

THE HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF JOHNSON'S CORNER, ALTON

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ABSTRACT

Excavations, and associated documentary and architectural studies are used to examine an area in the centre of Alton including High Street and Market Street frontages. It is shown that major late medieval rebuilding truncated earlier deposits and the principal evidence presented is thus post-medieval. The standing buildings are dated by a combination of archaeology and dendrochronology with documentary evidence. The latter also provides information relating to the functions and ownership of the properties. Conclusions are drawn concerning the medieval and post-medieval development of the town. Important specialist studies of pottery, botanical material and animal bones are included in microfiche, 48-95.

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 1976 it became clear that a major site in the centre of Alton was to be redeveloped. As a result of discussions with the developer, Longley Ltd, the County Planning Archaeologist, Mr M F Hughes, and the then land-owner, F W Woolworth Ltd, it was agreed that access could be given to allow excavation prior to the development. The author was approached and excavations organised under the aegis of the newly formed Alton Archaeological Committee with finance from the Department of the Environment. These excavations were carried out during March and April 1977 with a small nucleus of students helped by members of the Alton History and Archaeology Society and the Farnham and District Museum Society.

The phasing of the excavation with the development meant that excavations had to be done within the standing buildings. This restricted the area available and determined the locations of the trenches. Thus only three areas

and two smaller trenches were opened. The disadvantages of working within the buildings were outweighed by the advantages of being able to study the standing buildings in the context of the strata beneath. A detailed survey of the standing buildings was produced largely as a result of the work of local volunteers. Together with the excavations, historical research and finds analysis, this has enabled us to produce a more comprehensive picture of the development of this part of the town than would have been possible from excavation alone. The finds and site records have been deposited with the Hampshire County Museum Service (Accession No. A.1979.3). A copy of the buildings survey is deposited with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England).

Local and Archaeological Background

Alton has not been the subject of any archaeological study although the Anglo-Saxon cemetery was partially excavated in 1959-61 (Wilson and Hurst 1960, 134; 1961, 309), and the nearby Romano-British town at Neatham has been partially excavated (Millett and Graham forthcoming). Finds from the town, and the relevant historical evidence have recently been summarised (Hughes 1976) and discussed (Millett 1977). The only previous archaeological work in the town consisted of observation of the Police Station site (Millett 1978). Thus this site provided the first opportunity for a controlled excavation.

The site occupies a substantial part of the block bounded by the High Street, Market Street, the Market Square and Loe's Alley (Figs 1 and 3). The High Street is the main thorough-

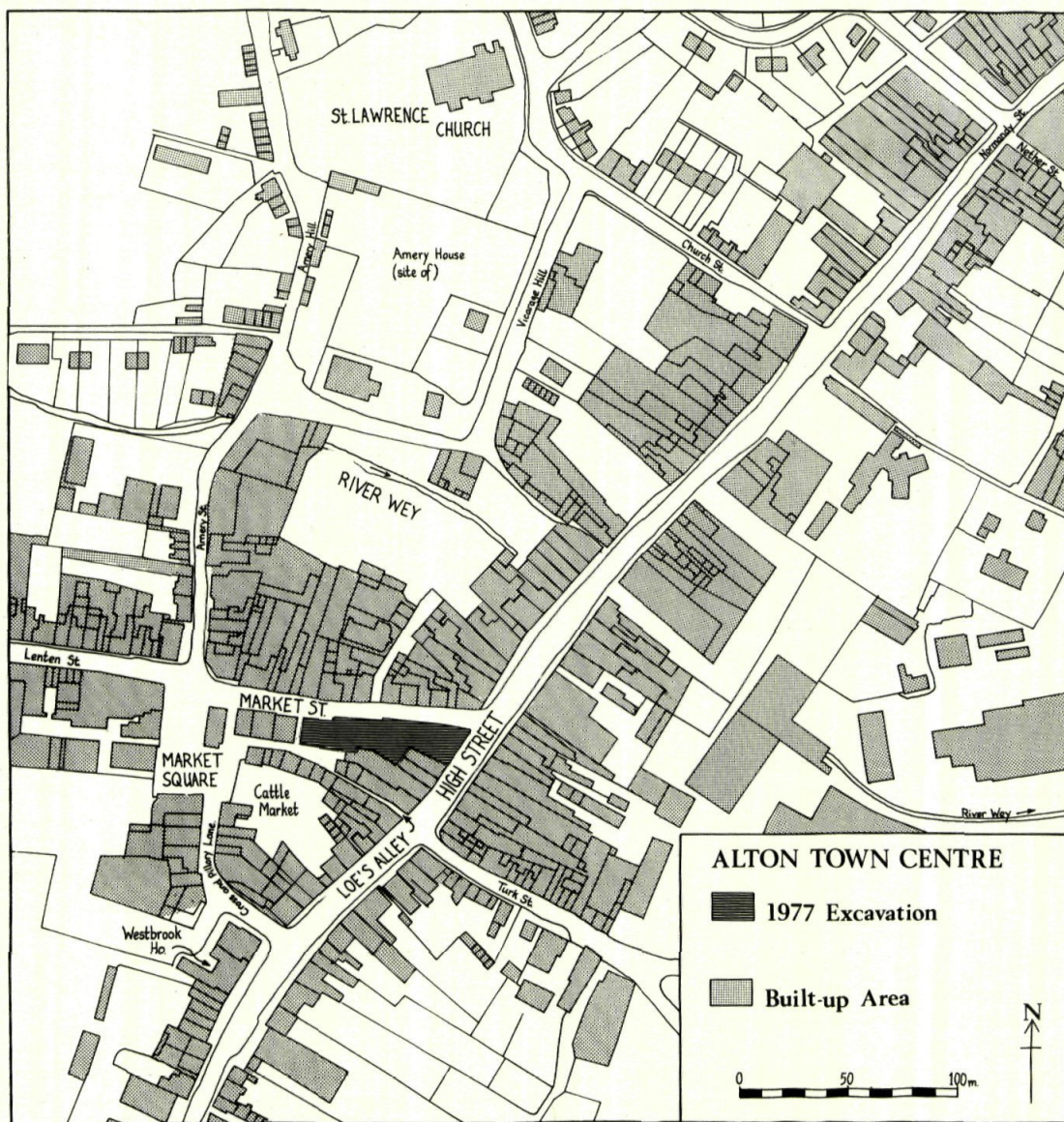


Fig 1. Location of Johnson's Corner in relation to Alton Town Centre.

fare today and was probably the main focus of the medieval town. Market Street (the Baskingstoke Road) connects the High Street with the Market Square. The Square itself stands on flat ground while Market Street cuts diagonally down the slope towards the river. The importance of the excavation site lay in its potential for investigating whether the High Street or the Market Square developed first as a commercial centre, and this was the primary objective of the excavation.

Topography and Geology

The topography of the site was much altered in the medieval and post-medieval periods, by the progressive terracing of the hillside for building. The present slope is gentle with the highest point on Loe's Alley at c 107 m OD and the lowest on the corner of Market Street and the High Street at c 104 m OD. The terracing makes it difficult to estimate the original slope. The general form of this slope has been reconstructed by interpolating contours between the highest points of the undisturbed natural surface. There remain some uncertainties, especially at the top of the slope, but the general form shown in Fig 2 indicates the problem faced by those originally building on the steep slope. The site lies on Lower Chalk but over most of the area this is masked by alluvial gravel which reaches a maximum thickness of 3m at the top of the slope.

The Site

The site contained several buildings on different alignments (Fig 3, centred on SU 718395), forming nine properties. To make their description consistent and understandable to those who do not know the town, house numbers in the two streets have been used, together with 'Unit' letters for the buildings in the High Street where properties have been amalgamated. Since the series of properties need not have been connected, each is described in turn with successive sections concerning documentary, architectural and archaeological evidence.

50-52 HIGH STREET

These buildings (Site C = AC77) faced onto the High Street and incorporated 2 Market Street (unit E), the frontage of which was not utilised in the buildings' final form (Figs 3 and 4). Before demolition the structure was a single shop consisting of five units which had been amalgamated. These are referred to as units A, B (52 High Street); C, D (50 High Street); and E (2 Market Street).

Documentary Summary (by Georgia Smith)

50-52 High Street lies at a seemingly important location in the economic and social life of a market town. The neighbouring properties, Monks Place and Bulbecks, are easily identified in the first surviving rental of 1398 (BL Add Ch

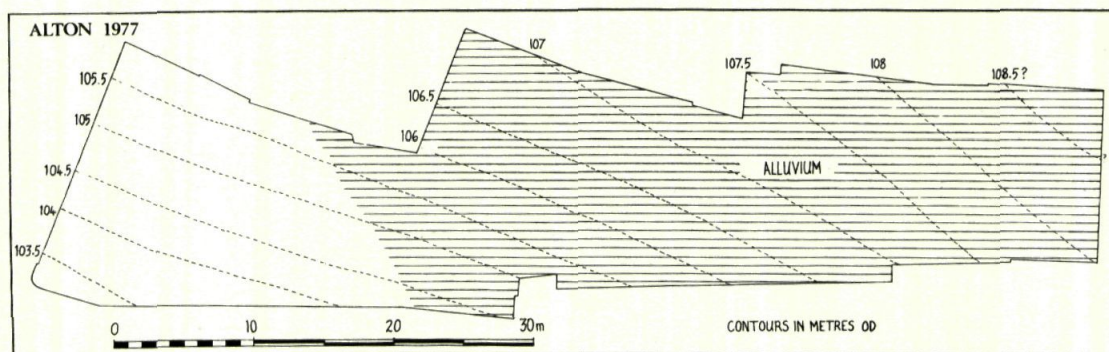


Fig 2. Plan of Johnson's Corner showing the surface geology and reconstructed contours of the valley slope. North is to the bottom of the plan.

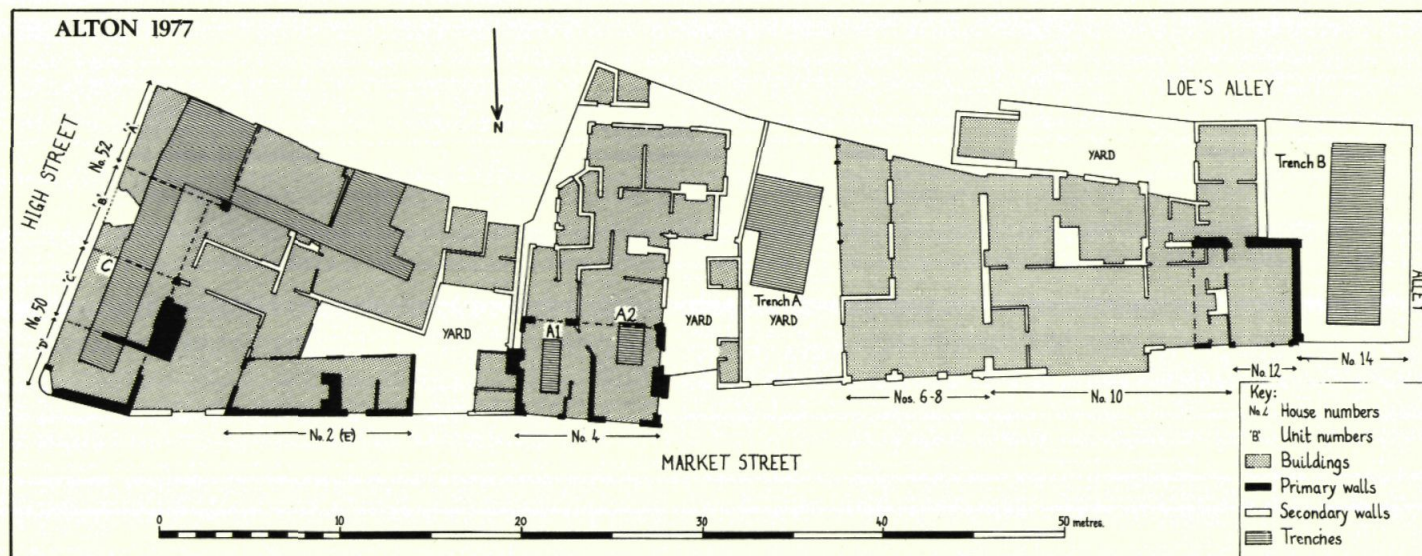


Fig 3. Plan of Johnson's Corner showing the buildings as standing in 1977, and the trenches excavated.

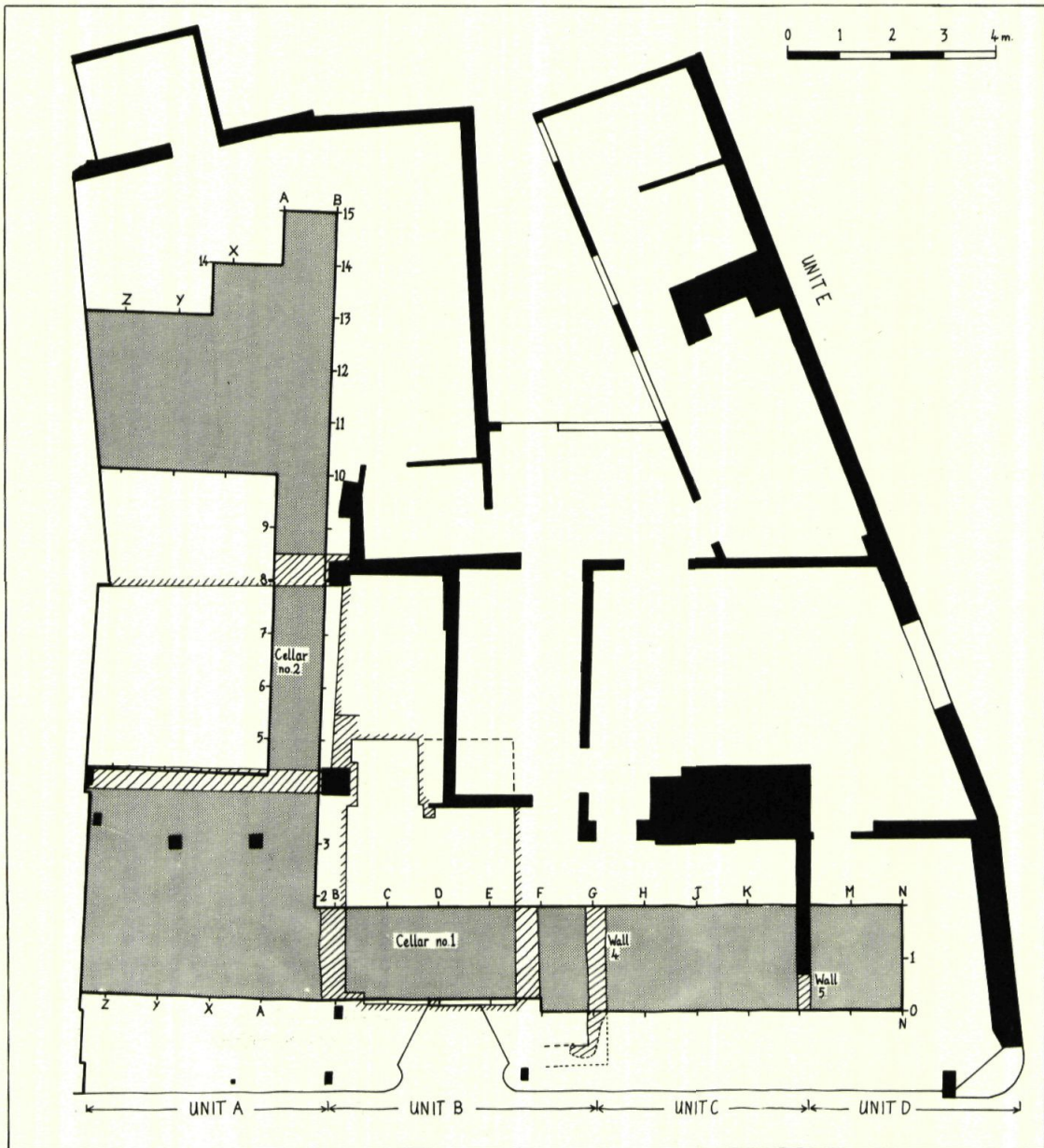


Fig 4. Johnson's Corner: plan of nos 50–52 High Street and no 2 Market Street showing the unit numbers used in the description of the buildings, and the areas excavated. See Fig 3 for orientation.

27820) as 'of Thomas Thorp for one tenement lately Robert Monk's . . . 7*d*', and 'of Richard Bulbeck for one tenement lately Draper's in Alton Street . . . 15*d*'. The corner site has not been identified in this rental as a separate unit; nor was it by this period still part of Monk's as the boundaries might suggest, as the rent of Monks remained unchanged until the late seventeenth century. However a hundred years later in the next surviving rental (BL Egerton Rolls No 2101) there is an entry 'of Robert Field for (a tenement) and a garden called Graveldens . . . 12*d*', which subsequent rentals identify as the corner site. In 1550 the rental (BL Add Ch 27893) refers only to a garden, but by 1662 (BL Add Ch 27889) there is the description 'of John Fielder for his house and garden . . . 12*d*'. By this time Hugh Gander was paying rent for an adjoining house next to Monks Place, which was integrated into the corner site about the end of the century. The map of Alton of 1666 (HRO photocopy 30; Fig 17) shows five houses on the High Street frontage between Loe's Alley and Market Street. There are two on our site, Monks Place and Bulbecks, with Pithams nearest the Alley. This map, which appears to show all the houses and certain other buildings in the town, was drawn for the Knight family who held the manors of Alton Eastbrook and Truncheaunts (properties of which lay in both Alton Eastbrook and Alton Westbrook). Checks against documentary evidence suggest that, except perhaps for the north side of Market Street, the map is diagrammatically accurate with an attempt to depict some topographical features. Reservations arise from doubts about the continuous frontages. It may be that the surveyor was unable to show on so small a scale that there were gates and gatehouses in the boundary walls giving entrance to yards and gardens between the houses. Rear boundaries and hedges of surrounding fields are not marked on the map.

John Fielder was a mercer and an inventory taken at his death in 1633 (HRO proved Winchester Archdeacon's Court 1634) listed the contents of a hall, buttery, cellar, kitchen, chamber over the shop and a kill loft, altogether valued at £42 5*s* 8*d*. There is no reference to the shop itself, or trading stock. The property was

inherited by his eldest son Richard, a butcher, who had a standing under the Market House in 1622, but had given it up by 1632 (BL Add Ch 27892). By 1694 (HRO 63M48/671) the property was in the hands of William Gill, another butcher, who acquired the adjoining house (by now known as the house of Jonas Knight) and turned it into a slaughter house (HRO 63M48/672). A new boundary wall was built along the High Street frontage, for which he incurred an additional rent charge for 'an encroachment into the street by diverting the front wall on the west'. The Gill family had been butchers in this quarter of the town since at least 1635 when Mark Gill bought Pithams (HRO 4M51/146), a plot which ran alongside the alley, then known as Snowers Hill (referred to in this report at Loe's Alley), leading to the Market Place. By the time William died in 1728 (HRO, will proved Winchester Bishop's Court 1728) leaving his corner property to his brother Thomas, the senior branch of the family had disposed of Pithams and the slaughter house there had ceased to be used as such. It has not been possible to establish whether Thomas Gill carried on the same trade on the corner site, even though he and probably his son of the same name remained there until the 1770s.

In the next thirty years several people occupied the site, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the connection with the drapery trade had been established, and remained until the shop was finally closed. The Tithe map (Fig 17) shows the site as No 190 which was owned and occupied by James C Jefferies, a linen draper. In plan the building shows little change from the present, but examination of the brickwork on the front of the building shows that the third storey has been added. An early photograph shows a house and shop, both of two storeys, and this was still the elevation in 1863 when the street was decorated for the wedding of Princess Alexandra and the Prince of Wales. The third storey was added shortly afterwards.

Archaeological Evidence

A single L shaped trench (Site C) was excavated across units A to D and through to the back of unit A (Figs 3 and 4). The latter area

was occupied by intercutting pits (Fig 7). Between these and the shop front the archaeological deposits had been removed by eighteenth and nineteenth century cellars. In the shop front (Figs 5 and 6) the stratification was thin but undisturbed. The features in this area could be phased without difficulty.

Periods I and II (Fig 5). Period III levelling and terracing had removed all surface deposits of these periods leaving only those features cut into the natural subsoil. The majority, the bases of post and stake holes, were filled with clay. They occupied three areas on the boundaries between units A, B, and C. Those between A and B were the most substantial (Fig 5). All three lines appear to be the remains of boundaries between plots, and therefore delimit buildings 1 and 2 (Fig 5) which occupied units B and C. There were no finds from the post holes but they were stratigraphically pre-Period III. The truncation of the stratigraphy made phasing of these features impossible. In unit C there was a round pit (pit C7) c 1m across and 0.3m deep, truncated by the Period III levelling. This pit was filled with large flints and contained a number of bones including cattle skulls (below). The stone infilling suggests a deliberate action perhaps immediately prior to the truncation. Pit C7 contained no datable finds, but it is unlikely to have been contemporaneous with buildings 1 and 2. It is therefore tentatively assigned to a separate period (II). The bones from pit C7 suggest an association of this site with butchers in this period.

Period III. The area was cleared of buildings and levelled into three or four terraces (Fig 5), cut to the natural chalk, giving a firm and clean surface for building. The edges of these terraces, about 20cm high, could be traced on the boundaries between units A, B, C and D. Floors survived only in units C and D, replacing in these three buildings (3, 4 and 5) those of Period I/II. The insubstantial boundary (wall 2) between buildings 3 and 4, and the absence of terracing on this line, perhaps suggest that they were two bays of the same building. This wall had been robbed leaving only a shallow trench. A stone sleeper wall (Fig 5; wall 1) lay on the boundary between units B and C. The boundary

between units C and D, on the edge of the terrace, was marked by a shallow robber trench which had contained a stone sleeper wall (wall 3). This was the boundary between buildings 4 (unit C) and 5 (unit D). The only other structural feature was a post hole, adjacent to the western wall of building 4 and packed with stone blocks. These walls are assumed to have supported timber framed buildings facing the High Street. The surviving floor of buildings 4 and 5 consisted of thin black silty layers. In building 5 there were several floors, represented by interleaved layers of brown earth and black silt. These layers contained numerous bone splinters suggestive of a butcher's shop floor (below, 106).

Finds were sparse but suggest a sixteenth century date for the levelling at the beginning of this period. It is worth noting that the boundaries between the properties remained the same as in Periods I and II (except that unit C was subdivided) and that the units are of equal width at c 5m (15½ ft). When subdivided unit C was divided exactly in half. This, together with the total rebuilding of Period III, suggests control over all the properties consistent with common ownership. The terracing and construction of the new floor levels on the natural chalk implies the removal of much soil. The present slope of High Street to the south of the site has clearly been made shallower. The Period III terracing seems associated with this, although today's almost imperceptible slope does not seem to have been finally achieved until Period VI.

Period IV (Fig 6). Alterations in Period IV relate only to the western part of the site. Buildings 4 and 5 remained as before with only one possible alteration to building 4. Building 3 and the building on unit B were demolished. Unit B was then rebuilt in stone (building 6) with a cellar on its south-western side and a through passage adjacent. Its north-eastern wall (wall 4, Fig 6) encroached onto unit C. The remainder of this unit was made into a cobbled alley connecting the High Street with the yard behind the buildings. It was possible to locate and examine the front corner of wall 4 beneath the floor in the shop window, so that the position of the frontage is known (Fig 6). Cellar no 1 and

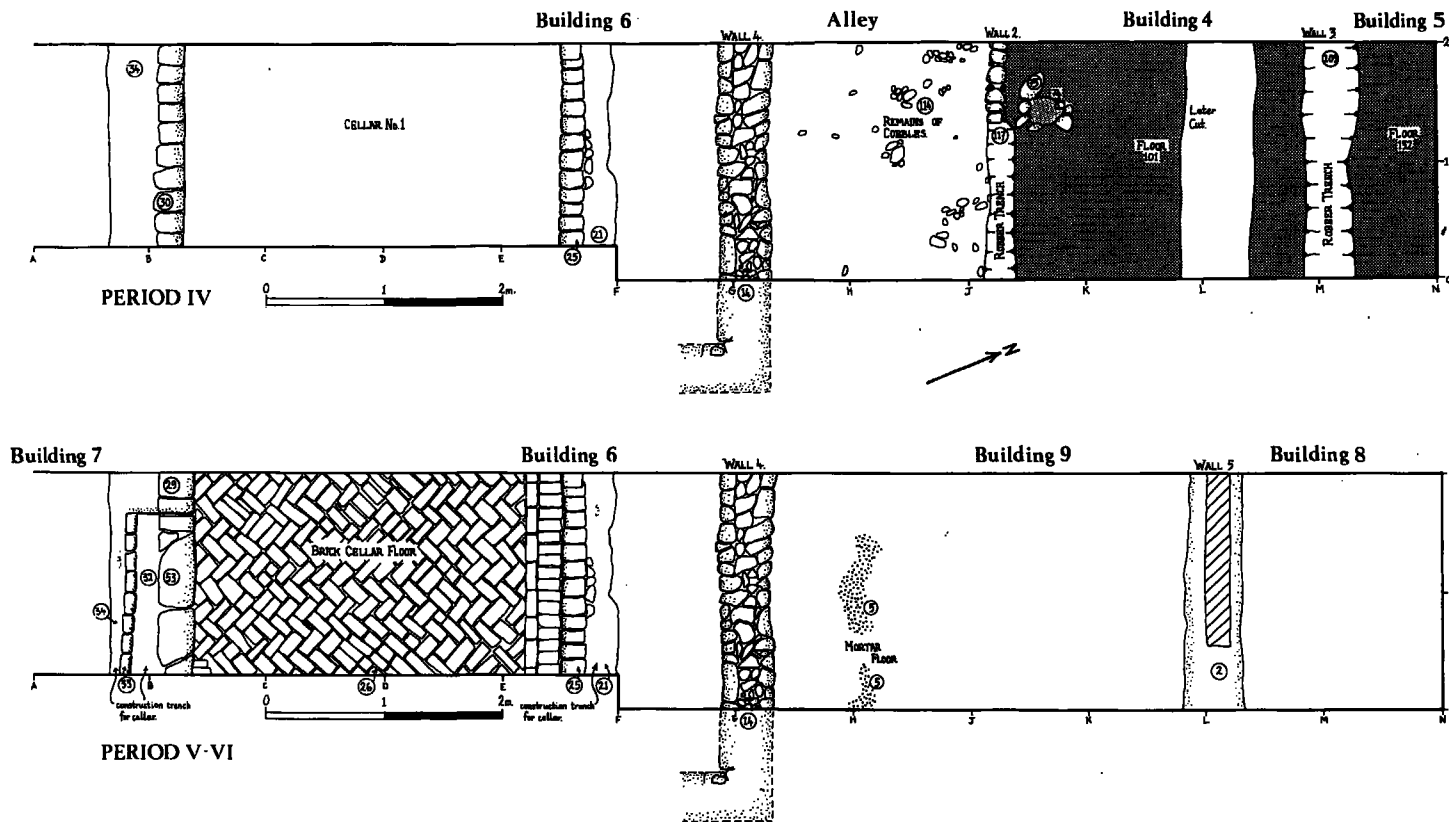


Fig 6. Johnson's Corner: phase plans of Trench C, beneath nos 50-52 High Street. Periods IV-VI (for location see Fig 4).

wall 4 were both built in Upper Greensand and flint, and their location suggests that they were part of the jettied timber framed building which survived in the fabric of the existing buildings. No floor levels survived, but pottery from construction levels suggests a sixteenth century date consistent with the architectural evidence. The stone walls probably extended to the first floor as the foundation excavated seems too substantial simply to support a frame. Building 6 seems to have been altered in this phase with the insertion of a post hole (74) adjacent to wall 2 to strengthen the insubstantial wall which had previously been only a partition.

Period V (Fig 6). The sequence representing Period V and VI is complex and there are several uncertainties resulting from the absence of stratigraphic connections between different parts of the site. The simplest interpretation is presented here, in which all the changes are interpreted as part of the same sequence of alterations.

Building 6 and the adjacent alley on unit C continued in use during this period. The alley was widened over part of the plot previously occupied by building 4, which together with building 5 was demolished. A single building constructed to replace them occupied unit D and part of the land previously occupied by building 4, implying common ownership. The absence of recobbling in the alley suggests that these alterations were not completed before the next phase of activity began.

On unit A the previous building (building 'O') known only from the buildings survey, was demolished at this time, and the site remained vacant while the ground level was lowered by up to c 1.3m (the difference between Period VI ground level and the base of the frame of building 'O'). This reduced the slope of the street to its present gentle incline.

Dating evidence for this phase is poor, as there is little pottery from occupation levels. However, the levelling of unit A ends the use of the pits and well behind it. The latest pottery from these features is early seventeenth century.

Period VI (Fig 6). On unit A, the Period V levelling was followed by the construction of a

timber framed building (building 7) known from the building survey, represented in the trenches by the remains of a sandstone block wall on the line of the rear of the building (Fig 4). This wall was stratigraphically later than building 6. The major alterations in this period concern units B and C. The alley between building 6 and 8 was built over with building 9. As a result the first floor wall between building 6 and the alley was rebuilt. It was probably at this time that the jetty at the front of building 6 was infilled.

The floor of cellar 1 in building 6 was relaid in brick and the walls rebuilt in two places. This may have been made necessary by a partial collapse of the cellar wall between Units A and B during the period when unit A was vacant perhaps allowing water in behind the walls. The brick floor is stratigraphically later than the alterations to the wall, although this probably represents only a sequence within the same renovation. The rebuilt walls incorporated a number of shaped Greensand blocks. These mostly derive from window and door frames, although two very large blocks were found, which appear to be the bases of a large arch, probably from the entrance to an alley such as that on unit C in Periods IV and V. The earth behind the rebuilt cellar wall contained a farthing token of mid-seventeenth century date which gives a *terminus post quem* for the alterations. The continuous frontage shown on the 1666 map (Fig 17) indicates that the rebuilding was complete by then. This dates the Period VI alterations to c 1652–1666 although the doubts about the continuous frontage expressed by Mrs Smith must be borne in mind.

The pits and well on unit A (Fig 7). A group of six pits and a well were located behind the frontage on unit A. These were truncated by the Period V levelling and thus stratigraphically isolated. Their sequence has been established on the basis of their inter-relations and of the pottery that they contained. The earliest pits dated to the late thirteenth century and the sequence continued to the early seventeenth century. They are assumed to have belonged to the property on unit A, and functioned as cess and rubbish pits, although pit C5 was revetted by a

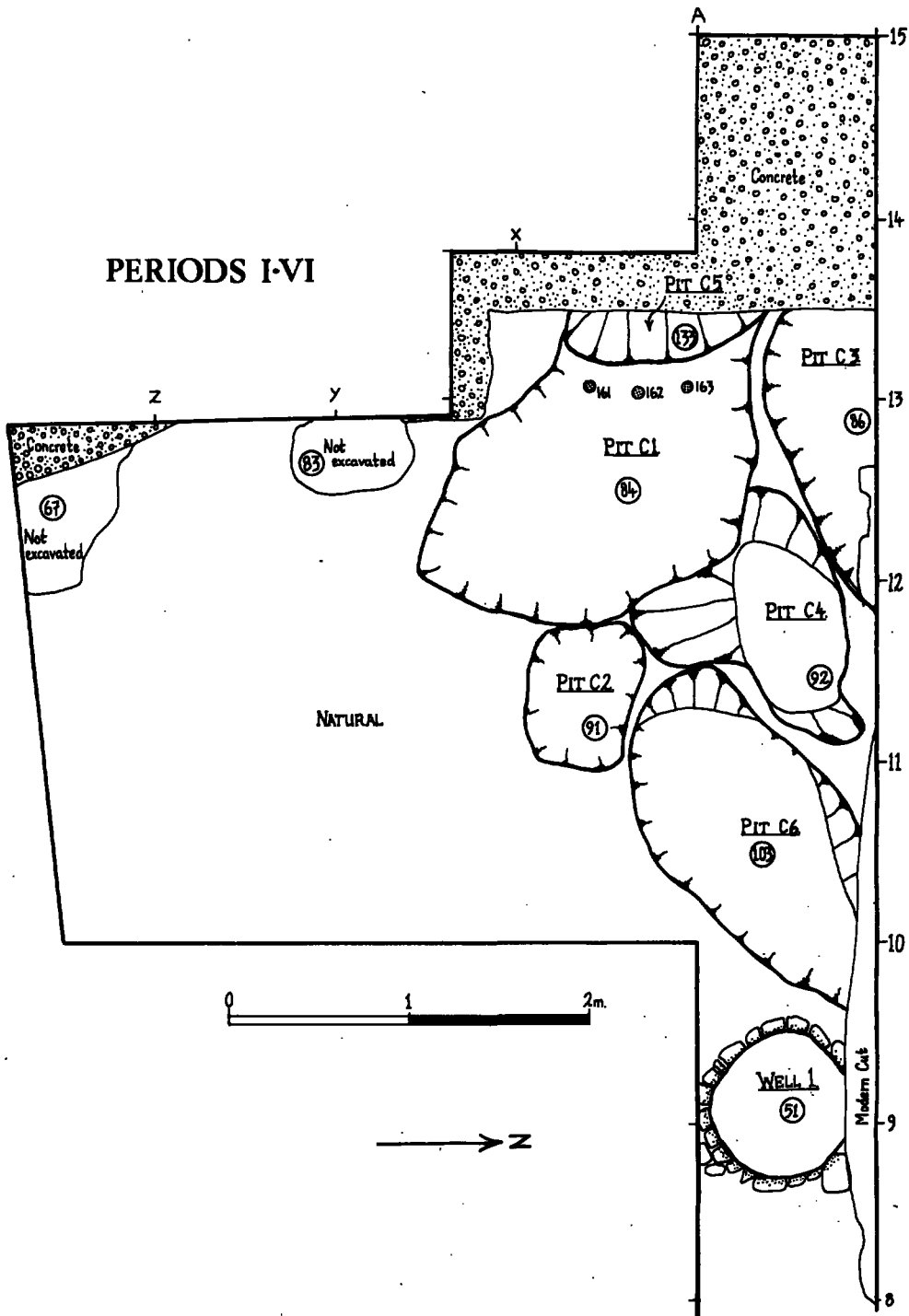


Fig 7. Johnson's Corner: plan of pits and well at the rear of unit A in Trench C, beneath nos 50-52 High Street (for location see Fig 4).

wicker fence where it cut pit C1 and may have been a well. Their dates based on pottery evidence are:

- Pit C1 – late 13th to early 14th century
- Pit C2 – late 13th to early 14th century
- Pit C3 – 14th to late 15th century
- Pit C4 – late 15th to 16th century
- Pit C5 – late 15th to 16th century
- Pit C6 – 16th century
- Well 1 – late 16th to early 17th century

These features contained some of the best groups of pottery from the site together with organic material consistent with their use as cess pits.

The seeds, dated by the pottery, are discussed by Frank Green who shows that the differences seem to be mainly chronological rather than of high and low status (*cf* pits from Trench A).

Period VII (Fig 6). This period is the last from which archaeological deposits survived and it is clear from the buildings survey that they did not relate to the whole complex sequence. The main deposit was demolition rubble derived from the rebuilding of wall 5. This covered the area of buildings 8 and 9 on units C and D and represented the rebuilding of these structures, which were presumably under common ownership.

Other alterations to the structure included the construction of a cellar behind unit A, and the amalgamation first of units A and B and then of A to D. These are later than this period, and their sequence can only be established on the basis of the buildings survey (below). A coin of George II or III confirms the general date range of 'seventeenth century and later'.

Buildings Survey (by Christopher Catling, Geoffrey Cole and Martin Millett)

The sequence of buildings on the site was complex because the buildings had been altered piecemeal since the sixteenth century and not redeveloped as a whole. As time and resources were limited, the buildings survey was concentrated on the earlier phases and the whole sequence was worked out in outline only. The survey plans were produced by Geoffrey Cole, whose drawings have formed the basis for those published. In the following report the archaeo-

logical sequence has been used and extended for the later phases. The detailed survey plan is not published, but has been deposited with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and the Hampshire County Museum Service. The main periods are summarised on Fig 8 and the buildings planned in Fig 4. Dendrochronological samples proved too small for dating with the exception of those from buildings 8 and 9 which gave a *terminus post quem* much earlier than the remainder of the evidence, suggesting re-use of timbers.

Period IV (Fig 8). The earliest parts of the buildings were of this date, surviving in two areas on units A and B. On unit B, building 6 was constructed in this period some time in the sixteenth century. Building 'O' on unit A had its foundations removed by subsequent activity and as it is isolated in the building sequence it can only be said that it predates Period V.

Building 'O'. Surviving remains consisted of a single frame with rear wall post, wall and basal plates, and roof truss, preserved in the party wall between 52 and 54 High Street. The roof was a butt-purlin, collar and tie beam truss, with lower king and queen struts (Cordingly 1961, 90, fig 11, type Vd, 4c).

Building 6. Surviving parts were, the cellar and walls of the ground floor, two plates, a spine and diagonal beam on the first floor, and wall plate at the rear. The location of the front wall showed that it had been jettied over the High Street. The function of the diagonal beam is not clear, although it may have been placed to allow access by ladder from the passage to the first floor. The cellar continued behind the front bay of the building. Two reconstructions are possible: (1) a lean-to structure at the back covering the entrance to the cellar; (2) alternatively there may have been a second bay at the rear. We have no evidence to support either alternative. It is possible that the passage indicates a building with a hall at the rear, behind the shop.

Period V (Fig 8). Building 'O' was demolished and building 6 continued in use. On unit C and D the previous structures were replaced by building 8. This survived in the standing building as a spine beam and plate perpendicular to

it. The spine beam and joists were well carpentered and had chamfered edges suggesting a ceiling of exposed beams which is consistent with the Jacobean date suggested above.

Period VI (Fig 8). Two buildings are datable to Period VI, building 7 inserted on unit A, and building 9 on unit C. Building 7 consisted of a plate, built against the wall between 52 and 54 High Street, into which were housed a pair of spine beams. These were also housed into the already existing wall plate of building 6. The remainder of this structure had been destroyed by subsequent building, except for the remains of the truss at the back of the building adjacent to building 6. The chimney in this structure, removed on the ground floor but surviving on the first, was probably original.

Building 9 was inserted between buildings 6 and 8. The only structural timber surviving was a spine beam which ran at a slight angle to the side of building 6. To facilitate the insertion of this new building the first floor wall of building 6 was rebuilt in timber and brick and it is presumed that on the High street frontage the building was refronted and the jetty bricked-in. The joists of the first floor of building 9 were housed into a new wall plate on the first floor of building 6. On the other side, the joists of building 9 rested on dentilations on the wall plate of building 8. The top of this frame was housed into a new truss which indicates that building 6 was re-roofed. The refurbishment of building 6 in this phase included work on the cellar (above, 86). The nature of the alterations suggests joint ownership of buildings 6 and 9. The buildings appear on the 1666 map (Fig 17) as a pair of two-bay structures suggesting the pairing of buildings 6 and 7, and buildings 8 and 9. This therefore suggests that the whole set of properties may have had the same owner, and that the Period V alterations were part of the same programme as the period VI alterations. It may be no coincidence that during the Period V and VI alterations there can have been only one building fit for occupation at any one time (ie, building 6 in V; building 8 in VI). If periods V and VI are taken as two parts of the same redevelopment, as the chronology outlined above suggests, the conclusion about common

ownership is inescapable.

2 Market Street unit E (Fig 4). This building, which also appears on the 1666 map (Fig 17), was not surveyed because of its dangerous condition. Some general conclusions can however be drawn.

The ground floor walls and the chimney of an older dwelling survived in the structure of an otherwise nineteenth century workshop. These walls were coursed in English bond, which became obsolete with the introduction of Flemish bond in the early to mid-seventeenth century (Cruickshank and Wyld 1975, 178). The thinness of the bricks and their irregularity in size further indicates a pre-eighteenth century date (dimensions vary from 8.1/4 to 8.1/2 inches long and from 4 to 4.3/8 inches wide, with an unvarying depth of 2.1/4 inches). In plan the building consisted of a large axially placed double-sided chimney, with one heated room either side, and a further unheated room leading off the westernmost of the two. The sole entrance to the house was into a small lobby consisting of the space between the flank of the chimney, and the southern side of the building. According to Mercer (1974, 60–61) this 'lobby entrance plan' was ubiquitous in south-eastern England from the end of the sixteenth century onwards. The evidence therefore suggests that no. 2 Market Street was an early- to mid-seventeenth century dwelling of timber and brick, whose upper storey was rebuilt in the nineteenth century.

Period VII. This marks the beginning of a series of alterations to the buildings which are only listed in outline, as they have little bearing on the overall development of the site.

- a) The wall between building 8 and 9 was rebuilt in brick, but incorporated the timber surviving on the first floor,
- b) Lean-to structures were added behind units A to D, joining them to unit E.

Period VIII. When the buildings on the plot were amalgamated into a single unit in the nineteenth century, a series of alterations were made:

- a) The frontage was changed so that windows were equally spaced on the first floor,
- b) Internal walls were demolished and a

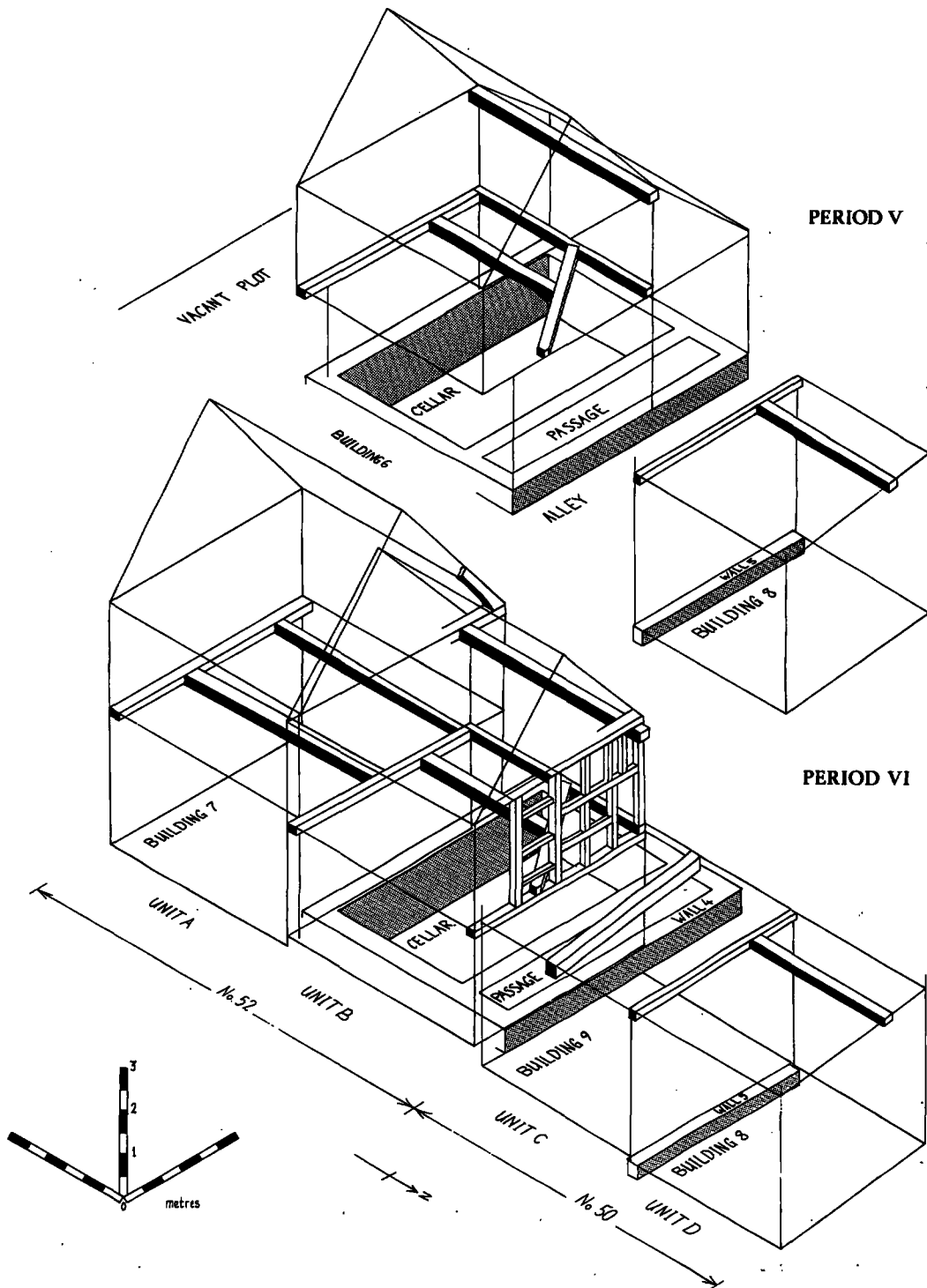


Fig 8b. Johnson's Corner: isometric reconstruction drawings of nos 50-52 High Street in Periods V and VI. Surviving timbers are shown with solid black on one side.

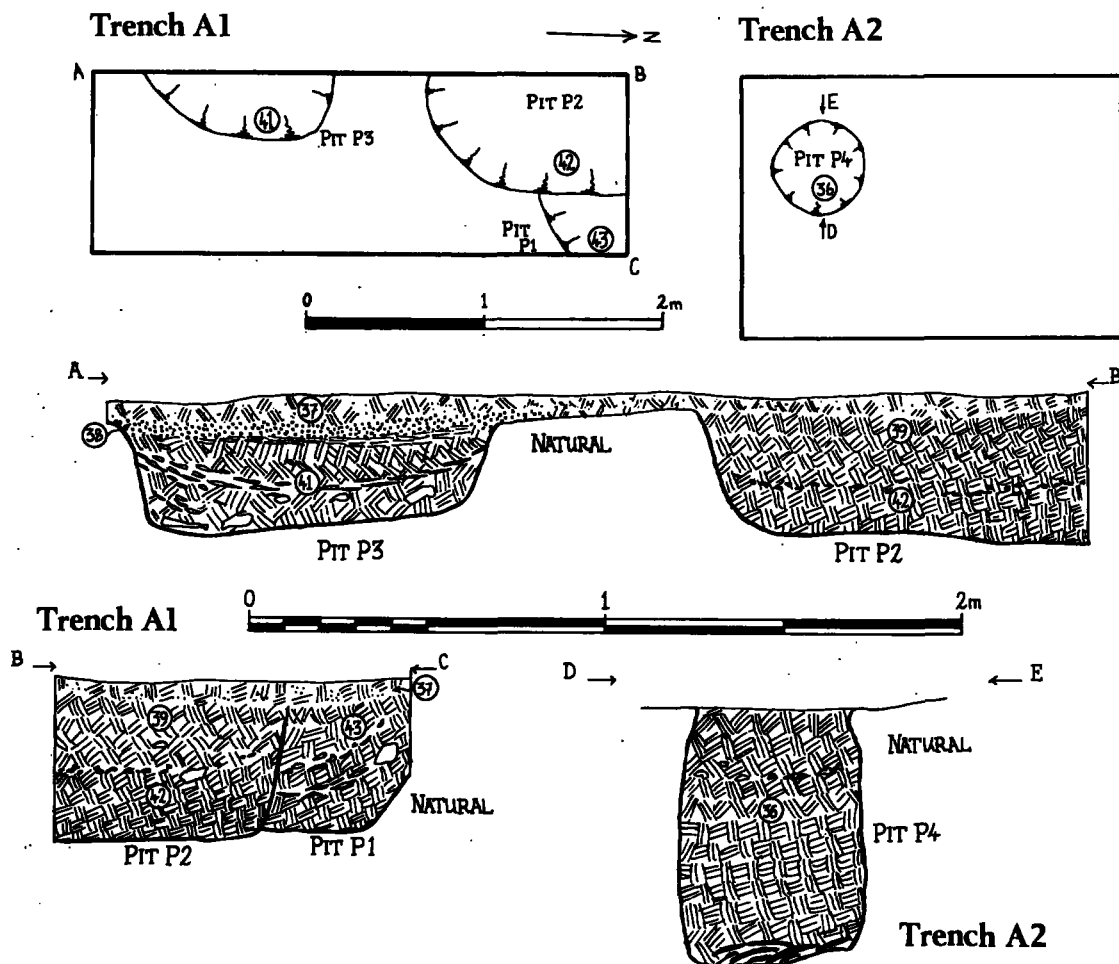


Fig 9. Johnson's Corner: plan and sections of Trenches A1 and A2 beneath no 4 Market Street (for location see Fig 3).

of several of the earlier buildings were therefore incorporated in the latest structure.

In the present stage of documentary research, it is difficult to relate known persons to the known buildings, particularly in the earlier periods. The rental of 1499 probably refers to units B, C and D, and this same area was referred to as a garden in 1550. This may indicate that the buildings of this period were unoccupied or derelict. The construction of building 6 by John Fielder therefore dates to between

1551 and 1633, the date of his inventory. Because building 6 was structurally earlier than building 7, which can be identified as Hugh Gander's house of 1622, this date range can be narrowed to 1551 to 1622. Richard Fielder probably built building 8 in the mid-seventeenth century, whilst his widowed mother continued to occupy building 6. Before 1694 the properties passed to William Gill, and it was probably he who constructed building 9 and undertook the renovation of building 6.

4 MARKET STREET: THE PLOUGH INN

This building was obviously timber framed and was surveyed by Christopher Catling at the beginning of the excavation. Whilst this survey was in progress, two small trenches (A1 and A2: Figs 3 and 9) were excavated beneath the floor of the two rooms within the timber framed building.

Documentary Summary (by Georgia Smith)

This building was a public house known as 'The Plough' from about 1840. As parcel No. 191 on the Tithe Map (Fig 17) it was listed as a shop and premises owned by Francis Little and occupied by William Alderslade, described as a publican, in the census of 1841. It had been erected on land belonging to Monk Place in the early seventeenth century. However its rent was not charged separately until 1694 (HRO 63M48/671) and ever afterwards it was generally paid by the owner of Monk Place until the nineteenth century. The building is depicted on the 1666 map at which time it must have belonged to Robert Lamport, variously described as a yeoman and a miller. The Lamports lived in the town from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century and owned several of the mills along the Wey, in particular Spittal Mills. Later owners of Monk Place were generally ironmongers, another trade likely to employ assistant labour who could have been housed in this small building.

At the time that the Tithe Map was drawn there was a small area, Plot No 192, next to the Plough, which belonged to a cowkeeper who lived in the Market Place. It consisted of a cowshed and yard which extended to the front building line of the Plough. Earlier it had been a stable and garden, but it is not possible to trace this odd piece of land very far back. From its position however, it seems likely that it had been the back access to Monk Place. In 1898 James Allen was given planning approval to build a loft over the then existing stable, and eventually the whole strip of land was taken into the yard of the Plough.

Archaeological Evidence (Fig 9)

In both trenches the ground surface had been considerably lowered during alterations in the 1920s. This had truncated a series of intersecting medieval pits (P1-P4). In trench A1 the sequence is P1 (undated); P2 (late fifteenth-early sixteenth century); and P3 (mid to late sixteenth century). The isolated pit, P4, in trench A2 is dated to the late-thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. It contained a complete pot and substantial portions of two others (Figs 21-23). Their completeness suggests that they may have been dumped during clearing-up operations prior to the construction of the present building on site. The pits give a *terminus post quem* of the late sixteenth century for the construction of the building. This is consistent with the date given to the architecture, the documentary evidence, and the dendrochronological study.

Buildings Survey (by Christopher Catling)

The building on this site was a two-bay, timber-framed structure, consisting of six principal posts, tie beams and wall braces (Fig 10). The roof consisted of a butt-purlin, collar and tie-beam truss, with queen struts and the principal rafters and diminishing common rafters above the collar (Cordingley 1961, 91, fig 12, type Ve, 3b). The roof frame was strengthened by single, large, concave wind-braces, and one gable was hipped. The main timbers were substantial but the rafters were thin, of uneven shape and bore an inconsistent series of carpenter's marks suggesting re-use. Wattle and daub remained in one internal wall but nothing survived to indicate the nature of the external wall frame infilling. Contemporaneous with this building was a brick chimney with a wide breast, recessed in raking tiers, projecting from the western wall and gable.

A mansard-roofed extension of the late eighteenth century was built against the rear of the western bay, and there was a contemporaneous cellar beneath this extension. In the nineteenth century major alterations gave it a new brick facade and destroyed most of the eastern bay and ground floor frame. The floors were lowered

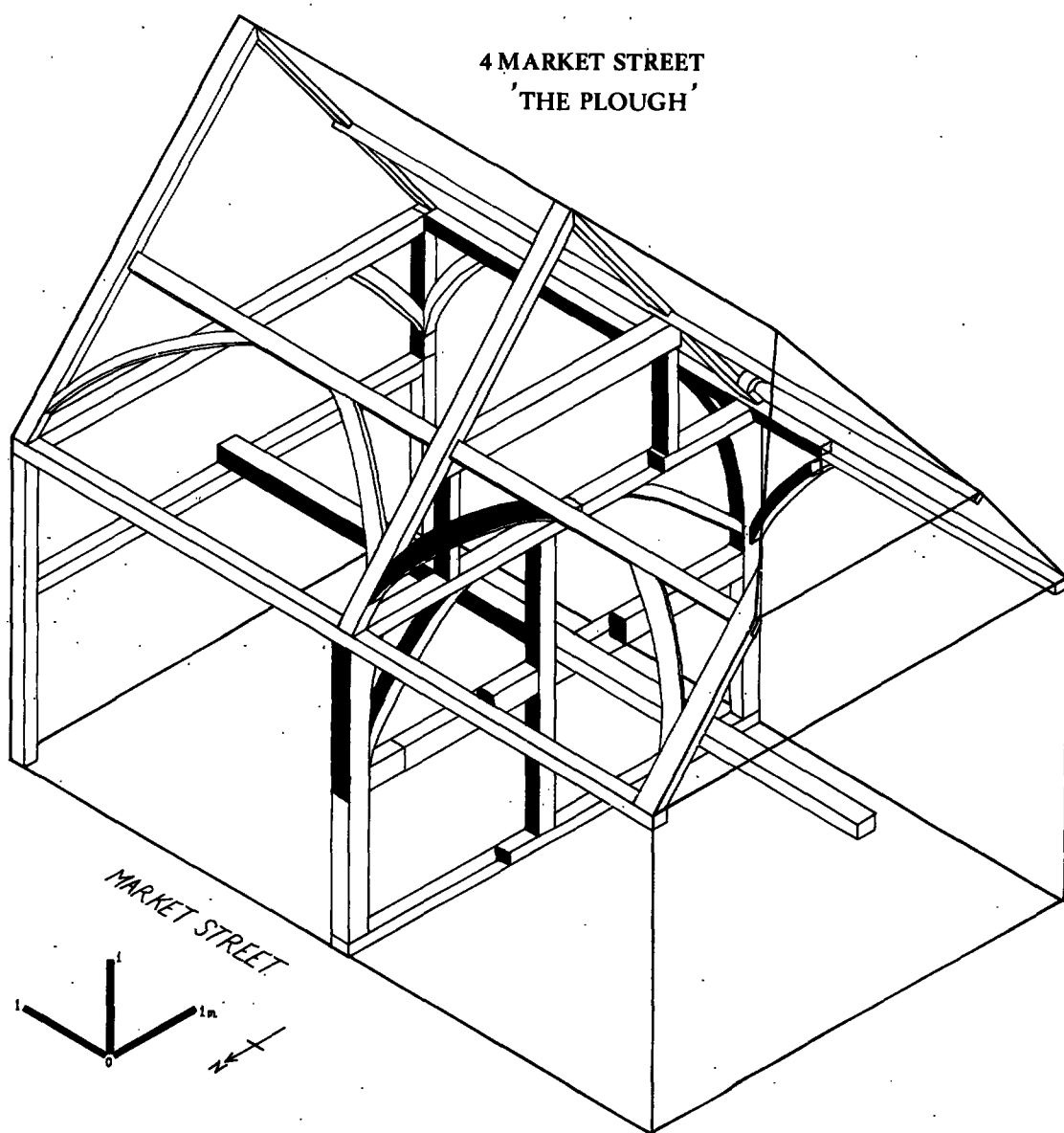


Fig 10. Johnson's Corner: isometric reconstruction drawing of no 4 Market Street. Surviving timbers are shown with solid black on one side.

in the 1930s. The remaining building on the site, consisting of bathrooms, kitchen and public dining room were granted planning consent for construction in 1928.

A sample of oak from the central frame (sample IV) was submitted for dendrochronological dating. The date given is 1608 ± 9 . As the building appears on the 1666 map, and time should be allowed for seasoning, the structure was probably built between c 1630 and 1666.

Summary

The site was part of the Monk Place property and was used only as a backyard and cess pit area until the early seventeenth century. Their location suggests that the cess pits may have been associated with the High Street buildings.

6-8 MARKET STREET AND THE ADJACENT YARD (Fig 3)

The imposing structure of the late Victorian Loe's Bakery (built c 1900) which occupied this site (Site A = AA77) was surveyed by Geoffrey Cole but is not discussed here.

Documentary Evidence (by Georgia Smith)

Although eventually belonging to the Co-operative Stores, the three storey building with oversailing sack hoist is best remembered locally as Loe's Bakery, completed in 1900. The Tithe Map (Fig 17) reveals that Plot No 193 had been the site of two houses owned by Jane Alderslade. They were still in existence when the Ordnance Survey Plan of 1870 was drawn and may have survived until c 1896. They can be traced back through Land Tax and Poor Rate Assessments to 1731 and John Hulett, sieve maker, to whom they were probably first leased. In his will (proved Archdeacon's Court 1731) Hulett left his 'leasehold messuage on the south-west side of the street leading out of the High Street towards the Market Place' to his son John, a baker who was living on the other side of the street. Before being built on, the site could have been yet another part of the Monk Place holding, as the boundaries on the Tithe Map suggest, or still part of the waste of Alton Westbrook within the loosely defined area of the

Market. No record of the lease has yet been found in any rental to resolve the question. It appears to have been built on by the time the 1666 map was drawn.

Archaeological Evidence

In the yard east of no 6 sufficient space was available to excavate a single trench 6m x 3m extending to the yard wall on the eastern side. Although thin, the archaeological deposit was sealed by a clinker yard surface which had protected it from recent disturbance. The following periods of occupation were recognised.

Period I. The natural gravel of the site had originally sloped steeply towards Market Street (Fig 2). This slope was terraced in Period I removing any evidence of previous activity on the site. The terrace had cut into the slope by about 0.6m; on the top of the slope were a series of stake holes which are interpreted as a hurdle fence. No evidence of structures had survived the later disturbance at the front of the terrace. There was no datable material from this period, although the earliest of the pits (see below) is late fifteenth century. Since there is also an absence of build-up on the terrace surface it was probably constructed in the fifteenth century not long before the pits.

Period II. On the terrace was a series of cess pits, filled with domestic refuse. The sequence of pits was established stratigraphically and they can be individually dated on the basis of the pottery: pit A1 late fifteenth century; pit A2 late fifteenth century; pit A3 late fifteenth-early sixteenth century; and pit A4 first half of the sixteenth century. These pits may have formed part of the same series as P1-4 in trenches A1 and A2 (above, 92). Whether or not they did, their location adjacent to the street suggests that it was not of importance at this time.

Period III. The use of the area for cess pits seems to have ceased in the mid-sixteenth century although rubbish continued to accumulate on the terrace. On the top of this refuse, Period III is represented by a series of irregularly placed post holes. They do not make any readily recognisable pattern and are interpreted either as outbuildings or as other features of the yard. The pottery from these and the rubbish layer

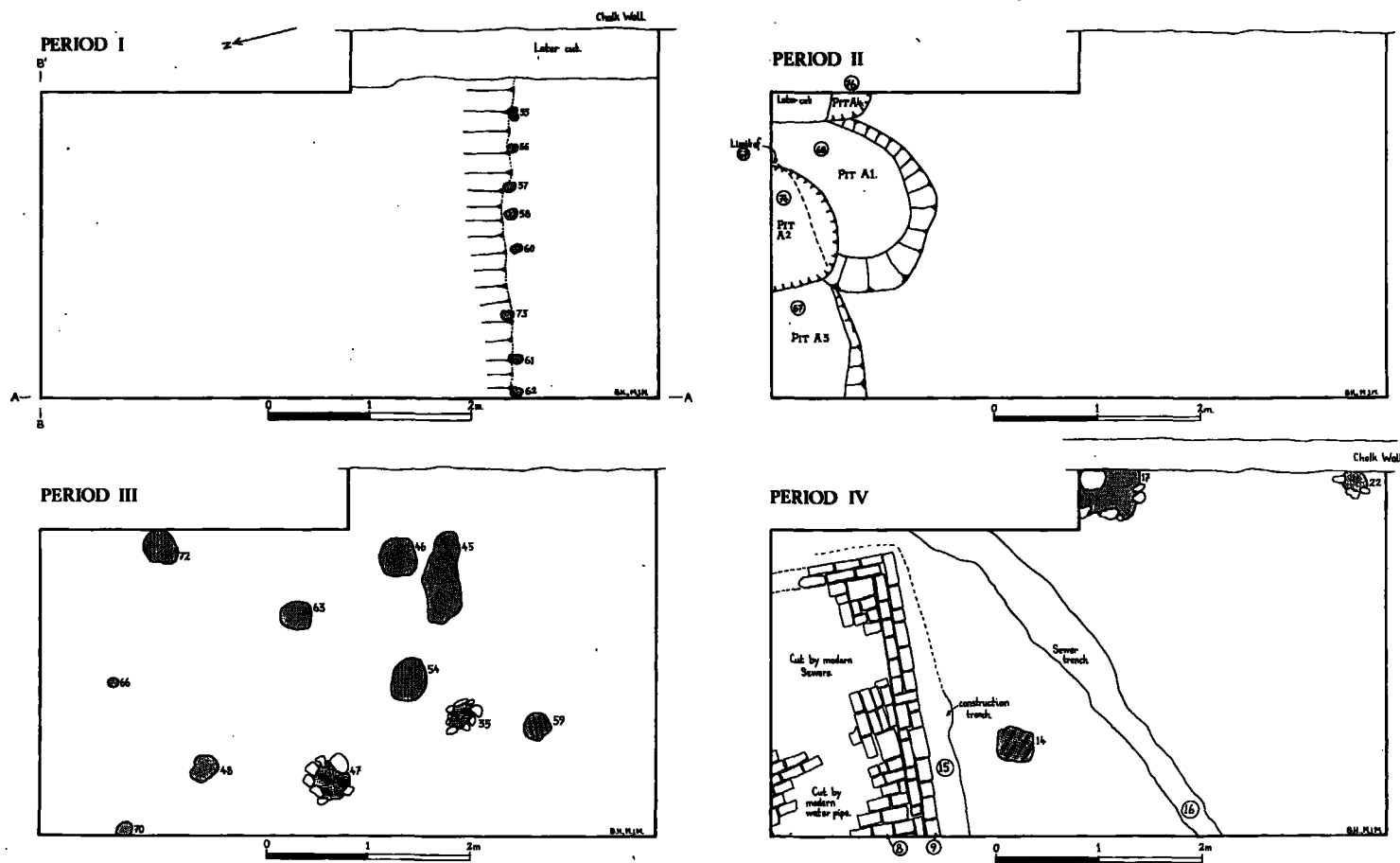


Fig 11. Johnson's Corner: phase plans of Trench A (for location see Fig 3).

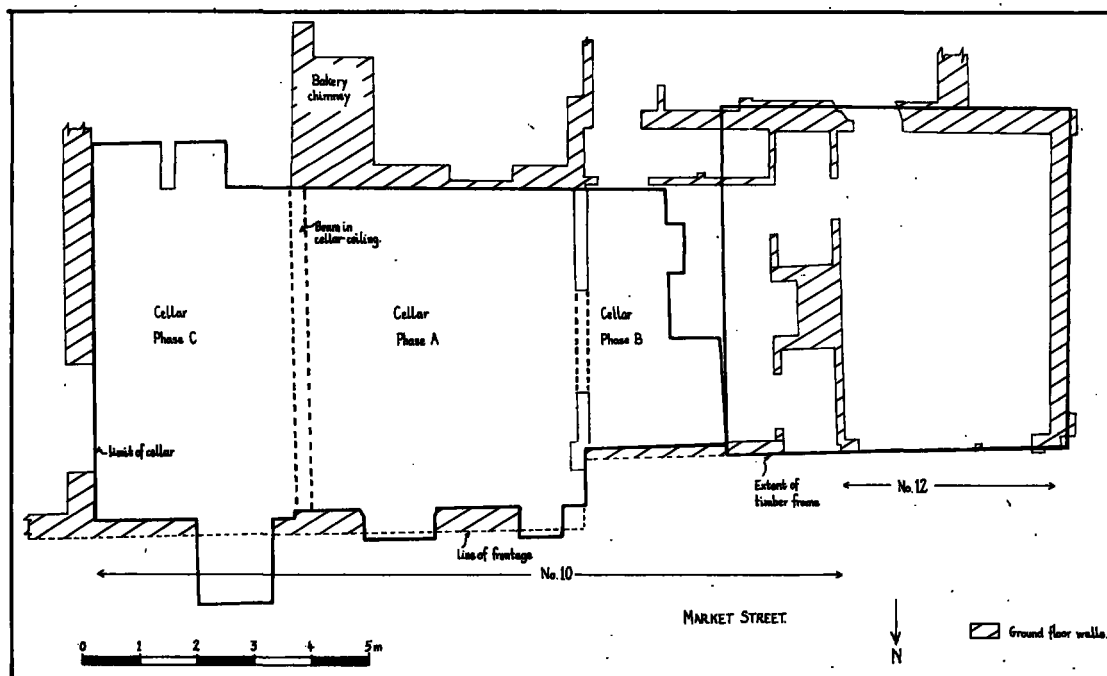


Fig 12. Johnson's Corner: plan of nos 10 and 12 Market Street showing the cellars and other features discussed in the text (for location see Fig 3).

(Layer 73) beneath, gave a sixteenth–seventeenth century date for the period.

Period IV. After accumulation of rubbish on top of the Period III post holes a chalk wall was built between the yards of 4 and 6–8 Market Street on the eastern side of trench A. At the same time a brick structure, later used as a latrine, was built over the Period II pits, truncating the Period III deposits in that area. Three post holes, two obviously associated with the boundary wall also date to this period. The pottery suggests an eighteenth century date.

Period V. The brick building was converted into a latrine, connected to the main sewer which crosses the site. Deposits built up in the yard to the south of this structure until they were sealed by the clinker deposit early in this century. These deposits contained a considerable amount of nineteenth century pottery including stoneware jars bearing the inscription LOE ALTON, the wine merchant owner of 10 Market Street.

Summary

There is no evidence for occupation until the fifteenth century and since that date the plot has been a yard and cess pit/latrine area. The frontage of the street cannot therefore have been continuously built up at any time since then.

10–12 MARKET STREET

The western part of the building complex which included 6–8 Market Street was earlier than the bakery mentioned above. Part of it was in a dangerous state and it proved impossible either to survey it completely or to excavate within it.

Documentary Evidence (by Georgia Smith)

The facade of the block now known as no 10–12 Market Street has been altered several times in the last hundred years to meet the needs of the grocery trade. Inside was a timber framed

structure of probably sixteenth century date. The ownership of the building can be traced back through the Alton Westbrook rentals to Christopher Walliston who died in 1563. The brass to his memory in St Lawrence's Church throws some light on this interesting man who was a Groom to the Chamber and a Yostregere (Keeper of Goshawks) to the sovereigns from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I. He was also overseer of the will of Thomas Stephens (Hockey 1976) last Abbot of Beaulieu, rector of Bentworth, Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral, who had bought some land in Alton, probably on Walliston's advice. There is other land in the town connected with his name and it would be unwise to assume that Walliston lived in Market Street. Two or three generations of the family lived in the town and it appears that in the course of time they acquired more land in this area of the Market as their rent from property had increased by 1622. By the mid-seventeenth century the house had been sold to Christian Bryant and land at the back had been sold to John Gill of Pithams for a slaughter house. By 1694 John Gill had also bought Walliston's old house, but the Pithams and Walliston properties remained separate in the rentals. The will of Thomas Gill, maltster, of 1719 (proved Archdeacon's Court 1731) makes it clear that he was not living in Walliston's and that it was let to Amy Wheeler, a widow, who subsequently bought it. Judged by the evidence of the Poor Rate Assessments and Land Tax, the house remained one dwelling, and in the early years of the nineteenth century was the home of a succession of glaziers until it was enfranchised in 1827. In 1832 it was bought by Francis Little, a grocer and corn factor, who had already acquired the Plough (no 4) and a house on the opposite side of the street. In 1846 he added Bulbecks and Pithams to his small empire and it was on this foundation that Edwin Loe built his extensive business as grocer, baker and wine merchant in the late nineteenth century.

Buildings Survey (by Christopher Catling, Geoffrey Cole and Martin Millett)

The present building on the site consists of a complex of structures (Fig 3) of various periods

with a complex series of relationships which were not completely elucidated, although a substantially complete survey was produced. The main elements were (Fig 12):

- a) No 10, frontage, which consisted of a long warehouse with a large open loft which had been used as a grain and flour store for the bakery which occupied the rear of no 10.
- b) No 10, rear. A wing at the rear perpendicular to a) with a lean-to to its west. This included the chimney of the former bakery ovens (Fig 12). The end of the wing facing Loe's Alley (Fig 3) included a timber frame although its dangerous state prevented survey.
- c) No 12 Market Street, frontage. This structure, which included a timber frame (below) had been substantially altered so that in its existing form it consisted of a house with central chimney stack, and two main rooms on each floor, one on either side of it.
- d) Rear of no 12 Market Street. This consisted of two rooms on each floor.

These elements were in their final form by the mid-seventeenth to early eighteenth century. The sequence is not certain although c) was earliest, with a) and b) later and d) probably at the end. The relationship between a) and b) was not established although it is likely that b) preceded a). Within these buildings were the remains of at least two earlier structures, a cellar beneath no 10, and the much altered remains of a timber frame within no 12.

These remains were from two different properties, so that relating one to the other presents great difficulties. The cellar showed three major structural periods (Fig 12). Phase C was the latest, on the basis of its brickwork, and Phase A was stratigraphically earlier than it. Phase B was stratigraphically later than Phase A, but appeared from its walls, which were of stone, to be earlier than the brickwork of Phase C. The timbers in the ceiling of Phase A were primary, as they were substantial and had sequential carpenter's marks. Sections from two of these timbers were submitted for dendrochronological assessment and gave a felling date of c 1505. This suggests that the cellar was built in the early sixteenth century. The Phase B extension was later although there is no

12 MARKET STREET

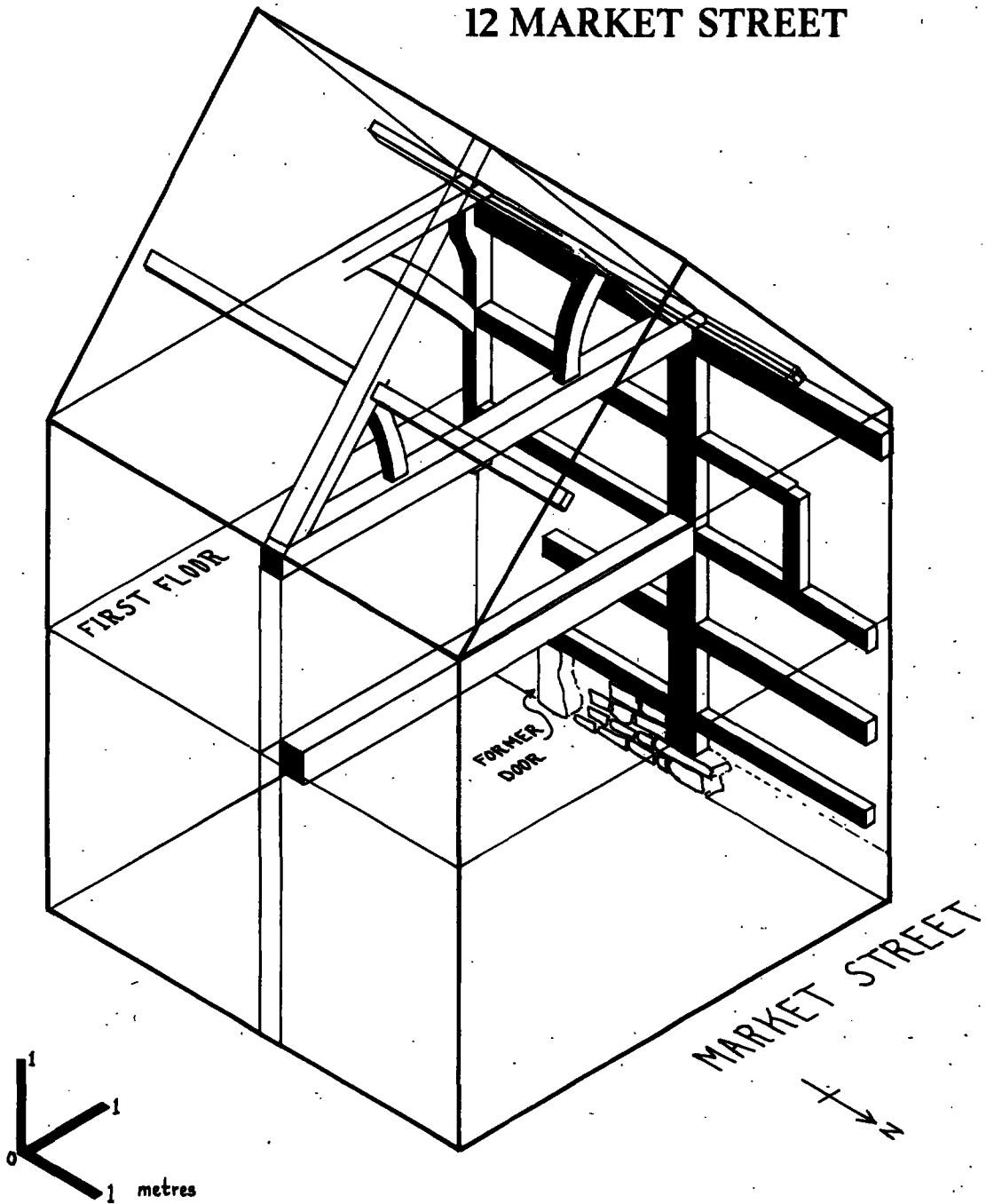


Fig 13. Johnson's Corner: isometric reconstruction of no 12 Market Street. Surviving timbers are shown with one side in solid black. The roof truss is reconstructed from surviving re-used timbers and joints in timbers *in situ*.

evidence to suggest how much. An examination of the infill behind the western wall of this phase B cellar extension, below the floor of no 10, showed that it had been built whilst the adjacent site of 12 Market Street was vacant, since the construction trench went c 1m to the west of their common boundary. No 12 is therefore unlikely to be earlier than the mid-sixteenth century.

12 Market Street had been considerably altered so that the final structure appeared to be an eighteenth century house of one build. Within this several elements of a much earlier timber frame survived. These were:

- a) a substantial part of the timber frame within the western wall (ie, the party wall with 14 Market Street);
- b) a series of beams in the attic floor, with others re-used in the attic walls and roof;
- c) a spine beam on the first floor which had been moved but which, on the basis of its dimensions, derived from the same structure as a) and b).

These features are shown in Fig 13 with the roof and first floor spine beam replaced in their original positions using the information preserved in the peg holes and mortices of the *in situ* beams. This shows the building to have been a two-bay structure built gable end on to Market Street. The roof had a butt-purlin, tie beam truss; the purlins being clasped against the principal rafters by curved angle braces. There is no exact parallel for this in Cordingley (1961), although compare his types Va-c (90-1, figs 11 and 12).

Two features about the surviving structure of the western wall are notable. Firstly, whereas the other buildings observed in the area seem to have had their principal vertical posts housed in a basal plate, this structure had a split plate with the post housed into it and resting on a stone pad (*cf* below, no 14 Market Street, Period III) which formed part of the stone sleeper wall. This seems to have been an early structural feature retained for no obvious reason. Secondly, at the southern end of the stonework in this wall, there was a large upright block which coincided with the ends of two of the beams in the frame (Fig 13). This suggests a

primary door, opening onto the site of 14 Market Street. The phasing allows this, as no 12 was originally built in Period II of that site when outbuildings stood there.

The date of the primary structure of no 12 is difficult to assess as there is no excavated evidence, and dendrochronological samples proved too small. Given its relationship to the Phase B cellar of no 10 and the fact that this was later than the Phase A cellar, which dated to just after c AD 1505, a date before c 1550 seems difficult to accept. The historical evidence is of little more help, although the likelihood is that it was built before 1563 when Walliston died. A date early in the third quarter of the sixteen century therefore seems likely.

The alterations to this building seem to have involved a single major refurbishment. The building was extended to the east and a chimney inserted in the centre. This required the removal of the original eastern wall, and the moving of the first floor spine beam, which was turned through 90° and had a short extra length bolted to its end so that it fitted between the front and back walls. The roof was turned around so that the ridge was parallel to the street. Many of the timbers from the original structure were re-used in the alterations which do not seem to have required the total demolition of the structure. Dating evidence for these alterations is provided by the 1666 map and a coin which was found below the attic floor. The map (Fig 17) shows that the alteration in the roof line and the insertion of the chimney took place before this date. An Alton token of 1652, of a class which was in circulation until c 1670, was found beneath the attic floor on the ceiling of the altered structure, and is consistent with a date for the alterations some time before 1652-1666. The warehouse of No 10 Market Street (a, above 98) was stratigraphically later than these alterations and of mid-seventeenth to early eighteenth century date on archaeological and architectural grounds.

Summary

This part of the site seems to have been built on by the early sixteenth century, earlier than the area to the east, near to the High Street. The

sequence suggests that the timber frame found within could be that of the building built for the courtier Christopher Walliston, although not necessarily lived in by him.

14 MARKET STREET (Figs 3, 14, 15)

This site (Site B = AB77), the nearest to the Market Square, occupied the end of the block bounded by Market Street, Loe's Alley and the footpath joining the two. The house was demolished in 1904 and the plot had been vacant since then.

Documentary Evidence (by Georgia Smith)

Running through the series of rentals of this site is the name Omydons which can be traced back to the rental of c 1550 (BL Add Ch 27893) which reads 'for four shammels late in the holding of Roger Emyden, 8d'. It is yet another example of the association of this quarter of the market with the butchers' trade. During the seventeenth century Omydons, together with two adjoining properties, belonged to the Stanlie family, some of whom were hatters and haberdashers. The inventory of Margaret who died in 1663 (will proved Archdeacon's Court 1664) included 'a hatter's basin, a working plank and a brass kettle in the workhouse, three presses, two chests and a tub in the shop, hat bands and taffety in her stock'. A piece of white linsey wool cloth which she had saved for at least four years was left to her two daughters.

Between 1731 and 1758 the house was the home of Stephen White, a Quaker, variously described as a patten wood maker and a tool maker. At that time the rental described the house as in Back Lane, which probably reflects on the surviving medieval layout of the Market and indicates the changed nature of this triangular back area. Until the late eighteenth century there were certainly four and possibly six or seven houses facing on the Back Lane. In time most became stables and store houses, and some were rebuilt to face Market Street.

Omydons became known as 14 Market Street but it would be difficult to say whether it was rebuilt or refaced. Photographs show a house of eighteenth century appearance on the building line of no 12, but with a lower roof line. For

more than a hundred years it was the home of the Clinker family of blacksmiths whose smithy was at the rear of the site, shown as Plot No 185 on the Tithe Map (Fig 17). For the last few years of its life the forge was in the hands of Alfred Trimmer and a photograph taken in 1900 shows a brick and weatherboard shed opening on to the alley where two blacksmiths are shoeing horses on cobbles. In the background two of Mr Loe's carts stand in front of the open doors of the cart house belonging to Bulbecke House in the High Street.

Archaeological Evidence (Figs 14 and 15)

A trench 10m x 3m was excavated to establish the relationship between Loe's Alley and Market Street. The excavation was supervised by David Crowther who also prepared the phasing.

Period I. Owing to levelling in Period II little survived to indicate earlier activity. This levelling was particularly severe on the Market Street frontage where the Period VA building had further lowered the level. A single post hole (54) can definitely be assigned to Period I, with another (82) stratigraphically isolated (Period 0) but possibly contemporaneous. Post hole 54 contained 4 sherds of fourth century Romano-British pottery and a single sherd which is probably mid- to late-Saxon in date. The unusual depth (c 50cm) of the post hole is probably the reason for its survival and the presence of residual Romano-British material confirms earlier finds from this area of the town (Hughes 1976, 23).

Period II. The area was levelled and a succession of timber structures then erected. These are:

- a) a wattle fence, running diagonally across the site;
- b) a series of post holes which probably represent the western end of a narrow building using the Alley frontage;
- c) a series of post holes which probably represent another phase of the building represented in Phase b.

The function of these structures is not clear, but their insubstantial form suggests outbuildings. Their date may be sixteenth century

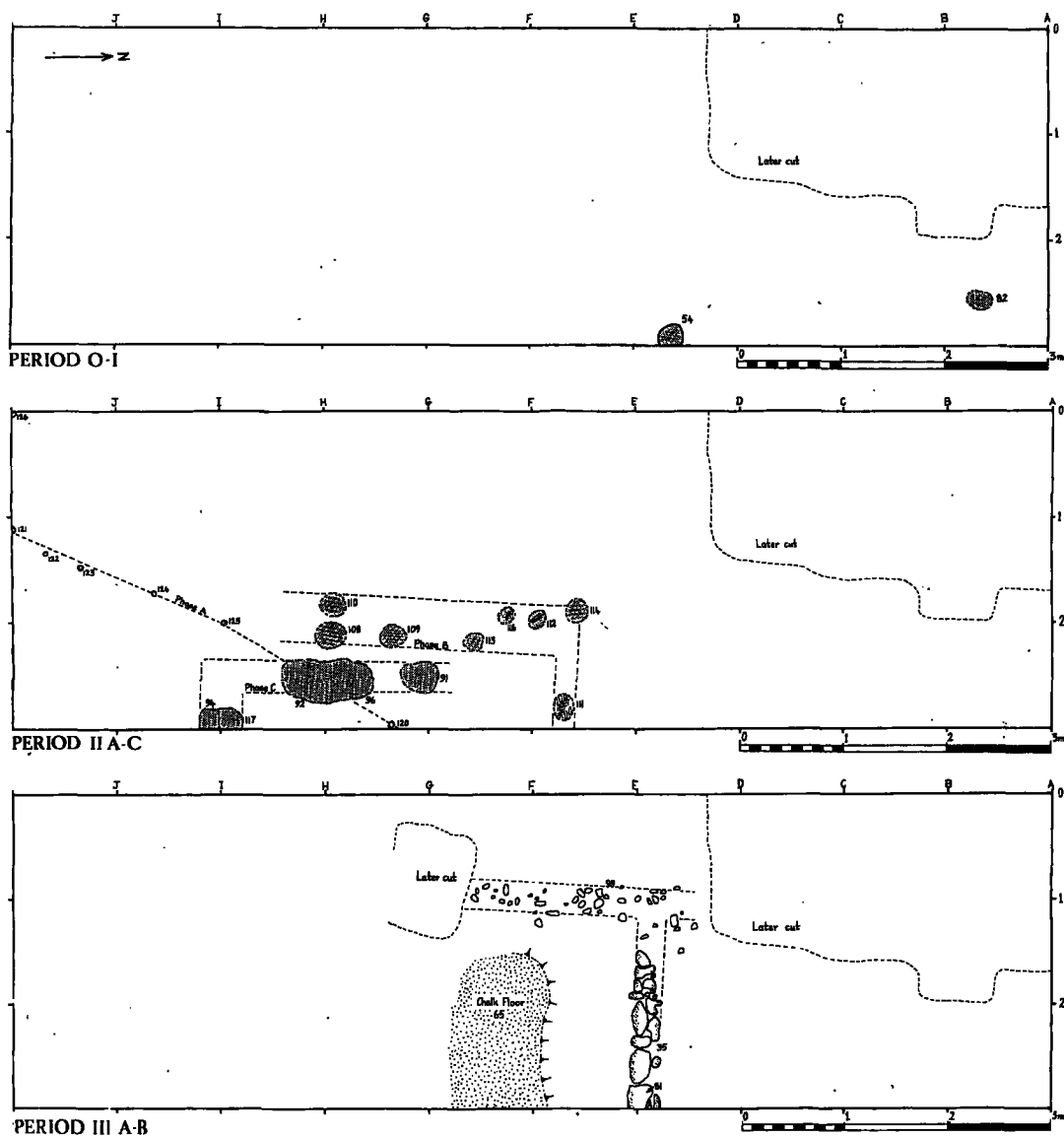


Fig 14. Johnson's Corner: phase plans of Trench B, periods 0-III (for location see Fig 3).

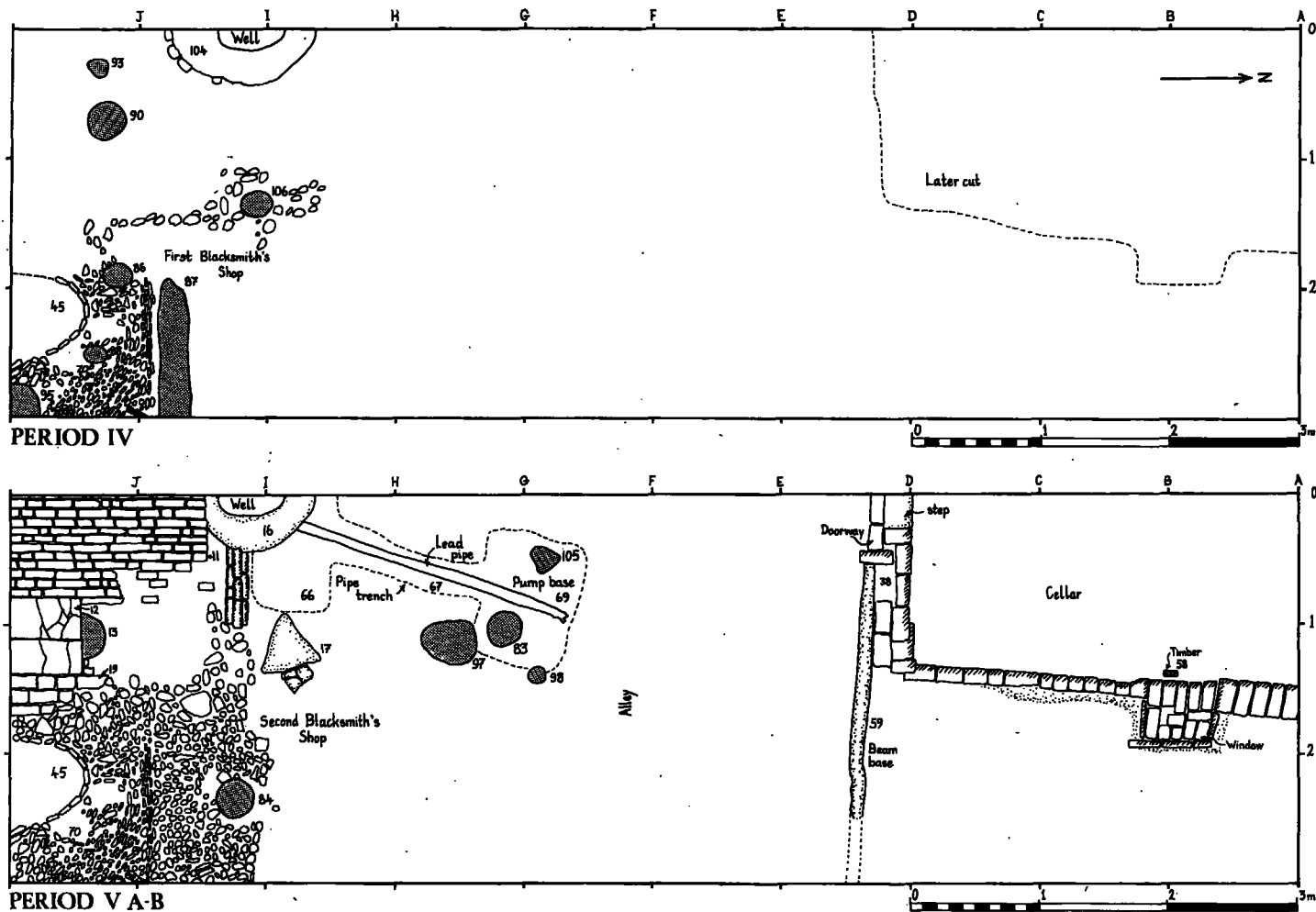


Fig 15. Johnson's Corner: phase plans of Trench B, periods IV-V (for location see Fig 3).

although there was little dating evidence.

Period III. The Period II structures were replaced, closer to Market Street, by a chalk floor (Fig 14, 65) cut by two stone sleeper walls which formed part of a structure facing Market Street and the alley to the west. There was little dating evidence but the pottery suggests a sixteenth-seventeenth century date. A post pad (81) on the wall resembled that of no 12. The 1666 map shows a three storey building on this site, and the depth of the building in comparison with no 12 is consistent with the map. This suggests that the Period III foundations are those of the building shown.

Period IV. In Period IV the first of two phases of a blacksmith's shop was built facing Loe's Alley (Fig 15). At the same time the well was dug on the corner of the path and Loe's Alley. The blacksmith's shop floor consisted of sandstone setts defined at the rear by a beam slot. Towards the wall several posts indicated an extension. There was little datable pottery but the documentary evidence (above) suggests that it was built at the end of the eighteenth century.

Period V. Alterations to the blacksmith's shop and the construction of a house facing Market Street marked the change from Period IV. The blacksmith's shop was rebuilt in Period VB with a brick floored extension to the west, and the rear wall was moved back. The sleeper beam of Period IV was sealed by the knapped flint setts of the extension which also surrounded the large post hole for a roof support (84). A photograph of 1900 shows that the walls were of weather-board. At this time the well was covered over by a slab, and a pump connected to it was constructed in the yard between the blacksmith's and the house facing Market Street, was connected to it. The construction of the Period VA house facing Market Street involved further lowering the level of the surface. In view of the documentary evidence for continuity of use of this plot it is likely that this removed the remains of previous structures. The house had insubstantial brick footings and a cellar. A window to the cellar on the side facing 12 Market Street shows that the rear was recessed to make a small courtyard. A photograph however shows a continuous frontage (Hawkins

1973, plate on cover). The mortar beam base (59) at the rear was probably for a fence screening the courtyard. The back door of the cellar opened on to the alley where the pump was located.

Summary

This area was occupied before much of that further down Market Street, probably because of its location on the gravel terrace, near to the Market area. It is not certain whether the mid-to late-Saxon posthole was the beginning of a continuous sequence. The archaeological and documentary evidence show that this was a thriving part of the Market until early in this century.

THE FINDS

Only summaries of the find reports are presented below, with the full reports in the microfiche section attached (48-95). This contains the following:

- a) The coins and tokens – by R A Merson;
- b) The small finds – by D R Crowther (including Figs 19, 20);
- c) The Romano-British and Saxon pottery – by M Millett;
- d) The medieval and post-medieval pottery – by Katherine Owen (including Figs 21-26);
- e) Tree ring analysis of timbers from four buildings – by Jennifer Hillam (including Tables 1A and 2);
- f) The plant remains – by F J Green (including Tables 3-4);
- g) The animal bones – by Jennie Coy (including Tables 5-10).

Summaries

The coins and tokens (by R A Merson). A total of 21 coins and tokens was found. All are listed, although the majority are modern. Two Alton farthing tokens of the seventeenth century were found. Research suggests that three sets of initials on them are not those of town officials, as previously suggested, but belong instead to local tradesmen.

The Small finds (by D R Crowther). Large numbers of small finds were recovered, mostly from post medieval contexts and many were

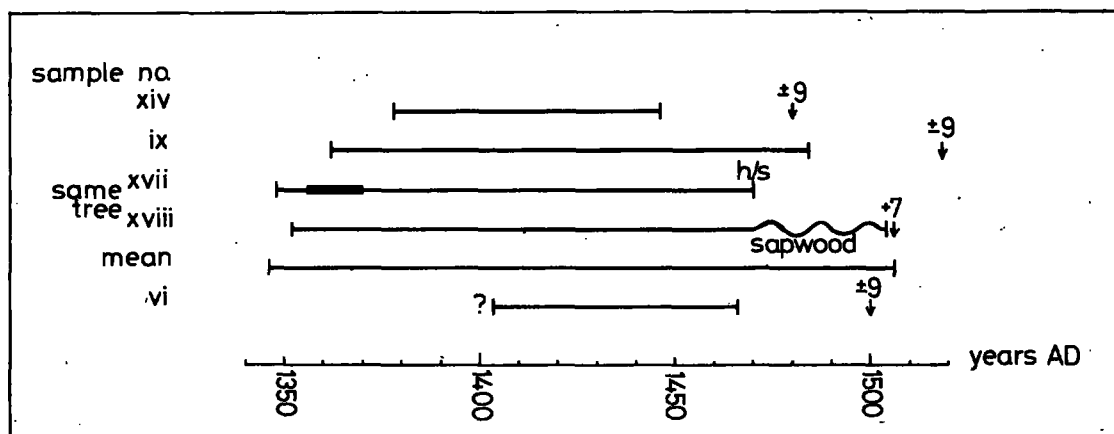


Fig 16. Johnson's Corner: block diagrams to show the relative positions of the matching samples. Arrows indicate the earliest possible felling date. H/S = heartwood/sapwood transition. The scale in years is based on cross-dating between Alton and the chronology from Wales and Ireland. The sample taken for radiocarbon analysis is shown by the solid block on XVII.

associated with the blacksmith's shop at 14 Market Street. The identifiable objects are listed and illustrated in Figs 19 and 20. Large blocks of stone found in Trench C are probably derived from the gateway between two buildings.

The Romano-British and Saxon pottery (by Martin Millett). Only 5 sherds of pottery of these periods were recovered, all from a Period I post-hole in Trench B. One is probably mid- or late-Saxon although no exact parallel has been found.

The medieval and post-medieval pottery (by Katherine Owen). The pottery is very fragmentary and few sherds are diagnostic. The material is therefore presented by fabric. Chronology for hitherto unknown local fabrics was established through their association with dated fabrics and on this basis the broad chronology for the excavations was established. All the illustratable sherds in each fabric are presented in Figs 21–24 and graphs showing the incidence of fabrics through time are presented in Figs 25–26. A fine medieval face jug (unstratified) is shown in Fig 24.

Tree-ring analysis of timbers from four buildings (by Jennifer Hillam). Despite the problems presented by fast grown trees with wide growth rings, two buildings were successfully dated. An

Alton curve has been established for the years AD 1384–1504, allowing the phase A cellar of 10 Market Street to be dated to shortly after 1505. The date for 4 Market Street was established at 1608 ± 9 on the basis of comparison with Welsh and Irish chronologies.

The plant remains (by F J Green). A wide range of botanical material of medieval and post-medieval date was recovered from a series of pits and floor levels, as well as from the daub of a wall at 4 Market Street. The material from soil samples was comparable with that from other cess pits on other Hampshire urban sites, but the presence of grape and fig suggests comparatively high social status. The occurrence of sycamore is possibly one of the earliest yet recorded in this country. The daub contained mainly wheat and barley straw, but hop was also present. The seeds from the daub were generally well preserved.

The animal bones and shells (by Jennie Coy). 5,714 fragments of bone were recorded, mostly of domestic cattle, sheep and pigs, in decreasing order of importance. Sieving increased the range of material and fowl, goose, deer, hare and rabbit were identified, as well as wild birds and marine fish. There seemed to be a trend in the sixteenth–seventeenth century material towards

more sheep and fewer cattle. The high ratio of meat to non-meat bones suggests that prepared cuts of meat were in use at this date. This contrasts with earlier pits where there was a high ratio of non-meat bones in a rather small sample.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

This section draws together information relating to the chronological, social and economic aspects of the site, and examines them in the light of our current knowledge of the town. Discussion of the early development of the town which is only marginally relevant to this report will be reserved for a later paper (Millett in preparation).

Chronological Development

The site was so altered in the post-medieval period that the earlier deposits were almost completely removed. Nevertheless certain basic inferences can be drawn about the earlier history of this area. It is clear from the material beneath 52 High Street, and 4 and 12 Market Street that there had been activity on the site at least periodically from the late Roman period onwards. The location of the earliest of this material at the western end of the site (14 Market Street) is likely to be because of its location on the edge of the gravel terrace, rather than because of proximity to the Market. The location of the thirteenth century pits behind unit A of 50–52 High Street suggests that by this date plots on this part of the High Street on the slope down to the river, were already occupied. This implies expansion, since the flat terrace top in the area around Westbrook House and in Normandy Street (Fig 1), would have been preferable locations (Millett 1977).

The first main phase of activity on all three sites examined consisted of terracing for the construction of buildings. These are not well dated although they appear to date to the late 15th or early 16th century. It has been suggested that this levelling implies common ownership of 50–52 High Street. This is not so for the rest of the site, although Georgia Smith has been able to show in her documentary survey that several of the properties were originally rented from

Monk Place. This suggests that pressure on land led Monk Place's owner to rent out, in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, the land on the slope towards the river, leading to the piecemeal terracing of these areas at the same time as the organised terracing on the High Street frontage, where pre-existing properties were rebuilt.

The 1666 map (Fig 17) shows this quarter as substantially built-up. The buildings were aligned on three major routeways: the High Street, Market Street, and Loe's Alley (also variously Snower's Hill and Back Lane) which meets the High Street opposite Turk Street (the old Worldham Road: Fig 1). This alley, now no more than a footpath, seems to have been in decline in the post-medieval period when Market Street was becoming more important. It was probably the major thoroughfare in the medieval period, joining the High Street and Worldham Road with the Market, via the terrace-top route, rather than the slope where Market Street is located.

The occupation of the frontage of Market Street beneath nos 4 and 6–8 by cess pits until the later sixteenth century, supports the view that Market Street was comparatively unimportant until the seventeenth century. This, also suggested by indications at 14 Market Street that the Loe's Alley frontage was built-up before Market Street. We therefore suggest that, apart from the High Street frontage, the site was back land on the river slope until the sixteenth century, when it was developed from the Market end. This development is seen as a result of pressure on land, and resulted in the town centre changing from being centred on the terrace, to being centred in the valley.

Economic Aspects

The archaeological and historical evidence offer considerable information about the economic activities which took place on the site. This information is summarised in Table 1, which shows the variety of specialist activities as well as their transient nature. The exception is the continued connection from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century of the High Street shops with butchers.

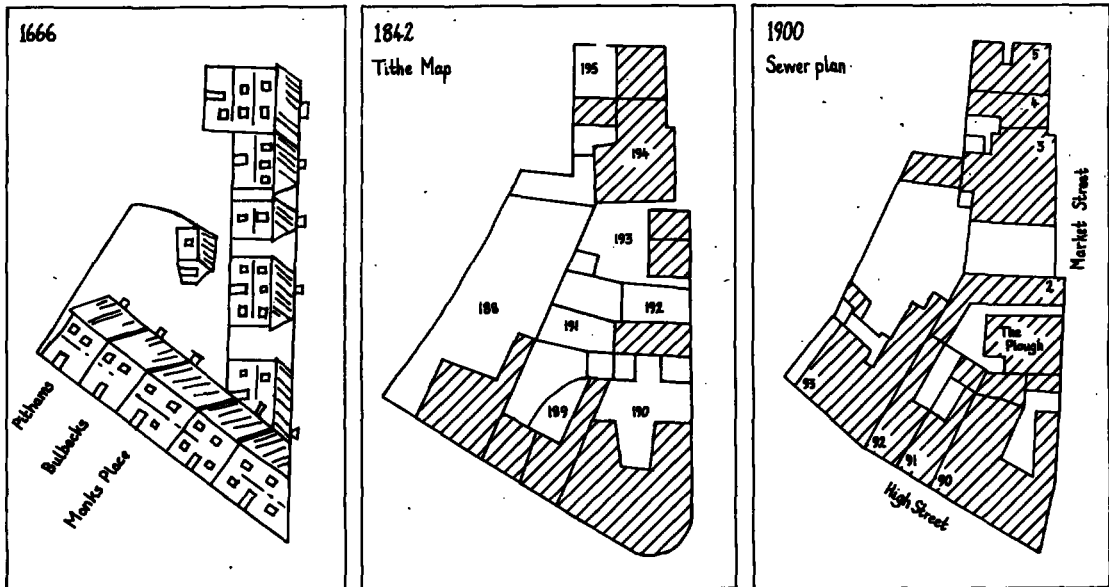


Fig 17. Johnson's Corner: extracts from the maps of 1666, 1842 and 1900 showing the development of the site.

	HIGH STREET				MARKET STREET			
Date	No 52	No 50	No 4	No 6	No 8	No 10	No 12	No 14
	UNIT A	UNIT B	UNIT C	UNIT D				
15th	Garden		Butcher?					
16th	Mercer	Alley		Yard				
17th	Butchers			cow sheds				hatter/ haberdasher
18th				Pub	sieve maker			Tool maker/ patten maker
19th	Drapers shop				Baker/Grocer			
					Baker/Grocer/Winemerchant	Glazier		Blacksmith

Table 1. Johnson's Corner: summary of property uses, by date.

Social Aspects

The economic aspects shed some light on the social status of the area investigated. One or two additional points can be made on the basis of the archaeological and architectural evidence. First, there seems to be some differentiation between the quality of the contemporary buildings on the

High Street frontage, and those further up Market Street. It seems clear that the jettied building (52 High Street, Unit B, building 6) was a substantial and, for Alton, a high quality building. This fits with its attribution to a mercer. Later on, the quality of the High Street buildings is higher than those on the Market

Street frontage. Building 8 at 50 High Street was a quality Jacobean house with refinements such as an open beam ceiling, befitting its tradesman resident. This contrasts with 4 Market Street which was built at about the same time with poorer carpentry in a traditional form, more consistent with its function.

Acknowledgements

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