

Earthwork Survey at Wharram Percy in Retrospect and Prospect

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Pre-Ordnance Survey mapping

As has long been recognised, it is clear that well before the beginnings of academic research into medieval rural settlement in the 1930s, memories of the former existence of villages persisted amongst the rural populace, their desertion often attributed to fire, plague or divine wrath (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 15; Wrathmell 1996, 7). In the case of Wharram Percy, the principal evidence for such local folklore is the names of the three fields that contained the village earthworks, as recorded in the early 19th-century glebe terriers: Water Lane, Town Street and Towngate (e.g. Borthwick, Ter K 1825). It is perhaps significant that all three field names refer to routes ('gate' also meaning a way or street in the regional context), rather than to elements of the settlement itself, suggesting that they may have their origins at a time when the structure of the nucleated village had already disintegrated. On John Speed's 1610 maps of Yorkshire and the North and East Ridings of the county, a church was depicted, annotated respectively 'Wharum in y^e Stret' and 'Wharum'. Moll's 1720 map of the county applies the latter name, while Bowen's 1750 map shows neither the place name nor the church. However, beginning with the publication in 1771 of Thomas Jefferys' map of the county, surveyed between 1767 and 1770, a series of maps also record the name Wharram Percy (in various spellings: Greenwood 1817-18; Hobson 1840s). Of all these early maps, Greenwood's is perhaps most likely to have been available to the later map-makers of the Ordnance Survey, for Greenwood had learned his craft in the service of the Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey mapping: the beginnings of archaeological research

As the Ordnance Survey's large-scale mapping of Britain progressed in the first half of the 19th century, there is no doubt that the map-makers would sometimes, during their protracted campaigns of fieldwork, have become familiar with folklore concerning historic sites. As early as 1816, the Superintendent of the Ordnance Survey ordered that prehistoric remains including 'all ancient fortifications, Druidical Monuments ... and all Tumuli and Barrows' should be mapped (Seymour 1980, 63). By the mid-19th century, local societies and individuals with an interest in antiquities (notably members of the clergy) were being invited to assist with the identification and interpretation of archaeological sites, and ruined medieval buildings were routinely recorded, together with any associated major earthworks (Seymour 1980, 174). By the time detailed rules for recording archaeological remains were written down in 1884, it was common practice to record earthworks such as moats, fishponds and park pales, regardless of whether any ruins or other traces of buildings were present.

For the First Edition map of Yorkshire, surveyed in 1850-1 at a scale of 6 inches to the mile (1:10 560), Captain John Bayly was responsible for overseeing the survey of many of the map sheets covering the Wolds. He ordered the depiction of the village earthworks at Wharram and identified them, presumably partly on the basis of information gained from local informants, as the 'Site of the Village of Wharram Percy' (Ordnance Survey 1854 and Fig. 3.1). Bayly's working practice, in terms of

what he was expected to depict and with what standard of accuracy, would have been governed by military regulations. However, the archaeological perceptiveness of his survey is apparently attributable to his own personal interest. He went on to be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and as such headed the Ordnance Survey's Boundary Office from 1864 to 1873 (Seymour 1980, 159).

The identification of historic boundaries, surviving as earthworks or relict hedges, was an important aspect of the Boundary Office's work and Bayly's promotion may in part reflect the expertise he had developed in analysing historic features. He mapped 'sites of buildings' and 'old foundations' at Towthorpe, Duggleby, Low Mowthorpe and Kirby Grindalythe, while at Croome House, north of Sledmere, a series of 'old banks' clearly represent a tract of well-developed ridge and furrow. Elsewhere on the Wolds, he omitted prominent prehistoric boundary earthworks, but this apparent inconsistency must be largely attributable to the notoriously changeable orders as to what types of remains should be mapped, for on the North York Moors he identified and mapped the slight remains of probable Bronze Age field systems and enclosures over extensive areas (Oswald *et al.* 2005). In passing, it can be observed that by the time work began in 1888 on the First Edition 25-inch scale mapping of the area, the rules had clearly changed, for while Wharram's houses and tenement boundaries were depicted, disused field boundaries were not, even though some of these were prominent earthworks and had been mapped previously by Bayly (Ordnance Survey 1890). Indeed, the plan of the village surveyed in 1888, though at a larger scale, arguably represents a step backwards from Bayly's work in terms of the interpretation of the earthworks (Ordnance Survey 1890 and Fig. 3.2).

The remains of the well-preserved deserted village of Gainsthorpe, in Lincolnshire, had also been mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the 19th century (NMRA). A series of oblique aerial photographs dated 3 March 1925, which form part of the collection amassed by the Ordnance Survey's first field archaeologist, O G S Crawford, but which were not necessarily taken by him, seem to indicate that the 19th-century surveys had already sparked archaeological interest in some deserted villages. In the case of Wharram Percy, however, this was not to be. Nor does it seem that Crawford himself was greatly concerned with medieval settlement, although he was intrigued by field systems, park pales and other medieval earthworks. Only one deserted medieval village, that at Barbury Farm in Wiltshire, was included in his pioneering publication with Alexander Keiller on *Wessex from the Air* (Crawford and Keiller 1928, plate XLVI). The first flight over Wharram Percy, by J K J St Joseph, took place almost a month after Beresford's first field visit, on 22 July 1948 (St Joseph 1948). Since that time, specialist oblique aerial photography has been virtually continuous.

Earthwork survey during the Wharram project

The earthworks were recognised as an important source of information at an early date in the Wharram project, but Beresford expected that they would represent a single horizon of activity relating to the time immediately preceding the moment of desertion. This expectation appears to have coloured the work of the project's surveyors, so that informative stratigraphic and plan relationships were not generally looked for, or found. Indeed, since most of the survey work coincided with the summer

campaigns of excavation, vegetation conditions were seldom ideal for the recognition of slight earthworks or the interpretation of stratigraphic relationships. In 1954 G L Worsley of the Ordnance Survey was commissioned to make a plan of the village at 1:600 scale. This was extensively amended by R T (Dickie) Porter from 1955 onwards. Five separate plans of key areas were made at scales of 1:120 and larger by W J Hopkins of the Ordnance Survey during his summer holidays in the mid-1970s, while Christine Mahany surveyed the earthworks in Nut Wood in 1977. All these surveys, together with transcriptions of ridge and furrow cultivation and other earthworks visible on vertical aerial photographs taken by the RAF in 1946 (but levelled by post-War ploughing), were amalgamated into a single plan by Porter (Fig. 3.3). Once redrawn, this final product appeared consistent and comprehensive, serving as the standard depiction of the site in countless publications.

In reality, the plan had developed organically over the course of twenty-five years and was a composite of differing theoretical expectations, observational skills and survey methods (including working scales). There had been occasional revisions of the field survey in the light of discoveries made using other techniques; this methodological dialogue was certainly productive, but further eroded the consistency of the end-product. For example, on 21 August 1979, at a time when the plan of the village was felt to be tolerably well understood, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England flew an aerial photographic sortie intended to contribute to the East Riding Inventory (NMR). The new photographs unexpectedly revealed evidence for the croft boundaries of what is termed in this publication the East Row, immediately prompting a re-appraisal of the overall plan of the village (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 79-80). In the following year, Hopkins undertook a re-examination of the relevant area on the ground, but could not detect the boundaries. Therefore, although all do survive as slight earthworks, the newly discovered features were plotted on the plan as cropmarks. A couple of years before this, Herman Ramm and Chris Dunn of the Royal Commission had argued on the evidence of initial reconnaissance that a comprehensive re-survey of the whole village was justified for the Inventory, but this proposal was eventually rejected on the grounds that it would take too long.

Earthwork survey by English Heritage

In January 1998, Stuart Wrathmell, in the role of coordinator of the Wharram Post-excavation and Publication Project, also reached the conclusion that a fresh and comprehensive analytical earthwork survey and investigation, coupled with comprehensive new geophysical and aerial surveys, should be undertaken to accompany the forthcoming synthesis of the excavated evidence. While the timetable for this work was still under discussion, English Heritage began the preparation in 2001 of Conservation Statements to lay the foundations for more detailed Conservation Plans for monuments in Guardianship in the Yorkshire Region. As an essentially separate project, it was also agreed to improve Wharram's on-site signage for visitors, which by that time was in poor physical condition and represented the end product of several interpretation schemes of different dates.

Accordingly, in November 2001, Alastair Oswald, Stewart Ainsworth and Trevor Pearson of English Heritage's Archaeological Survey and Investigation Team carried out a rapid examination of the site (at Level 1 standard, as defined in Ainsworth,

Bowden, and McOmish 2007). This assessment noted several potentially important features not recorded by the earlier surveys and specific places where stratigraphic relationships visible on the ground were not accurately conveyed by the existing plan (English Heritage 2002). It was suspected, too, that certain fundamental issues could be addressed through a more analytical approach to the village plan as a whole, adding weight to Wrathmell's proposal. The parallel needs of the Wharram Project and English Heritage as curators of the site culminated in a thorough and detailed re-examination of the earthworks at Level 3 standard (as defined in Ainsworth *et al.* 2007).

English Heritage's Level 3 field survey covered the village and all of its immediate environs that remain unaffected by modern ploughing, including Drue Dale, a total area of 31.5 hectares (78.0 acres). The same three investigators who had carried out the 2001 fieldwork formed the core of the new team, tackling Nut Wood and the most complex areas under pasture over the winter months between January 2002 and March 2003, so that vegetation was not a serious impediment. Survey-grade GPS, offering plan accuracy of <2cms and height accuracy of <5cms, was used to map modern features, establish temporary control points and record ridge and furrow, except in wooded areas, where a 'total station' electronic theodolite was used to do the same jobs. The same combination of electronic surveying equipment was also used to model the natural topography and major earthworks, serving both to underpin a digital reconstruction drawing of the village and to allow the main scarps of the valley sides to be depicted using contours at 1m intervals, so that the artificial earthworks assumed greater impact by comparison. The temporary control points were then used as a framework within which a taped survey of the site was completed using traditional graphical techniques. This 'low-tech', labour-intensive approach was considered appropriate to achieve the best possible understanding of subtle and complex earthworks. The investigation initially produced a fully illustrated report, a plan at a scale of 1:1 000, a plan of the North Manor at 1:500 and a digital ground model of the natural topography (Oswald 2004). In October 2003, rapid examination of the course of the Wharram stream and detailed survey of the site of the mill belonging to the grange of Meaux Abbey were also completed (Oswald 2005).

Much of the plan produced by the 2002 investigation (Fig. 3.4) differs little from that compiled and produced by Porter in terms of the features shown and the degree of metrical accuracy, but it achieved more than merely 'dotting the i's and crossing the t's' left by previous fieldwork. Arguably, it was not until this relatively late stage in the Wharram Research Project that the sophistication of the questions directed at the earthworks began to match that of the questions being asked of the sub-surface remains, particularly with regard to the issue of change over time (Wrathmell 1989, 41-5; Beresford and Hurst 1990, figs 34 and 60). Collectively, the results of the analytical survey undertaken in 2002 can be said to introduce a greater degree of dynamic change into the picture of the site than can be inferred from the earthwork traces, an outcome that could arguably have been anticipated on the evidence of the excavations.

In the later 1970s, when the publication of the early excavations at Wharram Percy was in preparation, archaeological theory was generally determinist in its outlook. In keeping with this trend, the evidence for pre-medieval activity was widely interpreted

as indicating a significant degree of direct continuity of occupation, which almost implied incremental, evolutionary progress towards the *floreat* of the nucleated medieval village (Roberts 1990, 18; Stamper *et al* 2000, 18). The ideas underpinning and arising from the English Heritage investigation inevitably reflect a changed theoretical stand-point: from the current perspective on the development of landscape, the tone of earlier interpretations would seem to overemphasise the degree of continuity and the importance of earlier land-use in determining its subsequent development (see also Chapter 6, below). Rather, the pattern of the landscape's development now seems more complex: at least as much the product of change, on occasions of a sudden and unpredictable nature, sometimes instigated by individuals for idiosyncratic reasons (Roberts 1987, 18; Everson *et al* 1991, 6-9; Hodder 1992).

Directions for future research

The essence of the method of analytical field survey - the process of observation, analysis and recording - has not changed significantly since the 19th century, but expectations of the technique's potential in its own right to deliver understanding, as opposed to merely a sterile site plan on which to plot excavations, have progressed much further. Theories about the development of the village based on the surviving earthworks must of course be advanced with full awareness of the inherent limitations of the evidence. Yet, even at this late stage in the long history of research at Wharram, it is unwise to assume that investigation through earthwork survey has no further potential to deliver useful insights.

It is too soon, as yet, to foresee what new contributions future field survey in the traditional mode might make. The limited objectives of the ground modeling undertaken in 2002 might be extended further and the resolution consequently increased, but possibly without yielding great dividends in terms of improved understanding. Airborne survey using Lidar, which at best currently offers resolution in the region of 0.25m, would be suitable for more comprehensive topographic modeling, but not (yet) for the recording of the slightest earthworks. Even terrestrial scanning, which offers much higher resolution recording than Lidar, disappointingly failed to pick out slighter earthworks that are clearly detectable with the naked eye during trials in the wake of the main fieldwork (again in part due to summer vegetation conditions).

Yet this technology might, in due course, be usefully applied to areas where earthworks are extremely slight and degraded, such as the site of supposed Middle Saxon settlement revealed by geophysical survey. The trained eye can recognize extremely subtle changes, yet it is drawn to sharper anomalies (scarps, in other words) while high resolution scanning could in theory detect form in micro-topography that appears unintelligibly amorphous to the naked eye. Above all, however, the lesson of the new surveys, and indeed of the Wharram Research Project as a whole, is that dialogue between different research techniques is more likely to offer new insights than any single technique applied in isolation.

Summary and discussion of the earthwork evidence

By its nature, analytical earthwork survey of any intensively-used site tends to elucidate most clearly the latest phase of activity prior to the cessation of that intensive activity. Thus, in the case of the Wharram Percy village site itself, the 500

years of active pastoral land-management responsible for ensuring the preservation of the medieval remains as earthworks offer negligible impediment - indeed vital assistance - to the attempt to detect the final phase of medieval settlement. In terms of Wharram Percy's wider farmlands, the field boundaries established at the time of the estate's Improvement, mainly between 1775-9 and depicted on Dykes' 1836 estate map (Fig. 3.5; see *Wharram XIII*, 361), can all be identified with confidence as low banks and shallow ditches, in several cases following the lines of medieval earthworks (notably the edges of hollow ways, suggesting that these were still in occasional use). In most cases, the boundaries are shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps as relict hedgelines, denoted by discontinuous lines of tree symbols, and one of the ancient hawthorns still survives, its trunk exhibiting evidence of traditional management by 'laying'. According to the 18th-century accounts, most if not all of the hedges were planted at intervals with ash standards; one ancient pollarded ash still stands on the boundary of the garden of the Improvement farmstead. In addition, the development of a series of stratigraphically late trackways, which cut through medieval features including the boundary of the *curia* of the South Manor and, more tellingly, broad ridge and furrow, is also very probably attributable to the years after 1775.

As a result, most of the post-medieval earthworks can be straightforwardly filtered out of our perception of the medieval remains, if we so wish. Yet this exclusion may justifiably be regarded as detrimental to a holistic understanding of the earthwork evidence and the dynamic interplay of features and activities through time. For example, it was the demonstration through field survey that the construction of the earthen ramp up to the railway bridge must post-date spoil dumping associated with the construction of the Burdale railway tunnel in 1847-53 which allowed the earthwork to be ruled out as the prime candidate for the village's lost medieval mill dam (Oswald 2005, 13-15). However, for reasons of space, remains post-dating the abandonment of the village are not discussed in this précis (for description and discussion of these remains and for fuller descriptions of the medieval earthworks, the reader is referred to Oswald 2004).

To some extent, then, the medieval earthwork remains that are most readily detectable and intelligible do indeed relate to the horizon immediately predating the village's abandonment, as Beresford initially anticipated. However, it is now clear that desertion was not a single event but a long, drawn-out process which did not occur in the same way or at a uniform pace across the village. Therefore, through recognition of relative chronologies, as well as patterns and anomalies in plan form, earthwork survey, no differently from excavation, allows us to work backwards through time, framing questions about earlier phases and sometimes discerning possible answers 'through a glass, darkly'. Some of the most pressing research questions at Wharram, for example those concerning the foundation and early development of the village, are those for which analytical earthwork survey offers the fewest and least secure insights, but, again, it is no different from excavation in that respect. To emphasise this, the following description is structured as far as possible in reverse chronological order.

Settlement in the 16th and early 17th centuries

The documentary evidence relating to the depopulation of Wharram Percy has been considered in detail in a previous volumes (*Wharram XII*, 1-3). What the few late medieval records seem to show is a substantial decline in the number of holdings (perhaps by as much as 50%) between the late 13th century and the mid-15th century. Further farmholds were ‘thrown down’ at the end of that century, but others continued to be tenanted until around 1527, when the open fields were abolished and laid down to grass.

However, a case can also be made from the documentary sources for a number of houses in the township continuing in occupation into the mid-16th century, though probably as cottages for smallholders and shepherds, rather than as farmhouses. The discovery of two early 16th-century jettons and stoneware imported from Cologne, along with a significant quantity of other mid to late 16th-century material, seems to support this inference (*Wharram I*, 94-5; *Wharram XII*, 253). By 1605, and probably by the late 16th century, a ‘chief messuage’, or principal farmstead, was documented, apparently operating an infield-outfield system. The dating of the pottery and clay pipes recovered from the excavation of the late 17th-century farmhouse which was the direct predecessor of the 18th-century Improvement farm suggests that the early-17th century farm was not on the same site (*Wharram XII*, 160).

It is seldom advisable to attempt to tie specific earthwork remains to specific documented events, but Building 5, near the southern end of the West Row (Fig. 3.6), is a very plausible candidate for the ‘chief messuage’ documented in 1605, notwithstanding the scant excavated evidence which would offer little support for the theory. One of the buildings first depicted on the Ordnance Survey (1890) 25-inch scale map, Building 5 is a relatively large and well preserved longhouse, with opposed central doorways and a clear tri-partite division of its interior. The wall-lines around the southern end of the building were trenched by Beresford in 1952 and it was here that excavation first revealed evidence for multiple constructional phases, as described below. The findings of this early investigation were re-evaluated subsequently (Wrathmell 1989, 33-5) and both phases detected by Beresford can in fact be recognised from the surface traces.

The 2002 earthwork survey demonstrates that Building 5 falls very late in the sequence, for it not only encroaches northwards into the adjacent toft, but also eastwards beyond the original frontage of the row, hindering, if not impeding altogether, the passage of any traffic along the track that followed the brink of the escarpment giving access to all the tofts. Intriguingly, however, all the pottery recorded from the 1952 excavation dates to the 14th and 15th centuries, providing no suggestion that Building 5 was inhabited until at least the final years of the village, as might reasonably be concluded from the earthwork remains. However long it survived, Building 5 probably represents the last occupied farm holding in this part of the village.

The adjacent toft to the south contains the remains of two, or possibly three, fairly small buildings set around a rectangular sunken yard, which perhaps originated as a quarry. The enclosed yard is set within a larger enclosure linked to Building 5. The platforms around the yard were apparently not interpreted as the sites of buildings

during the earthwork survey carried out in the course of the Wharram Research Project, although they had been depicted as such on the First Edition 25-inch scale map (Ordnance Survey 1890). A ledge in the scarp that forms the western end of the sunken yard seems to represent the line of a footpath shown on the First Edition 25-inch scale map (Ordnance Survey 1890).

The plan form of the yard enclosed by raised buildings is suggestive of livestock management and the apparent juxtaposition with Building 5 is reminiscent of the form of the late 17th century farm revealed by excavation on the site of the Improvement farm. A series of four small quadrangular enclosures defined by low banks (presumably former hedgelines or fencelines) to the south and west of the sunken yard may represent associated pasture enclosures belonging to the same farm, since the ground within them shows no sign of having been ploughed. The southernmost of these paddocks encloses Building 4 and the northernmost another (previously unrecognised) building, both of which could be barns or other agricultural outbuildings. Taken together, the complex seems to represent a late and relatively prosperous farmstead that would accord well with the 'chief message' documented in 1605.

The 1952 excavation of Building 5 unearthed the eastern wall of an earlier building on roughly the same site, but the vestigial earthworks of both this wall and the other three walls of the earlier building were not recognized until the 2002 investigation. The earlier building lies on the same north - south alignment as Building 5, but is confined within the width of the toft and adjoins the frontage, suggesting that it dates to a time when the structure of the village and the conventions governing acceptable redevelopment remained essentially intact.

Remarkably, the eastern wall of the earlier building, or perhaps the wall or bank that originally defined the frontage of the row, if this was a separate structure, can still be traced within the southern half of the interior of Building 5. This does not seem to be attributable to the effects of the 1952 excavation, so may indicate that the feature was retained within the later building, perhaps providing the footings for a wall or partition that divided the southern end into two rooms, for it is otherwise difficult to account for its continued survival as an earthwork within the later house. At face value, however, the somewhat schematic record of the excavated section would not support this theory (Wrathmell 1989, fig 25). It is also tempting to speculate that the 14th and 15th-century pottery unearthed by Beresford might relate to the earlier building, but this possibility does not explain away the absence of 16th-century and later finds.

Although Building 5 has evidently shifted away from the earlier building on the same site, it undoubtedly represents a direct successor to it, in contrast to the excavated late 17th-century house on the site of the Improvement farm, which appears to have been a new foundation. This implies a dislocation or episode of discontinuity in the mid 17th century which can perhaps be characterised with greatest justification as the final desertion of the settlement, village life having stood on the threshold of extinction for nearly 200 years.

It is also possible to point, with varying degrees to confidence, to at least three groups of buildings which could still have been used in the mid-16th century, or might even represent the farmsteads from which the four families were evicted around 1500. The unusually large Building 23 (Fig. 3.6), and its neighbour Building 24, have previously been interpreted as a 'demesne farm', its occupants responsible for managing the manorial lands after the departure of the Percy family (Hurst 1985, 97). The two buildings, which seem to overlie the manorial earthworks (implying that they originated no earlier than the late 14th century), appear to define two sides of a courtyard tucked into the south-eastern corner of the *curia* of the North Manor. Buildings 23 and 24 share the same alignment as the alleged manorial solar block (see below), suggesting that this may also belong to a relatively late phase. The nearby Building 19 presents a plausible candidate for an associated farmhouse. The manorial *curia* may well have been maintained as a land parcel associated with the buildings; it is suggestive that the broad ridge and furrow which eventually encroached onto Track 1B (Fig. 3.7) never encroached into the *curia*. Building 24, though its form differs little from many buildings that are certainly of medieval date, also appears to overlie the bank which equates to the boundary between Great Hog Walk and Ings Meadow as shown on Dykes' 1836 map (Fig. 3.5), hinting that this boundary may have been established well before 1777. Leases dating to the early 17th century refer to 'hedges and ditches sett with quickwood' (that is, hawthorn). The fact that some of these are described as 'nowe decayed' suggests that they may have been planted considerably earlier (see *Wharram XII*, 3).

The sunken yard enclosed by Buildings 21 and 22, together with Building 20 which lies in the adjacent toft (Fig. 3.6), seems to represent the hub of a courtyard farm complex which has aspects in common with that associated with Building 5 (Hurst 1984, fig 4; Beresford and Hurst 1990, 47 and 80). In this instance, the associated dwelling is perhaps represented by Building 19 or a previously unrecognised building just to its north. Alternatively, Building 19 may be part of a separate unit encompassing what appears to have originated as one of the medieval village pounds. Some of the boundaries associated with Buildings 20, 21 and 22 show signs of having been remodelled, giving the impression that the paddocks associated with the farmstead equated almost exactly with the medieval village's northern row, but perhaps sub-divided into two along the line of one of the medieval croft boundaries. It is possible, to judge from the degraded condition of the medieval earthworks, that ploughing continued within the amalgamated crofts. The western boundary of the land parcel as a whole separates it from the *curia* of the North Manor (that is the holding putatively associated with Buildings 23 and 24) and equates to the boundary depicted on Dykes' map between Ings Meadow and Cow Pasture. Overall, this hints that the major land holdings associated with the last phase of the village's existence may have formed the bones of the 18th-century land divisions.

A similar pattern can be discerned in the northern half of the West Row, where the medieval crofts seem to have been amalgamated into two larger arable fields, separated by a boundary re-established on the line of one of the former croft boundaries. Building 18, at the north-eastern corner of the land parcel (Fig. 3.6), is reminiscent in its siting of the building at the north-eastern corner of the largest paddock associated with Building 5. In this case, it is difficult to single out a dwelling

or an associated group of buildings, either because the medieval arrangement remained virtually unmodified or because the buildings lay at some remove (Building 19, for example, might once more be a candidate). Building 3 in the East Row is another very plausible candidate for a late building, probably a dwelling, set within its own enclosure, in this case formed by the amalgamation of two medieval tofts. It is worth noting that Buildings 3, 5 and 23 are amongst the largest recorded through earthwork survey.

The North Manor (Fig. 3.6)

At the northern end of the village, a distinctive cluster of mostly rectangular buildings of varying sizes has long been interpreted, undoubtedly correctly, as the site of the village's late 13th and 14th-century manor. The principal building remains of the complex were identified and recorded by the Ordnance Survey in 1851. Most previous attempts to marry the physical remains with the documentary evidence have concluded that the North Manor must represent that held by the Percy family, though a more recent discussion has shown greater caution in making this equation, pointing to the poor understanding of the physical development of the North Manor (Roffe 2000, 3). On the other hand, the remarkable preservation of the North Manor alone suggests that it remained in use well after the destruction of the *camera* of the South Manor in the mid-13th century. None of the buildings has been fully excavated, but documents show that the manor was used well into the 14th century and earthwork traces of buildings post-dating the demise of the manor can also be identified (as described above).

Despite the paucity of excavated evidence, a bold attempt was made by John Hurst and Jean le Patourel to interpret the disposition of specific rooms, based on a plan of the earthworks surveyed at a scale of 1:120 by W J Hopkins (Figure 3.8; Hurst 1985, fig 4). In metrical terms, the new plan, surveyed at 1:500 scale, does not differ greatly from its predecessor, although there are a few important differences (Figure 3.9). Perhaps the most significant is the addition of chronological depth to the previous interpretation, which treated the complex as a single, static entity (Fig. 3.10). The new survey suggests that the manor underwent at least one major phase of expansion and that several of the buildings which might previously have been interpreted as part of the complex are more likely to represent later encroachment onto the site, as described above. The irregular trapezoid plan of the *curia*, which makes a striking contrast with the almost perfect rectangle of the South Manor, suggests that it was initially fitted into existing boundaries, specifically the hollow way on its south, whose longevity has been proved by excavation, and the northern boundary.

Within the manor precinct, a series of slight scarps on a north-south alignment may represent the vestiges of slight positive lynchets on the eastern (downslope) side of cultivation ridges, hinting that the complex may also have been laid out over what was once arable land. Therefore, the provision of access to Field 1 via Track 1 may be contemporary with the initial imposition of the manor (Fig. 3.7). This theory is supported by the observation that the alignment of many of the principal buildings and boundaries echoes that of the cultivation ridges in Field 2, which in turn replicate the north-north-west to south-south-east stretch of Road 1A/1B beyond the Guardianship Area. However, there is no trace of these or later cultivation remains where they might be expected to survive best, in the large yards associated with the

barn and immediately to the south of the manor house. This observation is also relevant in understanding the use of the *curia* after the demise of the actual manor house.

In both phases of its existence, the plan of the manorial buildings seems to have been more organised and regular in layout than has previously been appreciated. Initially, the *curia* enclosure seems to have been a quadrangular area of about 0.47ha (1.16 acres), that is, somewhat smaller than that of the South Manor. At this stage, the main east - west range of the manor house, which has previously been interpreted as a solar, hall and buttery/pantry, seems to have formed the main range of an L-shaped building of modest size, with a major wing projecting to the north of the eastern end. A separate small building to the north of the western end of the east to west range was perhaps only connected by a broad corridor to the main L-shaped building; this was originally interpreted as the private rooms of a solar block but is perhaps better seen as a possible kitchen (see below). These three arms defined three sides of a possible courtyard or enclosed garden of up to *c* 300m². A building on the northern side of this has previously been interpreted as a bakehouse and brewery, partly because it shares the same east-west alignment of the manorial buildings. This structure is similar in size and form to the peasant houses found in other parts of the village. There is no clear-cut stratigraphic indication that the building is of different date from the manor, nor any reason why the cruck-truss construction technique employed by many of the peasant houses should not also have been used at the higher-status complex. However, the possibility that it represents encroachment by peasant houses onto the former site of the manorial complex after its destruction cannot be dismissed.

The interior of the main east-west range was evidently divided into three parts, suggestive in essence of a typical division into solar, open hall and service end, but the interpretation of the function of individual rooms is problematic. In its eventual form, the manor appears to have been approached from the east, and this would support the earlier theory that the private chambers of the solar block were towards the west, in the most private part of the complex. However, it is less clear how access was gained in the earlier phase - possibly from the west via the yards as concluded on the evidence of the earlier survey. A pronounced step within the range has previously been interpreted as the edge of a dais, whose identification seems optimistic. If proven, this would also support the identification of the western end of the building as its 'high' end. The new survey suggests that the step corresponds to the line of an underlying lynchet, although this observation in itself need not invalidate the previous interpretation.

The proximity of the barn (described below) to what has been seen as the private high-status solar block was regarded as somewhat awkward, but was justified by the apparent absence of doorways in the eastern side of the barn. The identification by the new survey of two doorways on this side, apparently blocked at some stage, again call this theory into question. Access from such a utilitarian building to yards overlooked by service rooms seems more plausible. In this scenario, the building previously interpreted as a solar block might be a kitchen connected by a pentice. The wing extending northwards from the other end of the main range might represent the private rooms of a larger solar range. Although it might be assumed that a solar block

should project southwards to enjoy the best light, ranges extending northwards were far from exceptional (see, for example, Pearson *et al* 1994). In this form, the long south side of the main range might be said to have faced towards the church and the rest of the village, although how access was gained is unclear.

In the second major constructional phase identifiable from the earthworks, the *curia* seems to have been enlarged eastward and northward to encompass an overall area of 0.90ha (2.22 acres). This expansion too seems to accord well with the theory that the North Manor was the property of the Percy family, plausibly representing the period between c1254 and the mid-14th century when Peter I and his son Robert III were evidently investing considerably in the family's holdings at Wharram (see Ch. 9, below). To the east, the expansion demanded the reclamation of the westernmost toft and croft of the North Row, whose western boundary can still be discerned. To the north, it involved taking in a 10m wide strip of Field 2, so that the *curia* encroached beyond the former southern edge of the field (Boundary 1). The narrowness of this strip is suggestive: if the cultivation ridges in Field 2 were aligned north to south at the time when the expansion took place, as they may have been at some stage, it may have been the former headland of the field that was taken in. Alternatively, if the change to the eventual east to west alignment had already occurred, a single ridge may have been taken, but there is no surface trace of any continuation of either feature to the east of the *curia*.

In the same phase, the main east to west range of the building seems to have been extended eastwards to an overall length of 37m, encompassing what has previously been interpreted as a detached kitchen (Fig. 3.8). This expansion is suggested in part by the fact that the eastern end of the range is on a fractionally different alignment from the wings that form the L-shaped portion. The addition may have created what might be interpreted as an outer courtyard, its eastern side formed by a range extending northwards, comprising what appears to be a gatehouse with adjoining rooms. An alternative interpretation might be that the extension was essentially the addition of a whole new manor, which replicated the rooms of the earlier manor, but in a location shifted to the east so as stand more centrally within the extended *curia*. In this scenario, the outer court would be the main courtyard, and the south frontage of the hall range would have retained an unimpeded aspect. The rooms in the Phase 1 building may have become more utilitarian in function and the surrounding compartments may have been converted to gardens at this stage. The dovecote (as previously interpreted, almost certainly correctly) overlooks the northern end of the new courtyard, an arrangement found widely in post-medieval manors. Despite damage done by stone-robbing, the structure remains one of the best preserved components of the manorial complex, with walls surviving to at least 0.5m high.

East of the gatehouse lay a small forecourt, with an opening in its eastern side opposite that in the gatehouse. The northern and southern sides of the forecourt continue the alignment of the rest of the main ranges to the west, while the eastern side follows the western boundary of the former Toft 21. East of the forecourt lies a larger enclosure whose eastern side follows the eastern boundary of the former toft, an area effectively corresponding to the course of Track 2 as interpreted previously (see Fig. 3.7). The southern end of this outermost enclosure is formed by a broad bank

up to 0.4m high, with an original opening which would have given access on to the village green. Thus, while the focus and orientation of the complex as a whole had apparently shifted eastwards, the outermost entrance remained oriented towards the church and the heart of the village.

On the exterior of the bank that appears to have defined the western edge of the *curia* enclosure are the remains of a rectangular building aligned north - south with internal dimensions of 28m by 7.5m, which has been interpreted, entirely plausibly, as the manorial barn mentioned in a valuation of 1368 (Ch. 9, below). The barn was apparently one of three buildings standing within a yard (see Fig. 3.7), which was one of two such enclosures accessed from Track 1. The northern end of the barn initially seems to have lain against Boundary 1, which may have been the headland of Field 2 when the North Manor was first laid out and thus presumably allowed access to the barn from the cultivated land. Access from this direction was apparently blocked by the northward expansion of the manorial complex beyond Boundary 1. In the west side of the building are gaps which must represent broad doorways (as concluded by Hurst and le Patourel), since both have slight traces of wear outside them. While the evidence for the doorway located centrally in the northern end is also secure, the gap in the southern end is not central and may be the product of later stone-robbing.

Arguably of greater importance is the identification by the new survey of two probable blocked doorways in the eastern wall of the barn, opposite those in the western wall. The gaps are much less clearly defined than those on the west side and in both cases, the blocking wall lies just inside the line of the rest of the wall, a misalignment reminiscent of the construction of the walls of cruck-truss buildings excavated elsewhere around the site. The pattern of opposing doorways, designed to funnel wind through the building to assist threshing, is widespread amongst medieval and later barns. As mentioned above, the identification of possible points of access into the main part of the manorial complex would tend to suggest that the area to the east is unlikely to have been used as a private garden, at least while the opposed doorways were in use. The function of the building after the probable blocking of the eastern doorways is uncertain, but it has been pointed out that doors are commonly located in the end of sheephouses in Yorkshire (Hurst 1984, fig 4; Beresford and Hurst 1990, 47). It could be that doors were inserted into the north and south ends of the building at the time that the eastern doorways were blocked, signalling an important change in the function of the building and perhaps in the economic basis of the manor.

A series of grants in the 1320s mention the existence of a 'park', lying adjacent to an 'acre enclosed with a ditch', but they do not otherwise specify its size or location (see Chapter 9 below). On the assumption that any park would have been directly accessible from the North Manor, apparently the only manor in existence at that date, the enclosure has been equated by Hurst and Porter with the area of the North Row which, it has been deduced, must have been entirely cleared away in 1254, with the park extending beyond it, along the uncultivable valley sides of Crow Wood Dale, perhaps as far north as the parish boundary (*Wharram IX*, 4-5).. The 2002 investigation did not securely identify the site or extent of the documented park, but it is worth noting that the bank which defines the northern sides of the extended manorial *curia* and North Row is accompanied on the

north by a slight and poorly preserved ditch (though there are hints that this may have been recut in the post-medieval period). An equally slight ditch runs along the western edge of the lynchet that defines the eastern side of Field 1. In both cases, the placement of the ditch in relation to the bank could be compared to a conventional park pale, if the park occupied approximately the same area as Field 1.

The South Manor (Fig. 3.6)

In 1955, excavation of Area 10 (centred on Building 10) revealed a sequence of peasant houses, beneath which lay the top of a major stone wall, which a trial trench proved to be set 3m into the ground. Further excavation in 1956 and 1957 showed that the wall was part of an elaborate rectangular stone-built undercroft, built *c* 1180 on an east-west alignment. This was interpreted as part of the solar block, or *camera*, of a manor house and its outline was eventually laid out for display to visitors. Apart from various dressed stone blocks in the demolition rubble used to backfill the undercroft early in the second half of the 13th century, there was scant evidence for the form of the upper storey and none at all for the remainder of the building, perhaps due to later disturbance. It has been speculated that the hall may have extended at right angles to the south, and was perhaps built primarily in timber (Beresford and Hurst 1990, plate 9); an alternative interpretation is offered in the present volume (Ch. 9). Documentary evidence indicates that the Percy family acquired the rights of both manors in 1254 and since the *camera* had been demolished at about this date, the South Manor was initially linked to the Chamberlain family (Hurst 1979, 138-9). Caution about this conclusion has been expressed more recently (Roffe 2000, 3), but the 2002 survey would appear to support the earlier interpretation.

With hindsight, the existence of the manorial complex might have been suspected prior to the 1955 excavation on the basis of the earthwork remains, although nothing of the backfilled undercroft itself could have been detected. The building lies within a rectangular *curia*, which is itself anomalous and encloses a number of other unusual features (Figs 3.11 and 3.12). The enclosure is defined on south, west and north sides by a substantial bank up to 0.7m high, presumably once surmounted by a wall or similar barrier. The bank is accompanied by an external ditch, now of negligible depth, which has previously only been detected as a discontinuous geophysical anomaly (Beresford and Hurst 1990, fig 52). The ditch appears to form an integral part of the *curia* boundary, which contradicts the earlier interpretation of the ditch on the northern side as an element of the late Iron Age or Romano-British field system. The same conclusion has also been reached on the evidence of the more recent geophysical survey (Linford and Linford 2003, fig 8). An examination of the four datable sherds recovered from the primary silt of the ditch has also indicated that while three are Roman, one is 12th-century 'Pimply ware' (information supplied by Ann Clark). If this single sherd can be taken as an indicator, the boundary of the *curia* would seem to have been built in the same century as the excavated *camera*. At its western end, however, the *curia* bank directly overlies Boundary 3, part of a more extensive field boundary that may be of Romano-British or Late Iron Age origin.

The eastern end of the *curia* seems to have been defined by a ditch, the northern section of which was revealed by excavation in Area 10, continuing the line of the frontage of West Row (north). Although this was augmented by a wall after the

demise of the manor, the excavation provided no evidence as to whether any wall existed while the manor still stood. A slight bank, obliquely sectioned by a trial trench extending southwards from the excavations in Area 10, probably represents the continuation of the later wall rather than part of the original boundary. Interpretation of this bank is further complicated by the existence, apparently on a similar line, of a field boundary shown on the 1836 estate map and therefore probably laid out in the late 18th century (Dykes 1836). Nonetheless, given the lack of other possibilities, the point of entry into the manorial complex may have lain at the southern end of Track 4 (Fig. 3.7), roughly mid-way along the eastern end of the *curia*. A broad gap in the northern side of the *curia* boundary is also apparently an original opening, for the terminals of the bank on either side are slightly off-set from each other, but this seems unlikely to have been a main entrance given its position. The *curia* as a whole would have measured 142m from west to east by 62m wide, with an internal area of 0.83 ha (2.05 acres).

What appears to be a large rectangular building platform is set into the corner formed by the so-called 'lynchet bank' and the southern side of the *curia* boundary (see Fig. 3.12). This has not previously been interpreted as the site of a building. The proportions and large size of the platform are unusual, measuring 17m long from north to south by 10m wide. The sharpness of the scarp along the western side of the platform, where it cuts into the foot of the lynchet bank, suggests that it may represent the line of a chalk wall. However, the slight scarp along the eastern side does not immediately suggest the existence of any stone walling on this side, which may indicate that the building was a free-standing timber structure, or perhaps a building largely open on one side. In either case, the unusually large size of the building hints that it may have been a component of the manorial complex. Alternatively, given the thorough eradication of the *camera* in contrast to the apparently well-preserved condition of this building and taking into account its proximity to a number of late medieval or post-medieval routes, it may have been associated with one of the late courtyard farm complexes or with post-medieval livestock management.

Planned units of settlement within the village

Detailed descriptions and interpretations of the earthworks are presented elsewhere (Oswald 2004); more general observations about the form of the settlement are reproduced in this account. At an early stage in the Wharram Research Project, it was recognised that the plan of the village as a whole, together with the regular size and shape of many of the individual tofts and crofts, constituted strong evidence that the settlement had been deliberately planned at some stage, and initially it was assumed that there would have been a single episode of planning. From the late 1960s onwards it was, however, broadly accepted that the structure of the village as a whole represents the outcome of several planning events (e.g. Hurst 1971, fig. 25). Acceptance of this underpins the whole analysis of the settlement structure presented in this report, for it allows the differing characters of individual rows to be appreciated and a dynamic process of development to be inferred. In this report, the units of peasant settlement are distinguished for convenience as the West Row (south) and (north), the North Row and the East Row.

The East Row (Figs 3.6, 3.13)

On circumstantial evidence, it seems likely that the East Row was the latest of the planned units of settlement to be established, occupying what had hitherto apparently been part of the northern end of a long village green. The steeply sloping ground experiences considerable natural soil creep and is boggy in places, making the land inherently unattractive to settlement, and better suited to pasture than to arable agriculture, so that its inferred earlier use as part of the village green is easy to understand. Conversely, the very fact that the site was poorly suited to settlement is one of the strongest indications that the row was a relatively late addition to the village plan. It would appear that, prior to the imposition of the row, a precursor of Road 2B may have headed directly for the village church, following a typically gentle gradient across the slope and running through the heart of the village green (Fig. 3.7). The terraced lower edge of the track seems eventually to have formed the boundary between the tofts and crofts of the East Row. To gain the maximum space for the new row, this early route appears to have been realigned to run as close as possible to the foot of the steeper upper part of the slope, forcing travellers to climb and then descend again to reach the church.

One plausible context for this reorganisation is the quitclaim of the rights of the Chamberlains to the Percy family in 1254, at which time it has been argued that the North Manor underwent a considerable expansion, including an encroachment onto the westernmost plot of the North Row. It seems highly improbable that the establishment of the East Row could have been intended as an act of compensation for a single evicted peasant family. However, provision of a replacement home for the evicted and new homes for families who had outgrown their homes may have been considered an obligation for a good lord and the symbolism inherent in the foundation of the row may have been an element of the motivation. More obviously, the establishment of the row could be seen as an attempt to increase the lord's income and stamp his newly acquired authority onto the form of the settlement through creation of something akin to a conventional two-row planned village, with its focus shifted closer to the gate of the North Manor's *curia*.

The East Row consists of as many as eleven tofts and crofts fronting onto the eastern side of Road 2B and stretching down to the foot of the western side of the valley. Earthwork traces of three buildings, numbered 1 to 3 on Figure 3.6, were recognised prior to English Heritage's surveys in 2002. Apart from buildings recognised in excavation beneath the Improvement farm, which may lie at or beyond the southernmost end of this row, this part of the settlement has not been investigated by excavation. It was first subjected to geophysical survey in 2002, with good results (Linford and Linford 2003, figs 3 and 6).

The plan of the southern end of the row has been reconstructed conjecturally as a rectangle whose southern end coincides with the boundary of the plots enclosing the parsonage and the church itself (Beresford and Hurst 1990, fig 60). On paper, this gives a pleasing appearance of regularity comparable to the pattern of the other rows, but it ignores the irregular form of the natural topography. The steep-sided, scallop-shaped depression eroded into the valley side by the spring below Wharram Percy Cottages makes the achievement of such regularity impractical. The plan is more likely to have been confined within the triangular space formed by Road 2B on the

west, the foot of the slope of the western side of the valley on the east, and the northern edge of the scallop-shaped depression on the south. Although the more southerly of the identifiable plots in this area are fairly long, regular rectangles aligned end-on to Road 2B, they become increasingly irregular in shape towards the northern apex of the triangle.

While the tofts are still set out at right angles to the road, the crofts are laid out perpendicular to the foot of the slope, creating a change of alignment at the junction of the tofts and crofts. From this pattern, it seems likely that Road 2B was established at the same time that East Row was laid out, coinciding with the abandonment of the putative earlier and easier route, Road 2C. It was also evidently considered desirable, presumably for practical reasons to do with the cultivation of the ground, that the crofts should not be aligned obliquely to the contours. The eastern boundary of the crofts is marked by a continuous scarp up to 0.7m high, which presumably carried a hedge or fence. Its form is essentially that of a substantial lynchet, which presumably built up during the lifetime of the row, which would suggest that the interiors of all the crofts were used to some degree.

There may well have been a 'back lane', but the probable existence of such a route, which would have been little more than a footpath if it existed at all, does not fully account for the broad interval between the ends of the crofts and the edge of the Wharram stream. Today, this part of the valley floor is dry and level and would apparently make useful cultivable land. The complete avoidance of the valley floor hints that it may once have been much more boggy. The bank that defines the frontage of the row continues beyond its junction with the scarp that defines the eastern side. This may have had the effect of blocking any back lane; there are other stratigraphic hints that the bank may have been rebuilt at some relatively late date, perhaps to carry a hedgeline in the post-medieval period, although no such boundary is depicted on historic maps.

The tofts are of more variable breadth than anywhere else around the village, ranging from 16m to 22m, but there is no sign that this was done deliberately in an attempt to maintain a constant area in the face of the unequal length of the plots. Towards the northern apex of the row, the alignment of the long boundaries, which are more or less parallel towards to the south, becomes less regular. This can only partly be accounted for by the natural topography, so it is tempting to infer that the planning of this part of the village was genuinely more piecemeal, contrasting with the evident regularity of design exhibited by West Row (north) and North Row. All the peasant houses that can be detected are aligned side-on to Road 2B, in striking contrast to the West Row (north) in particular, where most of the houses, in their eventual form, were aligned end-on to the frontage. Whether the side-on alignment of the buildings in East Row simply respects the natural lie of the contours is doubtful, for a number of the tofts at the southern end of the row are sufficiently level to accommodate buildings aligned end-on to the road. It is tempting to draw a parallel with West Row (north) in its early phase, where Wrathmell (1989, 44) has suggested that most of the buildings may have been aligned side-on to Track 4. If so, it may follow that East Row did not experience much modification subsequent to its establishment, as West Row (north) clearly did. From this, it may be inferred that much of East Row may

also have been abandoned at a relatively early date, presumably for the same reasons that it is likely to have been the latest part of the village to come into existence.

The North Row (Figs 3.6, 3.14)

North Row evidently existed in a planned form by the time the *curia* of the North Manor encroached onto its western end, an expansion which can plausibly argued to have occurred soon after 1254. It has been suggested that the North Row originally comprised six tofts in a row aligned from west to east, but that all these were cleared away when the two manors were amalgamated in 1254. The earthwork investigation undertaken by English Heritage in 2002 supports the first of these observations, but suggests that only the westernmost of the tofts may have been cleared away and that the buildings that formed the courtyard farm may have been converted from surviving earlier buildings. There is further evidence that the sequence as a whole is likely to have been more complex.

In the first place, it is possible that the ridged cultivation hinted at by possible positive lynchets underlying the North Manor may have extended eastwards to the edge of the western plateau. What may be the southern terminals of these ridges are preserved as positive lynchets on the very limit of the escarpment, to the south of the frontage of the row. In several cases, these more or less coincide with the more prominent positive lynchets that mark the divisions between the crofts of the row, hinting that earlier agriculture may have influenced the plan of the row. However, earlier ploughing might be expected to run perpendicular to the early Boundary 1, or parallel to the crest of the western plateau. The alignment of the croft boundaries does not correspond precisely to either of these predictable alignments, so it could be inferred that they were set out with little regard to any pre-existing earthworks.

Secondly, the line of the western section of the frontage of the row may have been pushed back by up to 7m from the edge of the escarpment. This modification is suggested by a distinct change of angle towards the eastern edge of Toft 24 and a slight scarp which seems to represent a remnant of the earlier boundary. This apparent retraction from the edge of the escarpment may represent a reaction to the natural slumping that has evidently occurred in the locality. However, the survival of what seem to be the terminals of early cultivation ridges, mentioned above, would tend to suggest that slumping was not a problem at this point (unless the bulges interpreted as ridge terminals are, in fact, themselves the product of natural slumping). In this scenario, it is possible that the re-alignment reflects the incorporation of the westernmost toft in the row, Toft 21, into the expanded *curia* enclosure of the North Manor, representing another major change to the layout of the row. The amalgamation of at least two of the peasant tofts to form a courtyard farm, in the very late medieval or early post-medieval period, is perhaps the latest of the significant developments. It is notable that at no point is there any sign of an entrance into any of the tofts from Track 3; this apparent absence seems to be due to the reconstruction of the frontage, with the addition of a shallow ditch along its outer edge, to form a continuous boundary around the late courtyard farm.

The dimensions of the tofts do not appear to have been as strictly laid out as those in West Row (north), their widths varying *c* 2m on either side of 20m. There is similar

variation in the width of the adjoining crofts, whose boundaries are easier to distinguish than those of West Row (south and north) because the divisions are marked by positive lynchets. These boundary lynchets are slightly more pronounced than those associated solely with the cultivation ridges, two of which make up each croft. The lynchet that forms the boundary between Crofts 23 and 24 is accompanied by a shallow ditch, apparently a late subdivision of the land, comparable to the bank between Crofts 16 and 17. This variation cannot be entirely accounted for by the constraints of the natural topography. Any variation in the length of the tofts is more difficult to detect, due partly to the putative re-alignment of the frontage and partly to the existence of Track 14, which seems, at least in the form that can now be seen on the surface, to be a relatively late development, although presumably the approximate line of an earlier back lane.

The West Row (north) (Figs 3.6, 3.15)

West Row (north) can be argued to have been established in its planned form at about the same time that the curia of the South Manor was laid out, probably at some point in the 12th century, rather than in the 13th century as suggested previously (Hurst 1971, fig 25). In its earliest identifiable form, that is excluding the later encroachments into the curia of the South Manor, the row comprised six tofts of regular width (18.5m wide) and one of exactly half that width (Toft 19), all fronting onto a track. As a whole, the row gives the impression of more regular planning than any other component of the village. What may be the fragmentary remains of earlier broad ridges (discussed further below) have been identified east of the frontage of the row, and the toft boundaries seem generally to coincide with these, both in spacing and alignment. The form of this section of the so-called 'lynchet bank', which defines the boundary between the tofts and crofts, is also straight and regular, supporting the interpretation (at least of this section and in its initial form) as a deliberately constructed earthwork, contemporary with the laying-out of this part of the planned settlement. The lynchet is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

Six buildings (numbered 12 - 17) have previously been identified within the tofts, with another (18) lying on top of the lynchet bank immediately west of the northernmost toft. The addition of the newly recognised buildings to those identified previously suggests that there was a common pattern in the layout of each toft. Buildings and/or boundaries were placed so as to enclose a central courtyard in the front half of each toft, with a more open half to the rear (presumably the 'garth'). Generally, as noted previously, there seems to be a pattern on the western plateau of buildings aligned end-on to the frontage, perhaps replacing an earlier norm of buildings placed side-on (Hurst 1971, 122-4; Wrathmell 1989, 41-45).

The crofts of West Row (north) were ultimately amalgamated into two larger fields – the boundary between the fields following the former boundary between Crofts 16 and 17 - and ploughed over, each croft being sub-divided into two virtually flat ridges (Wrathmell 1989, fig 29). As described above, it seems likely that these fields were cultivated towards the end of the village's existence, possibly up until the early decades of the 16th century, by a smallholding somewhere within West Row (north), whose location cannot be specified with confidence. As a result, the marginally more pronounced furrows which represent the ploughed-out ditches of the croft boundaries

are easier to distinguish under optimum conditions from the air (St Joseph 1970; Figure 21). It seems likely that banks once accompanied the ditches, as is the case with the croft boundaries of the East Row, but that all trace of these has been ploughed away. Since all the crofts of West Row (north) were separated from the open fields by Boundary 3, it is possible that there were no hedges between the individual holdings, a pattern observed elsewhere (Roberts 1987, 3.7).

The relationship of the tofts in West Row (north) to the northern boundary of the *curia* enclosure of the South Manor suggests that the remainder of this sector of the settlement is likely to have been laid out at the same time as the manorial compound, or within the period that it remained in active use. The width of the frontage of Toft 14, and consequently those of the tofts to its north, was evidently measured out with respect to the line of the north boundary of the manorial *curia*, for the only tofts whose frontages are of irregular size are the two northernmost in the row, Tofts 19 and 20. The sides of the tofts, on the other hand, were apparently set out at right angles to the frontage rather than parallel to the northern boundary of the *curia*. As a result, the width of Toft 14 was distorted and markedly broader at its western end. This too supports the argument that it was originally the southernmost in the row. It therefore appears that the north boundary of the manorial enclosure was deliberately singled out as the starting point for the demarcation of the property boundaries. From this, it can again be inferred either that the row post-dates the establishment of the manorial complex, or that the two were laid out at the same time. This might suggest a date for the planning and construction of West Row (north) *c* 1180, when the excavated *camera* was built. There is also a single sherd from the primary silts of the ditch of the *curia* boundary to suggest that this was laid out at about the same date (see above). However, it is not impossible that there was an earlier manor house on the site and that the foundation of the row was contemporary with this as yet unrecognised building. It would not be surprising if such a manor house had been established at the same time that the church was rebuilt in stone, in the early 12th century.

The village green (Fig. 3.6, 3.7)

The triangle of the steep valley side enclosed by East Row, North Row and West Row (north), an area of about 1ha (2.47 acres), has been interpreted as a village green. The earthwork survey undertaken in parallel with the Wharram excavations depicted this steep ground as essentially an open area, though traversed by a number of trackways. While there is no reason to dispute the interpretation of the area as a green, the field investigation undertaken by English Heritage in 2002 has identified a number of important earthwork remains scattered across the area, which collectively give the impression of more intensive activity. The southern extent of the green is open to question. Unsurprisingly, the steep section of the valley side east of West Row (south) was evidently not settled (apart from the toft-like enclosures east of Tofts 8, 9 and 10), so it could be inferred that this formed part of the green. On the other hand, consideration of the overall plan suggests that the green proper would have extended no further south than Track 5a, allowing access from both manors and all three northern rows.

In the centre of this triangular area is a scatter of newly identified earthworks which

probably represent the sites of small buildings. The clearest of these are approximately rectangular platforms, occasionally accompanied by slight suggestions of wall-lines, generally aligned along the contours. The largest are only slightly smaller than the houses and other buildings that comprise the rest of the domestic settlement. The earthworks are far slighter and much less crisply defined than the remains of the buildings on the western plateau, but it could not be ascertained whether this difference reflects the effects of soil-creep on the sloping ground, or a genuine difference in the age, function or form of the buildings. Indeed, some of the apparent platforms may be merely the products of small-scale quarrying.

Two circular enclosures, defined by what must formerly have been quite massive embankments (presumably originally supplemented by some form of stockade), are suggestive in size and plan of common livestock pounds. Their existence was hinted at by the previous survey, but not made explicit. Why two should have existed is unclear; it may be that they were of different dates, or related in some way to the early division of the village between two manors. Alternatively, it is possible that one (or both) served a function other than a pound, for example as an arena for bear-baiting, bull-baiting or cock-fighting, or as a small show-ring. On Ham Hill in Somerset, a circular pit of similar size, enclosed by a penannular bank, appears to have served similar functions during fairs held on the hilltop in the post-medieval period, although the fairs originated early in the 12th century (RCHME 1997, 29-30). At Wharram Percy, both enclosures seem to have been sited adjacent to Road 1B and to have faced on to it, though the entrance into the more northerly one is not easy to discern. Both were evidently created by scooping into the natural slope and using the resulting material to augment the height of the surrounding bank.

The more southerly enclosure, with an internal area of 120m², is more clearly defined, but it is uncertain whether this is because it was constructed at a later date or simply because it was less affected by later activity. The internal area of the more northerly of the two enclosures, at 240m², is about twice that of the southern one. A slight kick in the course of Road 1B, which is otherwise a smooth curve, suggests that the construction of the pound may post-date the establishment of the route, forcing traffic to divert slightly to avoid its entrance. There is evidence for a fairly large rectangular building, apparently a later superimposition, occupying its northern side, with vestigial traces of what may be two more structures to its south, sharing a similar alignment. This hints that the pound enclosure may have eventually been converted into a toft-like unit. There is no way of telling whether this modification caused the construction of the second pound, or whether it was merely a piece of opportunism after the enclosure had already fallen into disuse. Either way, it is tempting to infer that the building which re-used what had previously been a communal space might have retained some communal function, such as the common oven or the kiln, both of which are mentioned in a document of 1368 (see Chs 9 and 11.2).

The West Row (south) (Fig. 3.6, 3.16)

The character of West Row (south) is so different that it is perhaps misleading even to term the unit a 'row', but that term will be used as a convenient shorthand. There is no convincing evidence for crofts adjoining the tofts, nor for conventional ridge and furrow cultivation in the area where crofts would normally be expected. The scarp

convincingly identified by Wrathmell as a continuation of the frontage of West Row (south) extends well within the *curia* of the South Manor, which would imply the existence of more tofts prior to the imposition of the Manor and suggests a *terminus ante quem* for the foundation of the row of c.1180 at the latest, suggesting that West Row (south) may represent the earliest planned element of the village, as first proposed early in the Wharram Research Project (Hurst 1971, fig 25).

The bank that defines the northern side of the large building platform set against the foot of the lynchet bank might represent the modification of the northern boundary of an earlier croft (numbered 11). This lies 20m north of the predicted position of the northern boundary of Toft 10 and there are hints that an earthwork may at one stage have extended eastwards from the building platform as far as the supposed frontage. Toft 12 may have been re-occupied and redefined after the demise of the South Manor, as described below. However, the southern boundary of Toft 13 would also fall neatly into the 20m pattern, and may represent the northern limit of Toft 12, perhaps the northernmost in the original layout of West Row (south). This interpretation might help to explain the slight mismatch of orientations discussed below.

West Row (north) and West Row (south) appear to have overlapped in Tofts 11 and 12, which are crossed by two separate boundary banks, presumably defining the frontages of the plots at different dates. Wrathmell (1989, 41) interprets the change in alignment of successive peasant houses excavated in Toft 13 (Area 10), from north – south to north-east – south-west and finally to east – west, as a reaction to the misalignment of the frontages. However, in view of the complexity of the settlement record as a whole, he stops short of drawing any conclusion as to which is the earlier of the two units. The fact that Tofts 11 and 12 lie within the *curia* of the South Manor implies further chronological depth. The relationship between the earthworks at the point where the frontage of West Row (south) and the *curia* boundary intersect at first suggests that the frontage of the row cuts through the manorial boundary and is therefore later. However, closer inspection reveals that both earthworks have been dug away, the edge of this operation coinciding with the line of the frontage, so that the crucial relationship is unintelligible from the surface traces. West Row (south) comprised as many as twelve tofts fronting onto Track 8a. While their lengths from west to east range from 34m to 42m, their widths are fairly regular, varying only a metre or two on either side of 20m. The excavation of Area 6, thought at the time to have examined a single toft, may in fact have uncovered parts of three, as discussed below.

The excavation trench known as Area 6 (centred on a well-preserved longhouse initially identified from the earthworks and called Building 6) interpreted the entire area it examined as a single toft. The earliest stone buildings encountered, dating to the late 13th to late 14th centuries, were described as being ‘... clearly grouped around a courtyard’, while the latest longhouse was said to have been ‘... built in the centre of the site’ (Milne 1979b, 48 and 51). The earthwork investigation undertaken by English Heritage in 2002 suggests that parts of three tofts may actually have been examined and that several of the excavated buildings may have lain outside the toft occupied by the well-preserved longhouse. The overall pattern of toft boundaries

identified by the new earthwork survey strongly suggests that two boundaries might be expected within the area of excavation (reinforcing the similar suggestion made in *Wharram VI*, 33 on the basis of refuse disposal). Immediately to the west of the excavation trench, in the predictable positions, are what appear to be the stubs of two slight banks, running eastwards from the lynchet bank. Only the more northerly of these stubs was recorded by the earlier survey and neither was recorded as an earthwork within the excavated area. The levels survey undertaken prior to the excavations employed enhanced contours at 6-inch (0.15m) intervals and is therefore insufficient to determine in hindsight whether the earthworks actually continued further eastwards in a slighter form (Milne 1979b, fig 12). Perhaps more surprisingly, no continuation of the stubs was detected during the excavations, except that the line of the more southerly one corresponds to that of an earthen bank, whose interpretation was left open, running along the southern side of the latest longhouse.

In terms of their dimensions, the two major excavated buildings in Area 6, often held up as examples of typical medieval peasant longhouses, are actually unusually large in the context of the other probable peasant buildings at Wharram, and one of them was probably not domestic. The later and better preserved of the two (that recognised first and referred to as Building 6) was the longhouse, its occupation dating to between the early 15th and early 16th centuries. The more northerly building, which might also have been recognised as an earthwork with hindsight, was a barn, probably demolished before the longhouse was abandoned to make way for an enlarged courtyard. The size of these buildings, carrying with it an implication of wealth and status, may well be significant.

Power and planning within a polyfocal settlement

Wharram comprises a number of separate settlement units, each with its own distinct plan characteristics, suggesting that the village was a polyfocal settlement which developed over time. As analyses of other polyfocal settlements, such as Cawood to the south of York (Blood and Taylor 1992), have shown, the presence of two manors in Wharram prior to 1254 presents precisely the circumstances under which the plan form of a settlement can be expected to reflect the on-going negotiation of lordly economic, social and symbolic power. In view of this, the establishment of the West Row (north) and the North Row, possibly in the 12th century, can be seen as competing expressions of the lords' power within the limitations of their inherited landholdings. Similarly, the establishment of the East Row can perhaps be seen as a proclamation, perhaps soon after 1254, of Peter de Percy's newly acquired control over the whole village. The name Wharram Percy, first documented in 1292, may have its origins at this time. It seems likely that the village's three main arenas of architectural display - the two manor houses and the church - would have been caught up in this rivalry. The demolition of the South Manor *c* 1254 has long been recognised as a possible consequence of the Percy family's success, but other symptoms may have been overlooked, such as the repeated rebuilding of the church and the highly visible incorporation into its walls of high-status grave covers, perhaps belonging to the Chamberlain family. At an economic level, the same rivalry may account for the existence of what appear to be two circular pounds on the village green. The striking contrast between the two documented mills, of which one still retains water and the other is virtually unidentifiable, may result from an economic

take-over analogous to the *damnatio memoriae* inflicted by the Percy family on the home of the Chamberlains immediately after their departure.

However, the plan of Wharram may indicate a more complex negotiation of power than this fairly straightforward bipolar rivalry. The West Row (south) is distinctive in several respects, including its seeming isolation from the coherent core of the village plan, its lack of regularity, the absence of crofts, and the exceptionally large size (by comparison with the rest of the village) of some of the peasant houses. It has tentatively been suggested that this may be the earliest settlement unit of the village, as far as can be detected through analytical earthwork survey, apparently originating before the South Manor was established. This suggestion, and the possible association of this element of the village plan with free peasants of the Late Saxon period, is developed by Everson and Stocker in a later chapter (Ch. 8.2).

The early cultivation ridges

The new geophysical survey carried out by English Heritage has identified a series of curvilinear enclosures on the plateau which constitute part of the Middle Saxon settlement. These enclosures provide long-overdue context for the puzzling distribution of Middle Saxon finds encountered by dispersed trial excavations (see Oswald 2004, 16); the excavated finds, in turn, offer dating evidence for the enclosures revealed through the geophysics. Earthwork survey makes its own indirect but important contribution to the picture. English Heritage's new fieldwork has independently identified extremely faint traces (at the very limits of what is perceptible with the naked eye) of unusually broad ridge and furrow ploughing, which apparently represents the mechanism by which the Middle Saxon enclosure ditches and (presumably) banks were erased, and seems to predate the establishment of much, and perhaps even all, of the medieval village proper.

The ridges, which survive best within and to the south of the *curia* of the South Manor, are up to 20m wide and gently cambered so that the intervening furrows also appear extraordinarily broad. Were it not for the other archaeological evidence available, it would be easy to misinterpret them as periglacial soil stripes, similar in essence to those recorded in East Anglia (notably around Grimes Graves in Norfolk; Corbett 1973, figures 8 and 9). In the crofts adjoining the southern half of the west row, the earlier survey recorded traces of the furrows from the 1946 RAF aerial photographs, on which they are clearly visible (RAF 1946). However, detailed examination on the ground under optimal conditions allows their alignment and extent to be more accurately plotted.

It is difficult now to gauge how far west the ridges extended, but they do seem to extend at least as far as the present limit of arable cultivation, that is, beyond Boundary 5, which was the limit suggested by the earlier survey. The fact that the ridges within the *curia* are in a similar condition to those outside it to the south suggests that they were already in that condition when the South Manor was laid out, that is, probably by the later 12th century. Boundary 3, which was established even before the *curia* boundary of the South Manor was laid out, appears to impinge on the ridges, again pointing to an early date for the ploughing. In relation to the layout of the southern half of the west row, there are three key observations: nowhere do the

lines of the broad furrows coincide perfectly with the lines of the proposed toft boundaries; they do not share the same alignment; the so-called ‘lynchet bank’ (see below) cuts through the ridges.

North of the *curia* of the South Manor, conventional ridge and furrow in the crofts that make up the northern half of the west row has erased the early ridges, only leaving what appear to be remnants extending eastwards from the frontage of the row as far as the very edge of the plateau. There, the ridges seem to end in pronounced terminals, rather than on a conventional headland bank, perhaps indicating that the ploughing was not prolonged. Notably, several of the buildings on the village green and both livestock pounds seem to have made use of the relatively level platforms on the edge of the escarpment offered by the terminals of the ridges. The ridges are also apparently visible as a series of undulations in the narrow interval between the frontage of the row and the course of Track 4 (Fig. 3.7). Significantly, unlike the southern half of the west row, the lines of the supposed ridges appear to coincide closely with the lateral boundaries of the tofts. Furthermore, Road 1C cuts through several of the ridges, suggesting that it is unlikely to have been part of the Romano-British route, but instead developed within the medieval period. The northernmost ridge seems to lie close against the side of Road 1B.

Taken together, the earthwork evidence seems to point to an episode of ploughing, which was perhaps brief but sufficiently intensive to erase substantial banks and ditches across a wide expanse of the plateau encompassing two enclosures. This took place somewhere between the final quarter of the 8th century and the final quarter of the 12th century. While it is not impossible that the ploughing represents an unusual form of pre-Conquest ridge and furrow cultivation, it is perhaps more plausible that it was carried out to level and prepare the site for the establishment of the village.

The ‘lynchet bank’ (Figs 3.15, 3.16)

The main body of this earthwork appears to be a terrace-like accumulation of soil created by repeated ploughing (a ‘positive lynchet’), which extends southwards for some 380m from the southern edge of Road 1B. It parallels the edge of the western plateau, following a sinuous curve that is reminiscent of the so-called ‘reverse-S’ pattern created by the use of oxen to draw a plough. The steep face of the lynchet stands to a maximum height of 1.6m, even though the natural slope is not pronounced, and the sheer size of the earthwork has led to consideration of the possibility that it is actually a deliberate construction contemporary with the construction of the toft boundaries, perhaps a ‘wall’ made of turf and soil stripped from the rear of the tofts, possibly leaving a surface of bare chalk (Beresford and Hurst 1990, 78). The size of the scarp does appear to have been enhanced in places by other features and by erosion within the tofts. For parts of its length, a broad bank, 0.2m high on average, runs along the top of the lynchet. This seems to have originated in the medieval period as a plough headland and may well have served as a path along the rear of the house plots. The earthwork as a whole, presumably surmounted by a hedge or fence, clearly served to divide the ends of the tofts from the adjacent crofts.

Although it was initially assumed that all the village earthworks were of broadly the same date, the so-called ‘lynchet bank’ was soon recognised as being an anomaly of

considerable importance to the understanding of the plan of the medieval village and potentially of earlier origin (Beresford 1979, 23). Following a visit to Wharram Percy in 1978 by Peter Fowler, then Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, it was interpreted as a possible Bronze Age 'linear earthwork' boundary (information from Chris Dunn, English Heritage; Hurst 1984, 84-85 and fig.1; Beresford and Hurst 1990, 78). Excavations that were intended to settle the question produced only a single sherd of pottery, which, although not strictly diagnostic, has been interpreted as pointing to a 12th-century date. However, the excavation seemed to show that the lynchet bank was stratigraphically later than features of Late Saxon date. Most recently, this evidence has also been questioned and it has been concluded that the origin of the earthwork remains uncertain: whether earlier than, contemporary with, or later than the toft boundaries that adjoin it (Stamper *et al* 2000, 19).

It is easy to follow the deductive process by which Beresford and Fowler reached the conclusion that the earthwork predates the medieval village, for most of the observations are sound and are correctly depicted on the plan produced by the earlier survey. Firstly, the lynchet bank is clearly cut into by Tracks 5b and 6 (the former previously thought, erroneously, to be of Iron Age or Roman origin: Fig. 3.7), as well as by several minor hollows which apparently gave access to the headland from the rear of the tofts. One particular section is not adequately depicted on the earlier survey: the short surviving length of the lynchet bank between Tracks 5b and 6 maintains the same alignment as the rest of the earthwork, which would be almost inconceivable were the tracks earlier than the lynchet. However, since the English Heritage investigation also suggests that Tracks 5b and 6 are probably of 18th-century date, this stratigraphic relationship does not in itself rule out a medieval origin for the lynchet bank.

Secondly, notwithstanding the most recent inconclusive appraisal of the evidence, in almost every instance the banks that form the medieval toft boundaries can be seen to ride over the lynchet bank. In the other instances, the relationship of one earthwork to the other is merely uncertain; none suggests that the lynchet bank is later. On the other hand, it could be argued that what is visible on the surface represents only the latest phase of the earthwork and that the toft boundaries were probably redefined many times, disguising or reversing the original stratigraphic relationship. Yet it may be significant that the boundary of the *curia* enclosure of the South Manor, which seems less likely to have been redefined after the *camera* of the South Manor was demolished, also rides over the lynchet bank. Similarly, a large platform that may well be the site of one of the manorial buildings, which has previously gone unrecognised, is cut into the foot of the lynchet bank (Fig. 3.12). In short, were it not for the excavated evidence which apparently shows the contrary, there would be little hesitation in inferring that the lynchet bank is of earlier origin than the foundation of the manorial enclosure and the contemporary episode of planning.

However, it has been inherent in this and previous interpretations of the earthwork that the lynchet bank can be treated as a single feature. Although it describes a sinuous curve overall, close consideration reveals that there are slight differences in its form. Where it runs behind West Row (north), the scarp is higher and sharper,

running very straight and parallel to the frontage of the row. By contrast, where it runs behind West Row (south), it is generally lower, making several minor changes of course and not running precisely parallel to the frontage, giving the impression of a more organic development. This perception is sustained by the apparent existence of a series of very slight cultivation ridges of unusual form, which were discussed in the previous section of this chapter.

To summarise, along the length of West Row (south), these ridges are cut by the lynchet bank, but cannot be traced further east, suggesting that they may, in essence, be the manifestation of the ploughing responsible for creating the lynchet, though truncated by later activity within the tofts. If so, they may be contemporary in origin with the establishment of this part of the village though not necessarily the planned row. On the other hand, for the length of West Row (north) the ridges seem to have extended beyond the lynchet bank and beyond the earthworks of the tofts themselves. Alternatively, it may be that the survival of the ridges beyond the frontage of West Row (north) is a freak and that the whole settlement was laid out over the ridged cultivation. However, the more obvious inference, although the evidence is far from clear-cut, is that the southern half of the lynchet bank is in essence a genuine lynchet, though undoubtedly modified by the laying out of West Row (south), while the northern half is a deliberately built boundary bank. It is difficult to pin-point precisely where these two putative features join, but the line of the earthwork kicks westwards by some 7m at or near the northern side of the *curia* of the South Manor. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it has been argued that West Row (south) and (north) joined at about the same place (Wrathmell 1989, 41-2).

Fowler's early suggestion that the lynchet bank might follow the line of a Bronze Age linear earthwork can be firmly ruled out. There are many examples of such boundary earthworks on the Yorkshire Wolds, including one 900m south of Wharram Percy. Of this, a short stretch on the steep valley side survives well in earthwork form as a typical double bank with a medial ditch, while the remainder can be traced as a cropmark (Stoertz 1997, map 1). Fowler suggested a Bronze Age date, in line with examples known at that date on the chalk uplands of Wessex. However, it now seems likely that the earliest examples in Yorkshire, and perhaps beyond, date to the late Neolithic, while in the Yorkshire region the tradition certainly continued well into the Iron Age (Vyner 1994). However, the relationships of such boundaries to the natural topography are distinctive, most running across relatively narrow necks of land, usually at right angles to the contours and often between the heads or junctions of valleys. The lynchet bank has none of these characteristics and its stratigraphic relationship to the early ridged cultivation renders a prehistoric date implausible.

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