

1987

Exeter City Council

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 5th June 1987

Report to Committee

1. EXCAVATIONS AND WATCHING BRIEFS

Hayes Barton, St Thomas.

The main excavation on the site of Hayes Barton, at Flowerpot Field in St. Thomas, finished at the end of February 1987. Roads and sewers are now being constructed prior to the start of house-building in the autumn. It is hoped to undertake further limited excavation on the site in the summer in order to tidy up one or two loose ends. The excavations were funded by Exeter City Council and the Community Programme and supervised by John Dunkley.

An archive report on the results of the investigations is in preparation. It is hoped that this and a detailed summary account incorporating documentary evidence will be finished by the autumn.

Figs. 1-6 present interim restored plans of the principal features on the site at six stages in its history between c. 1200 and 1643.

Stage 1 (Fig. 1). The earliest features cutting into the alluvium date from the late 12th or early 13th century. A small rectangular ditched enclosure at the NE limit of excavation is likely to have contained a building in its northern corner which has left no trace. Any such building was presumably built of cob founded on footings that did not penetrate the subsoil, like

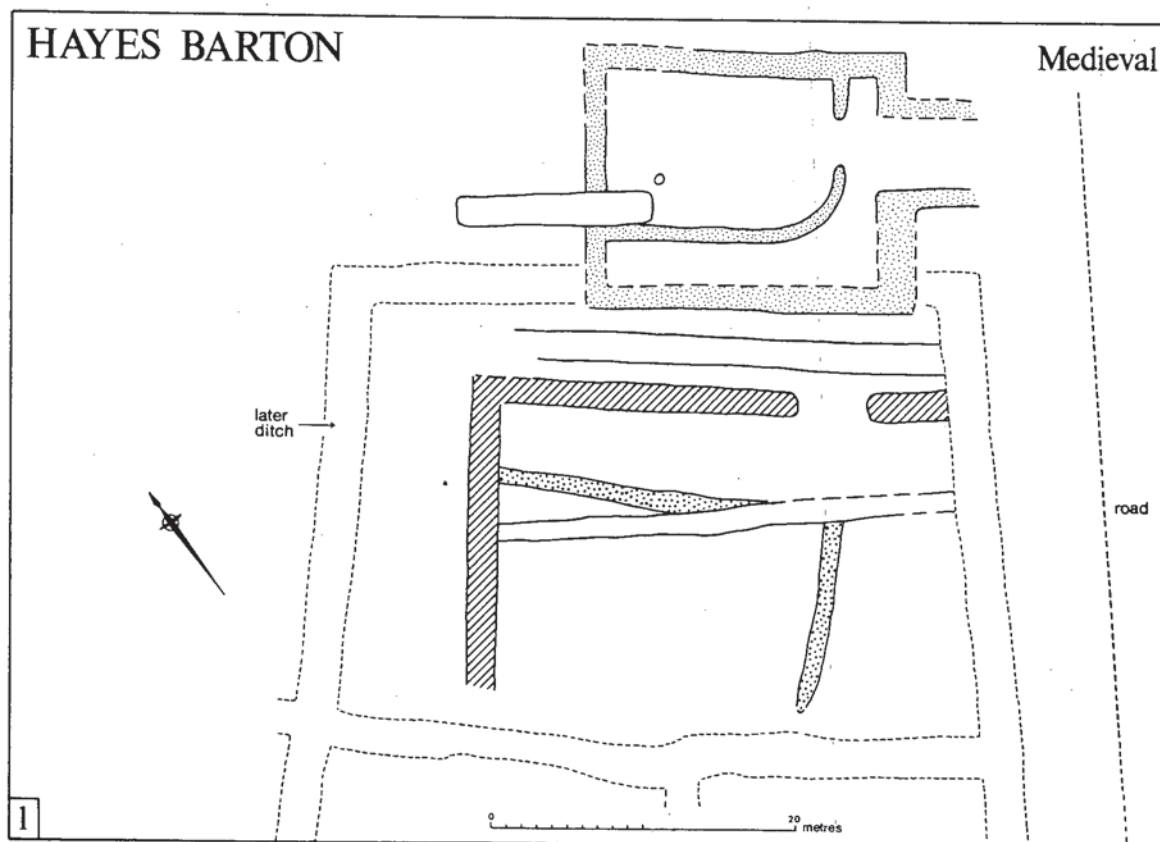


Fig. 1

those of the late 15th-century barn of stage 2. Between the site and the River Exe to the east was a road referred to in medieval documents as the highway to Exwick. This met Okehampton Street at a T-junction at the bend in the road next to the modern railway bridge. Three or four other phases of boundary or enclosure ditches illustrated in Fig. 1 date between the early 13th century and the late 15th century. No walls were found in association with them.

Stage 2 (Fig. 2). In the late 15th century a large non-domestic building, believed to have been a barn, occupied the eastern corner of a yard bounded by cob walls. The footings for the barn and the eastern boundary wall consisted of a single course of veined volcanic stones resting on the ground surface. Once removed, these left very little trace. This construction technique may account for the apparent absence of earlier medieval buildings on the site, assuming foundations were robbed on demolition. The western boundary wall was 1.25m wide, made of cob set in a 0.7m deep foundation trench without stone footings - a form of construction known from a number of other sites in the Exeter region.

Stage 3 (Fig. 3). In the early 16th century the ground level over the whole site was raised by up to 0.5m by means of an extensive spread of dumped alluvium. Some of this material must have been brought in from sources nearby but quite a lot of it was dug from ditches which now defined the settlement enclosure in the manner of a small-scale moat. Good drainage was essential in a position so close to the river.

The earliest structure within the new ditched enclosure was a rectangular cob building with no surviving wall-footings whose plan was

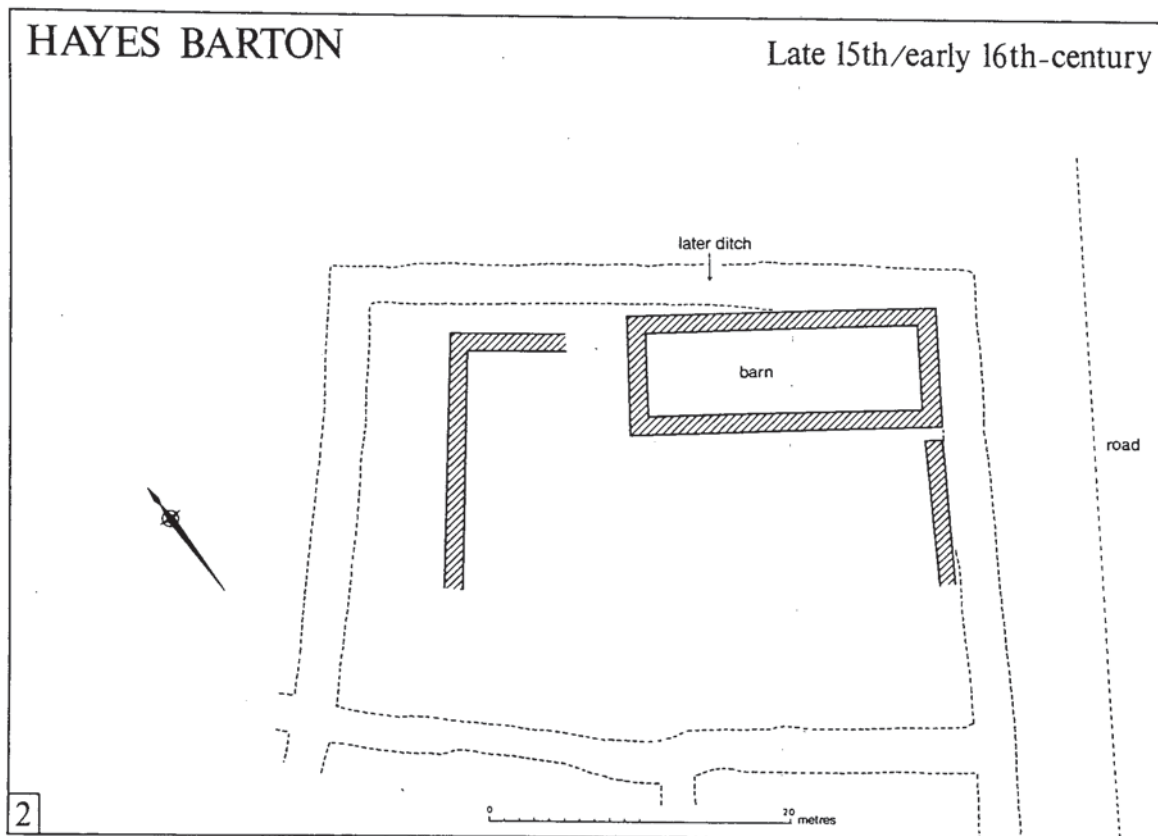


Fig. 2

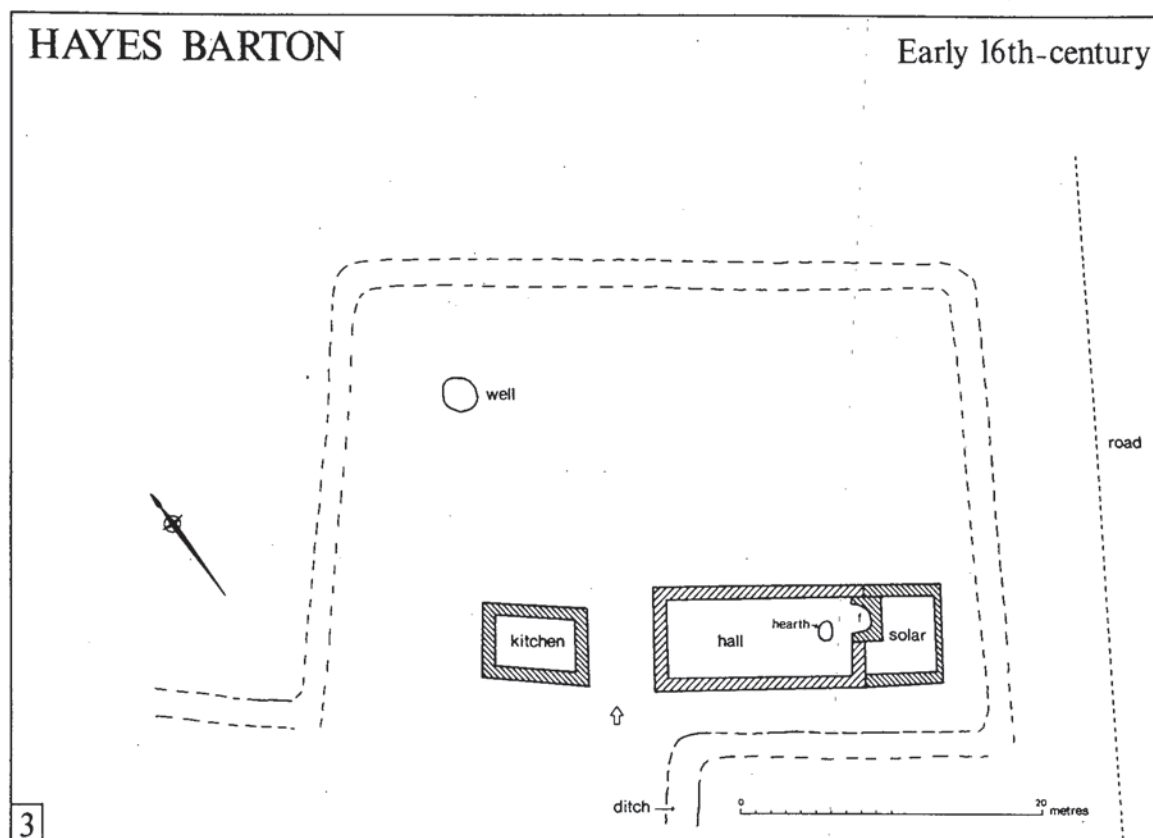


Fig. 3

discernible only because its interior had at some stage experienced a fierce fire. This building became the hall of the house known as Hayes Barton, but it is possible that it was built originally as a barn. A stone fireplace, inserted at the east end of the hall, presumably replaced an open hearth found nearby. An added room to the east is interpreted as a two-storey solar block. A small building to the west of the hall was not fully excavated but is assumed to have been a detached kitchen.

Stage 4 (Fig. 4). In the mid 16th century the house was modernised by the addition of a new solar block at the west end of the hall. This included an external rear stair turret and no doubt contained a parlour and perhaps a dining room on the ground floor with sleeping chambers above. At the east end of the hall a wide entrance passageway was introduced next to the former solar. The new entry was approached across a stone bridge over a ditch or moat revetted in stone at the front of the house.

The layout of the house at this stage is somewhat unconventional, probably because an existing simple house was being adapted. It must be emphasised, however, that the restored plan in Fig. 4 is partly inferred; it is possible, for example, that the room to the east of the archway was the kitchen, although no fireplace or hearth was found in it. The occupant of the house at this time was probably John Peter, who lived there by 1552, bought the freehold in 1563, and remained at Hayes until his death in 1571. Peter was Customer of the Port of Exeter and at one time represented Dartmouth in Parliament. Nothing is known of the previous occupant of the house, who may have been a bailiff or tenant of Anthony Harvey of Culmjohn, lessee of the prebend of Hayes with the 'manor and mansion place of Hayes' for 21 years from 1543. John Peter must at first have sub-leased the property from Harvey since the latter only surrendered his lease early in 1557.

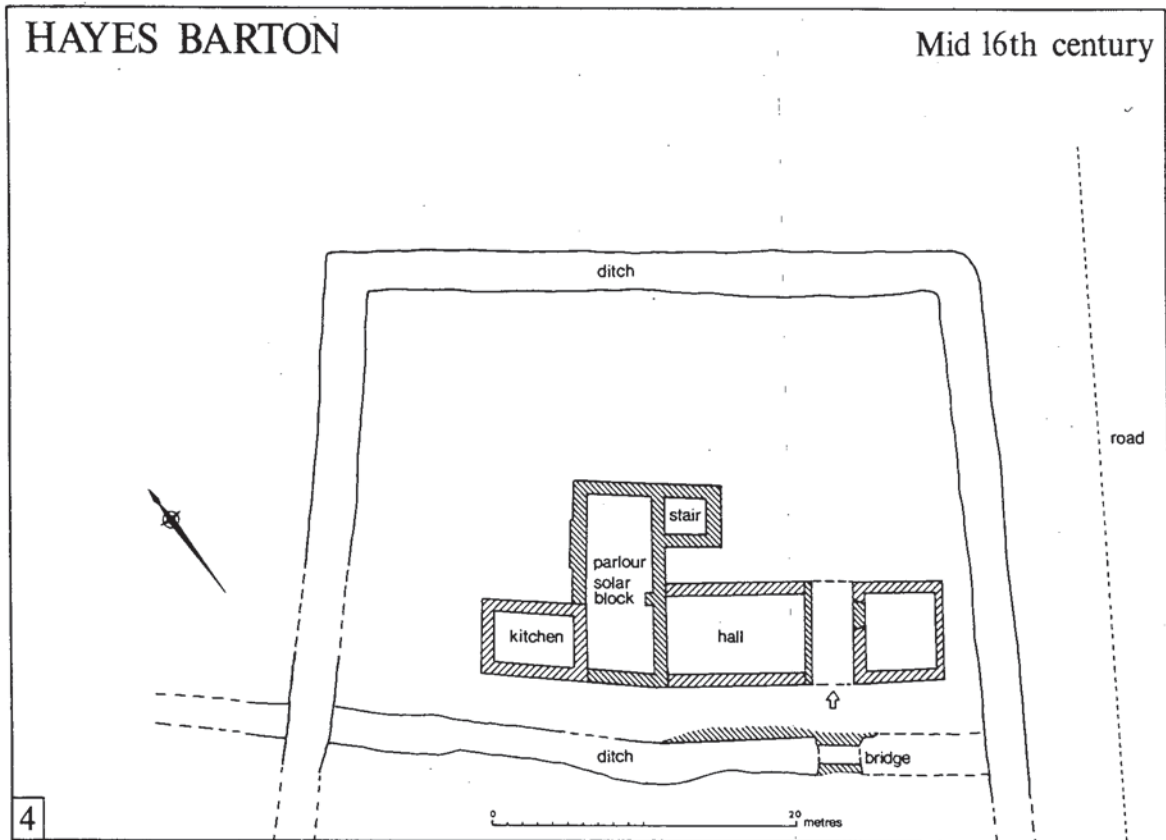


Fig. 4

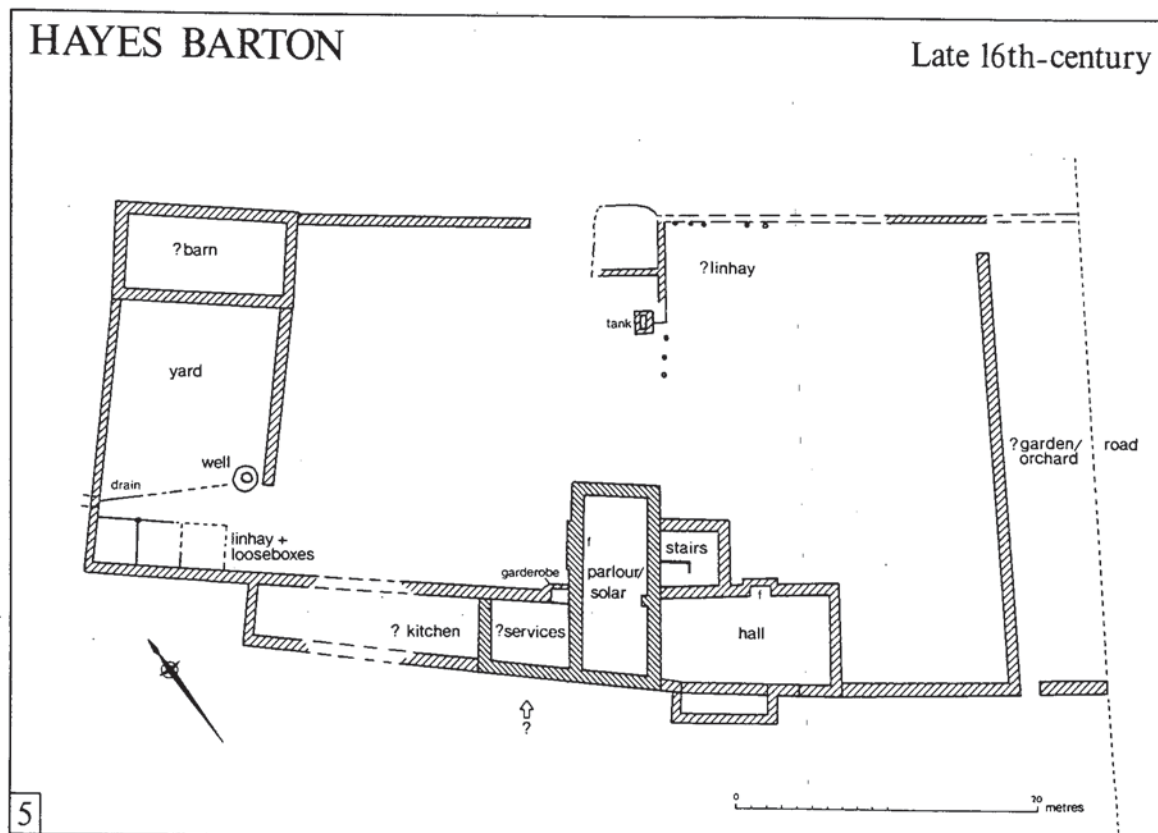


Fig. 5

4 — Stage 5 (Fig. 5). No outbuildings have been identified as belonging to the house of John Peter's time, which is described in an early 17th-century account as having been surrounded by hedges and ditches. The same source states that William Peter (nephew of John), who inherited the house and estate in 1571 and lived there until his death in 1614, filled in the
6 — ditches and built cob boundary walls without stone footings in place of the hedges. This description matches well the character of the late 16th-
8 — century enclosure walls and outbuildings revealed by excavation.

12 — During William Peter's long occupation of the property the old hall at the east end of the house was rebuilt with walls set on piled foundations, and a new stair turret was introduced in the angle of the hall and the earlier solar cross-block. The lower end of the house seems to have been extended considerably to the west of the kitchen, although the plan here
14 — requires further investigation. The unusual arrangement of rooms suggested for the previous stage, with the hall separated from the services and kitchen by the solar/parlour range, is now unequivocally evident.

20 — Four yards or gardens and a number of outbuildings may be identified behind the house. To the west a partially-cobbled yard contained a well adjacent to a linhay range containing looseboxes with cobbled floors and timber partitions. These probably housed horses and would have possessed a tallet or hay-loft above. At the north end of the yard a horse burial was found in front of a cob building which may have been a barn. The main area behind the house was apparently divided into two enclosures by a fence and contained traces of at least two buildings. Next to the road on the east was a narrow walled garden, close or orchard.

37 — Stage 6 (Fig. 6). William Peter was sick and confined to his bed in the last few years of his life. On his death in 1614 the property passed to Sir George Peter. By this time a large new cob barn with stone footing had been built to the rear of the hall. Perhaps at the same time the possible barn in the northern corner of the yard was subdivided and given a timber-framed extension on its southern side. The western room in this building had a separate entrance and a cobbled floor with a drip-gulley and soakaway in front of a barrel-rack against the north wall. The room could have been a cider house or possibly a dairy. The adjacent room to the east was partly cobbled and partly boarded; in the north wall next to the boarded area was the robbed foundation of a fireplace or furnace. It is possible that this
38 — half of the building, which was approached from the rear of the main house along a cobbled path, constituted a separate two-storeyed dwelling unit. However there is documentary evidence for a malt-house in the early 17th-
40 — century, and a boarded drying-floor and furnace would be expected in this.

43 — In the early 17th century various additions were made to the house. A new kitchen was provided at the west end, with a timber-framed structure abutting it to the west which looks like a pound house for a cider press; this seems to have been linked to the possible cider house by a cobbled path leading from the back door of the kitchen. The kitchen was connected to the rest of the house by an external timber-framed passage, probably with a gallery over it at first floor level reached by a small box stair.

The estate was sold by Sir George Peter to William Gould, son of Edward Gould of Staverton, in 1620. Gould was succeeded by his son, another William, in 1635. The house was destroyed in the Civil War, probably in an action initiated by Parliamentary forces on 31st July 1643, as described in the last report to the Committee. Fig. 6 shows the distribution of stratified musket balls from the site, which is densest at the corner of the property nearest to Okehampton Street, the direction of advance from Exe Bridge.

The results of the excavation are still being evaluated, and documentary research is incomplete. The picture emerging is of considerable

building with no close parallel. It is a two-storey building with a double doorway in the north wall on the ground floor. The eastern part of the ground floor was clearly built as a chapel since it contains a piscina in the south wall and a holy water stoup is situated externally on the east side of the eastern doorway in the north wall. The western part of the ground floor may have been a separate chamber entered through the other door, but any partition dividing the building into two has left no trace.

The chapel apparently possessed a coved ceiling. The first-floor room is lit by a large two-light east window, three small rectangular windows in each of the side walls and a further two beneath the western bell-cote. Near the west end of the north wall is a blocked doorway at first floor level which must have been approached from outside by means of a short gallery spanning the narrow courtyard in which the chapel is set, with access being obtained from a narrow almshouse range opposite. The upper room contains no domestic features such as a fireplace or garderobe. The most likely original function for this room is as a communal hall.

A full report on the fabric survey and excavation results will be made in due course. The survey has been undertaken by Keith Westcott and Laura Templeton and the excavation by Mark Knight.

Excavations at the Watergate, Cricklepit Street

A small excavation is in progress next to the site of the Watergate at the southern corner of the City Walls, behind the Custom House. Funded by Exeter City Council and the Community Programme, the project is being undertaken in advance of the landscaping and re-surfacing of Cricklepit Street. The fabric of the City Wall at this point has been surveyed in detail and its structural history interpreted in the light of documentary evidence. The project is being supervised by Peter Stead.

The earliest masonry visible near the Watergate probably belongs to a major rebuilding of a long section of the City Wall next to Cricklepit Street in the early 15th century. The late medieval date of the wall was established by trial excavations following the collapse of a section of wall near the Watergate in 1973. Documentary evidence suggests the period just after 1400 as the most probable time for the building of this section of wall. In the first decade of the 15th century the French posed a serious threat to south coast ports and a high level of expenditure on the walls is recorded in the Receiver's Accounts of the City in the years immediately after 1400.

The presumed c. 1400 fabric next to Cricklepit Street incorporates a number of buttresses. Just to the west of the Watergate a buttress scar has been identified and between this and the flank wall of the Watergate the west jamb of a blocked archway is preserved high up in the wall. Through this opening issued a stream which may be seen on the Hogenberg view of Exeter in the mid 1580s. It ran down Coombe Street from springs in the area of the Bishop's Palace.

There has long been uncertainty about whether a medieval watergate existed at the southern corner of the walls. The Act Book of the City Chamber records a resolution of 25 July 1565 that the new Quay should be constructed 'without the watergate of this citie as also a convenient gate...to be made in the wall at the place called the watergate'. This reference has in the past led historians to assume the existence of a medieval gate in the City Wall near the later Quay. There is however no evidence in the City's records for such a gate. The few late medieval references to a watergate are explained by the fact that the West Gate was occasionally known by this name. The 'place called the watergate' mentioned in July 1565 probably refers to the opening in the wall described above

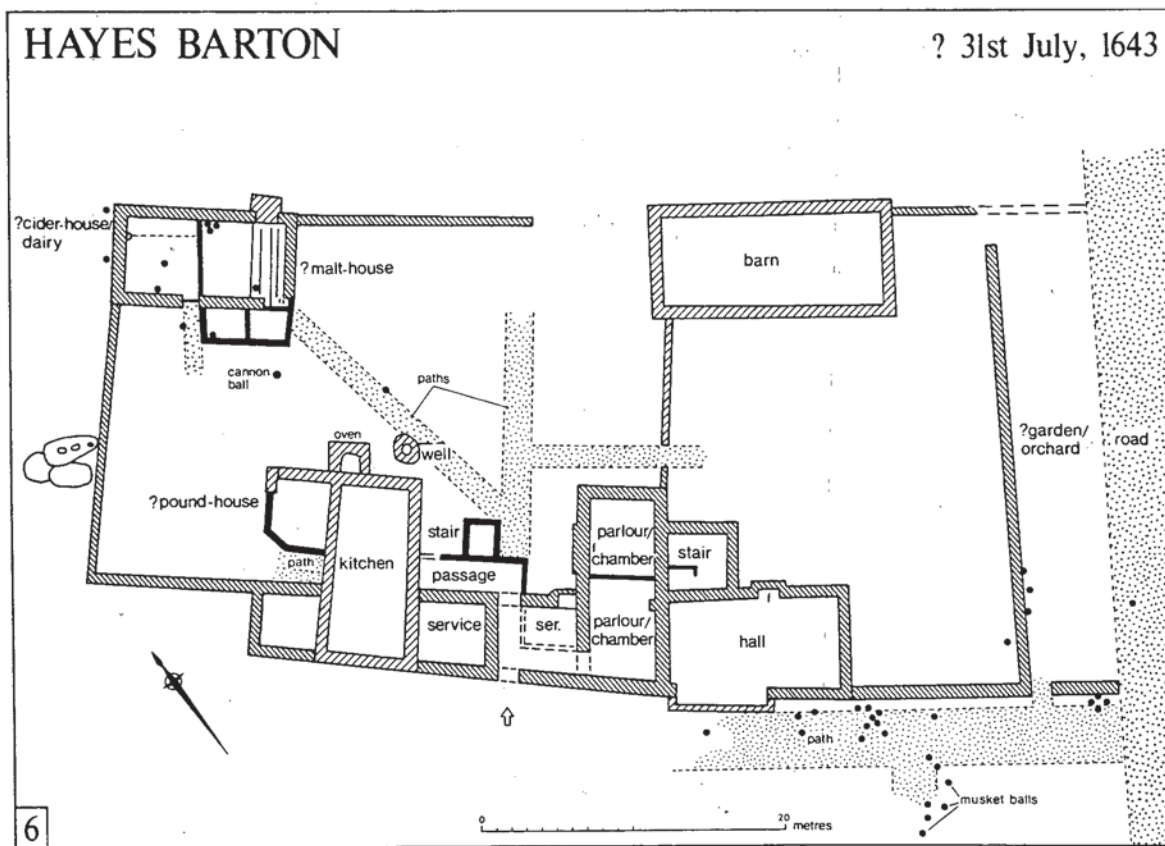


Fig. 6

interest in showing the way in which a large gentry house of the Tudor/Stuart period developed through a series of additions to a small original dwelling. The scale of the excavations has enabled the layout of associated yards and outbuildings to be established, producing an exceptionally full picture of the property.

A successful open day was held late last year. A summary account of the project will appear in Exeter Archaeology 1986-7.

Excavation and recording at St Catherine's Almshouses

The City Council is at present carrying out masonry repairs and consolidation at St Catherine's Almshouses (founded c. 1450) and the kitchen of the Annuellars' College (early 16th century) in Catherine Street. These monuments, normally open to public access in a small sheltered garden, recently became unsafe and in need of a general tidy up. The opportunity is being taken to expose some additional wall foundations with a view to their consolidation and incorporation into a new landscaping scheme. The A.F.U. has excavated two areas in order to locate medieval walls for display. This involves the removal of modern demolition rubble which has covered the site since the destruction of the buildings in wartime bombing. The site was trenched in 1945 by Lady Aileen Fox, who discovered two mosaics, now in the R.A.M. Museum. Parts of Lady Fox's trenches have been re-excavated in order to examine the Roman and medieval stratigraphy in section; in addition, limited excavation of medieval deposits has been undertaken in one area.

The upstanding masonry has been recorded comprehensively and analysed in advance of repairs and repointing. The most interesting observations concern the ruined 15th-century chapel of the almshouses which is an unusual

through which the Coombe Street stream flowed. This was truly a watergate - a gate for water.

The flank wall and causeway revetment outside the Watergate proper, built in 1565-6, have been exposed in the excavations and will be displayed in the new landscaped area. A fuller summary account of the excavation will appear in Exeter Archaeology 1986-7.

Magdalen Street/Southernhay excavation

The excavations undertaken by the A.F.U. on the new hotel site next to the City Wall at Magdalen Street, described in the last report to the Committee, will be completed this summer. The project is funded by Exeter City Council and the Community Programme and supervised by Paul Jeffery and Mark Hall. A full account of the results will appear in Exeter Archaeology 1986-7. An open day is planned for July.

ABC Cinema site, High Street/New North Road

Details of this site were given in the last report to the Committee. The excavation is now expected to start in the autumn, if funds are made available by the developer. A new entrance and interpretation area for the Underground Passages is to be provided within the development with access from a sheltered arcade next to Boots.

2. HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Exeter Cathedral: South Tower

Two sections of the roundel tier of the south tower have been examined recently. The primary recording of the west face (WD) was completed in the autumn of 1986. The arcade of this tier contains several capitals with well preserved detail and casts of these were made to obtain a full-scale, three-dimensional record. The tier has been monitored during cleaning and replacement of masonry (here limited to the projecting surrounds of the roundels and the hoods of the arches). As usual the removal of stone for replacement has provided the opportunity to examine the core of the walls and obtain mortar samples.

Recording of the south face (SD) of this tier has begun with the preparation of elevations and detailed drawings. No masonry repairs or cleaning have yet taken place. Only the western half of this level is scaffolded. The structure of this level is complicated by the insertion of the large 14th-century window lighting the south transept; substantial alterations to the surrounding facework accompanied this.

Work has also begun on preparing finished drawings of the tower record. For most areas examined the continuing work downwards renders the record incomplete, but the north face, of which the tower levels are observed by the south transept, is in progress.

The first free-standing pinnacle on the south side of the nave has been drawn and recorded prior to the reconstruction of the shaft. The spire of this pinnacle is of Bath stone but the shaft is one of the few remaining in Beerstone. This however is unlikely to be a medieval survival, since most of the later 19th-century repairs to the pinnacles were themselves replacing work by John Kendall of 1803-29. A full report on recent work was presented to the Exeter Cathedral Technical Advisory Committee in March.

St Martin's Church, Cathedral Close

Restoration of the stonework at the SE corner of the chancel of St Martin's Church was undertaken earlier in the year. The A.F.U. was given a small grant by HBMC to make a detailed drawn and photographic record of the fabric prior to repair.

The church is the only one of Exeter's small medieval parochial chapels for which a consecration date is recorded. According to a late medieval source the church was consecrated in 1065. Long-and-short quoins were noted at the SE corner of the nave during inspection by John Schofield. Detailed observation of the stonework and mortar confirms that the fabric is likely to be 11th-century in date since it is very similar to that of the Norman Castle Gatehouse built probably in the 1070s. St Martin's is only the second church in Devon in which Anglo-Saxon fabric has been identified. The survey was carried out by Stuart Blaylock and Keith Westcott.

Medieval Exe Bridge

The medieval bridge was restored and opened to the public ten years ago. It has deteriorated in recent years and is now in need of extensive repointing and repairs as a result of weathering and vandalism. In addition, the early 19th-century tower of St Edmund's Church has developed a number of cracks. The necessary repairs have now been put in hand and the area around the bridge is being tidied up. New signs will be provided to draw attention to the monument, which like several others in Exeter is little understood or appreciated by Exonians or visitors, even though it is recognised as being of outstanding national importance.

Roman City Wall, Paul Street

A substantial length of Roman masonry in the rear face of the City Wall to the SW of Maddocks Row was exposed by the excavation of an access road at the back of the Harlequins development in Paul Street. This will be repointed and made weatherproof later this year. The A.F.U. has cleared the vegetation and residual overburden and prepared a drawn and photographic record of the Roman masonry and of a length of late medieval fabric. The work was funded by Exeter City Council and the Community Programme and supervised by Laura Templeton.

1, Upper Paul Street

This scheduled ancient monument has undergone very thorough modernisation in the past few months. It is a house of the early 18th century and should be de-scheduled. A partial record of the building was made during the building operations by Keith Westcott.

46-47 High Street

This pair of houses dates from the early 16th century. Number 46 was renovated in 1985-6, when Keith Westcott and Jon Dunkley made extensive records of the structure. Number 47 was also recorded recently when empty. It is probably the last remaining fully timber-framed building in Exeter, and is far less altered than its neighbour. Amongst the well-preserved early features in the building is late 16th-century painted wall decoration.

Number 47 was originally a corner house, bounded on the east by Lamb Alley, now infilled. The exterior wall facing the alley is known to be elaborately carved, although it is not visible at present. The survey has demonstrated that when this pair of houses was first erected, presumably as a speculative development to provide two tenements on the site of an earlier medieval house, each tenement had a semi-detached timber-framed back block separated from the main house by a small courtyard. A report on these houses will appear in Exeter Archaeology 1986-7.

Survey of St Anne's Almshouses

St Anne's Almshouses, in the angle between Old Tiverton Road and Blackboy Road, were surveyed by Keith Westcott in the course of extensive modernisation in 1986. Four of the original late medieval single-cell dwelling units remained after rebuilding in the 19th century. A report on the results of the survey is in preparation.

3. POST-EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION PROJECTS

Exeter Cathedral West Front

Following completion of the recording of the Image Screen of the West Front in 1986 the preparation of drawings for publication is being undertaken by Stuart Blaylock and Barbara Jupp, funded partly by generous grants from the Devonshire Association, Devon County Council and the Society of Antiquaries of London. An account of the development of the West Front will appear with the new drawings in a forthcoming monograph on Exeter Cathedral to be published by the British Archaeological Association.

Report on survey of Exeter Guildhall Front Block

A report by Stuart Blaylock and Keith Westcott has been produced on the survey made by the A.F.U. in 1986 in advance of the restoration of the Elizabethan front block of Exeter Guildhall. This will be available for inspection at the meeting and copies are available on request.

Roman Finds 1971-86 publication project

A synopsis of the contents of this forthcoming volume on Roman finds edited by Paul Bidwell and Neil Holbrook in the Exeter Archaeological Reports series, published jointly by the Exeter City Council and the University of Exeter, was given in the last report to the Committee. A computer database has now been compiled by Neil Holbrook containing quantified statistical information on all groups of Roman pottery from excavations in Exeter. This will enable statistics on the chronological occurrence of particular fabric types and assemblages to be retrieved rapidly in future. The drawing of small finds from sites excavated in the 1980s has been started by Sandy Morris.

The deadline for the completion of the volume has been put back from late 1987 to autumn 1988, principally because Mrs. K. Hartley's report on the mortaria will not be available until then. The other specialist contributions have either been received or are not expected to cause additional delay.

Exeter Defences publication project

This project was described in the last report to the Committee. HBMC have made a grant towards the completion in 1987-8 of outstanding reports on projects relating to the town defences. These will be synthesised in an E.A.R. monograph to be edited in 1988.

Quay House publication and display

Analysis on the results of the excavation and recording undertaken in the Quay House at Exeter Quay in 1985-6 is now complete and extensive documentary research has also been carried out. It has proved possible to compile a fairly comprehensive picture of the development of Exeter Quay based on the various strands of evidence. An outline account illustrated with a series of reconstruction drawings by Jane Brayne is given in Exeter Archaeology 1985-6. A brief account of the archaeology of the site will also appear shortly in Devon Archaeology 4. The renovation of the building is almost finished. An interpretation and information centre in the four northern bays will open in mid July. This contains historical displays and a shop on the ground floor and an audio-visual presentation on the history of Exeter and the Quay upstairs. Part of the dock wall has been retained for display at the front of the building.

Exeter medieval and early modern suburbs volume

It is hoped to complete the compilation of this volume in the Exeter Archaeological Reports series in 1988-9. It will include the results of documentary research on the history and topography of the suburban parishes as well as reports on excavations and historic buildings. The main sites to be gathered together in this volume are Exe Bridge, The Quay, and excavations in St Thomas, Holy Trinity, St David's and at Polsloe Priory.

Fortress Bath-house pamphlet

A folded A3 pamphlet on the Legionary Fortress Bath-house excavated in the Cathedral Close, with text by Neil Holbrook and illustrations by Jane Brayne, appeared in late 1986. Further pamphlets are in preparation on Exeter City Walls and Exeter Cathedral West Front.

Annual Report

The long awaited report for 1985-6, containing accounts of work undertaken by the A.F.U. up to the autumn of 1986 will be available at the meeting. The report for 1986-7, for the period to September 1987, is already in preparation.

C.G. Henderson
Director, Archaeological Field Unit

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Archaeological Advisory Committee, October 16th 1987

Report to Committee

St Catherine's Almshouses and Annuellers' College

During the summer small-scale excavations continued on the site of the 15th-century St Catherine's Almshouses and the early 16th-century Annuellers' College kitchen, buttery/pantry and screens passage in Catherine Street. The work was funded by Exeter City Council and MSC and took place in advance of a scheme for the landscaping and floodlighting of the monument. The objectives were (1) to uncover the late medieval layout of the buildings for interpretation and display; and (2) to undertake limited excavation at depth to answer certain important questions about the Roman sequence on the site. The second objective was achieved by re-excavating some of the trenches dug in 1945 by Aileen Fox (who kindly visited the site on one occasion); by digging small extensions to the 1945 trenches, and by excavating small additional trenches to resolve particular problems. Although the site has now been extensively sampled, a high proportion of the Roman and medieval deposits remains undisturbed and available for investigation by future generations.

The results of the excavation were most exciting and proved to be of the greatest importance to our understanding of the topography of the Roman fortress and town. The NE early Roman defences were thought to run through this general area but their exact line was unknown. No opportunity to excavate in the upper part of the town has arisen since the post-war rebuilding, and no redevelopment is likely there for many years. The Catherine Street site therefore presented a rare chance to establish the course of the defences on the NE side of the fortress, the only side which had not been located precisely. In the event, the defences were found, and considerably more information was recovered than had been anticipated. This is because the NE side of the fortress followed an alignment slightly different from that expected; i.e. the NE defences were not parallel with the SW defences. This meant that the full width of the two successive ditches lay within the site, as well as the external perimeter street (found by Aileen Fox in 1945) and the front half of the rampart. Once this had been established, a trench was dug to locate an interval tower, which was found exactly in the position predicted. The first ditch had the usual fill of material derived from the rampart and containing pieces of oak including small pegs. These have now been found on three sides of the fortress. The first ones found were assumed to be tent pegs; however, their numbers and context suggest that they may have been employed in the rampart structure, perhaps to secure facing turves.

The second ditch remained open until the Antonine period, as was the case on the other three sides of the defences; it was covered over by material from the slighted rampart. The construction date of the extra-mural perimeter street is not certain. It may have been laid down in the early civil period and was resurfaced on several occasions. A building fronting on the NE side of this street in the third century was founded on timber sill beams and furnished with brick-mortar floors. It overlay the old defences and was rebuilt on one occasion. To the SE of this building a street overlying the demolished defences joined the NE side of the former external perimeter street at a T-junction. This new street formed an extension of the street bounding the SE side of the forum, which must have terminated originally at the NE inner perimeter street of the fortress. The latter probably went out of use in the

Antonine period when the early defences were demolished. Contrary to expectation, the extended SW-NE street did not continue beyond the old external perimeter street, an observation which has important implications for our ideas on the likely extent of the later Roman street system in the zone between the early defences and the City Wall. It is possible that the regular grid did not extend into the newly enclosed ground.

The next stage in the history of the site may also prove to be in some degree typical of developments elsewhere in the town. Both the streets and the timber-framed building were obliterated by a layer of silty loam containing oyster shells which extended over the whole site. Following the deposition of this material in the late 3rd or early 4th century a large stone house was erected whose rooms were floored with tessellated pavements and mosaics. This building was discovered in 1945 when the mosaic fragments were removed to the R.A.M. Museum. No finds were recovered to indicate the date when this house was abandoned. The walls were robbed in 11th and 12th centuries.

Catherine Street is thought to be late Saxon in origin. The absence of medieval pits on parts of its frontage suggests that this was built up in the earlier medieval period. Much of the surviving masonry belonged to houses built in the 14th or 15th century whose walls were incorporated into the 15th-century almshouses and 16th-century college buildings.

The ground plan of the almshouses, built c. 1450, can now be reconstructed in full. All but one of the building ranges were founded on thick mortared Heavitree walls; the range facing the north wall of the chapel was probably timber-framed. The layout included two large garderobes (latrine pits). The two-storey chapel is a most unusual building. The west end contained a chamber with a fireplace in the south wall, whilst the first-floor room, also heated by a fireplace in the north wall, may have served as a communal hall.

Little has been added to our knowledge of the Annuellers' building, which was surveyed by A.W. Everett following wartime bombing. It is, however, probable that his dating of the triple doors at the lower end of the hall to the 14th century requires reconsideration. Since the college seems to have been founded in the early 16th century, the hall is likely to have been built at that time.

Landscaping of the ruins will be completed this autumn, when the monument will be re-opened to the public.

Magdalen Street/Southernhay site

Excavations on this site, funded by Exeter City Council and MSC, are being undertaken in advance of the erection of a THF hotel and an office block. The site is about 150m long, up to 60m wide, and lies along the front of the City Wall on the eastern side of the South Gate, bounded to the south by Magdalen Street and Southernhay.

Certain problems remain to be resolved before the excavation finishes in a few weeks time, but the overall results are now reasonably clear. They provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the sequence of defensive features outside the wall from the late Roman period to the Civil War. In addition, a number of other important aspects of the topography of this area have been illuminated, and some very fine objects were recovered.

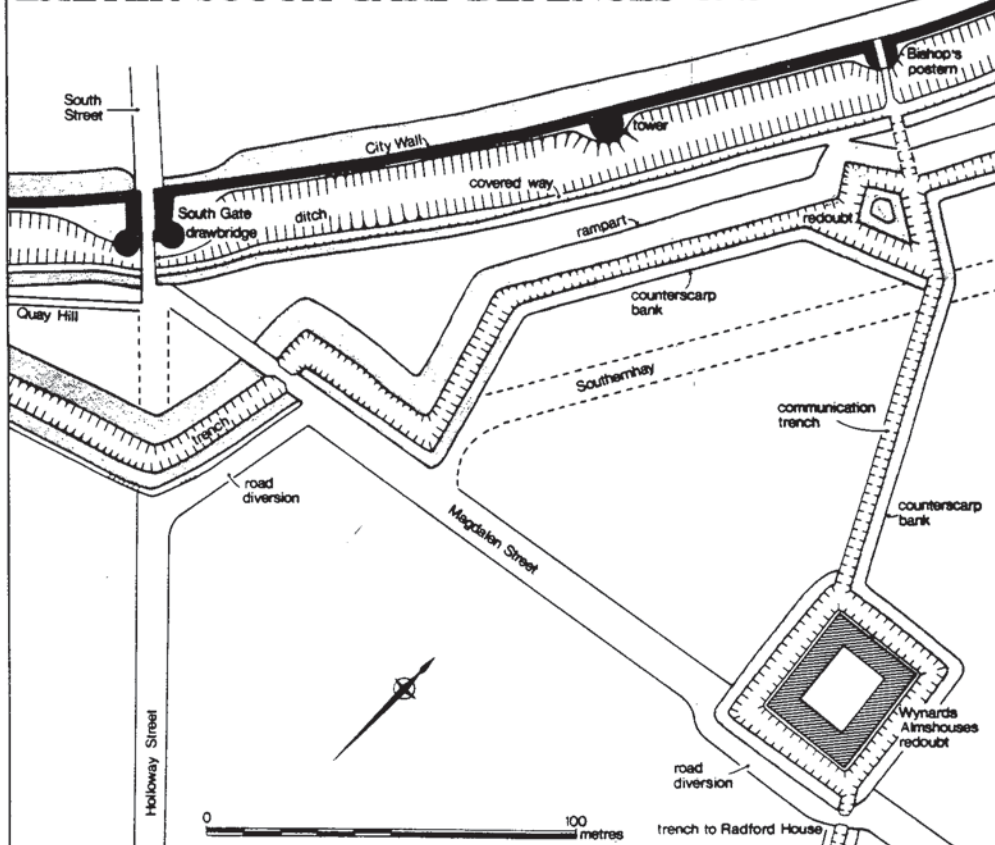
The early military buildings located in 1973-4 and 1978 at the top of Holloway Street did not extend as far as the present site. The only probably early Roman feature found was a well. The successive ditches outside the City Wall may be listed as follows:

- 1) Later Roman. (a) A ditch lay close to the wall; (b) a second V-shaped ditch was dug 26m out.
- 2) Late Saxon. (a) There was presumably a ditch close to the wall (recut in the later medieval period); (b) a large, V-shaped ditch 34m out is thought to be the Croiditch documented in the 13th century. This was 3m deep, 8m wide, and contained a fill of two main parts; the lowest fill consisted of clean rapid silt with very few finds - although one sherd of early medieval cooking pot was recovered from near the bottom. The upper fill, dating from c. 1200 or a little later, produced a fragment of an interlace-decorated late Saxon scabbard chape, probably of 10th-century date.

Later Medieval (a) A ditch in front of the wall was filled in or allowed to silt up in the 3rd quarter of the 15th century; (b) there was no late medieval outer ditch. The line of the Croiditch was followed by a well-metalled street from the 13th century until the 16th century. This probably ran from the South Gate to the East Gate and is thought to have been the High Street of the Lammas Fair. A 14th-century building, partly excavated, lay between this street and Magdalen Street. Two boundary ditches probably defined the fair site (cf. two ditches bounding St Giles Fair in Winchester, known from documentary evidence).

Civil War: The Civil War defences have now been traced for about 200m in excavations undertaken in this area since 1973. Documentary research in the

EXETER SOUTH GATE DEFENCES 1643



city archives and the British Library has allowed the features found in the excavations to be placed in their historical context.

The city declared for Parliament in 1642. Between January and August 1643 a great deal of money was spent on strengthening the defences, particularly in the South Gate area which was considered to be especially vulnerable. A fairly clear picture of the defences outside the South Gate has now emerged. The first line of defence comprised the old City Wall, the South Gate and existing external towers, which were all repaired and strengthened. Cannon were mounted on the gate and the towers. Early in 1643 the ditch immediately in front of the wall was much enlarged. Subsequently an outer line of trenches and banks was dug as shown in the plan. Further out, Wynards Almshouses and Radford House (next to Holloway Street) were fortified and linked by means of a covered communication trench to a postern gate in one of the towers next to the Bishop's Palace.

Prince Maurice besieged the city for 13 days from August 26th 1643. It has previously been assumed that the defenders capitulated without a major fight. However, research by Mark Stoye has established that a force of 2000 Royalists did in fact attack the fortifications outside the South Gate in an action that led to the surrender of the city. In this attack the communication trench leading to the postern was captured, cutting off the 3-400 men occupying the outer forts and allowing the Royalists to reach a position immediately beneath the walls which prevented further sallies. The city was surrendered shortly after these events.

The plan shows a provisional interpretation of the layout of the defences based on archaeological and documentary evidence. The outer trenches were set out so as to give maximum scope for flanking fire from cannon and musketeers stationed on the wall towers.

17th- and 18th-century houses

The post-Civil War houses on the Magdalen Street frontage were recorded by the A.F.U. prior to their demolition in 1977. The excavations have produced some useful additional information about the planning of these buildings and have also led to the elucidation of the structural history on the buildings on the frontage close to South Street, where the blacksmith's shop of one John Flay has been excavated. There were two large houses on Magdalen Street. John Mathew's house, built in 1659, was very thoroughly recorded in 1977, and can be reconstructed in some detail. Mathew himself remains something of a mystery figure but it is possible that he was a carrier on the Exeter to London road in the 1660s and 70s. The other large house demolished in 1977 was the residence of Dr. Michael Lee Dicker in the mid 18th century.

Some very fine post-medieval finds have been recovered from the site including an early 16th-century pilgrim's badge depicting the Virgin and Child and a set of gilded 18th-century cloth seals akin to examples from Exeter found in the Netherlands but not previously known to survive in Britain.

ABC Cinema Site

Excavation of this site started recently in advance of redevelopment. The main objectives are to investigate the origins of the road system and early settlement outside the East Gate; the history and development of the medieval aqueducts known as the Underground Passages; and the Civil War defences, which were probably laid out on similar lines to those outside the South Gate. To

date, an early medieval ditch has been found in a position corresponding to the Croiditch on the Magdalen Street site; and a Civil War ditch has been located on a line predicted from the layout of the roads and wall towers in this area. Work on the site is expected to continue into the new year.

Hayes Barton excavation

It is proposed to carry out further small-scale excavation on this site to tidy up loose ends in October and November prior to the start of building works. The archive report should be completed by Christmas.

Watergate excavation, Cricklepit Street

This excavation was finished during the summer. It was confirmed that no Roman or medieval gate existed at this corner of the walls. The stream flowing down the side of Coombe Street in the medieval period was found to occupy a gully several metres deep at the base of the wall. When the Watergate was built in 1565 a pavement of large Heavitree blocks was laid to receive the water from a chute projecting from the wall. The blocks formed a paved ford or watersplash across Cricklepit Street. The full early modern structural sequence was established for this area, culminating in the demolition of the Watergate in 1815, when the stream was diverted into a sewer under the road. Cricklepit Street will eventually be landscaped and an interpretation panel provided.

Other sites

The pressure of redevelopment in Exeter at present is relentless. About a dozen sites are likely to require excavation in the next year or two, including several in potentially very informative locations within the legionary fortress. It is to be hoped that personnel and finances will be available to permit an adequate archaeological response to be made to redevelopment proposals in these crucial areas.

Post-excavation projects

The preparation of reports on a wide range of projects has continued during 1987. The current financial year should see the completion of work, grant-aided by English Heritage, on the Exeter Defences project - concerned principally with the City Wall.

Some further work has been possible on the Roman finds volume but the final phase of its preparation has been put back to 1988-9 when the mortarium report is expected from Mrs. Hartley and when it is hoped that a grant may be forthcoming from English Heritage.

A fairly lengthy new summary account of the Roman legionary fortress and early town has recently been prepared for inclusion in a book planned for publication by Batsford and edited by Graham Webster.

The unpublished Roman faunal remains from Exeter will be analysed in 1988-9 by Bruce Levitan.

It is hoped that work on the post-Roman suburbs volume will be well advanced by the end of the current financial year.

The main new project for 1988-9 is concerned with sites in the fortress and its immediate environs, which will form the subject of a monograph. A great deal of work has been done on most of these sites in past years. The new project is intended to bring these to publication in a uniform format.

Aileen Fox recently delivered the finds and records from her Bartholomew Street East, 1959 excavation into the care of the R.A.M. Museum. There is much interesting material from the site which would probably be best published in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society. English Heritage have indicated willingness to grant-aid post-excavation work on the material.

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