

The Moor Sheffield SouthYorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation (T4)

January 2007 Revised March 2007

Report No. 1633

Faithful and Gould

The Moor

Sheffield

South Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation (T4)

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Summary

The evaluation trench excavated within the yard area of the C. A Grant Limited works prior to the demolition of the building at 156 Eyre Street, has demonstrated the survival of structures, very close to the current ground surface, associated with 19th and early 20th cutlery manufacture, on or near the former site of Albion Foundry. A small assemblage of nonferrous metal artefacts recovered from a single context relates to the manufacture of table knife handles although it is not clear whether these knife handles were manufactured on-site or were dumped from an adjacent workshop or factory. The pottery is a typical assemblage from inner Sheffield comprising wares dating from the 18th and 19th centuries.

On the basis of this trench it is considered likely that there may be other structural remains and associated stratified deposits in areas where basements and other recent groundworks have not destroyed earlier features. However, it is thought that these pockets of surviving archaeology are likely to be fairly small in area given the amount and extent of recent intrusive activity.

Although the remains identified within Trench 4 were observed to a considerable depth they were all consistent with late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} century activity on the site.

No evidence for earlier (medieval) activity within the excavated area, above the natural clay strata, was seen.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by Robert White of NJL Consulting on behalf of Faithful and Gould Project Management to carry out an archaeological evaluation at The Moor, Sheffield in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the area.
- 1.2 The site is located to the south-west of the centre of Sheffield situated to the north of the ring road St Mary's Gate (A61) (Fig. 1). It is bounded to the south-east by Eyre Street, to the south-west by Hereford Street, to the north-west by Charter Row, and to the north-east by Furnival Gate. The 9 hectare site is presently a pedestrianised shopping street known as The Moor and the surrounding eleven large blocks of shops, car parks, offices and works. The site slopes from the north-east to south-west lying between *c*.77m OD and 66m OD. The solid underlying geology is of the Lower Coal Measures Group (BGS 1974).

2. Archaeological Background

- 2.1 An archaeological Desk-based Assessment of an area centred on The Moor, Sheffield (Lee 2005) identified several sites of interest dating largely to the 19th century. It included the sites of two churches, a market, an 18th century button works, a foundry and possible cutlery factory (Sykes Wheel) that were identified from cartographic sources. Part of the former boundary of the late medieval Sheffield deer park is also thought to pass through the site. However, considerable redevelopment of the site during the 1950s and 1960s, with the construction of large shops and stores (often with basements), may have disturbed or removed potential archaeological remains relating to these sites. However, there is the possibility that some sites survive and they may be impacted upon by the proposed development. This is especially the case for Sykes Wheel and the Albion Foundry.
- 2.2 A limited geotechnical investigation (four boreholes) in one of the few areas where access was previously possible revealed deep made ground (approximately 2m+) at two locations with natural deposits within 0.5m of the modern surface at the other two locations (see Fig. 2). These ground investigations were not monitored by an archaeologist.
- 2.3 However, an archaeological evaluation was subsequently carried out in order to clarify the results of these earlier geotechnical investigations (Walsh and Webb 2006). This evaluation provided confirmation of the borehole data in the southern part of the evaluation area. A possible pit and the remains of a crudely constructed wall were also identified. No evidence was seen of a deer park boundary thought to cross part of the site. A proposed third trial trench could not be excavated for logistical reasons.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 At the time of the previous evaluation in October 2006 access to other parts of the site was restricted, most importantly in the area of the former Albion Foundry. However, during the soft strip of the C. A Grant building, a 'window of opportunity' arose to investigate a small yard area between this building

and the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce building, on the Eyre Street side of Union Lane prior to demolition of the two structures.

- 3.2 Consequently, on the instruction of Robert White of NJL Consulting Limited a single trench (T4) was excavated within the yard of the C. A Grant building situated at 156, Eyre Street. This building is located on the eastern boundary of the proposed redevelopment area and is scheduled for demolition as part of the regeneration programme. The trench was not directly targeted on any known archaeological remains but was positioned as dictated by available space and overhead obstructions. The trench was orientated on a north-west to south-east alignment, parallel with the existing buildings, and measured a maximum of 5m by 2m.
- 3.3 The aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:
 - to determine the extent, condition, character, quality of survival, importance and date of any archaeological remains present;
 - to provide information that will enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the archaeology of the site to be made and the impact which the proposed development will have upon this, and
 - to provide information that will enable an informed decision to be taken regarding the future treatment of the remains and any mitigation measures appropriate either in advance of and/or during the construction programme.

4. Method

- 4.1 A specific Project Design was not produced for this additional trench but the same methodology was adhered to as laid out in the Project Design produced in advance of the earlier evaluation, and agreed by Dinah Saich of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.
- 4.2 Prior to the commencement of the archaeological evaluation a review of the service plans was undertaken and a CAT scan of the yard area was carried out. The CAT scan identified several services and an overhead canopy further reduced the options. As a result the trench, measuring 5m by 2m, was located in the only safe working area available prior to demolition (see Fig. 2).
- 4.3 The upper deposits (made-ground or modern surfaces) were excavated using a 360° machine excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, under direct archaeological supervision and in level spits to the top of the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed natural. At this point a flat bladed bucket was used, the resulting surface cleaned manually and inspected for archaeological remains.
- 4.4 A full written, drawn and photographic record was made following ASWYAS standard methods (ASWYAS 2006). Sections of linear and discrete features were drawn at 1:10 scale with all plans drawn at 1:20. All sections and plans included spot-heights related to Ordnance Datum in metres as correct to two decimal places.
- 4.5 The site archive contains all the information gathered during the evaluation and is indexed in Appendix I. Inventories of contexts are listed in Appendix II. The archive is currently held by ASWYAS in an appropriate and stable

environment. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with Sheffield City Museum, at an appropriate time agreed with the museum.

4.6 The fieldwork was undertaken on December 5^{th} and December 6^{th} 2006.

5. Results

Summary

The excavated trench revealed buildings remains comprising brick walls and a very large sandstone block with surrounding demolition and dump deposits (Plate 1). Contained within these deposits were numerous non-ferrous metal artefacts identified as nickel silver 'blanks' for the production of knife handles for cutlery.

- 5.1 The south-eastern end of the trench showed the natural clay to be 2.1m below the top of the concrete yard surface. A deposit of brown silt (017) measuring 0.78m in depth and containing 19th century pottery was directly above the natural. Deposit 017 was overlain by layer 018 which consisted of a redeposited yellow clay containing sandstone fragments and black ashy material 0.32m in depth. The third layer in this sequence (008) consisted of redeposited clay and sandstone 0.24m in depth.
- 5.2 Within the north-east facing trench section layer 008 was overlain by three further deposits (007, 006 and 005). Layer 007 was a deep deposit of brown silt measuring 0.42m in depth above which 006 and 005 were thin deposits of plaster and black ashy material measuring 0.06m and 0.07m in depth respectively. All the above deposits seemed to represent the dumping of material associated with previous activity on the site.
- 5.3 Approximately 1.9m from the south-eastern end of the trench cut (010) was seen to cut through deposit 005 (Plate 2). The exposed extent of 010 measured 2m in length, 0.27m in width and 0.6m in depth with its base lying at the same level as the top of layer 018. Cut 010 was filled by a mid brown ashy silt (009) witch contained brick fragments that was used as a backfill around a very large sandstone block (011).
- 5.4 The sandstone block (Plate 3) measured 1.8m in length, 0.87m in width and 0.79m in depth and stood proud of its construction cut. The stone was a roughly shaped course block which seemed to taper slightly towards its base. On the upper surface of the stone a precise double diamond shape had been cut out within which four shallow circular depressions and a rectangular slot had been cut. Within one of the four depressions the remains of a square metal fixing could be seen around which seemed to be the remains of an unidentified fixing material.
- 5.5 The probable fixing material was also seen at both ends of the stone; the northern end of which also still seemed to contain the remains of a metal object. The entire cut out surface of the stone was stained orange affirming the thought that it was the base for a metal, probably iron, fixture. The slot located within the centre of the stone may have related its handling rather than the end use.
- 5.6 Sandstone block 011 was bounded on the northern and southern sides by two brick walls (012 and 015) whose relationship with 011 was unclear although it

seemed likely, due to the size of the stone and it's positioning, that one of the walls was constructed after the positioning of the stone.

- 5.7 Wall 012 was seen within the north-east facing trench section and measured 1.35m in length, 0.5m in height and was aligned north-west to south-east. It was constructed of modern (machine-made) brick, bonded with a dark grey mortar, and survived to five courses in height with the top course just below the modern rubble and concrete layers. This wall seemed to make returns to the north-east at both ends although at the south-eastern end this would have interfered with the position of the stone and no surviving brick-work was observed in either location.
- 5.8 On the opposing side of the trench, wall 015 was seen to run almost the entire length of the trench (Plate 4) on a parallel alignment to wall 012. It was exposed for a length of 3.66m and was 0.52m in height again with five remaining courses of brick, bonded with a dark grey mortar, the top of which was directly below the modern levels. This wall was built on a substantial foundation (016) formed from large rough sandstone blocks bedded in redeposited clay. It lay directly on top of redeposited natural layer 008 and was exposed for 2.13m in length and measured 0.36m in height.
- 5.9 The north-western side of sandstone block 011 was butted by a line of small flags (013) forming a narrow area of hard standing. During the excavation of the trench a large amount of copper objects were found around the sandstone block with a concentration on top of 013 located in the corner created by 011 and 012. These objects were identified as the parts of cutlery handles and other decorative metalwork that had been stamped into copper sheet.
- 5.10 The features seen at the north-western end of the trench were covered by another dump deposit, 014. This deposit comprised mixed brown ashy silt containing a small assemblage of non-ferrous metal artefacts. It was exposed for 2m in length and 0.68m in width and measured 0.64 m in depth.
- 5.11 The entire trench was sealed by a layer of brick rubble (002), measuring 0.17m in depth, which may have derived from the demolition of the observed structures. This rubble was used as the base for the laying of the reinforced concrete of the yard (001).

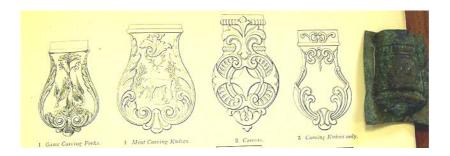
6. Artefact Record

6.1 Non-ferrous metal finds by Dr J. Unwin and K. Hawley

Introduction and Description

- 6.1.1 A small assemblage of (46) metal artefacts recovered from a single context was examined. All the artefacts were made from non-ferrous metal, probably nickel-silver, and relate to the manufacture of table knife handles. There are pieces of nickel-silver blanks and stamped out parts of knife handles, decorative ferrules and endcaps. Once assembled, these items would have been electro-plated, producing good quality (often marked EPNS) nickel silver.
- 6.1.2 The manufacture of these parts was a specialist industry, which supplied other cutlery manufacturers. There were several around the centre of Sheffield and the Hawley Collection at the University of Sheffield, has early 20th century

trade catalogues for several such firms, such as John Biggin and Yates Brothers. These catalogues show the many designs that could be supplied and the finds from this site are typical of these products.



Page from John Biggin Catalogueⁱ c1900, showing endcaps for carving knives and forks, with example from Eyre Street

Discussion

- 6.1.3 The assemblage demonstrates some of the stages in making these decorative features and knife handles from nickel silver. Nickel silver was a copper based alloy consisting of 40-70% copper, 15-30% zinc and 10-25% nickel. Sometimes called 'German silver', it was developed in the later 19th century as a base for electro plating.ⁱⁱ
- 6.1.4 Thin sheets of nickel silver are prepared, by being cut into squares or discs.



Bag 4 (TWO 06 014), blank discs

6.1.5 These are then placed in a stamp, a machine with a top and bottom die, which not only forms the shape of the item, but also imparts any decorative features to it. These dies were valuable assets to such manufacturers and the quality of the product depended on the accuracy and skill of the die-sinker, who prepared the dies.



Bag 10 (TWO 06 014), stamped out handles and Bag 5 (TWO 06 014) stamped out endcaps and ferrules

6.1.6 The knife handles were stamped as halves and the scrap metal from round the item was clipped off. The halves were then wired together and soldered.



Bag 8 (TWO 06 014, soldered Kings pattern handle, bottom right

6.1.7 Ferrules could be prepared as strip; the plain strip being fed through roller dies to impart any decoration which could be cut to any size and formed into a ring. This was placed on the knife handle below the bolster. The tubes in Bag 12 are made from nickel silver, soldered along their length and cut to size. They are placed on a mandrill and decoration is rolled on.



Bag 3 (TWO 06 014) decorative strip for ferrules

Conclusion

- 6.1.8 This is a very discrete assemblage of highly specialised finds, which would have been made by a specialist manufacturer. The material is part-made and is not in a state to be supplied to a cutlery firm for assembly and one would assume it to be still in the premises of the manufacturer, though the research undertaken for the desk-based assessment did not include such a firm. Without this information, it is not possible to be definitive in dating. The material must be later than the 1840s, since electro-plating techniques were developed in Birmingham at this time. From the designs in the trade catalogues in the Hawley Collection, we would assess the material to date from the first quarter of the 20th century. Since there seems to have been no other associated finds indicating such manufacturing activity here, we would conclude that this is dumped material, perhaps from the electro-plating works just to the north of the site off Duke Street.
- 6.1.9 The items themselves are interesting examples that demonstrate the manufacture of the non-ferrous parts of table cutlery. Examples of each group are worth retaining as such.

6.2 Pottery by Dr C. Cumberpatch

Introduction and Description

6.2.1 The pottery assemblage, consisting of twenty-nine sherds, weighed 873 grams and represented a maximum of twenty-eight vessels. The details of the assemblage are summarised in Table 1 (see Appendix IV).

Discussion

6.2.2 The greater part of the datable assemblage dates from the later 18th to the early 19th century and includes examples of a number of the most significant tablewares dating to this period (Creamware, Pearlware and Edged ware). The Cane Coloured ware and Slip Decorated Cane Coloured (CC) ware may be slightly later in date, although as production began in the early 19th century, they may well be contemporary with the light bodied wares. The earliest item

is most probably the sherd of Brown Glazed Fineware that is probably of 18th century date. The fabric is slightly unusual for a sherd of this type and it is not impossible that it is somewhat earlier in date, although it is unlikely that it predates the 17th century.

- 6.2.3 The utilitarian wares are of types common in Sheffield and with the present state of knowledge cannot be ascribed close dates. Brown Glazed Coarsewares were manufactured widely in South Yorkshire although the industry has seen very little research. Brown Salt Glazed Stonewares were manufactured in north-east Derbyshire and north Nottinghamshire, notably in Chesterfield throughout the 19th century and it is probable that this is the source for the material found on sites in Sheffield.
- 6.2.4 In general the assemblage is similar to those recovered from other sites in Sheffield, but is too small for it to be compared in detail with individual assemblages or to determine how closely it relates to these. It is to be hoped that further work on the site will produce a larger body of material suitable for comparison with sites in other parts of the city.

7. Discussion

- 7.1 Although it is difficult to determine the function of the features identified in Trench 4 the associated finds suggest that the buildings, on or adjacent to the site of the Albion Foundry, were connected with the manufacture of cutlery, specifically the production of cutlery handles and the electro-plating process. Whether or not this was the only activity associated with the identified buildings could not be determined.
- 7.2 Albion Foundry is first shown on Tayler's map of 1832 map and later on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850-1851. By 1934 the occupiers of the site were Atkin Ansel and Co. Ltd. upholsterers and cabinet manufacturers (Lee 2005). No evidence for activities associated with this industry were observed during this evaluation.
- 7.3 The location of Sykes' Wheel, immediately to the north (Lee 2005 Fig. 2; Catalogue Number 19), also the site of cutlery manufacture from at least the early 20th century, and an electro plating works just to the north of the site off Duke Street (Lee 2005 Fig. 2; Catalogue Number 20) illustrates that the evaluation trench is located at the centre of the 19th cutlery industry in Sheffield.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The evaluation trench excavated within the yard area of the C. A Grant Limited industrial unit at 156 Eyre Street, has demonstrated the survival of structures, very close to the current ground surface, associated with 19th and early 20th cutlery manufacture, on or near the former site of Albion Foundry. It is therefore considered likely that there may be other structural remains and associated stratified deposits where basements and other recent redevelopment have not destroyed the earlier features. However, it is thought that these pockets of surviving archaeology are likely to be fairly small in area given the amount and extent of recent intrusive activity.

- 8.2 Although the remains identified within Trench 4 were observed to a considerable depth they were consistent with late 19th and early 20th century activity on the site. The date range for the metal artefacts confirms this.
- 8.3 No evidence for earlier (medieval) activity was seen.

Bibliography

- Lee, D., 2005, 'The Moor, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, Archaeological Desk-based Assessment'. Unpubl. client report ASWYAS Report No. 1410
- Walsh, A., 2006. 'The Moor, Sheffield, South Yorkshire: Archaeological Evaluation'. Unpubl. client report ASWYAS Report No. 1600

Acknowledgements

Project management Alistair Webb BA MIFA

Fieldwork Marina Rose BSc

Report Marina Rose

Graphics/illustrations Marina Rose

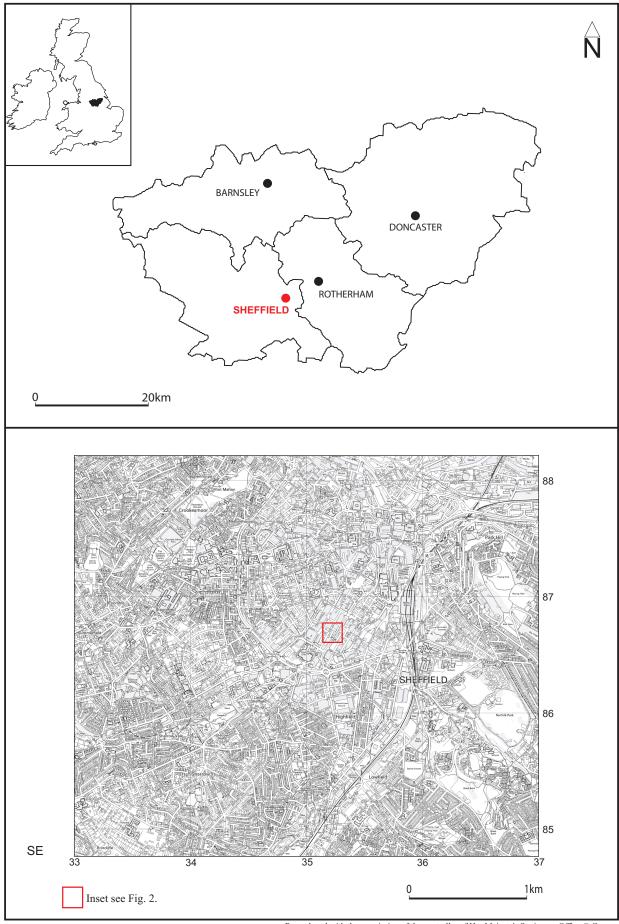
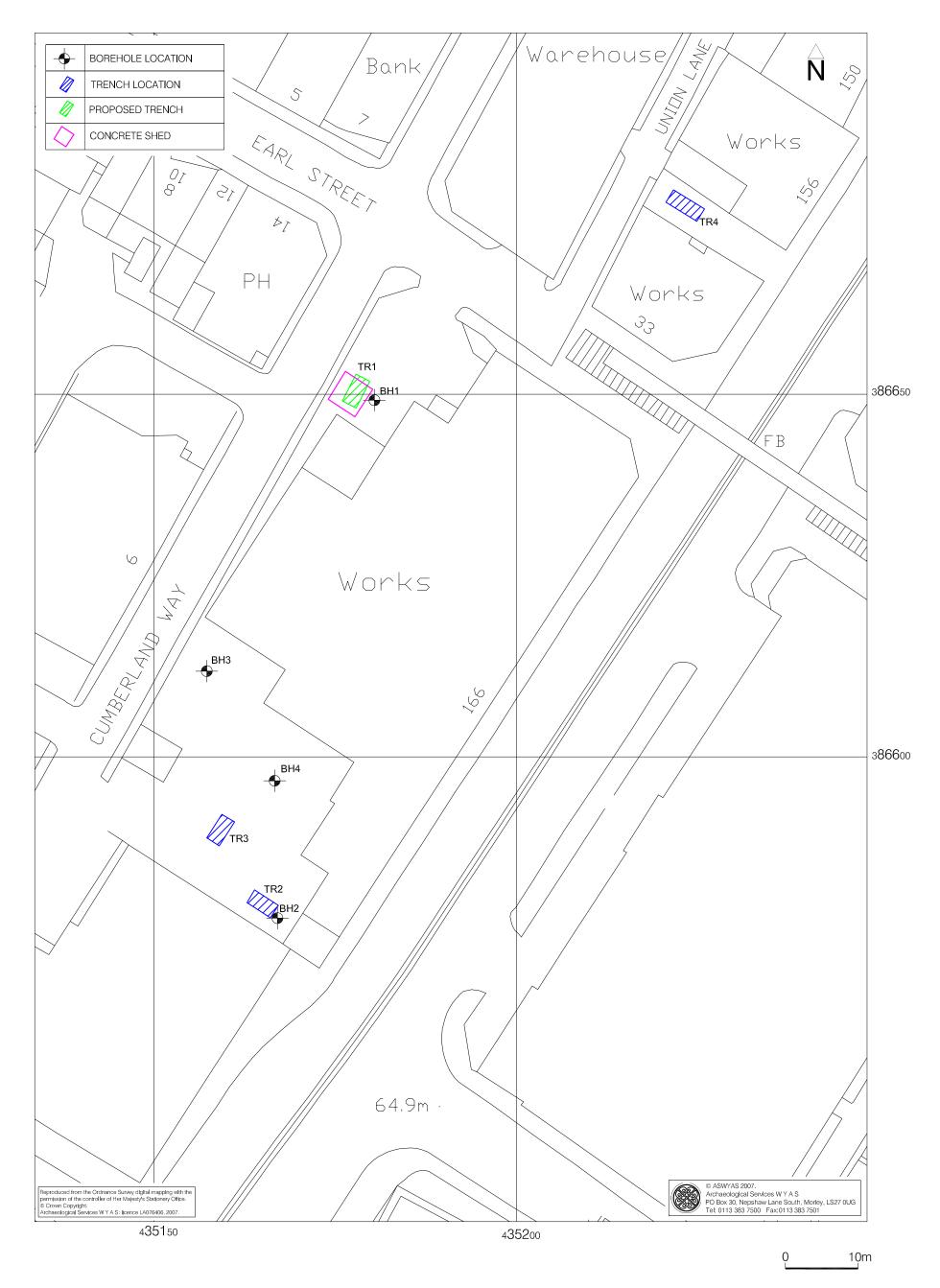
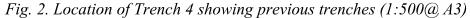
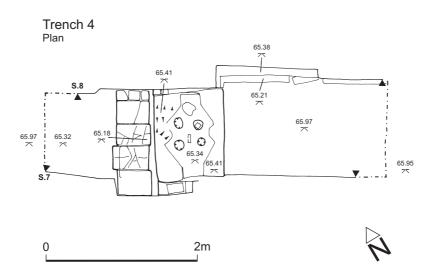


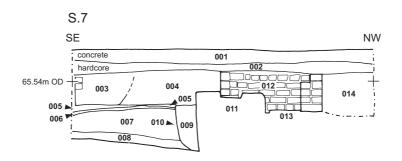
Fig. 1. Site location

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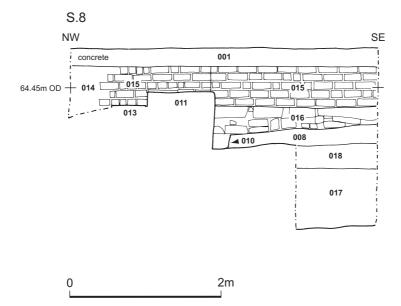


Fig. 3. Trench 4. Plan and sections



Plate 1. Trench 4 looking north-west



Plate 2. North-east facing trench section showing cut 010



Plate 3. Close up of sandstone block 011 looking north-east



Plate 4. South-west facing section showing wall 015 and foundation 016

Appendix I Inventory of primary archive

File no.	Description	Quantity
1	Context register	1
1	Drawing register	1
1	Photograph record sheet (Film nos 7898 and 7899)	2
1	Colour transparencies (Film no. 7898)	1
1	Black and white contact sheet (Film no. 7899)	1
1	Black and white negative (Film no. 7899)	1
1	Digital photograph record sheet (Download 0106)	1
1	Digital images on CD (Download 0106)	1
1	Levels data	1
1	Context cars (001-018)	18
1	Small permatrace sheet (Sheet 5)	1
1	Large permatrace sheet (Sheet 6)	1
1	Finds and samples record	1

Appendix II Inventory of contexts

Context	Trench	Description
001	4	Modern concrete yard surface
002	4	Demolition rubble/hardcore below 001
003	4	Mid brown silt deposit
004	4	Dark silt deposit
05	4	Black ash
006	4	Plaster
007	4	Mixed brown silt
008	4	Redeposited natural
009	4	Single fill of 010
010	4	Construction cut for stone 011
011	4	Large sandstone block
012	4	Brick wall
013	4	Flagged surface
014	4	Mixed dark ashy silt
015	4	Brick wall
016	4	Sandstone foundation for 015
017	4	Dark brown silt
018	4	Mixed clay above 017

Appendix III

Non-ferrous metal finds catalogue

Bag number	Item	Description
no number	wood	corroded fragment, unidentified
1	Newspaper fragments	unidentified
2	clippings	4 pieces of scrap clippings
3	Strip for ferrules,	7 – 7cm x 2cm
	decorative and plain	11 – 6.5cm x 2cm
		4 - 6cm x 2.6cmm, slightly tapered
		3 – 7.5cm x 2.5cm (one broken)
		1 – 9cm x 1.5cm
		10 fragments
4	Blank discs	2 – 7cm diameter discs
		2 – 3cm diameter discs, bent
5	Stamped endcaps and	3 - 5.5 cm x 3.5 cm, half endcaps for carvers
	ferrules, decorative, unclipped	6 – 3cm x 3.5cm, half ferrules
		1 9cm x 3cm strip with two plain ferrule halves
6.	Stamped endcaps	13 - 2.2 cm x 2.6 cm sheets with plain oval endcap, smaller than in bag 7, unclipped
		2 oval end caps, clipped from sheet
		4 4- 2.2cm x 2.6 cm sheets with plain oval endcap, squashed
7	Stamped endcaps	5 - 4.25 cm square sheets with plain oval endcap, unclipped
		1 oval end cap, clipped from sheet
		1 4.25cm square sheet with plain oval endcap, squashed
8	Stamped handles, table	1 – 11.5cm, half handle, Kings pattern, unclipped
	knife	1 – 11.5cm, handle of soldered halves, Kings pattern
		1 – 9.5cm, half handle, pistol pattern, unclipped

9	Stamped handles, tea knife, unclipped	3 – 9cm, half handle, plain
10	Stamped, decorated	7 – 12cm, half handle, reed lines
	handles, unclipped	1 - 12cm, half handle, reed lines, squashed
11	Stamped, decorated	5 – 12cm, half handle, reed lines with shield
	handles, table knife, unclipped	1 - 10cm, half handle, reed lines
	I I I I	1 – 10.5cm, handle of soldered halves, reed lines
12	, I	2 – 16cm tubes, 1.5cm diameter
	ferrules	2 – 10.5cm tubes, flattened
		1 – 7cm tube, broken
13	Blanks Square sheets	3 - 4.2cm square
		1 – 5.2cm x 4.2cm piece
		2 broken pieces

¹ Biggin, J Stampers, Silver and German silver, handle cap and ferrule manufacturer, c.1900 (Hawley reference C.CUT,014)
 ¹ Bambery, A. Is it Silver? Information Sheet No 19. (Sheffield City Museums, 1988)

Appendix IV Pottery Catalogue

Context	Type	No	Wt	ENV	Part	Form	Decoration	Date range	Notes
17	Brown Glazed Coarseware	-	135	1	Rim	Pancheon	Brown glaze int	C18th - C19th	Groove on ext edge of rim
17	Brown Glazed Coarseware	1	154	1	Rim	Pancheon	Brown glaze int	C18th - C19th	
17	Brown Glazed Coarseware	1	26	1	Rim	Pancheon	Brown glaze int	C18th - C19th	
17	Brown Glazed Coarseware	3	98	3	BS	Pancheon	Brown glaze int	C18th - C19th	
17	Brown Salt Glazed Stoneware	2	18	2	BS	Hollow ware	U/Dec	LC18th - C19th	
17	Cane Coloured ware	1	10	1	Rim	Hollow ware	U/Dec	C19th	
17	Creamware	1	8	1	Rim	Plate	U/Dec	c.1740 - c.1820	
17	Creamware	3	27	3	BS	Plate	U/Dec	c.1740 - c.1820	
17	Creamware	1	35	1	Server/tureen	Ring foot base	U/Dec	c.1740 - c.1820	
17	Edged ware	1	39	1	Rim	Plate	Wavy edge, blue feathered paint	c.1810 - c.1830	
17	Slip Banded CC ware	1	24	1	Recessed base	Hollow ware	Blue and brown slip lines ext	C19th	
17	Transfer Printed Pearlware	1	1	1	Rim	Hollow ware	Chinese landscape ext	c.1780 - c.1830	
17	Unglazed Red Earthenware	1	6	1	Rim	Hollow ware	U/Dec	LC18th - C19th	
N/S	Brown Salt Glazed Stoneware	1	38	1	Rim	Bowl	Brown ext, grey int	C19th	
N/S	Cane Coloured ware	1	41	1	Recessed base	Hollow ware	U/Dec	C19th	
N/S	Brown Glazed Fineware	-	13	1	BS	Hollow ware	Purple glaze int & ext	C18th	
U/S	Stoneware	5	143	5	BS	Flagon	Green stoneware	C19th	
N/S	Unglazed Red Earthenware	2	35	1	Rim	Hollow ware	U/Dec	C19th	
N/S	Whiteware	-	19	1	Rim	Component	U/Dec	C19th	Part of an electrical device? Screw thread at one end
	Total	29	873	28					