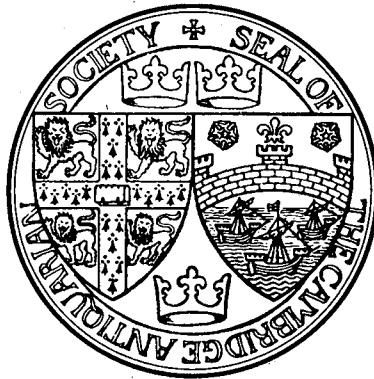

**Proceedings of the
Cambridge Antiquarian Society**
(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume LXXXVIII
for 1999

Roman Cambridge
Excavations on Castle Hill 1956–1988

John Alexander and Joyce Pullinger



This volume is dedicated to more than 400 volunteers who worked in their free time on the excavations and post excavation work, and to those contributors to the final work who did not live to see the results: Don Allen, Bernard Denston, Ray Farrar, Chris Godfrey, Rex Hull, Joan Liversidge and John Scott.

Roman Cambridge: Excavations on Castle Hill 1956–1988

John Alexander and Joyce Pullinger

With contributions by: D Allen, G Allen, G Bailey, M Blackburn, B C Burnham, P Croft, C B Denston, P de Jersey, B Dickinson, C Evans, R A H Farrar, R Flood, F Gardiner, D Haigh, B Hartley, K Hartley, M H C Hassall, M Henig, M R Hull, J Liversidge, A Rotherham, M F Sekulla, A Taylor, G R Thoday, F Weatherhead, P White, M Woudhuysen

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6. The Fourth Century Walled Town

Summary

A change in the settlement took place in the 4th century when it was made into a defensive site surrounded by a 12m wide ditch, 2–3m wide stone wall and internal rampart bank, with four gates. An area of 8.6 hectares was enclosed, considerably reducing the area of settlement. Whilst a number of dwellings continued in use, new ones were built over infilled pits, graves and quarries across the hilltop and new wells were dug. Throughout the century rubbish pits and latrines were dug and infilled. In all cases the existing street plan was respected and road surfaces were renewed as were a number of property boundaries. Structures on the hilltop were wooden and thatched, no substantial foundations, floors or deposits of roof-tiles being found. It may be that more elaborate buildings existed on the slope down to the river and bridge, for casual finds of roof-tiles and tesserae have been reported from areas where no excavations have taken place. Two probable pottery kilns were in use late in this period inside the walls, and there was one 4th century burial.

Introduction

The area selected for defence was the hillside above the bridge as well as the chalk-marl and gravel cap of the hill. On the south and southwest the boundary between the marl and the underlying clay was closely followed. One reason for this may have been that a ditch dug into the clay just below the line of water seepage would always have been supplied with water. The major departure from the obviously defensive topographic line was the inclusion of a stretch of the hill slope facing the river.

Description (Fig. 6.1)

The defences

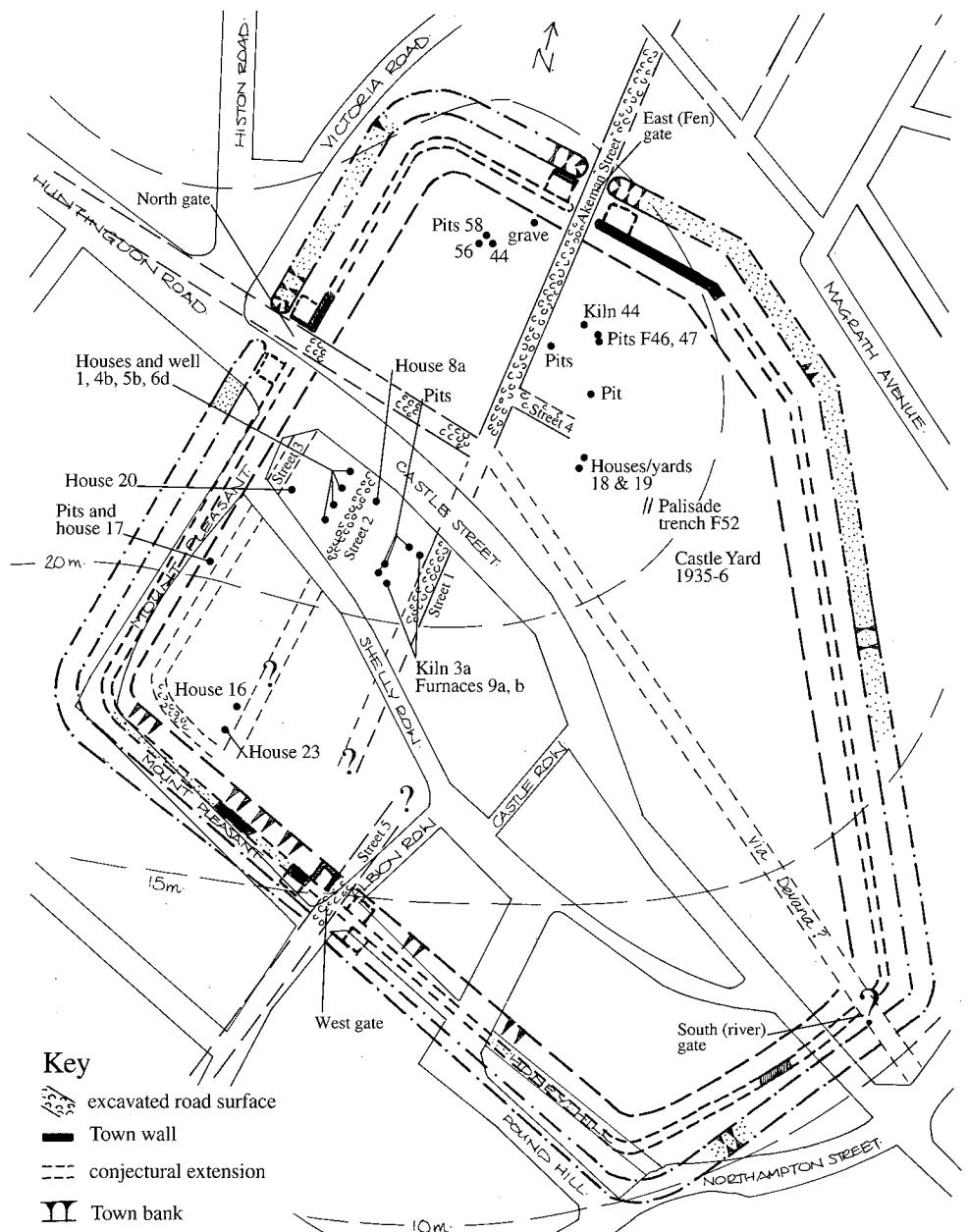
The Ditch

The line of the eastern defences is confirmed by excavations at SH 85 where the ditch was shown to have been beside the medieval castle bailey rampart. Stretches of the northeastern defences were located and excavated in the CH 86 sites where the wall, gate house footings and the ditch were found. They show

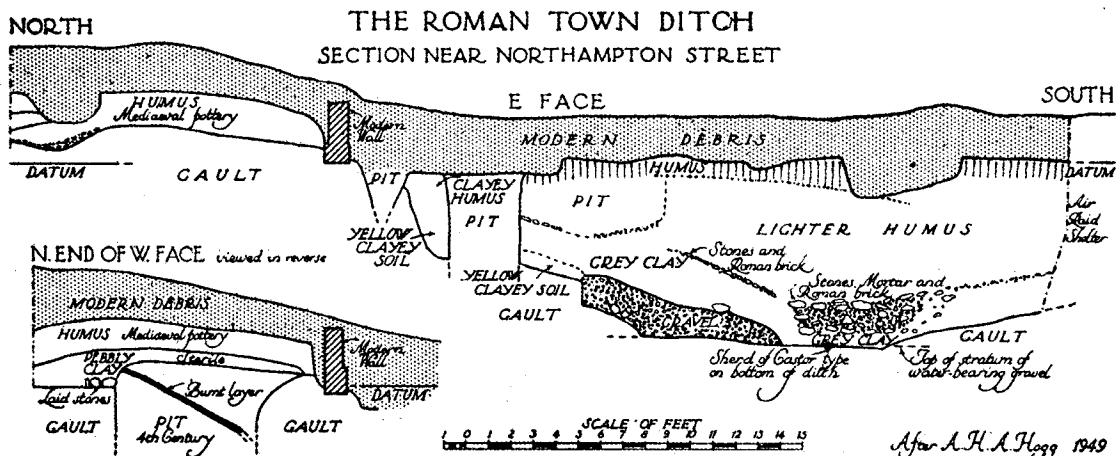
that the present Shire Hall/Castle Park boundary is approximately that of the Roman defences. The northern wall and ditch were excavated in the CH 85 site, the ditch being c. 12m in front of the wall. No evidence for defences west of Huntingdon (Godmanchester) Road has been found apart from an observation of a cross section of the ditch during roadworks immediately south of Huntingdon Road (J Pullinger) but excavations in SO, RG and MPH sites have reduced the possibilities. It has been shown that the ditch does not cross any of these sites, nor are there any traces of a wall or bank.

Excavations in Magdalene College Fellows' Garden in 1910 (Walker 1911) showed that the defences were not south of Chesterton Lane, while observations (J Alexander) of the erection of Clare College hostels (Wilflete and Castle End) showed no traces of a ditch, wall or bank immediately east of St Giles. The position of the ditch on Northampton Street was located and sectioned in 1949 (RCHM I 1959) (Fig. 6.2). It was c. 12m wide at its lip, 2.6m deep, and 3.6m wide at its flat bottom; considerable quantities of 4th century Roman sherds came from it (R A H Farrar). Observation of major sewage works in Mount Pleasant in 1979 failed to locate it (J Pullinger), suggesting it may lie in the grounds of St Edmund's College, indicating a wide berm of more than 10m between the wall and the ditch similar to that further northeast. Here in the CH 85 excavations the ditch was located and traced for 20m, 12m in front of the wall footings. In CH 86 it came to a butt end at the east (Fen) gate so that Akeman Street entered the town over a causeway.

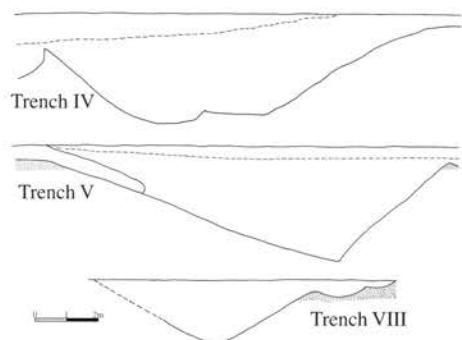
Beside Castle Street the ditch was 12.5–12.1m wide, U-profiled and 3.3m to more than 4m deep (Fig. 6.3). It would appear to have been recut here and its alignment slightly changed as it approached the gate and the Via Devana. If a causeway carried the road in Roman times it was destroyed in the 17th century as part of the Civil War defences. The ditch fill was a uniform dark-brown loam in which there was almost no sign of siltings even at the bottom. No sherds or datable objects came from it; it seems likely it was cleaned out in 1643 and was deliberately filled in soon after 1660 when the present Castle Street was constructed. The ditch was also located 10.5m west of Victoria



6.1 Plan of the 4th century walled town



6.2 Section through the Roman town ditch, Northampton Street, 1949



6.3 Profiles of the town ditch near Castle Street, 1985

Road, 12m wide and cut into marl (Fig. 6.4). It could be excavated only to a depth of 2.2m, showing infillings of gravelly brown silt, grey/green clay and marl clay which contained oolitic limestone fragments, brick and tile; water flowed along it at a depth of 2m. It was also machine sectioned in CH 86 and partially excavated in SH 85 (Fig. 6.5). Beneath later levels was an old soil horizon which may be dated by its pottery to the late Roman period. The relatively abraded condition of many of the sherds and oyster shells from this layer are in keeping with its having been subjected to considerable disturbance, probably due to cultivation.

The Rampart Bank

Defences were also exposed in MP, AR and PH. They showed that the bank survived within the garden of Nos. 19–21 MP and under Pound Hill Dairy. The present road-verge at the corner of Mount Pleasant and Mount Pleasant Walk is not quite the true bank of the

Roman town as the rear of the wall was found in the garden of No. 21 and it was shown to extend under the pavement (Figs. 6.6–6.14). The slope by the roadside had been caused by later gravel digging. The tail of the western bank was also found preserved beneath the raised girls' playground of the Old Free School (later Pound Hill Dairy). A fragment was also found in CH 85. It had been completely removed in Haymarket Road. No other traces of it remain, unless the medieval bailey bank in the Shire Hall grounds preserves part of its eastern line. Excavations in the CH and SH sites indicated a 10m wide featureless strip behind the wall. In the excavated areas in MP, the bank was more than 10m wide and 2.3m high, fronted by a wall. It was built mainly of clay and sandy gravels, probably the spoil from the ditch, and had an intervallum road and ditch along its inner edge. The following description is contributed by its excavator, R A H Farrar:

'In Trench A, in preparation for the bank, the surface was levelled, Pit 13 first being filled in and the post removed from Posthole 23. On this levelled surface over the western two-thirds of the trench lay a scatter of flint nodules, some with mortar adhering, and lumps of mortar. In the northwest corner c. 1.0m² of a continuous crust of mortar c. 1.5m thick was found. This and a scatter of mortar and flint nodules on the old ground surface suggest that the wall and bank were raised together. Furthermore, the tail of the bank was found resting on the floor of House 15, suggesting that it had been deliberately destroyed to make way for the bank. Ditch J.13 was filled in before the rampart was built, and the homogeneous nature of the filling and the way it had been compressed under the bank suggested that it had been filled only shortly before



6.4 Excavating the town ditch near Victoria Road, 1983



6.5 Excavating the town ditch, Shire Hall 1985



6.6 Modern bank around Mount Pleasant during excavations in 1964

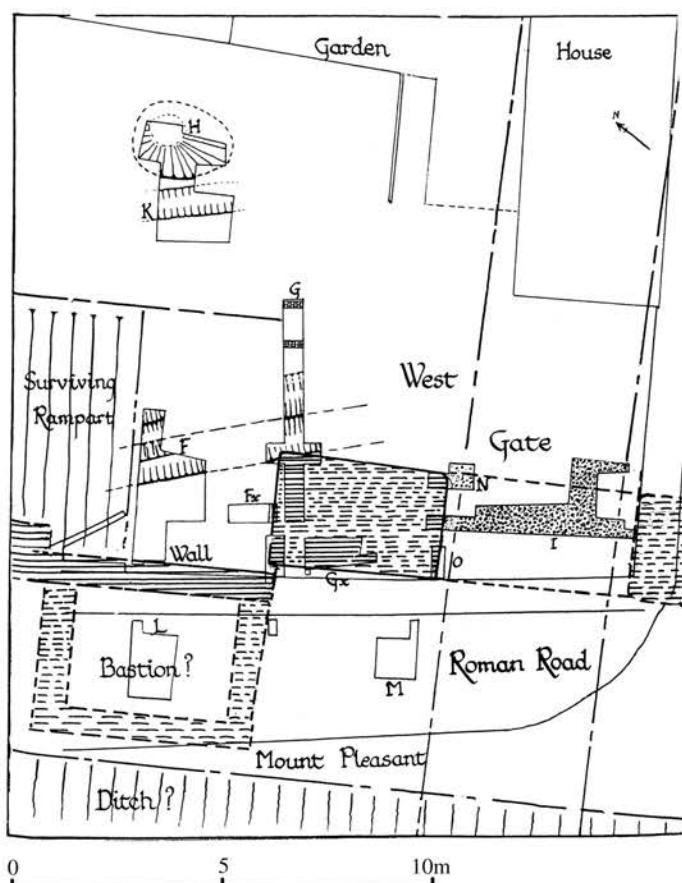
the bank was built. The bank was best studied in Trench C where it still stood 2.1m high. Here it consisted of thin layers of soil and occupation debris interspersed with thick, archaeologically sterile, levels of brown and grey sand. Above this were dumps of sandy clay. The lowest tips, mainly horizontal, were rich in 3rd to 4th century

pottery including 43 sherds of red polished ware and 283 sherds of late 3rd to 4th colour coated ware, animal bones including two dogs (articulated skeletons) and woodash. The upper tips sloped down towards the interior of the town and at least 12 tiplines could be distinguished, matching the bedrock outside the ramparts. In Trench A the three rear tips of the bank were found; the tilted strata of loam containing lenses of mortar, stones and charcoal. In the west they could be traced to within 60cm of the present land surface. In Trench E there were two low successive spreads of sand and sandy loam with some chalk covered with a level surfaced layer of sandy loam containing lumps of chalk, 4th century pottery including 46 late colour coated and two red polished sherds, bones and slag. On this lay a stratum of gritty loam. It was 2.3m thick

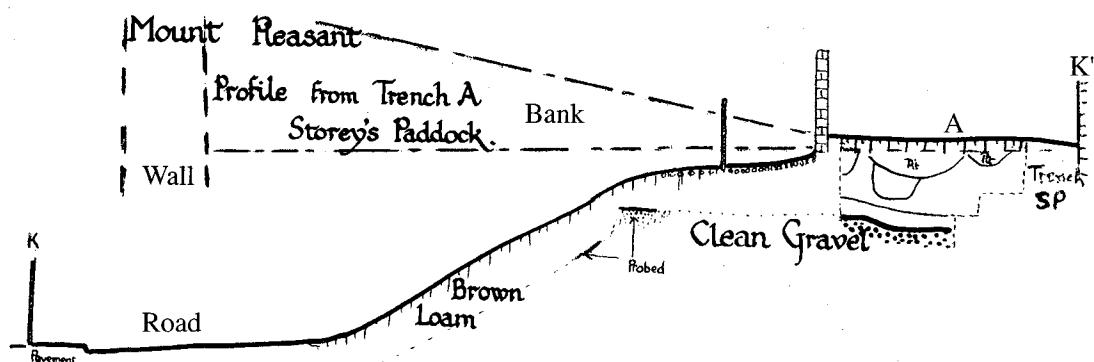
at the eastern end and 2.6–2.9m at the western; its surface being smooth and sloping. Above it was a stratum of clean orange sand with some pebbles and loam streaks. At the northwest corner a thin layer of loamy sand lay on this and separated it from another sandy layer which survived to within 60cm of the present surface. No sherds later than the 4th century came from any of these levels. These layers might, like the loam layers in Trench A and the sand layers in Trench C, have been tips in the tail of the rampart'.

The rampart bank was also located in PH. It survived to a height of 2.1m and was capped with a thick layer (30cm) of gault clay. It was cut by the construction trench and foundations of the 19th century playground wall and a deep V-shaped Saxo-Norman drainage gully. A few fragments of tile, Roman sherds and large limestone fragments were found in the clay capping. Below the clay was a layer of very dark brown compacted loam 1.3m thick. There was no variation in texture and colour except for thin lenses of sand in the first 40cm although it became progressively wetter towards the bottom. The first 40cm contained nearly 100 Roman sherds including wares of the late 3rd and 4th centuries, fragments of tile, brick and limestone. The next 40cm contained over 70 Roman sherds including those of 3rd and 4th centuries, many mussels, and fragments of tile and limestone. In the lower part of the bank there were 95 Roman sherds, the latest dating to the early 4th century. Also in this fill were fragments of tile and limestone. A small quantity of bone was found in all layers, particularly rodents and frogs.

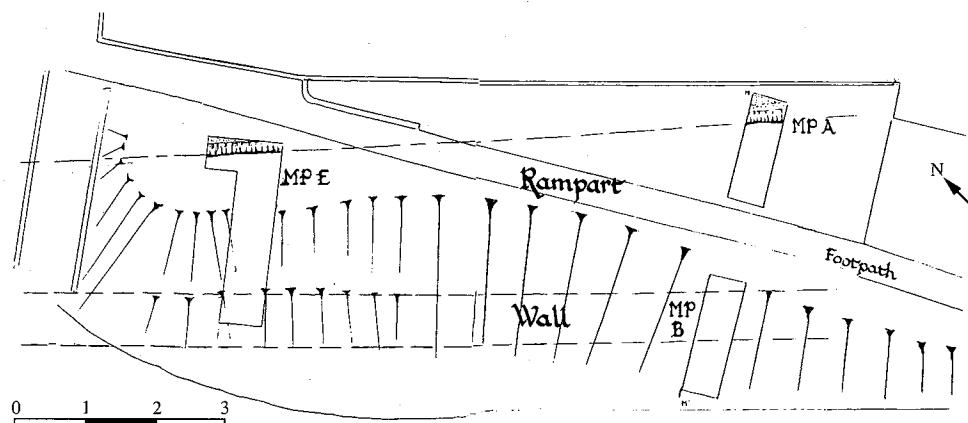
A fragment of the bank was probably present in CH 85 where a trench to rob stones from the wall cut through a 44cm thick layer of marly/grey clay (3) containing flint nodules



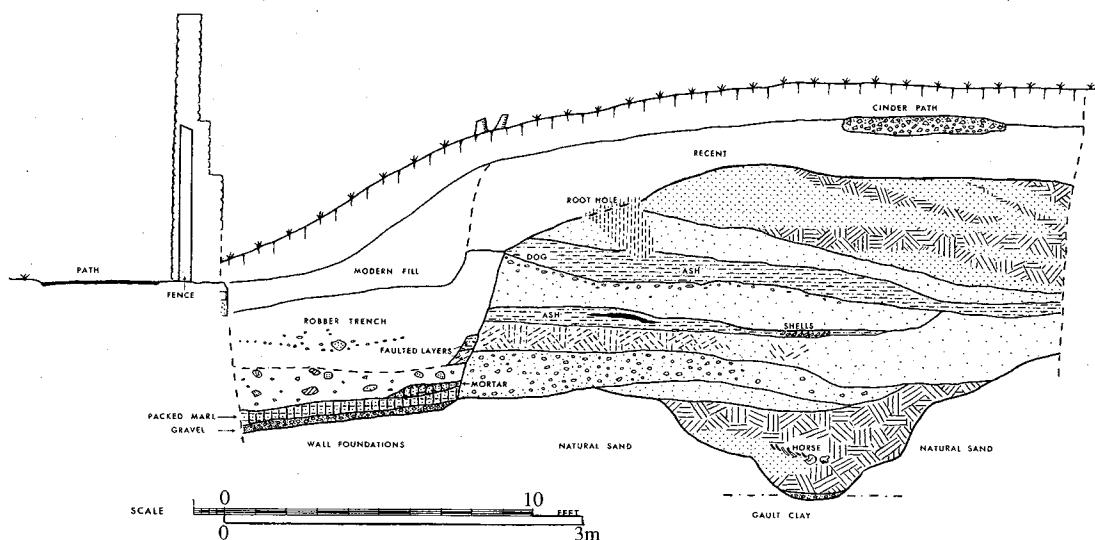
6.7 Excavations at Mount Pleasant



6.8 MP. Modern surface profile in relation to the projected town defences



6.9 Approximate line of the wall and rampart in Mount Pleasant



6.10 MP. Town wall and bank



6.11 MP. Guardroom of the west gate, from the northwest

and pebbles (Fig 6.15). This overlay a single layer of limestone fragments sealing a 3rd century pit (7). The clay contained Roman sherds including 3rd to 4th century colour coated wares and limestone fragments.

Drains for the Defences

At the tail of the bank in Mount Pleasant a straight northwest-southwest ditch (No. 25) parallel to the rampart was cut through the fill of posthole 23. It was c. 1m wide with a U-profile and was only cut into bedrock where it deepened to the northwest. Its bottom fill was very stony and contained only a few indeterminate sherds. From its upper softer, but still

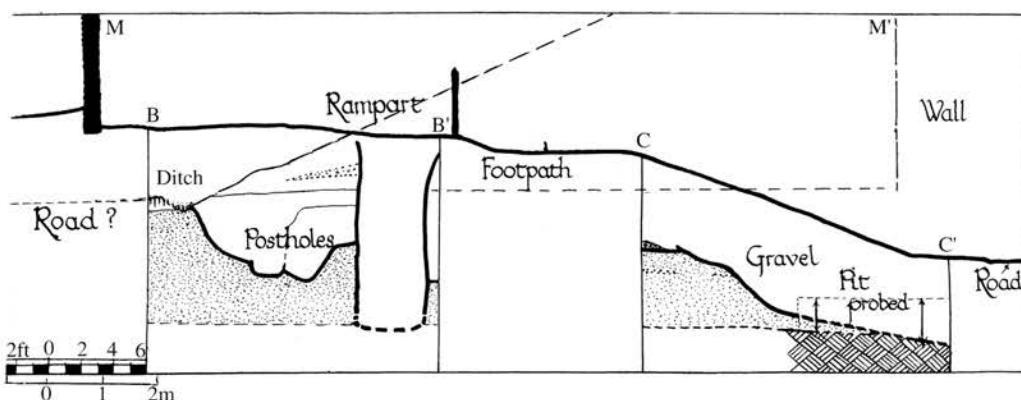


6.12 Excavations at Mount Pleasant: profile of bank

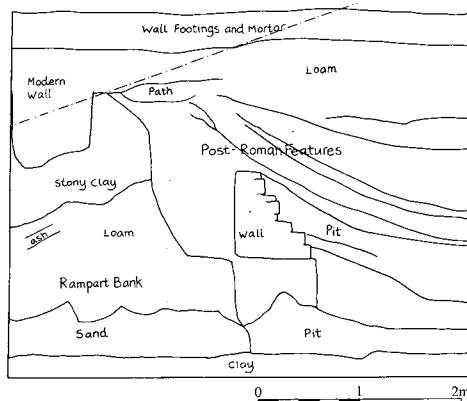
stony, fill came burnt clay lumps, dressed limestone fragments and 4th century sherds. At this part of the perimeter the bank and wall were laid out across the floor of a disused sand quarry and the major problem would have been the disposal of the water welling out at the surface of clay in the old quarry working face. Drains must have been made through or along the ramparts, and ditches (27 and 37) may be examples, although since the whole of the ramparts here were removed in early medieval times no further evidence was available.

The Wall (Fig. 6.16)

The wall, its foundation trench, or in some areas the stone robbers' trenches, was exposed in MP, KY, CH 85 and CH 86. It was of limestone, between 2.1m and



6.13 MP. Town rampart, drainage ditch and projected position of the wall



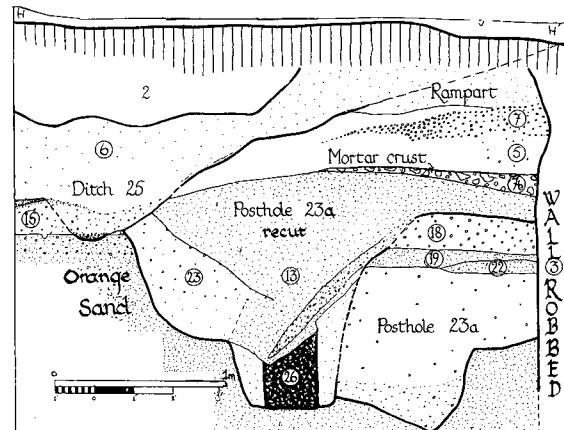
6.14 Inner edge of the town wall and a robbing trench, near Castle Street

3m in width, set in a foundation trench. The rampart bank had been piled behind as it was built.

In MP, 10m² were exposed of a vertically-sided foundation trench 60cm deep. The floor of the foundation trench had been levelled and covered with a thin layer of gravel, on which was a 5cm layer of carefully laid chalk marl sealed by a slurry of yellow-brown mortar. No courses of masonry survived later robbers, but their trench contained many large fragments of mortared oolitic limestone, flint nodules, bonding tiles and clunch blocks. Since the rampart bank behind the wall was shown conclusively to be of 4th century date and sealed evidence of wall building the wall was certainly contemporary with it.

Wall-footings, claimed at the time to be those of the Roman town wall, were found in 1804, 'westwards a little from Drake's Spring', which is now in the gardens of St Edmund's College. They consisted of 'flinty pebbles, bricks and ragstone firmly cemented' (RCHM I 1959). To the south a possible fragment of the wall found in the town ditch beside Northampton Street also consisted of 'stones, mortar and bricks' (*ibid*). No squared stones were found in the debris in Mount Pleasant but the masons' rejects used in the footings of the 4th century house 16 inside the town in nearby Storeys Paddock included broken squared stones. In Kettle's Yard the actual footings of the wall were excavated (Fig. 6.15, 6.16, 6.17). They stood to a height of 50cm and over the stones was a thick layer of burnt material, containing sherds of 11th to 12th centuries. Under the inner face of the wall was a sherd of 4th century red polished ware (Plate CXXXVIII: 1018): fragments of mortaria, flagons and tiles were incorporated in the wall which was estimated to be at least 2.5m wide.

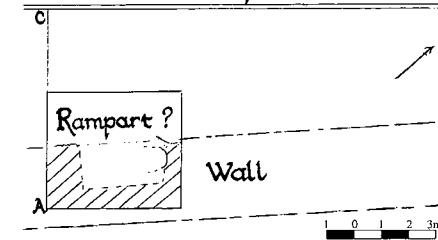
The foundation trench of the wall was exposed in CH 85 (Fig. 6.18) where it was traced for 17.5m, and on the north and northeast in the CH 86 site where the foundations were still in place for c. 17m (Fig. 6.19). In CH 86 it proved to be 2.1m wide and survived three courses high, being built of limestone blocks set directly upon the hard chalk marl bedrock without a foundation trench. It was faced on the exterior with squared blocks, the rear face and its interior being of



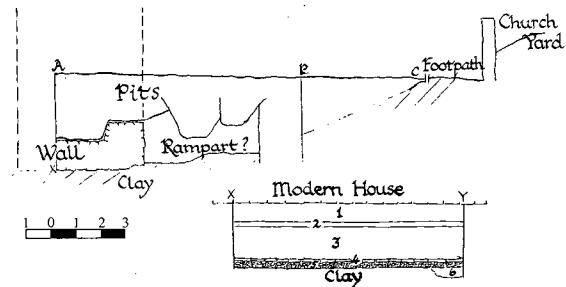
6.15 MP. Robbed wall, with rampart, drainage ditch and mortar crust from rebuilding the wall

St. Peter's Churchyard

Footpath



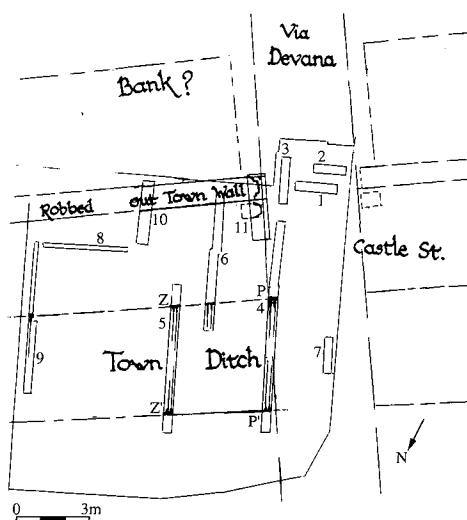
6.16 Kettle's Yard, the town wall



6.17 Kettle's Yard, the town wall (section)

irregular tabular blocks laid as a drystone wall. A slurry of lime mortar had been poured over alternate courses. More limestone blocks were noted as fallen into later ditch fill. It had been laid out across existing features including the *mansio*, one of whose walls was incorporated in the town wall.

Further west the wall had been set in a 60cm deep, 3.1m wide foundation trench cut into chalk marl. The stones of the wall had been completely robbed out but the foundation trench became shallower towards Castle Street with 15cm of mortar, gravel, mortared flints, and limestone chips at its bottom. The foundation



6.18 CH 85. Gate, town wall and ditch, near Castle Street

trench had vertical sides. Along the inner edge there was evidence of post settings 18cm in diameter possibly associated with the construction of the wall. The bottom of the trench was divided longitudinally by a 10cm wide ridge of natural chalk 1.8cm from the outer edge. It appears that the wall was robbed from the exterior, logical if the rampart bank was still standing. The upper fill of the robber trench was cut by later pits. No evidence of forward projecting towers was found, except at the gate in Mount Pleasant.

The Gates

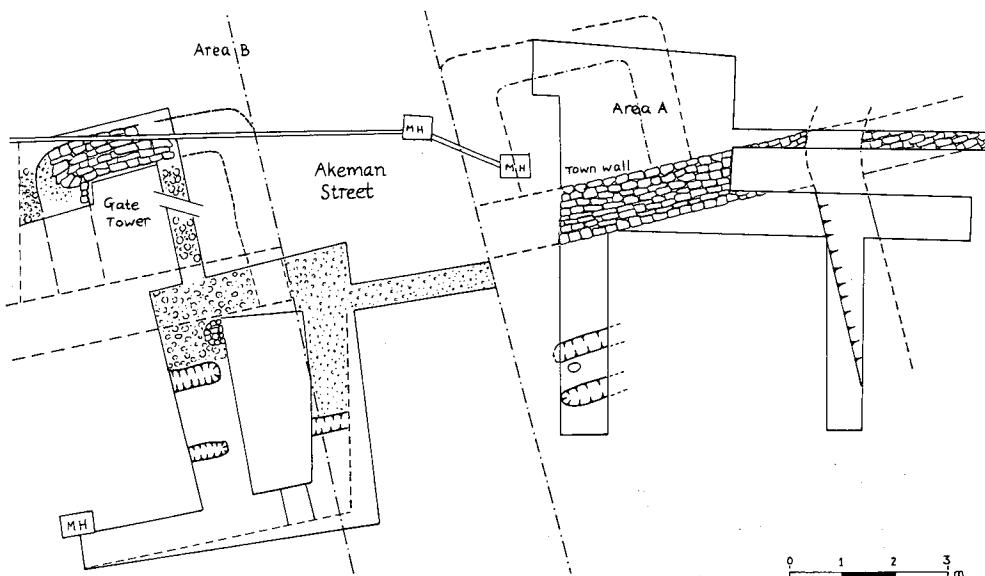
At least four gates may be presumed for the town of which three have been located by excavation.

The River or South Gate.

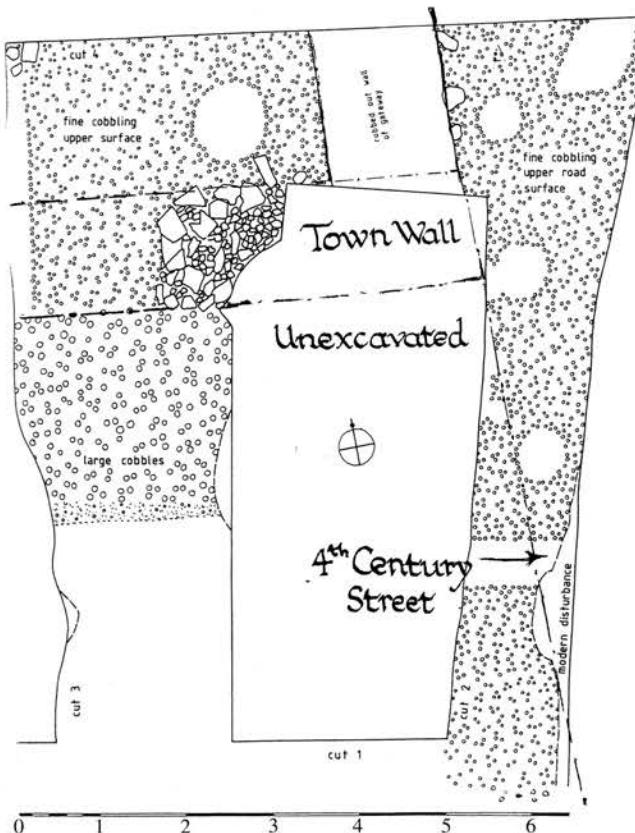
There is no evidence for this gate. It may lie beside or under St Giles church; observations made during 19th century rebuilding of the church suggest that wall footings survived until that date.

The Fen or East Gate.(Fig. 6.20, 6.21, 6.22, 6.23)

The foundations of half this gate were found at CH 86. The Akeman Street alignment, long known in the Arbury Road area (RCHM I 1959), was located crossing the town ditch on a causeway with the road surface intact but narrower than the earlier road. The gate had been laid out on the surface of the 1st century road which provided a firm base and it had cut through the 3rd century remaking of the road on its western side. Its northern part, 5.5m wide, was defined by a 60cm wide foundation trench with vertical sides and flat bottom. It was dug 30cm into the later road metalling and could be traced for 6.3m parallel to the road. All the stones had been robbed from it, apparently in Saxo-Norman times since sherds of that period, together with limestone fragments were found in the brown loam of the robbers' trench. A fragment of the exterior wall of the gate tower, which projected northwards from the wall, survived. Three courses of stones were intact showing that the wall was 1.2m wide. Here the outer face had large squared limestone blocks with well-dressed surfaces (up to 36 x 20 x 6cm) and smaller squared blocks forming the inner face; in between the filling was irregular. Three rims of polished red ware and three rims and two sherds of a Nene Valley ware mortarium were found under and among the stones (Plate CXXXV: 978, CXXXVIII: 1011-1017). Below ground surface the footings were stepped on the external face and laid in a zigzag pattern on the northwest. It was not possible to



6.19 CH 86 Area A and B. East gate, town wall and Akeman Street, all much disturbed by modern drains



6.20 CH. Area B. Town wall, robber trench of east gate, and 4th century phase of Akeman Street



6.21 Excavating the gateway to Akeman Street, Castle Court 1986

trace its junction with the town wall, large pits having destroyed all the evidence. A foundation, probably for a pier associated with the gateway was found. It was 1.4m square and composed of carefully laid limestone blocks, those on the face being squared ashlar. In the gateway the road was composed of fine cobbling north and east of the pillar and larger cobbling to the south and west. A similar pattern can be proposed for the southern half.

The Godmanchester or North Gate

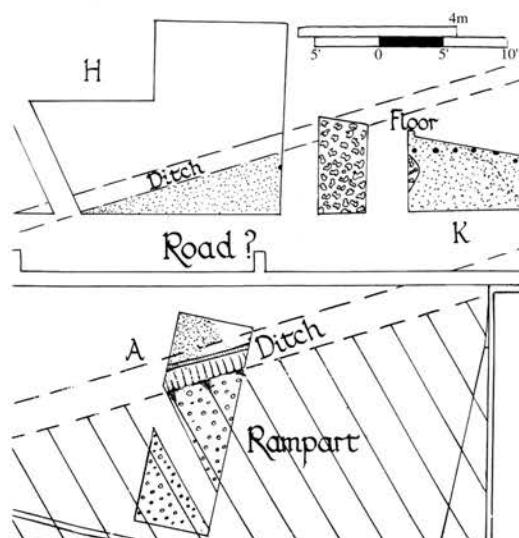
The position was located in CH 85 but no structures could be planned in the limited and disturbed area available. There was no indication of a causeway across the ditch here, probably because of 17th century refurbishment, but a butt end to the foundation trench of the wall was found (see above) and might have marked the join of the wall to a gate tower since it was close to the actual road. A robber trench along the outer foundation trench was probably the edge of a gate tower similar to that at the west gate.

The West Gate (Fig. 6.22–24)

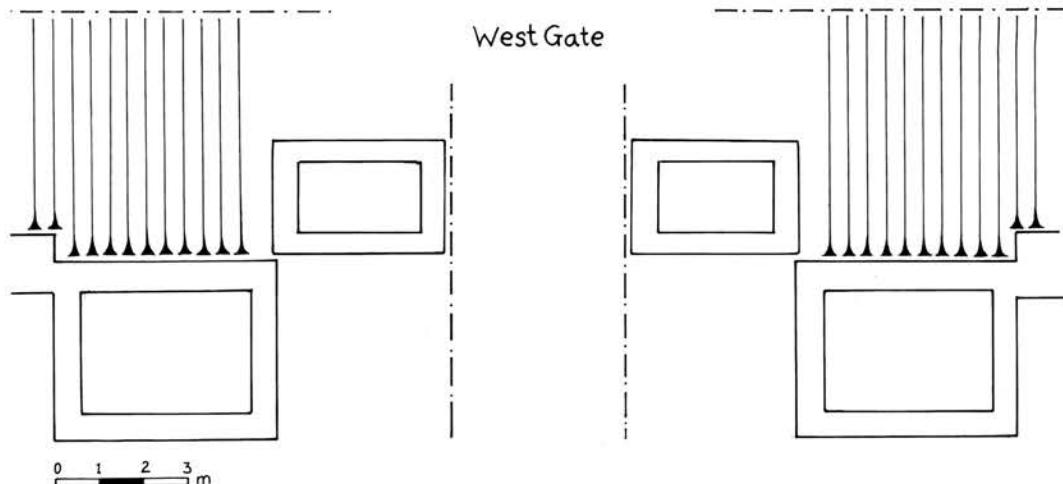
Found partly under and partly northwest of Albion Row in Mount Pleasant. Although much disturbed, the main characteristics of its northern half were identified. They comprised a rectangular tower projecting in front of the main town wall (the width of which was reduced behind the tower), a guardroom recessed behind the line of the wall and a roadway through the wall. A similar pattern can be proposed for the southern half.

The Gate tower

Unambiguous evidence of the existence of a tower flanking the gate was found in Mount Pleasant, although later disturbance was too great for details



6.22 MP and SP. Rear of town bank, drainage ditch and road, with 4th century hut



6.23 Diagrammatic plan of West Gate

above the foundations. Beneath the grassy bank bordering the road, the foundation trench of a substantial stone structure set in an 80cm deep foundation trench cut into the gault clay bedrock; it was found at a depth of 2.4m below the present land surface. The trench was vertical-sided and flat-bottomed, similar to that of the town wall. The edge of this foundation trench, if continued, would have outlined a tower c. 4m x 5m projecting in front of the town wall. Useful negative evidence showed no such foundations on either side of it. The strata within the foundation trench showed that most of the stone had been robbed in post-Roman times. Where there had been less disturbance, the bottom layer of footings survived. This was a closely set layer of angular limestone fragments above which the robbers' debris was looser rubble, including limestone and mortar fragments. The tower was an integral part of the original plan for the defences, for behind it the wall was reduced in width by 1.3m, to 1.6m.

The Guardroom?

The footings of the northwestern half of the gate and what was probably a guardroom were substantially intact. A rectangular area 7.6 x 3m set back 1.3m from the wall had been cut down 65cm into bedrock. The sunken area was nearly vertical sided and its bottom levelled. On this floor a thin layer of gravel had been spread and the sunken area filled with chalk marl and rammed solid. Special care had been taken to compact the chalk at the edges of the area. Above this footing all had been destroyed in later periods, but the destruction level contained fragments of limestone, mortar, bonding tiles and squared clunch blocks. Its construction had probably been very similar to that of the main wall. Excavation behind it showed no evidence of buildings and it seems likely that there was a clear space around the inner face of the gate.

The Roadway through the gate

Part of the line of the road was excavated in Mount Pleasant. The original road surface had long disappeared, for excavation showed a hollow way sunk over 1m below the Roman ground level; with a slight

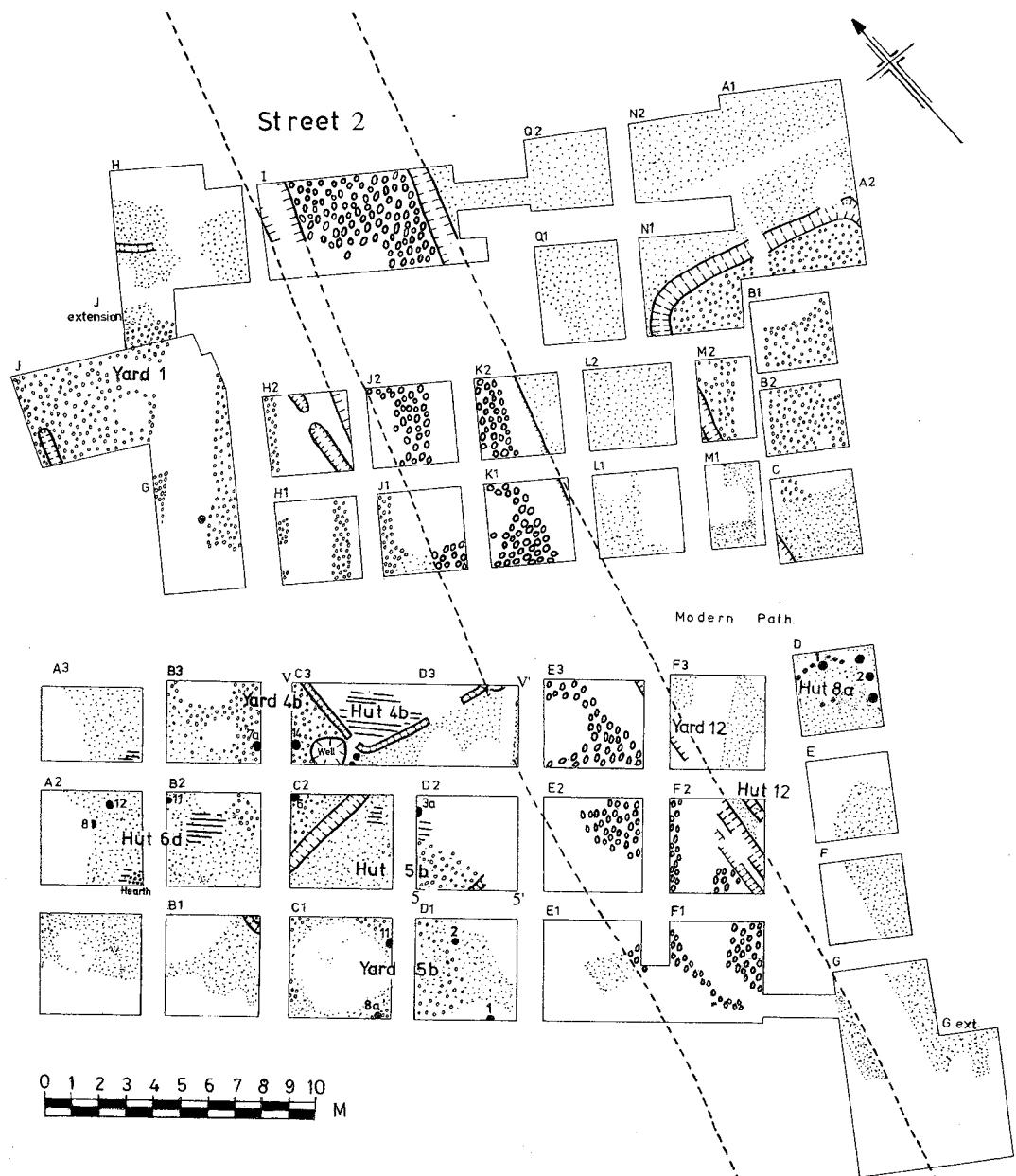
change of alignment this road had remained in use into the early 19th century. The hollow way was 9.3m wide but it is not known how this related to the Roman road width since the southern part of the gate would have lain under the present Albion Row. Any central pier would have also been destroyed by the hollow way (Fig. 6.24).



6.24 Foundations of the gateway at Mount Pleasant, 1964

Settlement within the walls

On the west the existing street pattern was respected and new dwellings built. The first evidence of any occupation in SO came from this period. From the pottery, there must have been considerable activity in the 4th century. At AR two pits might belong to this period, and to the north and east of the Via Devana many features were found.



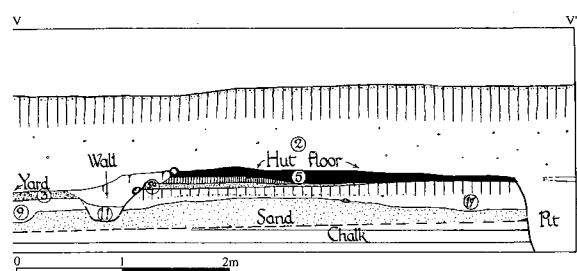
6.25 4th century street, houses and yards

Houses/ huts and yards

RG

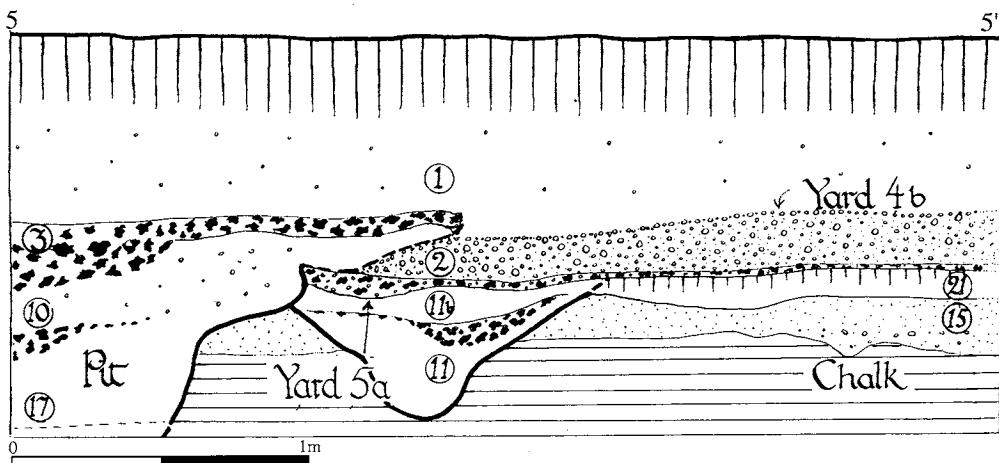
House 1 and its yard remained in use. The floor had not survived, but the adjoining yard was altered and regravelled in this time. Clean yellow gravel was spread, covering earlier postholes, and the earlier yard-gate was blocked by a fence, of which the foundation trench cut through the old causeway. Sherds from the surface of the yard were of late 4th century type and their number suggest that it was in use for some time.

House and yard 4b (Fig. 6.26, 6.27). Close to the southern boundary of Yard 1 a new house and yard were laid out over earlier pits and houses. The house was c. 4.9m square and built close to the street. North and



6.26 RGS. 4th century House and Yard 4b

west walls were set in a flat-bottomed foundation trench 38cm wide and 25cm deep with a gap 30cm wide at the northwest corner. Wall debris, found above the inside floor and in the yard outside,



6.27 RGS. Yard 4b over 2nd–3rd century ditches, cut by 17th century gravel pit

suggested that these had been of wattle with clay daub. Its interior probably had a lining of painted lime plaster, many fragments of which came from the neighbouring well. The floor was covered with sand and then, perhaps considerably later, a 5cm thick layer of marl was spread on top. Fragments of floor and flue-tile were recovered from the well in the yard and a scatter of roof-tile fragments came from the level above the floor. Its yard was probably a rectangle. Orange sand and gravel up to 15cm thick had been laid on a levelled surface, over 2nd to 3rd century pits. Only the yard's southern boundary was marked by a ditch, 50cm wide and 30cm deep. Its lower silt contained 4th century sherds and this was sealed by a clay layer, probably debris from the collapse of house 4b. An entrance 1.2m wide was found at the southwest corner of the yard.

House 5b and Yard. Very disturbed. Patches of marl c. 10cm thick survived above Yard 5a and 3rd to early 4th century pits. A gravel surface adjoined the marl on the west, but no features marked the junction, which was an irregular northwest-southeast line. 10cm of clean orange gravel spread over the levelled surface of the earlier ditches of Yard 5a, mixed with flints and chalk. One large posthole and three small postholes appeared to have been dug from the yard surface and were possibly associated with the yard. Posthole Cl.11 was 90cm in diameter and filled with a chalky fill showing the outline of a 20cm post. Postholes Cl.1, Cl.2 and Cl.8a were 20cm in diameter and filled with loam.

House 6d. A hearth and an intact area of marl floor. Its northern and eastern limits were found, showing it to have been a rectangle more than 6.1 x 2.45m, but no wall foundations were recognised. The hearth was set in a pit c. 1.2m in diameter and 23cm deep; it had been filled with clay and then smoothed, and much burning had taken place on it. It may have had a shelter or chimney over it for three postholes 1.8m apart may have belonged to it; A2.12 and B2.11 were 60cm in diameter, with 30cm and 40cm post-sockets showing in

their chalk fillings.

House 8a. Erected above levelled 3rd century pits. Represented by four postholes and six stakeholes which formed the northern corner of a rectangular structure aligned on the street, and resembled earlier House 2a. North wall line included one large post and six stakeholes. Posthole D1 showed the outline of a post 30cm square, set in a hole c. 90cm in diameter packed with chalk and small stones. Six 8cm stakes 30cm apart carried on the line. The south wall was shown by three postholes. Posthole D2 showed the outline of a post 18cm in diameter, set in a hole 75cm across packed with stones and loam. Postholes 7a and 5 had no post outlines, but the lie of the stones in the marl-filled holes suggested that the posts had been removed. Two smaller interior posts and two stakes might be related to the house. No floor was recognised although the stratum within the walls was not disturbed by later digging; it contained 4th century sherds.

House 20 and Yard. Represented by a foundation trench 45cm wide and 30cm deep with steep sides and a flat bottom, parallel to Street 3 and 2.45m from it. The boundary of the yard seemed to be indicated by the drainage ditch (F2) marking the edge of the road. V-profiled, 60cm wide and 45cm deep; 3rd to 4th century sherds came from it. Floors destroyed by recent cultivation.

Yard 3 probably remained in use during this time. No pits were dug through it after Pit M1.9.

Yard 9b. Compact gravel layer up to 15cm thick. 4th century sherds on its surface. Beneath it was a thin stratum of loam containing 4th century sherds, tiles and daub.

SP

House 16 and Yard (Fig. 6.28, 6.29). Much more substantial basis than the earlier houses and yards, probably built when the town wall was being made. In

preparation for the house, tips of limestone, loam and clay were dumped on the sloping hillside raising the floor level c. 30cm over more than 7.5m². The best preserved tip was of angular limestone rubble which looked like a mason's rejects. The rubble had not been levelled out, but sand, earth and clay had been tipped around it and the area levelled up. A few oyster shells and 4th century sherds came from the tips. A building was erected on the level surface of the tips. Patches of floor showed it to have been more than 3.6 x 2.1m and made of puddled marl 8cm thick. Only its western edge was found, marked by two postholes. Daub and roof tiles from the surface of the yard may have belonged to this house. Posthole C.3 was 75cm wide and 75cm deep. Stones were packed into it round a post 45cm in diameter. Posthole C4 was 20cm in diameter and 20cm deep but had no packing stones. Burnt daub and charcoal on the house and yard floors contained large lumps of reddened clay and 36 nails. This must represent the burning of house 16. Another yard or second room was found to the north and west. A surface reinforced with patches of cobbling covered all earlier features over more than 8.2m². In Trench G these patches of cobbles and flint nodules were set round a well-made hearth, oval, more than 75cm long, made of flint nodules covered with clay. From the yard surface came 4th century sherds, fragments of daub and tile. Successive events could be recognised here. Earliest was Pit C.14, a wide shallow depression 2.4m in diameter and 60cm deep. Its fill of grey ash contained nails, bones, tile and many 4th century sherds; it seemed to have gone out of use while the house was still occupied. A fence was then set up; it was a curved line of ten stake holes 23cm apart, all under 10cm in diameter. Six other scattered ones, found nearby, might have been contemporary. The fence then went out of use and the final cobbling covered it. After the house had burnt down occupation continued nearby, for two late 4th or 5th century rubbish pits were dug through the burnt layer and were sealed by the final Roman ground surface. Pit C.4 was

a large shallow pit more than 1.2m long and 60cm deep; its fill of loam contained bones, nails and 4th century sherds. Pit C.13 had been cut into Pit C.14. It was c. 1.65 x 1.35m and 30cm deep; its ashy fill contained much charcoal, lumps of burnt clay and 4th century sherds. The final Roman features were covered by a layer of stone-free brown loam which contained 4th century sherds but no sign of burning or destruction.

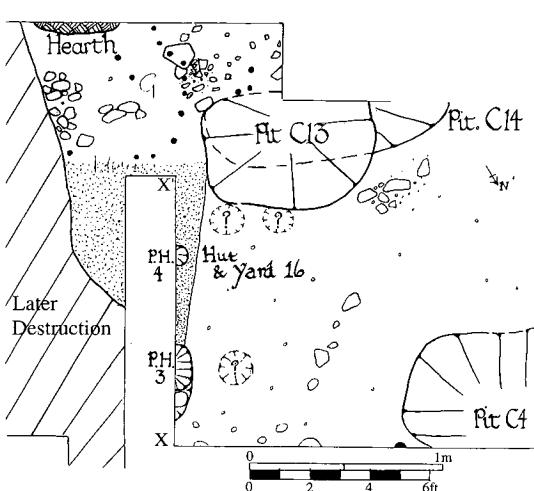
House 23. On the intervallum road, where a 5cm thick layer of loam and charcoal showed signs of burning. From it came 4th century sherds. On this stratum was a 5cm thick marl floor of which some 5m² was examined. A line of six stakes c. 7cm in diameter, had been driven 14–20cm into the road. They might have been the wall of a house or the fence of a yard, but in either case can only have been driven in when the intervallum road was no longer in use. The soil above was the same 75cm thick layer of stoneless brown loam found in neighbouring trenches. From it came 4th century sherds and iron and bronze fragments.

SO

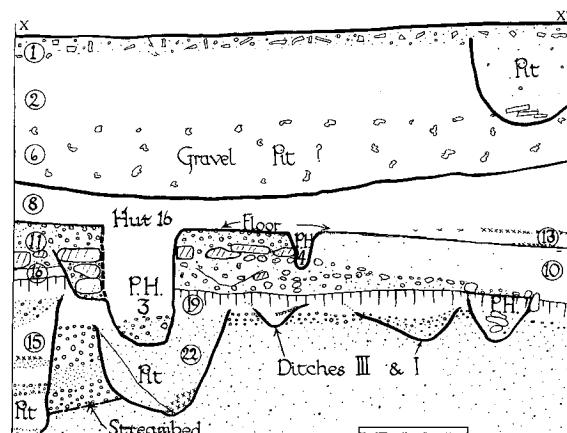
House or Yard 17. Above the earlier features was gravelly loam. A horizontal surface of flint nodules and clay had been laid on this and contained 4th century sherds, probably part of a yard or house floor. Its edges were irregular and no wall foundation trenches were found. 4th century sherds were found above as well as beneath it. Five pits here contained only 4th century sherds, although the level from which they had been dug could not be established.

GT

Yard 18. Loam overlying bedrock was removed and a layer of broken flint nodules laid on the chalk to form a hard level surface. Only 1.8m² remained intact but on and in it lay many very small 4th century sherds and oyster shells. The southern edge of this yard was roughly straight and at right angles to the Roman street, but was unmarked by posthole or ditch. After a considerable time, long enough for a stone-free loam 15cm thick to accumulate above yard 18, a new house was erected.



6.28 SP. House 16, overlying 3rd century ditches and cut by a 17th century gravel pit



6.29 SP. House and yard 16

House 19 and Yard. Northern wall only excavated. Set in a 45cm deep, steep-sided, flat-bottomed foundation trench, 1.05m wide at its top and 41cm wide at its bottom. Traced for 2.1m. Its loam fill contained iron nails and 4th century sherds. Twenty centimetres east a posthole dug from the same surface was probably associated with it. This was 60cm in diameter and 30cm deep. A 23cm square post had been set up in it 45cm from the wall. The post, which had rotted *in situ*, was traced vertically for 28cm. It had been wedged in position by large flint and limestone fragments. The use of limestone chippings in house building had been noted elsewhere in the town at this period. North of the house was its yard. Here a concentration of stones, charcoal, small 4th century sherds, oyster and mussel shells were found, many of them lying horizontally and some broken *in situ*. There were also many animal bones and iron nails, but only two small pieces of tile. Over part of the area a layer of flint nodules and gravel had been laid; its surface was irregular and only 1.5m² had survived later pit-digging. The northern boundary of the yard, 10m away from the house wall, was marked by three successive ditches preserving approximately the same line, suggesting the yard was in use for a considerable length of time.

Pits

RGS VI: 18a and b, was a shallow pit, 55cms deep, overlying and cutting Pit 18c-e/22. The fill contained 14 ox skulls and an adult human long bone and jaw, sherds of late 3rd and early 4th century date, fragments of roof and floor tile and burnt limestone blocks.

AR: pits 3 and 12.

CEF: pit C.11, A1.14b, A.16, B.27, B.28, 11, 18, and 19.

CH 84: pits F46, F47.

CP: pit VIII (32a-d).

GT: pit Ac.11, Latrine (?) Ac.12, Ab.14, Ba.16. Bb.30 and Bb.17

RGS VII (5), VII (8), III (3c) (Plate CXXXV: 965-973), VII (11/11a).

SH 83 II: ?pit F44(58), F50(59), ?Pit F76(107),

SR: pits B.21 and B.6

StP 1&2: pit 3 & 3a

SH 83 IV: pit (5), close to F74 but on the opposite side of Akeman Street, contained tile and plaster fragments, 76 nails, and many oyster and mussel shells. Its lower fill included a copper alloy fitting with studs and wood backing, a lead strap end, coins of Valentinian II, Theodosius/Constantine I and Eugenius, and 3 unidentifiable 4th century coins (App. III, 199, 221, 229), iron ring (possibly from a bridle), iron calthrop, perforated whetstone, ?live fork and fragments of bone artefacts (Plates XIV: 126, XVII: 151, 152, XVIII: 160, XXIV: 187).

Well

RG(N). Close to House 4b a well was cut through an earlier pit. A 1.3m square pit had been dug and, from it a round shaft 1m in diameter had been sunk; excavated to 6.4m without reaching the bottom. No revet-

ting, and the lower shaft had caved in at 2.4m where soft chalk marl had been traversed. After the collapse the upper part of the shaft had been used as a rubbish tip; the lowest layer of the tip was more than 1.5m of yellow sandy clay containing 4th century sherds. Above it was loam with lenses of charcoal and decayed organic matter containing animal bones and 4th century sherds. The top 1.6m of the shaft appeared to be a deliberate infilling containing more 4th century sherds and coins, animal bones, painted wall plaster, oyster shells and roof tile. The well was apparently protected by a rectangular structure c. 3 x 2.1m of which five postholes were found. Part of the eastern yard fence was marked by two smaller postholes which were 15cm in diameter and marl-filled.

Ditches

CH 84 F52. Palisade trench, traced for 5m, with a large post setting in its butt end and secondary smaller post settings along its western side and marl packing on its eastern side (Plate CXXXV: 974-977).

CH 86. Two U-profiled gullies southwest of and parallel to the town wall ended in butt ends close to Akeman Street. 70 and 90cm wide and 34 and 40cm deep. Between them was a posthole, 30cm diameter and 10cm deep. They were cut into redeposited sand, the uppermost fill of the deep 2nd century Roman ditch. Several small 4th century sherds in the fills of dark brown stony loam and gravel.

GT.

Ditch V. V-profiled, 90cm wide and 60cm deep. Roughly parallel with the wall of house 19. Its silt of hard grey clay succeeded by loam suggested that it had remained open for a considerable time and filled up naturally. From its siltings came 4th century sherds and animal bones, quern and roof tile. When silted up, a smaller ditch, probably a recutting, had been dug through it.

Ditch Va was V-profiled, 45cm wide and 30cm deep. Bottom silt was c. 5cm of hard clay and the upper, black loam, contained 4th century sherds.

Ditch Vb was dug into the upper silt of Ditches V and Va. V-profiled, 35cm wide, 22cm deep. It diverged to the north and from its loam fill came 4th century sherds.

HM

Ditch 8.7. V-profiled, cut c. 30cm into the fill of a quarry. 30cm wide. When it had completely silted up, it was replaced by a second very similar one, 27, which ran parallel to and partially cut into it. It had also been allowed to silt up and 3rd to 4th century sherds and animal bones came from it. It is possible that a ditch 5m to the west on the same alignment was a continuation of it.

Gully 39. Dug to 15cm through the late Roman land surface, north-south. Presumably these drained into

the intervallum ditch.

SH. Ditch F2. III 2.4m west of the ditch F1 and parallel to it. Fill of dark brown loam with sand and marl. Latest pottery, 3rd–4th century. In the very top was a coin of Carausius (App. III; 142).

Kilns/Furnaces

CH 84. Kiln/furnace 44. Oval, 1.6m long and 1.2m wide. Cut into natural gravel and chalk marl for 45cm. Large stones at the upper edge and fill of dark-brown loam over fire bars, which in turn lay on ash. Oyster shells lined one side, and marl and earth on another side were burnt. In the fill were broken coarse grey and black indented beakers, greater in diameter than any found elsewhere. Below and to one side of the kiln was a near complete Rhenish indented pot. The nearly circular stokehole, 1.2m diameter, was much deeper than the kiln and the black charcoal fill was packed with sherds including samian ware, over 50 colour coated sherds and a large quantity of coarse wares – some of which were similar to those in the kiln (Plates CXXVIII–CXXXI: 899–920, and App. VII).

The fabric of pots made in the kiln varied from off-white to pale and mid grey. It was mainly granular with fine grits and occasionally a few quartz grits up to 2mm. One vessel showed traces of mica in the fabric. Small occlusions were present in several of the vessels and one had a long slit-like occlusion. At least fourteen vessels were found. Vessels in the stoke hole suggest that platters may also have been produced, for the fabric is very similar with slight variations in tempering and one is most certainly a waster. A large narrow-necked jar, a ‘pinched’ flagon top and a beaker were also made of the basic kiln fabric.

RGS

Kiln/furnace 3a. Circular, cut into top of pit 3c, 1.70m in diameter with flue 94cm across. Black fill containing charcoal, many late Roman sherds, and tile cut into a kiln spacer (Plate CXXXV: 965–73). Southwest side cut by Saxo-Norman pit.

Furnace VI (19a–b). This feature cut the uppermost fills of shafts (19c–j) and (23). It contained ash and had reddened and burnt earth round its edge. Its shape

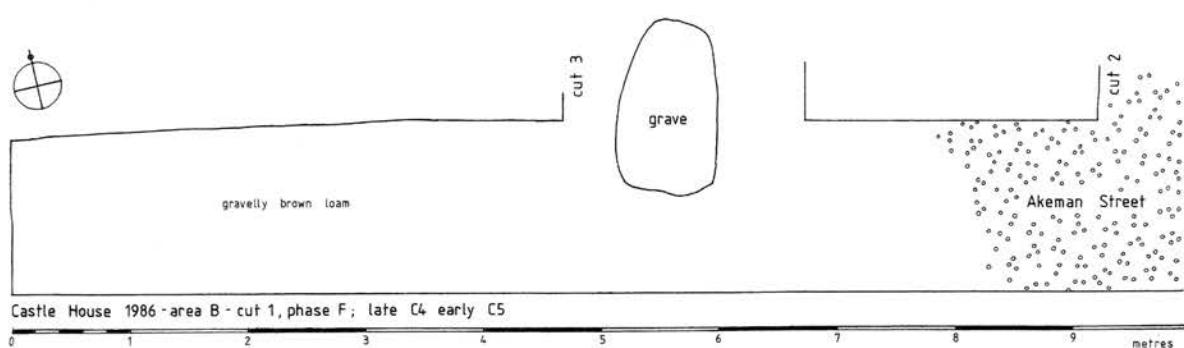
suggested the remains of a furnace. Maximum length 2.2m and the width 95cm. Possible stakeholes round the edge of the wider end and a posthole setting in the southwest side. A large quantity of daub fragments suggested that its superstructure had collapsed. A few bones in the lowest ash but in the upper fill was a predominance of colour coated sherds of 4th century date (Plates CXXXIV: 963, CXL: 28). Also 22 nails, iron and tile fragments.

Burial

CH 86 (Fig. 6.30). Grave of late 4th or 5th century date, cut through earlier features. 1.5m x 86cm and 46cm



6.30 4th century grave near Akeman Street



6.31 4th century grave adjacent to Akeman Street

deep. Skeleton of young man lying on his side and almost prone. Head thrown back and right arm round a large shell-tempered jar (Plate CXXIX: 1019). Large sherd of similar type placed over the end of the leg bones. When this was removed it was found that there were no foot or ankle bones. The grave showed no evidence of being truncated and there was no room for feet in the grave. The fill of very dark-brown friable loam contained three Roman coarse sherds, two oyster shells and a pig mandible.

Castle Yard

The interior of the castle bailey was watched by Bowtell in 1802, 'when the whole surface of Castle Yard was lowered from four feet to ten feet for the gaol foundations instead of the three feet stipulated in the contract.' (MS. II, 1875 Downing College). Coins of Honorius and Arcadius, but no structures, were recorded. When Shire Hall was built, 1935–6, pits containing 4th century pottery were noted by Lethbridge. Foundations noted at the same time, of which no details survive, may belong to this period (*ibid*). Nearby, beside the old Police Station, much 4th century pottery was recovered in 1955–56 when the land surface was lowered (J Armstrong, personal communication). Observations (J Pullinger) made when foundations for the Octagon were dug and on the northeastern side of Castle Court verify the lowering of the area 'by ten feet' in and outside Castle Yard.

St Peter's Churchyard

A late Roman figurine and 4th century coins were found in the 18th century, and Roman tiles were incorporated in the church during the 18th century re-building. Roof tiles and tesserae were recorded on a building site immediately west of St Peter's Church in 1955.

Pound Hill

4th century pottery was found during building work in 1959 (J Alexander). Stone foundations were reported without further details by Bowtell in 1806 and were thought by him to be Roman.

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