



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ON LAND TO THE REAR OF
THE WHITE HORSE PH, WHITCHURCH,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

SP 80239 20773

*On behalf of
CgMs Consulting Ltd.*

OCTOBER 2010

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land to the rear of the White Horse public house, Whitchurch. Two trenches were excavated. Trench 1 was located adjacent to the standing building and revealed a quarry pit, yielding some burnt brick, stone and tile with pottery indicating a late 15th-century date. A further two pits with late 15th-century pottery were also investigated. Trench 2 was located east of the White Horse, in the former pub car park. Post-medieval quarrying, in addition to an undated, pre-19th century posthole, were revealed. Remains of a 19th-century stone building, as well as a later brick lean-to, were also revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located in High Street, on the corner with White Horse Lane, in Whitchurch (NGR SP 80239 20773) at a height *c.*138m OD. The site is located on the interface of the Portland Sand and Portland Stone Members. The pub is disused.

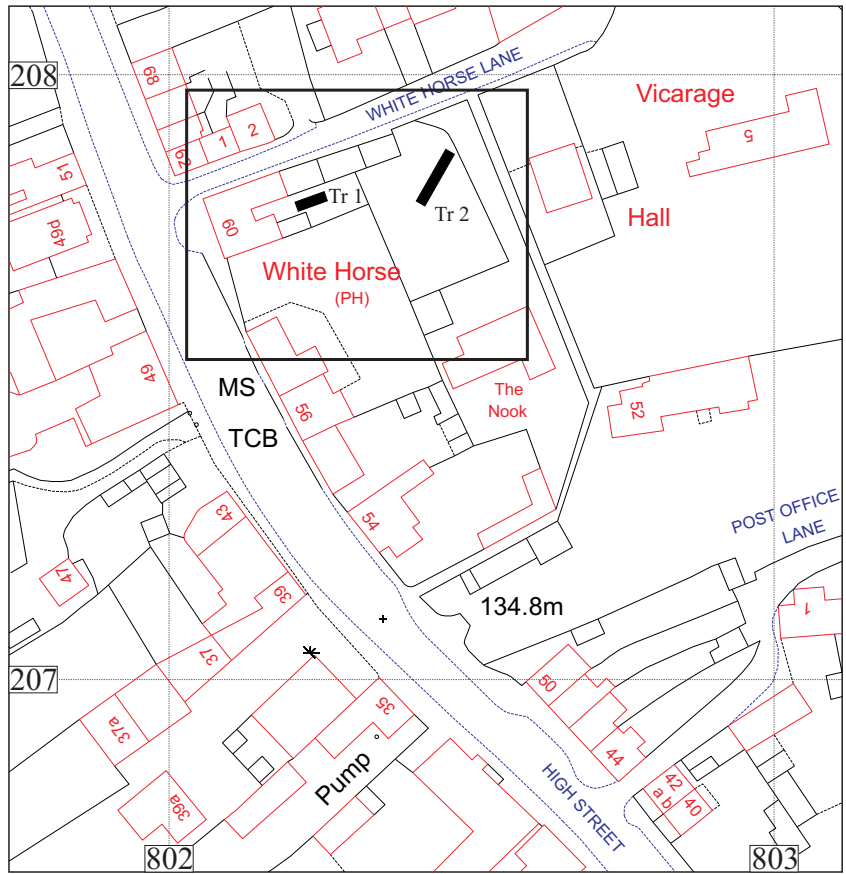
1.2 Planning Background

Plans are being considered for a programme of restoration and redevelopment at The White Horse Inn, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire. This will include change of use to residential with an extension to the existing building and a new dwelling in the present car park. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) has advised that a pre-determination programme of archaeological work should be carried out. BCAS has prepared a generic brief for the work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and agreed with the BCAS Planning Archaeologist that set out the method by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out to satisfy the requirements of the Brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The proposed development is located in an area of significant archaeological potential. A parish survey of Whitchurch has identified Neolithic and Bronze-Age flint finds (Marriott 1984, 6-11) as well as Roman finds from Weed Furrow and from along the Oving road.

The earliest historical reference to Whitchurch is in Domesday, where the name is recorded as *Wicherce* (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 86). Subsequent recordings of the name, for example *Hwitchirche*, mean 'white church' but are usually held to mean 'stone church', indicating that Whitchurch at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period had a well established stone, rather than timber, church giving the settlement its name. The church is located some 100m to the northeast of the development site and set back from the High St in a relatively isolated location. Three narrow lanes lead from the High St to St John's church. White Horse Lane named after the pub is one of the lanes. It is possible that the churchyard may have been larger in the past and fronted onto the main road.



0 50 m

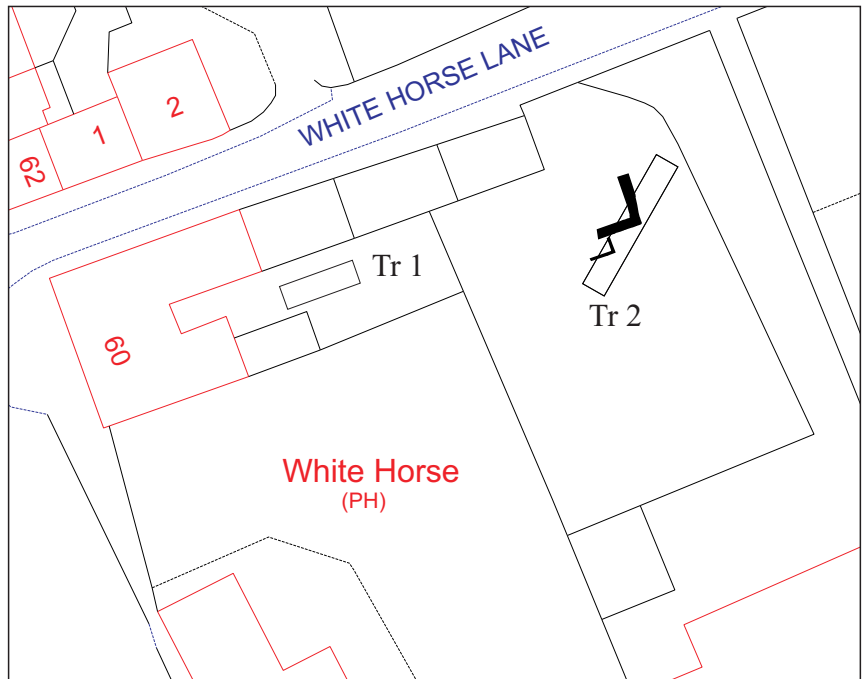


Figure 1. Site location and projected lines of observed structures

The manor in 1086 was held by Walter Gifford (Morris 1978, 14.16), who held a large number of Buckinghamshire estates. Hugh de Bolebec held Whitchurch of Walter. It accounted for 8 hides had 14 villagers, 2 smallholders, and 8 slaves. Two brothers, thanes of King Edward, held the manor as two manors previously, which perhaps indicates that the late Saxon settlement had two manorial foci.

The Bolebec family held a number of other manors; their initial head manor or caput was at Medemham, but this was later transferred to Whitchurch and coincided with the construction of Bolebec Castle (Matthews 2001, 6, 10). The castle was constructed on the west side of the village between 1233 and 1245, and is a scheduled monument (SM 19058). The male Bolebec line died out and the manor was believed to have passed through a female line to Hugh de Vere, Earl of Oxford, *c.*1245 (VCH 1925, 444-6). A more recent assessment suggests that the de Vere family obtained the manor in 1185 (Tompkins 2008). The date at which the borough was founded is not known. The borough charter dates from 1263 (VCH 1925, 444), but the borough may have been founded as early as the 12th century (Tompkins 2008). Dates for the establishment of the borough could be the transfer of the Bolebec caput (head manor), the building of the Castle, or the transfer of the manor to the de Vere family. The creation of the borough is important for this was established along the present High St. The foundation of the borough is what presumably separated the church from the High St, while the site is located on one of the three lanes from the High St to the churchyard. The northernmost lane is Church Headland Lane and must indicate a division between the open field system and church land; no such indicator exists on the south side of the church, today.

The Glebe Terrier of Whitchurch from 1607 records that John Duncombe owned land on the south side of the churchyard and that Thomas Green had 6 acres on the north side of the churchyard (Reed 1997, 137). The 6 acres must be the arable field to the north of the church headland, while the nature of the land to the south (around the White Horse Public House) is unspecified.

Some 47 buildings are listed in Whitchurch (DOE 1985, 93-117). Though the church and priory hotel are included most of the buildings are houses and public houses dating from the 16th to 19th century; two are in White Horse Lane. An application to demolish the Vicarage constructed in 1845, also located in White Horse Lane, was turned down resulting in it being listed Grade II in 2006 (HER 0640800000).

Whitchurch was inclosed *c.*1771 and the only pre-Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the parish survives from then. The inclosure map does not survive but the commissioners' working copy (BRO 1/R/144b) does. It shows a building located on the site of the White Horse Public House, conforming to the present part of the building fronting onto the High Street and also a back extension extending along White Horse Lane. These must represent the two-storey front part of the building. The 1880 1st Ed. OS shows an extension added onto this. There are two further buildings shown on the proposed site, both small and square to rectangular in nature, which again date from between 1777-1881. In the adjoining plot on the map *c.*1771 the street frontage continues, but in the 1881 map the building has gone and replaced by a garden. A photograph taken from the church tower in 1849 (Beckett and Adams 1998, 34) shows the line of buildings of the White Horse Public House extending along the side of White Horse Lane, which has a different arrangement of buildings to the 1881 map. Here the two outbuildings would appear to be gone and replaced by a

building with a single sloping roof to the south away from the road. This building must have been demolished to provide access to the present car park.

Recognisable industrial sites in Whitchurch village include a limekiln (HER 0513100000 SP 80220 21130), brickworks (HER 0560400000 SP 8056 2035), and a wartime munitions factory (HER 0944600000 SP 80458 20450). The sewer was inserted in the 1930s (Beckett and Adams 1989, 67).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the proposal area
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

In particular

- o To establish the potential for medieval and post-medieval remains being present in the areas of proposed development

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a Brief issued by BCAS, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of two trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with BCAS. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of two trenches by a 5-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of archaeological deposits. The integrity of archaeological features or deposits that

might better be excavated in conditions pertaining to full excavation, or might warrant preservation *in situ*, were not compromised.

The location of Trench 1 was changed due to the presence of structures associated with the former pub where the original trench location was proposed. Trench 2 was as advised.

Site procedures carried out followed IfA guidelines and the requirements of BCAS' Brief.

4 RESULTS (Figs 2-7)

4.1 Fieldwork

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All contexts numbers are preceded by trench number and /, and all detailed descriptions of contexts are in the context inventory.

Trench 1 (Figs. 2, 3 & 4)

Trench 1 was located parallel with the range of buildings to the rear of the White Horse. The trench measured 5m long by 1.6m wide and was a maximum depth of 2.6m deep. The trench was machine-excavated to the top of the natural (1/8), the Portland Stone Member, which comprised silty clay with limestone fragments through it.

The earliest feature was pit 1/7, which measured at least 4.2m long by more than 1.6m wide and was *c.*1.75m deep. Its shape could not be ascertained, as it extended beyond the limits of the evaluation trench. It was filled with a single fill (1/6), containing pottery, bone, brick and tile. The pottery recovered from the fill yielded a late 15th-century date. In addition to the pottery were fragments of tile and brick some of which showed evidence of having been burnt.

The pit was cut by a later pit 1/5, the dimensions of which again exceeded the width and length of the evaluation trench. The primary fill of the pit was a moderately charcoal rich deposit (1/4), sealed by the main fill (1/3) of the pit, which contained pottery, bone, tile, a copper alloy buckle and burnt stone. The pottery recovered from the later fill (1/3) indicated a date after the late 15th century, although a single sherd of residual medieval pottery was also present in the fill.

The pit 1/7 was cut by a later pit 1/10, which was only seen at the east end of the trench, and contained pottery and a fragment of whetstone. Pottery from the fill (1/9) also indicated a late 15th-century date.

All the cuts were sealed by a horizon of former topsoil (1/2), which yielded pottery dating from after the middle of the 16th century. Hardcore and concrete or paving slabs (1/1) sealed the yard area to the rear of the former pub.

Trench 2 (Figs. 2, 5, 6 & 7)

Trench 2 was located on the east side of the proposal site and was oriented northeast/southwest. It measured 10m by 1.6m and was a maximum depth of 0.8m

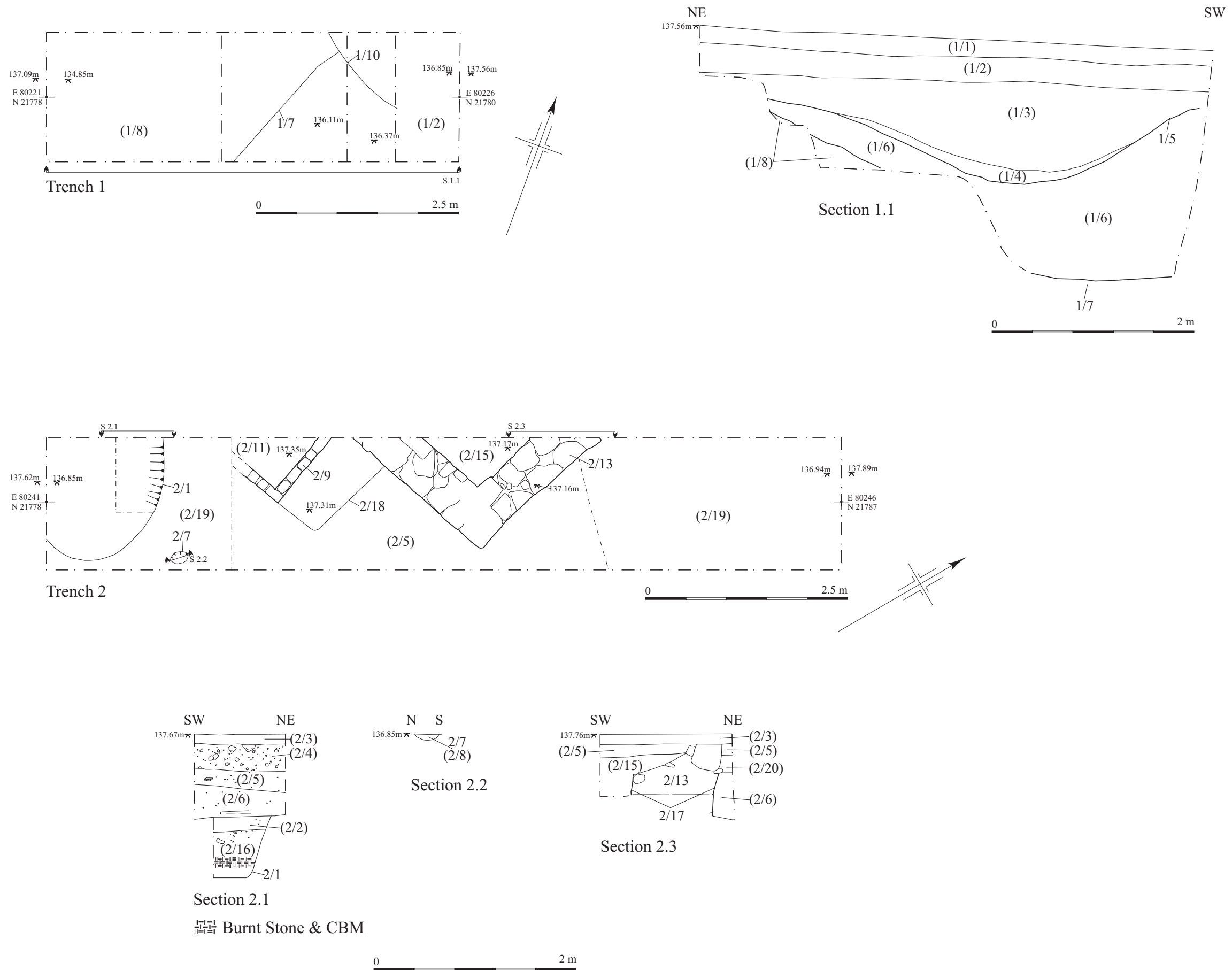


Figure 2. Trenches 1 & 2 Plans and sections

Natural Portland Stone Member (2/19) was seen at the north and south ends of the trench; the central part of the trench revealed archaeological remains at a much higher level, immediately below the tarmac. At the southern end of the trench the quarry pit 2/1 extended beyond the edge of the evaluation trench, and was 0.6m deep. The lower fill (2/16) was redeposited natural with a band of burnt stone and mixed CBM through it. Pottery from the deposit yielded a date after the middle of the 17th century. Overlying (2/16) was the deposit (2/2), which was a similarly redeposited natural, although it was markedly dirtier and contained pottery and brick. The pottery from this deposit indicated a 19th-century date. To the east of this feature was the small posthole 2/7, which was undated. It was sealed by a buried subsoil (2/6), which was undated.

The construction cut 2/17 for the wall 2/13 cut the subsoil 2/6. Wall 2/13 was located north of the quarry pit, comprising an approximately north/south and an east/west aligned length of stone built wall, three courses high, immediately beneath the tarmac. The stones were roughly worked. Pottery from the wall matrix yielded a 19th-century date. A dark grey-brown humic dump containing rubble, iron, ceramics, oyster shell, bone and glass (2/15), which butted up to the internal faces of wall 2/13, yielded a late 19th-century date; a pint-pot with an excise-mark, from this assemblage, dated from 1891.

Externally, the wall was butted by the charcoal rich deposit (2/20), which extended beyond the north end of the trench. The east face of wall 2/13 had been partly truncated and was sealed by the later dump (2/5), which comprised ironwork, pottery, slate, coal and glass (not all categories of find were retained) within a moist organic matrix; the dump (2/5) also sealed deposits (2/15) and (2/20), yielding a 19th-century date.

Cut through the dump (2/5) was a sub-rectangular pit 2/18 to the south of the wall 2/13, which was filled with mortar and rubble (2/12). Overlying the mortar and rubble dump (2/12) was the brick wall 2/9 and associated cement floor 2/10. The brick wall 2/9 was a single brick thick, bonded with yellow mortar; the floor 2/10 comprised slates bonded in cement with a skin of cement to give a flat surface. No direct relationship between this structure and wall 2/13, located to the north, could be seen within the evaluation trench.

A dump of rubble-rich material (2/4) overlay the brick wall 2/9 and butted up against the stone wall 2/13. Tarmac and hardcore (2/3) sealed the entire trench; although not recorded as two distinct episodes, there were two phases to the tarmac. The later phase roughly approximates the position of the stone structure associated with wall 2/13 and the brick structure associated with wall 2/9. It is possible that remedial work was carried out in the car park due to subsidence.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation, which took place during dry and frequently sunny weather, was monitored by Eliza Alqassar for BCAS.



Figure 3. Trench 1; looking west



Figure 4. Trench 1; section 1 looking south at pit 1/7 cut by pit 1/5



Figure 5. Trench 2; looking northeast



Figure 6. Trench 2; looking southwest



Figure 7. Stone building Trench 2.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 77 sherds with a total weight of 1,807g. It consisted of two groups, one of largely late 15th – 16th century date, and other, late 19th century, although sherds of earlier wares were present. The assemblage was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MS2: *Medieval Sandy Ware*, 12th – 14th century. 1 sherd, 15g.

MS9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 13 sherds, 473g.

PM2: *Staffordshire Buff Slip-Trailed ware*. Late 17th – 18th century. 1 sherd, 19g.

PM8: *Red Earthenware* 16th – 19th century. 4 sherds, 62g.

PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18th – 20th century. 57 sherds, 1,205g.

PM28: *English Stoneware*. Late 17th C+. 1 sherd, 33g.

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 fabrics is typical of sites in the region.

The majority of the pottery from Trench 1 is of late 15th – 16th century, with the OXAM vessels all dating to that time. They are in an orange-red fabric typical of the period, and are mainly fragments of large bowls and jars/cisterns, the main products of the industry at that time. A single residual earlier medieval sherd was also present.

The material from Trench 2 is largely mundane 19th century white earthenwares, other than a single sherd of a press-moulded dish in Staffordshire Trailed Slip Ware, and a single sherd of English Stoneware which is likely to be of 18th century date. The assemblage is notable for two vessels from context [15]. They are fragments of white earthenware ale-measures, one of one-pint capacity and the other of one half-pint capacity, with black transfer-printed designs proclaiming the pots to be ‘Standard Measures of the Board of Trade’. Both have red lines on the inside of the rim, the level to which they would have been filled. The rim from the smaller vessel has ‘Half Pint’ printed in a break in the line. The larger vessel has a registration mark on the base of May 1881, which reflects when the design of the pot was registered with the Patents Office. The outer body has an excise stamp, in red enamel and over the glaze, of ‘V 91 R’, which indicates that the vessel was officially passed as fit for purpose in 1891, and thus gives a date for when the vessel was first used. Their presence is unsurprising given the proximity of the White Horse public house.

Tr	Cntxt	MS2		MS9		PM8		PM2		PM28		PM25		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	2					4	62							M16thC
1	3	1	15	2	105									L15thC
1	6			4	137									L15thC
1	9			7	231									L15thC
2	2									1	33	9	34	19thC
2	5											5	40	19thC
2	13											2	99	19thC
2	15											41	1032	L19thC
2	16							1	19					M17thC
	Total	1	15	13	473	4	62	1	19	1	33	57	1205	

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

5.3 Other Finds

Material	Context number	Weight (g)	Fragments
bone	1/3	19	2
	1/6	31	4
	2/15	20	2
brick	1/6	278	3
	2/2	847	1
	2/16	1026	4
tile	1/3	220	3
	1/6	1230	18
	2/16	369	2
Cu alloy buckle	1/3	11	1
bone	1/9	73	1
burnt stone	1/3	488	1
slate	2/5	21	1
coal	2/5	8	1
oyster shell	2/15	42	2
glass	2/15	174	8

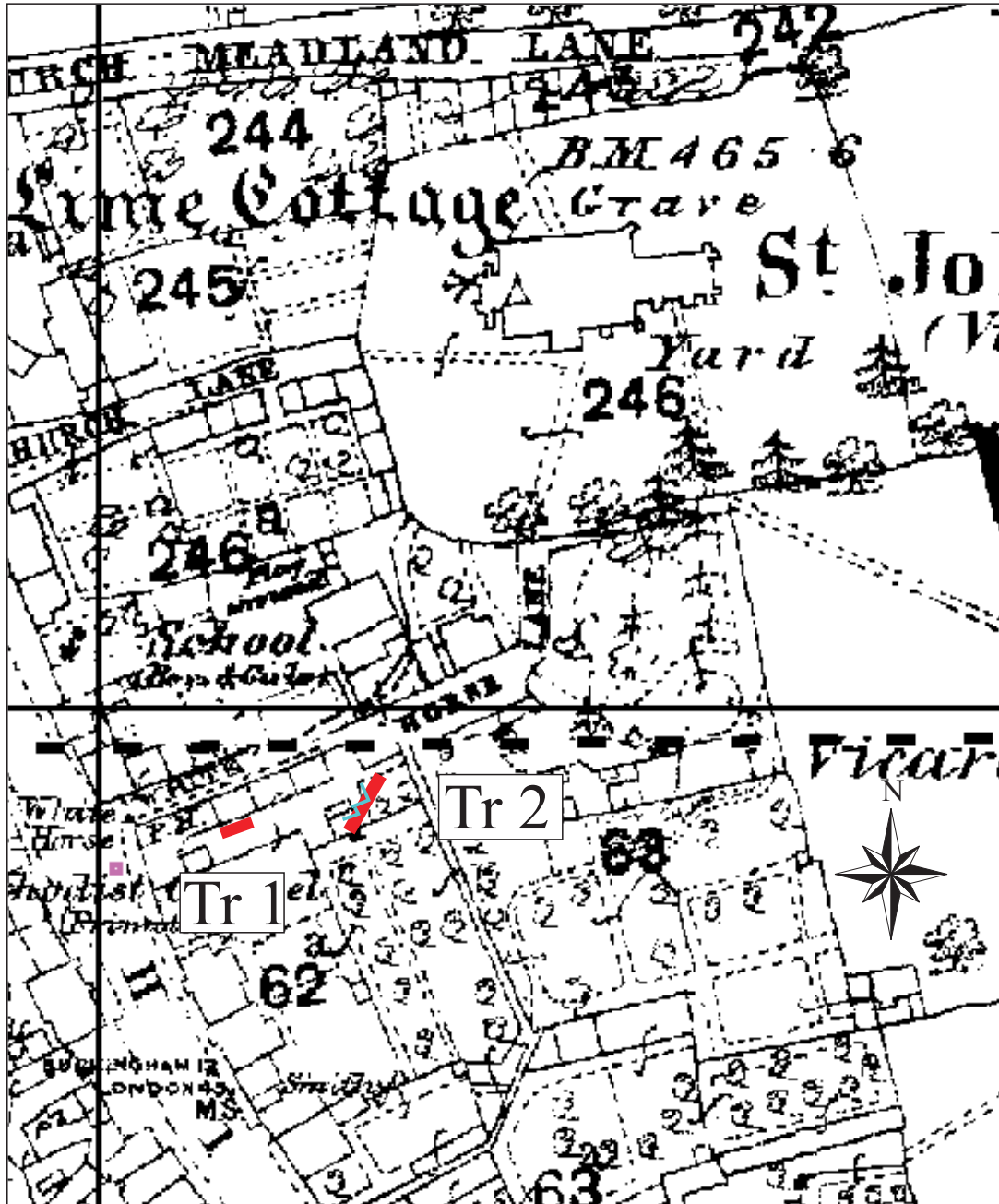
Table 2. Other finds.

6 DISCUSSION (Fig 8)

The evaluation to the rear of the White Horse public house, Whitchurch revealed two distinct phases of activity. The earlier activity comprised late medieval pits and an early post-medieval buried soil horizon.

The very deep pit 1/7 at the west end of Trench 1 extended below the standing buildings of the present White Horse public house. The presence of burnt tile and brick within the backfill may well be indicative of a quarry-pit associated with the construction of the White Horse, which the historic building recording locates in the 15th century. The two slightly later pits, 1/5 and 1/10, dug into the top of the quarry pit may well be associated with raising the ground-level, soon after backfilling of the quarry pit, as they were relatively sterile of finds, which is suggestive of their not having been rubbish pits. The pits were sealed by a buried topsoil, which yielded dating from after the middle of the 16th century.

To the east, Trench 2 the evaluation trench exposed a possible 17th century quarry pit with a tip of burnt brick and tile through it. The earlier fill was sealed by a 19th-century deposit, and might represent some intrusive activity; within the limited access afforded by the evaluation trench it cannot be assured that the whole quarry pit was not 19th century. Immediately adjacent and to the north of the quarry pit, the trench revealed a relatively recent brick structure and more significantly the remains of a corner of a stone building appearing on the Ordnance Survey 1 2500 of 1880 (Fig. 8).



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Not to scale

Figure 8. Trenches projecting walls overlaid onto the 1880 1st Edition OS

Rubble from within the structure indicates that it was razed after 1891 and probably not too long after that date as the pottery and other finds are more typically pre-First World War. The construction cut for the wall cut through an undated deposit, but all the other deposits in the trench were 19th century and were stratigraphically later than the wall.

None of the archaeological remains identified in Trench 1 can be associated with the present building, although there is the possibility that the construction of the White Horse, or a previous structure, may be responsible for the quarry pit. It seems very unlikely that the quarry pit is associated with the construction of the cellar of the White Horse, as the latter is located *c.*10m west of the westernmost observed extent of the quarry pit. Nonetheless, it remains an outside possibility that it may have been excavated for the construction of the cellar. The quarry pit would appear to have been associated with the making of tile and brick, which may have been used for the earliest building on the site, which is not necessarily the earliest standing structure on site.

The quarry pit at the south end of Trench 2 had two fills where it was sampled. The lower fill yielded a deposit of brick and tile and a single sherd of mid-16th century pottery. The upper fill of the quarry pit was dated to the 19th century. The undated posthole 2/7 was sealed by the deposit (2/6) which also sealed the upper fill of the quarry pit. The quarry pit appears to be 19th century, although may well have been first quarried earlier. The walls in Trench 2 date from the 19th century onwards. The brick wall is roughly where the light building shown on the 1880 1st Ed OS map is, although its west return does not correspond to the map evidence. The stone footings are to the north and east of the building shown on the map (Fig. 8). In such a scenario, the stone wall would possibly be an earlier 19th-century structure; however, it was clearly not razed before 1880 as there were sherds of post-1891 ale-measures in the internal backfilling of the structure. It may be that the apparent earlier structure is only a consequence of projection and that the stone wall and the building illustrated on the 1st ed OS are the same. The stone footings were 0.6m wide and reasonably well-bonded with sandy mortar, indicating a structurally robust building, in contrast to the light brick structure to the south and west. If it is not the building on the 1880 1st Ed map, its full extent is not certain.

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APPENDIX I – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation
Trench 1								
1/1	Layer	Concrete/paving slabs over shingle	0.12-2	>1.6	>7	No	modern	Back yard of pub
1/2	Layer	Mid grey brown clay silt, heavily rooted	0.2	>1.6	>7	Yes	M 16 th C	Buried topsoil
1/3	Fill	Pale grey brown clay silt, occ. charcoal	0.86	>1.6	>5	Yes	L 15 th C	Fill of pit 1/5
1/4	Fill	Dark grey brown clay silt, moderate charcoal	0.15 (max)	>1.6	3	No	L 15 th C	Fill of pit 1/5
1/5	Cut	Shape not determined extends beyond edge of ex.; gentle break of slope, concave sides @ c.45°, rounded base	c.1	>1.6	>5	-	L 15 th C	Large pit
1/6	Fill	Soft yellow/yellow white clay/silty clay with limestone	1.9 (max)	>1.6	>4.2	Yes	L 15 th C	Quarry pit fill
1/7	Cut	Shape not determined, gentle break of slope on east side, west unknown; sides @ 45°, relatively flat base	1.9 (max)	>1.6	>4.2	-	L 15 th C	Quarry pit
1/8	Layer	Crumbly yellow/yellow white clay, occ limestone	-	>1.6	>4.2	-	-	Natural
1/9	Fill	Pale grey brown clay silt, occ. charcoal	>0.6	>1	>0.85	Yes	L 15 th C	Fill of pit 1/9
1/10	Cut	Unknown shape (sub-rounded?); gentle break of slope at top, sides & base unknown	>0.6	>1	>0.85	-	L 15 th C	Pit
Trench 2								
2/1	Cut	Sub rounded, straight nr vertical sides, flat base	0.12	>1.5	>1.45	Yes	19 th C	Pit
2/2	Fill	Light yellow brown silty clay; mod stone /gravel, brick frags	0.6	>1.5	>1.45	-	19 th C	Uppermost fill of pit 2/1
2/3	Layer	Tarmac over hardcore and brick demolition	0.1	>1.6	>10	No	Modern	Carpark surface
2/4	Layer	Soft yellow brown silty clay; concrete rubble, brick and gravel; freq charcoal	0.25	>1.6	>10	??	Modern	Dump of clay & rubble across carparking area
2/5	Layer	Humid, soft dark red brown humic clay silt, gravel, brick	0.2 (max)	>1.6	>10	Yes	19 th C	Dump of humic waste
2/6	Layer	Light yellow grey silty clay; limestone, brick and gravel	0.35 (max)	>1.6	>10	Yes	Unk.	Buried subsoil?
2/7	Cut	Circular gradual break of slope, gentle sides rounded base	0.06	0.23	0.23	No	Unk.	Posthole base
2/8	Fill	mid grey brown silty clay occ gravel	0.06	0.23	0.23	-	Unk.	Posthole
2/9	Wall	Brick, bond unknown; single course standing, lime mortar		>2	>2	-	Post 19 th C	Wall
2/10	Floor	Concrete, with slate bedding	0.10	>1.15	>1.15	-	Post 19 th C	Floor
2/11	Cf 2/9	Mortar for 2/9						

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation
2/12	Layer	Loose, mortar and rubble layer	>0.10	0.65	1.2	No	Post 19 th C?	Dump of mortar and rubble
2/13	Wall	Limestone blocks roughlyworked, sandy mortar; robbed out on east face, stands c. 3 courses	0.7	1.8	1.8	-	19 th C	Wall
2/14	Cf 2/13	Mortar for above						
2/15	Layer	Dark grey brown silty clay & rubble including glass, ceramics, bone and iron	0.4	>1.3	>4.5	Yes	L 19 th C	Dump of rubbish rich material
2/16	Fill	Yellow/white yellow silty clay & limestone; dump of burnt CBM and stone through deposit	0.45	Unk.	Unk.	Yes	17 th C	Fill of quarry pit 2/1
2/17	Cut	Linear; sharp break of slope at top and base, vertical sides, flat?? bottom	0.4+	c.0.6	>4m	-	19 th C	Construction cut for wall 2/13
2/18	Cut	Subrectangular, sharp break of slope at sides, not bottomed	Unk.	1.15	1.1	-	19 th C	Pit filled with (2/12), associated with wall 2/9
2/19	Layer	Yellow, yellow/ or creamy/white, sandy silt, slightly clay with limestone fragments	Unk.	>1.6	>10	-	-	Interface of Portland Sand/ Stone Members
2/20	Layer	Moderate, green/yellow grey silty clay; charcoal inclusions	c.0.2	>1.6	>3m	-	-	Buried soil horizon