

Chapter 1: Introduction

by Richard Brown and Anne Dodd

*Chained to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen.
Here he exalts neglected worms
To sceptres and a crown;
Anon the following page he turns
And treads the monarchs down.*

Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, hymn writer and
boyhood resident of Tenement 237, French Street

Project background and site location

This publication represents the results of the combined efforts of many people over the space of five years. Linden Homes' proposal to develop and rejuvenate the French Quarter, which had become a run down and unattractive part of Southampton, led to a dialogue with the City Council that had two major conclusions. Firstly, there was the desire that any new buildings in Southampton's old town would reinstate the medieval street layout and be in sympathy with the many surviving medieval buildings: this intent had previously been severely lacking in post-war development with disastrous results. Secondly, a requirement would be placed on planning approval for the excavation, analysis and publication of the entirety of the site to the depth of archaeological remains. Given the scale of the subsequent development (which covered an area of 0.44 ha) and the complexity of the archaeological strata revealed, this resulted in the largest excavation yet to take place in the medieval town.

A desktop assessment and preliminary ground investigations (trenching) of the site were carried out by Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit in 2001 and 2003 (SCCAU; Smith 2001 and 2003a and b). Linden Homes later appointed CgMs Consulting to commission an archaeological team to undertake the excavation. Oxford Archaeology won this commission and carried out excavations between November 2005 and July 2006.

The excavation site was located in the southern central part of the medieval town (NGR 441983/111175, Fig. 1.1), bounded to the east by the High Street (English Street) and to the west by French Street. These two thoroughfares are both aligned north-south and probably date to the origins of settlement in the late Saxon period. To the south the

site was bounded by Castle Way, an 'inner ring road' constructed in the 1950s (Fig. 1.2) which was removed during the excavations as part of the development's aims to achieve a layout more reminiscent of the medieval street plan. The new development entailed the construction of two apartment blocks situated north and south of the reinstated line of Brewhouse Lane (the southern apartment block now lies over the former route of Castle Way). On the High Street and French Street frontages the new development extends further into the street than its 1950's predecessors, thereby reflecting the medieval street pattern. Excavations were carried out across the entire footprint of the apartment blocks and the line of Brewhouse Lane, which now serves as a conduit for major services (see Figs 1.3 and 1.4). Construction of the latter required the excavation of a large trench along its line. In addition a watching brief was carried out on all ancillary works/utilities trenches for redirected services supplying the new build. This provided information about the stratigraphy of the roads surrounding the site.

Topography and geology

Southampton's medieval town lay at the south-western end of a peninsula, which separated the River Test to the west from the River Itchen to the east: these provided direct passage to the Solent and the North Sea (Fig. 1.5). Modern reclamation and development of the Western Esplanade and Town Quay now surrounds the western and southern edges of the town.

The natural topography of the site sloped from north to south and from west to east. A pre-construction site survey recorded the following levels: the north-west corner of the site (French Street) lay at 8.43 m OD, the north-east corner (High Street) lay at 6.28 m OD, the south-west corner (Castle Way) lay at 7.21 m OD, and the south-east corner (High Street/Castle Way junction) at 5.67 m OD. Notably this shows that although the central axis of the medieval town is High Street/English Street, giving a classic ladder formation to the town, it is French Street that is the higher and (therefore) dryer part of the ridge formation upon which Southampton was settled.

The geological survey map (Ordnance Survey 1987) indicates that the site lies on Earnly Sands of the Bracklesham Group, overlain by superficial deposits of river gravels and brickearth. The



Fig. 1.1 Site location and sites mentioned in the text



Fig.1.2 The insertion of Castle Way, 1950s (by permission of Southampton City Council)

majority of the excavation area revealed brickearth at the base of the archaeological sequence, with the exception of the north-west corner where excavations below a cellar exposed natural gravels.

Previous work

The earliest reported historical investigation of the site was carried out in 1950 when John MacGregor compiled a brief building report on the condition of a bomb-damaged property known as Hampton Court/Polymond's Hall (Macgregor 1950). Macgregor concluded that the Georgian building had medieval origins and that the whole was in reasonably good condition and warranted preservation. Unfortunately the recommendation was not acted on and, following vandalism and decay, the property was demolished by the Southampton City Corporation. Excavations were carried out by J. S. Wachter (1956-58) as part of a campaign of investigation on the bombed parts of the city prior to rebuilding, funded by the City Corporation and Ministry of Public Buildings and Works (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 140). It is reasonable to assume that some strategy of preservation *in situ* for this significant part of the area was put in place even if the documentation relating to such activities has yet to be discovered. Work within the French Quarter area comprised fifteen trenches (Fig. 1.3). The survey was summarised along with other previously unpublished excavations carried out up to the late 1960s within the medieval town and the resultant publication (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a and 1975b) remains the authoritative work on Southampton's medieval archaeology: it includes a chapter on the town's surviving medieval buildings.

Twenty trench locations were investigated within the existing buildings and courtyard at the subject site during the two stages of initial evalu-

ations conducted by SCCAU. One proposed trench location was reduced to a borehole inspection when an extant cellar was discovered beneath the warehouse in the north-western part of the site.

Site conditions and preservation

The working conditions on site are indicated in Fig. 1.4. The excavations were carried out during the reasonably mild winter of 2005/2006 and warm summer of 2006. As expected from the results of the evaluations and previous work, the French Street and High Street frontages had largely been basemended, removing earlier archaeological deposits but also in some cases providing substantial survival of medieval fabric where the basements originated in this period.

The site was archaeologically very dense and complex with some 2,000 cut features and many structural remains present. It is clear from the records of Wachter's excavations that much evidence had, however, been lost during the redevelopment of the area in the late 1950s and 1960s. Wachter's records show complex horizontal layer sequences close below ground level, while the excavation showed that the construction of Castle Way through the site had severely truncated this strata, resulting in modern road make up deposits immediately overlying natural geology. Similarly the levelling of the tenements and construction of modern buildings and an inner yard had caused significant horizontal truncation of the site as well as localised impacts from the insertion of several large concrete stanchions, the Mayflower public house cellar and numerous sizeable foundation walls. Prior to the modern redevelopment of the site, cellared buildings within Brewhouse Court, Brewhouse Lane and an extensive wine merchant's warehouse in the yards of Tenements 174 and 175 had already been destructive of medieval remains.

The capital tenement in the north-western part of the site (Tenement 237, historically Polymond's Hall and Hampton Court) was an interesting exception to the general level of preservation across the site. A warehouse built here before 1958 (according to map regressions) had been built to encompass entirely the final form of the tenement (Hampton Court) and was constructed with an elevated floor level, meaning that up to 2 m of archaeological deposits and an undercroft were preserved below the building. As noted above the importance of this property was known during this period, making it likely that this was a purposeful strategy of preservation although no documentation or records have been found to substantiate this assumption. The medieval west range, which had already disappeared by the 1950s, would not have been known about and was severely disturbed by the accompanying widening of French Street.

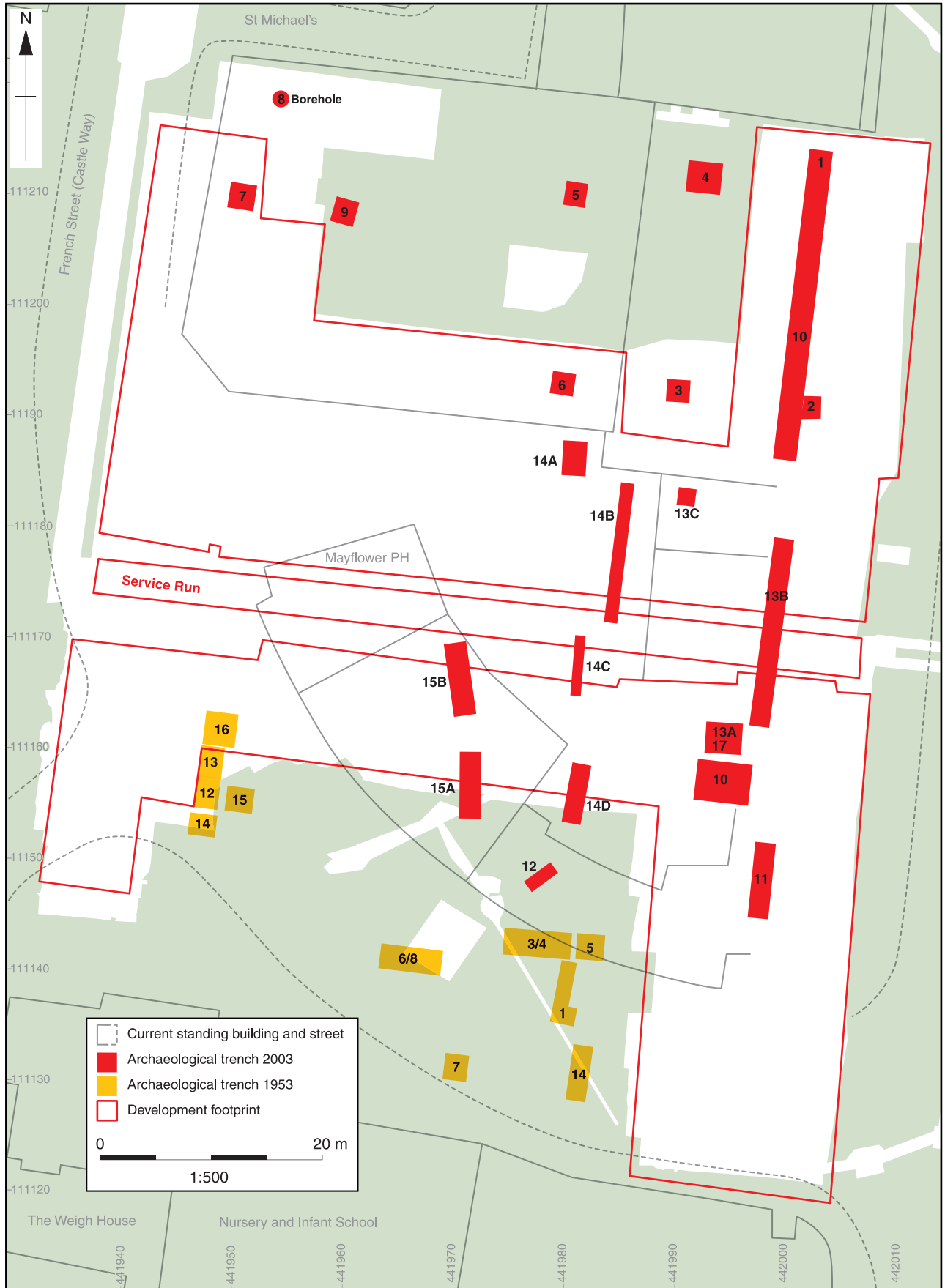


Fig. 1.3 The location of evaluation and excavation trenches

Archaeological and historical background

Before the 10th century (Fig. 1.5)

There is no evidence for settlement of the area that would become the medieval town prior to the 10th century AD. Finds of prehistoric and Roman date have, however, been recovered both from preliminary investigations into the site itself (Smith 2003a, 59, 62, appendix 1) and other sites in the vicinity (for example in Lower High Street; Smith 2001, 51). An Iron Age settlement is thought to have existed just to the north of the medieval walled town (Smith 2003a, 62; Wachter, in Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 140-42), and a fortified Roman small town/port known as *Claesentum* was located on the Bitterne peninsula on the eastern side of the Itchen estuary. Re-used Roman building material, particularly tile, occurs commonly in late 12th-century, transitional and somewhat earlier contexts throughout the medieval town (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 240).

The well known middle Saxon trading settlement of *Hamwic* is thought to have been founded under

royal control in the last quarter of the 7th century (Birbeck 2005, 195) and was located on the eastern side of the peninsula. Although a flourishing settlement in the 8th century, *Hamwic* appears to have gone into decline in the 9th century and had been largely abandoned by the middle of the 9th century or slightly later (Morton 1992, 70; Birbeck 2005, 204). In the 10th century, a settlement seems to have been present on the higher ground on this western edge of the peninsula. Southampton was mentioned in the Burghal Hidage memorandum of the period 914-919, but the Burghal Hidage fort itself, which had a very small hidage allocation, is thought to have been established within the old Roman fort of *Claesentum* (Morton 1992, 73-4; Birbeck 2005, 204).

The late Saxon period (Figs 1.5 and 1.6)

The settlement that developed into the walled medieval town of Southampton appears to have been established during the 10th century. Although not thought to be the site of the *burh*, the settlement was evidently defended. A very substantial ditch of



Fig. 1.4 The site under excavation, facing north-west



Fig. 1.5 The Roman, Saxon and medieval towns

defensive proportions (8 m wide and 2 m deep) was identified in excavations on the east side of the High Street opposite the current development site (Fig. 1.1, SOU 105 and 934; Smith 2001, 44-6, 56), and may have formed a boundary to the settlement. Further identifications of sections of ditch have been made elsewhere in the town (Brown 1994), and a conjectural enclosing circuit has been hypothesised, although there are contradictory elements which suggest a more complicated picture (see Fig. 1.6 and Chapter 7). The development site would have lain in the south-eastern part of this enclosed area.

Excavations initiated by Phillip Holdsworth in 1980 within the area of the Norman Castle bailey

revealed a late Saxon hall surrounded by a ditch or double ditch (Holdsworth 1984). Holdsworth suggested that the presence of a late Saxon 'motte' such as this would account for the subsequent unusual siting of the Norman Castle (to the centre, rather than at the corner of the town defences), assuming that the castle had been built above the earlier structure.

In the vicinity of the development area late Saxon occupation has been identified at a number of sites; (Smith 2001, 44 (SOU 105), 49 (SOU 161), 51 (SOU 266) and 58 (SOU 288 and SOU 294-5) as well as SOU 1380, a watching brief on cable trenches in the southern part of the medieval town and at recent

excavations on Telephone House, SOU 1355). An evaluation on the Lower High Street (SOU 266), recovered remains of late Saxon timber-framed buildings with associated floor levels and hearths (one dated to c AD 1000), as well as rubbish pits. The lowest levels of many pits were waterlogged

and a rich finds assemblage was discovered. Other sites providing late Saxon evidence elsewhere in the town have been mapped by Brown (1994, fig. 1). Platt has suggested that late Saxon settlement originated just north of the later medieval walls, and spread southwards along the ridge of high ground



Fig. 1.6 Sites in relation to the conjectural line of the 10th-century enclosure ditch, superimposed upon principal roads of Platt's plan of the late medieval town (Platt 1973, 3)

along the High Street (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 18). Precise dating of late Saxon features and deposits is difficult at Southampton, as elsewhere, and a broader late Saxon to Anglo-Norman date is commonly the best resolution achieved. The dating of late Saxon pottery is discussed by Brown (1994). Other sources of late Saxon dates have been a coin hoard of c 1030 recovered from a pit on the corner of the High Street and Broad Lane and an imitation coin of Athelstan of the middle quarters of the 10th century (*ibid.*, 143). A radiocarbon date of cal AD 960-1040 was obtained from the wicker lining of a well at Westgate Street, and a date of cal AD 900 or 920-1030 was obtained from a ditch section at Quilter's Vault (*ibid.*, 141). Both dates are, however, quoted at only one sigma confidence level, and the two sigma ranges are likely to be rather wider.

The nature of excavated settlement remains has tended to be fragmentary at Southampton, and there has been little evidence for any kind of ordered settlement layout. Late Saxon features examined include pits, wells, ditches, gullies, postholes and post-trenches (Brown 1994, table 1; Smith 2001, 2003a and b). Whether the settlement was in any sense a town at this point has been the subject of debate. Rumble (1980) attempted to explain the relationship between the place names *Hamton* and *Hamwic*, emphasising that they were not interchangeable, and did not necessarily refer to the same place. Brown suggests that the recorded late Saxon place known as *Hamton* may refer to an estate in which there were several different centres of activity (1994, 128). The conditions of the late 10th and early 11th century may not have been conducive to the development of a new town. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles record a Viking attack on *Hamton* in 980 and the Vikings wintered there in 994 (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (C) *sub anno* 980, trans. Swanton 2000, 124; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (E) *sub anno* 994, trans. Swanton 2000, 129). The area was at the centre of Viking activity throughout the first decade of the 11th century (Hill 1984, maps 116-20). The likelihood that there was nevertheless a functioning port in the early 11th century is reinforced by contemporary references to Æthelred and Edward landing at Southampton when returning from the continent (Platt 1973 7-8). The proportion of continental pottery in late Saxon assemblages may suggest that late Saxon Southampton was certainly functioning as a port, whose principal contacts were with northern France (Brown 1994, 147).

The later 11th and 12th centuries

Southampton was clearly a significant settlement at the time of the Domesday survey, which records 55 households, 79 *Homines* (men holding land from the crown) along with 65 French and 31 Englishmen (Darby 1986, 365), presumably substantial landholders. Although the absence of the poor in the record precludes any certainty of judgement on

the real extent of the population, Platt (1973, 262) suggests this was somewhere in the region of 650-850.

The town's trading links and the resultant probability of pre-Conquest immigration, when combined with the ambiguity of post-Conquest population size, mean that there is no clear indication of the effects of the Norman invasion in the archaeological record. The character of the archaeological evidence remained much the same into the 12th century, resulting in continued difficulties in distinguishing between late Saxon and Anglo-Norman features and deposits (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 234). Holdsworth (1984, 341) argued that the construction of the Norman Castle extended into the route of French Street which until this time had been the central thoroughfare of the town, thereby shifting the emphasis to High Street/English Street and significantly altering the pattern of circulation within the town. It is probable that the churches and parishes of St Michael to the north-west of the site and St John to the south were established shortly after the Conquest, although the earliest documentary reference to them occurs in the 12th century. This is also the case for the probably more ancient church and parish of Holy Rood on High Street/English Street.

Throughout this time, what is known of the settlement has been characterised by a lack of controlled plot usage, little stability in house plans and boundaries and the unsystematic construction of cess pits and rubbish pits (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 34). The evidence suggests that the settlement was poorly planned, if at all, and consisted largely of timber-framed buildings with associated rubbish pits (Smith 2001, 59).

Important results for this period were recovered in excavations on the High Street, just south of the project area (SOU 161; Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 232-269; Smith 2001, 49-50). Occupation of the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods (up to c 1200) was noted to have a number of distinct characteristics. Pits frequently contained dark fills with much crushed oyster and mussel shell and usually a significant quantity of bone. There was often a high proportion of charcoal in the lower layers, accompanied by burnt daub. Pits of this period were generally characterised by a peculiarly deep and slot-like construction, with some evidence for linings. Burnt daub is particularly characteristic of this period, rarely occurring later, and is believed to be associated with the firing of timber houses. Very similar deposits from deep pits are noted for the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods in the evaluation reports for the current site (Smith 2003a and b), while structural remains of the period continue to be characterised by postholes and beamslots.

There is evidence for a change in the composition of animal bone assemblages between this period and the 13th century (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 239). Evidence from the late Saxon and

Anglo-Norman periods suggests that sheep, goats, pigs and even horses may have been reared, and that butchery was taking place in the vicinity of the excavated sites. The town may have retained a distinctly agricultural or rural aspect at this date. A certain amount of evidence for craft working is also evident at this period: a smithy was identified at Platt's High Street site (SOU 161, just south of the investigation area), and evidence for iron smelting was recorded in the evaluation at Lower High Street (SOU 266; Smith 2001, 51). From the 13th century, however, the animal bone assemblages are characterised by bones from much smaller joints, suggesting that there was no longer room for the rearing of animals locally, and that meat was being obtained from specialist butchers (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 33). Similarly, Platt suggests that increasing specialisation in overseas trade had, by the 13th century, banished crafts from those quarters of the town most convenient for the markets and quays (*ibid.*, 24).

Despite the evidence for craft activity, medieval Southampton was never a manufacturing centre on the scale of its predecessor *Hamwic*, and its prosperity was based firmly on trade. In the 12th century, the earlier emphasis on exchange with northern France appears to have continued, and trade with the wool and cloth markets of Flanders was also significant. The main exports were probably wool and cloth, while imports included wine, luxury goods, and building materials (limestone, slate and tile) (Platt 1973, 21-2, fig. 2). During the later 12th century there is increasing evidence for dealings with south-western France, but this did not become dominant until the 13th century. The trading connections of Southampton are often explicit in finds assemblages, and sources of the more characteristic pottery and glass imports are illustrated by Platt and Coleman-Smith (1975b, figs 118-19).

The 13th to 16th centuries (Fig. 1.7)

There was a general rearrangement within the medieval town in the early 13th century, involving the laying out of a new street pattern and the reconstruction of many houses in stone. The importation of slate from Devon for roofing is also evident from the late 12th century onwards, and it was to become the standard roofing material at Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 25). There is evidence for glazed windows in at least some of the more important houses in the town before the end of the 13th century; decorative tile floors and elaborate roof furniture (ridge-tiles, louvers, finials) are also evident from finds assemblages (*ibid.*, 33). The great boom period for stone construction lasted for little more than a century (Platt 1973, 41) and timber-framed building is again evident from the 14th century onwards. The major reorganisation of the town accompanied the rise to prominence of a wealthy group of merchant burgesses with

increasing control over the town's affairs. The High Street (known as English Street) became the main artery of the town from this point. Many of the leading merchants lived on the street or sought to hold property there, and shops spread along most of its length (Platt 1973, 43, 45). The area of the current development appears to have been home to some of the wealthiest people in the town from this time until the 17th century (Smith 2001, 59), and plots were built up on both the English Street and French Street frontages. Most of the properties fronting English Street/High Street had street front basements or vaults as seen at the Lower High Street excavations (SOU 266 etc) and Platt's High Street Site C (SOU 161); while the epitome of these is perhaps the reconstructed No. 58 French Street, those along French Street were generally less uniform.

The 13th century was a time of considerable prosperity. The principal export remained wool, and the principal import wine. Political events had, however, led to a reorientation of the wine trade away from Anjou and northern France towards Bordeaux and Gascony. Over the course of the century the pottery of northern France was displaced in the archaeological record by increasing quantities of Saintonge pottery imported from south-western France. Other commodities were also imported, including fruit and nuts, spices, fresh and salted fish, timber, iron, tin and lead, flax, wax, rope, fur, and – particularly importantly – alum and dyes to supply the cloth trade in inland towns. Fruit and nut remains have been identified in cess pit deposits, along with considerable quantities of animal bone (including a pet monkey) and exotics such as silk and palm fibres (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a, 35).

The 14th century, by contrast, was a period of recession and difficulty in Southampton, as elsewhere. Southampton, as a south coastal port dependent on trade, was particularly affected by the almost constant warfare with the French from the 1330s onwards. The French and Genoese raid on the town in October 1338 caused widespread destruction of property and economic loss from the seizure or destruction of goods. The effects of the raid are attested archaeologically at several sites in the town (Platt 1973, 111). This was followed in 1348-9 by the Black Death, and further years of sluggish and stagnant trade (*ibid.*, 121). Platt notes evidence for rebuilding in the town during the later 14th century, but that sub-division of plots, partitioning of existing houses and inferior construction seem to have been common (1973, 145-6). New timber houses might have been built on the foundations of earlier stone houses, but elsewhere timber-framed buildings were constructed on a low masonry base, frequently of mediocre workmanship. Platt (1973, 262) estimates the late 14th-century population as 1,600 based on an assessment of the 1377 poll tax returns, with this rising to approximately 1,800-2,000 by 1454: the Southampton Terrier compiled in



Fig. 1.7 Southampton in the late Middle Ages

this year is a remarkably systematic survey of all the households in the medieval town (Burgess 1976). It was generated as a record of murage tax and the latest initiative to fund and maintain the city's walled defences: their construction had commenced under King John in the early 13th century with an earth rampart and palisade and they were substantially in their final stone wall and tower form by the late 14th century.

Prosperity had returned to Southampton in the 15th century, the revival being largely based on demand for English wool and cloth and Southampton was well placed for easy access to the major cloth producing area of the country (ibid., 154). Italian merchants were frequently resident in the town, hosted by the burgesses of Southampton. The town acted as a major redistribution centre for imported wine (taken as far afield as Oxford) and supplies of dyes to the cloth trade, which were redistributed inland to Coventry, Leicester and other centres (ibid., fig. 9). Ship building and the provisioning of visiting ships was also a considerable source of income for the townspeople (ibid., 163).

The early decades of the 16th century saw the maintenance of prosperity and active trade routes to the mediterranean, although by the later years of the century Southampton had declined to the status of a minor port, market town and local industrial centre: its international trade had 'fallen to the merest trickle' (Platt 1973, 221). Much of the trade had been lost to London-based trading companies. By the end of the century the town had a growing textile industry developed by refugees from Flanders and northern France. Archaeological evidence for imported Venetian glass, pottery and floor tiles shows, however, that there was still considerable wealth in the town.

The post-medieval and modern period

Archaeological investigations and publications set within the town have naturally focused on the medieval and earlier periods. Apart from work on the Tudor Merchants' Hall, post-medieval evidence has been largely produced as a by-product of PPG16 investigations and disseminated in unpublished client reports or as website information and brief statements in journal round-ups. The post-medieval and modern history of the town is, however, well served by a mass of documentary evidence and several historical publications including the three volume *History of Southampton* produced by A. Temple Patterson (1966) as part of the Southampton Records Series.

At the end of the 17th century changes were made to the town's defences. After periods of silting, cleaning and re-cutting, the town ditches were filled in and houses were built over them, along the line of the modern Bargate Street. Defoe remarked in his 1728 travelogue *A tour thro' the whole Island of Great Britain* that 'Southampton is a

truly antient town, for 'tis in a manner dying with age; the decay of the trade is the real decay of the town'. Within a few decades Southampton was being reborn as an 18th-century spa town. Encouraged by Prince Frederick's visit in 1750, the patronage of affluent and famous figures brought an influx of wealth to the town. The foundations of some of the grandiose (but short-lived) public buildings, which were erected during this period, have been recorded by SCCAU during construction of the West Quay Shopping Centre.

By the 1840s sea bathing and the Spa industry in Southampton was in decline, having lost its position as a seaside resort to Brighton. Port trade had begun to recover in the late 18th century and by the 19th century Southampton had become the premier port for passenger trade with America. Timber was imported from the Baltic, grain from Ireland and Eastern England. Coal, slate and building stone were brought from Scotland. Wine and fruit were imported from Portugal and Spain. The downside to renewed prosperity was a rapid increase in population, which caused overcrowding and insanitary conditions in the old town. At the end of the 19th century this led to the need for slum clearance and new house building. In 1888 a new water works ensured that most people had piped water and an electricity generating station opened in Back of the Walls supplying the first electric streetlights. The town's degeneration was recorded in the *Southampton Urban Sanitary Authority, Detailed Report of Dilapidated and Unhealthy Houses in the Borough of Southampton* (submitted in 1893; ed. Doughty 1986).

During the Second World War, German bombing did massive damage to the town, destroying more than 4,000 homes and seriously damaging 11,000 more. The ruined shops in High Street were replaced with new buildings by 1956, but the medieval plots were widened or ignored, building heights increased and roads such as Castle Way were cut through the historic core. Although few timber-framed buildings survived, there remains a rich legacy of historic buildings and vaults, as well as remnants of the town walls. The city has over 90 listed buildings and 45 ancient monuments. Among the now lost important buildings was Polymond's Hall/Hampton Court (Tenement 237, noted above), which was occupied by the Nonconformist Watts family and was the boyhood home of the celebrated hymn writer Isaac Watts. Extracts from his works are presented at the start of each of the chapters in this volume.

Excavation methodologies and recording

Site recording

Subsequent to demolition of the upstanding buildings, hard-standings and foundations were removed from the site under archaeological supervision. Each excavation area was machined by a

mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and directly controlled by an archaeologist. Lorries were used to remove stockpiled spoil from the site. The machine excavation was halted at the level of the first significant archaeological horizon.

The mechanical excavators and a small team of archaeologists removed the 20th-century infill of the cellars that had been located by the initial machine reduction. These were made safe and then cleaned. The surviving cellars and vaults were then examined and analysed by buildings archaeologist Jody Morris prior to archaeological recording, in order to establish a clear understanding of their date, construction and relationship to the wider site. The buildings archaeologist worked closely with the Project Officer and area Supervisors to ensure that building recording was integrated into the stratigraphic sequence (Harris matrix) and the archival record of the excavation areas. A combination of the following recording methods was employed. Medium format rectified photography of elevations was followed by the production of digital images and large-scale printouts. The latter were then overlain in order to generate interpretative contexted drawings. Digital photography, with multiple targeted and surveyed images, were stitched together in AutoCAD. The elevation data was then digitised in AutoCAD, printouts from which were used as the base for interpretative drawings. This method was supplemented by a complete 35 mm photographic record. Hand-drawn elevations were supplemented by a complete 35 mm photographic record.

Within the footprint of the intended development, in those areas where cellars and other forms of truncation had not significantly affected the archaeological remains, formal open area excavation techniques were employed. All cut features and structural remains were cleaned and planned to scale, as were occupation horizons and deposits associated with industrial activity. All small finds were three-dimensionally recorded. A running stratigraphic matrix was maintained on site using an Excel spreadsheet. Plans were surveyed to the site grid and digitised to provide an overall CAD plan that was imported to a Geographical Information System (ArcGIS) in conjunction with the context database for interpretation, analysis and production of drawing briefs.

Generally features were half-sectioned and a 20% sample of linear features was excavated. Significant features were subject to complete excavation. Full written and drawn records of all contexts and registers of all finds and records were made. Archaeological deposits, where not excavated, were recorded to the maximum extent possible. All paper records were produced on good quality durable paper, with all hand-drawn plans and sections produced on polyester based film. All on-site recording was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the *OA Field Manual* (ed. Wilkinson 1992) and the *Institute of Field Archaeologist's*

Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (as amended 1999). The site recording and excavation generated 6,000 contexts, 1,528 drawings, 242 35 mm and colour slide photographs, 3,915 digital images and c 60,000 finds (including animal bone).

The upper levels of virtually all of the features and deposits had been truncated by later activity. Vertical truncation was generally very obvious where it occurred, and there was often enough of the truncated feature surviving to extrapolate its probable original profile with reasonable confidence. A number of deeper pits were not bottomed during the excavation, either due to safety concerns, or the limitation imposed by the development impact level. Some pits were seen in section only (for example, exposed under modern concrete ground beams), and for practical reasons were not further excavated. Any finds from these features came only from the rudimentary cleaning process undertaken prior to section recording.

Environmental sampling

Given the vast quantity of archaeological deposits encountered, environmental sampling was prioritised on the following criteria: firstly any waterlogged deposits with potential for good preservation and secondly an even spatial and phase distribution of material from the across the site. This was achieved through spot-dating of contexts on site (ensuring that environmental indicators could be linked to datable materials) and mapping of the retrieval of environmental samples. The strategy resulted in 209 samples equalling 4747 litres of soil, which was assessed, processed and sorted for the recovery of charred, waterlogged and mineralised plant remains, as well as molluscs, fish bones, insects, intestinal parasites, small artefacts and hammerscale.

Tenements and site phasing

During excavation and analysis the site was subdivided into 22 tenement areas using the numbers designated and illustrated by Burgess (1976). Details of their locations have been refined during the excavation: fifteen properties fronted onto High Street/English Street (Tenements 166-180) and seven fronted onto French Street (Tenements 237-243). The analyses of finds and environmental evidence given in the specialist chapters and related downloadable documents (see below) refer to the tenement numbers identified in the Terrier of 1454. In addition, for the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods, two earlier property numbering systems in relation to geographical zones are noted in the monograph text (late Saxon Properties A-H and J and Anglo-Norman Properties 1-14), to allow cross-referencing to the developing layout discussed in Chapter 7. These are illustrated in Figs 3.1 and 3.8, with the position of the later tenements being indicated in Fig. 4.1.

In addition to allocation to tenements, the archaeological evidence has also been assigned to phase. These are defined and abbreviated in catalogues as:

Natural features and deposits	NAT
Prehistoric (pre-AD 43)	PRE
Late Saxon (900-1066)	LSAX
Anglo-Norman (1066-1250)	AN
High medieval (1250-1350)	HMED
Late medieval (1350-1510)	LMED
Post-medieval (1510-1750)	PMED
Early Modern (c1750-1900)	EMOD

Phasing of the substantial number of pits was based upon their stratigraphic relationships where evident, as well as artefactual dating and spatial relationships. It was clear, both from the stratigraphy of the pit fills and the comparative pottery dating of lower and upper fills, that to date the feature by its pottery assemblage, without regard to the stratigraphic relationships and pit morphology, could be misleading since it could suggest that pits were in some cases open and in use for an inordinate length of time. There were several cases where the upper 'fills' of a pit were actually layers of material overlying the already infilled pit, which had sunk into the feature as subsidence of the lower (often organic) pit fills took place.

A note on terminology

It is as well to clarify here the project definition of the terms 'cess pit' and 'latrine pit'. For the purposes of this report, a cess pit is defined as one containing deposits (at whatever level in the pit) that from their appearance include solid or liquid human waste. A latrine pit is defined as a purpose built earth closet, probably in use surmounted by at least a platform, if not a wooden screen or structure, whose primary purpose was for the direct and repeated deposition of human waste.

Apart from the often distinctive 'greenish' colour of the (mainly) lower deposits of either a latrine pit or a cess pit, the shape of the pit can also possibly indicate its probable original purpose. A latrine pit would be of a size convenient to be sited under some sort of bench or cover. The sides of such pits, being protected from the elements to at least some extent, would not tend to be prone to natural erosion or weathering to the same degree as open pits, and could therefore be vertical or nearly so. In contrast, a cess pit may have been larger but not as deep, with sloping sides. Such features were intended to be all-purpose rubbish pits, sometimes for continued deposition of household/kitchen/craft/demolition waste over a period of time, sometimes for a one-off clearance and dumping of one or more middens. The fill sequences in these features can consequently vary widely, and cessy material may be present in lower, middle and upper

layers. Given the density of pit-digging in some areas of the site, the excavation of a new pit might cut into a backfilled pit and encounter previously deposited cess material, which could therefore be redeposited high up in another pit's fill sequence, as is the case in some of the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman examples noted in Chapter 3.

Research aims and objectives

Any large-scale excavation needs to be underpinned by a clearly defined set of project aims and objectives, linked to research questions. The research objectives established at the outset of the French Quarter project have been constantly refined in the light of findings: to what extent these have been addressed is the benchmark against which the success of the excavation, analysis and publication can be measured. The research questions for the investigation are set out below and revisited in subsequent chapters.

- What is the earliest phase of settlement on the site? Does the presence of Roman building material imply any form of occupation activity or does occupation as generally accepted begin in the late Saxon period? What form does this take? Is it rural or urban in nature?
- Is it possible to characterise the development and quantify the density of occupation from the late Saxon to Anglo-Norman period? Is the impact of Norman Conquest and administration visible in the archaeological record? What description of everyday life through these periods can be derived from the archaeological record?
- Can the understanding of the evolution of major (French Street, High Street/English Street) and minor (Brewhouse Lane) thoroughfares be refined by the spatial distribution of late Saxon/Anglo-Norman features? If so what implications does this understanding have for the relative importance and use of the Town and West Quays?
- Can evidence be recovered for the nature of the transition of the site from what is thought to have been an unplanned settlement of largely timber construction to a sequence of regularly aligned tenement plots containing stone-built houses? Is this a definable single event or an organic development?
- Can local and international trading patterns be refined through retrieved artefacts from the high status medieval occupation of the site?
- To what extent can the effects of the raid of 1338 be seen as an archaeological event? If visible, do deposits (which can act as specific date indicators) refine the date of artefact/

ecofact assemblages? Using documentary evidence, can military artefacts retrieved from Tenements 170 and 172 be directly associated with the provision of arms or obligations of wealthy burgesses to maintain men-at-arms subsequent to the raid?

- What evidence is there for the relative characters of occupation on High Street/English Street and French Street?
- How do the medieval buildings on the site compare with other similar structures in Southampton and the rest of the country?
- What character of everyday household life in the tenements during the 13th-20th centuries can be described through integration of the archaeological and documentary evidence?
- What is the form of Tenement 237 in the period 1675-1737, when it was the boyhood home of Isaac Watts? Can finds or environmental remains datable to this period be directly associated with the family's occupation of the house? Is there any evidence for the possible boarding school and small cloth factory it is thought were maintained by Isaac Watts Snr at the property? What was the form of the remodelling undertaken in the 1760s by the Woodford family, who renamed the property Hampton Court?
- The varying prosperity of Southampton through time is well documented as are the influencing national/international policies and events (eg wool tax, Black Death, Hundred Years War, rise of London as a port). Are these fluctuations visible in the archaeological record from the site? Is there evidence for any contributing or symptomatic factors at site/local level?

Documentary research strategy

Documentary research for the project began with the printed sources (Platt 1973; Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975a and 1975b; Burgess 1976; Kaye 1976 and 1984; Blake 1981; James 1983; Thick 1995; Smith 2003a and b). Beyond these printed works, further research has been carried out in the Southampton City Archive (SCA SC 4/3, SC 4/1/13, SC 4/1/13, SC 4/1/10, 25, 26, SC/AP, SC/AG/7/1-51), at the Queen's College, Oxford and the National Archives/Public Record Office, Kew. More detailed tenement histories have been conducted for specific properties: these include Tenements 237 and 173 (both capital tenements at points during their history), Tenements 169, 170 and 171- where there is an insertion of a tenement (170) between two previously existing properties, and Tenement 241- which characterises tenements to the south of French Street.

Publication and digital dissemination

This report presents the documentary evidence for each tenement (Chapter 2), followed by evidence for the occupation of the site prior to the 13th century (Chapter 3) and the development of the tenements from the 13th century to the present day (Chapter 4). Finds and environmental evidence is reported in two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), which are supplemented by a series of full specialist reports which can be accessed and downloaded at <http://library.thehumanjourney.net/view/subjects/UK-Medieval.html>. It should be noted that the contents of these reports are in many cases superseded by the published texts contained in this volume: only those reports which contain significant additional information are cross-referenced in Chapters 3-6. Catalogue numbering differs between the archival reports and published versions, since the published catalogues relate only to those items illustrated here.

The supplementary reports are divided into two categories: finds reports (with the prefix F) and environmental reports (with the prefix E). The reports are:

- F1 Pottery – Duncan Brown
- F2 Clay pipe – David Higgins
- F3 Textile – Penelope Walton Rogers
- F4 Structural and fired clay – Cynthia Poole
- F5 Ceramic building material – Cynthia Poole
- F6 Metal objects – Ian Scott
- F7 Coins and tokens – Paul Booth/Martin Allen
- F8 Glass – Hugh Willmott
- F9 Metalworking – Lynne Keys
- F10 Worked bone – Rosemary Grant
- F11 Worked stone objects – Ruth Shaffrey
- F12 Flint – Hugo Lamdin-Wymark
- E1 Animal and bird bone – Andrew Bates
- E2 Fish bone – Rebecca Nicholson
- E3 Marine shell – Greg Campbell
- E4 Charred, mineralised and waterlogged plant remains – Wendy Smith
- E5 Charcoal – Dana Challinor
- E6 Intestinal parasites – Andrew Jones
- E7 Insects – Emma Tetlow
- E8 Worked Wood – Damian Goodburn
- E9 Mineralised and waterlogged fly pupae, and other insects and arthropods – David Smith

Finally, the site's history is set into its wider context in Chapter 7, which revisits the project's research objectives noted above and discusses the results of the project as a whole.