

# Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

by Richard Brown and Alan Hardy

*Nature and time quite naked lie  
To thine immense survey,  
From the formation of the sky  
To the great burning day.*

Isaac Watts

## Introduction

This project has successfully addressed the research questions posed in Chapter 1, further discussion of which is presented in this final chapter. Of particular importance is the substantial new body of information about Polymond's Hall, which makes a significant addition to current understanding of Southampton's heritage. In addition the transition of the town from late Saxon settlement to uniform and largely mercantile tenements is explored in relation to concepts of town planning and/or organic development. Perhaps more than fulfilling any specific research issue, the investigation has supplied a wealth of historic and archaeological data that anchors the town to a sense of place, past and permanence as it continues to evolve.

## Prehistoric and Roman activity

As noted in Chapter 1, no prehistoric or Roman sites are known in the immediate vicinity of the French Quarter excavation. The earliest finds recovered from the site itself consist of a group of worked flints of possible Mesolithic date, comprising 17 flakes and blades (Lamdin-Wymark, Specialist Download F12). These were found scattered across the excavation area, perhaps suggesting that prehistoric features had been removed by later activity. A single pit (170, Tenement 172) may have been of prehistoric date, with an undiagnostic flake and a piece of burnt unworked flint being recovered from it. A second group of worked flint was undiagnostic but may be of later prehistoric date, or was perhaps the result of much later construction work on the site.

The few Roman finds from the site include two late 3rd-century coins and a faience bead. Although a significant quantity of residual Roman tile was found in late Saxon and Anglo-Norman contexts, the almost total lack of Roman pottery and other finds argues against any settlement here. The tile was probably imported to the site for re-use, having been salvaged from a nearby Roman site, most probably that at Bitterne.

## The origins of settlement in the context of *Hamwic*

One of the project's key research questions relates to the nature of the relationship between the declining settlement of *Hamwic* and the emerging settlement that some call *Hamtun*, later Southampton. In brief it is generally agreed that *Hamwic* was established around the end of the 7th century, flourished for between a century and a century and a half before declining through the second half of the 9th century and by c 1000 losing its apparent primary function as a trading entrepôt. However, occupation of at least parts of the site persisted throughout the 10th century, and it almost certainly continued in some form until modern times as an extra-mural suburb of the walled town (Morton 1992, 70). Around this basic chronological trajectory of the settlement there appears to be some sort of consensus. There is, however, still a lively debate continuing over the character of *Hamwic*, the location of its core (if there was one) and the circumstances of its decline and demise. The more the site is investigated, the more complicated is the emerging picture. Powell recognised that *Hamwic* was unlikely to have been a 'uniform whole' (1993, 252), yet plausibly argued for its single function as a market (*ibid.*, 253), designated and organised as such from its outset.

Some of the earliest elements of *Hamwic* so far discovered are laid out over areas of burials, which has led Morton to question the date of the early years of the 8th century for the establishment of *Hamwic*, and propose an earlier start date – perhaps in the 680s. Furthermore, Morton argues (1992, 197–8, 203) that the focus of the settlement was not in the south-east near the waterfront, a scenario favoured by Andrews (1993), but in the interior, around the Six Dials area, in the north-western part of the settlement. Morton also cautions against seeing *Hamwic* as a one-dimensional construct, 'a Dark Age theme town' (1999, 49). It was a settlement and a port where trading took place, and essentially it was always part of a *villa regalis* (*ibid.*, 56).

There is agreement that *Hamwic* developed quickly, within a planned proto-urban infrastructure, a concentration of activity surrounding the manufacture of, and trade in, goods that spanned the range from utilitarian to specialised. The number of coins found clearly emphasises the importance of its role in both regional and international trade (Reynolds 1999, 168). *Hamwic* at its most developed in some ways presaged a medieval

townscape, with some buildings fronting onto a street, each with open spaces behind them. However the buildings themselves were still of varied construction, based on beamslots and earth-fast posts, typical of rural settlement buildings (see for example Birbeck 2005, fig. 47). In the context of the accepted function of the settlement and its focus on the manufacture and trade in commodities (Andrews 1997, 253-4), this is consistent with the need to organise the maximum amount of outlets into a small area, giving each exposure of a 'shop window', while also providing accessible work space. By contrast the subsequent 10th-century settlement on the peninsula to the west (in the French Quarter) displays a marked absence of indicators of organised manufacture. Within the few possible areas of domestic foci there are some pottery imports – suggestive of cross-channel contacts and elevated status – but only three coins were recovered, and two of these were residual in Anglo-Norman contexts (further discussion on the issue of status is given below).

As to the decline of the settlement, an early suggestion was that *Hamwic's* demise may have been influenced in part by the changing water level and the usability of the associated wharfage along the Itchen (Crawford 1949, 45-6), exacerbated by the deepening draft of trading vessels (Addyman and Hill 1968, 77). Morton demonstrated that there was no 'lagoon' to silt up, that the shoreline had not markedly changed from the 8th to the 18th centuries, and that developments in shipbuilding would not have been a significant factor (1992, 21-4). Further research suggested a more subtle combination of economic and political factors. Some favoured the economic changes removing *Hamwic's* *raison d'être* (Holdsworth 1984, 337). Hinton (1999, 30) spelt this view out in no uncertain terms: 'Saxon Southampton .... existed to export surpluses and had no role to play if there were no surpluses to export, or markets to receive them'. Morton (2005, 204) has recently stressed the security factor, namely the growing threat from Viking raids in the 9th century (and their actual attack in 840). The indefensibility of the site of *Hamwic* would surely have affected the confidence of its population. Furthermore, the Viking threat made trade and trade routes risky, particularly those on the coast.

The issue of continuity between the abandonment of *Hamwic* and the establishment of the settlement of which the French Quarter site is a part remains equivocal. While the pottery date range from the earliest late Saxon phase at the site suggests 10th- to early 11th-century activity, and could therefore be considered to have followed that of *Hamwic* with little or no interval, there is no indication of a large scale and rapid occupation of this particular area, as might be expected had the settlement moved here in a single event. It is possible, however, that Holdsworth's conjectured enclosure is a distraction, in that it is encouraging us

to look in the wrong place for the original site of the new settlement. If a major motivation for the abandonment of *Hamwic* was the disruption of trade routes and an increasing threat from raiders, as Morton argues (1992, 75-7), then some of the artisans and merchants of *Hamwic* would surely have moved away altogether, perhaps to Winchester. Those who stayed may well have sought at first a more defensible site, not on the exposed and vulnerable peninsula to the south-west, but further north: possibly the late Saxon evidence from Above Bar (see below, SOU 142) represents such settlement.

### **The enclosed late Saxon settlement (Fig. 1.3)**

The 10th-century enclosure within which the French Quarter site lay appears to have contained part or all of Southampton's late Saxon settlement. As is shown in Fig. 1.3, the development site would have lain in the south-eastern part of the enclosed area. It has traditionally been suggested that the late Saxon settlement spread out from the north-south axis of English Street (Platt 1973, 6-7). Several more recent archaeological investigations have, however, recovered evidence suggesting the presence of at least one large 10th-century ditch, of a scale that suggests it may have been a formal boundary to the enclosed settlement (Holdsworth 1984). The eastern part of this ditch appears to pass close to the line of English Street in the stretch south of the Church of the Holy Rood, an aspect which has prompted some reconsideration of the early settlement's axes.

In a summary of the evidence to date, Holdsworth (1984, 340) noted that the area enclosed by this hypothetical ditch (and implied bank) was the only part of the medieval walled town with a consistent ladder road network, focused on the north-south line of French Street. He suggests that this enclosed settlement was established by the early 10th century, and that within half a century or so had expanded north beyond its perimeter, occasioning the rapid backfilling of the ditch. Holdsworth further suggested the possibility of a Saxon 'motte' (see Fig. 1.6) predating the construction of the Norman castle (*ibid.*, 340), although no clear earthwork evidence has yet been found. Brown (1994, 151) has, however, noted the apparent contradiction in the pottery distribution, whereby there are substantial and high-status assemblages of 10th-century pottery from sites to the north of the supposed enclosed settlement. In addition, excavations in the Above Bar area in the late 1990s (SOU 142), a medieval suburb north of the castle, found a 7.4 m wide ditch producing late Saxon pottery, and interpreted as a boundary ditch to the late Saxon settlement (Bradley and Gaimster 2001, 285). It seems therefore, that in a number of areas around the supposed core of the late Saxon settlement, a number of short ditch sections have been exposed, some of them of convincingly massive scale to invite the reconstruction of a

hypothetical enclosing circuit. However, there are also patches of clear late Saxon activity outside the conjectured circuit.

It is difficult to envisage how the 10th-century settlement enclosure ditch advocated by Holdsworth fits into this scenario. From the meagre evidence so far recovered, it appears to have been a very short-lived construction, rapidly backfilled as the settlement spread further north. On the face of it, the sparse pottery and coin dating derived from fills of the ditch (summarised in Holdsworth 1984, 339-40, and more recently reviewed by Brown 1991, 141-3), would suggest that it was infilled around the middle of the 10th century. This backfilling, however, probably contained residual material, meaning that its precise chronology remains uncertain and the date of its infilling may be significantly later. With this in mind, could an alternative explanation for the ditch, and its apparent modest circuit and lifespan, be that it was not intended as a settlement enclosure at all? Could it perhaps have represented a temporary defence thrown up by the Danish and Norwegian forces under Sweyn and Olaf, who established their headquarters at Southampton in 994 (Page 1908, 499). A temporary defensive earthwork would describe a circuit no larger than was necessary and defensible. Its purpose would have been to protect the army temporarily, not to contain the entirety of what could have still been at that time a relatively dispersed settlement. It is accepted that possible parallels for such a specific type of enclosure are very rare in England. Reynolds' review of the evidence for large scale early medieval enclosures (2003, 115-7), suggests that most have an origin in the category of minster enclosure, and only one possible 'Viking' fortification has been confirmed by excavation, that at Repton, Derbyshire (Biddle and Kjølbe-Biddle 2001, fig. 4.5). What is undoubtedly needed is a much closer and more intensive examination of the ditches at Southampton, as it is clear that their relationship with each other and the late Saxon settlement has yet to be properly understood.

Arguably this uncertainty could add support to the idea of this settlement developing for reasons other than the imposition of a planned defensible settlement by a single higher authority. If the revival of trade was a stimulus to the re-establishment of a settlement on this peninsula, a revival driven by individual commercial initiative rather than the centralised rationale that underpinned the *wics*, then the attraction of the developing wharfage beginning at the southern end of the peninsula, and encroaching along its western side, would encourage settlement to grow back northwards along the peninsula's spine and to the west. Significantly, Brown notes the high proportion of late Saxon imported ware from Bugle Hall (SOU 164), which could suggest an early (high status) focus on a landing stage on the western side of the peninsula.

### The origin of properties and tenements (Figs 7.1-7.3)

While no archaeological evidence of a forerunner to English Street or French Street was exposed, the orientation of excavated features (including ditches and rectangular pits) suggests that the settlement area probably respected north-south aligned roads to the east (English Street) and west (French Street), and it is reasonable to suppose that the properties would have sat side-by-side along these roads, each separated by some form of boundary.

The distribution of late Saxon features across the site has been interpreted as suggesting a number of possible foci of activity, suggesting nine conjectural 'properties' (Properties A-H and J; Fig. 7.1). The most convincing unit is Property H, midway along the eastern side of the site. Remnants of east-west oriented boundary ditches on the north and south sides of this block defined its width, and the inferred north-south aligned boundary represented by the grouping of features suggests its western extent. This may indicate that early properties ranged along the west side of English Street did not peter out to the rear into undefined 'backland' or waste ground, but that there was some corresponding westerly property 'definition' broadly corresponding to the later parish boundary.

The area enclosed by Property H was approximately 1600 sq m. Within this area, the grouping of pits appeared to respect an undisturbed area, which it is suggested could represent the approximate footprint(s) of one or two rectangular halls. The excavated features consisted of a mixture of cess and rubbish pits and at least one possible well. The pits containing cess were concentrated to the north of the clear area, while the rubbish pits were situated to the west. The finds assemblage recovered from this 'property' was the most notable in terms of quantity, variety and implied status (see below). Such a layout for a proto-urban late Saxon property is not atypical, although their original forms are often difficult to discern beneath the inevitable complex subdivisions that characterised later medieval urban development. Urban estates such as this would normally have comprised buildings set within an enclosed plot of land, but not situated hard against a street frontage. In Southampton, three such pre-Conquest houses are referred to, as 'hayes in Hamtun', belonging to Earl Godwin (Doubleday 1900, 491a and 494b). Other examples are known or have been deduced from Winchester and Oxford, where the results of intensive archaeological work have been combined with extensive documentary evidence (Dodd 2003, 30).

Other late Saxon properties at the French Quarter site are less easily defined. The closely grouped line of pits in Zone 1 west suggests the rear boundary of a plot (Property A), while small groups of pits along the western side of the site suggest two further possible blocks (Properties C and D). The group of features in the centre of the site, to the north of

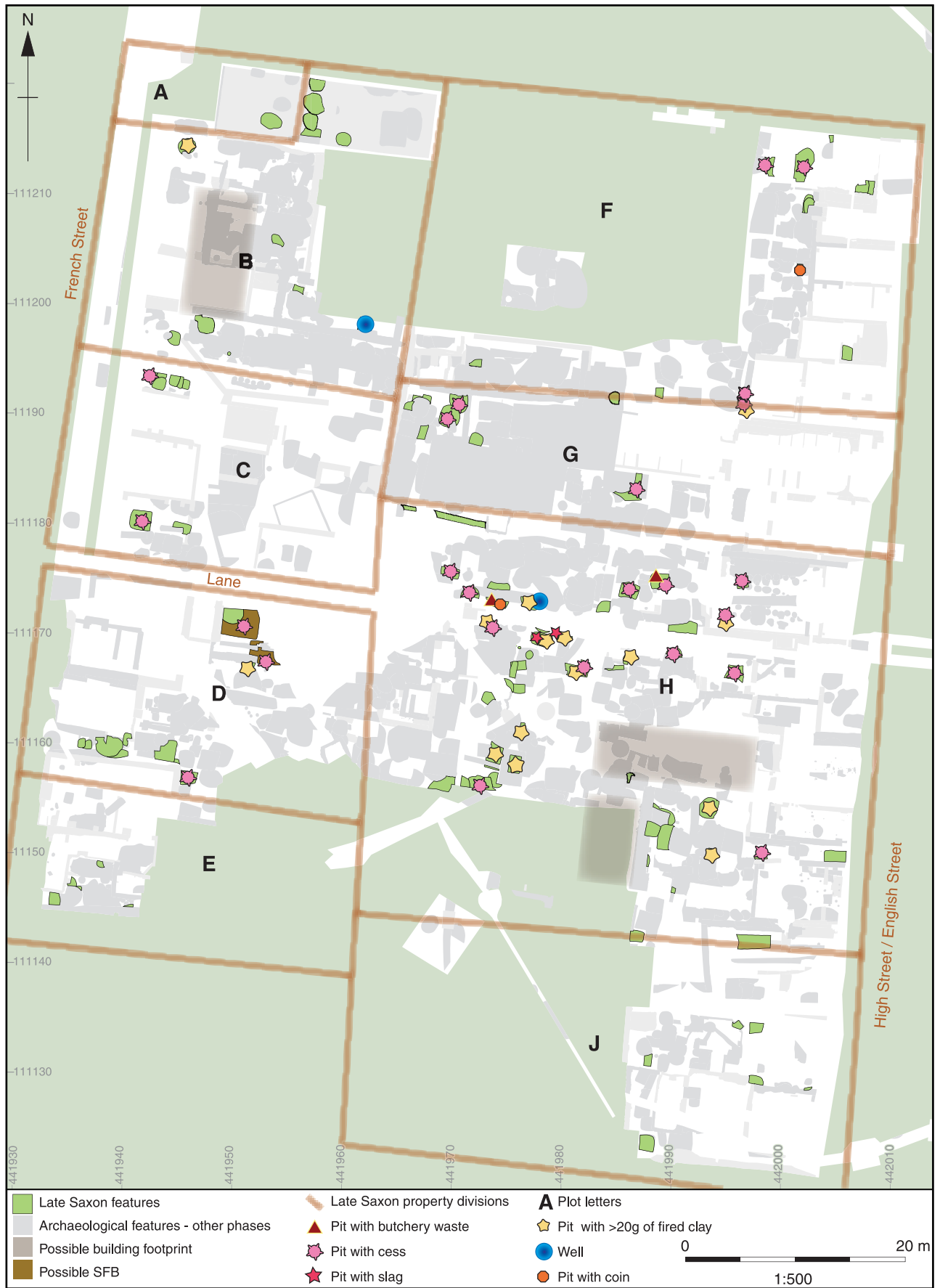


Fig. 7.1 Late Saxon pit usage and conjectural building properties



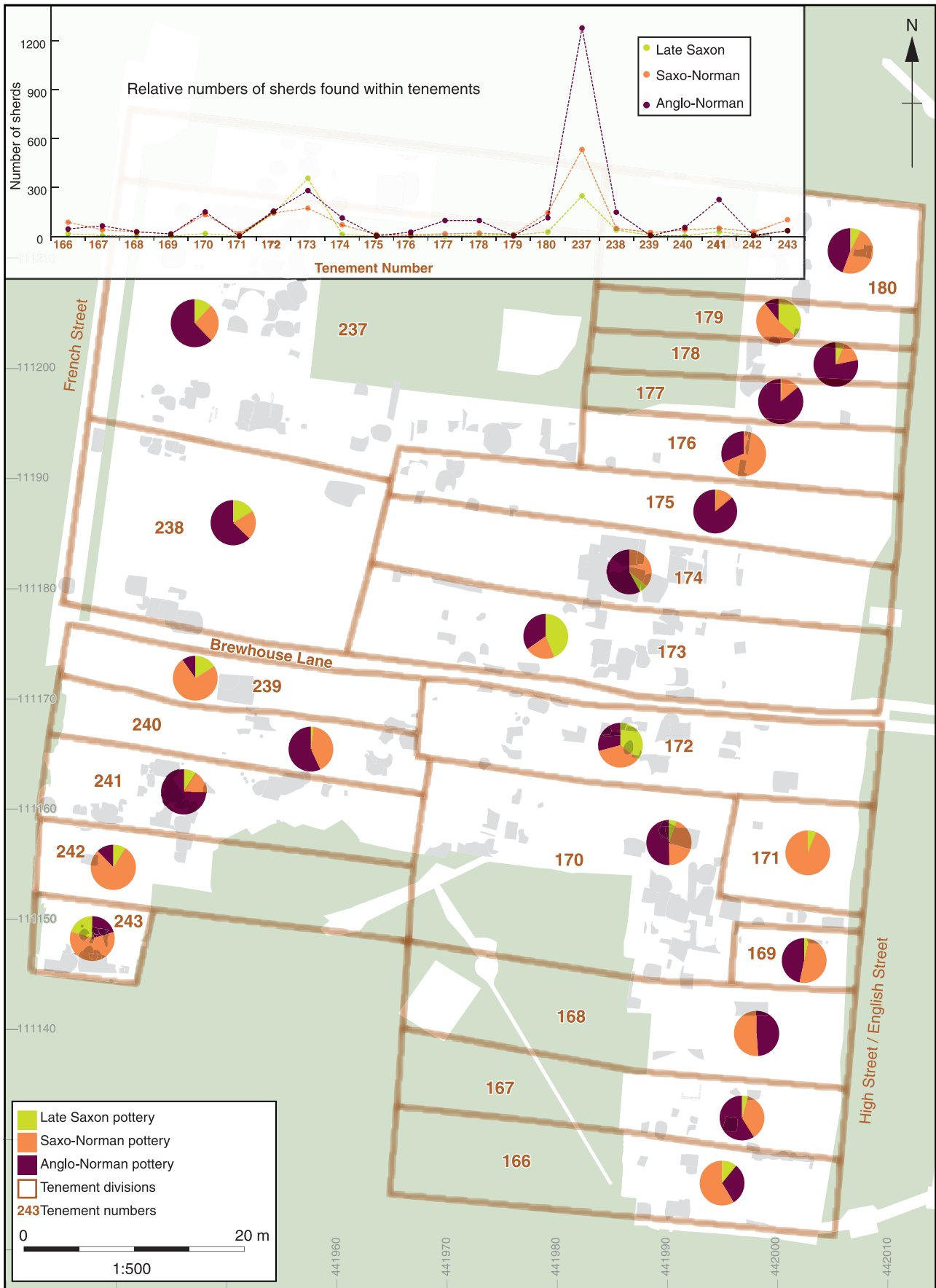


Fig. 7.2 Distribution of late Saxon, Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman pottery

Property H's boundary, perhaps defines the west end of a long property block (Property G) extending back from the east edge of the site. The southern-most blocks on both sides of the site (Properties E and J) almost certainly continued much further to the south. With the exception of Block H the precise definition of any or all of these blocks remains very speculative, but still has value in suggesting the early framework around which the later medieval tenements may have developed.

As an adjunct to evidence of the excavated features, the pottery sherd count also shows, at least in approximate terms, possible foci of activity across the site, in a way that arguably takes account of the fact that late Saxon pits may have been totally destroyed by later activity, and their (pottery) contents redeposited. Figure 7.2 shows the counts of late Saxon and Saxo-Norman and Anglo-Norman pottery for each medieval tenement (by sherd count), regardless of the date of the feature from which the pottery was recovered. It is reasonable to suppose that even if an earlier pottery assemblage is completely disturbed by, for instance, the digging of a new late medieval rubbish pit, it will most probably be redistributed in the immediate area, eventually to be incorporated into pottery assemblages in new pits. The relative sherd count therefore shows much more conclusive evidence for a concentration of activity in the vicinity of later Tenement 237 than is apparent by the number of features alone, suggesting that the intense levels of activity in the Anglo-Norman and later periods effectively destroyed the late Saxon remains.

Figure 7.2 also shows another interesting aspect. The dating of the late Saxon wares is within the range 10th to mid 11th century, while the date of the Saxo-Norman wares is within a range between the late 10th and the 12th centuries. Most tenements show an increased sherd count in the Saxo-Norman wares relative to the late Saxon wares, with the exception of parts of Property H. Three tenements (Properties E, F and J, later Tenements 243, 180 and 166) show greater than average increases. This may support the suggestion that Property H was the initial focus, and that Property B was slightly later, as were Properties E, F, and J.

The embryonic property framework suggested in the distribution of features in the late Saxon period can be seen to be refined and developed in the century after the Conquest, and in certain cases the boundaries appear to persist until the medieval period, to form part of the framework of tenements. Examples of this possible continuity can be seen in the ditches at the north and south boundaries of Property Block H coinciding as the boundary between medieval Tenements 173 and 174, and the boundary between Tenements 168 and 169/170 respectively. The property divisions of the Anglo-Norman period, as suggested by the feature distributions, are fairly irregular but also echo some of the earlier divisions and presage some of the later

boundaries. As is clear from Fig. 7.3, the general spread of features was much more even along each side of the site, as was the distribution of types of pits and their contents (for instance cess pits and pits containing fired clay). Again, virtually no physical evidence of boundaries was apparent, meaning that the conjectural property divisions as depicted here are again based on a combination of feature distribution and grouping, taking into account both the conjectural late Saxon properties, and the high medieval tenement layout defined by Burgess (1976). In addition, the course of the parish boundaries and the existence of Brewhouse Lane are contributing factors in the development of properties (see below). Clearly the distribution and varied concentration of features suggests that some of the boundaries as defined by Burgess seem to have been established within the 12th and early 13th centuries. The clearest example is that of the subdivision of most of late Saxon Property H, the southern part being subdivided into Anglo-Norman Properties 10 and 11; the northern part of it being combined with the southern part of late Saxon Property G to form Anglo-Norman Property 9. It would appear that a related factor in this particular area was the extension of Brewhouse Lane to link with English Street.

To the south on the same side of the site, the evidence from the northern side of Tenement 166 suggests that the boundary here was already defined in the Anglo-Norman period. On the western side the sub-division of the late Saxon blocks seems less advanced at this time, although the amendment of the perimeters of late Saxon Properties D and E into Anglo-Norman Properties 5 and 6 seems to predict the former's further subdivision into the three of the tenements defined by Burgess (Tenements 240-42).

As with the late Saxon phase, this process appears not to have been part of an overall design, and perhaps owes more to the organic development of the commercial context of the French Quarter, and individual property exchange and subdivision.

### **Roads and parish boundaries**

The three thoroughfares that frame and bisect the site (French Street, English Street and Brewhouse Lane) are not mentioned by name until at least the beginning of the 13th century. Both of the main north-south aligned streets lay within the 10th-century enclosure and English Street became the main arterial route leading from the water gate to the south to Bargate to the north, with several churches ranged along its eastern side (Fig. 1.5). One could suggest that the first documented mention of French Street (in 1200) and English Street (in 1215; see Chapter 2) reflect the success of the deliberate encouragement by William of a French trading enclave in the port. Brewhouse Lane was first mentioned by this name in the Southampton Terrier, although was referred to in



Fig. 7.3 Anglo-Norman pit usage, properties and conjectural parish boundaries

the 13th century as *Grantes Layne* and in the later 14th century as *Grope Lane*.

During the late Saxon period much of the eastern side of the site appears to have formed part of a single large property (Fig. 7.1, Block H), with no indication of the presence of the route that was to develop into *Brewhouse Lane*. On the western part of the site the absence of features on or close to the course of the lane is sufficient to suggest that an east-west boundary and/or path may have existed here at an early date. In the Anglo-Norman period a group of pits on the western side of the site apparently respected the northern side of Property 4, suggesting the possible presence of a route: no Anglo-Norman features encroached into the area known to have been the lane in later periods. The lane's narrow width (it seems never to have been more than 2 m wide) suggests that it evolved as a boundary between two existing properties, rather than being laid out as a full-width road against which properties on either side developed. Such minor routes appear 'to constitute a network, largely confined to the traditional French colony, of service lanes just wide enough to accommodate a loaded pack-horse' (Burgess 1976, 14). There is no doubt that by the medieval period *Brewhouse Lane* ran westwards from *English Street* towards *West Quay*, along the course of *Beneytes Lane* and *Westgate Street* (Fig. 1.7). It could be suggested that the lane always extended through to the line of *English Street* from the time of the earliest settlement, and that Block H was in fact two properties, one on either side of the lane (Alan Morton, pers. comm.), although if that were the case one might ask why the lane was not laid out as a full-width road in the first place?

No north-south road frontages were revealed during the excavation, since the entire eastern 10 m of the site had been severely truncated by post-medieval and modern cellaring, destroying all but the deepest of the earlier medieval features. The service trench watching brief conducted along the line of the *English Street* revealed no evidence for road surfaces, but did expose four pits. Three of these were not datable, but their observed fills (and dumps of shell found within them) suggested they were late Saxon or Anglo-Norman. This could either mean that there was no street at that point at all, or that it followed a slightly different line.

The properties examined by the recent work lay within three parishes: *Holy Rood* to the east and *St Michael's* and *St John's* to the west. The Church of the *Holy Rood* and its bestowed territory was probably in existence by the early 11th century as a chapel of *St Mary's*, serving an embryonic settlement on the gravel ridge to the west of the *Minster*. Probably just before or just after the *Conquest*, the two churches of *St Michael* to the north (extant), and *St John* to the south (demolished in 1708) were founded, in response to the growing and largely Frankish enclave on the land to the west and south-west of the gravel ridge. The earliest reference to *St*

*John's Church* dates to the late 11th century, and there is 12th-century fabric surviving within *St Michael's Church* (Davies 1883, 370).

On its original site, the 12th-century Church of the *Holy Rood* encroached well across the line of *English Street* and it was not until the 1320s that the church was resited and rebuilt clear of the eastern side of the street (Platt 1973, 96). It has been suggested that the presence of the church on the line of the medieval street might suggest that the course of the street was, in the Anglo-Norman period, slightly to the west of its present route, and that therefore the service trench watching brief noted in Chapter 4 revealed features relating to properties on the eastern side of the street.

The three parishes were defined by boundaries that crossed the development site. The modern path of the north-south parish boundary (between *Holy Rood* and the other two) now follows a wandering course reflecting centuries of property modifications, but it is reasonable to suppose that its original route was more direct. The boundary between the two other parishes ran along the western part of *Brewhouse Lane*. Whether the line provided by the lane was chosen as the parish boundary, or whether the parish limit determined the route of the lane is uncertain, but the former is perhaps more likely. As noted above, the archaeological evidence supports the idea of a boundary (and possibly a route) along the line of the western part of the lane, the origin of which may stretch back into the 10th century. It therefore seems probable that the line of the western part of the lane was chosen as the boundary between the two new parishes.

#### **Late Saxon to Anglo-Norman settlement** (Figs 1.3 and 7.1-7.3)

##### *Adjacent sites*

It is useful at this point to set the results of the *French Quarter* investigation into the context of the overall pre- and post-*Conquest* settlement in terms of adjacent excavations (Fig. 1.3). Between 1967 and 1969 excavations near the junction of *High Street* with *Broad Lane*, to the south of the subject site (SOU 161; Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 234-9), found 11th- and 12th-century remains including beamslots and pits, as well as evidence of metal-working. This phase of activity was, however, considered to be of 'relatively restricted economy, preserving the characteristics of rural life'. The site was extensively developed in the late 12th century, with evidence of stone buildings, much elevated status and (on the basis of the pottery) demonstrable trading links with south-west France.

Immediately to the south, excavations between 1986 and 1991 produced further significant pre-*Conquest* evidence (SOU 266; Russel 1994). At the south of this site were the truncated remains of a large ditch aligned east-west, measuring up to 12 m wide by 3 m deep, which contained a coin of



Edward the Confessor in its backfill. In the northern part of the site were the postholes of an east-west aligned late 10th- to early 11th-century hall, with associated floors, hearths, pits and cobbled surfaces. This was followed by intense later 11th-century activity (perhaps contemporary with the backfilling of the ditch), and an assemblage of over 18,500 late Saxon pottery sherds and over 1000 metal objects, as well as fired clay, and objects of worked stone and bone. This evidence is clearly indicative of a much greater intensity of activity during the late Saxon period than that found in the French Quarter area to the north. This may suggest that the late Saxon settlement began close to the southern or south-western edge of the peninsula, and was closely related to the establishment of a new and useable wharfage at that point. Further late Saxon evidence has been recovered from excavations on Bugle Street, on the east-west route towards the site of West Quay, at Bugle Hall (SOU 164; Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a) and at the corner of Westgate Street (SOU 111; unpublished, but see Brown 1994), and slightly to the west (SOU 25; unpublished but see Holdsworth 1984) (Fig. 1.3). Unfortunately none of these investigations was on a large enough scale to set the results in their local context, and all areas showed subsequent extensive Anglo-Norman redevelopment.

### Buildings

Only limited evidence for late Saxon and Anglo-Norman buildings was found at the recent excavation site. Two late Saxon building footprints have been suggested at Property H and another at Property B, with two possible sunken-featured buildings at Property D (Fig. 7.1). In the Anglo-Norman period a possible 'cellar' pit was revealed in Property 5, with two other possible examples in Properties 6 and 11. These features were notable by their shallow, sub-rectangular and flat-based plans and profiles, with single relatively clean fills. Such features equate most obviously to the signature feature of a sunken-featured building. While these structures are ubiquitous in early and middle Saxon settlement sites, they are less common in an Anglo-Norman context. Similar features of this type have, however, been found in the vicinity, for example pit 10 on the site at Vyse Lane to the west of French Street (Wacher 1975, 150, fig. 42). Examples of more fully developed late Saxon urban 'cellar-pits' are known from other sites, such as Oxford, although here they are argued to be a phenomenon of the first half of the 11th century (Dodd 2003, 40). A recent example found at Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire is of the classic and normally earlier two-post type, although it evidently dates to the 10th to 11th century (Clarke *et al*, forthcoming). Several examples of the more developed urban form have now been found in Norwich at the Greyfriars, Norwich Castle and Busseys Garage sites (Emery 2007, fig. 2.6; Shepherd Popescu 2009a; David Adams, pers.

comm.). The Norwich evidence indicates that usage of some of these structures continued into the mid to late 11th century and possibly later (Emery 2007, 40; Shepherd Popescu 2009a, 276).

Apart from demolition fabric from daub walls or fired clay from ovens, there was virtually no physical evidence for structures of the late Saxon period at the French Quarter, which had undoubtedly been destroyed by later activity. A few postholes and short lengths of beamslot were all that survived. Fired clay was recovered from some pit fills, particularly in Property H (see Fig. 7.1), but whether this derived from wall fabric or oven structures was not clear. No unequivocal *in-situ* evidence of oven structures was found in this period.

Other than the early stone house at Tenement 237, the Anglo-Norman phase surprisingly only yielded evidence for one stone-built structure, at Property 9 (in the area of later Tenement 174). In part this is probably due to the fact that the relevant street frontage – which on the eastern side is arguably the most developed during this period – was completely occupied by a later building, meaning that any earlier frontage footings were either destroyed or incorporated into later structures. In general, the distribution of the first stone houses in medieval towns tends to show concentration around focal points of secular or ecclesiastical power (Schofield and Vince 2003, 83), meaning that cathedral cities would tend to see the first stone houses in the vicinity of the cathedral. Ports, on the other hand, would tend to see the first stone house close to the harbours and wharves, and along the principal roads serving them. At Southampton, the excavations at Cuckoo Lane and Blue Anchor Lane, along with No. 79<sup>1/2</sup> High Street, revealed the first stone houses as double range buildings, incorporating a warehouse below and a residential dwelling above (Faulkner 1975, 78).

The transition from wood to stone seems to have been at its height in the town in the early years of the 13th century, and examples have been identified in the excavations of the 1950s and 1960s, either alongside the main thoroughfare of English Street, or in the streets adjacent to the West Quay. At Cuckoo Lane, close to the site of West Quay, the timber-framed building was replaced by a large rectangular double range stone building (Faulkner 1975, 79). Again the association of wealth, status and resources to invest seem closely linked to the wharfage facilities. In addition to the surviving buildings themselves, the remains of several limekilns (as at Cuckoo Lane, *ibid.*, 289) attests to the demand for construction mortar.

Again, most of the evidence for structures of the Anglo-Norman period at the French Quarter excavation site is confined to incomplete evidence of post-hole and/or beamslot buildings, most of which were found on the western side of the site, in properties fronting French Street. Interestingly three of the buildings (in Properties 5, 6 and 11) are characterised by similar 'cellar' pits (noted above).

Two other structures were tentatively identified. In Property 2, a complex spread of postholes bordered and partly surrounded what appeared to be a gravel/clay surface, the whole representing a possible utilitarian building. At the southern edge of the site (Property 6), a similar clay floor and possible associated postholes suggested another structure. It may be mere coincidence that, apart from the stone footings in Property 9, most of the structural evidence was found on the western side of the site, fronting French Street. Could this be evidence of a difference of building style or occupation in what was becoming a Frankish enclave? Unfortunately, with so much of the eastern side of the site destroyed or rendered inaccessible by later cellarage, this possibility can only be raised, rather than addressed with any substantial evidence.

Although the evidence for buildings themselves was limited in the late Saxon to Anglo-Norman periods, some information can be gleaned from the building materials found. These include the daub used in oven construction and walling, which suggests a change in wattle sizes from the late Saxon to Anglo-Norman periods and may indicate a change in coppicing practice. The distribution of Roman tile is notably concentrated in those parts of the site that attained elevated status in later periods. The 12th-century roofing tiles indicate that re-roofing at Properties 2 and 12 (later Tenements 237, 170 and 174) may have been an indicator of wealth, while other roofing materials of the period include slate. The earliest bricks found at the site appear in this period, again confirming the status of what would later become Tenements 170-173 and 237. While no surviving structures were evident, the presence of quantities of 12th-century roof tile in Anglo-Norman rubbish pits points to the developing sophistication of the street frontages, particularly in the northern part of the site – a fact that reinforces the impression that these two areas probably contained the most substantial buildings on the site.

### *Pits and middens*

Most of the surviving evidence in both the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods consisted of pits. No ground surfaces of these periods were identified, although occasional possible remnant 'midden' layers were noted in section. These layers appear not to have been widespread: if they had been extensive, one would expect bone debris to be easily accessible to animals (mainly dogs) and to show frequent evidence of gnawing. While nearly twice as many animal bones in the late Saxon phase displayed gnaw marks (by percentage) as in the Anglo-Norman or later medieval phases, this was still a relatively low rate for an urban site, suggesting that discarded bones were disposed of fairly promptly and in a way that did not encourage scavenging (for example in pits, rather than middens).

A total of 107 pits were assigned to the late Saxon period and 169 to the Anglo-Norman period. The secondary use of all of the pits appeared to be as receptacles for rubbish and/or cess, although identification of their primary function was often problematic since the deeper features were often not fully excavated (see Chapter 1). With these reservations in mind, there appeared to be four primary functions to the pits: wells, latrine pits, cess/rubbish pits and quarry pits.

Of the late Saxon pits, at least 50 were probably rectangular or sub-rectangular (in plan) in their original form. A total of 35 were approximately circular, and 22 were too heavily truncated to be sure what their original plan form may have been. The pits' depths ranged from very shallow (little more than scoops) to shafts exceeding 2.5 m deep. Aside from those considered to be wells (see Fig. 7.1), all of the pits assigned to this phase were interpreted as receptacles for rubbish or direct/indirect cess deposition. There seemed to be no clear correlation between the shape of the pit in plan and either the depth of the pit, or the primary use to which it was put, as interpreted by the pit fills and finds assemblages. The features identified as wells typically had vertical sides and were deeper than other features, although none showed evidence of a wooden or wicker lining. In examples of these early periods, it was difficult to distinguish between a well and a latrine, as both types invariably ended their lives as cess/rubbish pits.

Of the 169 Anglo-Norman pits, 81 were considered to be square or rectangular in their original form. Fifty-eight were probably circular or sub-circular, and 30 were insufficiently complete for confirmation of their plans. As with the late Saxon pits, the depths varied from shallow scoops to at least 2.5 m. Four pits were tentatively identified as possible wells (at least in their original use; see Fig. 7.3), principally on the basis of their vertical sides and depth and the vestiges of a wooden or wicker lining; pit 3303 in Property 2, pit 8061 in Property 5; pit 1220 (and recuts 1218 and 1217) in Property 9 and pit 7544 in Property 13. Two large pits (6063 in Property 11 and 4108 in Property 3) contained high concentrations of butchery waste spread through several layers, suggesting that the pits were designated for such disposal. In contrast several other pits contained (among otherwise mixed domestic rubbish) discrete single dumps of oyster shell, seemingly the residue of individual meal/feasting events. Several pits in Properties 5 and 10 contained fragments of slag, although it should be noted that slag was also found in earlier features in the same area (in late Saxon Property H), raising the possibility that the stratigraphically later material is redeposited.

Many pits across the site, in both late Saxon and Anglo-Norman phases were identified as 'cess pits' by the excavators (see Chapter 1 for definitions of cess and latrine pits), typically on the grounds of the consistency and/or a perceived greenish colour of

one or more of the (usually lower) layers filling the pit. While the greenish colour of soil layers in urban pits is conventionally taken as an indicator of cess, such a conclusion is by no means unequivocally accepted by environmental scientists. In the absence of published research on this aspect, however, it seems likely that the greenish colour of deposits is an indicator of the phosphatisation process whereby calcium from the soil matrix combines with phosphate in the urine to form calcium phosphate. To achieve the greenish colour, the process probably requires a fairly constant input of organic waste and urine and relatively closed conditions (R. Nicholson, pers. comm.). The greenish colour is therefore an indicator of *repeated* deposition of concentrated uric and/or faecal matter, as opposed to a single deposit, and probably in conditions not subject to dilution by, for instance, rainwater. Relatively few pit fills across the site were sampled for environmental analysis from these early phases, meaning that conclusions as to the siting and frequency of cess pits across the site are somewhat subjective. Figures 7.1 and 7.3 show the incidence of pits (in the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods) noted by the excavators to have significant proportions of cessy contents in their fills. Some of these were very likely to be latrine pits, and some were general cess pits.

In addition to the large pits, a number of small shallow pits were identified; these were sometimes clearly intended as one-off receptacles for food waste (particularly single deposits of marine shell), or in one instance (pit 8114 in Property 6), industrial waste in the form of iron slag and metalworking scrap.

In some cases, where there were no evident finds in the fill, the pit may simply have been excavated to provide material to 'seal' a noxious layer of cess in a nearby larger pit. There is no clear evidence to suggest that cess pits or latrine pits were routinely emptied of their contents and re-used, although there were examples of the re-digging of a pit almost at the same position.

In the Anglo-Norman period, there was again no evidence of systematic rubbish removal from the properties, or indeed emptying and re-use of rubbish pits. The density of pitting does, however, suggest that space was now more at a premium and that the location of rubbish and cess pits was being deliberately defined. Examples of this can be seen in the central areas of Properties 9-11, where the pits were clearly concentrated in the central part of the property blocks. In the absence of contemporary ground surfaces, it is difficult to determine whether the siting of the pits in the middle of the property was intended to make them more accessible from the main frontage building, or was intended to leave the back part of the property to serve as a midden heap. From the finds evidence the latter might be more likely, as the occurrence of conjoining pot sherds within individual pits was rare in both the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods.

Comparison of the character of the French Quarter and *Hamwic* through excavated evidence offers some interesting contrasts. Over 500 pits were examined during the Six Dials project (Andrews 1997, 174-204) and in some respects the results are similar to those from the French Quarter, with the largest pits generally being rounded in plan and up to 3 m in diameter (*ibid.*, fig. 76), with the slightly smaller examples more frequently being rectangular in plan and with vertical sides (*ibid.*, fig. 77). Smaller still were those features interpreted to be 'interior' storage pits (*ibid.*, fig. 78). The larger pits were interpreted as 'primarily intended for cess or domestic rubbish' (*ibid.*, 174), and the frequent occurrence of greenish staining in the fills of these pits was noted. In contrast to the French Quarter, several examples of wood-lined pits were found at *Hamwic*, although the uncertainty of what this implied with regard to the pits' original function was acknowledged (*ibid.*). Their use as cleanable cess pits was mooted, the wooden lining facilitating re-use. Examples of pits with decayed wooden linings were also found during the Football Stadium excavations, where they were interpreted as well linings (see Birbeck *et al.* 2005, figure 60). While none of the excavated pits in the French Quarter revealed any *in-situ* lining, the fact that the lower levels of the deeper pits were frequently not investigated is pertinent. Surviving well linings at *Hamwic* were often only revealed at the base of the features (see for instance Andrews 1997, plate 28).

#### Daily life and status before the 13th century

Most of the finds recovered from the site are typical of similar assemblages of the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods. Although a few imported pottery sherds were found, the vast majority of the pottery is of local origin, generally consisting of flint-tempered jars and cooking pots. A number of pre-Conquest glazed ware sherds do, however, suggest some status. The predominance of local wares persisted into and throughout the 12th century, although greater quantities of North French wares (particularly from Property 2) provide evidence of increased overseas contact and trade, and arguably evidence of a French presence in the western part of the site. Rare local vessels from the same property, including five bowls and two lamps in Anglo-Norman coarseware, attest to the high status of what was to become Tenement 237. The other capital tenement (174, Property 9) produced the second highest quantity of Saxo- and Anglo-Norman pottery from the site (Fig. 7.2).

Evidence of craft working was meagre, with limited evidence for bone and antler working. Evidence for these crafts – which is frequently found at settlements of the Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman periods – has been found elsewhere in Southampton and its limited presence at the French Quarter sites indicates that it was not a major



activity on this particular site. Of note among the bone artefacts from the site are a single-sided comb from Anglo-Norman Property 9, which is of a style commonly found in Southampton and may have been manufactured there. A double-sided composite comb from Property 6 is of a medieval type rarely found in England, although common on the continent and particularly in Scandinavia.

Various pits at late Saxon Property H yielded possible evidence for small-scale metalworking in the form of sherds from two different crucibles, smithing hearth bottoms and vitrified hearth lining. Small quantities of metalworking waste of the Anglo-Norman period were found at Properties 2, 5 and 10. Fuels for such crafts and for domestic activities would probably have come from the New Forest and the charcoal samples examined confirm the presence of a range of native British species. Of note among the charcoal from the Anglo-Norman phase was the presence of a large quantity of charcoal from pit 3453 at Property 1 (Tenement 237): the use of valuable oak here may indicate a particular function for the relevant fire. Pine found among the late Saxon charcoal at Property H may have been the remnant of an imported object.

The relative status of properties across the site is to some degree reflected in the building remains recovered from pits, as well as the quantity and quality of other finds. In the late Saxon period three main foci are suggested in Properties B, H and E (medieval Tenements 237, 241 and 170-173). In the Anglo-Norman period the same foci are indicated by the quantities of floor and roof tile, but are supplemented by Property 7 (Tenements 176-180 and part of 237) in the north-east of the site.

Of the two coins recovered from late Saxon deposits, one was a residual Romano-British radiate and the other a silver penny of Edmund or Eadgar. Two further pennies were found residually in later contexts. The other metalwork, amounting to 31 items, was unsurprising in its general character, although occasional items reflect the presence of wealth. A length of gold thread came from late Saxon Property B, and a decorative mount from the area of Property H. Also, from an isolated pit in Property G came a pair of prick spurs of 10th- to 11th-century type.

Later metalwork was predominantly structural, principally comprising nails and a few knife blades, attesting to unremarkable domestic activity. Of note was a scale pan for a small balance and a probable balance arm from deposits within Anglo-Norman Property 2, which may point to a moneyer being resident here, although such delicate balances were also used to weigh spices or precious metal. The majority of whetstones recovered from across the site are of common types, although one primary rotating whetstone was recovered from Anglo-Norman Property 5.

In both periods cattle, sheep and pig are the principal stock animals represented, and the trend is for a late Saxon predominance of cattle to

decrease in the Anglo-Norman period. In both periods the evidence suggests the animals (or their carcasses) were brought onto site whole, unlike the later medieval phase, where animals tended to be butchered off-site. Consumption of deer, an indicator of high status, was marked in the late Saxon period. Domestic fowl (chicken) were the most frequently occurring bird bones, although goose bones were also found in the Late Saxon period. Fallow deer bones were found at Property H (later Tenement 172) in the late Saxon period: this species appears to have been reintroduced to Britain by the Normans, its presence therefore indicating status at this early date. Similarly, rabbit bones from Property B (later Tenement 237) and Property H (later Tenement 170) may indicate French imports since the species – an expensive commodity during the medieval period – is also believed to have been a Norman introduction. Interestingly, both rabbit and fallow deer bones were also found in the pre-Conquest phase at Norwich Castle (Shepherd Popescu 2009a, 185), a site which was later elevated to the status of a royal castle. Fallow deer was found in increasing numbers in later periods at the French Quarter site, perhaps reflecting the practice of hunting in parkland.

While fish bones are plentiful in Anglo-Norman rubbish pits, fish seems to have contributed little to the diet in the late Saxon period; and it is notable that the greatest quantities of fish bones (principally elvers and flatfish), came from Property H. In contrast, shellfish – particularly cockles and oysters – were consumed in significant quantities. The highest level of consumption of shellfish occurred during the late Saxon period, with cockles being particularly common. Some of these would probably have been gathered by the consuming households. Oysters reaching the site may have been packed in seaweed while being transported, while mussels were also being consumed in the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods. In the Anglo-Norman period fish consumption increased markedly, and was particularly notable in Property 2 (later Tenement 237), and Property 12. Most of the fish were small, and probably caught by trap or net in shallow water, although the substantial increase in the proportion of herring attests to the developing coastal fishing industry in the 12th century. The discovery of dolphin or whale bone at Property 9 (Tenement 173) during the Anglo-Norman period is another possible indication of status, whales and porpoises being considered a royal 'fish': they were, however, eaten by others and were highly valued for their by-products including oil. Whale meat is known to have been imported from France in the 11th to 14th centuries and any carcasses washed ashore were normally quickly scavenged (Riddler in Atkins and Popescu, 2010). Dolphin remains are relatively rare in archaeological terms, although the species was evidently occasionally also eaten: '... dolphins smell like violets, taste most pleas-



antly being salted, and give competent nourishment...’ (Muffet 1655, 173).

Pastimes at the French Quarter site are indicated by a bone chess piece from Anglo-Norman Property 2 (Tenement 237) and bone skates from both late Saxon and Anglo-Norman contexts. The chess piece adds to the existing corpus of Anglo-Norman and medieval gaming pieces from Southampton, made in both bone and wood. Bone skates were used from the late Saxon period onwards in various parts of Europe, with the last documented example in London occurring in the 18th century: they were still used in the fens until the early 20th century (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, 888).

The late Saxon plant remains derived from samples in just two areas, Properties H and F. Cereal remains are dominant, and include barley, free-threshing type wheat and rye. Samples from the Anglo-Norman period were recovered from a wider selection of pits across the site (from Properties 2, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 13). The same cereal types predominated, but the range of fruits increased in the Anglo-Norman period, suggesting greater access to more exotic foodstuffs. Remains of sedge and rush seeds were noted only in mineralised samples, which could indicate that suitable vegetable matter was increasingly being dumped into cess pits to keep them dry (and presumably less noxious). Is this an indicator of increasing pressure (from increasing population density) on what was still a rudimentary sanitary system?

Comparisons with *Hamwic* have been made (see above), but, looked at as a whole, how does the Late Saxon and Anglo-Norman material evidence compare to contemporary urban evidence elsewhere? It is undeniable that there must have been, from the earliest development on the peninsula, a significant link with France, attested by the imported pottery. Such evidence also appears in other south and east coast ports in the late Saxon period, but its presence may also indicate the existence of a foreign enclave in a settlement, not just trade. Although the documentary evidence for a French (or Frankish) presence can only go back to the Conquest (see Chapter 1), the finds evidence suggests it could comfortably extend back to the 10th century, or even earlier.

The general amount of material relating to craft or industrial activity – while not completely absent – is less than might be expected, perhaps reflecting the mercantile character of the site rather than its use as a production centre. The late Saxon/Anglo-Norman period at both Winchester and Norwich, in contrast, saw widespread and intensive craft and industrial activity (Biddle 1990; Ayers 2003; Shepherd Popescu 2009a+ b). The contrast with the results from the French Quarter site might again be indicative of the topography of the early medieval settlement at Southampton, with the focus of craft activity being not at the geographical centre of the settlement, but along its southern and western edges.

## The medieval and later tenements

### *Tenement layout* (Figs. 7.4-7.5)

One of French Quarter project’s key research objectives was to establish the sequence of tenement development in this part of Southampton. This entailed the identification of evidence for the nature of the transition of the site from what is thought to have been an unplanned settlement of largely timber construction in the Anglo-Norman period to a sequence of regularly aligned tenement plots containing stone-built houses, many of which were of commercial character. Allied to this was the question of whether this process could be defined as single event or an organic development. Of particular importance for the town’s history is the existence of the Terrier of 1454 which ‘provides a comprehensive survey of a medieval town within its walls at the period of its greatest prosperity’ (Burgess 1976, 8). As noted in Chapter 2, this document effectively provides a street directory for the town in one particular year, with identifications of earlier ownership: its value ‘as a topographical guide to medieval Southampton is too obvious to need stressing. In point of fact it appears to be unique among medieval municipal documents, not only in this country but also, perhaps, in Europe’ (Burgess 1976, 12). A useful broad comparator comes from recent work at Norwich which uses documentary and archaeological evidence from more than seventy Castle Fee properties as a similar framework for the development of medieval and later tenements in the immediate vicinity of the castle: although the Fee effectively had military origins, it soon became an administrative entity (Shepherd Popescu 2009a+ b). The work at both centres clearly demonstrates the power of such documentary information to assist in the interpretation of archaeological remains, thereby informing on a plethora of issues such as urban development, tenement status, economy and demography.

The earliest documentary sources of the high medieval period at Southampton refer to twelve tenements in the first half of the 13th century (Fig. 7.4), rising to fifteen during the 14th century (Fig. 7.5). While these early sources are clearly not as detailed as those that occur later, it is reasonable to suppose that the 22 tenements within the site boundaries as they appeared in the 1454 Terrier were the result of a long process of sub-division of properties based ultimately on the first blocks of land allocated or assigned between French Street and English Street in the late Saxon period (Properties A-H and J) and their refinement in the Anglo-Norman period (Properties 1-13). The maps showing the transition from the Anglo-Norman to the high medieval tenements (see Figs 7.3-7.6) are of course speculative being based on the densities of period features, the few ditch and masonry property boundaries that exist and always mindful of the later more informative Terrier survey and

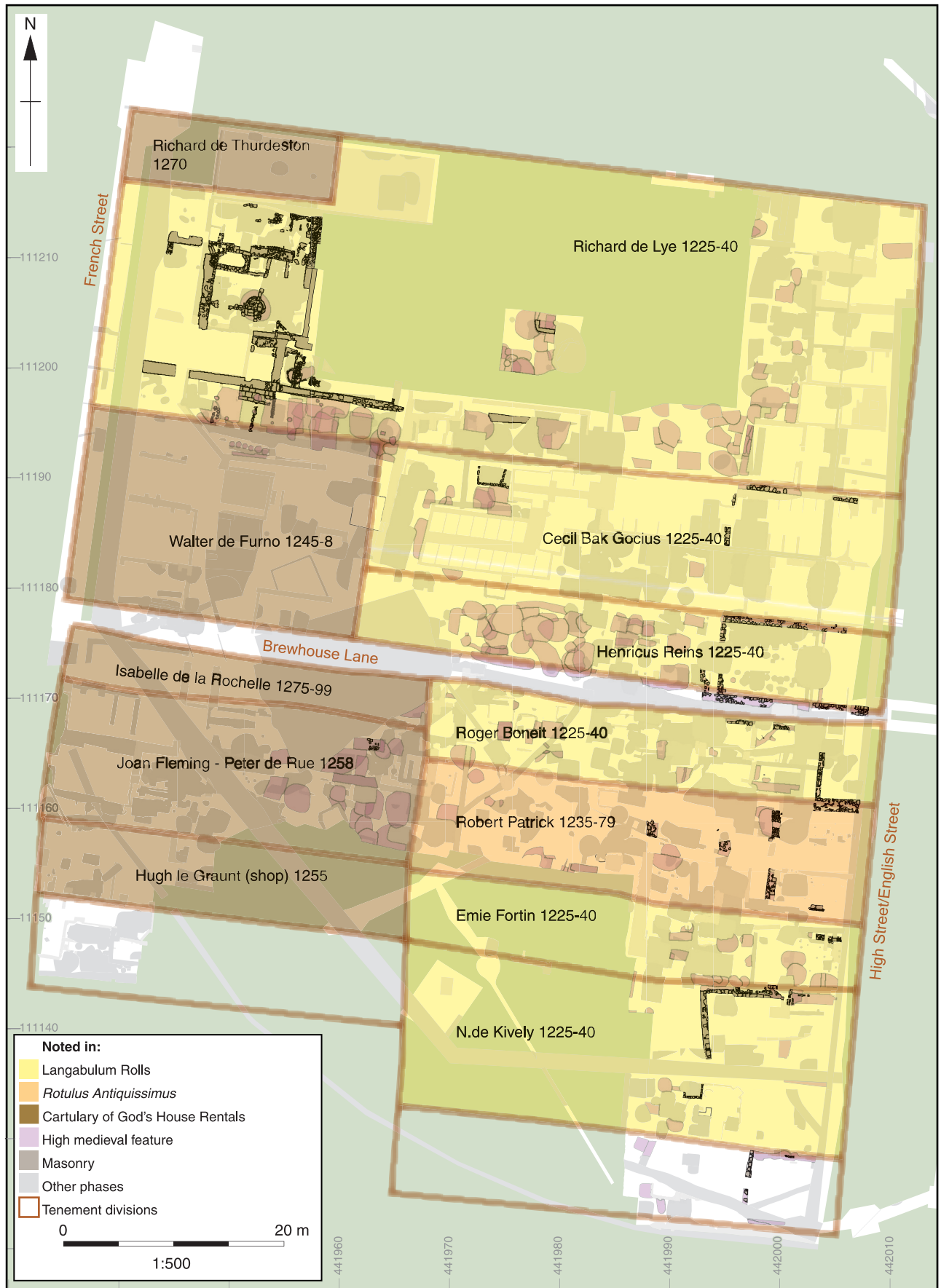


Fig. 7.4 Tenement plots in the 13th century, based on documentary evidence and archaeological remains

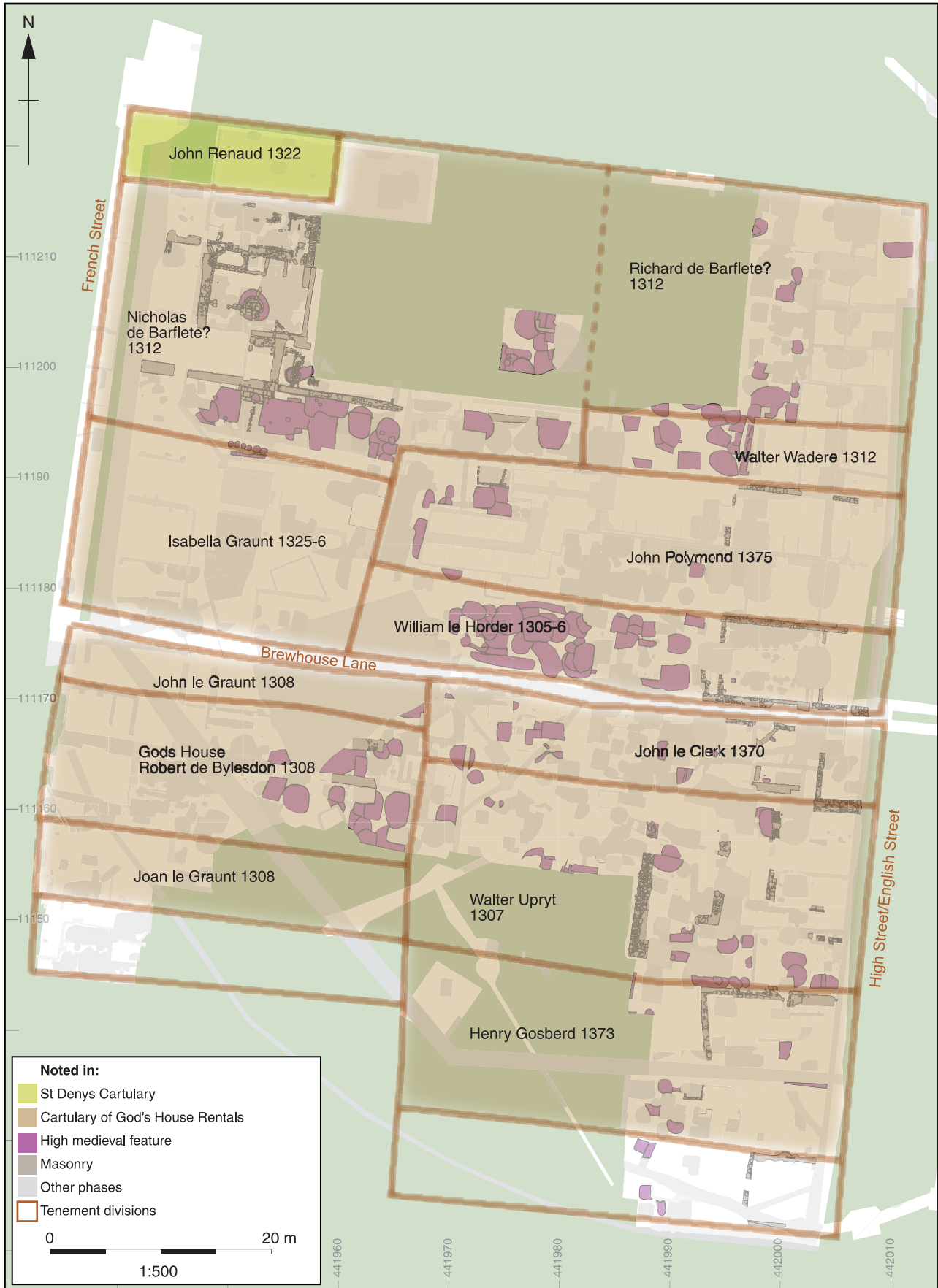


Fig. 7.5 Tenement plots in the 14th century, based on documentary evidence and archaeological remains



Royal Engineers' Plan (1846). What is certainly valid is the rectilinear arrangement of the tenements, framed as they were between High Street/English Street and French Street and bisected by Brewhouse Lane. It is also clear that, by the time of the construction of stone buildings, occupation had completely migrated to the street frontages. In addition it is evident in all periods that the plots, once established, did not always simply sub-divide into smaller land holdings thereafter. The wealth of merchant landlords meant that the properties were in a constant cycle of being amalgamated as holdings and sub-divided for letting and the sub-divisions then sold off.

An insight to the process of tenement development is offered by examination of tenements in the eastern part of the site, along English Street (later Tenements 169-172). Here the use of a party wall between two buildings (one to the north held by Roger Boneit in 1225-40 and another to the south held by Robert Patrick in 1235-79) suggests that, at the time of construction, both plots may have been under single ownership (Fig. 7.4). Patrick's property was larger, with those to the north and south (the latter held by Emie Fortin in 1225-40) being closer to the typical 'merchant's house' size demonstrated by other plots (for example, Tenement 173 and No. 58 French Street). The northern property (later Tenement 172) was held by John le Clerk in 1370, with both of the southern properties being combined and held by Walter Upryt in 1307 (Fig. 7.5). At the time of the Terrier in 1454, this larger property had been sub-divided into three (Tenements 169, 170 and 171).

In an overview of urban medieval property development, it was noted that 'the erection of a stone building by the street, often in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries (as for example in Lincoln and Bury St Edmunds) would thereafter tend to anchor that part of the frontage for generations' (Schofield and Vince 2003, 83). This was clearly the case at Southampton's French Quarter where, with the scarcity of ditched boundaries and the absence of evidence for fences, it is not until the construction of stone buildings in the high medieval period that a confident understanding of the form of the tenement plots can be achieved. The solidity and permanence of these structures, with their basement walls marking the property divisions, preserved the character of medieval tenements through subsequent development until the devastation of the area during the Second World War and the eventual abandonment of the historic footprint during subsequent redevelopment. Stone buildings set near street frontages were evidently present in some parts of London by 1100, while others might be visible but set back from the street: the properties, as at Southampton, were generally rectangular although varied considerably in size and shape. The width of the Southampton tenements of the high and late medieval period was an average of 26.29 ft/8.01 m, reducing to 22.5 ft/6.85 m with the exclu-

sion of Capital Tenement 237 and the vacant adjacent plot/garden at Tenement 238. The cottages (Tenements 167, 177-179) were the smallest plots, with Tenement 178 at 10.9 ft/3.35 m possibly as small as could be commercially sustainable. It is also worth noting that the spatial distribution of pitting on the cottage sites suggested that there was little land leased with them.

The width and size of each medieval plot at the French Quarter site was effectively established by the various leasings and sales of properties over time, rather than any form of town planning or other external pressure. Any consistency in size resulted from a common starting point (ie the Anglo-Norman and to a lesser extent the late Saxon properties), with the final layout reflecting the smallest practical viable street frontage. Similar processes of organic urban development have been recorded at numerous other sites. Properties recorded in Norwich dating to the late 12th to 13th centuries were in the region of 19.5 ft wide (c 6 m), their boundaries surviving virtually unchanged into the 17th century (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, 1066).

#### *Buildings and cellars*

'In general, the stone building with gable to the street must be seen as the successor to the timber hall over cellar building of the eleventh/twelfth century, with the innovation that the ground floor of the stone structure now communicated directly with the street' (Schofield and Vince 2003, 83). Early stone houses were often present in towns – like Southampton, London and Norwich – with strong mercantile connections.

The progression from timber to stone building in Southampton has been previously recorded and discussed, notably in relation to the High Street excavations where the stratigraphic sequence of beamslots, pits and stone buildings is cited as evidence for the early 13th-century rebuilding of the town in stone (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 238-39). The combination of street frontage development and cellaring as well as horizontal truncation of the French Quarter site, means that much evidence for timber buildings immediately pre-dating the stone structures may have been removed. Only small remnants of these early structures survived. A linear feature on Tenement 166 was parallel but slightly offset to the line of the property's medieval cellar wall and may have been the remnant of a beamslot that survived due to the lack of cellaring on the adjacent property (Tenement 167). The feature contained mainly early flint-tempered wares, with some sherds of scratch-marked Anglo-Norman coarseware indicating a 12th- to early 13th-century date. A small stretch of possible beamslot was recorded to the rear of the street frontage on Tenement 167 with pottery dating to the 13th to 14th century, however given its location this was probably a short-lived ancillary structure rather than



the main building. More informative perhaps is the building development on Tenement 241. Here, an hiatus of activity on the plot following destruction during the 1338 raid meant the subsequent basement (probably dating to between 1397 and 1403; see Chapter 4) was constructed on a different footprint to earlier structures, allowing their survival. The early structural sequence comprised two phases of Anglo-Norman building, followed by two phases of high medieval construction prior to destruction and demolition in 1338. The high medieval phases were separated by a destruction layer but not discernible by artefact dating (both containing ceramics dating from the 13th to 14th century). It is notable that the initial small structure, built with stone sleeper foundations (for timbers) was replaced by a building that also utilised timber as its main structural element. No development into full rebuilding in stone was evident at Tenement 241 before the impact of the 1338 raid.

Significant remains of medieval buildings were present on Tenements 166, 168, 173 and 237. Although dramatically rebuilt with brick inserts, buttresses and mixed material walls in later periods, the major use of stone fabric in Tenements 169, 170, 172, 239, 240, 241, 242 and 243 also seems to indicate their medieval origins. The close dating of the construction of such buildings through archaeological techniques and associated artefacts is always problematic. At the French Quarter site, this is exacerbated by the general absence of *in-situ* diagnostic architectural features and mouldings, the absence of stratified coin sequences and lack of preserved wood that might realise dendrochronological information. It is clear, however, that the form of the main western (hall) structure on Tenement 237 is akin to the late 12th-century Canute's Palace (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a 91) and its stratigraphic position and associated documentary evidence also attest to a late 12th- or early 13th-century origin. Tenements 166, 168 and 173 provide examples of the classic simple barrel vaults of early 14th-century date that are also seen at No. 58 French Street (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 104) and the possibly mid 13th-century vault of House 1, High Street (*ibid.*, 241). The buildings on Tenements 168 and 173 can be assigned to the first half of the 13th century by documentary references; Tenement 169 has an entry dating to 1225-40 in the Langabulum Roll stating 'Of land next to the stone house of N de Kively' which must relate to the building on Tenement 168. Tenement 173 has an entry of 1235-49 in the *Rotulus Antiquissimus* as 'house of stone next to small lane'. The buildings are described in detail in Chapter 4, with only a broad characterisation and comparisons to what exists of a Southampton typology for the medieval stone buildings being given here.

#### *Tenements 166, 168 and 173*

The medieval structure on Tenement 166 was a single-barrel vaulted cellar (Fig. 4.5) with internal

measurements of at least 7 m long by 6 m at the widest point. Its walls survived to approximately 1.5 m high and the remains of the vault rested on a simple chamfer moulded stringcourse approximately 1 m above the floor. What survived of the structure closely resembled the cellars of Tenement 173 and No. 58 French Street in all respects and is therefore presumed to have been constructed in the 13th century although no documentary references have been found to substantiate this.

The surviving cellar on Tenement 168 was rectangular in shape and divided into two sections. It measured at least 11 m by 3.5 m. The surviving ashlar block vaulting was aligned in two directions: that in the eastern part (the street frontage) was aligned parallel to the street, north-south, while the vault over the western section of the cellar ran east-west. Both vaults were sprung from stringcourses with a simple chamfered moulding that matched that seen in the vault at Tenement 173. As noted above, documentary evidence for Tenement 169 notes the presence in the mid 13th century of an adjacent stone house (at Tenement 168), suggesting that the date of the stone construction here is probably early 13th century. Access between the two sections of the cellar was via two doorways, the northernmost utilised Bembridge limestone and was substantial with large hollow chamfers leading down to broach stops. The doorway did not appear primary to the partition wall, although secondary alterations or widening may give the same appearance as a complete insertion.

Juxtaposing vault orientations such as that evident here have been recorded in Southampton at the Lower High Street site, where a series of investigations and conservation exercises over several decades on a similarly complex arrangement of tenements and vaults awaits publication (SOU 266). However the vault orientations on the Lower High Street are separate tenements each laid out with their gable ends facing a street frontage. Since the buildings are on a corner plot, they face two different streets; High Street and Broad Street and so are aligned in two directions. It is always simpler to construct the entrance to a rectangular vault at the gable end of the building, making it reasonable to assume that the building at Tenement 168 was originally constructed with a vault access facing to the south. While the land to the south never served as a street the adjacent property (Tenement 167) appears to have been under the same ownership until the 17th century and no mention of a second building has been found before the Terrier of the 1454 (which notes a cottage on Tenement 167). The vault was therefore presumably accessed via adjacent land and it was only when commercial pressure on the High Street dictated development in the gap that it became necessary to reconstruct the entrance to the vault of Tenement 168 facing the High Street. This would suggest that the western side of the vault was a later addition orientated towards a secondary entrance on the High Street.

The cellar at Tenement 173 was recorded by Wachter prior to levelling in the 1956-8 excavations and published under a round-up of medieval buildings by P.A. Faulkner as No. 111 High Street (in Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 101). The process of levelling was destructive and less of the structure survived than was originally recorded. During the recent excavations, the large rectangular medieval cellar was found to measure 8.5 m long by 6.5 m and was divided into two parts. The western part and major element of the cellar had an intact vault when previously recorded – this had collapsed under subsequent levelling and infilling but was visible in the section of the rear (western) wall. It was elliptical in profile springing from a simple chamfered string course which in turn topped well-coursed rubble stone walls. The vault itself was constructed from well-cut ashlar blocks.

The published record (which is supported by photographs from the 1940s) noted the presence of a cess pit ‘partly in the thickness of the wall and partly beneath the lane. The half below the lane was spanned by a well-formed four-centred arch in the thickness of the wall’ (ibid.) which seemed to have formed the lower part of a vertical shaft (garderobe) from above. A substantial stone southern wall survived above the cellar. The wall incorporated a window with internal splay and external chamfer, of similar character to the earliest of the hall windows in the north wall of No. 58 French Street. The wall at Tenement 173 extended to the High Street where it was finished with quoins suggesting a timber frontage. On the basis of the available evidence and in comparison to No. 58 French Street, Faulkner interpreted the date of the cellar as late 14th century, although in the same publication the building was dated by Faulkner as early 14th century. More recently investigations by English Heritage (1983-5) provided documentary research confirmed by dendrochronological dating to show that No. 58 French Street was built in the 1290s (Monument No. 1084978 – Scheduled Monument Notification 01-AUG-1996) and, as noted above, Tenement 173 was noted to be a stone house in the mid 13th century.

*Tenement 237, Polymond’s Hall (Figs 7.6-7.9)*

Tenement 237 was by far the largest property recorded by the excavation and was the most significant in terms of finds assemblages and its documented history. A series of reconstructions spanning the medieval to post-medieval periods is given in Figs 7.6-7.9. The presence of a substantial building is first documented here in 1254-72 as ‘the great stone buildings of Richard of Leicester’ (see Chapter 2) although Platt suggested that Leicester built and disposed of the property before 1221 (Platt 1973, 248). The evidence suggests that a major building was constructed in the late Anglo-Norman period that was perhaps contemporary with the great late 12th-century houses of Southampton: Canutes’ Palace, West Hall and Bull Hall. During

most of the late medieval period this was a prosperous tenement. In the late 14th century it had been bequeathed to the St Denys Priory and was leased by a wealthy and prominent burgess, John Polymond. Polymond’s properties (among others in the town) extended to Tenements 180 (then known as Polymond’s Gate), Tenements 174/5 on the High Street and the adjacent French Street property, Tenement 238. Tenement 237 was for a long time known as Polymond’s Hall: the reconstruction of the building published here (Fig. 7.7) illustrates the expansion of the property with an eastern range and proposes that this was built by John Polymond or his immediate heirs. Since there is no documentary evidence to support this suggestion and artefact dating cannot give exact resolution, the premise is effectively based on the wealth and prominence of the family and their accession of the neighbouring property, Tenement 180. The style of the illustrated eastern range is based on the (somewhat misnamed) ‘Tudor’ Merchants Hall, which dates to the early 15th century and is located adjacent to the Westgate, Southampton.

In 1454 the Southampton Terrier describes the property as a capital tenement of St Denys occupied by an Italian merchant. Antonio Perugino, the Venetian Consul, is said to have resided in the property during the 15th century (although the primary source for this information is unknown, see Chapter 2). Following the dissolution of St Denys Priory in 1536 ‘Polymond’s Hall’ came into the possession of the Mills family. In 1551 John Mills, when bequeathing it to his son, described it as ‘Seynt Denys Olde House alias Polymondes Hall’ and included cellars and garden and ‘such part of the garden as is enclosed with pales adjacent to the corner tenement of Thomas Edmond’s’ (possibly the garden meaning Tenement 238 and Thomas Edmond’s tenement being Tenement 173 which adjoined the rear of Tenement 238).

What little remained of the primary building, in the west range of the tenement buildings, can be confidently dated to the late 12th to early 13th century from a combination of documentary and physical evidence. The building (reconstructed in Fig. 7.6) conforms to the ‘Norman hall over basement’ typology seen at Canute’s Palace and is distinct from the merchant house structures on the site that it preceded. The building was sunken rather than basemented and measured 10.8 m by 4.5 m, aligned parallel to the street frontage, with walls c 1 m thick. Two splayed window recesses were visible in the eastern wall. Two stairways were present; one at the north-eastern corner of the eastern wall and a spiral stair at the south-eastern corner of the building. The northern staircase formed part of a circulation through the northern (kitchen?) range, which in turn had access through to an external staircase in a courtyard, which would have led to the first floor hall. The spiral staircase foundations and the location of the south-west range suggest that this was a chamber block. The

Fig. 7.6 Tenement 237: reconstruction showing the property as it may have appeared in the high medieval period, with buildings ranged around the central courtyard well

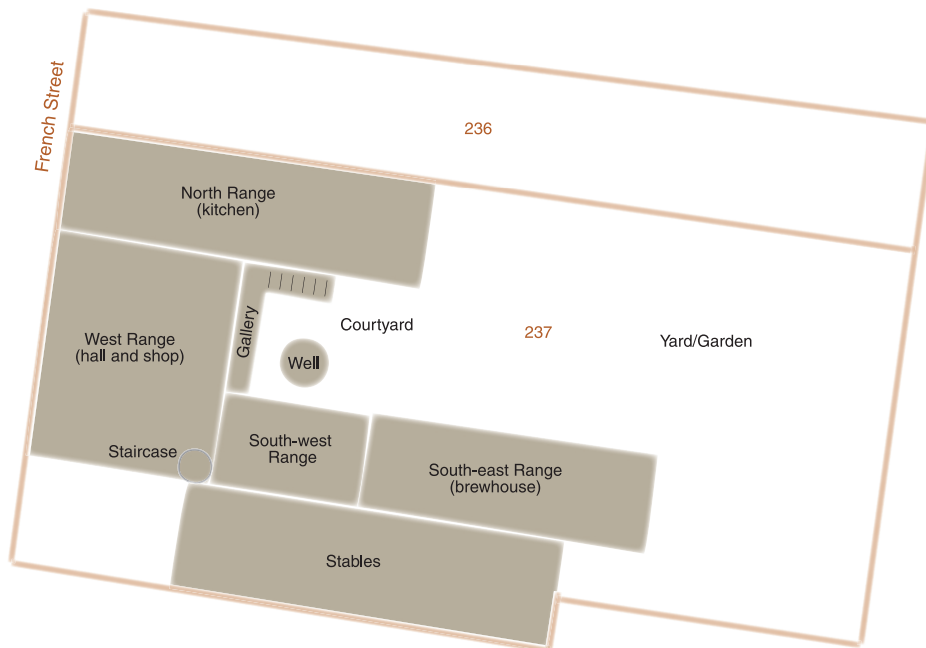
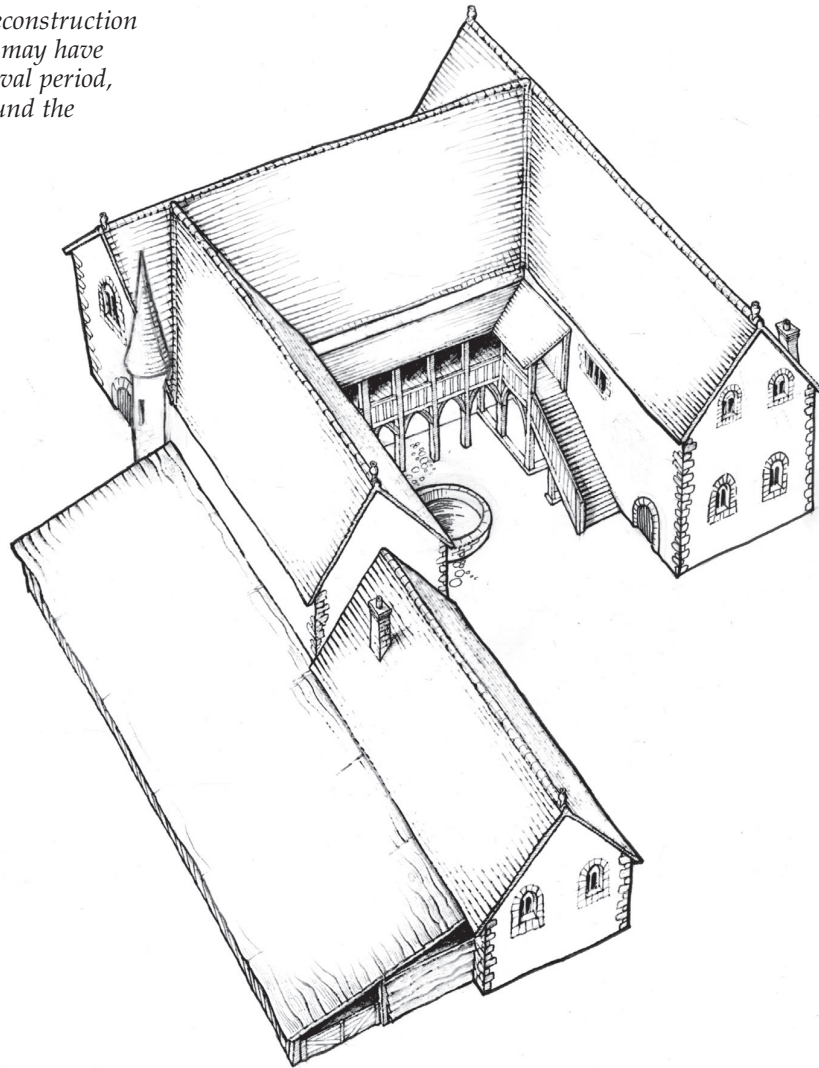


Fig. 7.7 Tenement 237:  
reconstruction showing  
the insertion of the east  
wing – 'Polymond's Hall'  
– in the late 14th century

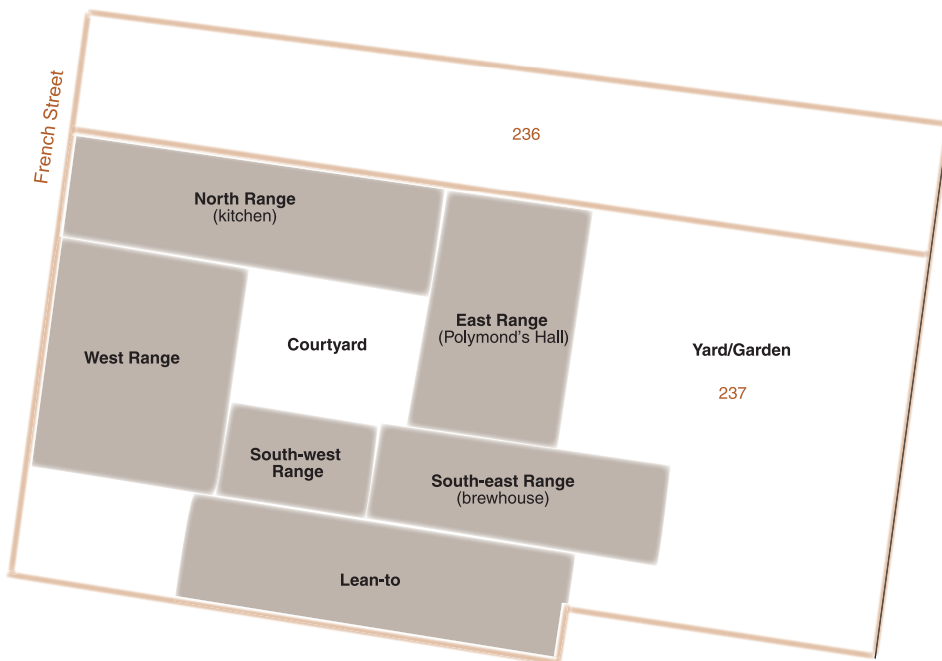
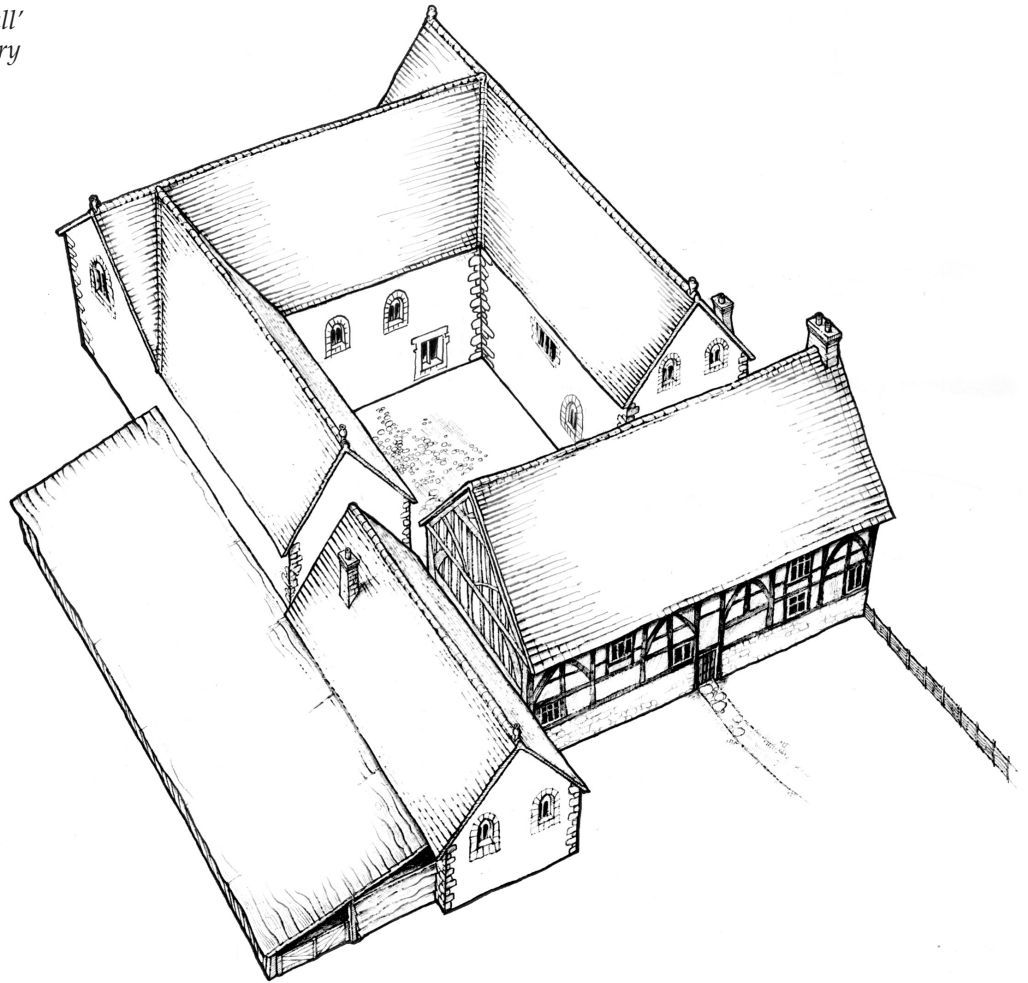
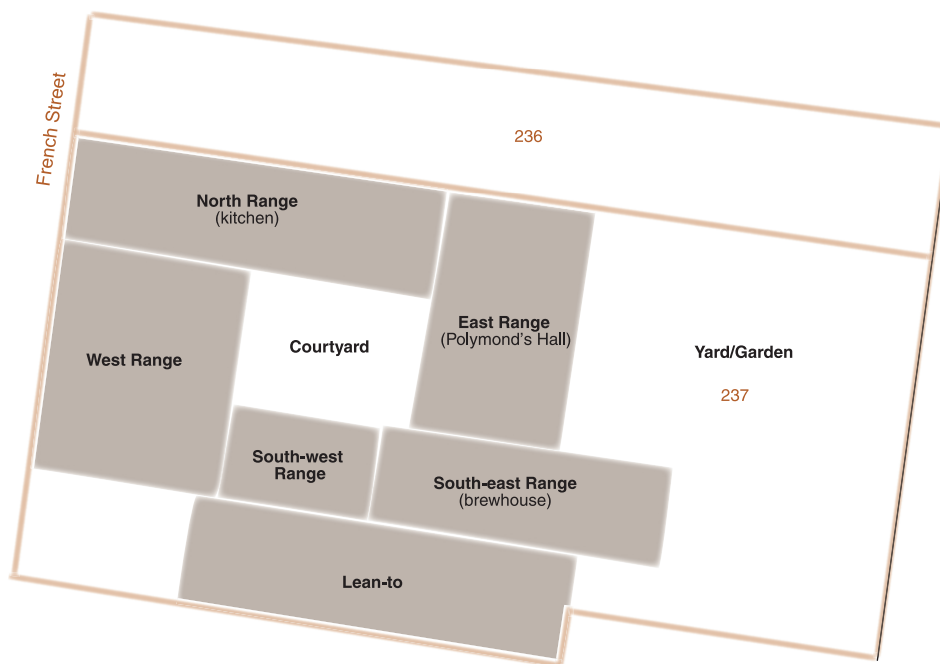
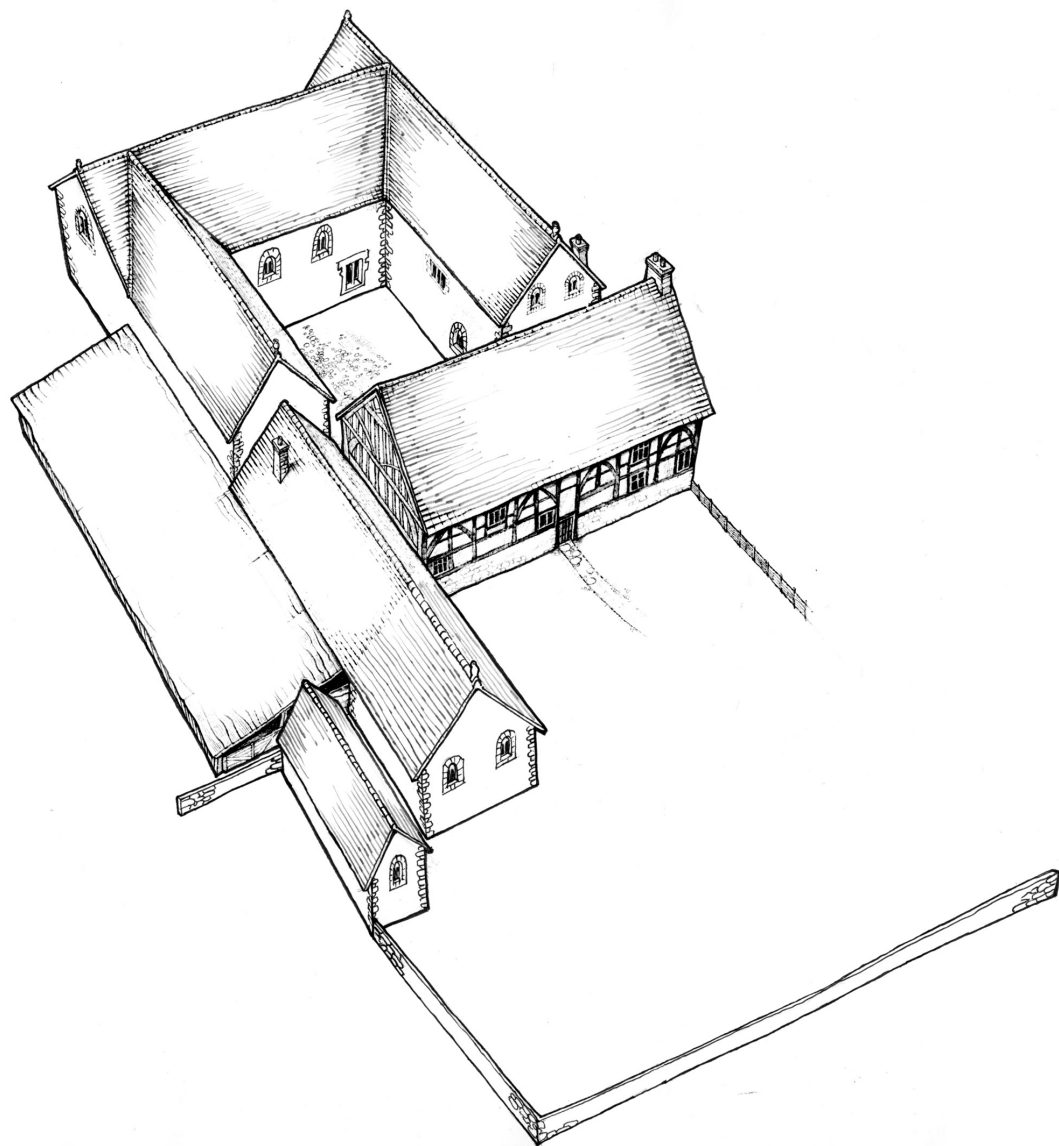




Fig. 7.8 Tenement 237: reconstruction at the time of occupancy by the Watts' family in the 17th century, showing the extension of the brewhouse and the insertion of the well house



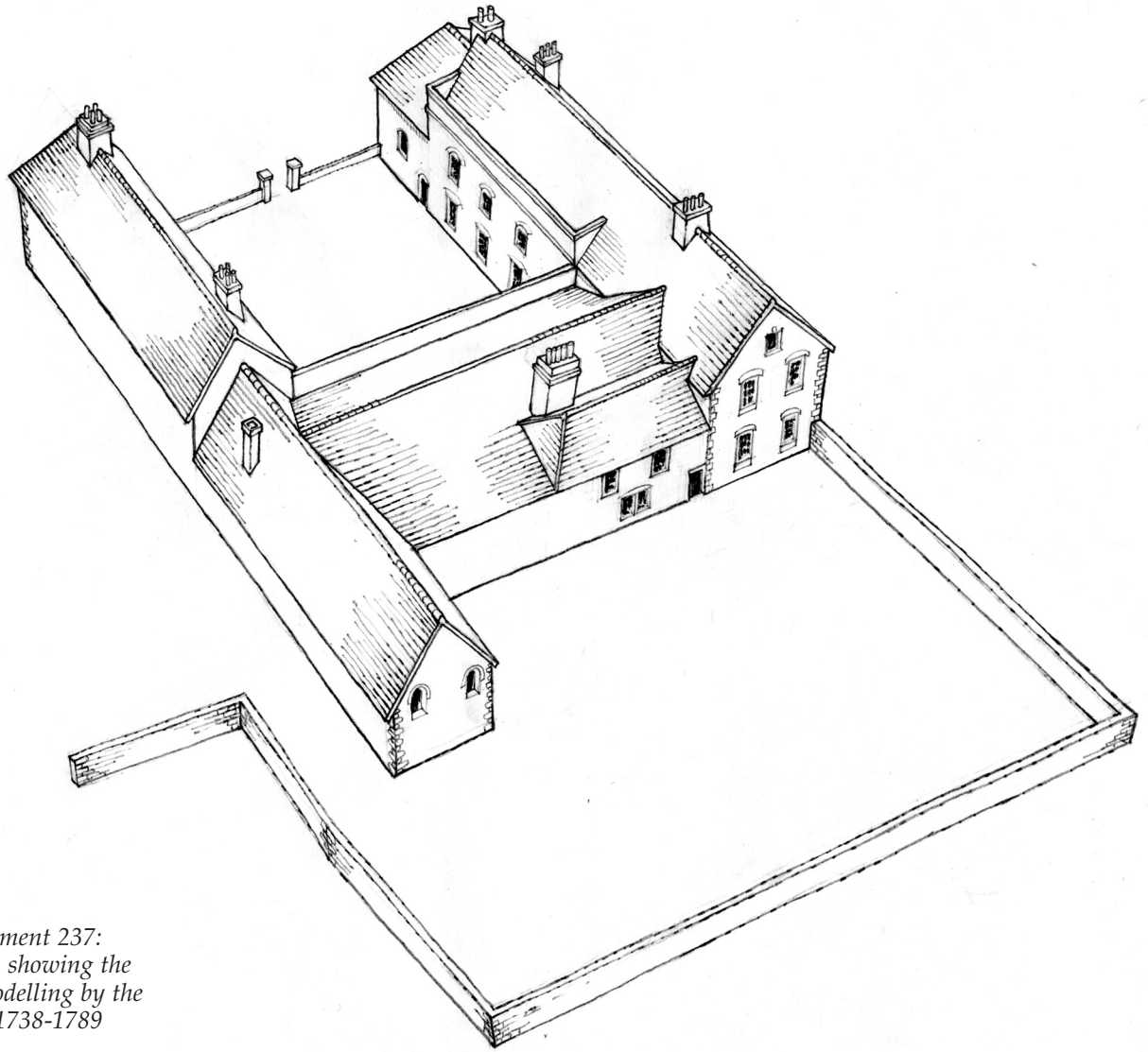
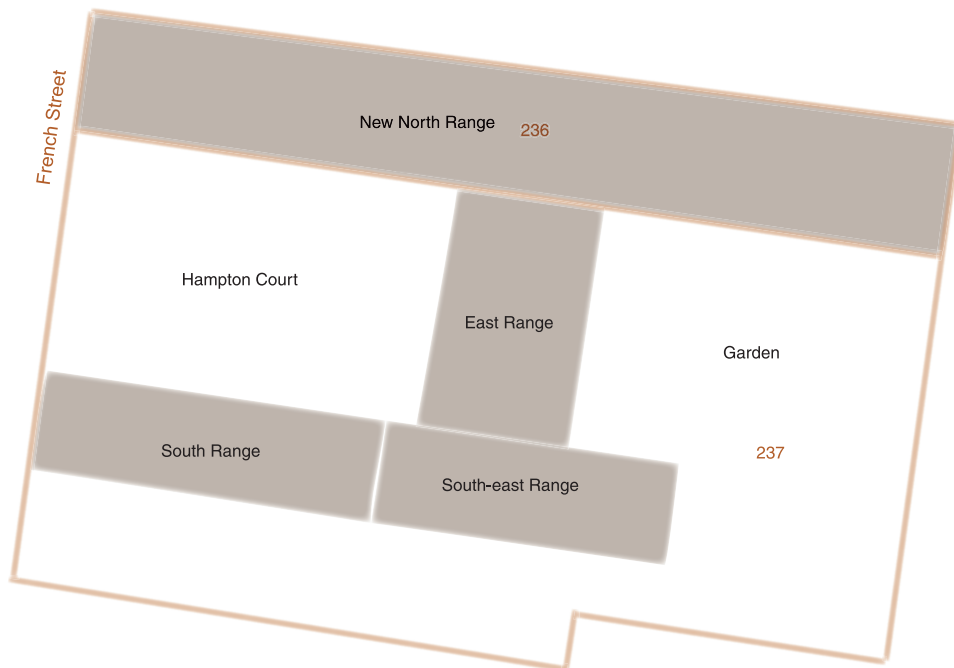


Fig. 7.9 Tenement 237: reconstruction showing the Georgian remodelling by the Woodfords, c 1738-1789



garderobe at its eastern end was dated to the 17th century by its infill (last use) but was probably primary in construction and regularly cleaned out.

The evidence for the east range (later the main hall of Polymond's Hall) is somewhat ephemeral as the excavation extended only as far as a small stretch of wall recorded at the eastern limit of the excavation which represented the western wall of the eastern range (this primary wall of the range was later built over during the remodelling of Tenement 237). The wall was abutted by (and therefore earlier than) a preparation layer for the cobbled courtyard which contained a mid 15th-century jetton. A building investigation carried out in 1950 noted a medieval element within the then standing Georgian house which comprised oak roof timbers 'finely framed with tie beams raking struts and wind braces' and a trench investigation in the area of the range carried out in 2003 revealed an internal cobbled floor containing late medieval pottery in its make up layers (see Chapter 1). A reconstruction of the building is suggested in Fig. 7.7.

The other ranges included possible kitchens to the north and stables to the south (see below), with these and the other buildings being set around a courtyard with a central well. These were adapted and developed throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. Access to the property was at one time made via Polymond's Gate (Tenement 180).

#### *The other tenements*

Piecemeal elements of medieval buildings were recorded on Tenements 169, 170, 171, 172, 75, 180, 239, 240, 241, 242 and 243. These are described in Chapter 4. No surviving medieval structures were present on Tenements 167, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179 and 238: notably of these Tenements 167 and 177-79 were all described as cottages in the Terrier.

#### *Building materials and constructional details*

The stone used to construct the medieval and later houses of the French Quarter site included Bembridge limestone quarried at Binstead on the Isle of Wight or the Quarr featherbed. Other materials included Purbeck limestone from Dorset. With the exception of the characteristic string moulding present at springer level in Tenements 166, 168 and 173, there were few decorative stone mouldings associated with the buildings. Those that were present (ie window mouldings in Tenement 180, a chamfered doorway in Tenement 168 and chamfered stone in the well house at Tenement 237) were obviously reused pieces, likely to have been removed from the Priory of St Denys at its dissolution.

The ceramic building material attests to considerable building activity on the site during the high medieval and later periods, with the largest high medieval groups coming from Tenement 237, followed by Tenements 172, 173 and 241 with lesser amounts from the other properties. Much of the

assemblage consists of roofing materials, which confirm the elevated status of Tenements 172, 175, 237 and 241 in the high medieval period (through the use of louvers, finials and chimneys): such items provided both a decorative display and indication of wealth. Of particular note is an anthropomorphological figure of a horse and rider used as a finial, found at Tenement 237, which was clearly a prestigious building. Similar finials are known across Britain, tending to occur more commonly in large towns and ports. Other building materials from the site include brick and floor tiles. Many of the latter were plain glazed examples, although a notable bichrome tile came from Tenement 180 (Polymond's Gate) – this type is normally associated with ecclesiastical sites, but also occurs in the houses of wealthy merchants. A similar range of building materials was present in the late medieval and post-medieval phases. The post-medieval pantiles all noticeably came from properties ranged along the High Street.

Surprisingly little window glass was recovered from the site and there were correspondingly few pieces of lead window came – neither material appearing in contexts earlier than 15th-16th century. Window glass has been retrieved from Southampton dating as early as the 13th century and associated with high status houses (Platt and Coleman 1973a, 33), however it is likely that most domestic structures in the town would have had wooden shutters on window mullions until at least the 15th century.

#### *The tenement yards – cess pits, latrines and wells* (Figs 7.10-7.11)

The identification of features from the high medieval and late medieval periods as cess and/or latrine pits was less subjective than it perhaps was in relation to the earlier periods, due to the nature of the evidence. Twenty-three probable cess pits were recorded from the high medieval period and 19 from the late medieval period. Alongside the greenish tinges at the base of the pits, the features were also generally deeply cut and sub-square in plan. Some contained the remains of wooden lining and nearly all revealed organic material capped or interleaved with relatively sterile material (often natural clay, or domestic dumping containing building material). Such sequences are well-known from other sites throughout the medieval period (for example, at Norwich Castle, Shepherd Popescu 2009a, plate 5.6).

There was a visible hierarchy in the quality of the high medieval cess pits at the French Quarter site. Tenements 237, 173 and 170 all had stone-built garderobes, integral to the fabric of the buildings. Although ostensibly of a late medieval and post-medieval date in relation to artefacts in their infills, pits 6144 (Tenement 170) and 3169 (Tenement 237) were contemporary with the buildings that housed them and their final infilling showed the date of abandonment. More common in the high medieval



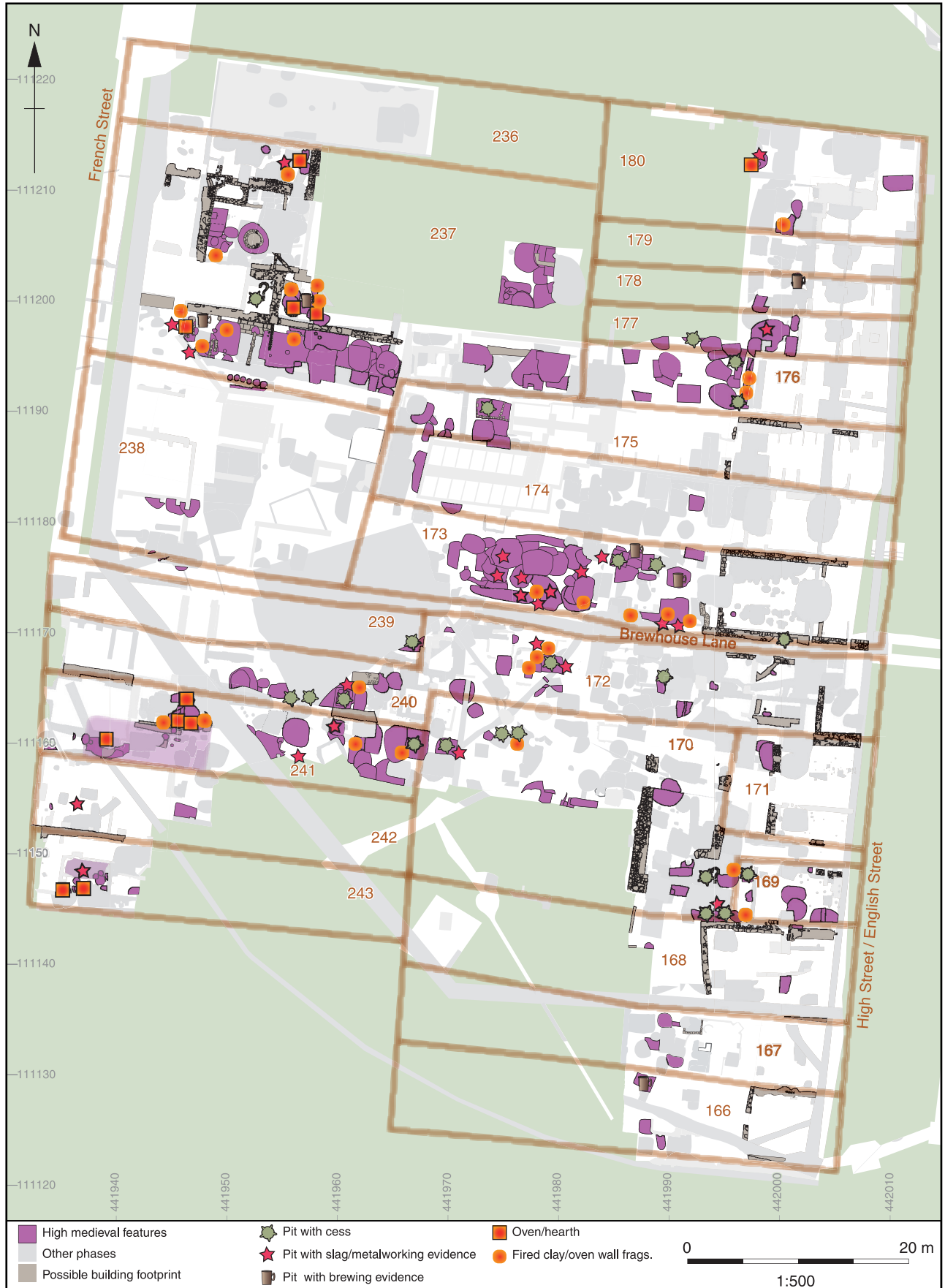


Fig. 7.10 High medieval pit usage and oven/hearth location by tenement

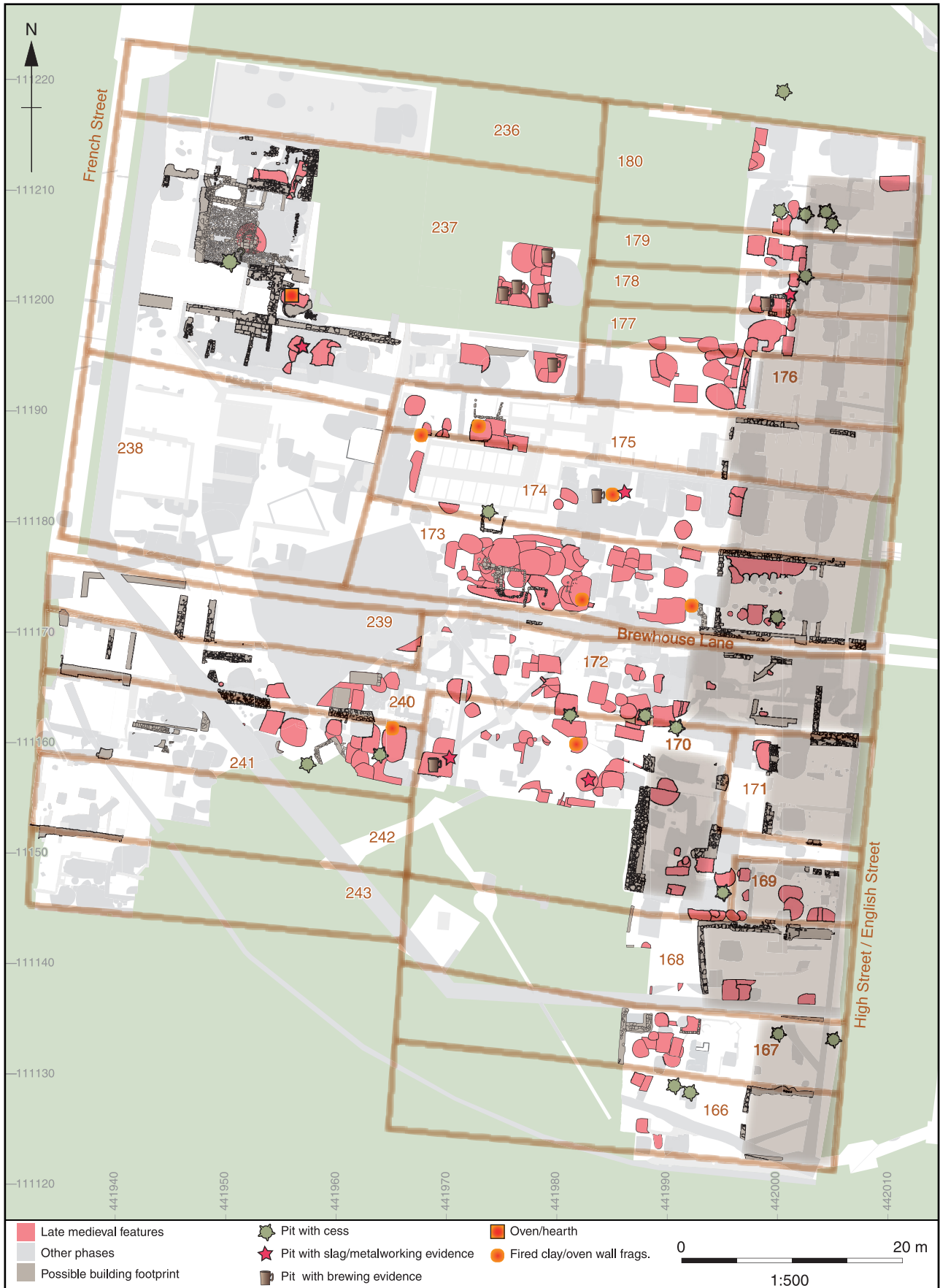


Fig. 7.11 Late medieval pit usage and oven/hearth location by tenement

period was a type of vertical-sided sub-square, deep cess pit, possibly either wood or stone-lined and sited away from the building. Examples of this type were seen in the yards of Tenements 172, 173, 175, 239, 240 and 241. In contrast, Tenements 176 and 169 had closely clustered and irregular shaped cess pits positioned near the building. This distribution would appear to correspond to the limited land available to these properties: the rear of Tenement 176 was for periods of time separately leased as St Denys' garden and Tenement 169 lost much of its yard to Tenement 170.

In the late medieval period most of the cess pits were stone-lined and were commonly sited near to the property boundaries. Pit 1344 appeared to straddle the boundaries of Tenement 173 and 174 and may be an example of a communal toilet. London's cess pits were also generally sited near property boundaries throughout the medieval period, leading to numerous documented complaints about lack of maintenance and misuse (Schofield and Vince 2003 82). The London examples were often placed towards the rear of properties behind the buildings, as is evident in the French Quarter. In Norwich, however, examples have been found close to the relevant street frontage (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, fig. 8.35). The contents of cess pits – night soil – could be traded as a commodity, presumably for manuring fields, with documented examples at Norwich from 1277 until the early 14th century (Ayers 2003, 96).

Some shallow irregular cess pits were found within the cellars of Tenements 168 and 173 at the French Quarter site. While this may seem unexpected and unsanitary in modern terms, cess pits within medieval buildings have been noted in Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1973a, 25) and at other towns and cities (including Stamford; Schofield and Vince 2003, 82). One possible factor in the presence of cess pits within cellars at Southampton may have been the use of the basements as temporary accommodation for soldiers during the several periods of troop mobilisation during the Hundred Years War (see below), meaning periodic occupation by people with no long-term interest in the hygiene of the cellars.

The noisome waste held in cess pits is well attested at the site, with evidence for possible mitigation of the smell by the use of caustic material such as lye or lime. Use of such material appears to be evidenced at Tenement 173 in the high medieval period. The presence of such foul waste, along with rotting fruit and vegetable matter, is amply demonstrated by the range of flies and other insect species present. The range of insect species found are typical of 'house fauna' relating to unheated dwellings with earth floors and of wood, wattle and daub construction, as well as hay-like material which is just beginning to decay. Several of the pit fills contained evidence for the use of straw, perhaps used both to soak up liquids and damp down smells. Although it was sought during

analysis, given that stables were present at Tenement 237, there was no clear evidence for stabling at the site in terms of the beetles and other insects present. Evidence for the presence of an intestinal parasite – human whipworm – was also found, its presence also being attested at many other late Saxon and medieval sites (for example, Dragon Hall in Norwich: Shelley 2005, 32; High Street/Blackfriargate Hull, Schofield and Vince 2003, 240).

The nature of water supply during the early life of the tenements is unclear. Certainly Tenement 237 from its origins was self sufficient with its wells and well house, and these would have been necessary to support the household and industries of the capital tenement, which presumably included the supply of beverages to the neighbourhood in the form of ale. No other medieval or post-medieval wells were found on the site, although this may have been the primary but temporary use of very deep cut features (for instance pit 172 Tenement 172 – over 2 m deep) which were subsequently used as cess and rubbish pits. There were no springs or streams within the medieval town and constant water supply was first brought into the town in the early 14th century via a conduit laid down High Street/English Street to supply the Friary and later a communal/public well house.

### **The Hundred Years War and The Black Death**

The raid on Southampton by a French and Genoese force in 1338, at the start of the Hundred Years War, is a well-known touchstone of Southampton history and Platt dedicates a full chapter to it in his 1973 book on the town. Given the prevailing circumstances of the time, preparations for possible attack were already in hand. In 1337, for example, Edward III ordered the construction of hilltop warning beacons and Hampshire in general was prepared for defence (Platt 1973, 109). In February 1338, the men of Southampton were required to provide ships and men for the king's intended expedition to France, and the raid on the town followed in October of the same year (Platt 1973, 88-89).

The primary source for the raid is *Froissart's Chronicles*: 'the Normans and Genoese entered the town and pillaged and looted it completely. They killed many people and raped a number of woman and girls, which was a deplorable thing. They loaded their ships and vessels with the great plunder they found in town which was well stocked, and then went back on board' (trans. Brerton 1978, 61). The subsequent effects and repercussions have been identified in a plethora of documents. A royal enquiry into the economic impact, for example, suggests the quantities of goods stolen or destroyed including substantial quantities of wine and wool: such were the losses of some of the Florentine merchants that they transferred their business to Bristol until 1341 (Platt 1973, 111). No wool exports from Southampton are



recorded for the year following the raid. The greatest material damage to the town itself took place in the southern area, where parishes were fired as the raiders fled. Excavated deposits confirm the extent of the damage. For example at West Street, in Period 3 of the excavation burnt material was recorded over floor layers between house phases (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 195) and a thick charcoal layer and rubble-filled (building) clearance pits were present on the High Street excavations (*ibid.*, 245). The analysis of the God's House Cartulary includes a table of tenements included in the God's House rentals that could be seen to have been effected by the raid of 1338 (Kaye 1976 vol. I, table 2). Of the properties at the French Quarter site these included Tenement 238 (which was destroyed and never rebuilt), Tenement 240/1 (destroyed but rebuilt by 1340) and Tenement 243 (Kaye lists this property as destroyed and never rebuilt, based on the Gods House rolls, although this is partly contradicted by the Terrier, see below). The excavation confirms the documented destruction. At Tenement 238 there was no evidence of a medieval building, which is probably due to a relatively insubstantial timber building being destroyed and never replaced in stone, as with the majority of the other tenements. There is clear evidence of fire at Tenement 241, although it should be noted that there were two incidents of destruction by fire here during the high medieval period, the first possibly related to the presence of ovens in the building. Similarly significant burning was recorded at Tenement 243 although both the excavation and the Terrier of 1454 show that this tenement was rebuilt by the 15th century.

During the Hundred Years War, Southampton was at times used as a muster and departure point for armies that could number in the region of 10,000-15,000 people: incidences occurred in advance of various campaigns including the Battle of Poitiers in 1356 and Agincourt in 1415. Artefacts of a military nature were found at the French Quarter site, although were not abundant: while it is possible that some may relate to events of the Hundred Years War, it should be noted that wealthy burgesses were obliged to provide men-at-arms after the Genoese raid. Possible mail armour came from Tenement 174 in the high medieval period. The presence of mail and plate armour, an arrowhead, and a billhook (often included among an archer's equipment) from 13th- to 14th-century fills of a pit at Tenement 172, found in conjunction with butchery waste from at least 14 sheep/goats, may provide evidence for the debris left by troops awaiting embarkation for France.

The plate armour is characteristic of the lining of a brigandine or 'coat of plates', which would have been worn by those below the rank of knight. The pieces found at Tenement 172 are from a less highly developed or decorated armour than that found elsewhere, perhaps being more akin to the later pikeman's corslet. Similar examples of riveted plate

have been recovered from 13th- to 14th-century contexts in Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975b, 285-286), although these are commonly simple squared shapes and difficult to identify definitely as armour pieces.

The arrowhead found at Tenement 172 was a long thin socketed bodkin form similar to Jessop type M8, a military form of 13th- to 15th-century date (Jessop 1996) designed for piercing armour. A second arrowhead retrieved from Tenement 237 was a socketed leaf-shaped form (most similar to Jessop type MP3), equally as likely to be used for hunting as military action. The small quantity of arrowheads from the site belies the vast quantity of arrows that would have passed through Southampton and the staggering amounts that were produced in the country during this period. In 1359, for example, the Tower of London was supplied by the counties with 850,000 arrows, 20,000 bows and 50,000 bow strings (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, 744).

Of particular note from the French Quarter site is a nut from a large military crossbow (arbalest), possibly a siege bow, found in a high medieval pit at Tenement 170. Although use of the crossbow by private individuals was prohibited in the medieval period, coastal towns such as Southampton were exempted, in fact the crown at several times supplied munitions to the town including arbalests, springalds, quarrels, bows arrows, lances and breastplates as well as an expert to aid the construction of a mangonel or catapult following the 1338 raid (Platt 1973, 114). The crossbow, which developed from the classical *ballista*, was adopted in England in the late 12th century, despite having been outlawed by the Pope: while it was a highly accurate weapon, it had a slow rate of fire and the archer required protection when firing (Pounds 1990, 108-109).

From the late 14th century, Southampton's town walls were adapted or constructed for gun use, with alterations in the 15th century: their early adaptation to this purpose relates to the danger of cross-channel raids along the south coast of England. Such was the concern about the town's weakness after the 1338 raid that an inquisition into the defences was made in 1360, after which a continuous wall was constructed (Burgess 1976, 21). Indeed, 'the improved defences of Southampton and their guns were sufficiently effective to hold off French raiding fleets in the fifteenth century while elsewhere towns were attacked and burnt' (Burgess 1976, 22). These events provide a backdrop for the Terrier of 1454.

The Black Death reached Southampton in 1348. The influence of the resultant depopulation is apparent in the lack of impetus to rebuild on the tenement plots affected by the 1338 raid and occasionally in the documentary record. Kaye for instance notes the successive deaths of Edward and Alice Kemp in April and May of 1349 on Tenements 177-79 (1976, 361). Perhaps to this list could be

added Roger Le Horder whose subsequent tenancy of Edward and Alice's property lasted only a year, Thomas le Taverner at Tenement 169 who died in 1348, Robert de Wight's occupancy of Tenement 173 which finished in 1348 and Richard Elmele and Robert Cuttergare's tenancy of Tenements 241/2, which started in 1347 and was over before 1349.

### Urban living in the medieval to post-medieval French Quarter

#### Documentary evidence

During the high medieval period the majority of the holdings at the French Quarter site were owned by notable town merchant families and either occupied as capital tenements or more commonly leased as shops (sometimes shops occupied by owners) and are often named as such; Tenements 170-171, 174-5, 177-179, 238 (prior to its destruction in 1338 raid) and 242 are all referenced as shops by the late 13th-14th century (see Chapter 2). While caution should be employed in ascribing trades to the tenements based on the surnames of the occupants, surnames

at least until the 14th century (notwithstanding the established major merchant families) were still often descriptive and fluid rather than inherited. These have therefore been examined for the excavation site, together with the specific description of trades that is occasionally given. All entries are presented by tenement in Table 7.1, with the source reference being given in Chapter 2.

The list does not indicate closely grouped zoning of crafts within the excavation area. It is noteworthy that the listed crafts are generally artisan trades and missing from the list are the blacksmiths, butchers, fullers, tanners, dyers and millers. This indicates that, by at least by the 15th century, the more noisome and/or anti-social occupations were being located elsewhere within or outside the town. A useful comparative example comes from late medieval Norwich, where analysis of the documentary evidence of more than 70 trades and occupations indicated a dominance of metal trades and weaponry during the late 14th to mid 16th centuries (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, fig. 8.63 and table 9.2). Among the dominant groups here were the brasiers (bell-founders) and skinner, as well as others

Table 7.1. Trades and crafts suggested by personal names or listed trades (14th to 15th century)

Tenement	Name	Possible trade/craft	Date
T167-168	Peter Sone	poticarie (apothecary)	1495
T169	Thomas le Taverner	taverner (inn-keeper)	1333-1349
T170-171	Hugh le Barbur & John le Coupere	cooper (maker of barrels)	1333-1337
	John Cras & William Peyntour	corvoyser (shoemaker) painter (decorator in paint and gilding) of solid objects such as wood)	1416-1418
	William Peyntour & Roger Tayllour	tailor	1419-1420
	Thomas Downe Patynnemaker	clog maker	1421
	Cornelius hardwareman	hardwareman	1423-1424
	Thomas Glasiere	glazier	1431-1435
T172	John Wyttenale	merchant	1409
T173	Richard Jacob & 'Hamond schypman'	possibly a foreign shipping merchant renting out the tenement basement	1401
T177	William sutor	cobbler	1467-72
	Robert Taylor	tailor	1473-5
	Andrew Capper	cap maker	1476
	Robert Wryght	wright (carpenter)	1479
	Robert Potycary	apothecary	1481-87
	Philip Capper	cap maker	1487-8
	John Brown wever	weaver	1488-9
T178	Florentia le Lym	baker	1361
	Richard Cras	tailor	1406
	John Mason	tailor	1410
	John Berd barbour	barber (possibly a barber-surgeon)	1427-1429
	John Chevelon	skinner	1435
	Henry Plomere	plumber (or possibly a plumer ie dealer in feathers)	1436-1452
T240-241	Thomas Sadeler	saddler	1407-35
	John Payn	merchant	1450-1455
	Lewse schypman	shipman	1458-1460
	William Taylour	tailor	1470
	Angelo Catayn & Cevo Catayn	merchants (Italian merchants)	1473-1475
	John Chawndeler	chandler (dealer in candles and/or other merchandise)	1484

among the groups noted above as absent at Southampton's French Quarter, reflecting the fact that in Norwich some of the more unpleasant trades were conducted in the open space of the castle defences rather than on the outskirts of the city.

### *Craft and daily life*

#### *Crafts and occupations*

As in the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman phases, the relative lack of some of the crafts often present at medieval sites reflects the character both of the tenements examined and the nature of this part of the town, with its substantially mercantile function. For example, evidence of metalworking on the French Quarter site as a whole was relatively slight, amounting to 18kg of mainly undiagnostic slag. On the basis of the diagnostic remains present, the assemblage probably all relates to smithing work. Mapping of the retrieved metalwork assemblage shows a correlation between the distribution of the location of metalworking waste and ovens in the high medieval period, implying small-scale domestic metalworking such as minor repairs, in multi-use ovens and beyond this a clustering of slag and some smithing hearth bottoms on Tenement 173 (Fig. 7.10). Tenements 173 and 237 were the only properties where fragments of horseshoe nails and horseshoes were retrieved in the high medieval period, and the excavation has demonstrated the presence of stables during the high medieval attached to the southern range of Tenement 237. Given the comparable capital tenement status of Tenement 173 and the fired clay and metalworking evidence it seems likely that this property also contained some facility for stabling and smithing (see below). A very large whetstone from Tenement 237 may indicate status, although the generally low level of wear on the whetstones recovered from the site as a whole reflects the relative lack of craft activity and workshops.

Ovens and/or hearths were recorded on Tenements 237, 243, 241 and 180 in the high medieval period, with further oven lining material retrieved from Tenements 169, 170, 172, 176, 237, 241 and 243. On Tenement 237 the hearths of the south range and possible stables can be interpreted as malting kilns and a smithing hearth respectively. The hearths on Tenements 180 and 243 and within the north range of Tenement 237 appear to have been domestic cooking ovens that were also periodically used for small-scale metalwork repairs. The sequence of high medieval ovens recorded at Tenement 241 suggests, in relation to the size of the building, that this property was probably a commercial bakery. This possibility is also reflected in the assemblage of fired clay, which demonstrates the character of the clay domes that sealed the ovens and the means of their insulation (clay with a high straw content and/or turf). Historical records show that only limited numbers of medieval households

had their own bread oven, often the manor house in rural areas, and the lord would charge for others to bake their bread in his oven. This may also have been the case in towns, although professional bakers are known to have been at work in urban centres from the 13th century (Schofield and Vince 2003, 122). At the French Quarter site, the distribution of relevant features and materials reflects those properties with other evidence for wealth or status (Tenements 237, 241, 170, 172 and 173). These facilities were not, however, exclusive to the more prestigious properties and some of the smaller cottages (Tenements 167, 174-6 and 178) on the High Street frontage also produced sufficient fired clay to indicate the presence of such structures. This raises the possibility that some of these may also have served as a baker's shop(s) at some point during the Anglo-Norman or high medieval phases.

Fuels for the various crafts and for domestic use included firewood, reflecting the wood pasture of the surrounding area, with some of the timber probably coming from the New Forest. Other plant remains recovered from the site include a range of cereals (including barley, rye and free-threshing wheat and oats) and provide some evidence of the types of bread and other produce being made. These may have included plum pudding (originally eaten as a savoury) and breads or cakes perhaps flavoured and/or decorated with a variety of seeds. A number of grain pests were recorded, some accidentally, but in one case there was evidence for what may have been an infested batch of post-medieval grain (dumped into limestone tank 3549 at Tenement 237).

Among the other evidence for food processing, a variety of querns and mortars, millstones and a pestle were recovered. The presence of an unusual millstone and several querns at Tenement 173 perhaps indicates a focus on food preparation and production. One small example may have used in malting. In Norwich, it was noted that querns might have been used for grinding malt or roasted grain rather than flour since here 'milling was tightly controlled by the city authorities' (Margeson 1993, 239). Tenement 173's millstone is a rare decorated example, indicating high status.

There was a notable lack of ovens on the site in the late medieval period. In Tenement 237 the 'brewhouse' oven was replaced in the late medieval period, and there is an entry at Tenement 178 for a 'Florentia de Lym (baker)' in 1361 (see Chapter 2). This may, however, simply be the result of both domestic and commercial ovens being moved inside the cellared buildings during the late medieval period, with subsequent waste removed from the site rather than cleared into pits in the tenement yards and gardens.

Evidence for brewing was almost entirely focused on and around the south-east range of Tenement 237. Fragments of malting kiln tiles were also retrieved from high medieval deposits at Tenements 166, 173, 175 and 178 and late medieval



deposits at Tenements 170, 174 and 178, but were too few in number to suggest even domestic production on these properties. At Tenement 237 the presence of frequently replaced keyhole-shaped ovens, kiln tiles and germinated barley sprouts showed an industry that had developed to serve a substantial household in the 13th to 14th century, and started a tradition of brewing on the site which culminated in the Hampton Court and Aylward and Co. Breweries which survived until destruction of the area in the Second World War. In the Anglo-Norman and high medieval periods, the small-scale production of ale (beer, unflavoured by hops) reflects such production at other urban centres, while the evidence at Tenement 237 appears to link to more regulated and larger scale production: such activity would have come under the control of guilds by the 16th century. Southampton's Oak Book of c 1300 records trade information on three types of medieval beverage: wine, cider and beer, of which wine was predominant as both export and import (Studer 1910, xviii). The French Quarter site was clearly closely involved in both the production of beer/ale and the wine trade throughout its medieval and later history, as is detailed further below. Brewing was a popular trade in Southampton and was subject to constant regulation. For instance, in 1531 'for the avoidance of gambling and idleness, 'by reason that every other house is a bruer or tapper,' the number of brewers and tappers was strictly apportioned' (Page 1908, 522). The beer would have been of several regulated strengths, charged for according to a standard laid down by the town corporation. The introduction of hops (first attested in London in the early 15th century) meant that storage areas were incorporated into brewhouses as, unlike ale, beer made with hops could be stored and transported (Schofield and Vince 2003, 91).

The presence of textile workers and clothing manufacturers is suggested both by the documentary evidence for tailors, cappers, shoe and clog makers and a weaver noted in the 14th to 15th centuries (Table 7.1), as well as by a range of associated tools. The increasing quantities of sheep bones in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods reflects the growing trade in British wool of the period, which is discussed further below.

Apothecaries and chemists were present in the French Quarter during most of the period of occupation, being documented from the late 15th century onwards (Table 7.1). They are attested in archaeological terms by the presence of specialist containers such as urinals, with examples from the site indicating a possible French connection due to the composition of the glass. Examination of urine (uroscopy) was an important element of medieval medical diagnosis and its practice frequently appears in various art and manuscript forms from the 13th to the 17th centuries (Shepherd 2007, 158). Part of a glass curcubit (or receiver; the lower part of a distillation unit used with a round-bottomed

vessel known as an alembic) from distilling apparatus was found at Tenement 172, such vessels being relatively uncommon. Fragments of possible industrial vessels were also found in the pottery assemblage, including the remnants of a possible receiver. Distilling of the medieval and post-medieval periods might have included the production of 'a wide variety of waters from herbs for medicinal and culinary purposes' (Margeson 1993, 235).

In terms of the building trades, a possible glazier – Thomas Glasiere – was noted at Tenement 170-171 in 1431-1435. Other building trades are suggested by the presence of a possible carpenter at Tenement 177 in 1479, and tools recovered from the site include a gouge or drill bit, adze blade, axe or hammer heads and a saw blade.

Evidence for butchery was recovered from some of the pit fills, with occasional evidence for hornworking and skinning. The leather trades are represented in the list of 14th and 15th century trades in Table 7.1 (including the skinner, saddler and shoemaker) and leatherworkers are known to have been working in the French Quarter during the 15th century. An awl used in leatherworking was recovered from Tenement 237. Given the evident presence of stabling facilities at this property in the high medieval period, there is relatively little evidence for the presence of horses at the site, although it does include the evidence for small-scale smithing noted above, as well as the presence of horseshoes, horseshoe nails and a harness pendant. Horse bones were evident in small numbers, with examples from the late Saxon to high medieval periods showing evidence of butchery.

Craft and industrial activities conducted on the French Quarter site during the post-medieval period included cloth dyeing, butchery and brewing: these are noted in the section on the Watts' family occupancy of Tenement 237 below.

#### *Diet*

Analysis of the animal bones indicates the patterns of local provisioning, with concomitant evidence for livestock management. Whole cattle carcasses appear to have been present at the site in the high medieval period, with a relative increase in the number of pig limbs and heads. In the late medieval period, it appears that both cattle and sheep/goat were now frequently sold as smaller joints of meat, reflecting patterns of consumption observed elsewhere in the town. There seems to have been a decline in the number of cattle and pig in relation to sheep/goat in the post-medieval period. The greatest variety in patterns of consumption across the various tenements occurred in the late medieval period, when cattle remains associated with Tenement 237 show a higher frequency of the haunch of the animal, while sheep/goat bones from the other tenements show a preference for the fore-limb. In all periods, however, the consumption of beef was dominant.

The faunal evidence attests to the consumption of a range of domestic and wild birds, the latter including a variety of game birds and birds of prey which again indicate a degree of status. Further indications of wealth are provided by the swan bones from Anglo-Norman to post-medieval deposits. Swan was a festive delicacy for those of higher status, although was evidently consumed by people of lower status at the French Quarter site, bones having been recovered from a range of tenements including Tenement 237.

As would be expected from its maritime setting, the site's excavated assemblage of fish bone is dominated by marine species, with Tenement 237 providing the greatest quantity and diversity of species. The evidence appears to reflect the rise in commercial fishing from *c* AD 1000, primarily focused on those species such as herring and cod that could be preserved and transported. As with the bird species, some of the fish bones present attest to trade with Scotland and more distant places in the late medieval and post-medieval periods. Sources of the fish known to have been imported to Southampton during the medieval period include herrings from Suffolk and Norfolk and other species from Guernsey, Brittany, Normandy, Holland, Devon, Dorset and Cornwall, Ireland and Newfoundland. In general, the evidence indicates the continued importance of fish in the diet. The level of consumption of shellfish, however, appears to have declined in the high medieval period with the change to a more 'urban' economy: the consumption of oysters was dominant in the later periods.

The plant remains indicate an overall stability of plant usage, with the range of species present increasing over time. Evidence for a varied diet comes from the remains of a variety of fruits (including blackberry, cherry, fig, grape, bullace/greengage/damson/plum, pear, apple/raspberry and wild/alpine strawberry), some of which were probably used dried, although the Oak Book records the importation of apples and pears by sea (Studer 1911, 13). Documentary evidence attests to the presence of gardens and orchards at the French Quarter site and the insect pests recovered from post-medieval deposits at Tenement 237 notably included the 'apple blossom weevil', suggesting that at least some of these fruits may have been locally grown.

Almonds and walnuts were present on the site in the high medieval period. The presence of both walnut shells and charcoal suggest that a walnut tree may have been growing at Tenement 237. Walnuts were however, listed among the imports in the Oak Book; where they are described as 'French nuts'. Other fruit and nuts noted among the imports recorded by the Oak Book include figs, dates and raisins from the Mediterranean.

Other foodstuffs attested by the plant remains from the site include broad beans and peas. Evidence for flavourings and food decoration

comes from the possible presence of parsley in the late Saxon and late medieval periods, as well as flax/linseed and opium poppy. Of particular note is the discovery of the remains of cumin at Tenement 177, the first discovery of its kind in Britain. This would have been used either in cooking or as a hair colourant and is documented as having been used in the payment of rent at Tenement 169 from the mid 13th century (Chapter 2). Cumin is listed among the most valuable of the imports from the Mediterranean in the Oak Book, which also notes other spices including pepper, ginger, zedoary, cinnamon, galingale (a member of the ginger family), mace, cubebs (tailed pepper), cloves and saffron (Studer 1910, xvii). The custom listed as paid on cumin going out from Southampton by land and sea in *c* 1300 was 2d per bale and 1d for a bale in *c* 1329 (Studer 1910, 9, 21).

#### *Household life*

Many of the household items found at Southampton's French Quarter have parallels in urban centres such as London, Norwich and Winchester, although this is partly a result of the quantity and origin of published material available for comparison. The typical range of urban household tools and equipment was recovered from the French Quarter site and in some cases does not reflect the known status of particular properties. The metalwork, for example, includes standard items such as knives, locks, keys and a range of other household objects; personal possessions are relatively limited. Among the other finds recovered from the site, the most opulent items are the wide range of examples of fine glassware, which form an important assemblage in their own right (see 'Merchants and Trade' below). The large assemblage of pottery exhibits a wide range of forms, including cooking, serving and storage vessels and those with other functions. The high medieval to post-medieval range includes jugs, pitchers, bowls, dishes, plates, curfews, costrels, dripping pans, chafing dishes, jars, pipkins, tankards, an aquamanile, watering pots and chamber pots. Lighting is indicated during the high and later medieval periods by the presence of a range of candlesticks, candleholders, lamps and lanterns.

In the post-medieval period, clay pipes are known to have been produced in the French Quarter, resulting in a notable assemblage of such items at the excavation site, with a notably larger group of better quality and imported items found at Tenement 237 potentially dating to the period of occupation by John Combes and the Watts family. A rare post-medieval matchholder in black-glazed Staffordshire pottery was found at Tenement 237. During the 17th century, smoking became a popular occupation despite the high price of tobacco, which was initially imported from the Caribbean, but lower-cost tobacco was imported from Virginia in the late 17th century. Tobacconists were present in Southampton before 1629 and seven individuals

were licensed as retail tobacconists by 1632 (Page 1908, 523). In Norwich, the authorities viewed smoking with extreme disfavour and the first legislation against the habit in public was passed as early as 1677 (Shepherd Popescu 2009b, 915).

### **Merchants and trade**

One of the French Quarter project's key research objectives – the identification and refinement of local and international trading patterns – has clearly been addressed by the excavated remains, not only in terms of the high-status high medieval occupation, but also for the earlier and later periods. Overseas trade on the south coast was dominated by Southampton and Portsmouth. Although wine was the principal export of the 13th century, these ports had numerous contacts including Normandy, Flanders and Brabant, while Cahorsin merchants exported wool from Southampton: the town also served as the outport for the great international fair at Winchester (Miller and Hatcher 1995, 184).

Italian merchants were frequently resident in the town, overseen and accommodated by the burgesses of Southampton under the terms of the Hosting Law of 1439 which was intended to ensure that foreign merchants' commercial dealings were reported and accountable. Vested interests in local government and business meant that factions developed either supporting or against the significant presence of foreign merchants in the town. The entries in the 1454 Terrier for the site show that Robert Aylward had housed Christopher de Vernagis (Cristofano de Vernaccia), a Genoese merchant, in Tenement 237 which he leased from St Denys. Aylward and Nicholas Bylot who was the owner/occupier of Tenement 173 (which incorporated Tenement 238 as its garden) frequently acted as hosts (Platt 1973, 153). Aylward traded principally to Salisbury in wine, soap and dyestuffs although he also had interests in cloth and iron (Platt 1973, 230). He was three times Mayor and obviously a dedicated supporter of the foreign traders. Fragments of olive oil jars, Pisan Maiolica vessels and North Italian sgraffito wares were retrieved from the excavations at Tenement 237. At Tenement 243 John Bedell, who leased the property from God's House was accommodating another Genoese merchant, Peter de Nigro at the time of the Terrier survey.

Other French Quarter inhabitants listed in the Terrier were less enamoured with foreign traders. A member of de Vernagis' household at Polymond's Hall complained bitterly about the inability to get justice from Walter Clerk (who was Mayor in 1457-8 and listed as the owner of Tenement 169 in the Terrier) because of the 'evil will' he held towards the Genoese merchant (see Chapter 2). John Payn was the owner/occupier of Tenement 239 in 1454 as well as holding God's House Tenements 240-41. Like Robert Aylward, John traded in wine, iron, cloth dyestuffs, oil and victuals, but he was also leader of

the anti-foreign faction in the town, an aspect of complex politicking that later led to his deposition as Mayor (Platt 1973, 176).

The revival of Southampton's trade during the 15th century, following the disruptions of the previous century discussed above, was largely based on demand for English wool and cloth: the town was ideally placed for both export from the major cloth producers and as a redistribution centre for imported wines and dyes. In addition, despite the fact that 15th-century 'London weakened the ports ... by drawing away their share of trade, some towns in the south-east gained from the association. Southampton and Sandwich served as outports for the capital, so that Italian ships *en route* to Flanders would load and unload at Southampton without making the longer journey up the Thames estuary' (Dyer 2002, 307).

Some 50% (by weight) of the late medieval pottery retrieved was imported vessels. In general, the ceramic assemblage indicates the presence of exotic high medieval types and imports (continuing a trend from the Anglo-Norman period), supporting the suggestion of early merchant households at the site and their comparative wealth. Two fragments of high medieval whiteware pottery excavated from the site bear 'merchant marks' that were added after firing. Perhaps reflecting the putative presence of the Venetian consul in the late 15th century, the ceramic assemblages from Tenement 237 show high levels of Italian imports, although in general assemblages from the more lowly tenements of the same period (the cottages) are not very different, suggesting that imported pottery was readily available in late medieval Southampton. Overall, pottery does not appear to have had a great deal of status in the consular household. Notable among the imported wares, however, is a rare fragment of alkaline glazed pottery, possibly brought from Syria in the late medieval period.

The late medieval glass assemblage from the French Quarter, comprising domestic, Italian/Millefiori, Venetian, French and German vessels, is one of the finest uncovered in recent years and includes some currently unparalleled examples. Among these is a fragment of spherical flask in purple glass, a colour normally associated with Islamic traditions, rather than a European style, and a rare highly decorated piece of soda glass pedestal beaker. Notable imports and unusual items ranging from the medieval period to the 18th century were found at Tenements 172, 176 and 237, the latter unsurprisingly with the greatest concentration of finds, given its connections with Italian merchants and the Venetian consul, as well as the relative status of its later occupants.

Reflecting the wine trade, the occupations listed in Table 7.1 indicate the presence of a taverner at Tenement 169 in 1333-49, taverns being drinking-houses for the consumption of wine during the medieval period (Schofield and Vince 2003, 91). Such consumption is also clearly evident at the



French Quarter site from the high medieval period onwards, with the presence of wine glasses and goblets, notably including 14th- and 15th-century examples at Tenement 237. Fragments of wine bottles of early and mid 18th-century date were recovered from Tenements 172, 176 and 237; such tablewares were becoming increasingly common on the tables of the emerging middle classes. A possible cooper is documented at Tenements 170-171 in 1333-37. Cask hoops found at Tenement 173 indicate the presence of stored wine in the early modern period. This large container would either have been a pipe or a tun, both of which were used to transport wine. Wine and spirit merchants are known to have been present at the French Quarter site in the modern period, with examples at Tenements 168 and 175 being reflected in constructional details of the relevant cellars. Much of the pottery assemblage attests to vessels used for storage, serving and drinking, the latter including pitchers and jugs.

Exotic birds and animals (such as the monkey found at Southampton's Cuckoo Lane; see Chapter 1) formed part of the long distance trade and were much prized by wealthier households. Of the birds of prey from the French Quarter site (a peregrine falcon from Tenement 172 and a gyrfalcon from Tenement 237), the gyrfalcon from Scandinavia, Greenland or Iceland would have been a costly item, perhaps kept as a visible display of wealth. Of particular interest among the bird bones are those of great auk recovered from a post-medieval pit at Tenement 237: remains of such birds are not normally found outside Scotland at this late date and the bird may have reached the French Quarter site having been preserved as an internationally

traded commodity. Contacts with northern Britain, Scandinavia or further afield are also indicated by the presence of red or black-throated diver in a late medieval pit (at Tenement 237), again indicating maritime trade.

Documentary references to 'shipmen' in the 15th century reflect the town's maritime connections, which are also attested by various finds from the site. At Tenement 173, one such reference in 1401 may relate to the letting out of the cellar to a foreign merchant. Numerous clenched nails and roves recovered from the Anglo-Norman period onwards, are of the type used in medieval ship building; many of these came from Tenement 172. The French Quarter's proximity to the sea and the dominant presence of the port and its community in the day-to-day life of the tenements is obscured in modern Southampton, surrounded as it is by multi-story buildings, reclaimed land to the west and an extended quay to the south. Only 250 m to the south and 200 m to the west, however, were the quays where an enormous fleet was once assembled and maintained for the Agincourt campaign, estimated at 1500 vessels (Barker 2005, 153). Many ships were built at Southampton's port. William Soper, one time owner of Tenement 167-168, had several ships built for Henry V's navy including the Holy Ghost, the Gabriel and the Grace Dieu (Ruddock 1951, 36; Barker 2005, 95). Vibrant trade activity, military supply, ship construction and fishing were all intrinsic aspects of medieval life and employment near the port.

In the final decades of the medieval period Southampton's trade with the Mediterranean dissipated and with it went the prosperity of the town.

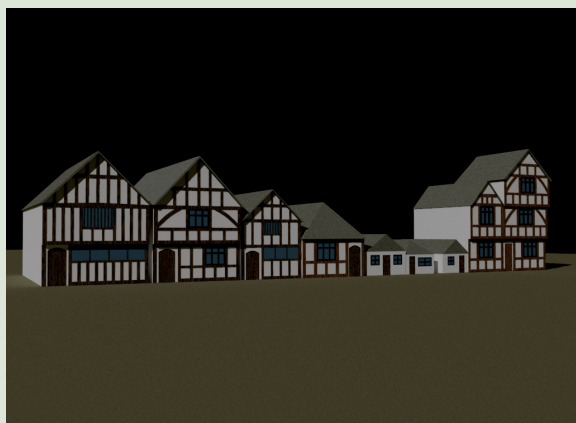


Fig. 7.12 Reconstruction of properties ranged along the High Street in 1454, by Matt Jones

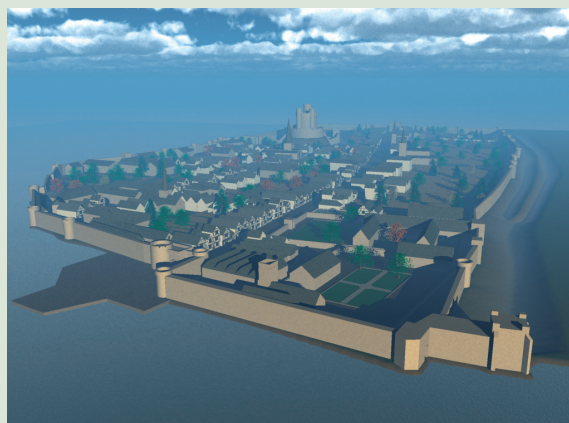


Fig. 7.13 Reconstruction of medieval Southampton as it may have appeared in 1454, by Matt Jones

The figures above are a representation of the High Street properties and medieval Southampton in 1454 based on the data of the Southampton Terrier and including the excavated footprint of the French Quarter buildings. The images were produced as part of a 3D-computer model constructed by Matt Jones at Southampton University who was awarded the 3Dvisa student award 2007 for the project. The model can be seen in the Museum of Archaeology Southampton.

In effect the town declined from being one of the most important centres of the country's medieval trade to a decayed Elizabethan port (Ruddock 1949, 137-151).

### **The home of Isaac Watts and the French Quarter in the 17th century**

In 1620 Tenement 237 was the home of 'Sergemaker' Matthew Vibert and was described as a large house with outbuildings, stables, shops, cellars, gardens and orchards. Between 1675-1737 the tenement was the home of the Watts family and is recorded as including a boarding school and cloth factory. Isaac Watts, the prolific and famous hymn writer, was born in Southampton in 1674 and died in 1748. His father was a non-conformist preacher who spent some time in prison and was also a cloth merchant and school teacher. In 1661, just 14 years before Isaac lived here, the probate inventory of John Combes listed the array of buildings which included a hall, a kitchen, a gallery, a back chamber, a coal house, a brewhouse, two mill houses and a mill loft, a malt loft, a shear shop and a press house.

The Watts' occupation of the property preceded a major rebuilding on the site carried out by the Woodfords (which included the incorporation of Tenement 236 to the north and the building of an undercroft on that site as well as the demolition of the street frontage building) and the character of the tenement during their occupation was substantially a medieval hall rather than the open-fronted Georgian town house represented in paintings and photographs prior to its demolition in the late 1950s. A reconstruction of the house at the time of Watts' occupation is shown in Fig. 7.8.

The inventory of John Combes (Appendix 2) and John MacGregors' survey of the building (encased as it was in the Georgian remodelling) carried out in 1953 combine with the archaeological evidence to provide a remarkably detailed impression of the house that Isaac Watts would have known. The excavations demonstrate that a square property was centred around a cobbled courtyard. A substantial stone structure (the medieval hall) on the west of the courtyard from the street frontage of the property probably served as the shop for the various trades at work on the tenement in the 17th century and perhaps also provided the school room where Isaac's father taught. Two windows at the rear of this building provided a view into the cobbled courtyard. To the north of the courtyard was a kitchen range. In the south-east corner a doorway provided access to a stone-built latrine on one side and a building containing oven ranges, formerly for brewing and possibly in contemporary use for dyeing clothes, on the other. Between the two buildings a corridor led to an outside yard where cisterns were placed for steeping cloth. Butchery waste from nine animals came from the stone latrine and fifty-three further examples were found in an outside cistern, suggesting that sheep

were brought to the tenement on the hoof, where they were skinned, their horn cores removed and their carcasses dismembered. The animals provided wool and skins for processing, food for the household and horn either for selling as raw material or more likely for producing buttons and moulds in the press house.

To the east of the courtyard was the main residence. This was not as large as the ancient western hall but would have been more comfortable and warm. The main front room was lined with its original oak panelling and the floor made of deal timbers. A well house to the south-east of the oven range provided water for the household and for the multitude of crafts and industries carried out on the site. Material evidence for the period of the Watts' occupancy comes from the finds, including glass, clay pipes and pottery.

The executors of Isaac Watts senior sold the premises to Matthew Woodford, in December 1737. The premises were then described as:

*All that capital messuage or tenement and premises with appurtenances commonly called Little St Dennis ... with all houses, outhouses, stables, courts, gardens, yards, orchards, vaults, cellars etc between tenement heretofore of widow Hobbs formerly in occupation of Arthur Leytes cooper and late of widow Jacobs or undertenant(s) on north, land late of Joseph Taylor and then of Taylor his widow on south, a messuage in occupation of Richard Purbeck grocer or his trustees on east French St on west together with all and singular houses outhouses edifices buildings structures stables courts yards backsides curtilages gardens orchards vaults cellars sollars entries ways paths passageways gutters sinks drains water courses lights easements commons privileges commodities advancements emoluments hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever to the said capital messuage or tenement and premises ...*

In the time of Isaac Watts, the house was therefore a large complex of buildings and industries, bustling with workers, schoolchildren, traders and household members. There was some comfort to be enjoyed in the main house with its wood interiors and fireplaces and an inspiring view of the nearby sea and merchant ships at the bottom of French Street and at West Quays from the upper floors of the buildings. Presumably learning, discipline, obedience and a marked family hierarchy would, however, have been the dominant factors of a puritanical lifestyle at the hall.

### **The later fortunes of Southampton and the French Quarter**

The rise and fall of economic prosperity in Southampton in modern times is laid out in Chapter 1. The French Quarter site's fortunes can be seen to have ebbed and flowed along with that of the city. The purchase and renovation/rebuilding of Poly-

mond's Hall by the Woodford family in the mid 18th century was the start of a new era at Tenement 237. The Woodfords appear at a time when Southampton was undergoing a renaissance as a Spa Town and enjoying an influx of wealth. The family's dramatic rebuild of Polymond's Hall swept away the western and northern ranges that had stood for half a millennium (Fig. 7.9). Tenement 236 was purchased and a new north range constructed partially using the medieval rubble from the demolished buildings for the foundation walls of the new undercroft and brick for architectural and visible elements of the build. The eastern range was expanded to the east and the west front was given a brick façade to match the new buildings. The garderobe in the south-west range was filled in and never again used. All evidence of industry on the property ceased. The Woodfords were wealthy (Matthew is described only as 'gentleman' in the deed effectively used to purchase Tenement 236) and could afford a Town House that did not need to be a generator of income. It must be presumed that the French Quarter had returned to sufficient status to accommodate occupants of the Woodford's social standing.

Southampton saw its population increase ten-fold during the 19th century from 7,629 inhabitants in 1801 to 65,325 in 1891. By 1895 the town was an urban area of 87,000 (Crocker 1987). The French Quarter was not immune to this pressure of population. In 1790 a portion of the rear part of the French Street tenements south of Brewhouse Lane had been carved out to form Brewhouse Court containing nine new tenements. Between 1803 and 1835 seven additional tenements were built to the rear of Tenement 173 along the line of Brewhouse Lane and north of Brewhouse Court. By the time of the Royal Engineers' Plan in 1846 (Fig. 2.2) with the addition of houses and warehouses infilling the rear of properties, little open space remained in the French Quarter. The High Street and French Street properties were still vibrant with such trades as cabinet maker, chemist, wireworker, litho printer and confectioner listed in the trade directories. Connections with the sea were still evident: a substantial wooden well frame found at Tenement 170 may have been a ship's knee of possible late 18th or early 19th century date, perhaps purchased unused from a nearby shipyard: such frames were used as brackets in ships or to reinforce joins.

Domestic life improved at some properties with the installation of internal (albeit primitive) plumbing as seen in Tenement 172. Overall, however, the mixture of industry, poverty and cramped living conditions had become of a character familiar to any reader of Dickens, especially in the smaller new tenements. Brewhouse Lane was described thus in the Dilapidated Housing Survey: 'all the houses are dark the sun rarely gaining admission to the thoroughfare.... The air is usually stagnant a peculiar odour being perceptible on passing through...there are open ash heaps in the court' (Doughty 1986, 12). Two houses

at this time were suspected of being brothels. The houses in Brewhouse Court were apparently of a similar nature 'all are... damp dark and unhealthy' (ibid.). The houses were condemned and ordered to be cleared, although they are still visible on the Ordnance Survey map of 1933.

Ultimately, it was not the city council that demolished the buildings. During the Second World War some fifty-seven air raids were made on Southampton, during which more than 2,300 bombs were dropped amounting to over 470 tonnes of high explosives. Over 30,000 incendiary devices were dropped on the city. Nearly 45,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed, with the city's High Street being devastated (Southampton City Council 2002-05). Little of the tenement structures was left standing. The sturdy stone-built medieval undercrofts survived where the ashlar vaulting had been retained but where this had been replaced with wooden floors on brick pillars virtually the whole building was deposited into the basement. Rebuilding of the area in the late 1950s looked to the future rather than the past and on the French Quarter, the story of tenements, streets and path lines that had developed over a thousand years came to an end.

## Conclusions

It now appears that settlement at the French Quarter site may have begun as one or two major enclosures ('hayes') that were established during the 10th century. No significant areas appear to have been left as open ground at this time and there is some evidence to suggest these early properties faced east or west towards the forerunners of High Street/English Street and French Street. It is possible that as early as the 11th century the western part of what was later to become Brewhouse Lane was established to give access from one of these possible 'hayes' to the landing place at West Quay. It is suggested that these early boundaries were used to determine the parish boundaries, perhaps in the early part of the 11th century. There is no persuasive evidence from this investigation that this area of the pre-Conquest settlement was in any sense a second *Hamwic*, and it may be best described as the residential adjunct to the developing wharf to the south. Property H in particular may be characterised as a higher status urban estate, containing a dwelling and associated building(s), and perhaps housing a lord and their household, but not acting as the centre of any industry or base of commercial manufacture. In terms of its topography, land and property division and material culture, the settlement shows a much more 'organic' development than is apparent in more 'formal' late Saxon centres: it is more like Norwich, where a large sprawling town coalesced from a number of separate foci (Reynolds 1999, 174) than Winchester, where a urban structure was essentially planned (James 1997, 42).



The development of the settlement through the later 11th and 12th centuries saw the piecemeal subdivision of the earlier large properties, and the gradual regularisation of their layout, with cess and rubbish pits tending (especially along the eastern side of the site) to be sited in the centre of the long properties. The focal points of possible high status evident in the late Saxon period appear to have continued as such in the ensuing century, which argues for a degree of continuity in property holdings.

It has been speculated that French Street was the primary thoroughfare of Southampton (Holdsworth 1984). This seems a reasonable suggestion based on its elevated situation compared to High Street, as well as its central position in the late Saxon settlement within the area destined to become the medieval town. Further clarification of this point and an understanding of what mechanisms, aside from Holdsworth's construct based on the imposition of the Norman castle, would have triggered the eastward expansion of the town and the dominance of the High Street remain interesting aspects of research into Southampton's development. From the earliest point at which a meaningful comparison can be made between the two street frontages at the French Quarter site (the 13th/14th centuries) it is clear that development on the High Street was far more intense in response to the commercial opportunities the street offered. The High Street did not

exhibit the vacant plots that French Street had following the 1338 raid, nor areas simply maintained as garden such as Tenement 238. The pressure for commercial space on the High Street instead led to a general uniformity of properties based on the optimum size alongside the subdivision of some properties far smaller than those seen on French Street (the cottages) and even to buildings being crammed in at the rear of the frontage properties (Tenement 170).

While the Capital Tenement 237 had its contemporaries within the town, it was anomalous within the French Quarter site. In actuality most of the other properties were simply shops or other business premises. For most of its history, Tenement 237 was a self-supporting, self-contained industrial complex as well as a high status accommodation akin to a country manor house estate planted into the urban environment. From this base, characters such as John Polymond, Richard Alyward and John Mylles expanded their property interests and commercial ventures, often absorbing many tenements in the surrounding area. It was Tenement 237 that defined the common thread that ran through the life of the tenements in the French Quarter. The brewing industry that began here in the 13th to 14th century was more vital than ever in the 20th century with the presence of the Hampton Court/Alyward brewery alongside several public houses, wine merchants and accommodation for workers.