

Shootinglee Excavation 2019

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Excavation of the peel house (Trench T3) and its extension to the S (T4) were completed and the site consolidated. An earlier building was found W of the extension that pre-dates it and possibly the peel house too, but only one corner of the building was available to excavate due to the presence of trees (see photograph). An additional test trench (T6) was opened in June c.6m to the W to examine a possible building platform.

The byre drain that ran the length of the peel house from N-S was wider in its primary configuration at the N end, having been partially infilled with stone and clay to make it narrower. Much of the floor adjacent to the drain was covered with large paving slabs that reached the walls to E and W in the middle of the building, but left the four corners unpaved. In the NW and SE corners the floor was covered with clay, but in the NE where the subsoil was higher than elsewhere any areas of clay floor were mixed with that of the burnt floor from the next phase, while in the SW corner no clay floor at all was found. No evidence that might explain the absence of a clay floor was found.

To confirm that this was a primary floor of the building a 1m wide E-W section was excavated across the N end of the building and through its walls. This showed that the walls had been built on levelled ground and sloping ground in between had been levelled up with an infill of gravel that abutted the W wall to a depth of 0.45m. No finds or charcoal were recovered from the gravel make-up which was only found to the W of the drain. On the E side of the drain the paving stones were set in silty-clay directly on the subsoil and produced two sherds of late medieval pottery.

In the extension to the S of the peel house, the earlier of two successive paved floors was excavated and a green glazed jug handle was found sealed under it in a make-up layer of brown silt. This floor covered about one third of the interior of the extension. Where there was no paving a make-up layer of silty clay covered the NW third of the interior and extended under the line of the W wall and abutted the S wall of the peel house. This was removed to reveal a drainage gully that ran alongside the S wall of the peel house that had been cut into the subsoil and drained to the W. Its W end was traced past the south-west corner of the building which it had started to undermine through erosion. Some pieces of clay pipe were found in its fill.

Under the make-up layer, a 1m wide extension of the trench on the W of the S extension of the peel house revealed a pit cut into the subsoil, 0.25m deep, that extended 2m from N to S and was roughly parallel to the footings of an earlier stone wall that had been revealed terraced into the slope to the W of the peel house extension (see image). The construction trench for this wall was visible in the bottom of the pit.

The additional exploratory trench (T6) was opened about 5m W of the peel house to examine a possible building platform. A paved floor was found in the S end of the trench with a possible N-S wall on its S side. To the S of this there was a gravel yard surface E of a rubble base for a N-S wall that may be the robbed remains of yard wall visible immediately S of the trench.



Image: the footings of the wall to the W of the peel house extension, possibly an earlier structure.