

EXCAVATIONS AT NOB ROW, DUNIPACE, 2021

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Introduction



Illus 1: Extract from the 1863 Ordnance Survey Map showing the long line of Nob Row north of Carronvale (National Library of Scotland).

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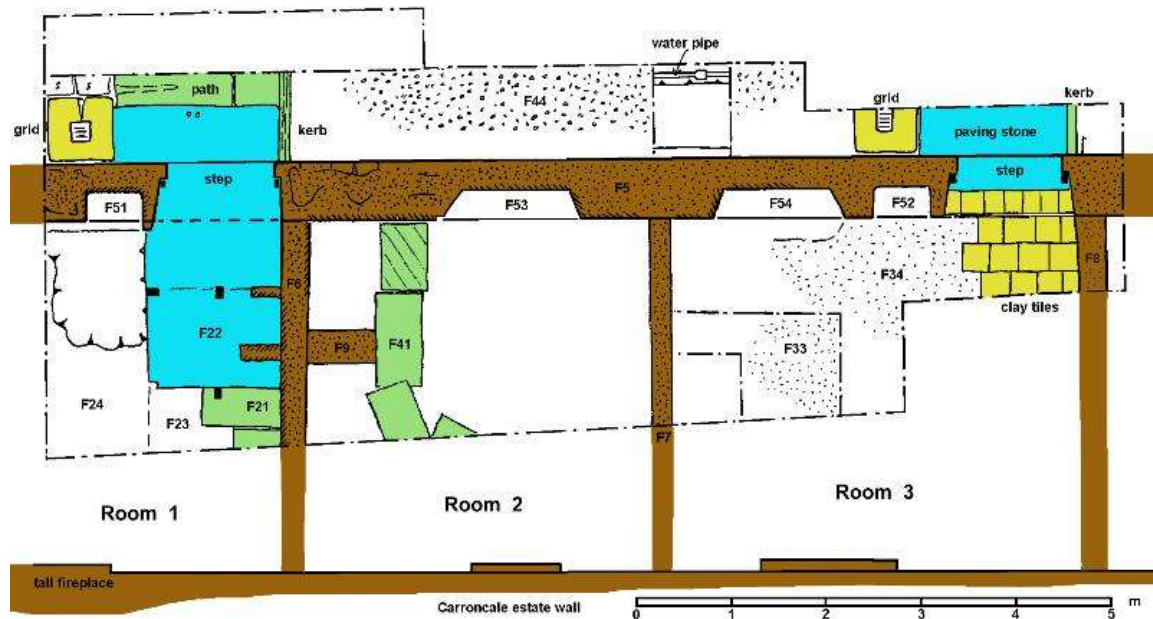
Over the nine days from 3-12 September 2021 Falkirk Community Trust with Great Place Falkirk undertook a community archaeological dig on the south side of Milton Row in Dunipace (NS 8089 8331) on housing constructed in the 1830s to house strike breakers for the Herbertshire Printfield. As the Scottish term for such blacklegs was “nob,” this became known as “Nob Row.” The site was chosen for its prominence in local tradition and its conspicuous presence in the landscape, making it a valuable educational tool. It is now a wide grass verge with a tall stone estate wall studded with interesting features as its backdrop. Each weekday the dig was visited by a class from a local primary school as well as by several older groups and members of the community.

Excavation

Upon excavation a series of walls was found defining three rooms which were number 1-3 from west to east in the order in which they were first exposed. Each wall and feature was given an “F” number and these will be found on the plan in illus 2 as well as in the quick summary at the end.

The natural orange-brown clay loam was reached at a depth of 2.18m below the present ground level in the trial trench located in Room 1. Above this was a 0.34m thick layer of dark brown silty clay loam (F61) which represents the cultivation soil before 1830. This is well below the ground level on the north side of Milton Row as the land sloped down to the south towards the River Carron creating a broad flood plain.

The foundation of the north wall (F5) of Nob Row had been dug through F61. The foundation trench was only marginally wider than the wall. Here F5 was 0.8m wide with offsets of 0.1m on both the inside and outside just above the top of the cultivation soil, reducing it to the standard width of 0.6m (2ft). The north/south cross-walls were much narrower and butted up against F5. F6 was 0.3m wide, F7 only 0.2m, and F8 0.3m. Each of the rooms thus created were infilled with material to raise the ground level for the floors. In Room 1 large slaggy ash (F62) was piled up against the footing of F5 forming a wedge-shaped layer 0.2m at its deepest. It may have been intended to act as a drain keeping the foot of the wall dry. This was covered by almost 0.55m of sandstone chippings (F25) which were presumably derived from the dressing of the building stone on the site. The top of this had been prepared for the floor with a 0.02m thick layer of ash. In Room 2 the makeup material was a mix of clay loam, broken sandstone and ash; and in Room 3 of broken sandstone in clay loam – only the upper levels were explored in these two rooms. The differences in the fills suggest that each room or cell was filled in separately using whatever material was at hand at the time (hence there were no foundation trenches for the north/south walls).



Illus 2: Plan of the Excavation Trench.

Blue – cement screed; yellow – fired ceramic; Green – paving stones; Brown – walls.

Two doorways (D1 & D2) were found in the section of F5 exposed. They were both 0.9m wide with rebated jambs and chamfered ingoings. The jamb stones were neatly dressed with tight joints. The rebates were 0.1m deep and at the foot of each was a rectangular post-hole set into the top of the doorstep for the door frame. The eastern doorstep was 0.35m wide. Immediately to the west of each doorway a closet had been recessed into the interior of the wall (F51 & F52). These had been lined on the bases and sides with cement. Their locations and linings suggest that they may have been intended for storing muddy shoes and wet coats. The eastern doorway (D2) gave access to the two rooms of the house – Room 3 and Room 2 – identified as the kitchen and bedroom respectively, or but and ben. D1 likewise opened up into the kitchen (Room 1) of the adjacent house. A chamfered window recess occurred in the north wall of each room and provided the only natural light for them; there were no windows in the south wall which still stands.



Illus 3: The south wall of Nob Row with alternating tall and short fireplaces.

This wall has the remains of fireplaces consisting of cheek stones supporting broad lintels – all of which stand 5-10cm proud of the wall. These alternate between tall and short ones representing the kitchen and bedrooms

respectively. One local resident recalled that as a young boy he used to scale the wall to gain access to the allotments on the other side and had to be wary not to fall down the vertical voids which had been left – the chimney flues. Short perforated horizontal iron bars with rounded ends are set to either side of the kitchen fireplaces, held in place by lead plugs. The hole would have held the top of a vertical bar so that it could swivel along with its attached arm in order to suspend pots over the fire. Such swivelling arms are known as sweys or sweets.

Illus 4: Iron eye for the kitchen swee, Room 1.



The floor in Room 3 was composed of 0.3m square ceramic tiles made of fireclay (F63). They had been bedded on a thin layer of lime mortar and only those near the main door survived. They appear to have been left behind because they were cracked from the heavy wear at this pinch point, whereas elsewhere they were deliberately removed for re-use. Large broken fragments of these tiles were found discarded in the immediate vicinity. This room had a thin layer of plaster on the walls which had a white distemper on its face.



Illus 5: Doorway 2 with internal clay floor tiles to the left and path to the right.

The doorway between Rooms 3 and 2 was not found because the dividing wall (F7) did not survive to a sufficient height. It was not at the northern end as the plaster of these rooms stopped on line with F7. It is unlikely to have been near the southern end of this wall because of the proximity of the fireplaces. A central location is favoured.



Illus 6: Looking west with Room 1 in the foreground.

Room 2 had red plaster on the walls which started in a line level with the top of the floor tiles in the kitchen, indicating that Room 2 had possessed a wooden floor. There were no traces of socket holes for the joists in any of the walls and it is reasonable to assume that the joists rested on the ground. A north/south line of four large re-used flat slabs (F41) located 0.7m from the west wall was probably used to separate the wooden beams from the damp earth. The slabs were 0.7-1.0m long and 0.5m wide. The northernmost had diagonal ridging on it (a fossilised beach). An attempt had been made to lift the stones when the building was being demolished, but this was abandoned, presumably when some of them broke in two. It seems likely that a second north/south line occurred 0.7m from the east wall and that its slabs were successfully retrieved. The slabs were far more

substantial than was necessary for such a mundane function and their edges chamfered slightly off the perpendicular. It is highly likely that they had been coping stones for the adjacent estate wall – no longer required when flues were inserted.

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Room 1 in the second house had been paved with thick sandstone slabs (F21), neatly squared and fitted tightly together and set on a thin bed of sand (F23). Only those on the eastern side of the room remained, hidden by a later cement screed (F22). Those in the west half had been removed at the time of demolition and here the building rubble (F25) lay directly upon the makeup material.

In front of both doorways was a large worn sandstone paving slab bordered on the east by an upright kerb. These kerbs were also of sandstone and that from Door 1 had laminated along its bedding plains, necessitating the vertical insertion of large iron nails into the soil along its outer edge. Smaller paving stones continued the paths to the north. These paths are shown on the 1863 OS map extending to the road where a small outhouse was located. These outhouses would have contained dry closets.

Illus 7: Extract from the 1863 Ordnance Survey Map (National Library of Scotland). The two houses excavated are those with the number 588 in the gardens.



Next to the paths immediately to the west of each of the two doorways was a drain cover. The surrounds were made of fireclay and their surfaces were much worn. That by Doorway 1 had two cast iron grills (one circular and one square) capping a 6ins vertical ceramic pipe sunken below the ground whilst that at Doorway 2 had a single grill flush with the sloping sides of the surround. The first had been choked with slates and a large stone from the demolition process which may account for its depressed condition. A shallow groove in the western stone path fed rainwater from it into the drain and to aid this process two slates had been laid flat on the north side of the drain.

Illus 8: Doorway 1 looking south with the drain to the right and path in the foreground.



The area between the two paths had been raised using rounded boulders covered by a layer of topsoil. Such a large quantity of boulders must have come from the river, though some may have been from field clearance. The topsoil was subsequently covered with more soil and a thin layer of gravel metalling (F44) which was well compacted, creating a yard surface in place of a garden.

A large hollow to the west of the drain cover at Doorway 2 was filled with demolition material and it was evident that something had been removed from here for salvage. It was almost certainly the stand pipe which delivered water to the house by means of a 2ins cast iron pipe which was found 0.8m north of the front wall of the buildings set in a west/east service trench. The service trench cut the former topsoil but lay under the metalling (F44).



Illus 9: Doorway 2 looking south with the drain in the foreground and internal ceramic tile floor beyond.



Illus 10: On the left is the front wall of Nob Row with an offset at its foot, in front of this a layer of round boulders covered by soil through which the trench for the water pipe had been cut. The metalling can be seen on the top.

The soil upon which the metalling sat was 0.2m deep and may be associated with the secondary attempts to raise the general ground level in the area to prevent surface water from entering the houses. Despite the initial raising of the ground level at the time of construction there were evidently problems with dampness and at some stage the floors too were raised by a further 0.25-0.30m. In Room 3 the ceramic floor tiles had been lifted and 0.25m of medium brown sandy loam was placed on the original mortar bedding (F33), compacted, and then covered with another layer of mortar bedding (F34) to receive the relaid tiles. In Room 2 the flat slabs of F41 lay on an earlier north/south wall (F9) which extended 1.5m from the north wall before turning west to meet F6. This wall was 0.3m thick

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and the space between it and the walls of the building had been filled with stone and mortar. F9 was wide enough to have been load-bearing, but in the second phase it clearly did not extend above the floor level. It is possible that it held a wooden internal partition to create a closet. A dry closet would be an obvious necessity but this was probably catered for by the outbuilding. The preferred interpretation is that it acted as the base of a bed-in-the-wall, keeping it from the damp earth.

Illus 11: Room 2 looking south-west with the flat slabs of F41 overlying F9.



The floor in Room 1 had also been raised using a layer of ash (F36). This had necessitated the infilling of the lowest 0.3m of closet F51 with stone and brick and lining the new base with cement.

Illus 12: Closet F51 looking north showing the infilling. The ash used to raise the floor can be seen under the cement screed on the right.

entrance to the western of the two houses excavated. This material covered the stone slab in front of the step as well as the step and an area 1.8m by 1.4m inside the building. This latter created an entrance hall. Small rectangular slots or postholes set into this floor show that there was a timber structure here. This may have been a screen and cupboards defining an entrance lobby or it may have been a stair inserted to allow the roof space to be used as a loft space with a dormer window. 0.75m from the north wall (F5) the area of cement screed had a west/east post-hole on its western edge, a north/south post-hole half way between it and the east wall (F6), and a vertical stone set on the same line against that



Illus 13: The cement screed in Room 1 showing the cupboard, lobby and entrance doorway – looking north. Post-holes and slots can be seen.

wall. A shallow slot on this line shows that the space between the posts was originally filled with more stones covered with plaster and whitewash. 0.8m further south was a second similar west/east row. The presence of the plastered stones suggests that these were vertical walls rather than stair treads. The inner area would then have been a cupboard for the kitchen and the outer a lobby. Confirmation of the lobby comes from a possible post-hole against the inside of the western door jamb which would have belonged to an internal door frame forming a barrier to external draughts.

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The window recess in Room 3 does not seem to have been paved with the ceramic floor tiles. It and an area 0.25m wide in front of it had no mortar bedding for the tiles and it would seem that there was a window box and seat in this area.

Passing brief descriptions of the buildings mention a shed-like construction which is a reference to the monopitched roof. This sloped down from the top of the tall estate wall to the front wall (F5) and was covered with slate. In 1832 wooden gutters would have channelled the rainwater from the roof into down spouts to feed wooden barrels or butts. Thin wrought iron straps or hoops found to the east of Doorway 1 would have come from such a water butt.

Illus 14: "THE QUEEN'S PUDDING BOILER."

Few of the finds can be attributed to the period of occupation of the houses and most were found in the demolition layers. The only exceptions were a series of small finds in Room 2 which appeared to have been trapped between the sub-floor fills and the demolition material. These included some marbles, a number of buttons (many with a mother-of-pearl finish), pins and two or three coins. The coins included a 1905 penny and an Indian head penny of

1880. The latter is a curiosity as it is an American issue. Amongst the marbles was a hand-painted clay example. The white clay had a broad black line around its equator with two narrower bands to either side. The poles had been painted with red roses. The remainder of the marbles were either plain clay or glass – the former being more numerous. Some of these had evidently been used in kettles to stop them furring up



with lime scale and consequently had small patches of iron staining on them. However, they and the majority were intended for use by children. Allan Gillies describes the games of marbles or bools played in Dunipace in the 1950s (Gillies 2012, 31).

Illus 15: Indian head penny & painted marble.



Illus 16: Cocoa tin.

When the buildings came to be demolished in the early 1930s much material was salvaged. The slates would have been carefully removed for re-use elsewhere and broken examples littered the occupation levels in front of the building and in the western drain. Timber too could be re-worked, though it is unlikely that the floorboards would have been in a fit condition. There was little evidence for burning and we might expect any bonfires to have been placed in the yards to the north. Paving slabs and ceramic tiles were prised up. Building stone from the walls must have been removed as little remained in the demolition debris. The stone for re-use was carefully selected and only small unsuitable pieces of sandstone were thrown back into the interior. The pale orange-brown sandy material shrouding the remaining wall stubs and floors was largely derived from the decayed lime mortar – most of the lime having percolated down through the ground.

Some of the finds are typical of derelict building sites. Items such as bed springs seem familiar to anyone who has left a skip outside the house overnight only to find it full of mattresses in the morning. The batteries too may belong to this category. Small pockets of topsoil amongst the demolition layer suggest that rank weeds took hold.

A thick deposit of coal ash (F4) from a furnace burning at high temperatures was dumped over the site forming a blanket some 1.0m thick. This had been covered with a thin poor quality topsoil (F2) and grassed. Constant use of motorised grass cutters has compacted the topsoil.

Narrative



Illus 17: Extract from Roy's 1755 Great Map showing Lairocks (National Library of Scotland).

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The area to the north-east of Denny Bridge was known as Lairocks (later Lairox) which means low ground, referring to the meadowland bordering the River Carron (Reid 2009, 67). The farm of that name stood on the site of the public house known as the Lairox Inn (since 2001 as the Red Hoose). From here the fields to its east were ploughed (represented by the cultivation soil F61) whilst a broad strip beside the river was left as pasture (see Roy's map of 1755). Through this meadow ran a lade to what in 1728 was still known as the New Mill of Denovan (ibid, 289) near the site of the later Vale Paper Mill. A small track ran from the Stirling road along the south side of the Avon Burn to a single-arched stone bridge and on to the Denovan Road. It is probable that this was complemented by a footpath along the lade side to the bridge to provide a more direct route from the south. Over the years this more convenient route became a substantial track.

Mylnetoune (Mill-town) of Denovan is first mentioned in the late 16th century (ibid 263) at which time the mill was probably fed by the Avon Burn. The plentiful water of the River Carron had been used to provide power for machinery over many centuries and by 1755 a lade had been constructed from it to the mill. The small community at Milton consisted of the corn mill, the miller's house and a couple of neighbouring farms. In 1783 a printfield was established by William Morehead who was then the laird of Herbertshire. It was located adjacent to the old mill and went under the name of the Herbertshire Print Works. It may have been at this time, or shortly afterwards, that the lade was extended eastward across the Avon Burn to a replacement mill which, from its location adjacent to the formal plantations of Denovan Mains, became known as Planting Mill.

The printfield was for calico-printing and in 1800 the bleachfield at Denovan a little down-river was converted to this process. Both processes required the washing of large amounts of cloth at various stages and the water for this came from the river and was returned to it in a filthy state. Calico is a plain-woven textile made from unbleached, and often not fully processed, cotton. Decorating it involved block-printing by hand using carved sycamore blocks or copper-faced blocks of wood covered with pigment of the colour required. It was a skilled job and as printed calico was much in demand good wages were obtained – far greater than those of other trades in the area at the time. By the beginning of the next century Denovan and Herbertshire Printfields were employing over 1,500 people between them.

The house at Carronvale was erected around 1815 for Neil Carnie, by then the owner of the adjacent Herbertshire Printfield. This entailed a reconfiguration of the immediate road system. The public track along the side of the lade became a private drive to the house. It was replaced by one further to the north. A tall estate wall was placed around the six acre estate to maintain the Carnie family's privacy and security. This was a substantial structure some 4.6m tall and 0.6m wide with long stretches of droved ashlar masonry on the inside south face. This must have been capped by broad coping stones (see F41) to keep the rain out of its core. The northern section of this perimeter wall alone was some 330m long and evidently required a huge outlay. We can only surmise that there was some local opposition to the loss of the old right of way. Grassam's map of 1817 shows that a pond or reservoir for the printfield lay in the grounds of Carronvale House.

By 1832 wages had risen to such an extent that the printfield proprietors made great efforts to reduce them. The Printers' Union called a general strike throughout Scotland and England which had a severe impact upon production. The masters, however, were not to be beaten, and took steps to keep their works running. The hand-weaving industry was tottering to its fall at this time and large numbers of unemployed weavers were induced to make a fresh start in the printfields. A substantial body of them was imported to Denny (said

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by some to be from the Paisley area), and as a result things became very lively indeed. The blacklegs, or “nobs,” as they were contemptuously dubbed, were subjected to all manner of abuse, and at times the place became a perfect pandemonium. According to the Concise Scots Dictionary a “Nob” was “a blackleg in a strike; an interloper or unqualified person in a trade - reduced from the English “Knobstick.” So badly were the incomers treated that a detachment of the 42nd Highlanders had to be stationed in the place to preserve order, and to keep the new printers from molestation. Even then the nobs could not regard themselves as safe, and more than one had to submit to being held under the pump-well which used to stand in Broad Street – to mention only one of the many methods in which the infuriated printers wreaked vengeance on the incomers.

The arrival of the military was a double boon to the owners of the Denny Printfields. One of the soldiers was a young printer who had run away and joined the army, and this coming to the knowledge of the proprietors, he was promptly bought off and engaged at – for him – a princely salary to teach the nobs the art of block-printing. Under his tuition the apprentices made great progress, and in course of time work went on in the printfield as effectively as ever.

Strangely, the extensive strikes and riots were not reported in the press at the time. That they were serious and generally known about can be deduced from the following article in the Stirling Journal in November 1834:

“CALICO PRINTERS – In a late number we mentioned that exertions were in course of being made to obtain the liberty of the calico-printers who were sentenced to imprisonment for being accessory to the riots at the printfields. It is with much pleasure that we are now enabled to inform our readers that these exertions have been crowned with complete success. His Majesty has been pleased, under the advice of Lord Duncannon, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to grant a free pardon to all the prisoners who were sentenced by the High Court of justiciary to suffer imprisonment in the jails of Glasgow, Dumbarton, and Stirling, for various periods from seven to fifteen months. We have no doubt this act of clemency, so worthy of a liberal Government, will be duly appreciated by the trades. Much praise is due to Mr Gemmell, the indefatigable law agent of the calico-printers, who not only prepared the petitions to his Majesty, and got them supported so admirably, but also went to London, and by personally representing to the Home Secretary the whole circumstances connected with dispute between the masters and workmen which led to the disturbances succeeded in obtaining the unfortunate sufferers restoration to liberty, and their return to the bosoms of their families.”

On arrival in Dunipace the nobs had needed somewhere to stay and a great quantity of housing was required in a relatively short time. From the fact that sentry boxes were posted at the printfields it seems that many of them stayed on the premises. There would have been plenty of covered space in the factories as the printfields were not in anything like full production. The long term solution was also relatively simple. The north boundary wall of Carronvale House was now used as the back wall of a long row of small houses built on the shed principle, that is to say they had a monopitched roof. Incredibly the row of houses stretched for 270m along the



Illus 18: The south ashlar face of the Estate Wall.

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boundary wall and the 1863 Ordnance Survey map shows that the houses varied slightly in size according to the status of the occupants. Most were small, consisting of two rooms - in Scottish terms these might be called "but and ben" houses. The order of construction seems simple enough. A wall (F5) was built parallel to the estate wall from west to east. As this was progressing cross walls were inserted and the cells thus created were filled in as part of a rolling programme to raise the ground level. Fireplaces and flues were carved out of the old estate wall, one for each room, alternating between tall kitchen fire surrounds with sweeps and shorter bedroom fireplaces. This was readily achieved by taking out the north face and core of the wall at these points, leaving the ashlar south face intact. The large coping slabs were re-used in the houses and chimney stacks put in their place. The roofs were slated and tenants would have moved in as each dwelling was completed. The houses remained the property of the printfield and later of the paper mill.

The fires provided the heat for warming the house and for cooking. Two windows in the north wall gave light. There were no windows in the favoured south wall as they would have overlooked Carronvale House. There was no piped water for several decades and water would have been obtained from runoff from the roof as mentioned above. Constant use of the water butts kept the water from turning stagnant. The dangers of using such water are illustrated by an incident that happened to a Denny calico printer's wife in 1828 before the strike. One Saturday night in September she worked up a great thirst and quickly quaffed down a drink of water. Almost immediately she felt her stomach moving and realised that she had swallowed some manner of creature with the water. The movement did not cease and so she obtained some medicine to make herself sick and eventually, on the Monday morning, she coughed up a 4ins lizard! It was still alive (Edinburgh Evening Courant 11 September 1828, 3).

Each house had a small outhouse beside the road which probably served as a washhouse and would have held a dry closet. Ash from the fire would have been liberally sprinkled on the cess periodically to reduce the smell. The pits would have been emptied at intervals by the inappropriately named scavengers and taken to the fields for use as fertiliser.

Officially named Milton Row, it was soon nicknamed "Nob Row" by the strikers – a name that stuck with it for decades. Nob Row is used in the census returns for 1861, 1871 and 1891, but not for 1881. The Ordnance Survey used the official name, describing it in the early 1860s as follows:

"This row begins at the south of Dunipace village and ends at Carronbank Cottage and is built in a north-easterly direction from the turnpike road leading from Stirling to Glasgow. The houses which line its course are one and two stories in height, chiefly slated and in good repair."

Those at the east end had large "gardens" to the north fronting the road and paths led to the front doors. At the excavation site the smaller area thus indicated was metalled to form a yard surface. The 1863 OS map shows that the houses varied in length and the above description shows that they also varied in height. These differences would reflect the status of the head of the family within the works as well as the rent paid. They were not necessarily an indication of the size of the family living there. The houses belonged to the owner of the printfield and changed hands with it. After calico printing finished and the works were turned into a paper mill the row became the property of the mill owner.

After the 1832 strike a period of prosperity followed, but demand for the goods declined and the printfields were unable to keep up with modern production techniques which turned out printed fabric on an industrial scale. The time that followed the collapse of the Denovan Printfield especially was a sore one for the Denny people. But providence was kind, even to a place like Denny, and other industries developed in such a way as to provide the

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population with a means of livelihood. Herbertshire Printfield closed in 1866 and was converted into a papermill employing fewer people. Many of the tenants in Milton Row now worked in the local coal and ironstone pits. It was a hard life and there are several reports of miners from the Row being killed or maimed in pit accidents.

By the 1861 census only 12 of the residents of Nob Row were calico printers. 23 were ironstone miners, 9 labourers, 8 paper mill workers, 2 domestic servants. The remaining jobs each had one representative – carpenter, iron dresser, shoemaker, slater, flax mill worker, and warehouseman. 16 of the ironstone workers were newly arrived from Ireland and the remainder were born in Argyleshire, Dunbartonshire, St Ninians, Renfrewshire, Dunipace and Denny. It is notable that the one man in this line of work who was born in Dunipace was the son of a calico printer.

Ten years later there was only one calico printer in Nob Row and he was the last. Tenants did not stay long and comparisons between each successive census shows that families quickly moved away. These working class families had little money to spare and poaching of rabbits and other game from the local farmlands was rife. Given the poor conditions at Nob Row it is not surprising that the dwellings should have been viewed as temporary accommodation for incomers – a role that it had throughout its lifespan. Life was hard and accidents in the pits only too common. The most common cause was rock falls from the roof of the workings, such as occurred in July 1900 when Peter McDermid from Milton Row was crushed in one of the pits belonging to the Herbertshire Collieries of Robert Addie Sons. Many of the miners developed pulmonary problems. It was not just the men who died at work. In 1898 Janet Parker Prow, 17 years of age, pithead worker from Milton Row, was killed on 31 May when she fell amongst the wheels of the engine at Carronriggs Colliery.

The occupants often resorted to drink in order to escape from the hardships of daily life and this inevitably led to disorderly conduct and an appearance at the sheriff court in Stirling for breaches of the peace. Violence was common and brawls almost a monthly occurrence. The violence extended to wife beating. Children were not always sent to school due to the expense and in the last decades of the 19th century the School Board was kept busy following up such cases of delinquency.

In response to constant demands the local council provided a drain for the Row in 1893 and this also allowed the north side of the street to be developed. Here more substantial two storey blocks were erected. The provision of the drain permitted mains water to be supplied and a two-inch pipe was laid along the front of Nob Row. However, the mill owner was not willing to pay to have the water piped into the houses which would also have required additional drains to be installed. Instead, the water was obtained from standpipes besides each front door. Further amenities were added in 1896 when the first street lamp was erected.

On 25 November 1904 Robert Boyd died at 34 Milton Row aged 75. He had been the last surviving block-printer and had worked at the Denovan printfield. Before he died he penned the following lines:

*“Nor have they left one stannin’ stone
To mark the spot where once they stood,
Where hundreds earned their daily food.
No more the “rap-tap” of them all
Shall e’er resound within the wall;
No more the merry printer’s call,
“Tear up, tear round, tear even, boy!”
For good work was the printer’s joy,
And ne’er again upon the green*

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*Shall busy men at work be seen,
Nor bonnie lassies, trim and trig,
Go lilting o'er the auld dale brig.
The day is past; another race
In Denny fills the printers' place;
And soon the last of all the lot
Their name and place shall be forgot."*

The miners, labourers and craftsmen who replaced the calico printers in Nob Row found time for hobbies other than drinking. Dog breeding and the keeping of hens meant that select creatures were shown at competition and the sale of pups and eggs helped to eke out the money.

The demand for water in Milton Row put a huge strain on the water supply and the water pressure was insufficient to cope. In 1909 it was agreed to lead an additional 2ins main, but it was 1912 before the sanction of the Vale Paper Company was obtained and work went ahead. The company had to make a financial contribution.

Several of the young men from Nob Row enlisted in the British army and served abroad. Quite a few served their terms and retired to Dunipace, their names still on the reserve list. In many respects this gave them more opportunities than remaining in the village, and they had much the same life expectancy. That was until August 1914 when the First World War broke out. Reservists were called up and many of the men from Nob Row signed up voluntarily. It was not long before one of them was reported missing. Mrs Turnbull of 73 Milton Row received word in early November 1914 that the fate of her husband, Pte Henry Turnbull of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, was unknown. He had been an ironstone miner at Woodyett Pit and as a reservist was amongst those called up in August. That same week Sergeant Thomas Paterson wrote to his father and mother in Shanks Buildings, Milton Row, informing them of the stern reality of the war. His letters were published in the Falkirk Herald and it was only later that censorship curtailed such information.

It is an amazing fact that some 96 men from Milton Row, just 33 dwellings, joined the armed forces during the First World War. Four were in the Black Watch, the regiment that had guarded the first occupants of the Row. The France family had six warrior sons in the army and the Smiths four. Incredibly all the Frances returned, but the Smiths were not so lucky. Pte Daniel Smith of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders enlisted in November 1914 but was killed on 19 September 1918, only two months before the end of the war, aged just 27. Of the 96 men from Milton Row and Milton Cottage who are known to have served a quarter, some 24, were killed. The names of the 96 are:

L Cpl T R Allan	Black Watch	killed		Son of Mrs & George Allan of Milton Row,
Pte James Ainslie	Cameron Hldrs	Survived	26 Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted in A & SH November 1916 aged 28. Transferred to Cameron Highlanders 16.8.1917.
Bdr William Ashwood	RGA	Killed 26.8.1917 aged 33	202 Stirling St	Youngest son of Robert & Mrs Ashwood of Church Pl, Dunipace. Brother of James Ashwood of Milton Row. Enlisted February 1917.

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Pte John Baird	A & SH	Survived	Milton Row	
Sapper Thomas Baird	RE	Survived	58 Milton Row	Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Robert Barr	Dorsets	Survived	55 Milton Row	Enlisted January 1915.
Pte William Baxter	A & SH	Killed	22 Milton Row	Enlisted June 1915. Died in hospital in Scotland after discharge.
Pte James Binnie	RGA	Survived	36 Milton Row	Enlisted 1915.
Pte James Blair	HLI	Killed 14.5.1917	75A Milton Row	Enlisted 1915.
Pte Thomas Bulloch	ASC	Survived	38 Milton Row	Enlisted June 1916.
Pte Charles Burns	Seaforth Hldrs	Killed 11.4.1917 aged 19	63 Milton Cottage	Worked for Geo Paul, ironfounders. Son of Mrs W Burns of Milton Cottage, Dunipace. Enlisted in A&SH. Reported missing 11.4.1917.
Pte Dundonald Burns	Gordon Hldrs	Survived	63 Milton Cottage	Enlisted April 1918.
Pte James Burns	Northumb erland Fusiliers	Survived	63 Milton cottage	Enlisted October 1915. Seriously wounded in left foot 1917.
Cpl Duncan Busby	Northumb erland Fusiliers	Killed 18.4.1917 aged 22	Tygetshaugh	Son of Mrs Busby of Tygetshaugh, Dunipace. Coachbuilder with Renton, Dunipace. Brother of Alex Busby of Milton Row.
Pte John Busby	Black Watch	Survived	38 Milton Row	Enlisted April 1917.
Smith Harry Chapman	RFA	Survived	Milton Cottage	Enlisted August 1914.
Cpl JB Clark	Manchest er Rgt	Survived	40 Milton Row	Enlisted 1911.
Sgt Archibald Crawford	Dorsets	Survived	32 Milton Row	Enlisted January 1915.

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Pte John Crawford	A & SH	Survived	69 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte Finlay Douglas	Gordon Hldrs	Survived	47 Milton Row	Enlisted June 1918.
Pte James Douglas	A & SH	Survived	47 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte John Douglas	A & SH	Survived	47 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte James Forfar	Cameron Hldrs	Killed 14.9.1914 aged 32	54 Milton Row	Soldier, served in India. Vale paper Works. Reservist called up August 1914. Left a widow.
Pte Alexander Forsyth	A & SH	Survived	41 Milton Row	Enlisted June 1918.
Pte Archibald Forsyth	KOSB	Survived	41 Milton Row	Son of George Forsyth of 41 Milton Row. Boiler Fireman in Station Pit. Enlisted January 1915.
Pte James Forsyth	A & SH	Survived		Son of Mrs Forsyth of Milton Row, Denny. Miner. POW, captured August 1914. Returned December 1918.
Sapper Alexander France	RE	Survived		Son of James France of 29 Milton Row, Dunipace. Brother of Daniel, George, John & James. Served with a tunnelling section.
Pte Daniel France	Royal Hussars	Survived	33 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte George France	Royal Scots	Survived	33 Milton Row	Enlisted December 1907, wounded February 1915.
Pte James France	Gordon Hldrs	Survived	33 Milton Row	
Pte John France	Royal Scots Fusiliers	Survived	33 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte John Gauld	A & SH	Survived	14 Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted August 1914.
Pte William Gillespie	Gordon Hldrs	Killed 14.12.1914 aged 35	49 Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted 1914. Left a widow.

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Pte William Gillespie	A & SH	Killed 10.3.1919 aged 27	Church House	Son of Robert (paper maker) & Jessie Gillespie of 43 Milton Row, Dunipace. Worked at the Anchor Papermill. Enlisted October 1915. Served in France. Wounded & invalided home. Survived torpedoing of SS "Donegal" returning him from France in 1916. Died in Aberdeen Hospital.
Cpl Andrew Gorrie	King's Liverpool Rgt	Killed 14.2.1919 aged 48	Milton Cottage	Husband of Helen Shanks. Worked at Anchor Papermill. Enlisted November 1915. Served in France for 2 years.
Cpl Thomas Gorrie	ASC	Died shortly after discharge	63 Milton Row	Enlisted November 1915. Left a widow.
Pte Michael Gribbon	Scottish Horse	Survived	Milton Row	Enlisted 1917.
Pte John Hair	Gordon Hldrs	Survived	26 Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Robert Hair	A & SH	Survived	26 Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted March 1917.
Pte John Johnstone	Seaforth Hldrs	Killed 2.11.1918	Milton Row	Vale Paper Mill. Enlisted January 1917. Son of late John & Mrs Johnston of Milton Row.
AS Hugh Kelly	Royal Navy	Survived	6 Milton Row	Enlisted August 1916.
Pte James Kelly	Royal West Kents	Killed 16.5.1917 aged 22	6 Milton Row	Son of Thomas & Bridget Kelly, Milton Row. Employed at Stripside Colliery. Enlisted January 1915.
Pte Thomas Kelly	MGC	Survived	6 Milton Row	Enlisted July 1916. Military Medal resulting in a public presentation from the people of Denny & Dunipace in September 1919.
Pte William Kelly	A & SH	Survived	6 Milton Row	Enlisted August 1914.
Pte James Kerr	ASC	Survived	30 Milton Row	Enlisted July 1917.
Sgt Robert Kerr	Army Veterinary Corps	Survived	5A Milton Row	Enlisted November 1915.
Pte Samuel Kerr	Royal Scots Fusiliers	Killed 15.4.1917 ages 23	24 Milton Row	Bottomer at Stripeside Pit. Enlisted January 1915. Gassed at Loos September 1915. On board HMS Transport "Arcadia" torpedoed at sea.

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Cpl John Lawrie	Black Watch	Survived	7 Milton Row	Worked at Denny ironworks. Enlisted June 1918.
Pte William Lawson	Black Watch	Survived	49A Milton Row	Enlisted 1916.
Pte Henry Madden	Royal Scots		50 Milton Row	Born at Dunipace. Miner. Enlisted June 1915. Discharged medically unfit 11.8.1916, aged 23. Died of pulmonary thrombosis 29.5.1918 aged 26.
Pte John Marshall	Seaforth Hldrs	Survived	56 Milton Row	Enlisted August 1918.
Pte John McAteer	Royal Irish Rifles	Killed 5.8.1917 aged 32	29 Milton Row	Born at Antrim. Husband of Mary. Enlisted June 1915
Pte James McCallum	G.M.G. Corps	Survived	46 Milton Row	Enlisted June 1918.
Pte John McCroary	RAMC	Survived	16 Milton Row	Enlisted January 1915.
Pte Findlay McDermid	A & SH	Survived	47 Milton Row	Son of Mr McDermid of 47 Milton Row, Dunipace. Wounded & taken POW. Ordrut Camp, aged 30.
L Cpl Peter McDonald	Royal West Kents	Killed 6.4.1916 aged 30	Milton Row	Miner at Station Pit with Robert Aidie & Sons. Enlisted January 1915.
Pte William McDonald	RE	Survived	52 Milton Row	Enlisted September 1914.
Pte Patrick McGrorty	Irish Guards	Killed 30.9.1915 aged 37.	43 Milton Row	Son of Patrick & Sarah A. McGrorty, 195 Stirling St., Dunipace. Employed at Annshill Pit. Miner at Bedlay Pit. Enlisted March 1915.
Pte Archibald Mckenzie	Gordon Highlanders	Killed 25.9.1915 aged 24.	15 Milton Row	Machine Assistant at Carrongrove Paper Works. Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Henry Mckenzie	A & SH	Killed 27.9.1915	139 Broad St	Brother of Archibald and James. Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted 1914.
Pte James Mckenzie	Black Watch	Survived	15 Milton Row	Enlisted 1 June 1916.
Pte John McKinlay	A & SH	Survived	19 Milton Row	Enlisted July 1916.

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L Cpl Daniel McLaren	A & SH	Survived	69 Milton Row	Worked at Denny Ironworks. Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Owen McMahon	A & SH	Survived	8 Milton Row	Enlisted August 1918.
Cpl Bernard McMenemy	Royal West Kents	Survived	18 Milton Row	Enlisted December 1914.
Driver Patrick McMenemy	RFA	Survived	18 Milton Row	Husband of Mrs McMenemy of 2 West Boreland Rd, Denny. Enlisted August 1914.
Pte Michael McVicar	Royal West Kents	Killed 26.9.1915 aged 20.	42 Milton Row	Son of John & Mary McVicar, 42 Milton Row. Drawer in Stripeside Pit. Enlisted January 1915 and served as a bomb thrower.
Pte John Mealls	London Rgt	Survived	15A Milton Row	Enlisted January 1918.
Pte William Mealls	HLI	Survived	15A Milton Row	Son of Mr D Mealls of 17 Milton Row, Enlisted November 1914 aged 17. Wounded 1917.
Sgt James Miller	A & SH	Survived	11 Milton Row	Husband of Elizabeth Hunter. Served with A & SH in Boer War. Shipping clerk with Smith & Wellstood. Died 3.10.1951 aged 68.
Pte John Moffat	A & SH	Survived	12 Milton Row	Enlisted November 1914.
Gunner Joseph Moffat	RGA	Survived	12 Milton Row	Enlisted April 1918.
Sgt Thomas Paterson	KOSB	Survived	Milton Row	Served in regular army before Boer War.
L Cpl John Peddie	MGC	Survived	26 Milton Row	Enlisted November 1916.
Pte John Penman	Royal Hussars	Survived	60 Milton Row	Enlisted March 1916.
Pte Robert Penman	Royal Scots	Killed 21.11.1916.	60 Milton Row	Son of Mrs Wallace of 60 Milton Row. Enlisted March 1916.
Pte Thomas Pinkerton	Seaforth Hldrs	Survived	34 Milton Row	Worked at Denny Iron Works. Enlisted June 1918.

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AS William Quinn	Royal Navy	Killed 1914	Milton Row	Enlisted May 1914.
Pte George Scott	A & SH	Survived	79A Milton Row	Enlisted April 1915.
Pte Thomas Sherlock	A & SH	Survived	79 Milton Row	Enlisted March 1917.
Pte Alexander Smith	Dorsets	Killed 2.1.1917	79A Milton Row	3rd son of Mr & Mrs Smith, Carronvale, Dunipace. Husband of Mrs Smith of 77 Milton Row. Enlisted January 1916.
Pte Alexander Smith	A & SH	Survived	56 Milton Row	Brother of James, John, Robert & Daniel. Enlisted August 1914.
Pte Alexander Smith	Royal Scots	Survived	57A Milton Row	Enlisted January 1915.
Pte Daniel Smith	A & SH	Killed 19.9.1918 aged 27.	56 Milton Row	Youngest son of J & Mrs Smith of 56 Milton Row. Brother of James, John, Robert & Alexander & 1 other. Moulder with George Paul & Co, Denny. Enlisted November 1914.
Pte John Smith	Royal Scots Fusiliers	Survived	56 Milton Row	Brother of James, Robert, Alexander & Daniel.
Gunner Joseph Smith	RGA	Survived	56 Milton Row	Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Robert Smith	Royal Scots	Survived	56 Milton Row	Son of J & Mrs Smith of 56 Milton Row. Brother of Daniel & 5 others. Enlisted December 1917. Wounded 1918 in Salonika.
Pte Daniel Hamilton	Dorsets	Killed June 1918.	21 Milton Row	Miner in Stripeside Pit. Married. Enlisted January 1915.
Pte James Thomson	A & SH	Survived	28 Milton Row	Native of West Plean. Also served with Stirlingshire Militia. Enlisted August 1914. . Died 9 December 1942 aged 75.
Pte William Thomson	A & SH	Survived	Milton Row	Enlisted November 1914.
Pte Henry Turnbull	A & SH	Survived	73 Milton Row	Son of John & Mrs Turnbull of 18 East Borland, Denny. Husband of Mrs Turnbull of 73 Milton Row, Denny. Stone worker/miner in Woodyett Pit. Reservist, called up August 1914. Wrongly reported as POW in Germany in April 1915.
Pte John Wilson	RE	Survived	28 Milton Row	

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Pte John Wyness	RE	Survived	53A Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted March 1918.
Pte Leslie Wyness	Royal Scots Fusiliers	Survived	53A Milton Row	Worked at Carrongrove Papermill. Enlisted November 1914.

The buildings were now almost a century old and were beginning to deteriorate badly. In the 1930s the local council decided to take action. In December 1929 the medical officer of Health condemned six of the houses declaring them unfit for human habitation. More followed each year and bit by bit the old row was demolished. The last were numbers 57-85 in 1939 and the building materials were salvaged for reuse. It was called the “Old Row” to distinguish it from other dwellings in the same road. The occupants were relocated to new council housing of much better quality. These included six new council houses on the north side of the road which were ready for occupation by September 1930.

The land was still owned by the Vale Paper Mill and throughout the 1930s it dumped lorryloads of ash over the remains of Nob Row to bring the ground level up to that on the other side of the road, accidentally preserving the upstanding stumps of the walls. For a short spell in the late 1930s the ground was used by the local boys for playing football. Then, in 1940 after the debacle at Dunkirk, army lorries appeared and parked up on the ashy surface. There was an acute shortage of accommodation for troops within Britain and local stately homes such as Dunipace House were pressed into service. At Milton Row the men slept in the lorries – yet again it had provided a quick solution to housing needs. Odd patches of cobbling on the top of the ash may be associated with this occasion, along with the collection of George Younger beer bottles from Alloa, buried in a shallow pit.

After the end of Second World War reconstruction followed. Temporary housing in the form of prefabs was made available and Milton Row was suggested as a possible location - an echoe of its previous history. This proposal was not carried out and in 1951 work began on 40 new houses and a number of single-roomed flats for old people at the end of Milton Row on the north side and the road was widened.

In the early 1970s the paper mill was acquired by Henry Boot and a housing estate was erected on the former grounds of Carronvale House. The old estate wall was retained and recapped using concrete flags. A poor quality topsoil was imported to cover the ash so that a wide grass verge could be established.



Illus 19: Blocked up fireplaces at Milton Row in Spring 2021 – the long grass a reflection of the Covid lockdown.

Today all that can be seen of Old Milton or Nob Row are the blocked up fireplaces at the foot of a stately boundary wall which encloses a housing estate, but below the turf the story of the Miltoners persists...

Acknowledgements

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A wide range of volunteers helped to excavate the site and to guide the children – for which I am very grateful. These included:



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The proprietor of the Red Hoose kindly made its toilets available to the digging crew for the first few days of the excavation which was a great relief.

And a great big thank you has to go to the people of Dunipace and Denny of all ages who showed their appreciation and enthusiasm for their local history. Together everyone made this a most enjoyable occasion.

Contexts at a Glance

- 2 – pale brown clay loam with some stones underlying the turf – topsoil.
- 4 – thick deposit of coal ash, 0.9-1.2m deep – levelling material.
- 5 - wall, 0.6m wide with dressed coursed sandstone and yellow lime mortar. The lowest courses contained large square stones with narrow levelling slabs – north wall of Nob Row.
- 6 – wall, 0.3m thick of sandstone rubble with yellow lime mortar – dividing wall between two houses.
- 7 – wall, 0.2m thick formed from single blocks of sandstone set with their bedding plains vertical and plastered on both sides – dividing wall between Rooms 3 and 2.
- 8 – wall, 0.3m thick of sandstone rubble bonded with yellow lime mortar – dividing wall between two houses.
- 9 – wall – 0.3m thick extending 1.5m from F5 and turning west to meet F6 – foundation for bed-in-the-wall.

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- 22 – cement screed over the paving stones in Room 1 – floor.
- 23 – brown-orange sand 0.02m thick in Room 1 – bedding for stone floor.
- 24 – 0.15m thick deposit of building rubble overlying the broken sandstone F25 in the western half of Room 1, included bricks with frog stamped DARNGAVIL – fill of robbing of stone floor.
- 25 – Broken sandstone chippings 0.55m deep under the floor of Room 1 – debris from dressing the stone.
- 33 – thin level layer of lime mortar – original bedding for ceramic floor tiles.
- 34 – thin layer of lime mortar – secondary bedding for ceramic floor tiles.
- 35 - 0.25m thick layer of orange-brown sandy loam – deposit to raise the floor level.
- 36 – 0.25m thick layer of ash under the paving slabs of Room 1 – deposit to raise the floor.

- 41 – N/S line of four large rectangular flat stone slabs in Room 2 – joist rest.
- 44 – thin layer of gravel metalling to the north of the house overlying a thin topsoil and the water pipe trench.
- 51 – recess in F5 immediately to the west of Door 1, 0.6 x 0.25m, lined with cement – closet.
- 52 – recess in F5 immediately to the west of Door 2, 0.6 x 0.25m, lined with cement – closet.
- 53 – window recess in room 2, 1.1m long chamfering to 1.4m on the interior, 0.3m wide.
- 54 – window recess in Room 3, 1.1m long chamfering to 1.4m on the interior, 0.3m wide.
- 58 – pipe trench for the 2ins cast iron pipe to the north of the houses, grey-brown clay loam.
- 61 - dark brown silty clay loam found in trial pit in Room 1 – cultivation soil.
- 62 – wedge-shaped layer of slaggy ash piled up against the south face of F5 in Room 1 – floor makeup.
- 63 – floor in Room 3 made of 0.3m square fireclay tiles – kitchen floor.
- 64 – 0.01m thick layer of lime mortar under F63 – floor bedding.

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