

**EXCAVATIONS ON THE SAXO-NORMAN TOWN DEFENCES AT  
SLAUGHTER HOUSE LANE, NEWARK-ON-TRENT,  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

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*with contributions by*

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## SUMMARY

Excavations and watching-briefs by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust took place on a series of sites located on the northern side of the town defences, in advance of the redevelopment of Slaughter House Lane in 1988. The earliest phase represented (Phase I) was a probable buried soil, which produced evidence for Romano-British and early- to mid-Anglo-Saxon activity. In Phase II the soil was sealed by a large timber-reinforced rampart, probably that of the Anglo-Saxon burh, with some fragmentary contemporary structures including a circular oven, probably using coppiced wood as fuel, to its rear. The line of an outer ditch (undated) was found in a watching-brief. The structures were later sealed by thick, possibly dumped, deposits (Phase III). In the medieval period the rampart was perhaps replaced by a stone wall, while cut into it and the soil deposits behind were a malting/drying kiln, a rectangular building with stone footings, and other structures (Phase IV). General late-medieval site clearance and levelling (Phase V) was followed by pits, lime kilns and cellared buildings, and ultimately by a series of brick cottages of late-18th- or 19th-century date which stood until demolition in 1988 (Phase VI-VIII).

The principal sources of pottery used on the site were Torksey in the Saxo-Norman period, Nottingham in the 12th to 14th centuries, and pottery from an unknown source resembling wares from Lincolnshire in the late medieval period. The bone assem-

blage was typical of small Anglo-Saxon and medieval towns, with cattle and sheep predominating; there was evidence for primary dismemberment of the carcasses, and a little evidence for bone working.

A pre-Conquest date is most likely for the defences at Slaughter House Lane, and a reconsideration of previous work on the defences raises the possibility that the entire defensive circuit known from excavations, topographical and historical sources, is of pre-Conquest origin.

## INTRODUCTION

### SITE LOCATION

Slaughter House Lane follows the line of the defences on the northern side of the historic core of the town, which includes the castle on the river frontage, the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene and the market place (Figs. 1 & 2). To the south of the lane the ground is roughly level, while to the north, and to the west towards the river Trent, it drops markedly. The bedrock is Mercia Mudstone but in places a thin layer of pebbles and sand are all that remains of a thin capping of Older River Gravels which thickens towards the north-east and south-west within the town. The areas investigated lay mostly on the south side of the lane (excavation areas 01, 02, 04, 05 and 07) with 03 and 06 to the north (Fig. 3).

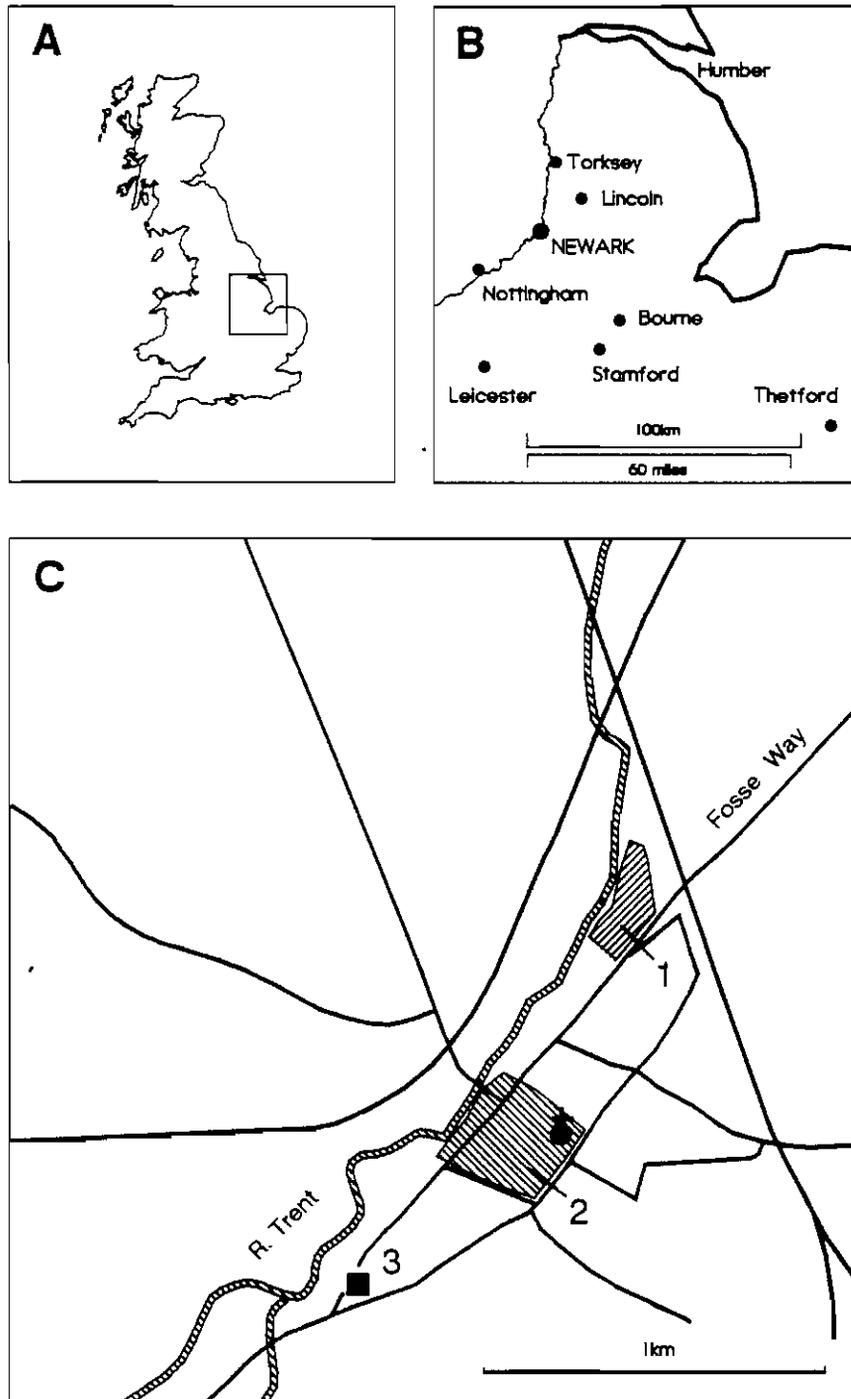


FIGURE 1: Slaughter House Lane: A & B: location of Newark and other sites mentioned in the text; C: archaeological sites in relation to Newark's modern road and rail network; 1 — known minimum extent of Romano-British settlement, 2 — area of town defences, 3 — location of early Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

## CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EXCAVATIONS

Plans to redevelop the west end of the lane were finally implemented in 1988, with the commencement of the constructions of a supermarket and various small shops, houses and offices on its north and south sides with, additionally, almshouses for the St. Leonard's Trust in St. Leonard's Court (05). A trial excavation, carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust, directed by C.J. Drage in 1984 (01), confirmed the preservation of deep stratigraphy, including parts of the rampart, on the south side of the lane. A further series of excavations (02, 04, 06 and

07) was carried out by the Trust, directed by the author, in order to record the archaeological remains in advance of destruction in the redevelopment, with the principal aim of establishing the character and date of the town defences in this area. In addition, a watching-brief was maintained on the supermarket site (a recorded sample area was designated 03) where the likelihood of uncovering significant archaeological remains was unpredictable. Funds for the excavation and post-excavation work were mainly provided by English Heritage, Nottinghamshire County Council and Newark & Sherwood District Council, with a small contribution from the deve-

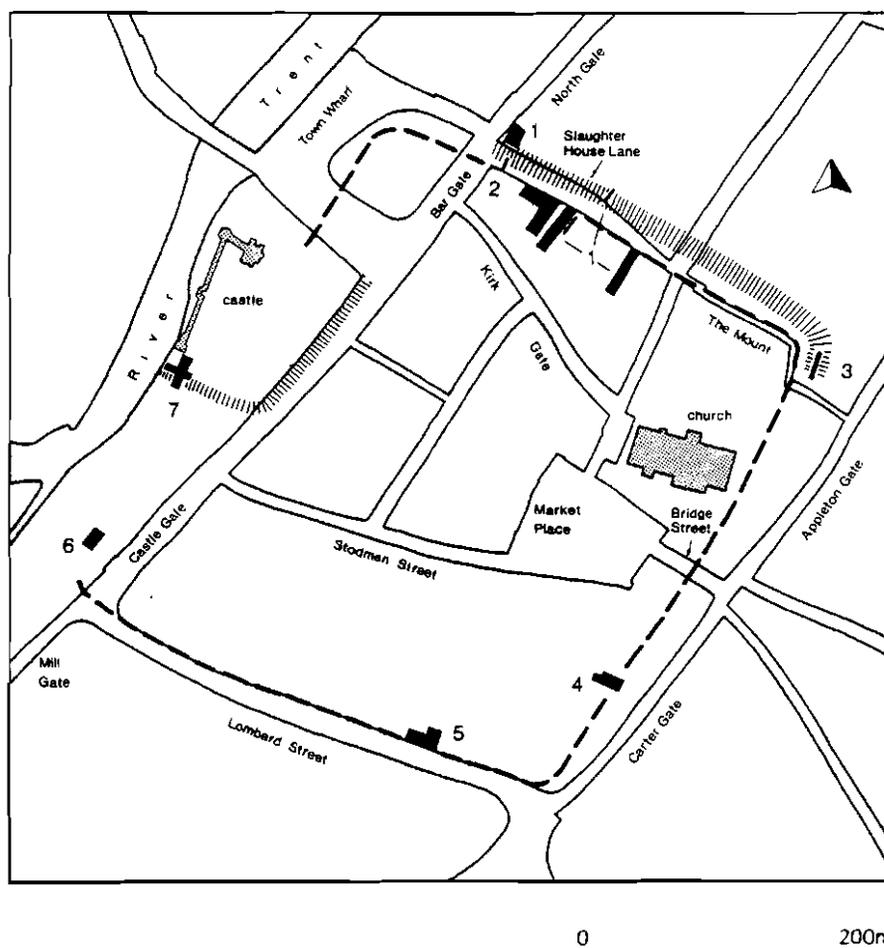


FIGURE 2: Slaughter House Lane: Location of present and previous excavations on the town defences; 1&2 -- Slaughter House Lane (1 this report, 2 Barley), 3 -- Mount Lane, 4 -- Old White Hart Yard, 5 -- Lombard Street, 6 -- Castle Gate, 7 -- Bell's Yard/Cuckstool Wharf.

loper, Henry Lax.

### PROGRESS OF THE EXCAVATIONS AND OTHER RECORDING WORK

In 1984 the trial excavation, 01, was sited in the Co-Op Yard in what was then the only piece of ground available for excavation. The location of excavation areas is given in Fig. 3. Initial machining was followed by manual excavation with limited disturbance of the rampart, in the expectation of its eventual inclusion within more extensive excavations at a later date. In early January 1988, immediately after the demolition of the buildings on the site, work began on 02, and continued until early April; two large cellars had destroyed much of the area, and the excavation of numerous post-medieval and modern disturbances proved an unavoidable distraction, but a 4m-wide strip was relatively well preserved,

running the length of the site from north-east to south-west, between two long sections orientated approximately perpendicular to the defences (Figs. 4-6). Most of this strip was fully excavated, but at the south-west end, due to lack of time, only a 1m wide trench adjacent to SL11 was excavated to sample the deposits at the tail of the rampart. Further small areas within 02 were selected for excavation to the north-west and south-east of the main strip where isolated stratified deposits appeared to be in part preserved. All areas had suffered to varying degrees from post-medieval and modern intrusions.

Access to 01 and 04 was gained in late March; there was time only to machine-excavate the overburden and a section through the tail of the rampart (SL20) in 04, while 01 was left altogether. Also during this period, manual trial excavations on 05 revealed post-medieval deposits to the proposed 1.0m

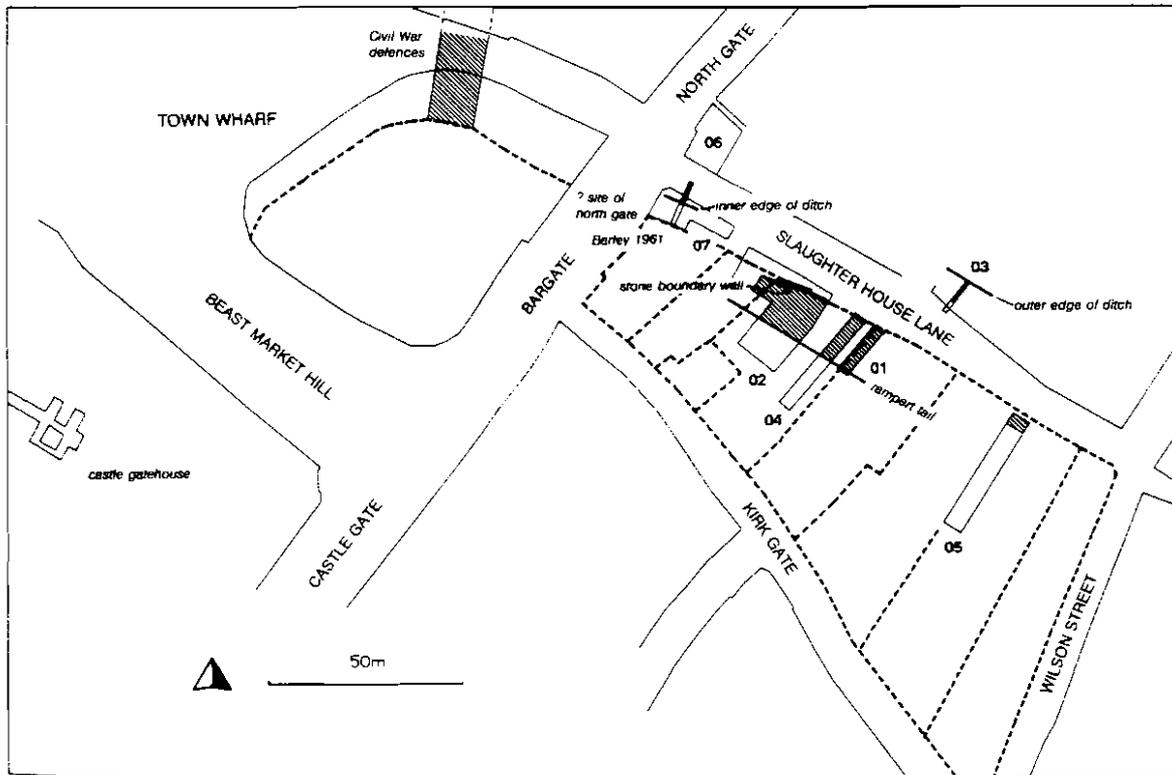


FIGURE 3: Slaughter House Lane: Plan of excavation areas in relation to modern streets; broken line - selected property boundaries in 1790; within 01-05, hatching shows extent of surviving rampart.

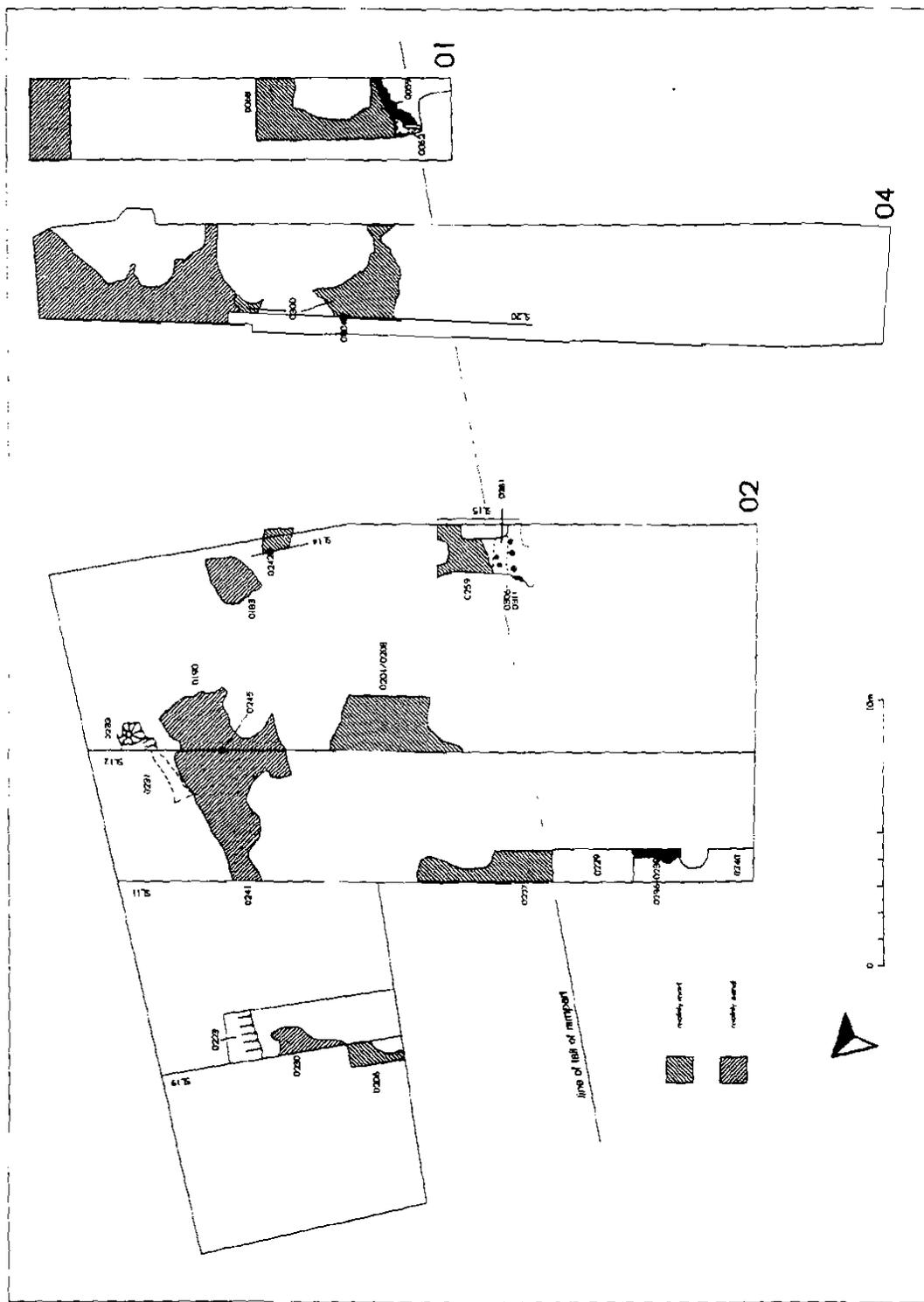


FIGURE 4: Slaughter House Lane: Plan of Saxo-Norman rampart (hatched) and structural features of phase II in 01, 02 and 04.

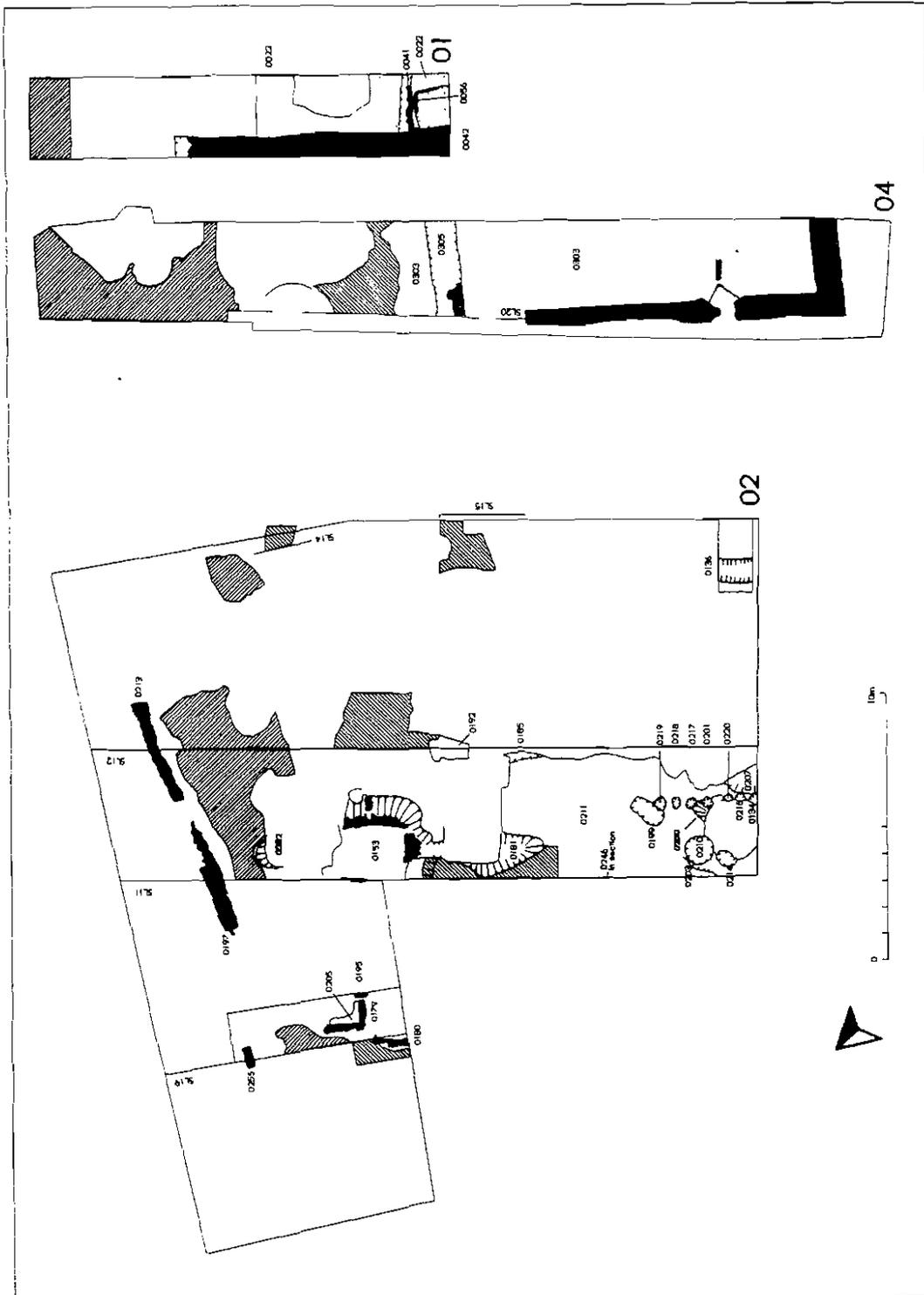


FIGURE 5: Slaughter House Lane: Plan of medieval features of phase IV in 01, 02 and 04; surviving rampart levels are also shown (hatched).

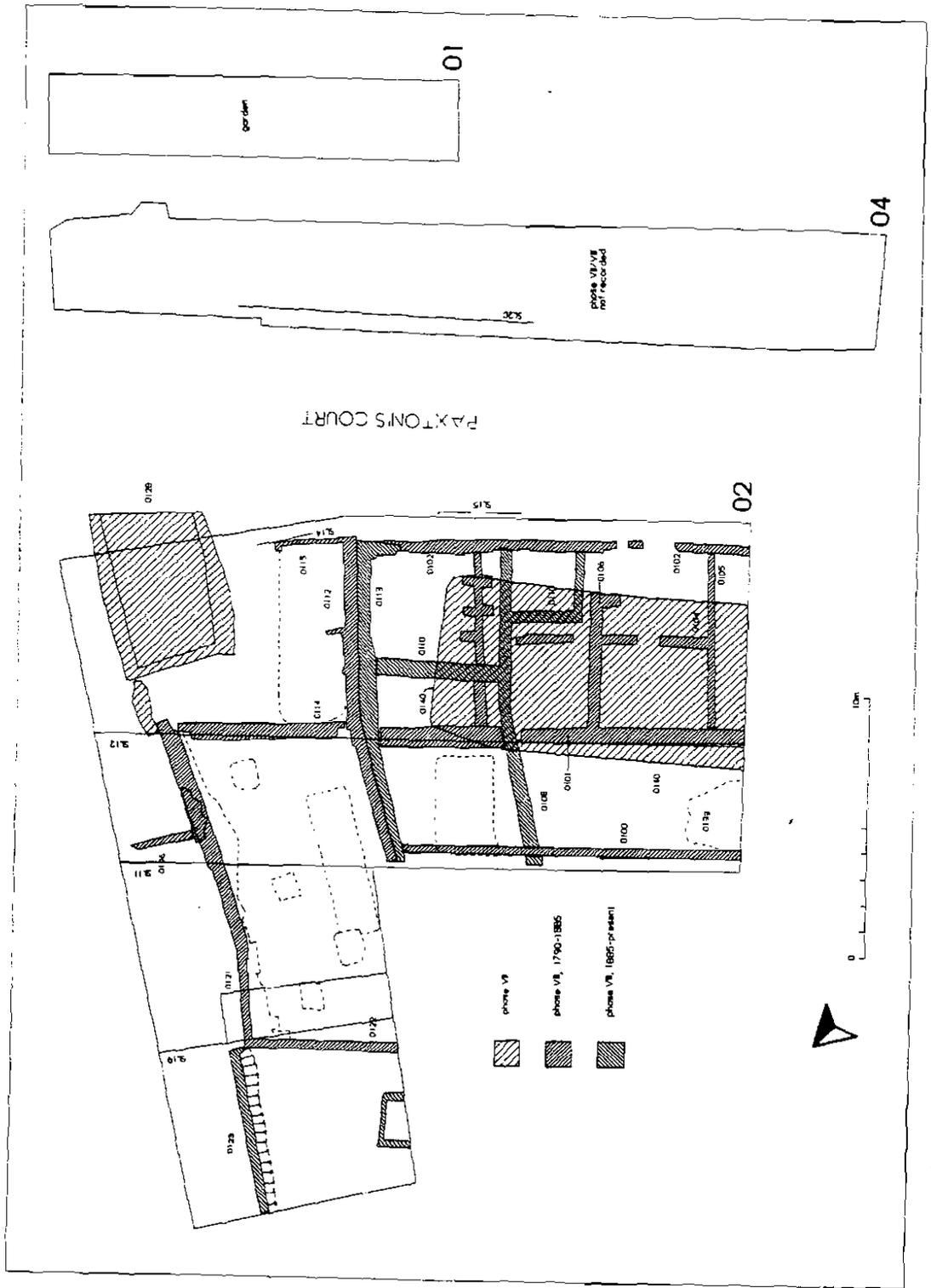


FIGURE 6: Slaughter House Lane: Plan of principal buildings in post-medieval phases VII and VIII in O1, O2 and O4; major modern intrusions in O2 are shown with a broken line.

foundation depth of the new building. In late January what was probably the north side of the town ditch was revealed in 03, during a watching-brief on contractors' excavations of the supermarket foundations. In mid-April negative results were encountered in manual trial work in 06 at the west end of Slaughter House Lane, and in a watching-brief carried out in November in 07. Finally, in a further watching-brief in 05, where the building foundations were dug deeper than had been originally indicated by the architects, further parts of the rampart and stratified deposits at its tail were recorded.

#### STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT AND THE NUMBERING OF EXCAVATION AREAS, CONTEXTS AND PHASES

The account of the excavations below gives an outline of the principal features of the site, illustrated by selected plans and sections. More detailed descriptions and illustrations are given to show particularly important features, and to provide examples of the nature of the evidence upon which the interpretations offered are based. The main passages (in full-size type) provide a summary of the features of each phase, and may be understood without reference to the subsidiary passages (in smaller type) which supply greater detail and supporting evidence. A fully-described and illustrated account can be found in archive.

The principal section lines were individually numbered SL1, SL2, etc., and the locations of those illustrated in this report are shown on Figs. 4-6; summary drawings of all SLs referred to are given in Fig. 7. Excavation areas were allocated two digit numbers (01-07), and contexts four digits (0001-0311), with fills of features further distinguished a, b, etc.

The grouping of features into site phases I-VIII is an attempt to make the complex stratigraphic relationships of the contextual data manageable and to describe the general development of the site; all the features included in a single phase are approximately, but not necessarily absolutely, contemporaneous.

Textual references to contexts are limited to those illustrated in plan or section in this report; unless stated otherwise.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE FEATURES

#### PHASE I: THE PRE-RAMPART SOIL

The earliest phase recorded in the excavations was found in 02 and 04, and consisted of a 0.3m-thick homogenous layer of grey or brown silty sand, containing an even distribution of pebbles (02: 0243 (SL19), 0228, 0229, 0248 (SL11), 0222, 0224, 0226 (SL12), 0257, (SL14), 0260 (SL15); 04: 0301 (SL20)). It lay directly on the natural Mercia Mudstone. The layer had evidently originally been continuous, but survived only where the overlying rampart was also preserved, both deposits having been reduced to a series of isolated 'islands' by the intrusion of later features (the extent of the rampart is shown in Fig. 4). The layer was everywhere completely truncated to the south of the rampart (the cause of this is discussed below). An even vertical distribution of pottery in this layer, with an extended date range and small sherd size, together with the layer's location directly beneath the rampart and upon the natural mudstone, and the setting of the rampart's timber reinforcement directly upon its surface (see below), permit its interpretation as a buried soil. The concentration of pollen close to its surface, described below, lends weight to this. Micromorphological studies carried out on this deposit (report in archive) were inconclusive as to the circumstances of formation, but if the interpretation as a buried soil is correct, the lack of a worm-sorted pebble layer suggests that it may have been under cultivation prior to being sealed by the rampart in phase II.

At the south end of SL12, the stratigraphy was not clear, but the layer (0226) could not be traced with certainty much beyond the south edge of the overlying rampart (0204), 10m north of the south edge of the site. Similarly, in a small area machined out to expose the tail of the rampart adjacent to SL15 in 02, the layer 0260 thinned out to an edge projecting only about 1m south of the rampart tail, and in 04 the same effect was observed in the machine trench adjacent to SL20 (0301). Careful trowelling of this deposit in 02 produced quantities of Romano-British and handmade Anglo-Saxon pottery; in 04 it was not manually

31.5% phase VII & VIII, from the post-medieval and later layers in all areas.

Phase VI, containing numerous pits, probably contains the largest volume of excavated deposits, and also produced 44.2% of the pottery by weight, as well as the greatest quantity of tile. The results show that tile was used for roofing in the town in the medieval period, but cannot be directly related to specific structures on the site.

#### *Catalogue of ridge tiles*

- 1 (AJI, 0199b, IV; Fig. 13). Part of one end with lower edges broken off. Upright crest with broken top, set longitudinally. Olive green glaze in patches on upper surfaces, much of the surface has flaked off. Length (incomplete) 91mm.
- 2 (AJJ, 0153a, V; not illustrated). Part of centre of ridge, broken at both ends and edges. One crest set transversely, mostly broken off leaving scar. Olive green glaze over most of original upper surface. Length (incomplete) 100mm.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

### ANIMAL BONES

A full report by Mark Beech is in archive. The following is a summary by the principal author.

#### Introduction

The collection of animal bones during the excavations was limited to those seen during excavation of each deposit; the lack of sieving will have resulted in the exclusion from the record of many of the smaller animals. The collection of bones might be expected to answer the following questions:

(a) what species were represented within each of the site phases?, (b) do the bones give any information as to the method of butchery practices, and does bone working appear to be taking place? and (c) is this collection of animal bones typical/atypical of sites of this type?

### Results

Firstly, concerning the general taphonomy of the assemblage, a few of the bones showed traces of apparent carnivore damage, i.e. canine puncture marks and pitting marks from gnawing. Presumably dogs were responsible for such action upon the bones, suggesting that burial of some of the material may have not been all that rapid, the material lying around on the surface for a while. Secondly, a few bone fragments showed traces of burning, indicating perhaps that at least some of the bones represented domestic food waste.

Table 4 details the presence of the species within each of the phases of the site.

Cattle were common throughout all the phases of the site (Table 4). The cattle, judging from the general size of the bones, do not appear to have been very large animals. The presence of quite young cattle is notable. Eight unfused cattle bones were identified from the Late-Saxon and medieval periods. This may perhaps suggest a hint of either veal or milk production with relatively young calves being slaughtered.

Quite a few bones could be definitely identified as sheep, whereas goat could not be identified with certainty. The sheep were medium-sized animals. During the medieval period both horned and hornless sheep were represented.

Pig was not as common as the other major domestic species. The two pig mandibles present (the only aged mandibles in all the assemblage) suggested that both pigs probably were killed during or soon after their second year.

The few cut and chop marks that were observed on the bones all appear to suggest basic primary dismemberment and portioning of the carcass. A horse scapula had a series of small cut marks running diagonally across its spinus. Such cuts would appear to suggest that horse meat may have occasionally been exploited as a resource. There is evidence for the use of cat skin during the post-Medieval phase of the site.

Table 4: Total number of hand-collected diagnostic bone fragments identified for each species by phases (figures in brackets indicate percentages).

	Phase I (Roman- mid Saxon)	Phase II/ III (Saxo- Norman)	Phase IV/V (Medieval)
Horse ( <i>Equus</i> sp. domestic)	-	1 (2)	5 (4)
Cattle ( <i>Bos</i> sp. domestic)	8 (100)	21 (45)	52 (37)
Sheep ( <i>Ovis</i> sp. domestic)	-	5 (11)	22 (16)
Sheep/Goat ( <i>Ovis</i> sp. domestic/ <i>Capra</i> sp. domestic)	-	8 (17)	26 (19)
Pig ( <i>Sus</i> sp. domestic)	-	7 (15)	22 (16)
Dog ( <i>Canis</i> sp. domestic)	-	3 (6)	6 (4)
Cat ( <i>Felis</i> sp. ?domestic)	-	1 (2)	4 (3)
Common Toad ( <i>Bufo bufo</i> L.)	-	1 (2)	2 (1)
<i>Identified to size category only:</i>			
La (Large artiodactyl)	-	16	49
Ma (Medium artiodactyl)	-	3	2
Sa (Small artiodactyl)	-	8	19
Unidentifiable	9	19	82
TOTAL	17	93	291

There is sparse evidence for bone and horn working on the site, although undoubtedly bone would have been an important resource. A cattle metatarsal had signs of having been chopped into its lateral midshaft (metapodials were commonly used to provide 'blanks' for bone working); and a cattle horncore had been chopped into its base, indicating horn removal.

The collection of bone material is small and prevents useful broad comparisons with other sites in the area. This assemblage is probably fairly typical of bone collections from small Saxon and medieval towns.

## THE BIRD BONES

A full report by Dr. Sheila Sutherland and Mark Beech is in archive. The following is a summary by the principal author.

### Introduction

A total of 62 bird bones representing 2 species were recovered from the site: all but 12 of which were from 016a, phase VI.

All the bird bones were identified by Dr. Sheila Sutherland using her personal comparative reference collection. A summary of the quantification of the bird bones is presented in Table 5.

### Results

Only two bird bones came from the Saxo-Norman levels of the site. These were a goose (*Anser/Branta* sp(p); 0230, phase II), and a domestic fowl (*Gallus* sp. domestic, 0247, phase III). Goose and domestic fowl were also only present in small quantities during the medieval period. It was possible to identify one almost complete coracoid to domestic/greylag goose (*Anser anser* L.).

The majority of the bird bones from the site came from the post-medieval levels. Nearly all of the bird bones belonged to domestic fowl. Remains of two adult and one juvenile birds were found in 0161a, phase VI, the fill of a small rectangular pit also containing much limestone including some stone roof-tile fragments. Some of the bones had apparently been cooked. The absence of smaller birds may perhaps be a result of the method of collection of the material (i.e. lack of sieving etc.). The predominance of domestic fowl in this collection is not unusual.

Table 5: Number of hand-collected fragments of bird bone (figures in brackets indicate the minimum number of individuals).

	Phase II/III Late-Saxon	Phase IV/V Medieval	Phase VI-VIII Post-Medieval
Goose sp. (p). <i>Anser/Branta</i> sp (p).	1 (1)	4 (3)	1 (1)
Domestic/greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i> L.	-	1 (1)	-
Domestic Fowl <i>Gallus</i> sp. domestic	1 (1)	4 (1)	49 (5)
Unidentifiable	-	1 (1)	-
TOTAL	2	10	50

## ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES: ANALYSIS

by James Grieg

### Introduction

The material contained some pollen and seeds which showed that there was probably a buried land surface under the rampart, and scatters of plant material throughout the deposit as a whole, but the remains were not abundant enough for a very detailed analysis.

### Pollen samples

Two column samples for pollen formed sections through the buried ground surface beneath the rampart. Sample 009 (Fig. 8, SL12) consisted of 28cm of 0190, rampart material consisting of marl and sand, above 35cm of sand 0222, the buried soil, resting on natural Mudstone. Sample 010 (Fig. 8, SL11) consisted of a top 36cm of 0227, rampart material consisting of marl and sand with many vertical holes with small stones and chareoal in them, possibly worm burrows; below was 39cm of sand (0229), the buried soil; resting on natural mudstone. A context 0228 consisting of a 2cm thick layer of sand was distinguished during excavation at the interface between 0228 and 0229, but was not traceable in the column sample.

Three sub-samples were prepared from sample 010, from depths of 25, 50 and 75cm (sample 007, Fig. 8, SL11). The 25cm (rampart, 11cm above the buried soil surface) and 75cm (lower buried soil) sub-

samples contained scarcely any pollen apart from a few battered Liguliflorae (a group including dandelions and other yellow-flowered composites), which usually persist because they are the thickest-walled pollen grains. The 50cm sample (14cm below the buried soil surface) had a more varied flora (although again dominated by Liguliflorae). There were also some cereal pollen grains, a *Centaurea cyanus* (cornflower), Cruciferae, Umbelliferae, Ranunculus and Gramineae. The only trees present were *Betula* (birch) and *Alnus* (alder). This spectrum corresponds somewhat with the picture obtained from the charred remains, which also contained mainly cereals and cornfield weed remains. The larger amount of pollen at this level may be because the material was part of the old soil surface, or associated pollen-rich layers.

### Macrofossils

Samples were also taken for macrofossils from thirteen contexts of late-Saxon and medieval date. The samples consisted of silty and sandy material which broke down easily in water; 1 litre was measured out by water displacement in a 2-litre beaker, and the organic material including charred remains washed out into a sieve. The mainly inorganic residue was dried and washed over again to check whether anything more would separate, but it appeared that the original washover was adequate. Almost all of the remains were charred. The results are given in Table 6. There were rather few plant remains in the samples examined, fewer than 10 per litre of sediment, mostly charred seeds with quantities of charcoal. 0247, phase III, from the deposits at the rampart tail, had the richest flora, consisting of rather badly-preserved

charred grain and cornfield weeds, and a sloe stone fragment. There were also some uncharred seeds. The floras of the other samples were essentially similar, with grain, weeds and a few other things. Such material seems to have been charred by rapid heating judging by the puffed appearance, so the remains seem to have come from fire ash, whether domestic or otherwise. The most frequently-identified cereal, *Hordeum* (barley) may represent fodder rather than food for humans. The uncharred seeds of violet and elder might be contemporary with the charred remains, or they could have fallen down from above through cracks and wormholes in the soil.

#### CHARCOAL SAMPLES FROM THE OVEN FLOOR 0060

by J. Wells

Four samples of charcoal taken from the phase II

oven floor 0060 (nos. 25-28), were identified as hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hazel/alder (*Corylus/Alnus* sp.), and poplar (*Populus* sp.)/Willow (*Salix* sp.).

The diameter of the material, measuring consistently 10mm in each of the samples examined, is indicative of a deliberate policy of wood selection, determined on the grounds of size and age, and suggests management by coppicing. All of the samples identified were of similar age, each possessing six to seven rings.

The samples therefore suggest the collection of particular species of brushwood material, selected for their kindling/burning properties, and good response to coppicing.

The worm-eaten nature of sample no. 28 is indicative of the wood being dead prior to usage. Details of wood type in each sample are given in the archive.

Table 6: Plant species from Slaughter House Lane

context nos:	0150	0153d	0227	0229	0247
<i>Viola</i> sp.	-	-	-	1	-
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.	?	-	?	-	-
Leguminosae half	1	-	-	-	1*
<i>Prunus</i> fruitstone	-	-	-	-	1*
<i>Rumex acetosella</i> L.	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L.	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	-	-	?	-	13
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	-	-	?	-	3*
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	-	-	-	-	2*
<i>Poa/Agrostis</i>	-	-	-	-	1*
long grass/small cereal	2	-	-	-	-
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	-	-	-	-	6*
<i>Avena</i> sp.	-	-	-	-	2*
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	2*	-	+	-	-
Cerealia n.f.i.	1*	-	3*	-	13*
charcoal	++	++	-	-	++

\* indicates charred. 0150, 0153d, phase V, levelling layer and fill of kiln; 0227, phase II, rampart material; 0229, phase I, pre-rampart soil; 0247, phase III, soil at rampart tail.

++ indicates present

## DISCUSSION: EXCAVATION RESULTS IN RELATION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NEWARK

### ROMANO-BRITISH PERIOD

A settlement of Romano-British date, known from a small-scale excavation<sup>50</sup> and 19th-century chance finds<sup>51</sup>, is located in the North Gate area of the town, adjacent to the Fosse Way. Finds include building remains, a kiln, and burials, and suggest that occupation was continuous from the 1st to 4th centuries. Little is known of the extent or character of the settlement. At Slaughter House Lane, the presence of Romano-British pottery in the soil beneath the rampart, and re-used Romano-British quernstones in the oven reflect the proximity of the North Gate settlement, but do not indicate that occupation extends as far south as the site.

### EARLY TO MID-ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

A pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies adjacent to Mill Gate (the Roman Fosse Way), north-east of the junction with Victoria Street (Fig. 1C). The site was excavated by the late M.J. Dean and others between 1958 and 1978, and a full report has now been published<sup>52</sup>. Over 400 burials and disturbed finds were recorded in a roughly semi-circular area on the south side of the road, placing it among the larger collections from early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the country. The cemetery was used from the 5th to 7th centuries, and its proximity to the Roman road suggests that the route was still of some importance when the site was chosen for burial.

A plain bowl was reputedly found while re-laying cobbles in the market place<sup>53</sup>, and indicates early or mid-Saxon activity. At Slaughter House Lane, early Anglo-Saxon pottery from the buried soil beneath the rampart, and the annular brooch from a later context, suggest that a site of the period lay nearby. Its nature is uncertain, but no human bones were recovered from the buried soil (see Table 4), and such finds probably relate to a settlement rather than a cemetery.

The even distribution of pottery through the buried soil and the absence of a pebble line suggest that the deposit had been cultivated prior to sealing by the rampart. However, the pollen concentrated close to its surface must have been preserved in anaerobic conditions, and therefore must relate to the prevailing environment immediately before the construction of the rampart at this point. It tends to confirm that the layer is indeed the pre-rampart ground surface. The slight emphasis on cereals in both the pollen and macrofossil assemblages, and the scarcity of tree pollen suggests a cleared environment dominated by arable land. The scarcity of charred remains from 0229 may result from the suspected cultivation, causing the complete breakdown of any charred material that may have been present.

### LATE-SAXON AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

#### *Historical outline*

Despite considerable contemporary documentation of the Anglo-Danish wars of the 10th century, no written evidence survives for the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon *burh* at Newark. Although Newark appears in a supposedly pre-conquest charter, recording a grant of lands by Godiva to St. Mary's Stow, this is thought to be spurious<sup>54</sup>, and the name is first reliably recorded in Domesday Book in 1086. The name "Newark" ("new work [fortified site]")<sup>55</sup>, and the presence of Domesday burgesses indicate a defended urban centre established before 1086, and the probable striking of coins in the town from the middle of the 10th century<sup>56</sup> suggests that its origin lay in a burghal foundation of, or before that date. It may have been constructed as part of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the Danelaw, perhaps to consolidate the territorial gains made when the submission of all the people settled in Mercia was received by Edward in 918<sup>57</sup>. The site derives its strategic importance from its location dominating both the Fosse Way and the

river Trent: the furthest east point where this is possible. There is no evidence for a bridge before the 1130s, and the main north-south crossing of the Trent in Anglo-Saxon times appears to have been at Nottingham: a bridge was constructed in 924<sup>58</sup>, and the road to York at Nottingham, along with the Trent and the Fosse Way received special protection against obstruction<sup>59</sup>. Nottingham's resulting superior strategic importance at the time of the Norman conquest was reflected in the siting there of the royal castle in 1067/8.

Following the Norman Conquest the manor of Newark passed to Remigius, Bishop of Lincoln. In the early 12th century the town was extensively developed by one of his successors, Bishop Alexander (1123-1148). Three charters of the 1130s record the grants by Henry I of permission to build the first castle, and to divert the King's highway (Castle Gate), to build a bridge over the Trent, and to establish a five-day fair "at the castle"<sup>60</sup>. Alexander founded the hospital of St. Leonard at this time<sup>61</sup>. In 1218 the castle was briefly besieged by supporters of King Henry III, while held by Robert de Gaugy, a supporter of the recently-deceased King John. A major rebuild was carried out at the castle in the early 14th century, including the refacing of the present curtain wall. In 1547 the manor passed from the bishops of Lincoln to Edward VI, and remained in royal possession to the Civil War.

From the above, likely historical contexts for the creation or modification of the town defences might therefore be expected in the early 10th century, the early 12th, and the early 14th, although the possibility of undocumented work at other times must be considered.

#### *Documentary evidence for the town defences*

Known from documentary sources and excavations, the medieval town defences enclosed a roughly-square area defined by Slaughter House Lane, Appleton Gate, Carter Gate, Lombard Street and the river frontage including the castle (Fig. 2). This circuit was of some age by 1231, as a survey of 1225-31 shows that the rents and tolls were separately

administered for the area within the defences (the "Old Borough"), and the extensive suburbs along all the roads approaching the town from the north, east and south (the "New Borough")<sup>62</sup>. In particular, the name *Potterdyke*, now Lombard Street, first recorded 1331<sup>63</sup>, indicates the course of the southern defences, while *le Brigg*, now Bridge Street, first recorded 1499<sup>64</sup>, locates the causeway or bridge over the ditch on the east side. In addition, continuous property boundaries, of which the earliest surviving record is that of the map of 1790<sup>65</sup>, plausibly appear to preserve some element of the defences on the present Slaughter House Lane and Lombard Street frontages, and the backs of properties fronting Carter Gate from the churchyard to the junction with Lombard Street, and also immediately to the north of Mount Lane. In addition, the continuous Slaughter House Lane frontage boundaries can be traced west of Bar Gate, round to the east side of Town Wharf (Fig. 3). The plan of the Civil War town defences in Newark Museum<sup>66</sup> shows what may well be a fragment of the medieval town wall on this line running across Beast Market Hill to join the Civil War fortification north-west of Bar Gate. This line was perpetuated in a property boundary first mapped in 1790 (Fig. 3). No gate leading directly onto Trent Bridge is indicated. A stone wall may be intended in the term *murus*, used in a deed of 1368 describing a property lying immediately north of the wall and the north gate, and east of North Gate<sup>67</sup>. The property must have lain over the ditch, which had therefore already been filled in at this point.

Elsewhere, building over the ditch is recorded earlier: the survey of 1225-31 refers to unlocated property in the "town ditch"<sup>68</sup>. A deed of 1341, referring to property between *Carter Gate* and *The Burghdyke* suggests that the ditch there was still open then, enough of a feature to define a property boundary<sup>69</sup>.

The first surviving written record of the north gate of the town was in the reign of Henry II (1154-89)<sup>70</sup>. An engraving published in 1816<sup>71</sup> shows a ruined stone wall with arch, demolished in 1762, identified as the north gate. Constructional details of the arch (formed of two concentric courses of radially-set thin

slabs separated by a thin course of roughly square blocks, with an apparent offset in the wall at the base of the arch) suggest Anglo-Saxon, or very early Norman work. The engraving is without scale, and clearly somewhat romanticised, but the possibility cannot be ruled out that this building was an Anglo-Saxon church, or less likely, in view of the tall, narrow arched doorway, a gatehouse. It stood in the vicinity of Bar Gate, where the north gate of the town would have been located. A second stone ruin stood "in the middle of" Bridge Street, on the east side of the defences, until demolished in 1784<sup>72</sup>; the gate is illustrated by Dickinson<sup>73</sup>, again somewhat romanticised and without scale, but the proportions and location "in the middle of the street" suggest that it was the principal arch of a medieval gateway, partly demolished before the drawings were made. The south gate, whose first surviving record is c. 1275<sup>74</sup>, stood at the junction of Castle Gate and Mill Gate<sup>75</sup>. No illustration survives.

#### *Previous excavations on the town defences*

Three elements forming the town defences have been identified from excavation in the town: a rampart, a stone wall and a ditch. The ditch has been excavated only on the north side of the town. At Slaughter House Lane in 1961 Barley excavated the inner half of the ditch, which was V-shaped in section, 3m deep, and with an estimated total width of 10m<sup>76</sup>. Natural silts in the bottom contained 13th century pottery, and were overlain by large quantities of redeposited natural mudstone containing pottery ranging in date from the 12th to mid-14th century. An unexcavated stone wall, formed of alternate thick and thin courses of Lias limestone, stood at the base of a later brick wall on the same line, some 6m back from the inner edge of the ditch. Two pits had been dug into this berm, one containing pottery of 12th and 13th century date. There was no evidence for the date of construction of the ditch; however Barley suggested that it may initially have been regularly cleaned out, but began to fill up naturally by the 13th century, and this process was deliberately completed, probably by throwing most of the rampart into the ditch, around the mid-14th century. It was perhaps at this time that the stone wall was built along the line of the front face

of the rampart. The course of the ditch further east was confirmed by observations made in building work in 1988 (excavation area 03, see above). Excavations at Mount Lane<sup>77</sup> revealed the ditch at the north-east corner of the town; its depth below the modern ground surface was 2.7m. It was filled initially with virtually clean mudstone to a thickness of 0.8m, which produced a few scraps of late medieval pottery; this was followed by mudstone interleaved with bands of ash and darker soil, containing a little pottery no earlier than the late 17th or early 18th centuries.

Further excavations by Todd at Castle Gate<sup>78</sup>, Lombard Street<sup>79</sup> and Old White Hart Yard<sup>80</sup> revealed elements of the rampart and wall of the southern and eastern defences. At Lombard Street, two immediately-adjacent trenches were excavated, one in 1972, the other in 1976. In the former, a section of only 2.5m length was exposed due to later disturbance. The stone wall stood three courses, 0.86m high, with the front face beyond the limits of excavation. The core and rear face exposed over a 2.25m length, formed of roughly-cut blocks of Lias limestone set in grey-brown clay, with a core of smaller lumps in similar clay; the thickness within the excavation was 0.4m. Behind the wall lay a 1.85m-thick series of gravel layers sloping down to the north (the interior), which produced three potsherds, two dated to c. 1200-1225. These layers were interpreted as the rampart, with the wall built upon its crest. The published section<sup>81</sup> implies that there was no excavation beneath the wall. In the 1976 trench a 4m-long section was exposed, with similar results. The rear face and core of the stone wall were of Lias limestone blocks set in clay, standing to two courses; layers interpreted as the rampart stood to a height of 2.32m, and consisted of horizontal bands of sand and gravel, with an overlying layer on a 45° slope at the rear. It produced no pottery, but from the series of layers dumped and accumulated over the tail produced substantial quantities of pottery of the first half of the 13th century. At the Old White Hart Yard the wall stood to a height of 1.3m in ten courses, composed of large Lias limestone blocks 0.25-0.35m long by 0.12-0.16m wide, set in light brown puddled clay. Above the two lowest courses lay a course of narrower blocks 0.09-0.1m

wide. The front face was smoothly dressed, while the rear was very rough. Behind the wall a deposit of bright yellow sand 0.10-0.18m thick (apparently a pre-rampart deposit) was overlain by brown sandy gravel 0.22-0.30m thick, itself overlain by light brown sandy clay and gravel with flecks of coal and charcoal. This was much disturbed by later intrusions, but the maximum thickness was 0.16m. Dateable material from the body of the bank comprised residual Roman pottery and several scraps of Nottingham Splashed Ware. A broad patch of gravel lay over the bank in the centre of the cutting, which produced a large part of a late-13th century jug, and the bank was cut by a large pit containing 14th century pottery. At Castle Gate, Todd excavated a bank at least 3.75m wide, formed of sand and gravel, and contained 21 sherds of possibly pre-Conquest pottery, but also eight glazed sherds no earlier than the 12th century. Lying south-west of the bank (outside), the ditch was flat-bottomed, dug no earlier than the 12th century, and filled in by the end of the 17th century. It was thought more likely to be an artificial water course than a defensive feature.

Fundamental doubts exist over the interpretations offered in these excavations, due to their small scale. From the published evidence the Lombard Street wall could equally have been dug into the front face of the rampart, as the foundations were apparently not exposed. Equally, the "rampart" appears in one trench as sloping layers, in the other as horizontally banded, and as these two trenches were immediately adjacent at least one interpretation must be wrong. The bank observed at Castle Gate could equally well be terracing or dumping as the site lies on a very steep slope down to the river. In the Old White Hart Yard, the wall's rough rear face would be consistent with a construction method involving the cutting back of the bank to a vertical face, and the building of the wall against it as a revetment; this need not leave a clear foundation cut. Equally, it is not clear whether the old ground surface was preserved at any point. The dating evidence at Castle Gate and Lombard Street becomes insecure once the identification of the rampart is doubted, and at Old White Hart Yard the evidence for the identification of the rampart is not given, and only a few scraps of Nottingham Splashed

Ware came from it. Excavations on a larger scale are needed to provide secure identifications and dating for the sequence of defences on the south side. Excavations at Bell's Yard, by Dr. J. Samuels in 1984, revealed a rectilinear stone structure and an adjacent stone wall on a terrace cut into the steep slope to the river on the line of the castle ditch, immediately south of the existing south-west tower of the castle<sup>82</sup>. The structure was demolished in the medieval period and may have been related to the castle, perhaps a water gate leading to the river, or part of riverside defences of the town.

A watching-brief by Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust, carried out at Cuckstool Wharf in 1990 during repair work to the modern riverside side wall, revealed more of the Bell's Yard stone wall, which appears on the Civil War plan of Newark mentioned above, and is conceivably part of a medieval riverside wall leading south from the south-west tower of the castle, and still standing in the 17th century<sup>83</sup>. Further work, beyond the immediate concern of this paper, has indicated the line of the castle rampart and ditch.

#### *The date of the earliest defences at Slaughter House Lane*

At Slaughter House Lane, the pottery evidence, in the present state of knowledge, provides only an approximate date for the rampart. A single sherd of Torksey Ware from the fabric of the rampart suggests a construction date not earlier than the 9th century; clearly a much greater quantity of dating evidence is required. In the layers immediately sealing the rampart, the presence of large quantities of Saxo-Norman pottery, and the consistent absence of Nottingham Splashed Ware (available from c.1100, and otherwise well-represented on the site), and of later pottery, suggests that those deposits had accumulated before c.1100. The period of time they took to accumulate cannot be accurately estimated, as the circumstance of their deposition is not certain. There was clearly a still earlier phase, during which the rampart was constructed and structures erected at its tail. Rampart construction in the 1130s would require the rapid abandonment of the structures behind the ram-

part, and the burial of the area with the soil deposits within a few decades, together with a late adoption of Nottingham Splashed Ware. The balance of probability based on the present evidence of all types therefore lies in a pre-conquest date for the defences at Slaughter House Lane.

Despite its demonstrable antiquity, the town's street pattern does not preserve any clear indication of an inner, earlier line of defences. If Todd's dating of the southern side defences is rejected (see below), and with the evidence of documents showing it to have been old in 1231, the known defensive circuit, including Slaughter House Lane, may again be considered to be of one period.

#### *The character of the occupation at Slaughter House Lane in the Saxo-Norman period*

At Slaughter House Lane, the presence of post-hole structures and an oven behind the rampart in phase II suggest that the site was occupied on a permanent basis. The later sealing of these structures with an accumulation of soil in phase III might be interpreted as a contraction of occupation in the 12th century, but this may not be representative of the *burh* as a whole. The contents of the oven point to the exploitation and possible management of nearby woodland, while some of the animal bones had marks indicating primary dismemberment of carcasses; it is likely that this butchery took place at least nearby, if not on site.

#### *The development of the Slaughter House Lane site in the Medieval period*

The probable levelling of the rampart and the construction of the stone building, kiln and stone boundary wall were the next well-represented general stage in the development of the site, although they may not have been exactly contemporary.

The stone boundary wall and rampart-levelling might be of the 14th century, and Barley's work suggested that the ditch had been infilled in the later 14th century, and certainly by 1368 (above). The

ditch might therefore have been filled in with the material from the body of the rampart, thus creating two new areas of land for building close to the town centre. The stone boundary wall may well have been erected at this time as a replacement for the rampart, as the boundary line was still important in demarcating the Old and New Boroughs.

The alignments of the tail of the rampart and the stone boundary wall (and the 1790 boundary which follows it) converge towards Bar Gate (Fig. 3); at Bar Gate the boundary/wall would be approximately over the centre of the rampart, and therefore over the expected location of the original gate. It is conceivable that when the rampart was replaced with the wall, the wall followed the front face of the rampart from Wilson Street, but began to converge with the tail towards Bar Gate in order to link with the existing gate, which must therefore have been retained after the levelling of the rampart. It has been suggested above that the gate contained an Anglo-Saxon stone church, and it may have been included in the new stone circuit.

Despite localised alteration and sub-division, the property boundaries of 1790, extending between Kirk Gate and Slaughter House Lane, show a regular pattern of plots of about 30m frontage, and are therefore likely to have been laid out at the same time. The presence of a 1790 boundary over the side wall of the building and possible yard boundary wall (Figs. 3, 5) suggests that these boundaries might be of medieval origin, if not original to the *burh*. Unfortunately the regular pattern is less clear north-west of excavation area 01, although it seems likely that 01 was in a separate property from 02 and 04.

The stone building, kiln and timber structures may therefore have occupied one or more properties extending from Kirk Gate to the town wall. The footings of the stone building were substantial enough to postulate that at least the ground floor was entirely of stone, indicating a building of some status. These features could not be confidently dated more closely than the late medieval period, perhaps the 14th or 15th centuries, while the building could have been

still standing as late as the 18th century.

The extension of buildings into the backs of the properties and the levelling of the rampart suggest increased pressure to utilise available land within this valuable location close to the centre of the Old Borough. The filling of the ditch suggests a similar situation in the New Borough. Although there was no direct evidence for the function of the phase IV kiln, use for malting is most likely. Similar kilns with stone-lined, sloping sides have been found at Barrow and Great Casterton, Rutland, Brixworth, Northamptonshire, and at Michelham Priory, Sussex<sup>84</sup>. The last was dated to the 14th century, but the remainder were not closely dated, with medieval or post-medieval pottery in their fills. At Great Casterton direct evidence for function was found in 256 carbonised seeds recovered from near the chamber floor; six were unidentified, but the remainder were all barley, indicating use as a malting kiln. Late medieval malt kilns were fitted with removable horse hair cloth floors, stretched over wood frames, which featured frequently in farmhouse inventories of the period<sup>85</sup>. Such kilns could also have been used for drying corn.

The levelling layer of phase V indicates that 02 was remodelled in the late medieval period, possibly for a new building, but there was not direct evidence surviving for this.

## THE POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Further discussion of the development of the site in this period is beyond the scope of this article, but the conical lime kilns are worthy of comment (Fig. 10B). Although not well dated, the repetition of the distinctive conical form suggests that the kilns belong to a single period in the history of the site. 0129 was dated no earlier than the late 17th century. The Civil War siege must have caused extensive damage to the medieval buildings of the town, and it is tempting to believe that the kilns were to supply lime for mortar for a major rebuilding programme in brick, possibly using material robbed from the stone building and the stone wall of the town. They certainly mark the end of the medieval history of the site, and the beginning of its redevelopment in the modern era.

## NOTE ON THE ARCHIVE

The site archive, containing finds and full documentation of the site records, including pottery database and specialists' reports on finds, has been deposited in the Appleton Gate Museum, Newark-on-Trent, Nottingham NG24 1JY, with a copy in the National Monuments Record. At the time of writing, an ASCII format copy may be had by sending a blank 3.5in 1.44Mb floppy disc and SAE to the author at Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

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