
2 INTRODUCTION

The excavations took place in advance of a hotel development adjacent to St Patrick's Church. The site is located on the north side of the Cowgate and is bounded to the west by South Gray's Close (illus 1, illus 9). The development extended 17m eastwards from South Gray's Close and 36m back from the Cowgate. The site was formerly occupied by a bowling green, which had been built over a WWII concrete water tank. Previous evaluation of the site established that medieval archaeological deposits

survived up to a depth of 2.5m below the modern ground surface (CECAS 1990; Rees & Martin 2000). The main research objective of the excavation was to further our understanding of the development of the Cowgate during the medieval period, especially through the study of soil formation processes and archaeobotanical evidence. To this end a multi-disciplinary palaeoenvironmental study including pollen, beetles and plant macrofossils accompanied the excavation.