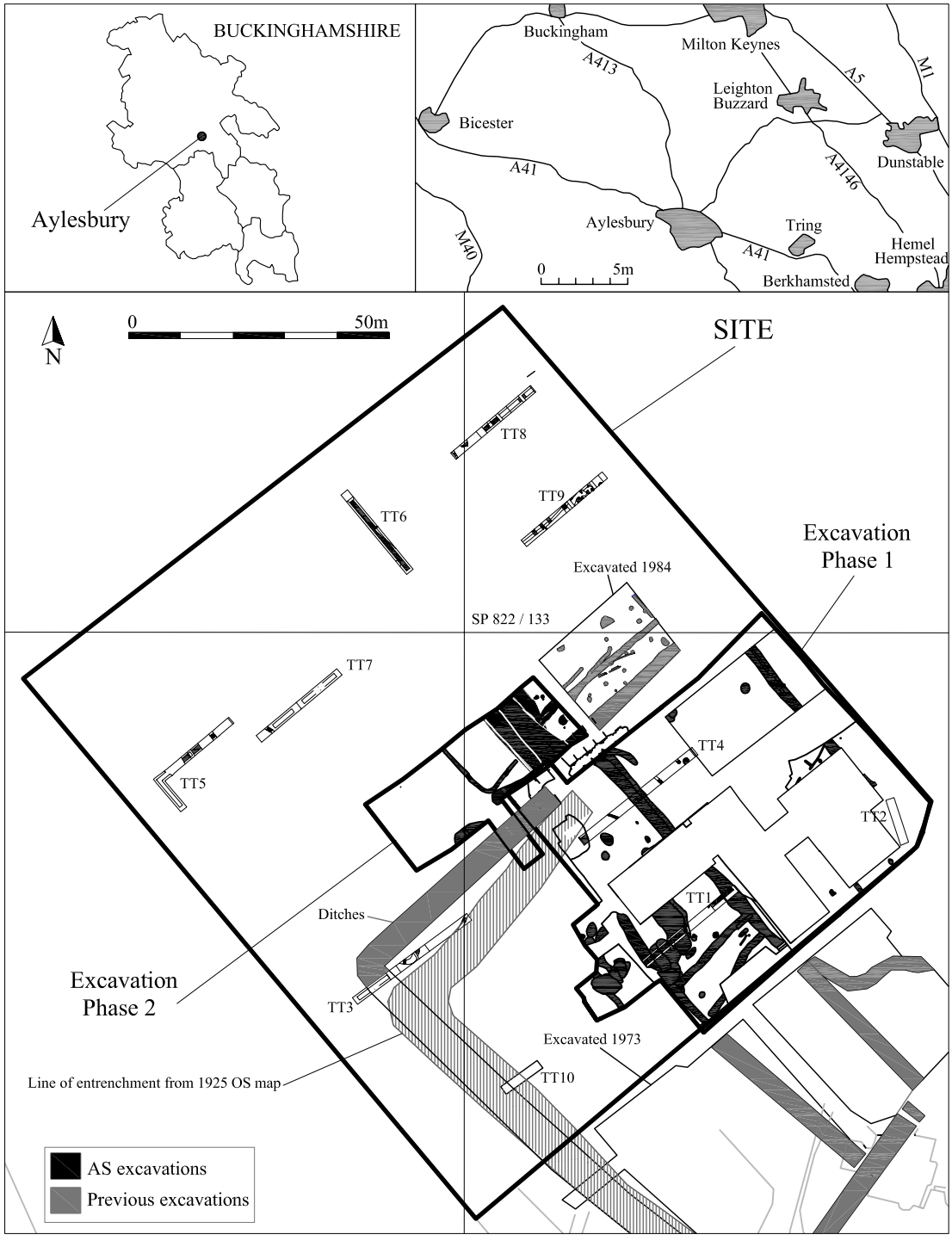


FIGURE 1 Site location plan

east of the present site revealed a 1st-century timber building, an oven-like structure, coaxial boundary features and twelve 1st-century AD inhumations (CAS 6145 & CAS 6733). It is possible that the orientation of the later Saxon streets and property boundaries of Walton originated at this time (Ford & Howell 2004, fig. 3.16).

Anglo-Saxon

Early Anglo-Saxon Walton appears to have been an extensive dispersed settlement, with large unoccupied spaces between buildings (Dalwood *et al.* 1989). There is substantial excavated evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement, with structures (predominately sunken-floored buildings) recorded and excavated to the immediate north, south and east of the current site. Excavations to date suggest that the core of the 5th-century settlement was located south-west of the present junction of Walton Street and Walton Road (CAS 2163), with more dispersed settlement adjacent to Walton Road to the north (CAS 6145). Middle Saxon structures (post-built rectangular halls rather than sunken-floored buildings) have been found both on the western side of Walton Street (CAS 2163) and across the street at the Orchard Site (Ford and Howell 2004: CAS 6108). Evidence of late Saxon tenement and plot boundaries is relatively frequent in the area; boundaries of this kind were found within the present site during the Police Houses excavation in the 1980s (Dalwood and Hawkins 1987; CAS 5555). The Church of All Saints in Aylesbury is thought to have had its origins in the 7th century as the Saxon minster church (DoE 1987).

Norman and medieval

Aylesbury is recorded in Domesday Book (Morris 1978). It was a regional administrative centre with its own court and was a household manor of the king. There is also evidence to suggest that the town had a motte-and-bailey type castle, although this is thought to have been short-lived (Hanley and Hunt 1993). From at least the 11th century, a formal layout of properties was established along both sides of Walton Street (Dalwood and Hawkins 1987). Tenth-century tenement boundary gullies were noted within the present site during the Police Houses excavation (*ibid:* CAS 5555). The excavations also identified a substantial medieval ditched boundary, interpreted as a continuation of the manorial enclosure, a number of rubbish pits and quantities of pottery (*ibid*). A further possible stretch of the manorial earthwork was noted at Walton Court Farm (Farley 1976: CAS 0093) and 13th-century plot boundaries were found at the Walton Road Vicarage site (*ibid:* CAS 2163). A linear mound (marked on historic maps as 'Intrenchment' – Fig. 2) runs through the development area. It has been dated to the 13th century and possibly represents a pillow mound or a rabbit warren boundary bank (Farley 1976).

Post-medieval and modern

The town was made a Parliamentary Borough in 1553/4 by Queen Mary (Elvey 1976). During the Civil War, it had a Parliamentary garrison. The Battle of Aylesbury occurred at Holman's Bridge, to the north of the town, in 1642 (Griffin 1998) and a post-medieval Civil War battery is located to the north-west of the site. The Grand Junction Canal was extended to Aylesbury and a dock opened on Walton Street in 1814, and a railway opened in 1838 (Hanley and Hunt 1993). The increasing prosperity of local agriculture in the 1850s and 1860s resulted in the expansion of the market. A new cattle market was established at the rear of the existing marketplace in the mid 19th century, along with a new approach road (Exchange Street, which now links Walton Street and the High Street). Substantial development of the town did not occur until the arrival of large-scale industry in the later 19th century, with offices replacing industry in the later 20th century.

The Excavation

Methodology

Topsoil and overburden were stripped under archaeological supervision, except for the extent of the earlier Police Houses excavation (Dalwood and Hawkins 1987) and the slab of the former council offices building. The stripping was undertaken using a mechanical excavator with toothless bucket. Once archaeological deposits were encountered mechanical excavation ceased, and thereafter excavation was undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded by means

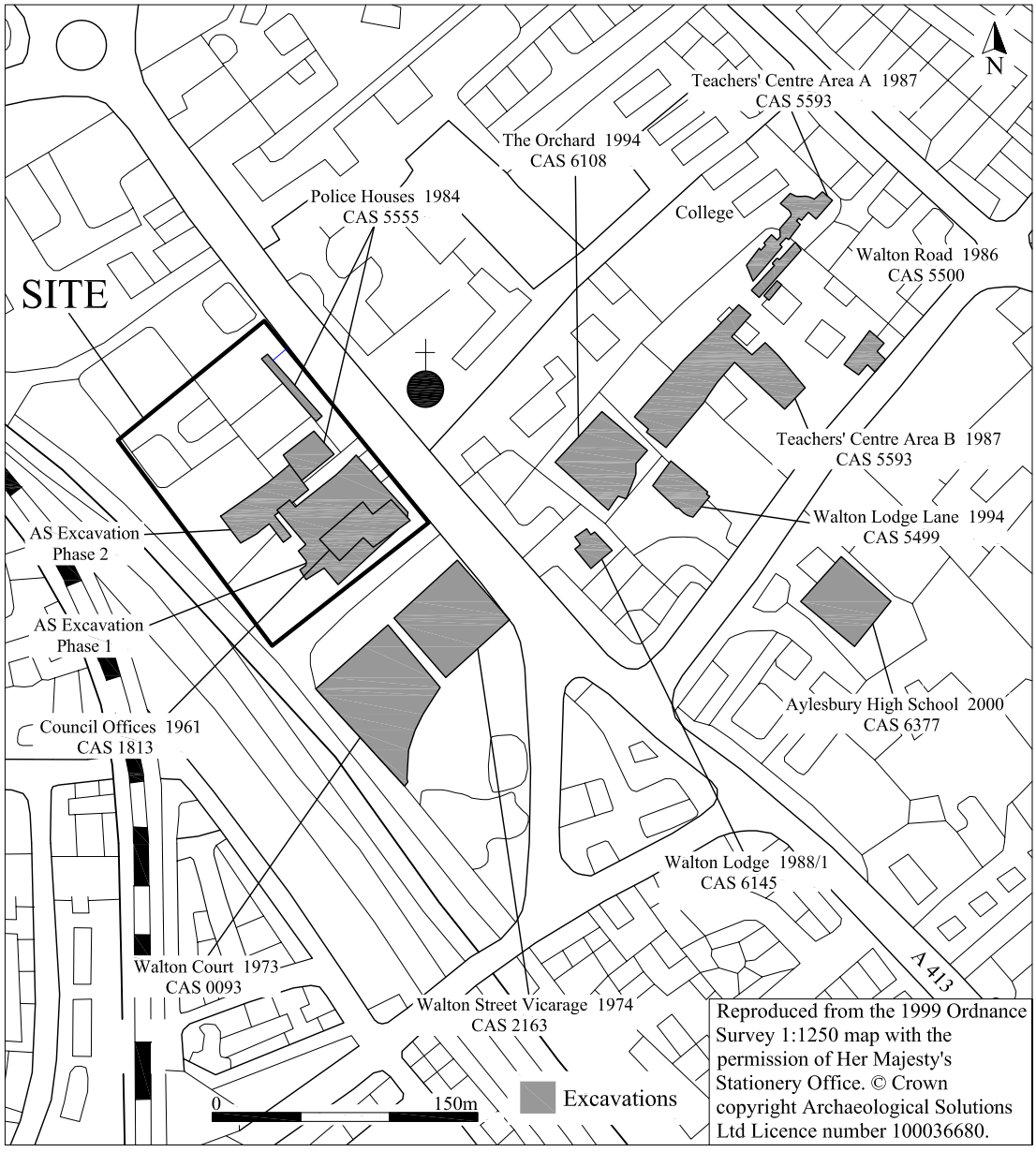


FIGURE 2 Previous excavations in the Walton Street area

of *pro forma* recording sheets; the site was surveyed using a total station theodolite (Nikon NPL 820); all sections were drawn at appropriate scales, and black and white, colour and digital photographs were taken as deemed appropriate. Excavated spoil was checked for finds and a metal detector was used to scan the areas of excavation. No factors are felt to have significantly affected the recognition of archaeological features or finds during the excavations.

Site phasing

Excavated features and layers were grouped into four chronological phases based on the combined evidence of finds dates, stratigraphic relationships and spatial/functional relationships between features. A summary of the principal features assigned to each phase is given in Table 2. The vast majority of the archaeology across the site was dated to Phases 2 and 3 (*c.* AD 550 to 1300).

Phase 1: late Bronze Age to early Iron Age (*c.*1300–400BC)

There was only sparse evidence for prehistoric activity on the site. Four features contained pottery dating to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. Of these, only Pit F3011 contained late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery, and is actually thought to have belonged to Phase 1, the pottery in the other three features being residual. The earliest residual pottery was recovered from Phase 2 Pit F2150 and comprised two early Bronze Age sherds of a beaker-type vessel. Single sherds of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery were also found in the fills of Pit F2145 and Gully F3015. Sixteen flint-tempered sherds found across the site can only be broadly dated from the late Bronze Age to late Iron Age, although similar coarse-gritted fabrics with mainly flint inclusions excavated from other sites in Aylesbury have been assigned a middle Iron Age date (Rayner 1996, 37). These are all thought to be residual: nevertheless, there is clearly evidence for low-level late Bronze Age/Iron Age activity on the site. Evidence of middle Bronze Age to early Iron Age settlement in the form of pits, four or five possible post-built roundhouses, and pottery/struck flint, has been excavated at the Orchard Site, to the east of the present excavation (Ford and Howell 2004, 62–4, 84–7). It is probable that the very sparse evidence for late Bronze Age to early Iron Age activity found at 82–84 Walton Street represents activity on the periphery of this settlement.

Phase 2: middle Saxon (*c.*AD 550–850)

Middle Saxon activity was attested by twelve features. Three were identified during the trial trench evaluation, seven during the first phase of excavation and two during the second phase. Of the three Phase 2 features identified during the evaluation, two were again identified during the full excavation of the site. The dating of this phase of activity is based primarily on the pottery found in association with the features, and on stratigraphy where stratigraphic relationships were present. The overall character of the pottery assemblage, with a fairly high proportion of organic-tempered fabrics, a near-absence of early Saxon stamp-decorated pottery and the presence of a single wheel-finished Ipswich Ware sherd, is consistent with a late 6th to 8th-century date.

Phase 2 pits in the south of the site

Pit F2146 (=F2079=F1170) was situated in the central southern part of the site. It was a large, elongated pit with five fills containing animal bone and middle Saxon pottery. Most of the animal bone was found in the upper fills of the pit and is primarily sheep/goat, with a partial cat skeleton also present. The pottery is mainly in quartz and organic-tempered fabrics, but also includes a single body sherd of sandy Ipswich Ware. Fragments of an antler comb (SF4; Fig. 5) were also present. To the north-east, the pit was cut by another elongated Phase 2 pit, F2145 (=F1173) which contained a single sherd (7g) of residual prehistoric pottery and a small amount of animal bone. Pit F2145 also cut Pit F2067 (=F1166), which extended northwards into the area truncated by modern council buildings. Two small possible postholes (F2072 and

TABLE 2 Phase summary

Phase	*Date*	*Principal features*
Phase 1	Late Bronze Age to early Iron Age (*c.* 1300–400 BC)	A single pit
Phase 2	Middle Saxon (*c*. AD 550–850)	A group of large quarry pits, occasional smaller pits and ditches
Phase 3	Late Saxon to medieval (*c*. AD 850–1300)	A large ditched boundary system and various pits
Phase 4	Early modern (AD 1800–1900)	Scattered pits, ditches and gullies

F2073) were cut into the base of Pit F2067. Pit F2067 contained residual struck flint, middle Saxon pottery, and animal bone. A large proportion of the latter was found in the upper fill of the pit, and mainly consists of cattle with some sheep/goat and pig. Also recovered from Pit F2067 was a sherd of Roman fine wheel-made grey sandy ware. This was one of just two sherds of Romano-British pottery found on site, and while no specific activities can be derived from its presence, it does imply that the area was occupied at some stage during the Romano-British period.

Pit F2165 was cut by Pit F2145, Phase 3 Ditch F2076 and Phase 4 Pit F2166. Its exact dimensions could not be established due to truncation from later features, but it was at least 3.92m wide by up to 2.20m deep. Seven fills were identified in the pit. These appeared to represent a sequence of natural silting episodes interspersed with thin lenses of slumped weathered material from the open north-east side of the pit. The silting layers (the second, fourth and sixth fills) contained 5th to 9th-century pottery, while the slumped lenses (the basal, third and fifth fills) contained no finds. Pit F2165 contrasted with the other pits in this group of middle Saxon features, the rest of which tended to have one main fill of yellowy or brownish-grey silty sand. The sequence of infilling suggests that Pit F2165 was left open for some time rather than deliberately backfilled, an observation supported by the animal bone assemblage, particularly that from the lower fill (L2168), which includes a large number of frog/toad bones. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the pit was open for some time, that it filled in gradually and naturally, and that it was at least sometimes waterlogged. It is possible that it was used as a watering hole for livestock, something which the relatively gradual slope of the upper portion of its sides would have facilitated.

Located *c.*10m to the north of Pit F2067, on the opposite side of the standing council office buildings, were smaller Pits F2084 and F2086. Pit F2084 was truncated by the council building in the centre of the site. It may have been part of the same feature as Pit F2067, though any such relationship was obscured. Located *c.*1.5m north of Pit F2084 was similar Pit F2086. Located *c.*7m south-west of Pit F2146 was Pit F2143. Pit F2143 had been heavily truncated by a cluster of later pits immediately to the south (see Phase 3, below). It contained four fills, the upper two of which contained late 5th to early 9th-century pottery, animal bone and a glass bead fragment (SF5; Fig. 6). Pit F2143 was very similar in size to Pits F2084 and F2086; in contrast, Pits F2084 and F2086 each contained a single fill. It seems likely that Pit F2143 was utilised in a different way to the other two pits. The faunal evidence from its lower fill, which included numerous frog/toad and small mammal bones, suggests that the pit was wet and had probably been left open for a period of time. It may originally have had a specialised use, for example as a tanning pit, before being left to fill in naturally rather than being used for deliberate dumping of waste material.

It seems likely that there was a functional difference between these small pits and the larger intercutting cluster of contemporary pits described above. The size and irregular shape of the larger pits indicates that their primary purpose may have been small-scale extraction of clay for local use. After this had ended, the resulting hollows were probably used intermittently as rubbish pits. The smaller pits, F2084 and F2086, were probably intended as rubbish pits from the start. The nature of this activity, comprising small-scale clay extraction and occasional rubbish dumping, seems in keeping with a peripheral area on the outskirts of a middle Saxon settlement.

Other Phase 2 features

Three further early to middle Saxon features were present on the site. Pit F1075 was located in Trial Trench 8, *c.*80m north of Pits F2084 and F2086. It contained Saxon pottery, including a probable 7th-century stamp-decorated sherd (incised with a circular cross), and a small quantity of animal bone. Pit F3009 was located *c.*35m north-west of Pits F2084 and F2086. It contained Saxon pottery and animal bone. Just south of Pit F3009 was Gully F3013 which was aligned north-east to south-west; it was truncated by Ditch F3017 to the south-west and extended beyond the site boundary to the north-east. It contained a single sherd of residual Samian ware, 27 fragments of animal bone, a large proportion of which are from cattle, and also a fragmentary dog skull. The presence of residual Samian ware implies that Romano-British activity was occurring in the vicinity of the site, though its location and nature are uncertain. Gully F3015 ran parallel to F3013. It contained late 5th to 9th-

century pottery and animal bone. These narrow, shallow features were probably drainage gullies; certainly they were aligned with respect for the slight downward slope of this part of the site to the west. However, it is also possible that they represent beam slots or foundation trenches for a small post-in-trench building, to which Pit F3009 may also have been related.

The nature of the Phase 2 activity identified at 82–84 Walton Street suggests that the site was on the periphery of the early to middle Saxon settlement revealed by previous excavations in this part of Aylesbury. Previous archaeological work has identified what might be interpreted as the 'core' of early to middle Saxon activity *c.*150m east of the current site, on the opposite side of Walton Street. The portion of the settlement so far identified comprises 10 sunken-featured buildings and 11 post-built halls (Ford and Howell 2004, Dalwood *et al.* 1989, Bonner 1994). The lack of direct occupation evidence at the current site compared with sites situated on the east side of Walton Street accords with the developing picture of the topography of the early Saxon settlement. The site was probably agricultural land/scrubland located on the fringes of the settlement, used for occasional clay extraction, periodic refuse disposal and perhaps, given the presence of a possible watering hole, grazing livestock. The resulting large pits were sometimes used for dumping domestic waste, although not in large enough quantities to indicate intensive activity in the immediate vicinity. The remaining pits and hollows were then completely filled in prior to the laying out of the Phase 3 boundary ditch system.

Phase 3: late Saxon to medieval (*c.*AD 850–1300)

Phase 3 was the principal phase of activity on the site (Fig. 4). This period saw the establishment, and then the long-term use and maintenance, of a system of substantial boundary ditches, which divided the site into several rectilinear enclosures. Numerous other ditches, pits and gullies were also dateable to this phase. Ceramic evidence shows that elements of the ditch system were first laid out in the late Saxon period. Probable pre-Norman Conquest assemblages, with diagnostic St Neots Ware sherds, were present, for example in Ditches F3017 and F2097 (=F2046=F1179). However, the ditches appear to have been periodically re-cut, cleaned out, and maintained over a long period, perhaps continuing as late as the 13th or early 14th century (e.g. Ditch F2006 (=F2002=F2196)). Land use on the site therefore appears to have remained much the same throughout the late Saxon and early medieval periods.

The Phase 3 rectilinear boundary ditches

The rectilinear boundary system was formed by six parallel north-west to south-east aligned ditches: Ditch F2006, Ditch F2056 (=F2064=F1134 =F1136), Ditch F2097, Ditch F2151, Ditch F2076 and Ditch F2157, and two south-west to north-east aligned ditches: F2040 and F2044 (=F2052). These ditches were very similar in width and depth, between 1.00m and 2.50m in width and generally no deeper than 1.00m. The sole exception was F2056, which was an earlier cut of F2097.

The northernmost of the north-west to south-east ditches was Ditch F2006, which measured 35m in length and was up to 2.60m wide by over 1.00m deep, with 'v'-shaped sides and a slightly rounded base. It contained a small amount of residual late 5th to 9th-century wares and a large assemblage of 12th to 13th-century pottery, consisting of South Hertfordshire Grey Wares, Brill and Oxfordshire/Brill-type sherds, and including some diagnostic jar and cooking pot rims. Animal bone and a small quantity of ceramic building materials were also present. The animal bone, consisting predominantly of sheep/goat with smaller quantities of cattle and pig, was present mainly in the upper fills of the ditch, suggesting that the feature was cleaned out / kept open, and only subject to deliberate dumping of rubbish towards the end of its period of use. The ditch was traced in three locations across the northern edge of the site; in places it lay outside the excavated areas or had been truncated by the former council offices. There was no evidence of any contemporary ditches running southwards at right angles to Ditch F2006, which would have directly associated it with Ditches F2097 and/ or F2056. However, a large proportion of the area between the two sets of ditches had been severely truncated by the former council offices, possibly obscuring any such relationship. Based on its identical alignment, dimensions and similar profile to the 9th to 13th-century ditches to the south, Ditch F2006 almost certainly formed part of the same boundary system. The basal and secondary fills identified in Segment A

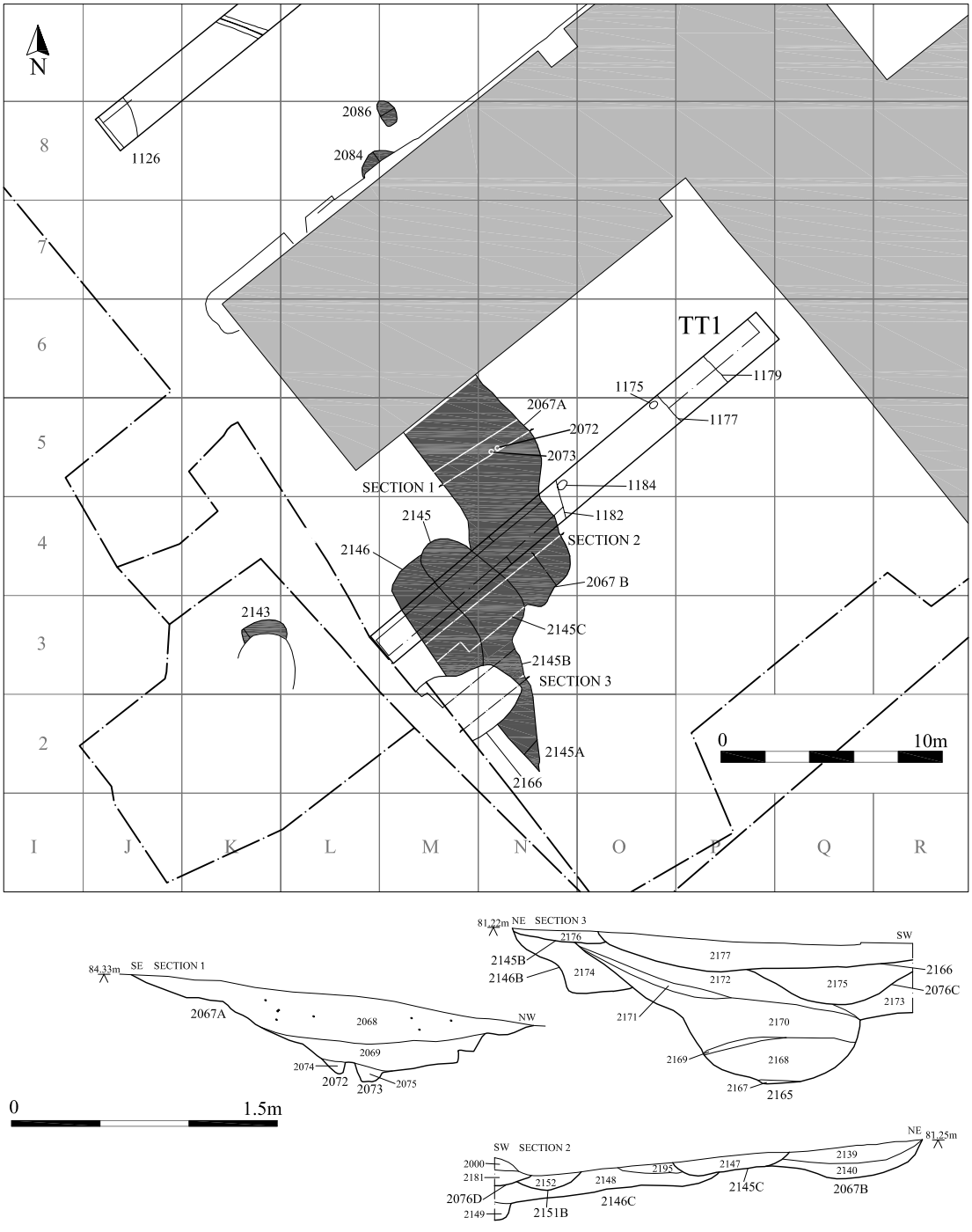


FIGURE 3 Plan and sections of Phase 2

of the ditch (specifically Ditch F2006) contained quantities of limestone rubble, a characteristic also noted in relation to several of the other Phase 3 ditches (see below).

Ditch F2097 ran north-west to south-east across the centre of the main excavation area, 33m to the south of Ditch F2006. It was traced for 41m, but extended beyond both the north-western and south-eastern boundaries of the site. It was almost certainly a continuation of a ditch excavated to the south-east of the current site in 1974 (Fig. 2). It was consistently *c.*2.20m across and 0.66 – 1.10m deep, and contained 21 different fills along its length; up to five successive fill layers were present in the individual segments dug through the ditch. One sherd of residual Iron Age pottery, 38 sherds of residual middle Saxon pottery and a moderately large assemblage of Saxo-Norman pottery were recovered, in addition to brick and tile, tap slag, shell and animal bone. The animal bone assemblage is the largest from any of the Phase 3 ditches and predominantly comprises cattle and sheep/goat bones; although a partial adult dog was present in the lower fill (L2178) of one segment. The presence of frog/toad and small mammal bones throughout the different fills suggests that the infilling of the ditch was a gradual process, with the feature remaining open for some time. Along the south-eastern side of the ditch (Ditch F2046), the second fill of the feature consistently included fairly large quantities of degraded limestone rubble, possibly representing a weathered and slumped bank. The layering of fills along most of the length of the ditch also suggests that it was left open for a significant period, during which it filled in naturally. Ditch F2097 re-cut earlier Ditch F2056, which followed an identical north-west to south-east alignment for over 40m. It contained 56 mixed sherds of mid 9th to 13th-century pottery and a large assemblage of animal bone. It showed no signs of the rubble deposition identified in Ditch F2097, although it had, in places, been completely destroyed by its re-cut. The presence of quantities of residual early to middle Saxon pottery suggests that an earlier ditch in this position and on this alignment may have existed during Phase 2, but been completely destroyed by later demarcations of the boundary. What may have been the bottom of an earlier, heavily-truncated ditch, F2118, survived in places beneath Ditches F2056 and F2097. It contained no finds, but could have originally held much of the middle Saxon pottery found redeposited in its recuts.

At their southern ends, Ditches F2097 and F2056 cut two ditches, which ran at right angles to them (F2040 and F2044). Ditch F2044 was the southernmost of these. It was *c.*16m long overall, but was identified in two short lengths separated by an unexcavated baulk. The ditch contained 11th to 12th-century pottery, brick and tile, a small quantity of slag and animal bone. The animal bone, which includes roughly equal proportions of sheep/goat and cattle, as well as a partial dog, is well preserved and was mainly found in one part of the feature (Seg. A); this may have represented a discrete dump of rubbish at one point along the length of the ditch. To the south-west, Ditch F2044 ended in an abrupt rounded terminus *c.*1.00m short of Ditch F2076. It is possible that this gap formed an entranceway to one of the individual ditched enclosures. This ditch contained one fill throughout. A small section of the ditch had limestone inclusions within its fill, although not to the same extent as in the larger north-west to south-east aligned ditches. Five metres north of Ditch F2044 was Ditch F2040, which ran parallel to Ditch F2044, extending for 17.50m from Ditch F2097 in the north-east towards Ditch F2076 (see below) in the south-west. It was cut by both F2097 and F2076. Ditch F2040 was identical in size and profile to Ditch F2044 clearly defining them as part of the same boundary system. Ditch F2040 contained residual late 5th to 9th-century pottery but nine sherds of St Neots Ware and early medieval sandy ware indicate a likely 11th-century date. Part of Ditch F2040 contained limestone rubble in its basal fill. The smaller size of the north-east to south-west aligned ditches suggests that they demarcated internal subdivisions within the main land units defined by the more substantial north-west to south-east boundaries.

Ditch F2076 was the southernmost of the ditches in the rectilinear boundary system. It ran north-west to south-east, parallel to Ditches F2097, F2056 and F2006, and was traced for 15m before extending beyond the southern boundary of the site and being truncated by Phase 4 Pit F2166. Ditch F2076 contained mid 5th to mid 9th-century pottery, 12th to 15th-century pottery, brick and tile, and animal bone. This ditched boundary continued to the north-west of Pit F2166 as Ditch F2151 which measured 15m long and extended north-west from

the terminus of Ditch F2076, before coming to a slightly irregular rounded terminus. It contained mid 5th to 9th-century pottery and animal bone. A probable south-eastward continuation of Ditch F2076 was noted during the 1974 excavations in this area (Fig. 2).

The rectilinear ditch system was the principal feature of the Phase 3 site. The few contemporary features, mainly large pits, were clustered to the south-west of the identified ditched enclosures. They may have been outside the enclosed areas, or more likely (based on previous investigations on and around the site), within a plot which was defined to the north by Ditches F2151 and F2076, and to the south by the possible 13th-century (or earlier) 'Intrenchment'. The large spaces between the boundary ditches were devoid of contemporary features. While this could be a result of intensive modern building activity, it is more likely to indicate the sort of use to which the enclosures were originally put.

This ditch system is consistent with the development, in the later Anglo-Saxon period, of a formal and organised system of land divisions in this area of Walton (Farley 1976, Dalwood and Hawkins 1984). The north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west ditch alignments have a clear association with the line of Walton Street, to which they run either parallel or at right angles. They also have a clear relationship with the earthworks of the medieval 'Intrenchment', within which they are sited, indicating that they may have been parts of the same boundary system. Contemporary boundaries to those excavated on the present site were identified immediately to the south during excavations in 1973–4 (Farley 1976). Several bear clear spatial relationships to those found during the present excavations. All the ditches contained small quantities of residual 5th to 9th-century pottery, which might either suggest the presence of an earlier ditch system, or may be the result of disturbance of early to middle Saxon features during the construction of the late Saxon/medieval ditch system.

Late Saxon and medieval pits

Sixteen late Saxon/early medieval pits were identified across the site. Four pits (F1009, F1011, F1030 and F1035) were excavated in Trial Trench 9, *c.*45m north-west of the first phase of open area excavation. The largest of the four, F1009 and F1011, were intercutting, while F1030 and F1035 were isolated. All contained medieval pottery ranging in date between the 12th and 15th centuries as well as brick and tile, animal bone and small quantities of shell, iron slag and flint. Pit F1011 contained a notable pottery assemblage of 47 sherds in a variety of fabrics, including reddish-coloured late Brill wares, which are probably 14th century or later. To the north-west, in the northern part of Trench 8, a buried soil layer (L1070) encountered immediately above the natural clay yielded 97 later medieval (13th to 15th century) potsherds, many in Brill and Oxford-type buff and orange fabrics. The layer also contained a large assemblage of well-preserved animal bone dominated by sheep/goat metapodials, probably a primary dump of tanning waste. Interpretation of these features in relation to other medieval activity across the rest of the site is hindered by the small area revealed and by their isolation from the main open area excavation. The relatively small size of the pits, their single fills, and the quantities of associated finds indicate that their most likely use was as rubbish pits. The date of some of the associated pottery suggests that, in contrast to the rest of the site, this north-western area saw some activity during the late medieval period. Elsewhere, there was little sign of activity beyond the early 14th century. This continuity only in the far north-western part of the site, closer to the core of medieval Aylesbury, may reflect contraction of the settlement following the climatic downturn and plagues of the 14th century.

Pits F2199, F2160, F2159, F2150, F2153, F2155 and F2141 were located in the southern corner of the site. All contained 10th to 13th-century pottery and animal bone. Pit F2155 contained a residual early to middle Saxon burnished bowl rim, while F2160, stratigraphically one of the earliest pits in the group, contained a post-Conquest assemblage comprising St Neots and early medieval shelly limestone wares.

Pits F2015, F2182, F2184, F3025 and F3022 were excavated across the rest of the site. All contained 10th to 13th-century pottery and animal bone, and Pit F2141 contained frog and toad elements, which imply that the pits were not infilled immediately after use. Pit F3022 also contained animal bone and a large assemblage of plant remains including cereal grains and chaff, legumes, nuts and various wild floras, thought to

represent a deliberate deposition event.

It is difficult to assign specific functions to any of these Phase 3 pits. With the exception of the cluster of intercutting pits (e.g. F2150, F2199 etc.) in the south-west corner of the main excavation area, there were no obvious patterns to their distribution. The location of four large pits in Trial Trench 9, all of which contained relatively large amounts of domestic pottery, might indicate a focal point of activity, perhaps of occupation, outside the bounds of the excavated ditch system. The pottery located within the pits in Trial Trench 9 is potentially of a later medieval date (12th to 15th-century) to that encountered elsewhere on the site.

The large group of intercutting Phase 3 pits excavated in the southern part of the site possibly represents small-scale extraction of raw materials, although the intercutting nature of the features makes this seem unlikely, as they were often dug into the fills of earlier pits rather than into undisturbed natural clay. If clay extraction was taking place, it was not on a major scale and the clay was perhaps being used for day-to-day maintenance of wattle and daub walls/fences rather than for construction or in an industrial process (e.g. pottery manufacture). A more likely explanation is that the pits were dug primarily for the disposal of domestic rubbish. The moderate quantities of finds present could have originally been deposited alongside organic waste, which has not survived.

Other Phase 3 ditches

Nine other ditches, identified over the course of the evaluation and excavations, can also be dated to the late Saxon/early medieval period, but do not all appear to relate directly to the rectilinear boundary system described above. Ditches F1073, F1102, F1095, F1029, F1019 and F1014 were identified during the evaluation, and as such their full extents and nature remain unclear. Three further ditches were revealed during the most recent phase of excavation. Based on their alignments, these are all likely to have been directly associated with the rectilinear boundary system to the south. Ditch F3017 was the earliest of the three; it was aligned north-west to south-east and contained 6th to 9th-century pottery and St Neots Ware, suggesting a late 9th to 10th-century date. At its south-east end, Ditch F3017 was cut by much larger Ditch F3028 which contained a moderate assemblage of 12th to 14th-century pottery, animal bone, brick and tile, and iron nails. Adjacent to Ditch F3028 was Ditch F3049. This feature contained six sherds 11th to 13th-century pottery and animal bone; however, the precise nature of this feature was unclear, as it was obscured on two sides by the site boundary.

Phase 4: early modern (AD 1800–1900)

Early modern activity was noted across the site. It comprised three pits (F1126, F2166 and F3020), five ditches (F1098, F2188, F2017=F2010=F2018, F2013 and F3032), a curvilinear feature (F1124) and a possible watercourse (F1145). The early modern ditches followed the alignments of the previous rectilinear enclosure system. All also contained large amounts of brick and tile, and animal bone, moderate amounts of 18th to 19th and 19th to 20th-century pottery, and small amounts of glass, slag, clay pipe and slate.

Specialist Reports

The Pottery

Peter Thompson

The combined excavations produced 983 sherds weighing 8.960 kg. The site is multi-period, spanning the Saxon to high medieval periods, with some prehistoric, Roman and post-medieval pottery also present. The assemblage is in mixed condition with the prehistoric and Saxon pottery mainly comprising small, abraded residual sherds.

Methodology

The pottery was examined under x35 binocular microscope and recorded by period and fabric type (Tables 3 and 4). Dating was made in accordance with the 2004 London medieval and post-medieval database and through comparison with published sites referenced in the text. A selection of sherds was also sent to pottery specialists in counties adjacent to Buckinghamshire for ware/fabric identification. The medieval and post-medieval fabrics have been assigned codes based on the Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit type-series (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat *et al*. 1994). Wares not in this type series have been assigned codes from the London type-series (provided by Berni Sudds of Pre-Construct Archaeology), and in one case each from the Oxfordshire type-series (Mellor 1994)

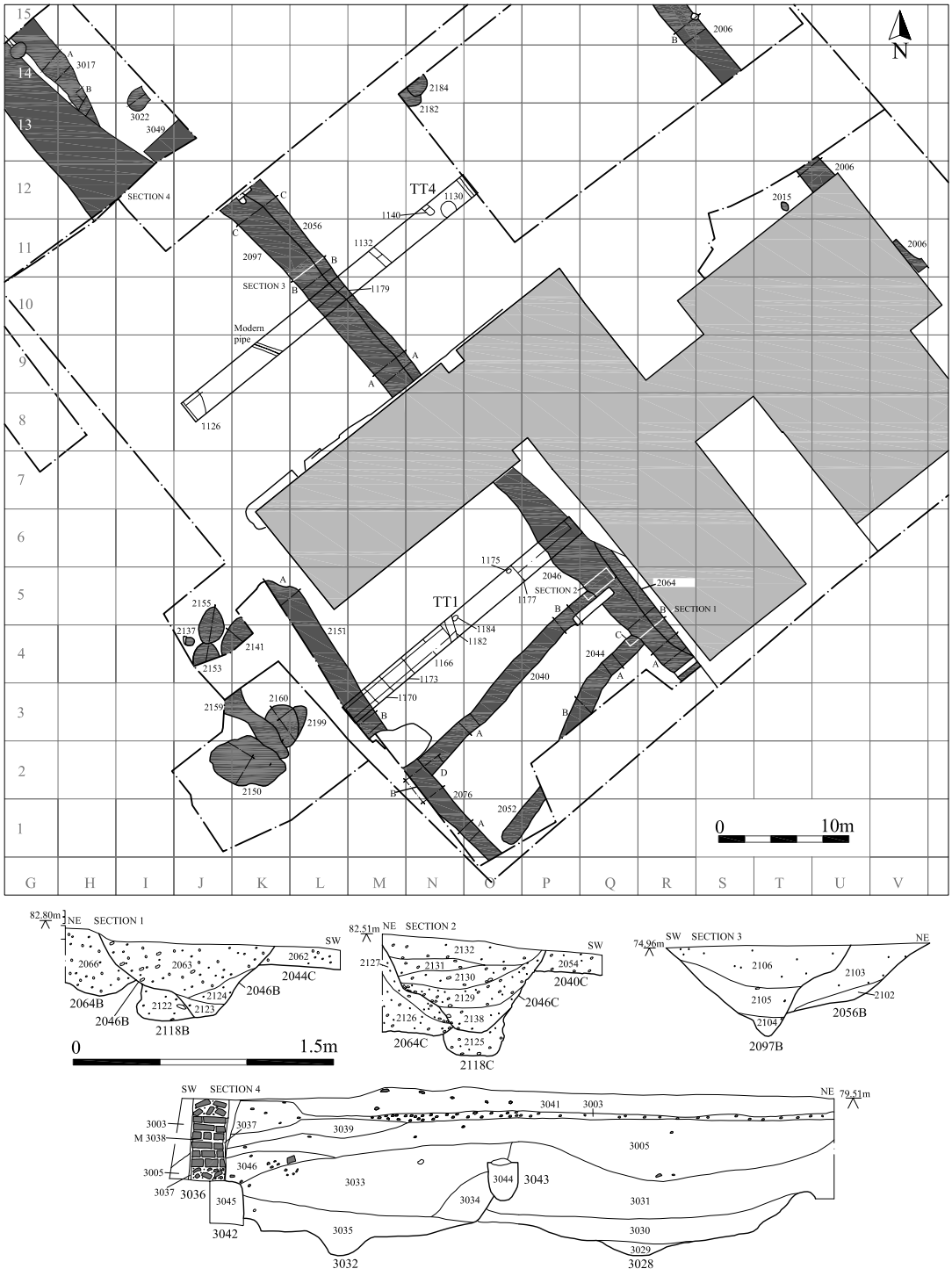


FIGURE 4 Plan and sections of Phase 3

TABLE 3 The pottery by period

Period	*Sherd Number*	*Fabric Weight (g)*	*Sherd percentage of site total*
Prehistoric	29	184	3
Roman	8	91	0.8
Saxon	216	1,609	22
Saxo-Norman	76	541	7.7
Medieval	526	5,309	53.6
Post-medieval to modern	126	1,226	12.9
	981	8,960	

and Bedfordshire type-series (Anna Slowikowski pers. comm.).

The Prehistoric and Roman Pottery

The earliest pottery came from Pit F2150 (L2162) and comprised two residual early Bronze Age decorated Beaker sherds in grog temper with a little flint (Fig. 5.1 & 5.2).

Sixteen prehistoric flint tempered sherds date between the late Bronze Age and late Iron Age. Similar coarse gritted fabrics with few other inclusions excavated from other sites in Aylesbury have been assigned a middle Iron Age date (Rayner 1996, 37). These sherds are residual with two possible exceptions comprising a single sherd each from Ditch F2145 (L2176) and Pit F3011 (L3012).

A further eight small abraded grog tempered late Iron Age sherds were also residual, with the possible exception of the single sherd from Gully F3015 (L3016). Ditch F1166 (L1169) contained a single sherd of Roman sandy grey ware and Ditch F3013 (L3014) a sherd of Oxfordshire red slipped ware (OXF RS).

The Saxon Pottery

The early to middle Saxon pottery (216 sherds), which is generally moderately to heavily abraded, made up 21.8% of the site assemblage. Organic or 'grass' tempering is the commonest fabric with 82 such sherds (37.9%), while a further 44 (20.3%) contained organics with sand or quartz. In Oxfordshire grass tempering appears to have been in use between the late 5th and early 8th centuries; at Oxford, no grass tempered pottery was present in contexts dated late 8th to early 9th century (Farley 1976, 192). While this fabric was used at various times in different areas, including limited evidence from Berkshire for continuance into the medieval period, it seems to have been in contemporaneous use in virtually every county in southern England except Kent, between the mid 6th and 7th centuries (Hodges 1981, 55). Two sherds present in pink granite and dark mica fabric, including one from Saxon Pit F2146 (L2148C), may have their source in Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire, which unusually for the period (late 5th – early 7th centuries) had a wide distribution for its handmade wares, stretching between East Yorkshire and the English Channel (Denison 1999). However, it is just possible that the sherd could have originated from local drift deposits (Berni Sudds pers.comm.).

Pit F1075 (L1076) contained two burnished early Saxon sherds in coarse quartz sand fabric. One has a decorative stamp of an A4ai open ended circular cross (Briscoe 1981, 5) bordered by two vertical lines of one to three grooves (Fig. 5.3). Such decoration became increasingly common throughout the 6th century after which its use reduced, but continued into the medieval period. The Walton Street example is suggested as 7th century (Berni Sudds pers. comm.).

Ditch F1177 contained 36 Saxon sherds in sand and quartz temper, some burnished, and including one simple slightly outturned jar rim. Eighteen Saxon sherds in mainly organic and quartz temper came from Ditch F1170, which also included a sherd of Ipswich ware. This middle Saxon ware has a blanket distribution throughout East Anglia, but stops at its political frontier and is much less common beyond it, although it can be present as far afield as York (Wickham 2005, 810). The 1985–6 excavations at Walton produced three sherds of Ipswich ware out of a total of 986 early to middle Saxon sherds (Dalwood *et al* 1989, 160). Ipswich ware can be closely dated between *c.*720/740 and 850/900 when it was replaced by Thetford-type

TABLE 4 The pottery by ware/fabric

Ware/Fabric	*Date Range*	*Sherd Number*	*Fabric Weight*
Prehistoric			
Grog	Mid 3rd – mid 2nd millennium BC	2	14
Flint	1st millennium BC – 1st century AD	16	103
Grog	1st cent. BC – 1st cent. AD	11	67
Roman			
Sandy oxidised ware	Mid 1st-4th century	1	7
Sandy grey ware	Mid 1st-4th century	6	70
Oxfordshire red-slipped ware (OXF RS)	mid 3rd-4th century	1	14
Saxon			
Organics	Mid 5th-8th	82	574
Quartz and organics	Mid 5th-9th	44	262
Quartz	Mid 5th-9th	40	392
Sand	Mid 5th-10th	24	164
Sand and organics	Mid 5th-9th	12	70
Sand & sandstone	Mid 5th-9th	6	53
Shell	Mid 5th-10th	5	36
Granite & dark mica	-	2	10
Ipswich ware	8th-late 9th	1	19
Saxo-Norman			
SNC1: St Neots ware	mid 9th-mid 12th	76	541
Medieval			
MC 1: Medieval shelly ware	11th- late 13th	12	55
B13: Early Med. Chalky ware	mid 11th- mid 12th	25	289
MSC 1: Sandy and shelly ware	late 11th-13th	57	491
MSC2: 'Sandy, flinty and shelly ware'	12th /13th -14th	63	525
SHER: South Hertfordshire grey ware	late 12th – late 14th	19	503
ESHER (DENM/M40): Denham-type	mid 12th-13th	7	60
MS3: Medieval grey sandy ware	late 11th- early 15th	152	1,412
MS3: Sandy grey ware	late 12th-15th	44	675
MS9: Boarstall-type coarse wares	13th-15th	24	183
MS9: Brill coarse ware (early)	13th	3	55
MS3: South Hertfordshire grey ware	Late 12th-14th	37	397
(SHER)	Late 12th-14th	37	397
MS26: Sandy Oxidised ware	13th-15th	10	46
OXY: Oxfordshire-type	12th-13th	10	58
MS9: Brill-type	13th-15th	44	371
MS6: Potterspury ware	13th-15th	18	179
Brill (late)	14th-15th	3	9
Post-medieval to modern			
PM 8: Red earthenware	17th - 18th	19	516
ENGS: English stoneware	17th-19th	5	123
PM 23: Creamware	early 18th-late 19th	16	174
PM 27: English porcelain	Mid 18th-20th	5	80
PM 34: Wedgwood 'Black Basalt' ware	late 18th-19th	2	3
PM 25: Factory made white earthenwares	Mid 18th-20th	61	205
PM 25: Transfer Printed ware	Late 18th-19th	15	96
MOCH: Mocha type ware	Late 18th-20th	1	6
PMRE: Modern red earthenware	20th	2	23

wares (Wickham 2005, 810 and Mortimer 2000, 21).

Rim forms or profiles were comparatively uncommon, but include a burnished bowl rim from Pit F2155 (L2156), while Ditches F2067 (L2140) and F2146 (L2148) contained burnished jar rims (Fig. 5.4 and 5.5). The latter comprises an unusual heavy rim in a distinctive fabric of iron ore and pink quartz fabric (Fig. 6.5) and has the appearance of late Saxon/early medieval forms, but the burnishing and association with Saxon sherds suggests an early to middle Saxon date (Berni Sudds pers. comm.). Saxon pottery is often difficult to date closely, with the exceptions indicated above. A comparison between fabrics excavated at Walton Street Car Park and Walton shows that Walton was dominated by organic tempered pottery, whereas at Walton Street the disparity is not so great and finer quartz sand and coarser quartz fabrics are higher in number (Table 5).

Dalwood suggested a date of late 6th to 8th centuries for Walton, based on evidence such as the rarity or absence of early Saxon stamp-decorated pottery and late Saxon St Neots ware, and comparison with organic temper from other sites (Dalwood 1989, 163). At Walton Vicarage and Walton Lodge there was an increase in the use of organic tempering in the 6th and 7th centuries (Dalwood *et al* 1986, 162). The Walton Street pottery is probably therefore of similar date, having organic tempered sherds in nearly all the contexts containing only Saxon pottery. Features containing Saxon pottery and nothing of later date are F1075, F1170, F1177, F2067, F2079, F2084, F2086, F2143, F2146, F2151, F2155, F2159, F2165, F3009 and F3013.

Saxo-Norman

St Neots ware is the only Saxo-Norman ware present numbering 76 sherds (7.7% of the overall assemblage). It is commonly found in and around Aylesbury, being produced in Bedfordshire, North Buckinghamshire and probably Oxfordshire. When added to the earlier Saxon sherd total it accounts for 29.5% of the Walton Street assemblage. At the Walton 1973–4 excavation, where St Neots ware appeared without other fabrics it was taken to indicate a 10th-century horizon. Where it continued side by side with newer forms, an 11th-century date was assigned (Farley 1976, 230). Ditch F3017 contained three Saxon sherds including organic temper and burnishing, and three of St Neots, suggesting a late 9th to 10th-century date, although the sherds are all heavily abraded and so could be residual. Ditch F2097 also contained residual Saxon sherds alongside 13 sherds of St Neots ware, including two hammerhead bowl rims from fills L2105 and L2106 (Fig. 5.6 and 5.7). This group also contained a bowl rim in South Hertfordshire grey ware (Fig. 5.8) indicating a late 12th-century date, but Hurst (1956, 50) suggests that hammerhead rims found at St Neots itself are pre-Conquest. Based on this criterion, and subject to residuality, features F1136, F2073, F2182, F3017 and F3025 containing St Neots ware only, or associated with earlier Saxon sherds, are probably *c.*10th century. Ditch F2040 containing St Neots ware and early medieval Grey Sandy wares is suggested as late 11th to 12th century. Features F1140, F2046, F2097, F2160 and F2184 containing St. Neots and early medieval Chalky wares, are assigned dates centred on the late 11th to mid 12th centuries.

Medieval Pottery

The medieval pottery comprises just over half of the site assemblage (526 sherds: 53.5%), is in mixed condition and probably derives from a large number of sources. There is an overall paucity in good diagnostic forms with the exception of

TABLE 5 Comparison of the main fabrics by percentage between Walton Street Car Park and Walton Street (Walton Street percentage based on Dalwood *et al* 1989, 160)

Walton Street	*Sherd percentage*	*Walton*	*Sherd percentage*
Organic	37.9	Organic	53
Organic and quartz	20.3	Organic and quartz	25.4
Sand/quartz	29.6	Sand/quartz	14.4
Other	12.2	Other	7.2

several contexts, in particular Ditch F2006 which contained over 100 sherds including some well-preserved pottery: eight sherds have been illustrated. The fabrics can be divided into very broad site specific categories for ease of discussion.

Group 1 Shelly wares

Group 1 comprises 37 sherds (7% of the medieval total) in calcareous wares. Twelve sherds of medieval shelly ware (MC1), similar to St Neots ware in appearance, are thought to derive from the Ouse valley (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 251), and include an open bowl rim with thickened, rounded end from Ditch F2006 (Fig. 5.9). Twenty-five sherds with mainly buff-orange to grey-brown surfaces containing visible white chalky inclusions and cores containing decayed grey chalk up to 1.5mm across with occasional voids, quartz and shell are early medieval chalky ware. This ware has been found at sites in North Buckinghamshire and around Leighton Buzzard including Chelmscote and Stanbridge Manor (Anna Slowikowski pers. comm. and Abrams forthcoming). In London, early medieval chalky ware is securely dated to the mid 11th to mid 12th century, after which it ceased to be used, and it is also found in the St Albans area predating South Hertfordshire Grey ware (Vince and Jenner 1991, 70–72). The type B13 pottery from Stanbridge could be of a similar date, although at Chelmscote a mid 12th-century date was suggested (Moore *et al* 2007, 49) and so the fabric may have a greater longevity of use in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Pit F2141 contained a fairly simple bowl rim in early medieval chalky ware (Fig. 5.10). In the Leighton Buzzard area all identifiable forms belong to jars and in London to cooking pots and spouted pitchers (Anna Slowikowski pers. comm.: Vince 1985, 37) and so it is possible the source for Walton Street is an unidentified site.

Group 2 Sandy and Shelly wares

Group 2 comprises 57 sherds (10.8%) in MSC 1 sandy and shelly ware which is unsourced and usually comprises grey quartz sand tempered fabrics with white shell and limestone. An expanded jar rim came from Ditch F2157 (L2158).

Group 3 Flinty tempered wares

Group 3 Flint with sand tempered wares totals 89 sherds (16.9%), most in a fine sandy fabric with sparse to moderate flint and occasional white calcareous and black opaque inclusions. Surfaces are mainly brown with grey or red brown cores. These fabrics are fairly similar in description to unsourced MSC2 from Milton Keynes, a comparatively rare fabric there, and the presence of 63 such sherds (11.9%) at Walton Street is unusual. They include two jar rims from Ditch F2006 (Fig. 5.11 and 5.12) and a profusely thumb decorated strap handle from F1036 (Fig. 5.13). It is possible this category is related to a group of fabrics known as 'M40 wares' from South Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Seven similar sherds with distinctive comb decoration (ESHER) are likely to have come from Rush Green, Denham in South Buckinghamshire: thumbing to jug handles was also a characteristic there (Farley and Leach 1988, 73–4 and 82–4). Nineteen sherds (3.6%) of South Hertfordshire grey ware (SHER) containing flint temper complete this group. Among them are two large bowls from Gully F2013 and Pit F1035, one with thumb-decorated applied strips. These are probably curfews, indicated by internal sooting (Fig. 5.14 and 5.15).

Group 4 Sandy wares

Most of the medieval assemblage (343/65.3%) is in this category, which comprises all the sand-tempered fabrics. The majority are sandy grey wares MS3 which includes Hertfordshire Grey wares (19) and Boarstall-type coarse wares (24) with dark grey to black surfaces and red-brown cores (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 292). The latter includes a thickened internally beaded rim from either a jug or small jar (Fig. 5.16). Four MS3 sandy greyware jars came from Ditch F2006 (Fig. 5.17-5.21). A squat cooking pot with splayed overhanging flanged rim (Fig. 6.20) quite closely matches an example from George Street, Aylesbury, dated to the early 13th century (Yeoman 1983, 26, 5). Additionally a flanged reduced sandy cooking pot rim (Fig. 5.21) is also of similar type to forms from George Street dated to the 13th century (Yeoman 1983, 26, 4). Ten Oxford and Brill-type sherds further support a 13th-century date. It is probable that some of these coarse wares come from Brill: in particular, a group of 47 reduced sherds with medium to coarse sandy fabrics may be related to the Brill fabric listed as OXAW in the Oxfordshire type-series, which Mellor suggests is a successor to Oxfordshire ware

OXY (Mellor 1994, 111). Two rims in this fabric from Layer L1070 and Pit F2150 (L2162) are similar respectively to T5/6 (a squared, undercut rim) and T12 (Fig. 5.22) in the Oxfordshire Brill typology.

Finer fabrics for table ware are present in glazed Brill ware MS9 (44/8.3%), in buff fabrics, Oxfordshire ware OXY (10/1.9%), and unglazed Potterspury ware MS 6 (3.4%) from just over the border in Northamptonshire. The latter included an unusual jug with a slash decorated rod handle (Fig. 5.23). At Great Linford rod handles were uncommon and always plain (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 264). The site yielded very little evidence to indicate late medieval pottery. The Brill-type fine ware fabrics are virtually all buff or orange, which Yeoman suggests is early in the range, appearing in the mid 13th to early 14th century. The three small sherds in reddy fabrics and patchy clear glaze are probably late Brill products, as Yeoman suggests the colour became pinker and then red brickier throughout the 14th century, but these are residual (Yeoman 1983, 22).

Post-medieval Pottery

Following this apparent gap, a pancheon rim in early post-medieval red earthenware with clear glaze over white slip line decoration (giving the appearance of brown over green), came from Ditch F1098 (L1099). The post-medieval to early modern pottery consists of red earthenwares, English stonewares, and mid 18th to 19th-century factory-made white earthenwares including Creamware and Victorian 'Willow Pattern'. Ditch F2012 (L2108) produced two tiny sherds of Wedgewood 'black basalt' ware of similar date.

Summary

The Walton Street Car Park excavations produced a sequence of pottery spanning the middle Saxon to high medieval period, although there is quite a large degree of residuality in keeping with a site continuously occupied over several centuries. The pottery ties in well with previous excavations carried out in Aylesbury, with organic temper predominant in the Saxon assemblage, which comparison with other sites locally and further afield indicates is of 6th – 8th century date. The presence of several sherds from as far afield as Leicestershire and Suffolk suggests a wide trade network, but most of the pottery would have been locally produced. In keeping with the earlier excavations, St Neots ware was the only one of the Saxo-Norman trio present due to its local availability.

The medieval fabrics are very mixed and only 20% comprising Brill, Boarstall, Potterspury and Rush Green, Denham can be provenanced to known kiln groups. Others such as South Hertfordshire grey ware and early medieval chalky ware, can be attributed to regions to the east and north-east respectively, but not to specific production sites. Approximately 50% of the material, mainly MS3 sandy grey wares, could not be sourced and probably come from unlocated production sites. However, the overall distribution suggests pottery is sourced both locally and from all surrounding areas particularly the north-east and east. The exception is to the south where there is less evidence for imported pottery unless the MSC2 pottery derives from the Thames valley in the South Buckinghamshire/Berkshire region. Approximately 13% of the assemblage can be classed as finer table ware in Oxfordshire, Brill and Potterspury fabrics. However, the lack of imported pottery from further afield does not necessarily mean the site was of lower status, as Brill itself is a high-quality fine ware.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to Anna Slowikowski (Albion Archaeology), Paul Blinkhorn, Berni Sudds (Pre-construct Archaeology) and John Cotter (Oxford Archaeology West) for advice and comments on identification and dating of fabrics.

The Ceramic Building Materials

Andrew Peachey

The excavations produced 282 fragments (19,551g) of ceramic building materials (CBM) including medieval peg and floor tile, post-medieval to early modern brick and rare fragments of Roman CBM. With the exception of the post-medieval to early modern CBM contained in Drain F2188, the CBM is very highly abraded and fragmented.

Roman

The Romano-British CBM was residual in Pits F2166 (alongside medieval fragments and post-medieval material) and F2146. Pit F2166 (L2177) contained a single fragment of flat tile in an

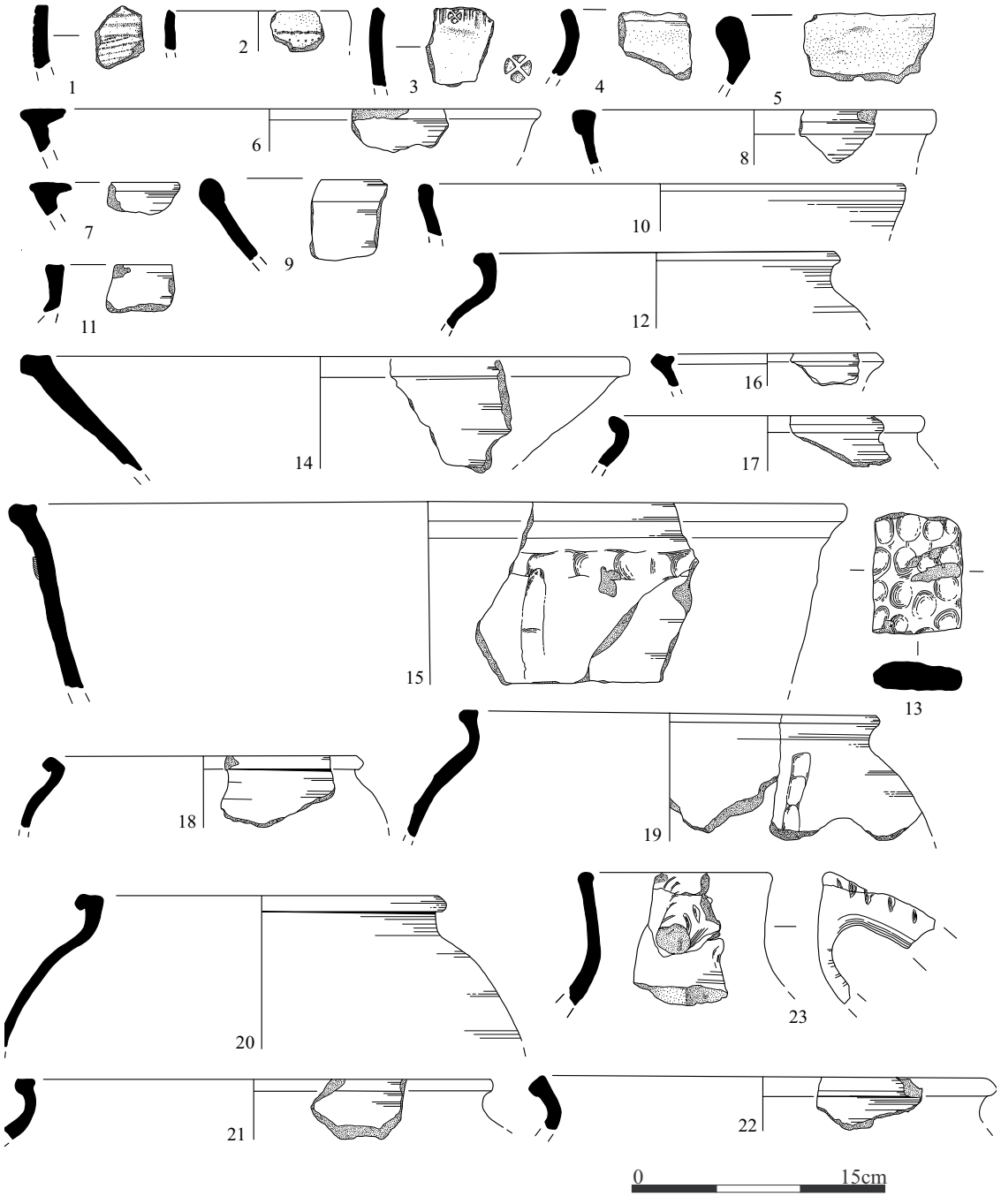


FIGURE 5 Pottery illustrations

entirely-oxidised, sand-tempered fabric with a combed oblique lattice on one surface. This fragment is probably derived from a Romano-British box flue tile but is too small and abraded to be certain. The second Romano-British fragment, in Pit F2146 (L2148), is the flange of a tegula roof tile in a contrasting fabric with oxidised surfaces and a thick reduced core, tempered with common fine quartz, common reduced grog (0.5-3mm) and sparse calcareous/ shell inclusions (1-4mm). Both fragments appear residual in their respective contexts.

Medieval

The medieval CBM assemblage is almost entirely comprised of peg roof tile, with fragments from a single floor tile also present. The fabric has oxidized orange to red surfaces, usually with a thin, reduced core. Inclusions comprise common quartz (0.2-0.5mm), sparse iron-rich grains (0.1-0.25mm) and sparse calcareous grains or voids (0.5-4.0mm). The peg tile is 13-15mm thick and flat, although it has often become warped during firing. Other diagnostic features include pre-firing circular, tapering peg holes (15mm wide at the top) and a sanded base. Peg tile of this type was probably produced in the 13th to 15th centuries: however, it may have continued or survived into the early post-medieval period. Low quantities of peg tile were ubiquitous in features containing CBM.

The floor tile was contained in Pit F2150 (L2161). All 23 fragments (1426g) are derived from a single tile but do not all cross-join. The upper surface of the tile is partially covered with an uneven green lead glaze and the base of the tile is sanded. The tile is 14mm thick and otherwise comparable to the unglazed peg tile that is common in the assemblage. Like the peg tile, plain floor tiles such as this were produced from the 13th century and continued to be used throughout the post-medieval period.

The Small Finds

Nina Crummy

Five objects were recorded as Small Finds on site. SFs 1, 2 and 3 are in fact slag fragments. The other two objects, a fragmentary antler comb, and part of a glass bead, are Anglo-Saxon.

Fig. 6: SF 4. (L2148) F2146. Pit fill. Fragments

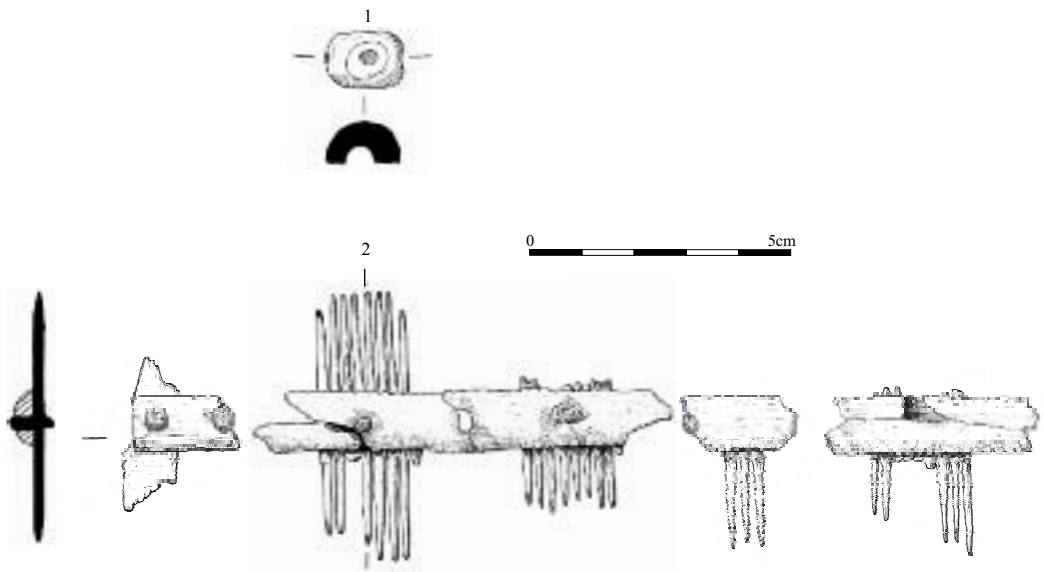


FIGURE 6 Small finds illustrations

TABLE 6 Total NISP count of species per phase, from hand-collection and environmental samples

Common name	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*Total*
Cattle		143	254	66* (2)	13	***476***
sheep/goat	1	138	375	90	10	***614***
Sheep		5		2		***7***
Goat			3			***3***
Pig		49	115* (28)	18		***182***
Horse		4	30	42* (5)	4	***80***
Dog		10	84** (52)	49** (26)	15* (10)	***158***
Cat		11** (8)	24* (2)	6		***41***
red deer			1			***1***
Roe				1		***1***
Rabbit			4			***4***
Hare			1			***1***
domestic fowl		2	12	6		***20***
Goose		6	5	4		***15***
Duck				1		***1***
Partridge			2			***2***
Pheasant			1			***1***
Pigeon		1	1			***2***
Crow			3			***3***
small passerine			3			***3***
Fringillidae			1			***1***
field vole			1			***1***
vole, indeterminate		7	13		1	***21***
Mouse, indeterminate			12			***12***
rat, indeterminate	1	3	2			***6***
Shrew			3			***3***
Mole			5			***5***
Frog/Toad		38	158	1	11	***206***
Herring			6			***6***
LAR (large ungulate size)		166	413	150	21	***750***
SAR (small ungulate size)	2	267	777	75	41	***1162***
USM (unidentified small mammals)		27	163	5	8	***203***
MAM (unidentified mammal)	4	294	1073	38	62	***1471***
BIRD (unidentified bird)		1	16		1	***18***
FISH (unidentified fish)		2	1			***3***
Total	***8***	***1174***	***3562***	***554***	***187***	***5485***

*indicates that an ABG (Associated Bone Group) is included in the count; the number of asterisks indicates the number of ABGs. The number in brackets indicates the number of elements from ABGs present.

of a double-sided composite antler comb with iron rivets. The connecting-plates are narrow and plain, but scarred from the cutting of the teeth. The surviving end-plate is also plain. It projects only very slightly beyond the end of the connecting-plates, and has been trimmed at the centre to match them exactly. The teeth on each side are the same width, rather than coarse on one side and fine on the other. The length cannot be estimated accurately, but was greater than 120mm; width 52.5mm.

Fig. 6: SF 5. (L2179) F2143. Pit fill. Fragment of a globular blue glass bead of Guido's Group 6xiii (1999, 54), with one complete and two partial white eyes with red centres. The surface of the

glass is degrading and covered with iridescence. Length 10mm, diameter 15mm.

The Animal Bone by Dr James Morris

Introduction

In total, 5485 fragments of animal bone were recovered from the site. Hand-recovery resulted in the collection of 2951 fragments; the remaining 2534 elements were recovered from bulk soil samples. Faunal remains were recovered from contexts of all four phases, but most of the remains were recovered from features dated to Phase 2: middle Saxon (AD550–850) and Phase 3: late Saxon to medieval (AD850–1300).

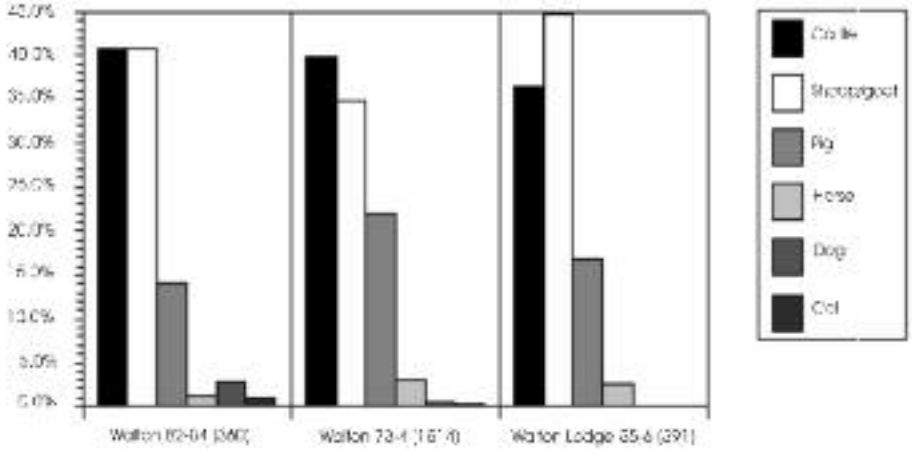
This animal bone report consists of two main sections. The first considers the faunal assemblages of Phases 1, 2 and 3 and the second discusses the overall results within a regional setting.

Results

As can be seen from the above description, the assemblage is variable between periods and feature types. Overall sheep/goat, cattle and pig are the most common species present. A number of dog bones were also recovered, most of which come from identified Associated Bone Group (ABG) deposits. A number of dog ABGs dating to the post-medieval period were also recovered (Table 6). A large quantity of frog/ toad remains were present in the bulk environmental samples. Along with the small mammals, these clearly indicate that a number of features were left open for some time between episodes of infilling or natural silting. Only a small number of wild mammals and birds are present in each period. Red and roe deer are represented only by antler fragments. The presence of rabbit bones in some Phase 3 features, if they are not intrusive, indicates that these features date to the later part of Phase 3 (*i.e.* post-Norman Conquest).

The proportion of species does change between Phases 2 and 3. Cattle and sheep/goat are found in roughly equal proportions in the middle Saxon period. However, sheep/goat become much more common in the late Saxon/early medieval period. The proportions of domestic species present in the middle Saxon period differ slightly to the results from other excavations, at 73–4 Walton Street (Noddle 1976) and 85–6 Walton Lodge (Sadler 1989a). However, the overall pattern remains broadly comparable (Graph 1).

The medieval species proportions are also similar to results from other excavations in the area. The results from the nearby sites of 73–74 Walton Street (Noddle 1976) and 86 Walton Street (Sadler 1989a) are directly comparable, with sheep/goat making up around 45% of each assemblage (Graph 2). However, the faunal remains from the excavations at the County Museum (Sadler



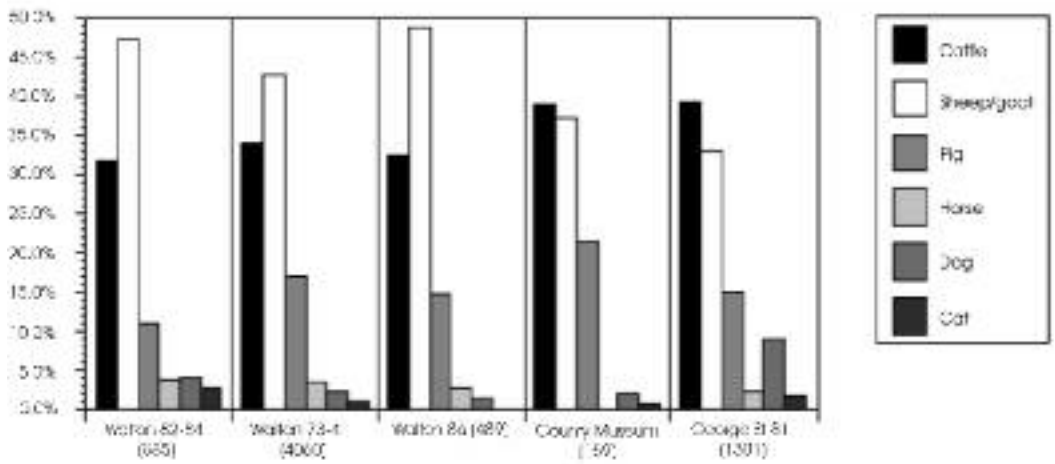
GRAPH 1 Percentage NISP of the main domestic species compared to 73–4 Walton Street (Noddle 1976) and 85–6 Walton Lodge (Sadler 1989a). NISP samples sizes are in brackets

1996) and 81 George Street (Jones 1983) have a different pattern, with cattle remains more prevalent. This could indicate that the processing of different species occurred in different areas of the settlement, or that different craft and trade activities are present in each location.

The cattle element data for Phases 2 and 3 indicates that all body areas were deposited on the site. There are no specific patterns to indicate that one particular part of the carcass was being deposited, in direct contrast with the sheep/goat data. Due to the fragmentation of the assemblage, it is only possible to calculate withers heights from a single Phase 2 cattle humerus and a Phase 3 metacarpal. Both elements give calculated withers heights of 1.10m. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the withers heights to be calculated for the other assemblages from Aylesbury, but the results are similar to those from other Anglo-Saxon (Crabtree 1994) and medieval settlements (Grant 1988). Only limited tooth wear data is available from the assemblage, but epiphyseal fusion data suggests that in Phase 2 and Phase 3, 77% and 80% of the cattle population (respectively) was at least four years old or older at death. Therefore, in both phases the majority of cattle appear to have been kept into adulthood. This could indicate that cattle were kept for secondary products before being slaughtered. Some cattle elements do have pathologies present that may have been caused by ploughing, but which also affect older animals (see above).

Similar pathologies are also present within the horse assemblage. It is noteworthy that 12% of the combined Phase 2 and 3 horse elements have pathology present. These include osteoarthritis, ossification of the interosseum ligament, and spavin. It has been suggested that such pathologies can occur due to trauma or working the animal on a hard surface (Daugnore and Thomas 2005). It is possible to age one horse mandible, from Phase 3 Ditch F3028. The second molar has a crown height of 26.6mm, which using Levine (1982), equates to an age of around 16 years. It would therefore appear that both cattle and horses were kept until old adulthood and may have been worked for traction. Horse meat was not commonly consumed in this period, but animals may have been knackered with the skin and bones being utilised, the meat may also have been used to feed dogs. In Phases 3 and 4 all body parts are represented indicating that the animals were probably slaughtered and deposited on site.

In contrast, the ageing data for sheep/goat from Phases 2 and 3 indicates that a large proportion of the population was killed much earlier. The ageing data for Phase 2 is limited, with tooth wear data



GRAPH 2 Percentage of main domestic mammals in the medieval period compared to 73–4 Walton Street (Noddle 1976), 86 Walton Street (Sadler 1989b), County Museum (Sadler 1996) and 81 George Street (Jones 1983). NISP samples sizes are in brackets.

only available from five mandibles, and little fusion data present. The majority of the mandibles are aged to two to three years old using Hambleton (1999, 64), with one from a four to six year old animal. A similar number of mandibles are present in Phase 3, but this phase has a much larger fusion dataset. Fusion data is available for 108 sheep/goat elements. The data shows that 14% of the early fusing elements (3-10 months) are unfused, 15% of the middle fusing elements (15-36 months) are unfused and 65% of the late fusing elements (30-60 months) are unfused. This shows that a large proportion of the sheep/goat population did not live long enough for the late fusing elements to fuse, and they therefore appear to have been killed around three to four years of age. This suggests that the majority of the sheep were utilised for meat rather than the primary focus being secondary products. Davis (2002) indicates that this would have been the prime kill-off age for mutton. Unlike the other main domesticates, there appears to be some preferential deposition of specific sheep/goat elements, with the large proportion of metapodials from Phase 3 Layer L1070 (see above). O'Connor (1984, 22) has suggested that a reasonable explanation for such deposits would be to attribute them to waste from the processing of sheepskins and such deposits have been discovered in association with tanneries (Serjeantson 1989). The site is positioned on the outskirts of Aylesbury and tanning often occurs on the outskirts of settlements due to the odorous nature of the work and the waste it produces. Similar deposits dating to the 17th century were also recovered by the excavations at the County Museum site (Sadler 1996), which could indicate that the process changed location as Aylesbury developed.

As with most Anglo-Saxon and early medieval settlements, pig remains make up only a small proportion of the assemblage. This is common across the periods, as the only secondary product produced by pigs is manure (Grant 1988). All body areas are represented suggesting that the animals were slaughtered and butchered within the sites vicinity. The pig remains present were killed young for meat, with the fusion data from Phase 3 indicating that 88% of the animals were killed before the middle fusing epiphysis had fused (24-30 months). Therefore, most pigs appear to have been killed before reaching two to three years old.

Conclusions

The excavations at 82–84 Walton Street have produced a good-sized animal bone assemblage, most of the remains coming from features dating to Phase 2 (the middle Saxon period) and Phase 3 (the late Saxon to medieval period). The animal remains are variable between features and the remains from the environmental samples indicate that some of the archaeological features may have been left open for a time before being in-filled. The faunal remains provide evidence for the dumping of domestic waste into open features during Phases 2 and 3, in particular the Phase 3 boundary ditches. Layer L1070 also produced possible evidence for the processing of sheep/goat skins close to the site. It has been possible to compare the faunal remains to those from other sites in this part of Aylesbury. Analysis indicates that in the medieval period, specific species were more commonly deposited in certain areas of the town, possibly due to different craft activities or areas of animal processing. Overall, the assemblage adds to our growing knowledge of the environment, economy and activities of Anglo-Saxon and medieval Aylesbury.

The Plant Remains by Dr Alexandra Livarda

Introduction

During excavations at Walton Street environmental bulk samples were taken for the recovery of plant remains and other organic material. The samples derived from contexts dated to the middle Saxon (Phase 2: *c*.AD 550 to 850) and the late Saxon to medieval (Phase 3: *c*.AD 850 to 1300) period. Most of the samples were from contexts that date to the late Saxon to medieval period. Only two of the sampled contexts were not assigned a date due to the lack of diagnostic finds and/or associations with other dated features.

Sampling and processing methods

Thirteen environmental samples of between 30 and 40 litres were collected from a variety of contexts, including postholes (Sample 1), pits (Samples 7, 11 and 14), ditches (Samples 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12), gullies (Samples 4 and 13) and a layer (Sample 8). Processing was carried out by flotation, using meshes with 1mm and 0.25mm apertures for the retention of the heavy (residue) and the light fraction (flot) respectively.

All samples were fully scanned using a stereo-

scope with magnifications ranging from ×7 to ×45. Charred plant remains were recorded and fully counted on the basis of the minimum number of characteristic plant parts. Uncharred material was recorded and their abundance was estimated on the following rating system: + = scarce <10; ++ = moderate 10–50; +++ = frequent >50. Plant names and wild plant order follow Stace (1997). Charcoal fragments and other organic material were also noted, estimating their abundance with the same method applied for the uncharred material.

Results

Both charred and uncharred plants were present in all samples, except in Sample 13 from Gully F3051, which was void of this type of material, including only a high number of land snails. Overall the archaeobotanical evidence was low and poorly to moderately preserved, apart from that encountered in Sample 7 (Pit F3022). A detailed presentation of the results by phase follows.

Phase 2: middle Saxon (c.AD 550–850)

Three samples, collected from a posthole (Sample 1, F3009), a ditch (Sample 3, F3013) and a gully (Sample 4, F3015), were dated to this period. They all included charred barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.) grains, while Samples 1 and 4 had also grains of free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum/turgidum* L.). Some more charred plants were found in Sample 1, including a few possible peas (*Pisum sativum* L.) and an indeterminate grass seed (Poaceae).

The uncharred material varied in the three samples. A few campion (*Silene* L. sp.) and sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia* L.) seeds were present in Sample 1, a seed of the carrot family (Apiaceae) was the only identifiable specimen in Sample 3 and, finally, some elder and goosefoot seeds complemented the plant assemblage in Sample 4.

Phase 3: late Saxon to medieval (c.AD 850–1300)

Ditches

Three ditches were sampled for plant remains: F3017 (L3018 and L3019), F3028 (L3029 and L3030) and F3049 (L3050).

Both fills of Ditch F3017 (Samples 5 and 6) had a very low amount of archaeobotanical remains, represented mostly by cereal grains. In particular, the material in Sample 5, which was the lower fill of the ditch, was very poorly preserved inhibiting the identification of most seeds to species or even genus level. Apart from the few charred cereal grains it included a legume and a single brome grass seed (*Bromus* L. sp.). Uncharred material was also rare, represented only by a few elder seeds (*Sambucus nigra* L.). In the upper fill of the ditch (Sample 6) the charred cereal grains were better preserved and the complete ones were all identified as barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.). No other plants were found in this fill, except for a single uncharred knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare* agg.).

A similar picture was encountered in the two fills of Ditch F3028 (Samples 9 and 10). In terms of charred plants, Sample 9 had only one poorly preserved wheat grain (*Triticum* L. sp.), while Sample 10 had a few more cereal grains, including barley and free-threshing wheat (*Triticum aestivum/turgidum* L.). Furthermore, both fills contained a small number of uncharred elder seeds, while Sample 9 had in addition some uncharred seeds of the deadnettle family (Lamiaceae).

The final ditch sampled (F3049, Sample 12) produced more archaeobotanical evidence, although still in statistically insignificant amounts. Cereals with preserved diagnostic features were identified as barley and free-threshing (bread/rivet) wheat in comparable numbers. An indeterminate legume was the only other charred plant present in the assemblage, while uncharred seeds included elder and a few docks (*Rumex* L. sp.).

Pits

The three samples taken from pits were quite distinct in their archaeobotanical content. Sample 14 (F3035) was the poorest and had only some very poorly preserved charred cereal grains and a few uncharred elder seeds. Samples 7 and 11 were considered to be two fills of the same pit (F3022), which had a relatively more precise date (12th to 14th century AD). The two fills differed largely in terms of the quantity of their archaeobotanical component. Sample 11, which was a much smaller deposit (10 litres), produced very little organic material. It included a few charred grains of barley and free-threshing wheat, a possible pea (*Pisum sativum* L.) and some uncharred goosefoot (*Chenopodium* L. sp.) seeds. Sample 7, on the other hand, was a much more diverse and rich sample in terms of both its charred and uncharred

material. It contained a mixture of cereal grains, cereal chaff, legumes, nuts and wild species. In terms of its charred items, the majority was cereal grains, and in particular bread/rivet wheat, followed by barley. Rachis segments are usually the best indicators of the wheat species, but in this case, the rachis parts present were too badly fragmented to allow a fuller identification. In addition, there were oat (*Avena* L. sp.) and possibly rye (cf. *Secale cereale* L.) grains in smaller quantities. Determining the oat species was problematic due to the absence of florets. Pea was positively identified in this sample, together with a few more vetches/peas. Wild species were represented mostly by plants commonly associated with grassy places. They included brome grass (*Bromus* L. sp.) and other indeterminate grasses (Poaceae), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata* L.) and bedstraw (*Galium* L. sp.). The uncharred remains of the assemblage were a combination of various wild species, occurring in low quantities. According to their modern ecological requirements (Hanf 1983; Clapham *et al* 1987; Stace 1997), most species, such as the goosefoot seeds, common chickweed (*Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.), wild radish (*Raphabus raphanistrum* L.), dead-nettles (*Lamium* L. sp.), bristly ox-tongue (*Picris echioides* L.) and even elder, are more likely to be found in waste/rough or cultivated ground. Buttercups (*Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus* L.) were also found in this sample, which are often associated with pastures/grasslands.

Unphased

Samples 8 and 13 were unphased, the latter producing no archaeobotanical material. Sample 8 was among the poorest, containing a single wheat grain and a few goosefoot seeds.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The archaeobotanical assemblage was generally poor, allowing little insight into practices related to agricultural economy and other potential activities involving the use of plant resources. This is particularly the case for the middle Saxon assemblage. The low density of plant items in the middle Saxon (Phase 2) and most of the late Saxon/medieval (Phase 3) samples points to their accidental incorporation into various deposits. As their overall poor preservation state further indicates, when initially deposited, these remains were possibly subjected to weathering and/or mechanical damage (e.g. trampling) prior to their final incorporation into the archaeological contexts. The uncharred remains were probably part of the local vegetation, but they were too few to allow reliable environmental reconstructions. The only deposit with a relatively high density of rather well preserved charred plant remains was encountered in Sample 7 taken from Phase 3 Pit F3022, which might represent a single, deliberate depositional event, and can provide some more information on the relative importance of the various species. Sample 11 was interpreted during excavation as a separate fill of the same pit, but its overall consistency, preservation and archaeobotanical content strongly suggests that it might be part of the same fill with Sample 7.

The majority of the charred plants in Pit F3022 (Samples 7 and 11) were cereal grains, and in particular free-threshing wheat and barley, which seem to be the two major crops consumed in the area. By the Saxon period, free-threshing wheat was favoured over other types of wheat, as its grains separate freely from their husks after threshing (e.g. Hillman 1981; Jones 1984), which renders their processing relatively easy and fast. Barley is a resilient crop that survives adverse conditions better than wheat and has a long tradition in Britain, since the prehistoric periods, both as food and fodder. Oat and rye were present in very small quantities and they may have been discarded crop impurities. Similarly, the few chaff fragments, most of the charred wild species, and probably the vetches/peas may have been crop impurities. Although most wild seeds were not identified to species level, which would allow determination of their qualities and, hence, the stage of crop processing from where they derive, their more or less similar size to the cereal grains may be a first indication that these were by-products of hand cleaning of the crop prior to cooking. Pea, which like all legumes, is an important source of protein, also seems to be part of the diet, with its charred remains being possibly accidental spillages from cooking. The diet was finally complemented, according to the available evidence, by hazelnut, the discarded by-products (nut shells) of which were preserved by charring. The mixed nature of the whole deposit points to discard of cooking refuse that may have been accumulated in a nearby hearth/oven. The uncharred material included wild species that could have grown in the area and incor-

porated into the refuse pit. They were mostly species partly indicative of waste/rough ground conditions, while some (buttercups) may further hint the presence of nearby pasture, which accords with the available archaeological, archaeozoological and documentary evidence.

Finally, it is interesting to note that across the excavated area in both Phase 2 and 3 the more recurrent economic plants were free-threshing wheat, barley and pea, supporting their role as the major crops at the site. Taking into account, however, that a more substantial archaeobotanical assemblage was present only in Phase 3 in combination with the large amount of terrestrial molluscs and some evidence for small mammals, the possibility that the archaeobotanical content of the Phase 2 samples was intrusive cannot be dismissed.

In conclusion, reliable archaeobotanical evidence exists only for the late Saxon/medieval period of the site. This showed that wheat, barley, and probably pea were among the most important staples, suggesting that common consumption patterns of the period were also followed in the area. The function of the site cannot be determined with certainty solely by this line of evidence, but some contexts appeared to have been used, at least partly, as refuse ground. Most plant remains were waste of domestic activities taking place nearby, which was accidentally mixed and integrated into the ground to be later incorporated into the various fills of ditches, gullies and pits.

Discussion

Middle Saxon activity

The initial discovery of middle Saxon activity along Walton Street during excavations in the 1970s was unexpected (Farley 1976, 166). However, since this time extensive settlement evidence has been recorded. It is likely that the core of the Saxon settlement was located to the west of the present junction of Walton Street and Walton Road, where a number of sunken-featured buildings have been excavated, with more dispersed settlement areas to the north, along Walton Road. A putative middle Saxon 'roundhouse', with associated postholes and pits, has been found on the north side of Walton Street, while at the Orchard Site, across the road and only *c*.100m east of the present site, ten 6th to 8th-century structures have been excavated. These included eight post-built halls, one sunken-featured building and one foundation-trench building, as well as fence-lines, pits and external hearths. Six early Saxon SFBs and two post-built halls were excavated at the Walton Road Stores site in 1994. However, in contrast to the evidence from some of the other Walton sites, the early Saxon buildings here appear to have been fairly randomly scattered, not respecting the rectilinear Romano-British field boundaries in the area. Later structures, which took the form of post-built rectangular halls rather than sunken-featured buildings, were found to have been arranged within clearly-defined rectilinear plot boundaries and fenced enclosures to either side of Walton Street. Traces of later Saxon tenement and plot boundaries are fairly frequent in the area, and were found within the assessment site during the Police Houses excavation in the 1980s.

The middle Saxon phase of activity on site was represented by a cluster of fairly large, but generally shallow, quarry pits (F2067, F2145, F2146, F2165, F2084, F2086, F2143), situated in the central southern part of the site and in the northernmost trial trench. The size and shape of the larger pits (F2067, F2145 and F2146) indicates that their primary function was probably related to small-scale extraction of the chalk, clay and flint which make up the underlying geology of the area. Extraction was on a small scale and the quarried material was almost certainly used in the immediate area, perhaps for construction and maintenance of wattle and daub walling in the buildings and fence-lines of the contemporary settlement to the east. It is likely that following the extraction activity, some of the pits took on a secondary use as *ad hoc* rubbish pits, as while some pits filled in gradually over time (e.g. F2165), others seem to have been backfilled in a single event (e.g. F2145). The final infilling of some of these pits likely corresponded with the establishment of the formal late Saxon boundary system. Alongside these large quarry pits were a number of smaller pits, probably deliberately dug for waste disposal. One or two pits may have had more specialised uses. Pit F2165, for example, appears to have remained open for some time and been at least periodically waterlogged; it may have been a watering hole for livestock.

The middle Saxon pits all contained 5th to 9th-century pottery, commonly in organic or grass-tempered fabrics. Dalwood suggested a late 6th to

8th-century date for the settlement at Walton, based on the rarity/absence of early Saxon stamp-decorated pottery and of late Saxon St Neots Ware, and on comparison with organic-tempered fabrics from other sites (Dalwood *et al.* 1989, 163). The middle Saxon pottery assemblage from 82–84 Walton Street has a similar composition, and a similar late 6th to 8th-century date range seems likely.

The nature of the middle Saxon activity suggests that the site was on the western periphery of the main Anglo-Saxon settlement. The presence of large quarry pits is in keeping with an area of scrub/ wasteland away from 'core' inhabited areas. This kind of area on the periphery of a settlement would have accumulated small quantities of rubbish from the nearby occupation areas.

Late Saxon and medieval rectilinear enclosures

The late Saxon to medieval period was the principal phase of activity on the site. During this phase, a formal system of large rectilinear boundary ditches was laid out. The layout of the enclosures displays a clear spatial relationship with both the north-west to south-east course of Walton Street, and with the position of the large medieval ditch and earthwork embankment, identified on historic maps as an 'Intrenchment'. These 'intrenchments' are still extant in the local landscape, and their orientation mirrors the formal layout of Walton Street, thought to have been established in the 11th century (BCC 2000, 6). Tenement boundary gullies of 10th-century date were noted within the assessment site during the 1980s Police Houses excavation, as was a substantial medieval ditched boundary, which was interpreted as a continuation of the manorial enclosure. Further 13th-century plot boundaries were found at the adjacent Walton Road Vicarage site, to the south-east, in 1973. Direct evidence of medieval occupation has been found close to the site, for example, at 95–97 Walton Road, to the north-east, where the basement of an oblong house or hut was found. Throughout the interior, a dense scatter of numerous fragments of pottery (mostly 13th century, but also 11 post-medieval sherds), animal bones and a few iron and other objects was found. Other medieval occupation features found close to the site include a stone oven and scatter of associated features (CAS 5499), and boundary ditches, pits and a well (12th to 13th-century) to the east (CAS 5500).

The rectilinear boundary system was formed by six parallel north-west to south-east aligned ditches, all of which were substantial features (*c*.2m across by 1m deep) and similar in profile. While the smaller ditches in the system (e.g. F2151, F2076, F2157, F2040 and F2044) generally appeared to have been filled in purposefully in a single event, the larger ditches (e.g. F2006, F2056 and F2097) contained sequences of multiple fills and were probably open for a considerable length of time. Evidence for re-cutting and scouring, visible in some sections, also points to the longevity of the enclosures. There was some evidence that internal subdividing ditches (e.g. F2040 and F2044) may have been removed, with the aim of enlarging the enclosures formed by the ditch system, a development which could have coincided with the re-establishment of the central boundary ditch (F2097). Interestingly, both Ditch F2097 and Ditch F2006 contained layers of limestone rubble, suggestive of a ditch lining, or more likely, slumped embankments. It is possible that the removal of the internal dividing ditches, and the re-cutting and re-emphasising of the central boundary may have been contemporary and the result of changing use of the enclosures.

The ditch system reflects the development of a formal and organised system of land division in this area of Walton, beginning in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Several of the ditches contained probable pre-Norman Conquest St Neots Ware, with some diagnostic bowl rim profiles present, alongside sherds in less diagnostic locally-produced fabrics. The consistent north-west to south-east and north-east to south-west ditch alignments have a clear relationship with the line of Walton Street. Property boundaries shown to the north-west of the site on early Ordnance Survey maps follow the same pattern. Also following the same north-east to south-west alignment of the ditches were the medieval 'Intrenchments', or earthworks that are still visible today, indicating that they may have been parts of the same boundary system. Contemporary boundaries to those excavated on the present site were identified immediately to the south during excavations in 1973–4 (Farley 1976). These ditches were interpreted by the excavators as internal divisions within a much larger enclosure demarcated by the surviving 'Intrenchment'. This is possible, although the ceramic evidence recovered during the present

excavation suggests that the 'internal' dividing ditches were slightly earlier than the medieval Intrenchment (*ibid.*). All the ditches contain small amounts of residual 5th to 9th-century pottery. The consistency with which this material was found might be evidence that a similar ditch system was in use during the middle Saxon phase of the site, and that this was re-cut, and perhaps enlarged in the late Saxon to early medieval period.

The apparent absence of contemporary features on the interior of the enclosures could be the result of modern truncation. However, it is perhaps more likely to be a reflection of their original use. The small areas enclosed by the ditches make little sense in terms of arable production (bearing in mind, for example, the amount of space required to turn a plough team). The evidence from plant remains suggests that wheat, barley and pea were staple crops, but these were not present in such quantities as to suggest that they were being cultivated in the immediate area. The layout of small enclosed and seemingly 'empty' plots on the outskirts of the growing late Saxon and medieval town would fit an interpretation as small paddocks or pastures for livestock. Later documentary sources point to manorial flocks being grazed on this land, and record that those living on Walton Street were obliged to keep their flocks in the same place (Farley 1976). While the animal bone assemblage points to roughly equal proportions of cattle and sheep/goats having been utilised in the middle Saxon period, the proportion of sheep/goats was much higher by the late Saxon to medieval phase of the site. The pattern is broadly comparable to that found at other sites in Walton, but contrasts with excavations at the County Museum and 81 George Street, where cattle were more prevalent during the medieval period. This might point to some zoning of activity, with this area on the south-eastern outskirts of the developing late Saxon and medieval town being used for grazing and processing sheep. Cattle were kept into adulthood during both the middle Saxon and late Saxon to medieval phases, suggesting that they were being kept primarily for secondary products (milk, cheese etc.). By contrast, sheep/goats in both phases were generally killed off at prime meat age. One of the other uses to which sheep/goats were put was indicated by the dump of tanning waste found in later medieval Layer L1070. It is unsurprising to find evidence for unpleasant/odorous trades being conducted on the periphery of the urban area. The picture of animal husbandry provided by the animal bone assemblage therefore fits well with the archaeological evidence for an area of long-lived enclosed pasture, and with the land use described by later documentary sources.

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