

The later medieval wasters and daub from the excavations at 7-9 Derby Street form the first evidence for pottery manufacture in Prescot and hint at the presence of a kiln near the site. The court rolls and 1592 survey refer to two potters working in Prescot in the late 16th century: Edward Glover and James Ditchfield. James Cropper of Eccleston and Lawrence Gorsuch, whose son owned property in the town, are referred to as potters, though they need not have necessarily been working in Prescot.

Glover lived at 27-31 High Street, while Ditchfield's "workhouse" was opposite, at 24-30 High Street. The 1592 survey mentions potter's ovens being sited to the north of Ditchfield's workhouse (Bailey 1937, 40), probably on Glover's plot, thus bordering the Town Moss on the north-east edge of the town. This location outside the town centre is similar to many known medieval town potteries, presumably to avoid fire risk and the dispersal of noxious fumes near domestic buildings (Platt 1976, 57-8). All other kilns referred to in the court rolls and 1592 survey are probably kilns used for malting or processing other agricultural commodities.

Conclusion

The excavations demonstrate that post-medieval cellar construction has destroyed most of Prescot's later medieval street frontages. However, the back of building plots, unless built upon or modified in some way since the 17th century, still retain later medieval garden layers and potentially features. Later medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered, some of which comprised wasters from the town's potteries.

Acknowledgements

For permission to excavate on the sites, I would like to thank Mr. C.M. Krelle, Messrs. J. and R. Jefferies of Grant Investment Trust Ltd., Mr. G. Beasley (Chairman of the Constitution Club) and Mr. S. Afzal. David Freke gave much help throughout the preparation of this report and I am particularly indebted to him. I would also like to thank Peter Davey and David Freke for the specialist reports; Clem Fisher for the archive bone report; Peter Trewin from the Knowsley Borough Council; and all those who dug on the various sites - Jimmy Irvine, Carmel and Gerry Glynn, Andy Dutton, Judith Callister, Betty Bottomley, Bobby Entwistle, Philippa Tomlinson, Peter Leather, Julian Bowsher and Catherine Eastman.

5. Observations at 82, Eccleston Street, 1980 (Site 2).

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In January 1980, Peter Trewin of the Knowsley Borough Council noticed that the front wall of the cellar of this property (Fig. 1.3) was stone-built, with the brick wall of the present house constructed on it. The cellars were being given a brick inner skin and only a small portion of the stone wall was available for study. The stones were 15cm x 25cm, of unknown depth, and well coursed and mortared. It was not possible to date the masonry, except that this stone wall pre-dates the mid-19th century brick building now on the site.

6. Observations during landscape work at High Street (Sites 3 and 4) and Church Street (Site 5), 1981.

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In January 1981, Knowsley Borough Council engaged an Manpower Services Commission scheme to landscape three sites in Prescot (Fig. 1.3).

The work on the High Street (Sites 3 and 4) consisted of laying kerbstones to define and protect approximately five metres by one metre areas where trees were planted. The maximum depth reached was half a metre. Only 20th century building demolition layers were encountered.

At 12, Church Street (Site 5), the area was lowered by approximately half a metre, footings for flower beds were constructed and trees planted. The front portion of the site comprised infilled cellars from the 18th century building formerly standing on the site. No medieval deposits or any significant post-medieval deposits survived on the site.