



**Northamptonshire
County Council**

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological excavation at
68-70 Whitefriars Street
Coventry
Warwickshire
2004



Dan McAree

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Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE

w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk

t. 01604 700493/4

f. 01604 702822

e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk



STAFF

Project Manager	Iain Soden BA MIFA
Text	Dan McAree MA MBA PG Dip PIFA
Fieldwork	Dan McAree
	Nathan Flavell BA PG Dip
	Jenny Jackson BA
	Mo Jones BA PIFA
	Barry Lewis BA
	Lucy Loughman BA
	Rob Smith
	Steve Tamburello MA
Pottery	Paul Blinkhorn BTEch
Stone moulds and building materials	Pat Chapman BA CMS PIFA
Other finds	Tora Hylton
Metal working debris	Andy Chapman BSc MIFA
Faunal and environmental evidence	Karen Deighton MSc
Illustrations	Jacqueline Harding BA HND
	Pat Walsh BA

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Name	Signed	Date
Checked by	P. Chapman		April 06
Verified by	I. Soden		April 06
Approved by	A Chapman		April 06

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	68-70 Whitefriars Street, Coventry	
Short description	An archaeological excavation was carried out on about 0.075ha of land at 68-70 Whitefriars Street, Coventry. The earliest features comprised two parallel lines of large quarry pits that had been filled in before the end of the 14th century. Later and shallower pits were cut into the quarry pit fills and included a stone-lined pit. These all contained quantities of domestic rubbish, including much animal bone and pottery of 14th-15th century date. At one end of the site there was the south-east corner of a substantial cellared building, with sandstone foundations, and to the south there was the north-western corner of a similar building foundation, which may have been contemporary. To the east a sandstone wall probably marked the boundary between two medieval burgage plots. The earlier remains had been truncated by the concrete foundations of buildings erected in the early 20th century.	
Project type	Open area excavation	
Previous work	Related trenching in 1995 on adjacent site – same historic plot	
Future work	No	
Monument type and period	Medieval quarry pits, waste pits, stone-lined rubbish pit, substantial sandstone foundations of cellared building, plot boundary wall.	
Significant finds	13th -15 ^h century pottery, stone metalworking moulds	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Warwickshire	
Site address	68-70 Whitefriars Street, Coventry	
Easting	43385	
Northing	27880	
Height OD	85.25m AOD	
PROJECT CREATOR		
Organisation	Coventry City Council	
Project brief originator	Coventry City Council	
Project Design originator	Iain Soden, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Danny McAree, NA	
Project Manager	Iain Soden, NA	
Sponsor or funding body	Tompkins Construction	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	August 2004	
End date	August 2004	
ARCHIVES	(Accession no.)	Content
Physical		Pottery, tile, animal bone
Paper		Site records, Photographs /Slides Drawings/ Reports
Digital		CD ROM

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
AT 68-70 WHITEFRIARS STREET,
COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE
AUGUST 2004**

Abstract

An archaeological excavation was carried out on about 0.075ha of land at 68-70 Whitefriars Street, Coventry. The earliest features comprised two parallel lines of large quarry pits that had been filled in before the end of the 14th century. There were few finds within these fills, but part of a stone mould for the casting of small decorative non-ferrous fittings may indicate the presence of a nearby workshop. Later and shallower pits were cut into the quarry pit fills and included a stone-lined pit. These all contained quantities of domestic rubbish, including much animal bone and pottery of 14th-15th century date, and one pit contained a quantity of ferrous slag, indicating the presence of a nearby foundry or smithy, and a further mould for casting small decorative fittings. At one end of the site there was the south-east corner of a substantial cellared building, with sandstone foundations, and to the south there was the north-western corner of a less substantial building foundation that may have been contemporary. To the east a sandstone wall probably marked the boundary between two medieval burgage plots. The earlier remains had been truncated by the concrete foundations of buildings erected in the early 20th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

Planning permission was granted for residential development of land at 68-70 Whitefriars Street, Coventry (Fig 1: NGR SP 3385 7880). The development occupies a 0.075ha plot, bounded by Whitefriars Street to the west, terraced housing to the south, a new office development to the north and post-war commercial buildings to the east (Fig 4).

The development plot lies within the circuit of Coventry's medieval town walls within a plot running south from Gosford Street, a major medieval street which extended from the town centre to Gosford Gate, which lay 150m to the east. Specifically it comprises an area which lies behind the historic frontage. Gosford Street constitutes a thoroughfare which developed probably first as a suburb east of Coventry castle in the post-Conquest period, but was steadily subsumed within the expanding medieval city. Immediately to the south is the site of the Whitefriars Monastery, established and occupied by the Carmelite Friars in 1342 until the Dissolution in 1539. The secondary roadway of Whitefriars Street was built only at the beginning of the 20th century, and the present site address dates only from that period. Its historic orientation is entirely related to Gosford Street properties.

As a condition of the planning process, the site was assessed by Coventry City Council's Planning Archaeologist (Assessment and Brief 2003). This determined that significant archaeological deposits dating to the medieval period were thought to survive within the development area, relating to industrial activity and occupation.

As a result of this assessment, archaeological mitigation works were required. These were set out in the site brief comprising the excavation of a defined area located within the footprint of the new development planned for the site.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous archaeological work

Historically the site forms part of a burgage plot or plots fronting onto Gosford Street to the north (Figs 2 and 3). Some early documents refer to this part of Gosford Street as Jordan Well, since such street designations remained fluid for many years.

The site lies to the rear of the public house now called *The Phoenix*, but formerly, and for many years, the *Sir Colin Campbell*, at 122 Gosford Street. The existing pub building dates to about 1900, but the original frontage and plot boundaries date from at least the 14th century. Whitefriars Street was created around 1900 when several buildings along the Gosford Street frontage were demolished and a new road was cut through the medieval plots to join with the old A45, London Road, to the south. The location of the original plots can be traced on all the principal historic maps of Coventry dating back to 1610. The newly-created Whitefriars Street is first shown on the Ordnance Survey revision of 1905 (Fig 3).

Immediately to the north of the site and forming part of the same original medieval plot lies a plot archaeologically excavated in 1995: 76 Whitefriars Street (Fig 4). This excavation uncovered archaeological deposits at about 83.40m above Ordnance Datum, below 20th century disturbance caused by the introduction of Whitefriars Street and the erection of a former factory. There was, however, minimal undisturbed archaeology above the natural geology (Dickerson 1995). Numerous substantial pits cut up to 2m deep into the natural geology were uncovered together with a late medieval cellar. There were about 40 pits and cut features of 12th – 16th century date. Some of the pits were 1 – 1.5m deep, stone lined and produced good pottery sequences. The pit density did not appear to decrease from the north (street frontage) to the south of the site.

On the opposite side of Whitefriars Street, an evaluation in 2002 by the University of Leicester and a subsequent watching brief in 2003 by Warwickshire Museum Field Services demonstrated that late medieval deposits had also survived there at about 83.40m AOD (Fig 4). Above this lay a disturbed overburden and garden layers of the 17th – 19th centuries. Other recent work by the same organisation in Whitefriars Lane to the south showed a consistent level of overburden across a wider area.

Further east lies the site of 114-5 Gosford Street, directly behind which were archaeological excavations in 1987 (*West Midlands Archaeology* 30, 1987, 64-5). These recorded 12th–13th century pits cut into north-south aligned ridge and furrow, which itself overlay 11th–12th century pits. The restored building at 114-5, now the Whitefriars Public House, is itself of 14th century date, confirmed by tree-ring dating.

2.2 Topography and geology

The site is flat, although beyond it the surrounding land slopes away to the north and east towards the valley of the River Sherbourne, which crosses Gosford Street just outside the medieval city walls at Gosford Gate. The site lies at about 84m above Ordnance Datum.

The underlying solid geology is coarse-grained red sandstone which seals carboniferous coal seams. The overlying soil is Keuper Marl (Mercia Mudstone), stiff red clay of the Triassic Enville Beds (BGS 1984).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the archaeological excavation, as defined in the Design Brief, was to excavate and record the archaeological remains in order to understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The specific aims of the project were to:

- ❖ Date the laying out of the Gosford Street plot
- ❖ Elucidate the nature of occupation and identify and characterise any industrial use of the plot
- ❖ Collect artefactual and environmental evidence for the character of the site during the urbanisation of Gosford Street
- ❖ Put remains into their immediate archaeological context.

All works were conducted in accordance with the *IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (1994, revised 1999) and the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1985, revised 2000).

Monitoring of the programme of fieldwork was carried out by Chris Patrick, Planning Archaeologist, Coventry Historic Heritage services, on behalf of Coventry City Council. The excavation area (c15m by c15m) was located in the south-west of the site, within the building footprint of the three-storey residential development (Fig 4).

The overburden, topsoil, subsoil and non-structural post-medieval and later deposits were removed by 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. Overburden and spoil was transported from site in tipper lorries. Only a small percentage of the spoil was retained on site, built up as a bund at the east of the excavation. This work was carried out at all times under archaeological supervision.

A site grid was established and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, and all levels related to Ordnance Survey Datum. A temporary bench mark was transferred to the site from a bench mark on the *Hope and Anchor* public house to the south of the site (value 86.12m). The archaeological surface was cleaned by hand and planned at a scale of 1:50. Complex features were planned at scales of between 1:20 to 1:10, as appropriate.

Following machine stripping, parts of the concrete foundations of the 20th century buildings remained in-situ and had truncated or overlay earlier deposits. The exposed medieval stone walls were cleaned and recorded, and were left in-situ. Between the walls a series of sondages were cut across the earlier series of pits and quarries to establish the general form and nature of this earlier activity. However, given the limitations imposed by the sondages, it was not possible to recover the full plan of these earlier features, although their distribution and their sequence of development was determined. Due to health and safety considerations, it was not possible to bottom the deeper quarry pits of the first phase of activity.

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature.

Artefacts and ecofacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site. Unstratified animal bones and modern material were not collected. Animal bone

has been scanned to determine the species present, the state of preservation, to identify evidence for butchery, and assess the potential for further analysis. All pre-modern material was retrieved.

Soil samples were taken for flotation from secure dateable contexts with a potential for the recovery of industrial residues, charcoal and carbonised plant remains. The sampling strategy conformed to English Heritage Guidelines (2002). Specific sampling strategies were agreed on site in consultation with Chris Patrick, Planning Archaeologist.

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, and colour transparencies was maintained.

All records completed during fieldwork have been compiled into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 Summary of chronology

The earliest activity on the site is dated to the 14th century when a series of large quarry pits were excavated. These were only partially investigated and full plan outlines were not obtained as they were partly obscured by later features. However, they evidently varied in size from between 4-5m wide and 5-8m long, and had steep to near vertical sides. They were excavated to depths of between 1.5m-2.2m, but none was bottomed for safety reasons. The quarry pits formed two linear groups running north to south along the western and eastern margins of the site. The area between the lines of pits contained no substantial cut features and may have been left undisturbed to provide access to the quarries (Fig 5).

The quarry pits had been backfilled with layers of redeposited sand and sandstone intermixed with small quantities of domestic refuse and ash. The pottery assemblage indicates that they were filled in from the mid- to late 14th century. One pit contained part of a stone mould for the casting of small decorative fittings, suggesting the nearby presence of a workshop

This area was developed as part of the expansion of the medieval town along the line of Gosford Street towards Gosford and Far Gosford Street (Gosford Gate Street) beyond. The Benedictine Priory Cartulary of 1410 indicates that the properties along the south side of Gosford Street generally extended back as far as the boundary of the Carmelite Friary at Whitefriars which lies another 40m to the south of the excavation site.

A modern property boundary, and perhaps its precursor, was marked by a sandstone wall that ran north-south along the eastern edge of the excavated area (Figs 2 - 5).

Once the property boundaries had been established, construction and occupation began along the street frontage and extended into the back end of the plots. Occupation of the Gosford Street frontage from at least the early 15th century may be marked by the cutting of a series of rubbish pits into the upper fills of the earlier quarry pits. These were typically between 0.6-1.0m deep and the fills contained considerable quantities of dumped domestic waste including much animal bone and a range of pottery dated to the 14th and 15th centuries. A single pit contained ferrous slag, perhaps suggesting the nearby presence of a foundry or blacksmiths workshop. Another pit contained a further stone mould for casting small decorative fittings, either as a residual find from the 14th century activity or indicating a continuation of such craft activity nearby. Two smaller pits contained sherds of a Chilvers Coton ware decorated plant holder, which appears to be the first evidence of medieval horticulture in Coventry, and one of the earliest examples of such vessels from anywhere in the British Isles.

Following the backfilling of the second phase of pits, two buildings and a number of associated walls were constructed on the site. The walls were all in sandstone, with shallow foundation trenches cutting into the underlying pit fills. In the north-west corner of the site, there was the south-east corner of a substantial stone-built house. A stub wall and a curving revetment formed a curious quadrant in the corner of the building that was some form of cellar or internal stone-lined pit. A wall to the south of this building and further length of wall on the same alignment to the east was probably an internal division within the property. To the east a length of parallel wall and an intervening sandstone surface or floor, may indicate that there was a small lean-to building set against this wall. To the south-east there was the north-west corner of a further building of a similar construction.

The stone-lined pit in the building to the north-west contained pottery and glass dated to the mid-18th century, indicating that these buildings had stood for a couple of centuries or more.

In c1900, the area was cleared of all existing buildings and the new Whitefriars Street was laid out. Construction trenches were cut across the earlier features and concrete foundations for a terrace of red brick houses were laid. In 1940-41 these buildings were damaged by enemy bombing and were subsequently demolished. Although the rubble was later cleared, in the early post-war years concrete foundations and associated hard standing were laid over much the site to support a series of temporary commercial buildings. In the 1990s, these buildings were cleared and the site was left derelict, when it became prey to fly-tipping and was rapidly overgrown.

4.2 The natural bedrock

To the east, the exposed natural was coarse yellow/orange sand. It contained occasional fragments of orange/red and red/brown sandstone and the occasional rounded river gravel. There were pockets and ribbons of red clay, very stiff and sticky, with no obvious inclusions. Towards the centre and west of the site, there was an outcrop of solid red/brown sandstone.

4.3 The quarry pits (14th century)

Along the western margin of the site, at the present street frontage, there was a line of three large quarry pits cut into the sandstone bedrock. As these were investigated in a series of unlinked sondages cut between later features, most of the pits were given more than one cut number, and the fill numbers were similarly duplicated. At the northern end, pit [19/15] (Fig 5 and Fig 6, section 2) was 5m wide with steep sides. It was excavated to a depth of 1.7m but was not bottomed for safety reasons. It was filled with a layer of orange silty sand containing broken tile, flecks of un-burnt coal and ash (32). This layer was 0.85m deep and sealed by a layer of dark grey/red silty sand containing abundant flecks and fragments of broken tile, coal, charcoal and ash, up to 0.65m deep (21). Pottery from these fills is dated to the 14th century. A fragment of broken stone mould (SF12) was recovered from the lower fill.

Further south, a large rectangular pit [23], measuring 4m by 6m, was also cut into the sandstone natural. It was excavated to a depth of 2m but was not bottomed (Fig 5 and Fig 6, section 2). It was filled with a series of deposits of sand and fragments of sandstone mixed with broken roof tile, coal, charcoal and ash, including 44, 287-291 and 292-294. The pottery from this pit is dated to the 14th and 15th centuries.

Southwards there was another sub-rectangular, and near-vertical sided pit [128/309], measuring 4m by c 4.5m. It was excavated to 1.2m but its base was not exposed. It was filled with a series of deposits of silty sand containing varying amounts of sandstone and decayed sandstone fragments, un-burnt coal, charcoal and ash (304-308).

To the east there were two large quarry pits. The southern pit [71] was sub-rectangular, measuring 4m by 3.5m, with near-vertical sides. It was excavated to a depth of 2.25m but was not bottomed

for safety reasons. It was filled with a sequence of silty-sand layers containing varying amounts of sandstone/decayed sandstone fragments, coal, charcoal, ash and flecks/fragments of stiff red clay (72-87), and contained pottery dated to the 14th century.

A metre to the north was another large pit [62], also near vertically sided, which was excavated to 1.5m but was not bottomed. Only the southern end was located, as later walls and pits obscured its outline to the west and north, but it was probably of similar size and plan as the pit to its south. Pottery from the lowest excavated fill (65) is dated to the 14th century. The silty sand fills (63-65, 181, 182) contained varying quantities of sandstone fragments, occasional fragments of roof tile, coal, charcoal and ash.

4.4 The property boundaries (14th/15th centuries)

Along the eastern edge of the excavation there was a rough sandstone foundation or wall of roughly shaped blocks bonded with red clay (262), set in an irregular linear construction trench with steep, near vertical sides and a flat base, up to 0.30m deep and up to 0.50m wide (Fig 5). This extended along the full length of the eastern side of the excavation, and appears to match the boundary of the burgage plot shown at this location on the historic maps of the area (Figs 2 & 3), and still visible in the properties to the immediate south (Fig 4)

Along the western edge of the excavation there was a short length of U-shaped ditch, 1m wide and 700mm deep [46] (Fig 5 and Fig 6, section 1). It was filled with silty sand mixed with broken roof tile, coal, and ash (47, 49-50), and sandwiched between the sandy layers was a layer of un-burnt coal dust and fragments (48). Pottery from the lowest fill (50) is dated to the 14th century. This ditch could be traced further to the north or south, but in these areas there were numerous walls and later pits. Pit [126] in the south-west corner of the site might represent a continuation of this ditch line, which may have been an early property boundary 15m west of the boundary wall, which would approximate to a measurement of 3 rods, based on the 16.5 foot (5.0m) rod defined in late medieval documents.

4.5 Rubbish pits (14th-15th centuries)

In the 15th century a series of pits were excavated into the upper fills of the some of the quarry pits, with a few smaller pits on the margins of the central area that was free of quarry pits.

To the west, a near circular pit [45], about 2m in diameter was excavated to 2.25m, but its base was not exposed. It was filled with a succession of silty-sand layers containing broken roof tile, domestic ash, refuse and re-deposited sand and decayed sandstone (24, 35-43). Pottery from this pit is dated to the 14th century.

To the south an oval pit [91] was cut into the upper fills of pit [128]. It was filled with deposits of sand, sandstone and sticky red clay, mixed with broken roof tile, domestic refuse, coal and ash (92, 223-229, 260). Pottery from this pit is dated to the 15th century, and a number of fragments of copper wire and corroded copper objects (SF 2, SF 5-9,) and a corroded ferrous object (SF 10) were recovered from fill (92).

In the south-west corner of the site pit [126] was sub-circular, c1.6m in diameter by 1.2m deep (Fig 5). It had steep near-vertical sides and a broad, dished base, and was filled with a sequence of sandy layers mixed with coal and ash (135-137).

About 1.0m to the east was another circular pit [93], about 1.0m in diameter and 1.0m deep [93], with steeply-sloping sides and a rounded base. It was filled with a series of layers of silty sand, sandstone and sandy clay (94, 132-134, 263, 297). Pottery from this pit is dated to the 14th century. It was cut through on its eastern side by pit [95], 1.5m in diameter and 1.2m deep, with steep sides and a rounded base. This pit was filled with a succession of layers of sand, charcoal/ ash and coal

fragments (95, 297- 303), and contained pottery dated to the 14th century. A copper alloy pin (SF4) came from pit [93] and a fragment of copper wire (SF 3) from pit [95].

Further to the east at the southern end of the site, there was a further pit [190], 1.8m in diameter and 1.2m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a broad dished base. It was filled with layers of red clay, broken sandstone and silty sand, mixed with fragments of roof tile, Swithland slate, lenses of un-burnt coal, ash and charcoal (191-201,217-8). The pottery is dated to the 14th century, and the pit lay below a later wall (34).

About 1.5m to the north there was a roughly circular pit [155], 1.5m in diameter and 0.75m deep, filled with a sequence of layers of silty sand and sandy red clay mixed with layers of charcoal and ash (156-164), and containing pottery dated to the 14th century. This pit cut the upper fills of the early quarry pit [71], but was cut by a later pit [4/10] excavated fully within the earlier quarry pit fills. Pit [4/10] measured 5m by 3.8m, with steeply sloping sides and a broad flat base varying between 0.90m and 1.2m deep. It was filled with a mixture of deposits including silty sand, sandy clay, sand, sandstone, broken roof tile, fragments of Swithland slate, mixed with dumps of domestic waste, bone, coal, ash and charcoal (11-15, 30-31,149-154). The pottery is dated to the 14th and 15th centuries.

A cluster of three pits impinged onto the central area, which was avoided by the earlier quarry pits. Pit [207] was circular, 1.3m in diameter by 0.75m deep, with steep sides sloping to a dished base. It was cut into sandstone and was filled with a succession of layers of silty sands, broken Swithland slate and domestic rubbish and ash, including pottery dated to the 15th century (208-214). This pit was cut on its eastern side by a sub-rectangular pit [202], 2.2m by 1.2m by 0.75m deep, containing the articulated skeleton of a horse. It was filled with layers mixed sand, sandstone with broken roof tile, Swithland slate, domestic refuse (including a bone pin (SF 11)) and ash, and pottery from a lower layer (205) is dated to the 15th century (203-206). A

One metre to the north was a large oval pit [234], measuring 3m by 1.8m, and excavated to a depth of 1.5m but not bottomed. It contained a sequence of layers of sandy clay, sand, sandstone, broken roof tile, Swithland slate fragments, domestic refuse, ash and charcoal (98, 238-248). Pottery from this pit all dates to the 14th century. A finely worked stone mould (SF 13) was also recovered from fill (98) of this pit. Fragments of a Chilvers Coton ware decorated plant holder were recovered from both this pit and the neighbouring pit [237].

Pit [237] which measured 1.0m by 1.0m and 0.6m deep, was filled with layers of sandy clay (97) with broken roof tile, broken and crushed Swithland slate (235) and silt sand mixed with charcoal and ash (236). Pottery from this pit is dated to the 14th century.

In the north-east corner of the site there was a complex of intercutting pits. The earliest of these was pit [125], which was 0.50m deep and was filled with layers of silt sand and sandy clay containing varying quantities of decayed sandstone mixed with flecks of ash and charcoal (118-122). On all sides this pit had been truncated by later pits or later walls and foundations. To the south there was a large rectangular pit [180/219], measuring 4.5m by 2m by 0.80m deep, cut into the eastern side of the earlier quarry pit. It was filled with a series of layers of silt sand, sandstone and sandy clay mixed with varying amounts of broken tile, sandstone, domestic refuse, coal, ash and charcoal (123-124, 167-179, 230-233). Pottery from this pit is dated to the 14th and 15th centuries.

To the west there were intercutting shallower pits [115], [147] and [117]. Pit [115] was 0.6m deep and was filled with a series of layers of silty sand and sandy clay containing flecks and fragments of decayed sandstone ash and charcoal (111-114). Pit [147] was 1.0m in diameter and 0.3m deep, with gently sloping sides and a dished base. It was filled with layers of silty sand (143, 146) containing fragments of sandstone and flecks of ash and coal, which sandwiched a layer of coal and charcoal (144) containing fragments of roof tile and pottery dating to the 14th century. The latest

in the sequence, pit [117], was roughly circular, 1.0m in diameter by 0.6m deep, with sides sloping steeply to a dished base. It was filled with a mixture of silty sand and sand mixed with broken sandstone and Swithland slate, charcoal, ash and un-burnt coal (116, 145,102). Pottery from the primary fill (102) dates from the 14th century.

Against the western edge of excavation, a stone-lined pit [54], 2.5m long by 2.0m wide and 1.0m deep, was built within a sub-circular construction pit [281], which was 4.0m in diameter and behind the stone-lining it was filled with sandstone and sand containing flecks and fragments of broken sandstone, ash and charcoal (282-286). The lining comprised substantial sandstone slabs (256) forming a solid base and roughly coursed, irregular sandstone blocks for walls (54). It was filled with layers of sand and sandstone and red clay containing broken roof tile, gritty coal dust and deep layers of ash (55-59, 254-5). Pottery from the fill of the stone-lined pit dated to the 15th century. Given the difference between this pit and those merely cut into the early quarry pit fills, it is possible that this stone-lined pit may have functioned contemporaneously with at least the earlier usage of the stone buildings.

4.6 Buildings and boundary walls

Parts of the southern [20] and eastern [106] walls of a substantial building lay in the north-western corner of the site. A length of 7.0m of the southern wall was exposed, which was probably only a little short of its full length given the nearby presence of the probably property boundary, represented by the modern street frontage. The eastern wall was recorded for a length of 5.8m, and extended beyond the northern limit of the agreed excavation area, running across the modern northern property boundary. Both walls were 0.5m wide and were built of roughly-dressed, irregular sandstone blocks bonded with soft white lime mortar. Where it crossed the earlier quarry pits, the wall had been built down into the soft pit fills to a depth of up to 2.4m, presumably with a construction pit having been cut down through the pit fills (Fig 6, sections 1 and 2). In the south-east corner of the room, a short stub wall [107] abutted the southern wall and a more roughly-built curving sandstone wall or revetment (108), built of irregular and randomly-laid sandstone blocks bonded with white lime mortar, ran from the end of the stub wall to the room corner. Together they enclosed a quadrant of a circle and this space was excavated to a depth of 2.4m but not bottomed. It appears to have formed a stone-lined pit set in the corner of the building. The pit was filled with a sequence of silty sand deposits containing large quantities of broken roof tile, roof slate, pottery, bone, charcoal and ash (253, 257-260). Pottery and glass recovered from these fills are dated to the mid 18th century.

To the south of the building lay another sandstone wall (27), 0.70m wide. This terminated to the east in line with the eastern wall of the building, and about 3.3m further to the east there was another similar sandstone wall (179) on almost the same alignment.

A 3.0m length of a narrower, 0.5m wide, sandstone wall [312] lay 1.0m to the south and in the space between the two walls there was a partial surface of sandstone blocks (166) laid on edge onto a bed of yellow sand. This may suggest the provision of either a narrow lean-to structure against the main wall or perhaps the provision of a laid pathway.

The second building lay to the south, with an L-shaped length of sandstone wall [34], 0.70 wide, forming its north-western corner.

4.7 Modern disturbance

The former row of 20th-century terraced houses had been set upon a continuous concrete with sandstone aggregate strip-foundation (22), poured into, and almost fully filling the construction trenches. These matched the expected outer and party-walls of the houses which complemented the row which survives today south of the site (Figs 3 to 5). Each stretch of foundation had supported 9-inch (225mm) brick walls (eg Fig 6, 129).

Service trenches carrying water, gas and electricity supplies were observed during machining along the street frontage onto Whitefriars Street. The former consumer connections to these were removed by machine, together with surviving remnants of the terrace down to the concrete foundations.

In the south-west corner of the site earlier deposits had been disturbed by two machine-cut pits [313], filled with 20th-century demolition debris, broken brick, plaster, concrete, roof tile, window glass, ceramic wall and floor tiles.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The Pottery

by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 988 sherds with a total weight of 32,252g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference (medieval wares only) was 6.81. The entire assemblage was medieval or later, with 350 sherds (15,477g) dating to the early 18th century or later. The range of other ware types present, indicate that the main period of medieval activity spanned the 14th – late 15th centuries (Fig 7).

The medieval assemblage is fairly typical of those found at other sites in Coventry, although fragments of an extremely unusual, highly decorated, medieval plant-holder were noted. Generally, the pottery was in very good condition and the sherds quite large. Some full profiles of vessels were present, and a large number of cross-fits were noted.

Analytical methodology

The pottery was initially bulk-sorted and recorded on a computer using DBase IV software. The material from each context was recorded by number and weight of sherds per fabric type, with featureless body sherds of the same fabric counted, weighed and recorded as one database entry. Feature sherds such as rims, bases and lugs were individually recorded, with individual codes used for the various types. Decorated sherds were similarly treated. In the case of the rimsherds, the form, diameter in mm and the percentage remaining of the original complete circumference was all recorded. This figure was summed for each fabric type to obtain the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE).

The terminology used is that defined by the Medieval Pottery Research Group's Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998) and to the minimum standards laid out in the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-roman Ceramics (MPRG 2001).

All the statistical analyses were carried out using a Dbase package written by the author, which interrogated the original or subsidiary databases, with some of the final calculations made with an electronic calculator. All statistical analyses were carried out to the minimum standards suggested by Orton (1998-9, 135-7).

Fabric

The pottery was recorded using the codes and chronology of the Warwickshire Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery Type-Series (Ratkai and Soden, in archive), as follows (the numeric codes prefixed by 'F' refer to those used in the databases, Tables and Appendices):

F299: Sq202. Coventry Sandy ware, 12th – 14th century. 2 sherds, 67g, EVE = 0.10.

F301: Sq232. Canon Park ware,	13th century.	16 sherds, 228g, EVE = 0.21.
F303: Sq30. Chilvers Coton 'C' ware,	1300-1500.	403 sherds, 11,584g, EVE = 5.13.
F402: WW02. 'Tudor Green' ware,	1380 – 1550.	1 sherd, 4g, EVE = 0.
F401: SLM10. Late Chilvers Coton ware (C),	15th century.	42 sherds, 2,135g, EVE = 1.14.
F403: MP. Midland Purple ware,	15th – mid 17th century.	14 sherds, 1,672g, EVE = 0.14.
F404: CIST. Cistercian ware,	1475-1550.	2 sherds, 6g, EVE = 0.
F405: STG04. Raeren Stoneware,	1470-1550.	1 sherd, 28g, EVE = 0.06.
F406: MY. Midland Yellow ware,	1550-1720.	2 sherds, 619g, EVE = 0.
F410: TGE01. Tin-Glazed Earthenware,	16th – 18th century.	1 sherd, 19g.
F414: MANG: Staffordshire Manganese Mottled Ware,	1680-1740.	26 sherds, 1,345g.
F426: MB02: Late Midland Blackware,	1600-1900.	81 sherds, 9,102g.
F428: STE02: Nottingham Stoneware,	1750-1900.	2 sherds, 37g.
F429: SLPW02. Staffordshire trailed Slipware,	1640-1700.	6 sherds, 188g.
F438: STE01: Late English Stoneware.	1750 +.	5 sherds, 196g.
F439: MO. Mocha ware,	1830-50.	5 sherds, 840g.
F443: STE03: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware,	1720-1780.	3 sherds, 83g.
F1000: MGW. Modern earthenwares,	late 18th century +.	166 sherds, 2,057g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of those noted on previous excavations in the city.

Chronology

Each context-specific pottery assemblage was given a ceramic phase ('CP') date, based on the range of major fabrics present (Table 1).

Table 1: Ceramic phase chronology

Phase	Defining Wares	Date
CP1	Sq202	1100-1200
CP2	Sq232	1200-1300
CP3	Sq30	1300-1400
CP4	MP, SLM10, WW02	1400-1470
CP5	CIST, STG04	1470-1550
CP6	MY	1550-1650
CP7	MB02, SLPW02	1650-1720
CP8	STE01 – 03	1720-1790
CP9	MGW, MO	1790+

Table 2: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase by number and weight (in g) of sherds and EVE

Date	No.	Wt (g)	EVE
1100-1200	1	33	0
1200-1300	0	0	0
1300-1400	285	8824	3.34
1400-1470	177	5757	3.24
1470-1550	10	299	0.23
1550-1650	0	0	0
1650-1720	0	0	0
1720-1790	68	6441	0
1790+	447	10898	0
Total	988	32252	6.81

The pottery occurrence data (Table 2) show that activity at the site was largely confined to the 14th – 15th centuries, with activity dropping off sharply at some point between 1470 and 1550, after when pottery was not again deposited until around the end of the first quarter of the 18th century.

It can be seen from Table 3 that, generally, there was very little residuality in the CP3 and CP4 assemblages, but in the CP5 group, Sq232 accounts for 8.7% of the phase assemblage. However, this was in reality a single large sherd, and as only 299g of pottery of late 15th – 16th century date occurred on the whole site, is probably giving a somewhat false impression.

Medieval wares are almost completely absent from the post-medieval groups, with less than 2% of the 19th century assemblage consisting of potentially residual wares. The CP8 assemblage comprises 14.1% Midland Purple and 9.3% Midland Yellow wares (by weight), although it is entirely plausible that the latter may have still been in use in the early 18th century.

Certainly, of the two sherds of Midland Yellow ware from the site, one was the near-complete base of a chafing dish, weighing 612g, which showed considerable evidence of wear and tear, suggesting that the vessel had a long and active use-life.

The Midland Purple assemblage from CP8 contexts consisted of just five large sherds weighing around 1kg, and these too may be contemporary. The given date for the end of such pottery in the Warwickshire CTS is the mid-17th century, the presence and condition of these sherds suggests that it may have been in use for longer.

Table 3: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase, major fabrics only, expressed as a percentage of the phase total, by weight (in g)

	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP8	CP9
Sq232	1.1%	1.9%	8.7%	0	0
Sq30	98.9%	47.4%	25.1%	0	0
SLM10	-	38.9%	24.7%	0	0
MP	-	11.1%	30.1%	14.1%	< 0.1%
CIST	-	-	2.0%	0	0
STG04	-	-	9.4%	0	0
MY	-	-	-	9.3%	0
MB	-	-	-	48.4%	54.1%
SLPW02	-	-	-	2.8%	0
MANG	-	-	-	20.3%	0
STE01-03	-	-	-	3.3%	1.8%
MO	-	-	-	-	7.7%
MGW	-	-	-	-	36.0%
	8824	5757	299	6641	10898

Vessel Use

The data in Table 4 (below) shows the vessel use at the site during the medieval period. In addition non rimsherds from other vessel types were noted: A handle of a skillet in fabric SLM10 was noted in a CP4 context (Fig 7, 12), sherds from two different Sq30 dripping dishes were noted in CP3 contexts (Fig 7; 9 and 10), sherds from a two bunghole cisterns in fabrics Sq30 and SLM401 occurred in CP3 and CP4 contexts (Fig 7, 2). All these vessels can be considered as domestic, but evidence of industry comes in the form of a fragment of the body of a crucible with a large lump of glassy purplish slag adhering to the outside of it. This ties in well with the mould fragments which also occurred at this site, and with other crucible fragments which were noted at the previous excavations in this plot (see below).

In the main, the range of vessels is one which is common at contemporary medieval sites in the city. Glazed jugs are common, and, in the 14th century, a wide range of domestic vessels associated with the storage, preparation and consumption of food and drink were being used.

The jugs are typical products of the Nuneaton industry, with a wide range of applied and incised decorative techniques utilized. These include modelled faces, such as that shown in Figure 7, 1 and the bodysherds illustrated in Figure 7; 6 and 7.

Table 4: Vessel occurrence per medieval phase, by type, expressed as a percentage of the ceramic phase total, in EVE

	Jar	Bowl	Jug	Cup	Lid	Planter	Total
CP3	11.7%	13.8%	56.6%	0	0	18.0%	3.34
CP4	31.5%	17.3%	41.7%	2.8%	6.8%	0	3.24
CP5	47.8%	52.2%	0	0	0	0	0.23

The medieval plant holder

The large, highly decorated planter (Fig 7, 15: illustration forthcoming) is of some significance, as it appears to be the first evidence of medieval horticulture in Coventry, and one of the earliest examples of such vessels from anywhere in the British Isles. The vessel was made at Chilvers Coton, and a fragment of a modelled head very similar to the ones on this vessel was noted during excavations at the manufacturing centre, at site 13 in association with kiln 32 (Mayes and Scott 1984, fig 107 no. 230), which was dated to the 13th – 14th century.

Sherds of the vessel were noted in contexts (238) pit [237] and (241) pit [234], which are both dated to CP3, and thus were probably deposited in the 14th century, making it broadly the same date as the modelled head from Chilvers Coton. Large portions of the pot are missing, but there are enough sherds present to allow a broad reconstruction of its original form. The vessel appears to be basically hand-built, and have the open-ended, 'hourglass' form which is typical of most of the known examples of vessels of this type (see below).

There are two possible handles which take the form of modelled bearded faces. They are both attached to rim fragments and show that they would have projected horizontally from the rim, presumably on opposite sides of the vessel, with the faces looking upwards. There are also five fragments from at least three loop handles which seem to have projected upwards along the rim curvature. The largest surviving rimsherd suggests that the rim itself may have been scalloped. There is a patchy green glaze on the outer surface, and a single horizontal slip stripe just below the carination of the vessel.

Medieval plant holders are generally rare, and most examples are from the north of England. Moorhouse's overview of the examples from eastern Yorkshire described four highly-decorated examples from Hull, York and Beverley (Moorhouse 1984, figs 8 and 9), all of which show the same basic, open-ended 'hourglass' form as the vessel from this site, but the decoration of this one is perhaps even more ornate.

One of the Beverley examples had modelled, bearded faces applied to the side of the vessel, but neither had the projecting pseudo-handles with faces like this example. The Yorkshire examples occurred in deposits dated to the 16th and 17th centuries; this one is considerably earlier, although the others are likely to have had a long life, being largely ornamental.

Moorhouse noted in a postscript to his paper that other finds had been made near the time of publication, and one of them, from Thornholme Priory in Lincolnshire, was stratified in a mid-14th century deposit.

Moorhouse's paper also suggests that at least some plant-holders were used at places which could not be regarded as ordinary. While examples from Hull and Beverley came from medieval tenements, the two vessels from York were found in gardens which were likely to have been part of the Bedern, the residence of the York Vicar's Choral. The two Lincolnshire examples came from the moat at Cowick and Thornholme Priory. Clearly, while ordinary people may have had such items, they were certainly as likely to have been used by the better-off members of medieval society.

Cross-fits

The entire medieval assemblage was examined for cross-fits, and the tabulated data suggests that the pottery from contexts (8), (11), (12), (14) and (31) pit [4/10], (238) pit [237] and (241) pit [234] came from the same source.

Table 5: Cross fits noted

Contexts	Pottery Type	Form
12 = 14	F303	Jug body
12 = 14	F303	Jug base (x2)
12 = 14	F303	Jug rim
11 = 12	F303	Jug body
8 = 14	F303	Jug rim
14 =31	F303	Jug rim
31 = 238	F303	Cistern
215 = 218	F303	Glazed jug base
238 = 241	F303	Plant holder

Pottery from site WS95

A small group of pottery from earlier excavations directly to the north (site code WS95), produced a range of material that enhances the findings from this excavation. It was rapidly scanned by the author during the course of this project. The assemblage was fairly small at less than 100 sherds, but was dominated by 14th – 15th century wares, particularly Chilvers Coton ‘C’ wares. There was no pottery dating to the 16th or 17th centuries, and it would appear that the area was abandoned from around the end of the 15th century until the 18th century, a chronological pattern which is virtually identical to that from this site.

The medieval assemblage was notable for the fact that although it was quite small, it included seven crucible fragments, all of which had a purplish glassy slag attached to them. This is of some importance given that metal-working moulds and a crucible fragment were found during the course of this excavation.

Discussion

The pottery assemblage from this site is in many ways typical of the high medieval period in Coventry, but has also produced evidence to suggest that the inhabitants of the burgrave plot under examination were perhaps a little wealthier than the average Coventry citizen of the time.

The presence of moulds and crucible fragments indicate that non-ferrous metal was being worked here. The presence of the ornate plant-holder would suggest that it was a profitable business, as such vessels, when they do occur, are often found on sites which are of a greater than normal status.

There seems little doubt from the rest of the pottery assemblage that people were living at the site as well as working metal. The usual medieval staples of jars, bowls and jugs are present, but there is also evidence that they were brewing beer, in the form of cisterns (Fig 7, 2), roasting meat, as the dripping dishes (Fig 7, 9 and 10) would suggest, and carrying out other cooking tasks using skillets (Fig 7, 12).

The post-medieval assemblage is a fairly typical example of an urban domestic pottery assemblage of the 18th – 19th centuries. The 18th century material comprises large quantities of utilitarian pottery, such as the large, black-glazed fabric MB02 bowls which are a staple of the period, along with small quantities of more refined wares such as white and brown stonewares (STE01, STE02 and STE03) and perhaps a few vessels in Midland Yellow (MY) and Midland Purple (MP) wares, early post-medieval pottery types at the end of their production span.

In the 19th century, mass-produced refined white earthenwares come to dominate the pottery assemblages, although the utilitarian earthenwares such as MB02 were still in general use.

Overall, the pottery gives quite an interesting picture of life in a medieval tenement in Coventry; the inhabitants were craftspeople, working non-ferrous metal in the area to the back of their habitation, and apparently living well off the proceeds of their labours.

5.2 The stone moulds

by Pat Chapman

There are two medieval stone mould fragments from the excavation, each exhibiting a different characteristic of the technique for the casting of non-ferrous metal objects. They are both made from a highly calcareous mudstone of the Jurassic type (Telford 1956).

The mould fragment (SF12) from context (32) quarry pit [19], is broken (Fig 8, 1 and Plate 9). It measures 105mm long and 20-24mm thick, with only 32mm and 42mm remaining at each side. It has a central V-shaped runner parallel to the long side, which does not reach either end of the mould, with channels branching off from each side. On the unbroken end the side channels reach the edge and terminate in semicircular loops carved in relief on the side of the mould.

Just set back from the broken edge and towards each end are two small funnel shapes about 3-4mm deep with U-shaped channels leading to the broken edge. Between them is a channel from the central runner widening and deepening to a funnel shape at the edge.

This mould resembles an example from the Much Park Street excavations in Coventry (Wright 1982, fig 49.11) except in that case the side runners terminate in moulds, and another example from Broadgate East with channels (Coates 1996). It is possible that the looped semicircles were the pool from which the metal ran into the side channels and so downwards towards moulds on the lost half of the broken piece. However, as these stone moulds were often designed to work with three pieces, two sides bound together on a base, this fragment could be the side piece with the two small hollows to hold the lugs on an opposing piece of mould which had the other half of the looped semicircles, and the larger funnel enabled the metal to run down into the disc that would be created on the base piece by the loops.

The rectangular mould fragment (SF13) from context (98) pit [234] (Fig 8, 2), measures 107mm long, 58mm wide and 28mm thick. Along one side are two lead dowels set 33mm in from the corners, one broken off below the surface. They would have been used to fix the two side moulds to this base. The weakness caused by drilling these two holes doubtless caused the fracturing of the corners.

This base has three moulds of badges carved in low relief, without any linking channels. It is similar to moulds from excavations at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum (Telford 1956) and the town wall excavations of 1976-78 (Bateman and Redknapp 1978). The central mould has a border of six loops with six bosses at each join and a central design resembling a woman's face with a head dress. On the other side there is a quatrefoil design with a central head in a similar style to the central mould. To the left is an eagle, the symbol of Leofric and later of Coventry Benedictine Priory (I Soden, pers comm). There are very fine incised lines leading from the eagle's tail, talons and beak. Similar lines were described as capillary air channels on moulds from the excavations on Coventry town wall (Bateman and Redknapp 1978, 142). However, these could also be interpreted as the craftsman's marking out lines.

These types of non-ferrous metal casting moulds are well known in Coventry. On some sites, such as Much Park Street the stone moulds were discarded in the rubbish pits in the back yards of parts of these streets. Most date to the 13th to 15th centuries. At Bayley Lane in 1988 the excavated plot (the former Delph quarry site) was documented in 1411 as the property of one John Foundour (Foundryman) from the late 14th century (Soden 2005, 159-60). Here a number of unfinished or blank moulds was recovered, suggesting another dependent, but undocumented industry, that of

mould-maker. Other examples come from further afield such as in Exeter (Hart *et al* 1984, 304) where moulds of a similar style and geology have been found and are dated to the 12th century.

This small assemblage adds more examples to this particular medieval industry in Coventry, and is either from some industry nearby or dumped from further away.

5.3 Building materials

by Pat Chapman

Ceramic roof tile

This assemblage comprises 206 sherds of roof tile, weighing 39.9kg, from 35 contexts. As many fragments display nibs, it is likely that all these fragments are from nibbed roof tiles, with the exception of some curved pieces and one crested ridge tile. There are no complete tiles. Contexts (59) pit [53] and (92) pit [227] produced one third of the assemblage and with the largest surviving fragments.

Where the width of the tile has survived they vary between 160mm to 170mm, conforming to the standard size established by an Act of Parliament in 1477. The nibs are generally neatly made, though a few examples have been carelessly pulled, and the majority are in conjunction with peg holes. The peg holes are square with a diameter of 8mm.

The thickness of the tiles is typically 12mm to 15mm. A few have traces of mortar adhering to their surfaces. Glaze was only found on six tile fragments, five with green glaze and one with yellow glaze.

The most interesting tile is one end of a green glazed crested ridge tile from context (142) pit [71]. Just the top survives, without a full profile, leaving only a gentle curve. The crest is narrow and low, only 12mm high and possibly an applied strip, and has been pulled diagonally across to create a series of waves. This has certain similarities to the 'Serpentine' crested ridge tiles from the Austin Friars, Leicester (Allin 1981), which were dated from the late 14th century onwards. A few other tiles are curved. One had a peg hole later covered in mortar. Two broad plain curved tiles and one in a thin green glazed white fabric may have been hip or valley tiles.

There are a few deliberately cut tiles. Three had been cut in a curve, one in a fan-shape from the corner, the others from the edge but broken, possibly for fish scale tiles or reuse for other purposes, contexts (235) pit [234] and (255) pit [54]. One tile had been cut at an acute angle from an edge, possibly as a shaped hip tile, context (14), pit [4].

Whilst most of the tiles are in the red to brown fabric types there are a few that have black surfaces and a few in a cream to white fabric, suggesting a use of pattern on the roofs (Brunskill 1978, 90).

There are five main fabric types with variations within each. Fabric 1 comprises one third of the assemblage; it is a pinkish brown slightly silty fine clay with the occasional reduced or reddish core. Some tiles have been harder fired and others have black surfaces. Three fabrics each comprise about 30 sherds. Fabric two is a fine orange clay. This orange can also be slightly coarse with a reduced. Fabric three is a fine reddish brown. Fabric four resembles a Nuneaton ware type with a cream to a pale pink to pink brown with a very pale core, slightly coarse and occasionally very hard. Fabric five is brown with a reduced core and only comprises a few sherds, including the crested ridge tile.

As nibbed roof tiles span the medieval to post-medieval periods, the presence of the ridge tile and the fabrics used in the manufacture of the tiles are the only indicators of period. However, as the

site has been occupied for many centuries the tiles are no more than a general indicator of building usage.

Table 6: Quantification of ceramic roof tile

Context/feature type	No sherds	Weight (g)	Context/feature type	No sherds	Weight (g)
6 / pit 4	2	34	92 / pit 91	23	6814
12 / pit 4	18	2518	97 / pit 237	2	252
14 / pit 4	9	879	98 / pit 234	1	108
16 / pit 15	4	416	99 / pit 180	3	1227
21 / pit 19	4	868	139 / pit 71	2	77
24 / pit 23	1	31	141 / pit 71	2	328
28 / pit 23	1	103	142 / pit 71	2	268
32 / pit 19	4	642	143 / pit 147	2	428
38 / pit 45	2	820	144 / pit 147	2	91
42 / pit 23	5	2138	176 / pit 180	1	75
47 / pit 46	3	233	204 / pit 202	4	577
50 / pit 46	2	193	235 / pit 234	9	2544
57 / pit 54	20	2251	238 / pit 237	9	1384
59 / pit 54	20	6206	243 / pit 234	1	218
64 / pit 62	2	579	244 / pit 234	7	676
67 / pit 282	3	1525	253 / cellar	3	355
69 / pit 45	2	224	255 / pit 54	19	3054
88 / pit 54	12	1844	Totals	206	39980

Swithland slate tiles

This assemblage comprises 31 pieces of Swithland slate tile from Leicestershire, weighing 3.9kg, from 16 contexts. The surviving complete examples are small and generally either rectangular or approaching triangular. Where the top edge has survived, the tiles have been perforated with a single hole in the centre. They are typically 8mm thick with the occasional slate up to 15mm.

The three almost complete narrow smooth rectangular examples from contexts (11), (12) and (14) pit [4] are between 90mm and 138mm long. They are 50mm wide at the top and widening slightly down to the base by a further 15 to 30mm. Two triangular shaped examples came from contexts (142) pit [71] and (201) pit [190], the former at 150mm long and from 70mm at the top to a probable 200mm at the bottom and is twice the size of the latter and about 10mm thick. There is one possible five-sided mitred hip-tilestone from context (69).

Table 7: Quantification of stone tiles

Context/feature type	quantity	Weight (g)
6 / pit 4	1	24
11 / pit 4	3	410
12 / pit 4	5	576
14 / pit 4	5	241
38 / pit 45	3	70
44 / pit 45	1	25
59 / pit 54	1	473
69 / pit 45	2	529
142 / pit 71	1	446
201 / pit 190	1	365
204 / pit 202	1	74
209 / pit 207	1	9
212 / pit 207	2	83
235 / pit 234	1	314
242 / pit 234	1	207
244 / pit 234	1	9
Totals	31	3855

The slates are probably derived from Leicestershire as the nearest available source. Where they are found in Coventry they almost always predate the advent of the ubiquitous Welsh slate of the 18th -19th centuries which came to predominate with the introduction of first canal and then rail links. It is commonly found on medieval sites in the city, such as at the Benedictine Cathedral Priory, where it was also used as levelling material between courses of building stone (Rylatt and Mason 2003, 95).

Brick

Only three fragments of brick were found all from context (57) pit [54]. Two are 47mm thick, the other is 50mm thick, no other dimensions are complete. The fabric is a pink brown that has weathered much darker where exposed, but has been fired to dark grey on the exterior.

Floor tile

There are seven fragments of floor tile, five from fill (253) of the cellar/stone-lined pit in the northern building and two from (57) pit [54]. All are of a reddish brown fabric. The two from (57) are 30mm thick, with one showing signs of heavy burning, possibly from a hearth area. Four from (253) are 18-20mm thick and very heavily worn with the green and yellow glaze only surviving as dribbles underneath. The fifth tile is 10mm thick with a yellow glaze and is a possible modern contaminant.

Plaster

There are four pieces of plaster, typically 30-80mm square and 30mm thick, and one thinner piece still attached to a tile fragment, the remaining pieces are very small. This assemblage, from context (92) pit [227], weighs 697g. The material is white and reasonably hard. There is evidence of combing on one piece, while another had been covering a curved element approximately 80mm in diameter. One other fragment came from (241).

5.4 The other finds

by Tora Hylton

Introduction

The excavations at produced a small collection of medieval finds. The assemblage is dominated by manufacturing debris deriving from a copper alloy-working industry. With the exception of pins, it has not been possible to identify the specific products manufactured. Evidence for manufacturing waste was recovered from Phases 1 and 3 and of particular interest is the presence of two stone moulds (see report by P Chapman). There are a small number of objects that reflect personal adornment and it is possible that some of these may be examples of the types of objects being manufactured. In addition there are a small number of tools.

In total there are 69 individual or group recorded small finds in seven material types. Where possible each object has been described and measured, and a descriptive catalogue is retained in archive. The majority of artefacts were recovered by hand, but the use of a metal detector at regular intervals during the excavation increased the recovery of metal objects. No stabilisation was necessary. All sensitive finds are packaged in air tight plastic containers with silica gel and an indicator card, to maintain a low humidity and reduce deterioration.

Table 8: Other finds quantified by material type

MATERIAL	TOTAL
Copper alloy	25
Iron objects	29
Lead	2
Stone	5
Bone	1
Glass	1
Casting debris (copper alloy)	6
Total	69

The finds

Costume and jewellery

There is a small range of copper alloy artefacts that would have been for personal use; these include a brooch, two brooch/buckle pins and a mount. In addition, a large bead in dark blue glass was recovered from a sondage (Phase 3).

The brooch was recovered by metal detector from topsoil deposits. It has been manufactured from two rings with U-shaped profiles, which have been placed together to form a tubular ring (Fig 8, 3). The outside edge is furnished with a series of short incisions; these were probably created during the 'crimping' process, which helped to secure the two rings in place. Protruding from one side of the brooch is a small lobed projection with zoomorphic features, symbolising an animal head. On the inward-facing edge of the opposing side, a shallow recess indicates the point where the pin (now missing) would have been attached. The brooch is decorated with a crudely incised motif of

close-set transverse lines and motifs, which are likened to a similar 13th/14th example from Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire (Pavry and Knocker 1957/8, fig 11, 5), they probably represent a 'false inscription'. A similar, undecorated example was recovered from a 14th century deposit at Billingsgate Lorry Park, London (Egan 1991, fig 39, 212).

There are two cast pins with plain, tapered circular-sectioned shafts and hooked terminals, for use with buckles or brooches. One was recovered from a sondage into the Phase 3 rubbish pits and the other is unstratified.

A lozenge-shaped mount for decorating items of leather or textile was recovered from pit [15] (Phase 3). It has been made from sheet metal, the edges are ornamented with tiny, crudely executed incisions and it is pierced at each end by two dome-headed rivets (Fig 8, 4).

Domestic objects

There is a dearth of domestic artefacts, suggesting that manufacture was the predominant activity in the immediate area. Only two objects may be classified as domestic, these include a cast foot/leg and a spindle-whorl (see below). The former, a foot and leg from a copper alloy vessel (either a tripod cauldron/ewer or skillet) was recovered from topsoil deposits. The leg is flattened with a shallow centrally placed longitudinal mid rib, it expands towards the basal end to form a foot. A similar example has been recovered in York (Ottoway and Rogers 2002, fig 1394, 14194). It is possible that this piece may have been set aside for melting down and copper alloy reuse.

Copper alloy working

The assemblage of finds is dominated by fragmentary waste products deriving from the copper alloy working industry. Small amounts were recovered from the early quarry pits (10, 19), while larger amounts were located in the later rubbish pits (91, 95, 117, 147, 155, 180, 190, 207, 234, 281). In general most of the metal working debris was recovered from the southern part of the site. The waste material includes fragments of wire, both straight and coiled, off cut sheeting and small amorphous lumps of casting waste, but it is not always possible to determine specific end products.

Fragments of wire occur in 1mm and 2mm thicknesses, its presence alluding to wiredrawing and the manufacture of pins, an occupation known to have occurred in the vicinity (VCH Vol 8, p 151-157). Five pins were recovered, four incomplete with spiral bound heads like those from Much Park Street (Wright 1982, fig 51, 29) and one with a globular head (*ibid*, fig 51, 30-31). There are several tightly wound coils measuring up to 53mm in length, these would have been used to create the wound wire heads (Brownsword 1986, 139). For a discussion on pins with wound wire-heads from excavations at nearby Whitefriars, see Caple 2005 (359-60).

Items for other activities

There is a small collection of items which would have been for uses other than metal working. A spindle-whorl manufactured from limestone and used for the hand activity of spinning was recovered from pit [234] and part of a turned bone stylus with spherical head and collar was recovered from pit [19]. Such objects are writing implements for use on wax tablets (Riddler 1998, 272), they are often recovered from scholastic deposits, like the example from Whitefriars, Coventry (Egan 2005, fig 161, 33) or ecclesiastical establishments. Finally there are two stones for sharpening knives or tools. A well worn whetstone manufactured from micaceous schist (Norwegian Ragstone) was recovered from the fill of a later pit [10] and a small rectangular fragment with two worn surfaces was recovered from an early quarry pit [15].

5.5 The metal working debris

by Andy Chapman

A quantity of metalworking debris was recovered from the fill (92) of a pit [91], 3.0m long by 1.6m wide and 1.0m deep, cut into the top of an early quarry pit. This was a primary deposit comprising large lumps of ferrous slag rarely weighing less than 0.25kg and including individual pieces measuring up to 190mm long and weighing 1.40kg. A total of 45 pieces weighing 16.85kg was recovered, representing a roughly 50% sample of the total excavated from the pit, but only a small part of the pit was examined. The pottery assemblage dates the pit to the 15th century.

The material is all the same, and comprises undiagnostic ferrous slag, highly vesicular and often with small pieces of the fuel impressed into the outer surface. The fuel is largely charcoal, but there are also small pieces of probable coal, and coal was also recovered separately from the pit fill. The material is not specifically diagnostic of any one metalworking process, but although there is an absence of tap slag or other clear indications that it derived from a smelting furnace, the large size of so many of the individual pieces would appear to be more appropriate for a smelting furnace rather than a smithing hearth. However, a small quantity of hammer scale was recovered from the fill of the stone-lined pit [54] lying to the immediate north of the pit containing the slag, suggesting that some secondary smithing was being carried out in the area.

6 FAUNAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 The animal bone

by Karen Deighton

Introduction

Animal bone was collected from the excavation by hand. The material derived largely from pits, with the majority coming from the rubbish pits cut into the fills of the quarry pits, where pottery suggests a 14th-15th century date.

Methodology

Identifiable and unidentifiable bones were separated and the latter were discarded. Bones were identified using reference material and a bone atlas (Schmid 1972) for large mammals and Cohen and Serjeantson for birds. Quantification uses minimum anatomical unit (MinAU). The following was recorded for each bone element: context, bone element, taxon, proximal fusion, distal fusion, side, fragmentation, preservation presence and nature of cut marks and sex where appropriate. Tooth wear for ovicaprids follows Payne (1973) for cattle follows Halstead (1985) after Payne (1973). For pigs follows Grant (1982) and Bull and Payne (1982). Fusion is after Silver (1969). Sexing for chickens follows Cohen and Serjeantson (1996); and for pigs follows Schmid (1972). Pathologies are described after Baker and Brothwell (1980). Butchery and gnawing are after Binford (1981). Ribs and vertebra were counted but not included in the quantification, due to their multiple nature. A skeleton was not included in the quantification to avoid species bias.

Preservation

Fragmentation was high with only 28.6% of bones whole. Only two fresh breaks were noted. The level of canid gnawing was low, only 8.2% which could suggest rapid burial following deposition. This is supported by the low occurrence of weathering on the bone surfaces. Green stains are probably due to the proximity of metal objects. Flaking, black stains and mottling were also observed, these can be the result of waterlogging and in the case of flaking rapid drying out. No evidence of burning was noted, which suggests it was not a favoured method of disposal.

Butchery was low at 7.8% including knife marks circling the bone shaft, however, chopping was the most common method of separating or jointing bones in the collection.

Table 9: Species by phase

Species and common name	Quarry pits	Boundary walls	Rubbish pits
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Bos (Cattle)	16 (34.8)	3 (6.3)	284 (35.0)
Ovicaprid (Sheep/Goats)	9 (19.6)	7 (14.6)	208 (25.6)
Sus (Pig)	9 (19.6)	4 (8.3)	130 (16.0)
Equus (Horse) (skeleton counted as 1)			10 (1.2)
Canid (Dog)			2 (0.2)
Felis (Cat)			4 (0.4)
Orientalargus cuniculus (Rabbit)			9 (1.1)
Gallus (Chicken)			39 (4.8)
Anser (Goose)	1 (2.1)	27 (56.3)	52 (6.4)
Equus/bos (Horse/cow)	2 (4.3)		1 (0.1)
Ovicaprid/capreolus (Sheep/roe)			2 (0.2)
Small mammal			1 (0.1)
Galliform (Chicken/pheasant)	7 (15.2)	3 (6.3)	22 (2.7)
Avis indet (Bird)	2 (4.3)	4 (8.3)	33 (4.1)
Piscis indet (Fish)			16 (1.9)
TOTAL	46	48	812

Cattle (Bos), as utilised for meat, milk, skins, horn and traction, is the most abundant species for both phases of pits. Sheep/goats (Ovicaprid), kept for wool, meat and milk, are the second most common species in all phases. No goat remains were positively identified.

Pig (Sus), husbanded for meat only, was the third most common species in all phases. Pigs have more catholic dietary habits than sheep or cattle and can feed on acorns, cereal waste, and stubble. A draw back on rural sites was that they were less easy than cattle and sheep to drive to markets, which would not have been a problem on an urban site like Gosford Street. The relative numbers of bone recovered should also take into consideration that pig bones are the least well preserved of the major domesticates (Stallibras 1985).

The relative meat proportions for the three major domesticates are that cattle give seven times more meat than sheep and four times more than pig.

Horse (Equus) is present in the second phase of pit digging only, as a single skeleton. Horses were used for traction (replacing oxen as favoured draught animal by the later Middle Ages) and hides. A Papal injunction against the eating of horse had been made by Pope Gregory III in 732, but horse flesh could still be used for dog food, and bones and hooves were often used in glue manufacture. In this instance the horse was probably owned and utilised for either riding or traction by the occupants of the plot within which it was buried. The partial horse skeleton included hind and fore legs and some vertebra, and the rest had been lost to truncation or was sealed by early 20th century concrete house foundations. All the long bones were fused, suggesting an animal over 3.5 years of age, but no teeth were available for more accurate ageing. No evidence of butchery was observed. Exostosis (excess bone growth) on phalanges 2 and 3 could have been due to use as a traction animal.

Dog (Canid) is represented by a single femur in a later pit, the size of which suggests a small animal. Canid gnawing also suggests the presence of dogs. Cat (Felix) is present in the later pits only, either as a domestic or feral animal. Goose (Anser) is the most abundant species in the boundary phase. It is difficult to distinguish between domestic and wild types from bones, and the bird was a popular food during the Middle Ages, and the feathers were also utilised. Geese provide more meat than chicken and can be driven to market. Chicken (Gallus) is seen in the later pits only. Chickens can be kept in backyards and fed on kitchen scraps for the production of both meat and eggs. All the bones were loose bones for birds with no partial skeletons noted. Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) is seen in the later pits only. The species was introduced to Britain in 11th-12th century and originated in the Iberian Peninsula. By the late medieval period it had overtaken hare as a food source. The animal can be intrusive but this seems unlikely in an urban context.

Cod (*Gadus Morhua*) appears in the later pits only. Fish was an important element of the mediaeval diet due to church restrictions on meat consumption as it was not considered to be meat. Demand was such that in the fifteenth century Coventry fishmongers could charter their own ships (Soden 2005, 211).

Pathology

From context (24) pit [23]: a cow first phalanx exhibits exostosis around the distal articulation. Context (39) pit [45]: a pig radius has exostosis around the proximal articulation.

Ageing

Neonatal bones from pig (5) and cattle (9) were present, all except a single pig femur coming from the later pits.

All mandibular and tooth material available for ageing originated in the later pits. Pig jaws (7) were available for ageing and all suggested animals less than 22 months of age. Sheep jaws (5) were available for ageing and suggested a range of ages. Cattle jaws (14) and teeth were available. Unfortunately only 5 cattle could be assigned to a single age class, these suggested 4 very old and one very young animal.

Sexing

For Gallus four complete Tarso-metatarsii (lower leg bones) were available for examination, two had spurs so were therefore probably male. No evidence for medullary bone was noted, which can indicate the presence of hens as it is formed during egg production. For pig five male canines were present, one female and seven indeterminate.

Measurements

The measurements taken are those suggested by Paul Halstead and Pat Collins, University of Sheffield (pers comm) The definition of the measurements follow von den Driesch (1976). Too few measurements were available to draw any conclusions regards stature.

Discussion

The later pits have the largest and most diverse bone assemblage, which complements the nature of the activity in this phase. Temporal comparisons were not possible due to the lack of material in the early phase of quarry pit filling, and the absence of material from later phases.

Heavy fragmentation is typical of a medieval assemblage. This was due to the prevalence of heavy handed butchery techniques (“hew” and “smite” were popular instructions in medieval cookery books (Mead 1967)) and the need to fully exploit all available resources. Indeed this is further evidenced by the dominance of evidence for chopping. The rapid burial of bone suggested by the preservation (see above) possibly resulted because of the proximity of dwellings and perhaps the need to discourage scavengers, vermin or flies.

The presence of neonatal pigs could suggest some on site rearing or a taste for suckling pig. Tooth wear suggests all pigs were less than 22 months at the time of death, ie they were slaughtered at a time when meat yield and food intake have reached an optimum. The animal was often kept in backyards and fed on kitchen scraps and waste products from brewing in Medieval times (Grant 1988). Its function in urban Coventry appears to have been primarily as waste disposal (Soden 2005).

Most cattle were old, which is compatible with the idea of slaughter when other uses are no longer possible (they were fattened up and sold), however, this is a tentative statement with such a small data set.

Grant (1988) asserts that goose made up a larger proportion of meat compared to chickens in towns and that is apparently seen here. The absence of egg shell from sieving and of medulary bone would suggest the birds were not being reared on site. Sexing data is inconclusive. Both facts seem unusual for Coventry (Soden 2005) where recovered evidence and documentary sources indicate the breeding of chickens and the keeping of geese as a prevalent factor in urban life.

The horse was a deliberate burial as no evidence of butchery was noted and the remains were articulated in the ground.

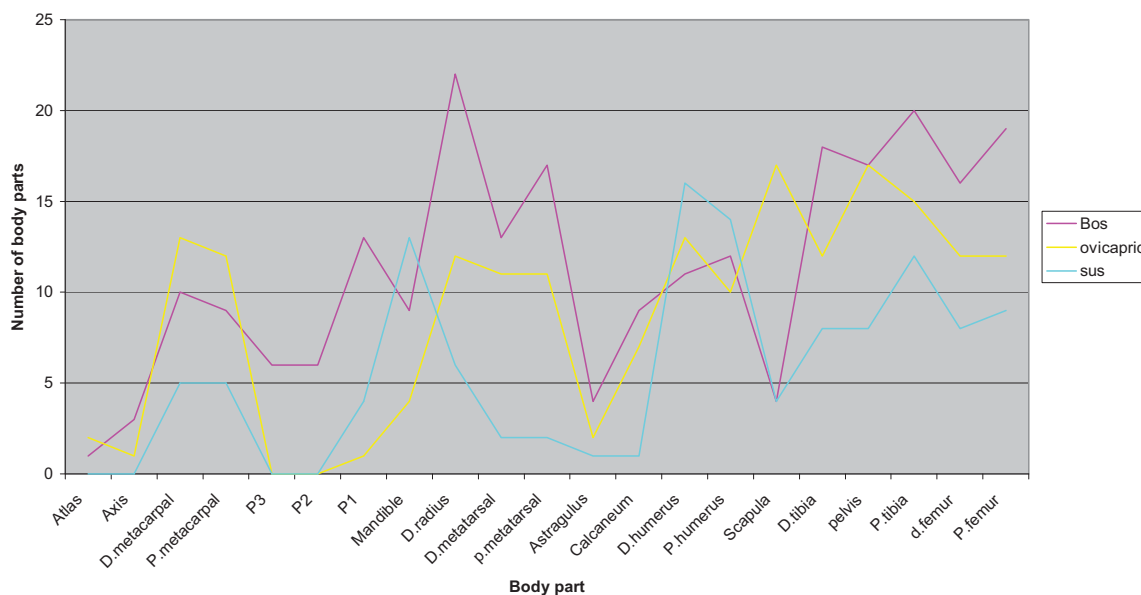
Rabbits could have been acquired from warrens at nearby Cheylesmore Park (Soden 2005) or purchased from the many butchers in and around Butcher Row in the town centre. The relatively low percentages of fish bones could be regarded as unusual and is possibly an effect of the sampling strategy. Fish was an important commodity in Coventry. The city had its own boats and made fishmongers guild members (Soden 2005). Cod was normally salted to aid preservation and would have formed a large part of a medieval diet.

Body part analysis was attempted for the three major species in the later pit assemblage. The numbers of the various bone elements in the assemblage were compared to a meat utility index where bones are arranged in order of their meat yields from low to high and to preservation data (derived from whole carcasses which have been subject to natural decay and predation) where bones are arranged in order of their robustness from high to low. Graphs are produced for both sets of data (see below). Any discrepancies show selection of particular body parts in one instance and the possible reason for this selection in the other. The utility index is from Binford (1978) and the preservation index from Brain (1981).

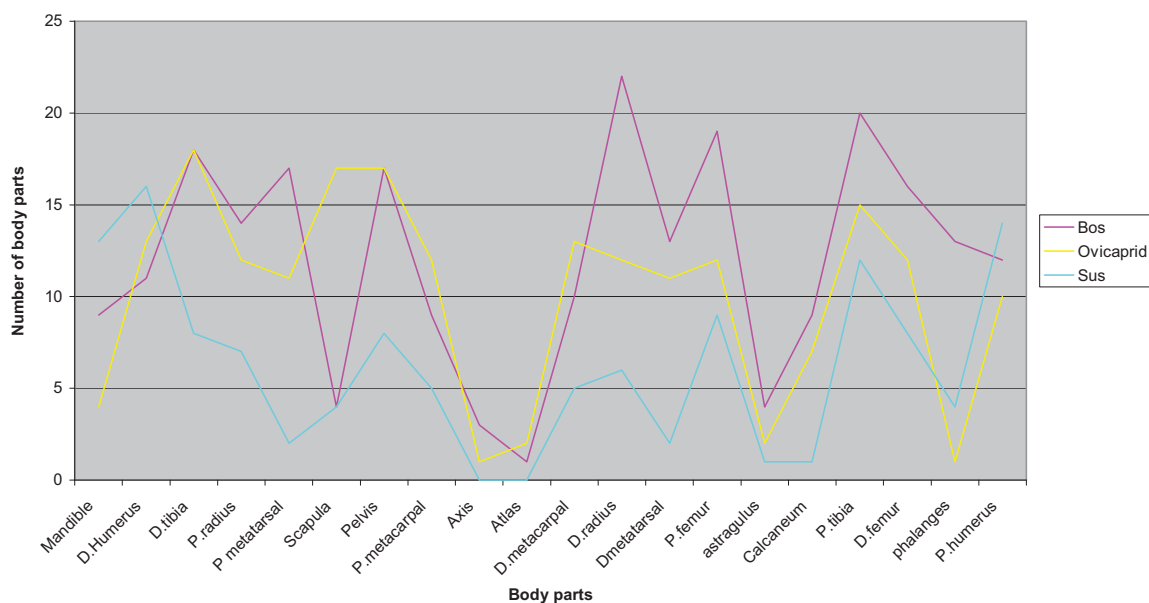
For utility a general increase is seen for the better meat yielding elements eg femurs, proximal tibia and possibly proximal humerus (see graph 1). Whereas preservation shows the same elements to be over represented (see graph 2), but the more robust elements such as atlas and axis are less well represented. A similar pattern for all species is seen, the apparent anomaly seen for cattle phalanges can be explained by recovery bias (Payne 1975). Body part analysis therefore suggests kitchen waste rather than butchery waste, with meat arriving at site as joints, quality cuts of meat.

Grant (1988) suggests this pattern is typical with meat bearing bones being dumped in domestic rubbish pits while bones from butchery “waste” were disposed of elsewhere. This would seem to fit with the known existence of numerous butchers in Coventry.

Graph1: Survival of body parts for major domesticates compared to Binford's (1978) meat utility index. Utility increases from left to right along the horizontal axis



Graph 2: Survival of body parts for major domesticates compared to Brain's (1981) figures. Preservation Decreases from left to right along the horizontal axis



It would be difficult to compare kill off patterns with so little data, and data for body part analysis is not always readily available, therefore intersite comparisons are made in terms of relative numbers of species only for the assemblage from the later pits.

Comparisons with other sites in Coventry for example, Broadgate East, Cox Street and Well Street show a possibly similar dominance of cattle, with lower numbers of ovicaprid and pig (Locock 1999). Other species are rare or absent. This bias is also mirrored on the more specialised sites

such as at Charterhouse and the Benedictine Cathedral Priory (Gilchrist in Soden 1995, 80; Armitage in Rylatt and Mason 2003, 120).

Comparisons with other urban centres in the midlands and beyond in many cases show a similar order. For example Bedford (Grant 1971) Mill Street was dominated by cattle, with equal quantities of ovicaprids and pigs. Norwich St Martin-at-Palace-Plain period 3 (Cartledge 1981) was dominated by cattle followed by sheep, then pig. Albarrella (1999) also suggests that a dominance of cattle is typical of urban medieval sites. However, exceptions exist, such as at Chalk Lane, Northampton, where ovicaprids represented 71% of bones and cattle only 20%. Pig still remained the least common of the major domesticates with just 9%.

Further south in Exeter (Maltby 1982) a similar range of species are seen but dominated by ovicaprids at 47.16% compared to 39.7% for cattle. Sus seem more comparable with 13.1% at Exeter and 16% at Whitefriars Street. Further north in York (Bond and O'Connor) Fishergate periods 6 and 7, the Bedern period 8 and Coppergate were dominated by cattle then sheep with smaller numbers of pig and dog, fowl and goose were all present.

Conclusion

The assemblage appears to represent purely medieval kitchen waste, apart from the burial of a horse carcass. A comparison with other medieval urban and rural sites suggests two things. Firstly that some regional differences existed between urban centres but a preference for beef in the later medieval period is the standard scenario for most Coventry sites, followed by mutton and then pork. Secondly the assemblage is reflective of diet and market-trade rather than animal husbandry.

6.2 The soil samples

By Karen Deighton

Methodology

Five samples were collected by hand from the excavation (see table below for volumes). These were processed using a siraf tank fitted with a 500-micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots were dried and analysed using a microscope. Identifications were made with the aid of the author's modern seed reference collection and a seed atlas (Werner, Schoch and Pawlik 1988).

Preservation

Preservation was exclusively by charring. Most cereal grains were abraded and fragmented.

Table 10: Taxonomic distribution by context

Sample		1	2	3	4	5
Context		50	264	255	85	96
Feature		Ditch [46]	Wall [265]	Pit [54]	Pit [71]	Pit [95]
Phase		2	4?	3	2	3
Volume (litres)		20	20	20	20	20
Triticum cf spelta	Possible spelt				2	
Triticum aestivum	Bread wheat	4			1	
Hordeum vulgare	Hulled barley	32			2	
Hordeum sp	Barley indet	1				
Triticum/hordeum	Wheat/barley	7	6		41	1
Avena sp	Oat					1
Cereale	Cereal indet			5	1	17
Total cereal		44	6	5	47	19
	Large pulse				1	1
	Small pulse				4	2

<i>Galium aprine</i>	Cleavers					1
Rumex sp	dock				1	
Charcoal		frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent	frequent
Hammerscale				2		

Discussion

The samples contain no more than the normal “background” spread of charred grains and seeds encountered at most medieval sites. Hulled barley appears to be the most commonly identified taxa; this was used for malting and consumption. Unfortunately no clear evidence for malting is seen here, eg the presence of sprouted grains. The crop was common in the medieval period, as was bread wheat. Oat could represent a crop or be a wild contaminant.

Docks and cleavers are common crop weeds and colonisers of waste ground. The absence of chaff and relatively small numbers of weeds can indicate a late stage in crop processing. However, in this case this assertion is extremely tentative.

Conclusion

The samples show that some of the common cereal crops and associated weeds were present on site, but not in such quantities that would indicate production or processing. It is probable the volumes of material recovered could come from straw or other bedding for animals or from normal ‘sweepings’ from crops utilised on or around the site.

7 DISCUSSION

The City of Coventry developed initially on the high ground to the north and west of the present site. This area held the Saxon church endowed by Earl Leofric and Lady Godiva and later became the site of a Norman castle erected by the Earls of Chester in the years after the Conquest.

Gosford Street formed a continuation of a road along the south side of the castle, now High Street and Earl Street, through Jordan Well and continuing towards Gosford and subsequently towards Leicester. On the evidence of the work at 114-5 Gosford Street in 1987, it appears to have lain outside the original urban core and was comparatively rural in nature until the 13th century. Excavations in 1995 on the northern part of the same burgage plot as the current excavation indicated only a scatter of 12th-century pottery, residual in later deposits. The evidence from the current excavation is of a single piece of 12th-century pottery, also residual. Whatever activity was taking place, it was of low intensity and has left no other substantive archaeological record on this part of the site (Figs 2 to 4).

7.1 Map analysis

John Speed's Map of 1610 shows the city with its town wall at the beginning of the 17th century. Gosford Street is easily identifiable, together with Earls Mill Lane (later Mill Lane and now Cox Street). Whitefriars Lane that ran from Much Park Street parallel to Jordan Well and then curved north to join Gosford Street to the west of modern Whitefriars Street is clearly shown. From these the approximate location of Whitefriars Street can be gauged. The distinctive angle in the street frontage shown on Jordan Well opposite Earls Mill Lane is not shown on any later maps. The detail on the map is insufficient to certainly identify the burgage plots destroyed by the construction of Whitefriars Street or those exposed in the current excavation.

Two prospects of the city by Wenceslaus Hollar in 1656 shows the city defences still intact after the civil war and give a good overall impression of the late 17th century city but do not show any detail of the area under investigation.

Samuel Bradford's Map of 1750 (surveyed 1748) shows much of the defensive wall circuit destroyed. Gosford Street is still clearly identifiable with plenty of fine detail. Despite best efforts to match the buildings outlined on this map with those of later maps, no definitive correlation could be made. What is clear is that by the mid 18th century, Gosford Street was fully developed with buildings crammed in along both sides of the street and with additional buildings or outbuildings extending back along the plots. On the south side of the street, gardens and orchards extended out to Whitefriars Lane which formed the southern boundary of these plots. Sharp's Map of 1807 shows little change to that of Bradford for Gosford Street.

The first large scale map of the area is the Board of Health Map of 1851 (Fig 2). This shows in fine detail the buildings and property boundaries along the southern side of Gosford Street. Modern Whitefriars Street is located to the west of the plot marked Morris Yard. The 1995 and 2004 excavations both took place in Morris Yard and Muston's Yard to the east. The property boundary between Muston's Yard and the buildings along the western edge of Griffin Yard forms the east boundary of the 1995 and 2004 development sites. The property boundary between Morris Yard and Muston's Yard is identically placed to the line of the sandstone wall uncovered along the eastern boundary of the 2004 excavation.

By the time the 1888 Ordnance Survey map was produced, the Griffin Inn shown on the 1851 map had been re-named as the Sir Colin Campbell. Griffin Yard, Muston's Yard and Morris Yard are known as Court Nos 42, 43 and 44 respectively. The plot to the west of Court 44 was not identified but shared a boundary with Court 44. No major structural changes were identified within the immediate plots under examination (Fig 3).

The 1905 Ordnance Survey map shows that the plot to the west of Morris Yard (Court 44) survived but that the three plots to the west had been destroyed to allow the construction of a new road, Whitefriars Street.

Whitefriars Street is then shown on the 1925 and 1936 OS maps with a newly built Sir Colin Campbell public house on the corner of Whitefriars Street and Gosford Street. The old location of the public house has become a shop that survived into the 1960s. A passageway and glasshouse separate the new public house from a factory to the south. This extended from the new street frontage of Whitefriars Street to the line of the earlier boundary between Muston's Yard (Court 43) and Griffin Yard (Court 42) to the east. To the south of the factory, terraced housing extended along the length of Whitefriars Street. All of the earlier buildings on these plots were destroyed in this phase of clearance and development.

The 1950 and 1963 Ordnance Survey maps show the damage caused by aerial bombing during the Second World War. The terrace of houses 64-72 were destroyed with only 74 still standing adjacent to the south wall of the factory. The remainder of the terrace has been replaced with a series of temporary structures as the site was used for car sales, light engineering and offices.

In 1995, the sole surviving terraced house had long been demolished and the site to the south now had a large metal framed building housing a light engineering works.

The factory site was derelict, the doors and windows bricked up and the roof removed to avoid local property rates/council tax on the property.

The 1995 excavation took place before the demolition and clearance of the factory site (Fig 4). A cellar built of sandstone ashlar blocks with a vaulted ceiling was uncovered in the north of the site (Plates 7-8). This matched the location of a building shown at this location on the mapping from 1851 to 1905 (Fig 3). A series of stone-lined and deeply cut rubbish pits were spread across the remainder of the site and clearly pre-dated the other buildings shown on the modern mapping.

A circular stone-lined well to the south of the cellar appears to be located within the small rectangular building shown on the mapping from 1851-1905, which was probably a well house (Fig 3).

The 2004 excavation exposed a sandstone wall aligned north-to-south across the development site (Figs 4 and 5). This wall exactly matches the alignment and location of the property boundary marked on the 1851-1905 maps between Morris Yard (Court 44) and Munson's Yard (Court 43). On the western edge of the excavation, parallel to the inner edge of the pavement along Whitefriars Street was a flat bottomed trench. This matched the property boundary between Morris Yard (Court 44) and the un-named plot to the west. It is probable that it was robbed out when the new road and terrace of houses were constructed in the early 20th century.

The large wall uncovered immediately to the east of Whitefriars Street at the north of the excavation cannot be related to any of the buildings shown on the early mapping. Speed shows an isolated building set back from the street frontage buildings on Gosford Street in this general location but identification is uncertain. The Bradford Map shows several buildings set back in this general location, one marked Baptist Meeting, but none can certainly be attributed to this plot or location.

Pottery from the cellar/pit fill is dated to the mid-18th century, so it is probable this building had been demolished and the site levelled before the survey for the 1851 Board of Health map was completed.

The sandstone walls uncovered in the south-east corner of the excavation cannot be related to any of the structures shown on the 1851-1905 mapping and must have been levelled before the mid 19th century.

The two east-west walls at the north-west of the site appear to match the location of a large rectangular structure at the southern end of the buildings shown in Morris Yard (Court 44). It is unclear if these were part of the standing structure, or whether they lay beneath the structure shown on the map (Figs 2 and 4).

7.2 The archaeological evidence

The first evidence for activity on the site is the series of large quarry pits cut into the sandstone bedrock. These appear to have been used to extract sand or sandstone, probably for use in contemporary building developments. The Carmelites were granted land in Coventry for their nearby house in 1341 and the consequent 'Whitefriars' is located less than 200m to the south of the site. The boundary of the monastic precinct forms the southern plot boundary of the burgage plots along the south side of Gosford Street, including this, the current excavation plot. Digging of quarry pits associated with the development of the friary immediately to the south of the site is the most probable impetus for this first phase of activity on the site.

The quarry pits were quickly backfilled with re-deposited sand, broken sandstone and dumps of domestic rubbish including animal bone, pottery, coal, ash and charcoal. There is no evidence for silting of the pits or the development of humic soils which would indicate colonisation by weeds or undergrowth. It is most likely that these were filled with the upcast from the excavation of further quarry pits recorded to the south and east of the site (Woodfield 2005).

The pottery from the pits is all 14th century, consistent with the quarrying and backfilling of the pits broadly contemporary with the establishment of the Whitefriars.

There is a strip about 4m wide aligned north-south through the centre of the site which has not been encroached upon for either quarrying or the cutting of rubbish pits (Figs 4 to 5, Plates 1 to 6). This appears to be a deliberate omission, and may indicate the retention of this area as a baulk between quarries either for storing the cut sandstone or for transport and access of wagons.

There is no evidence from this site that any part of Gosford Street was laid out as part of a planned expansion of the town. The surviving documentary evidence indicates that the street was developed piecemeal, both expanding east from the town towards Gosford, and west from the Gosford back towards the town. The development of the Whitefriars would have provided impetus for infilling and renewed development along Gosford Street and the evidence is that the area had been divided into plots by the late 14th century.

The sandstone wall along the eastern edge of the excavated area matches the location and orientation of a boundary wall shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map of the area (Figs 2 to 3). This may reflect a boundary initially laid out in the 14th century. Although no wall or ditch has survived along the central sandstone outcrop, the Ordnance Survey map of 1888 indicates that a later plot boundary ran along this part of the site. This would be corroborated by the fact that earlier sandstone walls all terminate on either side of the mapped location of this feature. It is significant that while later rubbish pits all appear to respect this line and the sandstone boundary wall to the east, the boundary wall is itself laid out over at least one of the quarry pits.

Following the division of the land into individual plots, a series of rubbish pits were then cut into the upper fills of the earlier quarries. Several of these were large but relatively shallow. All contained a mix of re-deposited sand and broken sandstone, together with domestic rubbish; unburnt flecks of coal, ash, charcoal, bone and pottery. Pottery from these pits is all dated to the 14th

and 15th centuries. This would be consistent with new, nearby occupation of the street frontage as Coventry grew in wealth and status, domestic waste being buried further back along the plots to reclaim the old quarry workings as habitable land.

The dating of the buildings and walls is slightly more difficult. The substantial building in the north-west corner of the site was cut through the edge of a former quarry pit, which had been infilled in the 14th century, while material recovered from a cellar within the building dates from the mid 18th century and gives a *terminus post quem* for the infilling of the cellar, not for its construction. A sandstone wall parallel to the south wall, which may be broadly contemporary with the building, cuts through both a quarry pit and a later rubbish pit, with these containing pottery dated to 14th - 15th centuries, and therefore dating this wall to the late 15th century at the earliest.

The building at the south-east corner of the site comprised a shallow construction trench containing a poorly-coursed sandstone foundation. This was laid across both a quarry pit and later rubbish pits that contained pottery dating to the 14th and 15th centuries, this building must date from the late 15th century at the earliest and possibly much later.

The poor construction of this wall may indicate a dwarf wall to support a timber framed building rather than a substantial stone-built structure.

The two sandstone walls aligned east to west across the north-east quarter of the site are also cut into the upper fills of rubbish pits. These in turn lie at least partly over a quarry pit. Pottery from the fills of these pits is dated to the 14th and 15th centuries. These walls must also post-date the underlying pits and cannot be earlier than the late 15th century.

The stratigraphic evidence from the pit fills and the overlaying walls show that new development was taking place on these plots some time after the mid to late 15th century. This evidence seems to be in conflict with the pottery evidence.

The period of activity from 1300 -1470 is evidenced in the pottery record by over 500 sherds. The period 1470 – 1550 is represented by only 10 sherds of pottery, many of which are likely to date to the earlier part of this period. There is a complete absence of pottery for the period 1550 – 1720. Evidence from the adjoining site, 76 Whitefriars Street (Dickinson 1995) shows a similar decline in the pottery assemblage throughout the 16th – 18th centuries (Blinkhorn, above).

While absence of proof does not constitute proof of absence, this gap in the pottery record does need some explanation. If the site was not abandoned, something else must have caused the gap in the pottery sequence. On John Speed's map of 1610, Gosford Street is shown with a full street frontage of buildings. Unfortunately, as Soden notes (*ibid* 36), Speed did not differentiate between occupied or derelict buildings. One explanation may be found in the construction of the sandstone walls for the new buildings on the site. Once occupied, these would have concealed at least part of the ground surface and made the digging of rubbish pits in the immediate vicinity a much less attractive proposition.

Assuming these buildings were occupied throughout the period, the pottery and waste may have been disposed of either in new pits further back along the plot to the south (i.e. under numbers 66-36 Whitefriars Street), or disposed of as land-fill outside the city, perhaps at Gosford Green (*op cit.* 2005, 37).

It is known from historical records of Coventry that the city entered a period of economic decline in the late 15th century and that this continued into the late 17th to early 18th century (Soden 2005, 35). Contemporary rentals do indicate much-reduced tenancies and rents but a widespread pattern of abandonment cannot be supported on the major thoroughfares. Even if only occasional plots

were abandoned, it might be expected that some refuse from adjoining plots would have found its way onto the site, and that is clearly not the case.

Taking the absence of pottery as proof of absence of activity, this may indicate abandonment for at least part of this period, or, the lack of pottery may indicate that the buildings were started but never finished.

The likely explanation may be found in sparse documentary references to plague in the city. In 1468 a letter to the Pope records a newly erected altar in St Michaels Cathedral dedicated for prayers to release the city from plague (Calendar of Papal Letters 1468). In 1478 another document records that four thousand five hundred people had died of the plague in the city. This would have amounted to almost half the estimated population of the city at the time (Soden 2005, 188). The death toll given seems very high and may reflect deaths across the whole County of Coventry, incorporating the outlying villages. A severe plague would accord with the attested records of over 525 houses still standing empty in the city in 1522 (Soden 2005, 35).

It is probable that the pottery gap is a true reflection of decline and limited activity through the 16th century.

Later clearance of the site for the construction of Whitefriars Street, the building of the terrace of houses in the early years of the 20th century and the subsequent bombing and clearance of the site in the middle and later years of the century have effectively removed all but the deepest buried cut features on the site (Figs 3 to 4). This has severely restricted interpretation of the post-medieval archaeology and may provide an alternative explanation for the gap in the pottery sequence on the site.

A total of 68 sherds of pottery for the 1720 – 1790 were recovered from the cellar in the north-west of the site, dating its infilling. No other pottery from this period was found on site. A further 282 sherds of 18th – 19th century pottery was recovered from a single context (270) in a small stone-built alcove built against wall (262). This had been used for disposing of rubbish as the stone and brickwork was reddened by fire and the pottery was recovered from deep layers of ash.

Perhaps more than the lack of 16th and 17th-century material, the relative lack elsewhere of pottery from these later periods across the site may well be the result of 1940s clearance rather than an indication of a sustained dearth of activity. The range of wares recovered from the two contexts is mute evidence for a resurgence of activity during the 18th and 19th centuries.

A substantial dump of iron metal working debris including ferrous slag and small quantities of hammer scale was recovered from one of the larger rubbish pits on the site. It is likely that some ferrous metalworking was being carried out on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

It is more probable that at least part of the site was used for non-ferrous metal working. The recovery of copper pins and copper wire may indicate pin making or wire drawing. The range of small finds, particularly the abundance of copper wire and copper fragments appears good evidence for medieval metal working on or adjacent to the site. This is supported by the discovery of parts of two stone moulds for casting small decorative metal badges or decorations, possibly for adorning clothing (Fig 8, 1 and 2).

The Victoria County History of Warwickshire (Vol 8, p 151-157) details the numbers of tradesmen operating in the main city streets in the 12th and 13th centuries, and again in the 14th and 15th centuries. In the earlier period, 32 mercers and merchants, 4 cholloners, 6 drapers, 8 fullers, 8 carters and a single bowstring maker are recorded in Earl Street-Gosford Street. Clearly, at this time, the majority of the trades were involved in the production of cloth. The presence of carters on a main arterial road into the city would not be unexpected as the city grew and expanded.

The development of the cloth and clothing industry in the city produced a range of supporting and associated industries. In particular the metal working trades associated with the production of the cloth and the making of metal fixtures and fittings to adorn the finished items. In addition to knives and scissors and wool carders, there was a requirement for pins, needles, buttons, clasps, brooches, buckles, strap ends, plate and jewellery and fine wire thread for decoration

Clearly the street had grown and developed considerably by the 14th century. In the 14th and 15th centuries almost a quarter of all those involved in the cloth and wool trades lived in the Earl Street and Gosford Street areas, the most wealthy part of the town, there were 48 drapers, 43 dyers, 22 tailors and 23 hosiers, with 10 bakers and 7 saddlers recorded in the same area.

Along with the concentration of cloth and wool trades, there was a focus on metal workers. Almost all of the girdlers, wiredrawers and card-makers recorded in the City Rolls were in the Gosford Street and Earl Street area.

The presence of metal working debris, metal casting moulds, scrap copper metal, wire and fittings all indicate industrial production in or in the immediate vicinity of the two plots excavated. It is highly likely that wiredrawers or copper smiths were operating in one or more of these plots during the 13-15th centuries where the range of pottery reflects domestic use with some indications of a higher status or quality of lifestyle for at least some of the local residents.

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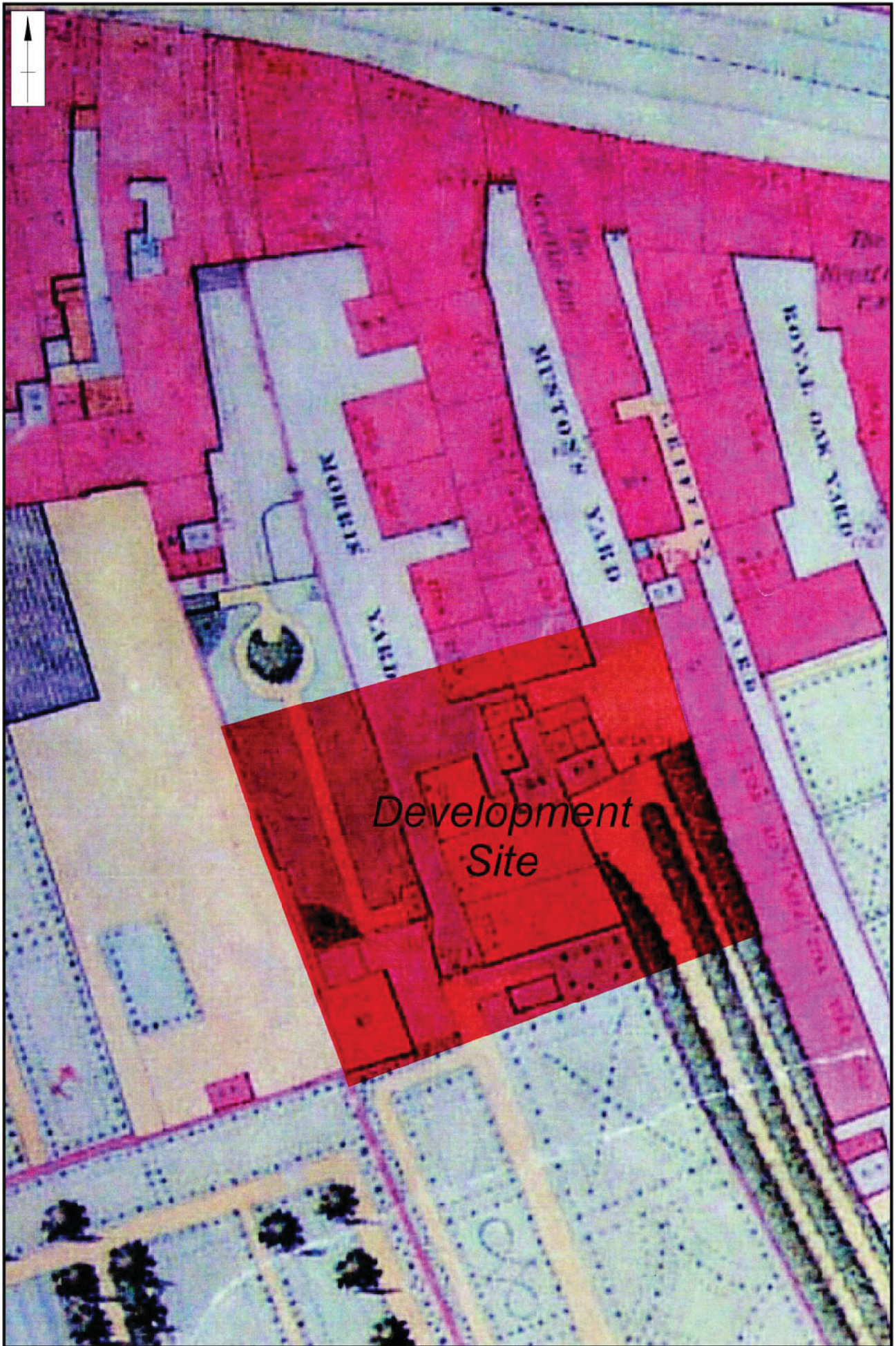
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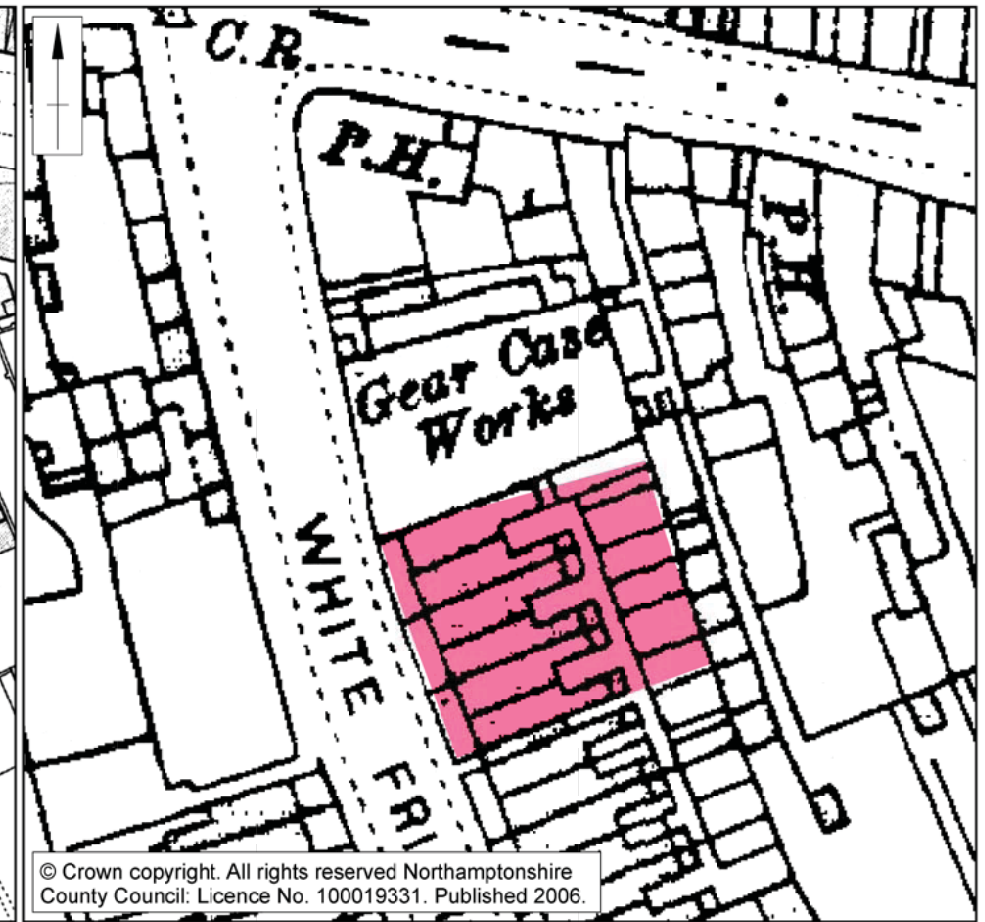
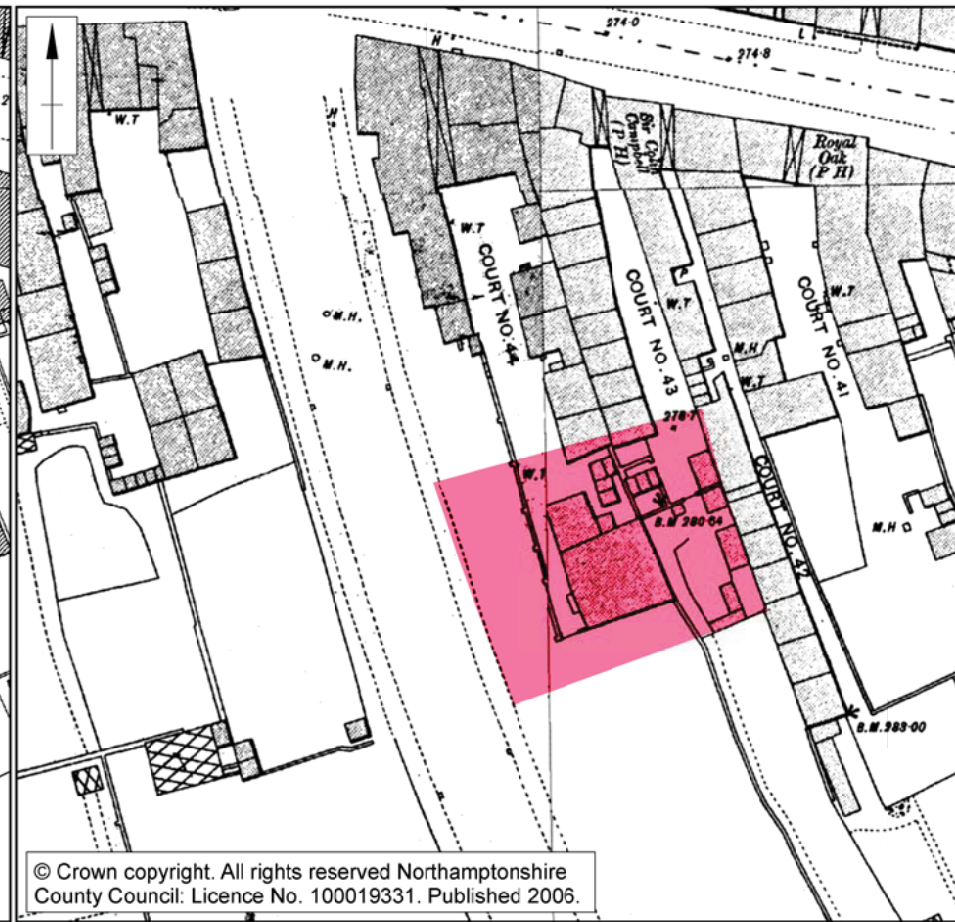


Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1



Extract from Board of Health Map 1852 Fig 2



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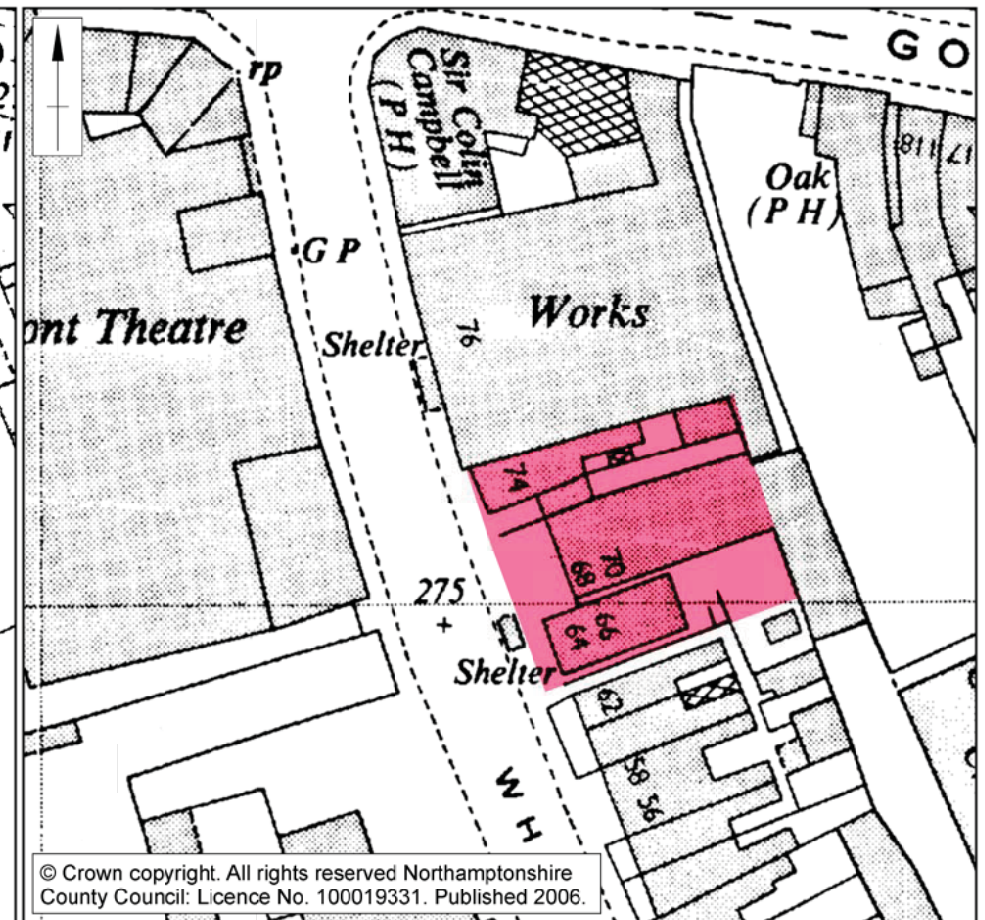
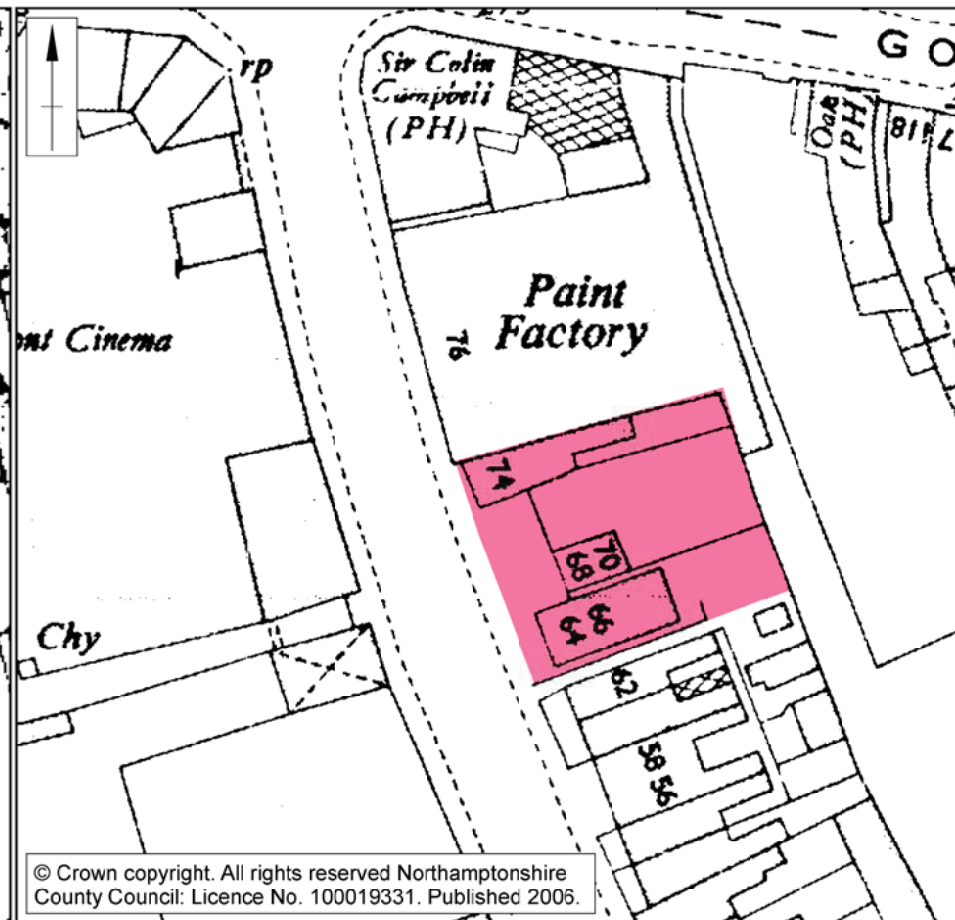
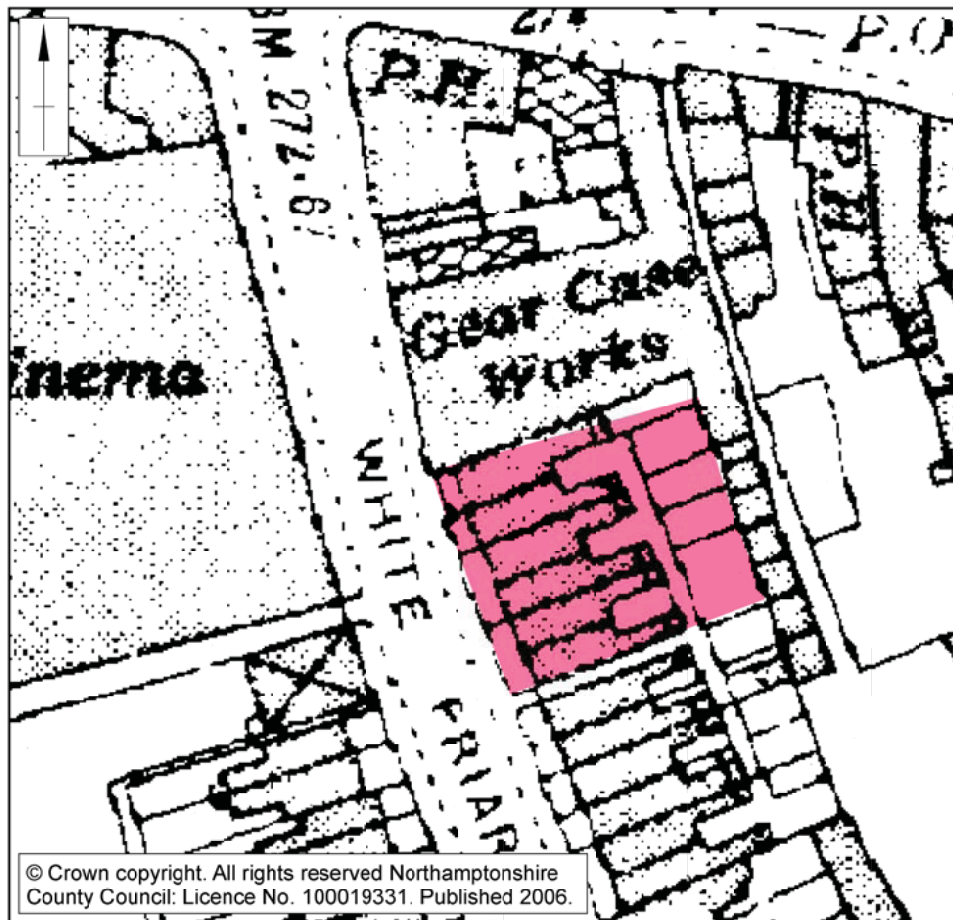
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Ordnance Survey Map 1888

Ordnance Survey Map 1905

Ordnance Survey Map 1925



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Ordnance Survey Map 1936

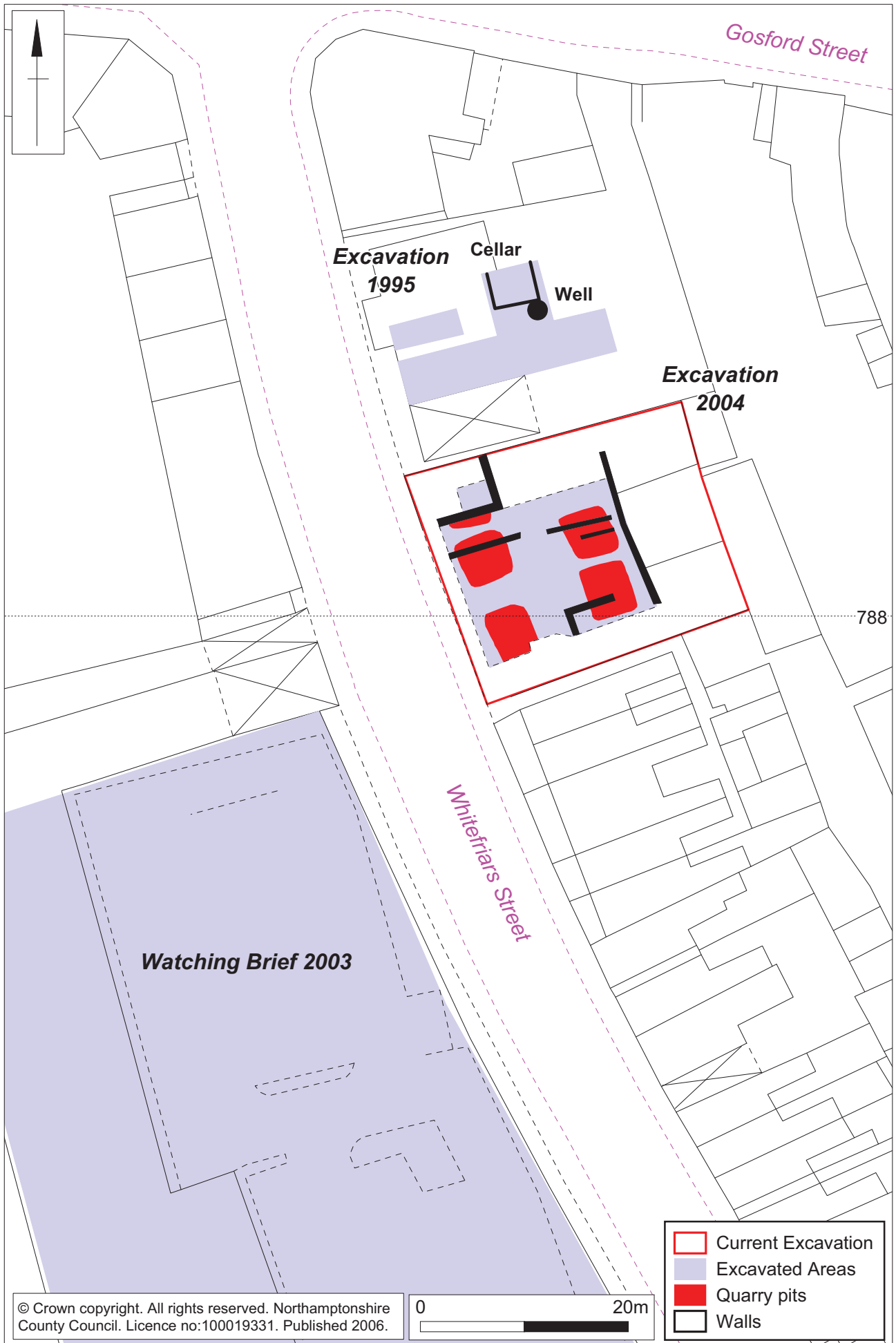
Ordnance Survey Map 1950

Ordnance Survey Map 1963

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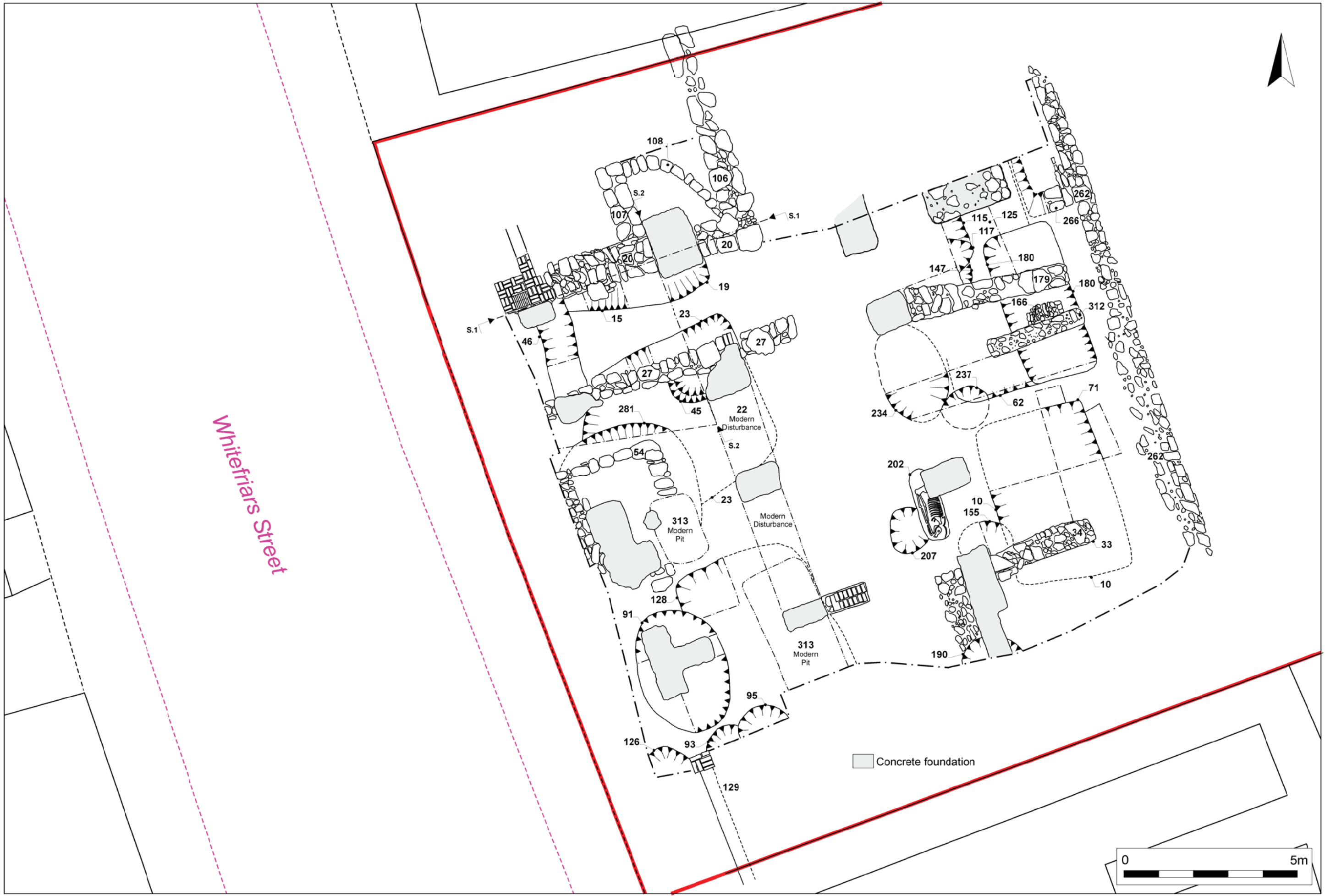
Maps supplied by Coventry City Council

Ordnance Survey Map Regression Fig 3



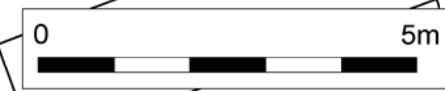
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Previous Excavations & Historic Structures Fig 4



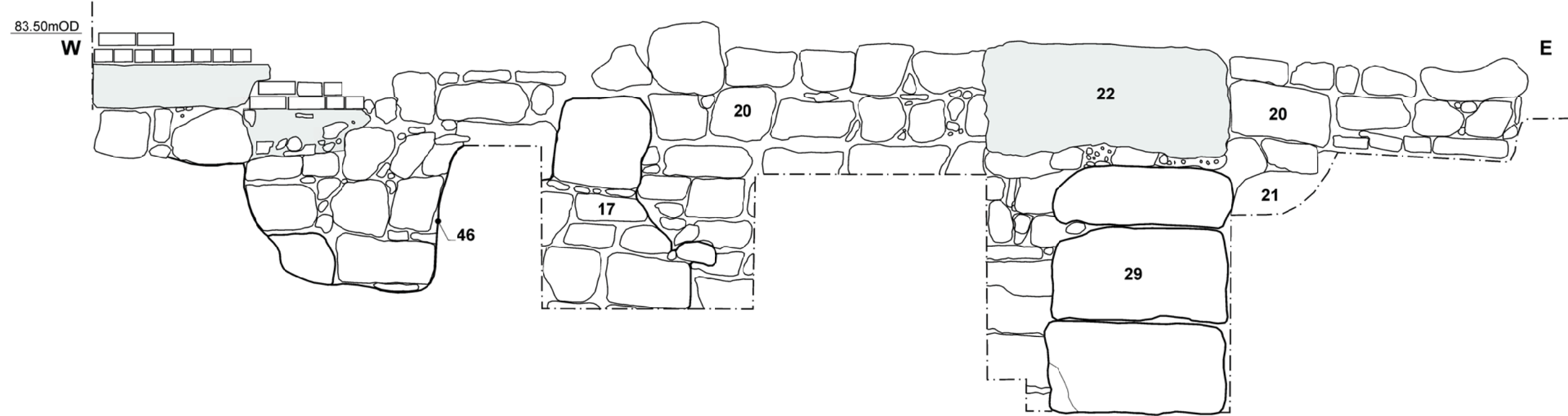
Whitefriars Street

Concrete foundation

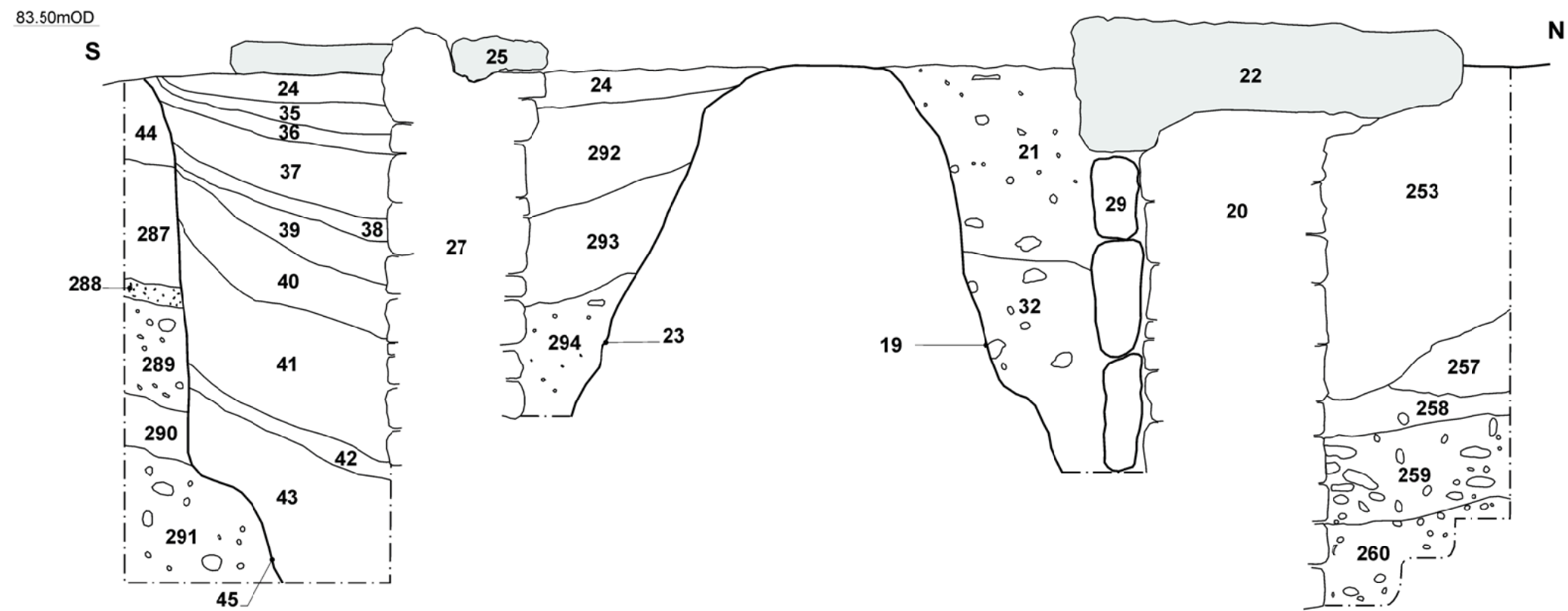


Plan of Excavation Fig 5

Section 1

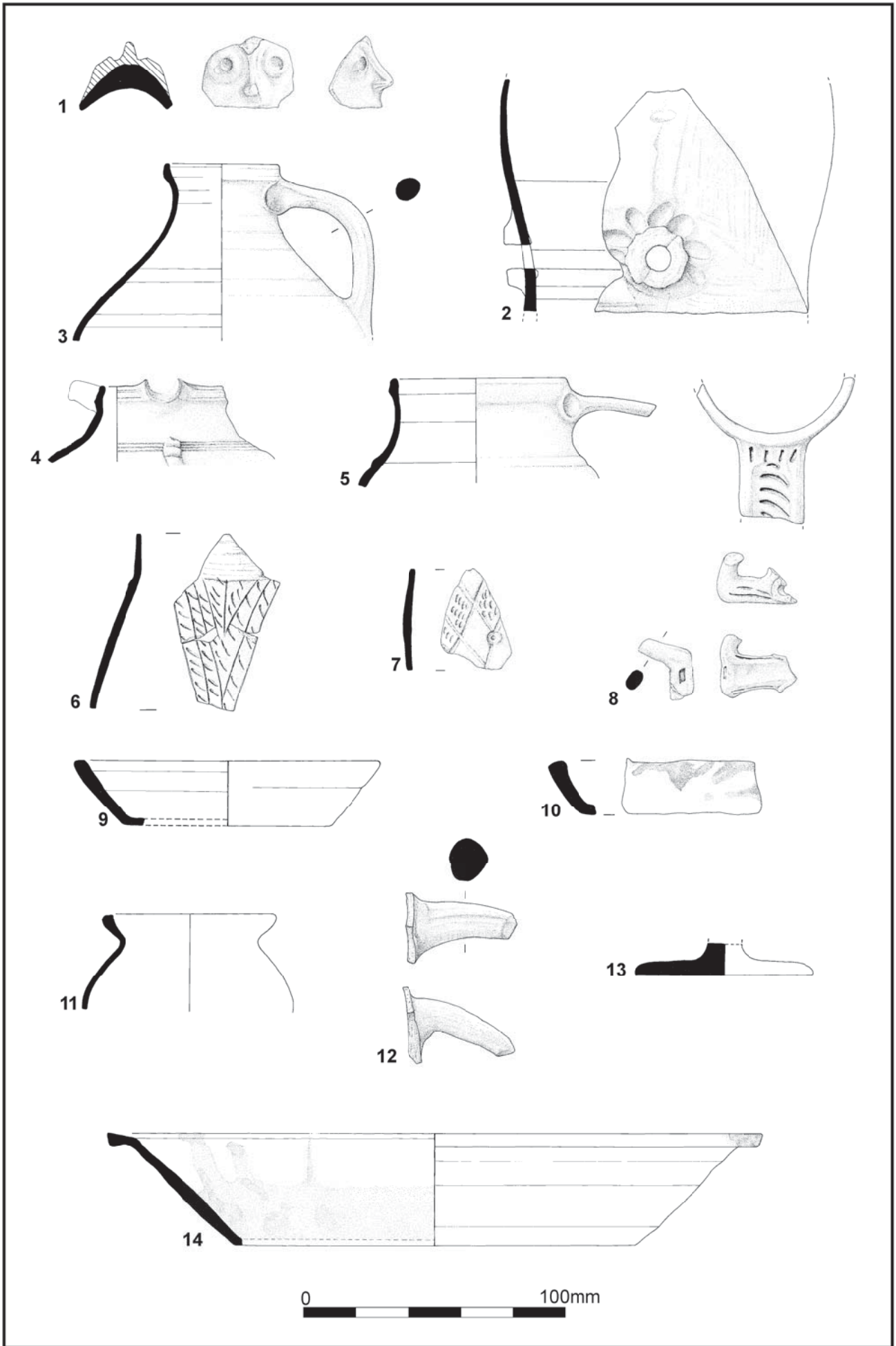


Section 2

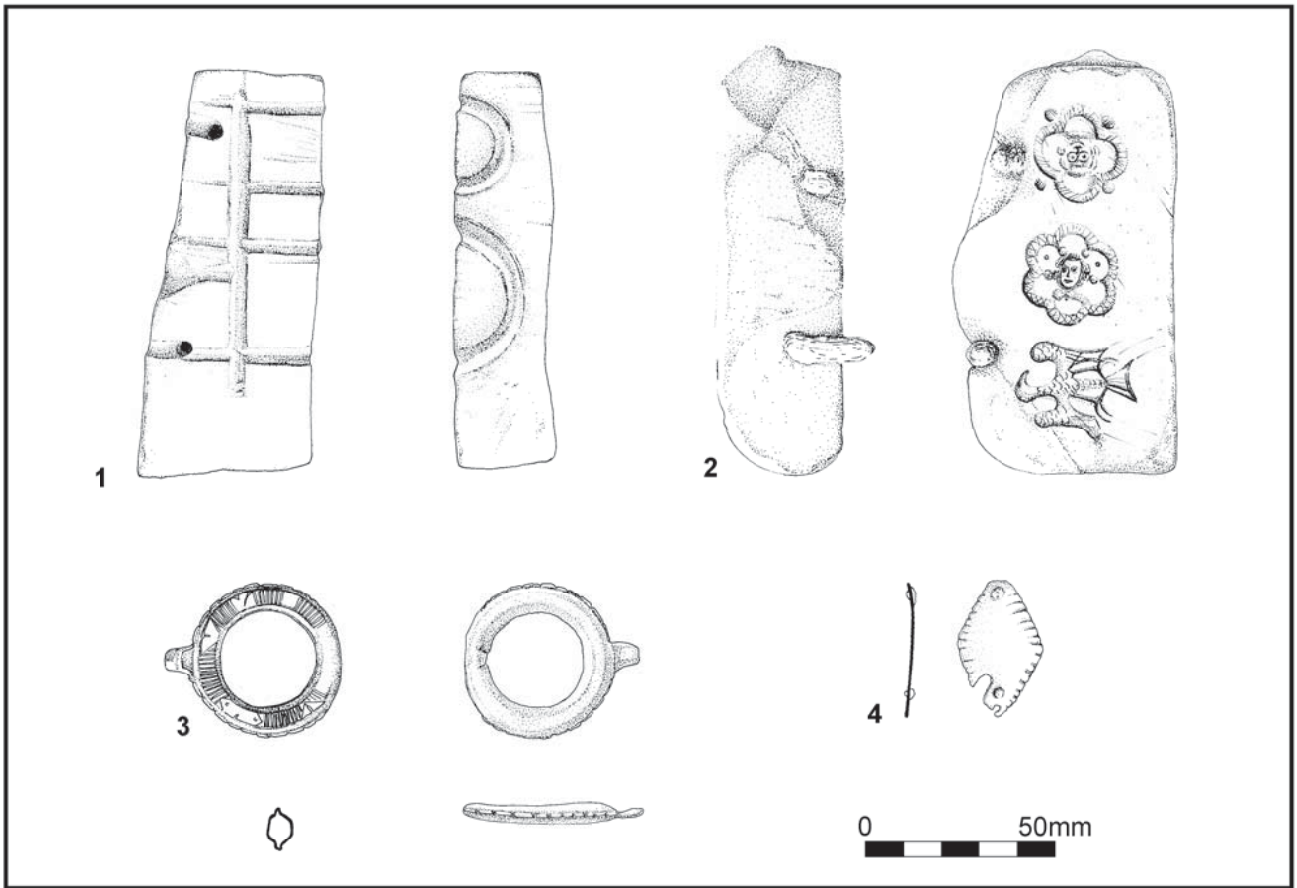


Concrete foundation





Pottery Fig 7



Small Finds Fig 8



Plate 1: Excavation, looking east.



Plate 2: Excavation, looking north.



Plate 3: Excavation, looking south west.



Plate 4: Excavation, looking west.



Plate 5: Excavation, looking south.



Plate 6: Excavation, looking south east.



Plate 7: 1995 Excavation - cellar, looking west.



Plate 8: 1995 Excavation - cellar, looking east.

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Plate 9: Casting mould fragment (SF12).



Plate 10: Casting mould fragment (SF13).