Introduction

AA512 is comprised of the sidewalk situated on the western side of the Vicolo di Narciso (VI, I). The portion excavated was located between the back door of the Stables and a stone block between the House of the Surgeon and the House of the Vestals. AA 512 abuts the previous excavation of the side walk, AAPP 99, AA 90 (Figure 1).

Aims and Objectives:

Discovery of the date of the construction of the eastern rear portion of the House of the Surgeon was one goal of excavation within the sidewalk. The eastern rear-rooms of the House of the Surgeon have not been excavated to date, including the kitchen area and corridors. There is discussion that this part of the house was constructed later than the rest of the House of the Surgeon. Additionally, excavation of this side walk may elucidate the phasing of the street in relation to insula VI.i.

Previous excavations have been carried out on the Vicolo di Narciso. As mentioned previously, AA 90 investigated a small portion of the western side walk abutting the House of the Vestals. A section of the road itself was excavated in 2002, and the sidewalk and ramp adjacent to the back door of the Stables in 2003.

The side walk is divided into several segments by modern gutter drains. Excavation in 2005 was carried out segment by segment. Each segment has been given a letter name (A through E) to avoid confusion with SU assignment (Figure 2).

Phasing of AA 512

Phase 1:
SUs: 11, 502, 503, 506 and 529

Natural was found at the deepest extent of excavation in each segment of the sidewalk. It seems to have been the 'pitted earth' layer in the natural sequence as identified primarily in the north of insula VI.i. The soil itself exhibited a deep orange color when first uncovered, which oxidized to a rich brown after exposure to air. This soil contained no inclusions.
Phase 2:
Su's: 6, 7, 515, 519, 528, 533, 580

A construction cut for the House of the Surgeon, wall number 34, 118, 199, was discovered in segment A and C (Figure 3). In segment B the cut was no longer present, except for the north part of the segment. Occasionally, only the very base of the construction cut and fill were found, as with SU 528. The natural sequence in other areas of the insula has black sand immediately atop the pitted earth. It is hypothesized that the construction cuts and fills may well have been more substantial when created, cut from the level of black sand. However, a cut into so fluid a soil did not survive, leaving only that part reaching deep enough into the pitted earth as evidence for its existence. Similar evidence was found in AA 508 where the Vestali and Surgeon party wall, along with the eastern boundary wall of the garden were found to be cut into black sand. The portions of the construction fill that were excavated in AA 512 yielded plaster and a very few sherds of pottery, which gave a tenuous spot date of second century BCE for the construction of the wall. The matrix of the fill proved extremely resilient and very difficult to remove. Segment B had only a small lens of foundation fill remaining in its most northern extent. Segment A was found to have no remains of the construction trench, exhibiting a pit cut filled with a grey-brown soil containing multicolored and decorated plaster. It seems that this deposit was the edge of a nearby pit, the majority of which was excavated in the Stables in 2003 (Figure 4).

The original elevation of the Vicolo di Narciso is unknown, but is thought to have been at a higher elevation than that of the current street for two reasons. First, the height of the back door of the House of the Surgeon is oriented to a much higher sidewalk height. Second, the drain described below, if it was to have a capping to make it useable, would argue for a sidewalk of higher elevation in order that this assumed capping would be covered by the sidewalk. If this
earlier phase of street existed, and if it had sidewalk stones in the form that the final phase sidewalks have, no evidence remains from the cutting away to lower the elevation.

During this phase, the drain SU 7 in the southern portion of segment C (south of the back door of the House of the Surgeon) was constructed. The drain comes out into the sidewalk from underneath the now-narrowed doorway of the backdoor of the House of the Surgeon and turns south into a cesspit, SU 533. The drain is a stone and mortar construction with a smoothed mortar channel (SU 6) (Figure 5). The cesspit, SU533, undermines the wall, leaving nothing of the foundation trench for the wall in this portion of the sidewalk.

**Figure 5:** Cesspit and drain in Segment C.

Phase 3: SUs 8, 538.

In phase three, the drain SU533 is put out of use and blocked by a large stone and several artifacts (SU8) (Figure 6). The cesspit was filled in with lapilli. Whether this fill is ancient or modern is unclear. Perhaps the lapilli had been used as fill to take away the smell of the cesspit. The lapilli was mixed with sherds of pottery and multicolored plaster. The fill had more inclusions of artifacts than the more northern cesspit of a later phase, suggesting the fill is ancient and untampered-with. However, flotation of the lapilli fill came back sterile, devoid of any ecofacts at all.

The doorway to the back rooms of the House of the Surgeon was narrowed in this phase, putting out of use the drain as mentioned above. An opus incertum construction is added to the southern door frame, narrowing the door from its original sarno-quoining. It seems that the capping (assuming this capping existed) for the drain had been removed prior to the doorway narrowing as only the channel portion of the drain remains under this narrowing construction.

**Figure 6:** Pottery and stone blocking the end of the drain SU 533, presumably signaling it being out of use.
Phase 4:
Su's: 510, 511, 516, 517, 541, 556.

At an undetermined point of time, the elevation of the Vicolo di Narciso was lowered, and a new road surface and sidewalk stones were placed. The construction trench for the sidewalk stones was found running the length of the sidewalk, cut through the majority of the deposits of the sidewalk. The fill of this construction trench (SU510, 516, 541) (Figure 7) contained pottery sherds and plaster, and yielded a spot date of first century BCE to 38 AD, placing the laying of the second sidewalk late in the life of the insula.

Considering the height from which one would need to step when exiting or entering the backdoor of the House of the Surgeon, it seems plausible that wooden steps may have been used to address the elevation discrepancy between the sidewalk and threshold. This, however, is speculation as no evidence of a structure to gain access through the door was found.

The laying of the sidewalk stones occurred after the laying of the street pavers. The sidewalk stones on the west side of the street lie directly atop the pavers. On the other side of the street, however, the sidewalk stones are divided from the street pavers by a small gap, suggesting that this side of the street was preserved during the lowering of the street and may have been at a lower elevation originally. Having a difference in sidewalk height on two sides of the same portion of street is not unprecedented in Pompeii. Thus, it may be that the sidewalk on the west side was lowered, while the east side maintained its position.

The stones used to construct the sidewalk were, at least in part, reused. One of the large sarno blocks utilized in the building of the sidewalk had an Oscan symbol carved into the west-facing side of it, matching the carvings on a number of the stones used to construct the city wall. This may indicate the use of the same quarry or the re-use of the stones of the city defense.

Phase 5:
SU's: 7, 26, 526, 572, 573 and 574.

Presumably after the blocking of the southern drain (SU 7) in phase 3, a second drain for toilet or kitchen waste was constructed on the northern side of the House of the Surgeon backdoor with an outlet into pit C. This drain originates from room 15 of the House of the Surgeon. To accommodate the down spout, a portion of the wall (SU 26) was removed and rebuilt around the new construction. Whether this drain is contemporary with or postdates the
more southern drain (SU 7) remains to be seen with further excavation of the back rooms of the house of the surgeon.

The cesspit which catches the outlet of the drain undermines the wall slightly, but not to the extent of the southern drain. In order to make the cesspit, the foundation trench for the wall was cut away (SU 572 and 574), along with the foundation trench for the sidewalk. The cesspit lacks for any substantial construction, comprised mainly of a hole without lining. The northern edge of the cesspit, however, does have a stone and mortar construction defining its northern boundary (SU 573) (Figure 8).

The build of the outlet for the drain is no longer present, but seems to have drained into a soakaway or additional drain construction, now robbed out, and connected with the cesspit. A single potsherd beneath two stones was found in the void of what was thought to have been this drainage connection (SU 585) (Figure 9).

Another drain was made, situated between pit A and B (SU 526). It comes from underneath the wall and runs east to the street. A hole was made in the sarno block (with Oscan symbol) to let it come out in to the street. The remains of this drain were not well preserved and the origin of the drain not clear. It will require further excavation on the west side of the wall, in the area of the Stables, to yield further information about this construction.
Phase 6:
Su's: 568, 557

In this phase, it seems that a part of the sidewalk fell into the cesspit on the north side of pit C. This collapse is repaired by two large reused sarno blocks. One of these stones is laid across the void of the cesspit, resting on a thin (0.5 to 2cm) layer of mortar (SU 568) and has a large portion of multicolored plaster on its cesspit-facing side, thus demonstrating its reuse as a sidewalk stone. It is possible that this collapse signals the end of the use of this cesspit. Whether there is a direct correlation, the drain SU 585 was put out of use, as earmarked by the destruction of the soakaway or outlet. Additionally, the upper portion of the drain does not continue to any inlet source. While it was thought that the small room on the other side of the wall from the cesspit was a toilet feeding into this cesspit (as evidenced by a sloping floor and waste-hole), this privy seems to have had its own cesspit directly beneath it as there is no connection between it and the drain in question.

The fill of this cesspit (SU 557) contained a large volume of pottery, multicolored and monochrome painted plaster, and a coin, as yet to be dated. The fill was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.5 meters and was subsequently abandoned for health and safety concerns. This deposit lacks for any modern contamination, suggesting that it is indeed ancient and associated with the decommissioning of the cesspit, but may also have been Bourbon-filled.

Phase 7:

Phase seven encompasses the modern repointing and modern reconstruction of the sidewalk stones and wall. Additionally, several modern gutter drains were installed with appropriate sluices into the street.