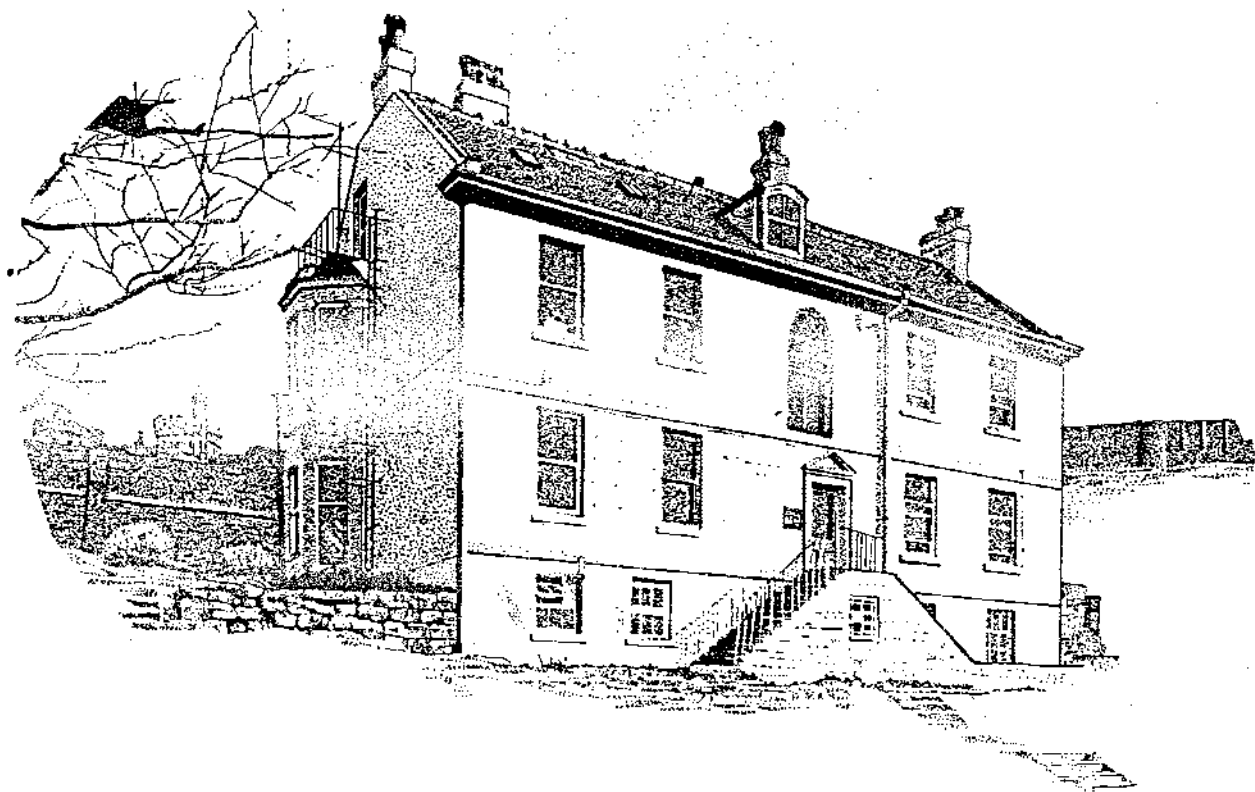


# PARADISE

## Scarborough



*A report on archaeological  
excavations - December 1988*

*by  
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## THE PARADISE ESTATE (Fig. 1a)

The Paradise Estate is an extensive block of open ground on the north-east of Scarborough's old town close to St. Mary's Parish Church and the medieval castle. Since the time of the first town plan of 1725 the appearance of this part of Scarborough has hardly changed. Extensive gardens still surround the only substantial building in the area which has long been known as Paradise House. Dating from the middle of the 18th century, the house was most recently occupied by the Graham Sea Training School. They vacated the premises several years ago, since when the house has been falling gradually into disrepair. Plans were therefore agreed by the council in 1988 to renovate the house and build on the former gardens to the east.

## THE EXCAVATION (Fig. 1b)

Between December 12th 1988 and January 4th 1989, the Field Unit and the Scarborough Archaeological Society jointly excavated two sites on the Paradise Estate at the request of the site owners G.E. and W.D. Bowser, prior to the start of development. The excavation followed on from an archaeological evaluation carried out by the same organisations in the spring of 1988 when a series of trial trenches were excavated to define areas containing significant archaeological deposits. The results of the evaluation have been described in a previous report.<sup>1</sup>

The two most recent excavations took place in an area where deposits were to be destroyed by the development. Trench B5 was excavated against the west wall of Paradise House where the evaluation had indicated the likely survival of medieval building remains. The second excavation (Trench A9) was some 65 metres to the east of Paradise House, the intervening area having been destroyed by 18th-century clay quarries. It was anticipated that trench A9 would reveal the kiln in which the clay quarried from the estate was fired into bricks and uncover earlier, medieval deposits.

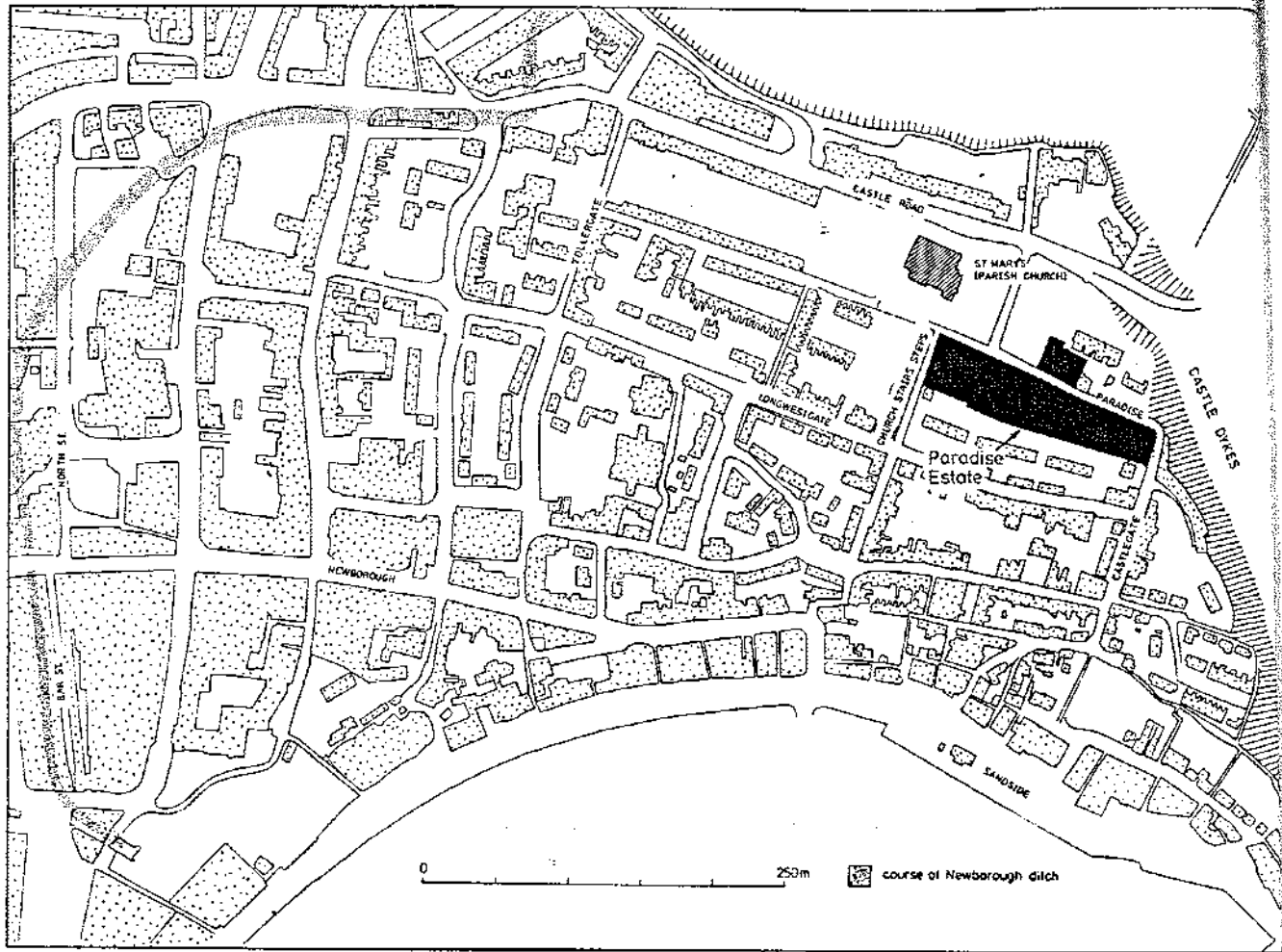


Fig. 1a: Location of the Paradise Estate

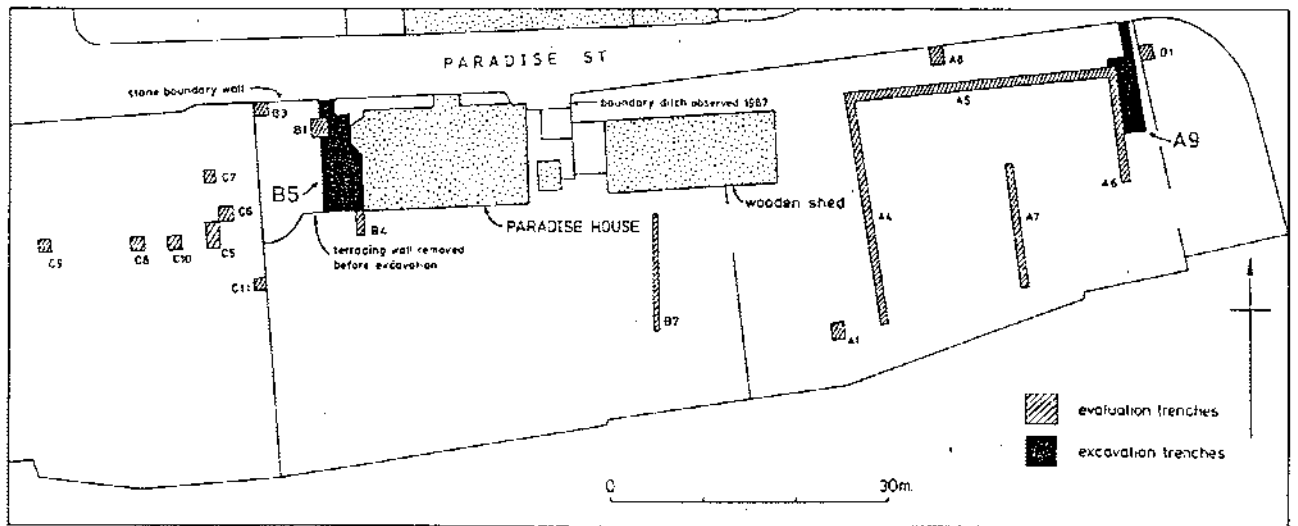



Fig. 1b: Location of the trenches



This report presents a brief description and discussion of the results so far. Further evidence may come to light during the building operations and the present report is thus an interim statement.

#### TRENCH B5 (Fig. 2)

Trench B5, measuring 10 metres x 4 metres, was excavated against the west wall of Paradise House with a 1.5 metre wide extension up to the northern stone boundary wall bordering Paradise Street. Part of a previous evaluation trench (B1) was included in the excavation. The principal features discovered in trench B5 belonged to a medieval building, though activity pre-dating the building is considered first.

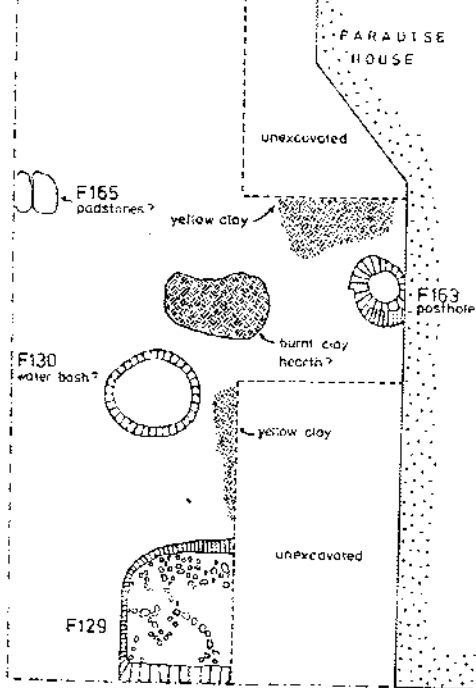
#### EARLIEST FEATURES

Probably the earliest feature uncovered by the excavation was a gully (F129) cut into the natural clay, with vertical sides and a flat, stone-filled base situated in the south-east corner of the trench. Its function is not at all clear. It did not yield sufficient pottery or animal bone to be thought of as a rubbish pit and by the next phase of activity it had been backfilled with a sterile, light brown clay and overlain by a spread of yellow clay. The same distinctive clay also lined a small circular feature (F130) cut into the natural surface which, because the adjoining area had been scorched red by fire, may have been a water "bosh" next to a shallow hearth. Other features likely to belong to this phase are a deep posthole (F163) and a setting of two flat stones that could be the padstones for a timber post, (F165).

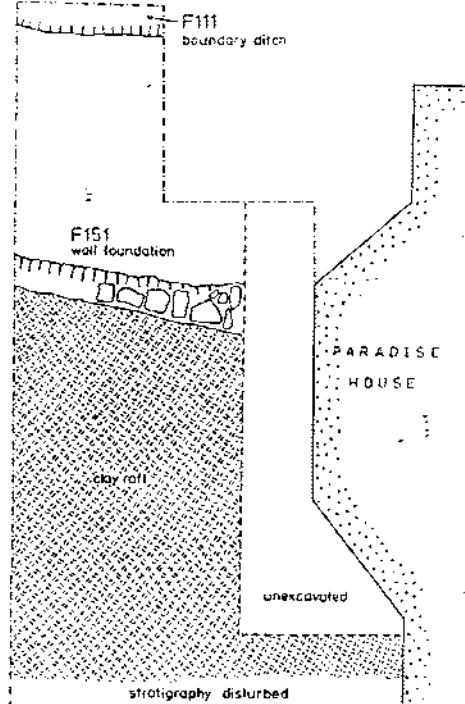
None of these features make an obvious structure, although the postholes and possible padstone may be evidence of a timber building. However, collectively the features do indicate the area was utilised before the first of the buildings discussed below was constructed.

EARLIEST FEATURES

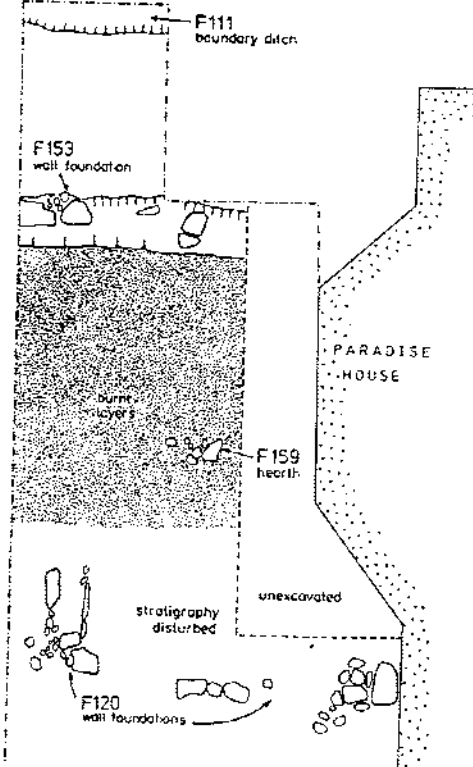
south half of trench



MEDIEVAL BUILDING Phase One



MEDIEVAL BUILDING Phase Two



MEDIEVAL BUILDING Phase Three

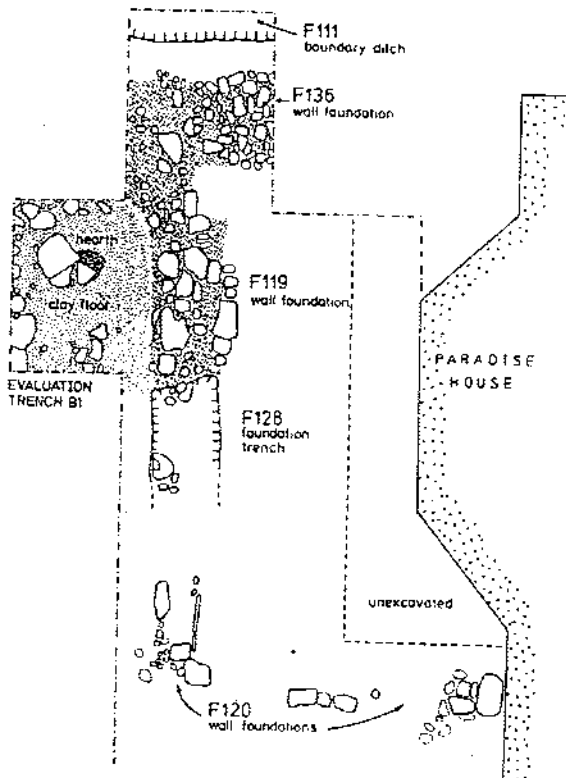


Fig 2 TRENCH B5 : excavated features

## MEDIEVAL STRUCTURES

Three phases of medieval building were identified:-

### PHASE ONE

The first phase comprised a light stone wall (F151), aligned somewhat obliquely to Paradise Street, against which a 20cm. thick "raft" of redeposited natural clay had been laid on the southern downslope side. No other contemporary features were encountered, doubtless due to the truncation of deposits during subsequent phases, when some of the wall stones also disappeared. The narrowness of the wall suggests that it supported a timber superstructure, and the clay to the south acted as a levelling deposit for a floor. Little else about the nature of the building can be deduced.

### PHASE TWO

Two stone wall foundations and a considerable depth of burnt deposits interleaved with clay constitute the evidence for the second phase of building. On the north, several limestone blocks (F153) set in a shallow foundation trench were all that survived of a probable northern, outer wall of a building fronting onto Paradise Street. The southern wall was less obvious, comprising several large stones and boulders (F120) aligned east-west about half-way down the trench. They had been badly damaged by later disturbances and this wall could equally well date to the subsequent phase of building. The clay and interleaved burnt layers between these two walls included a hearth containing several fragmentary iron nails (F159). These layers must represent a sequence of floor surfaces within the structure.

### PHASE THREE

The latest building remains consisted of two wide stone walls forming a right-angle in the north-eastern corner of the trench. The north-south wall (F119) was made of large stone blocks bonded with clay, whilst the

east-west wall (F136) was of lighter construction, although likewise clay bonded. Although wall F119 did not extend for more than two metres southwards (the stones presumably having been robbed) sufficient of the wall's foundation trench had survived to indicate that it originally extended southwards to the east-west wall F120 (discussed in phase two), with which it most probably formed a right-angle junction. The area enclosed within the north-south and two east-west walls did not contain any obvious floor levels, although the evaluation trench B1 had previously exposed a yellow clay floor on the western side of F119, and a possible hearth.

#### BOUNDARY DITCH

Below the present stone boundary wall along Paradise Street, the excavation revealed an earlier shallow boundary ditch (F111) some 25 cms deep. For fear of undermining the stone boundary wall, this ditch was not fully excavated, but it is probably the same feature as the shallow ditch observed on the eastern side of Paradise House in 1987. Thus, prior to the construction of a stone boundary, the southern side of Paradise Street was bordered by a U shaped ditch, presumably dug as much to facilitate drainage as to demarcate property rights. If drainage was its major function, it was most likely cut when the first of the buildings discussed above was constructed.

#### STONE BOUNDARY WALL

It has previously been established that the existing stone boundary wall along the south side of Paradise Street is medieval in origin, the evaluation trench B3 having recovered exclusively medieval pottery from its foundation trench. Although the same foundation trench was less clearly defined in trench B5, further evidence was obtained of its antiquity, and moreover, that it had been constructed after the last of the buildings discussed above. A soil layer containing medieval pottery covered the house wall F136 and butted up against the footings of the boundary wall. Since then over 80cms of soil has accumulated against the stone wall and

over the remains of the medieval building, arising from the prolonged use of the area as a garden.

The southern half of the trench had been badly disturbed when an east-west garden terracing wall was constructed flush with the southern side of Paradise House, probably in the early 19th-century. The associated disturbance was responsible for the destruction of all but the deepest medieval deposits in the southern half of the trench, including any deposits contemporary with the medieval buildings.

#### TRENCH A9 (Fig. 3)

Trench A9 was located in the north-east corner of the estate and measured 8m x 3.5m, with a 1m wide extension up to the stone boundary wall along Paradise Street. A 1.5m wide strip down the west of the trench had previously been opened as part of the evaluation exercise. This discovered the only area of medieval deposits to have survived the 18th-century clay quarrying on the eastern half of the estate. The topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator and 80cms of archaeological deposits were subsequently excavated by hand. The results are described below, beginning with the earliest feature, a medieval quarry pit.

#### QUARRY PIT (F130)

This feature covered virtually the whole of the trench and had been cut into the natural clay to a maximum depth of 70cms. Limited time meant that it could not be entirely emptied of its soil backfill, but two east-west trenches were fully excavated across the feature. These revealed that the quarry had irregularly sloping sides and a reasonably level base, the bottom being contiguous with a vertical change in the natural stratigraphy from a plastic clay above to an underlying stony clay.

In the absence of any contemporary features or distinctive fills the most likely interpretation for this feature is a medieval clay quarry. The



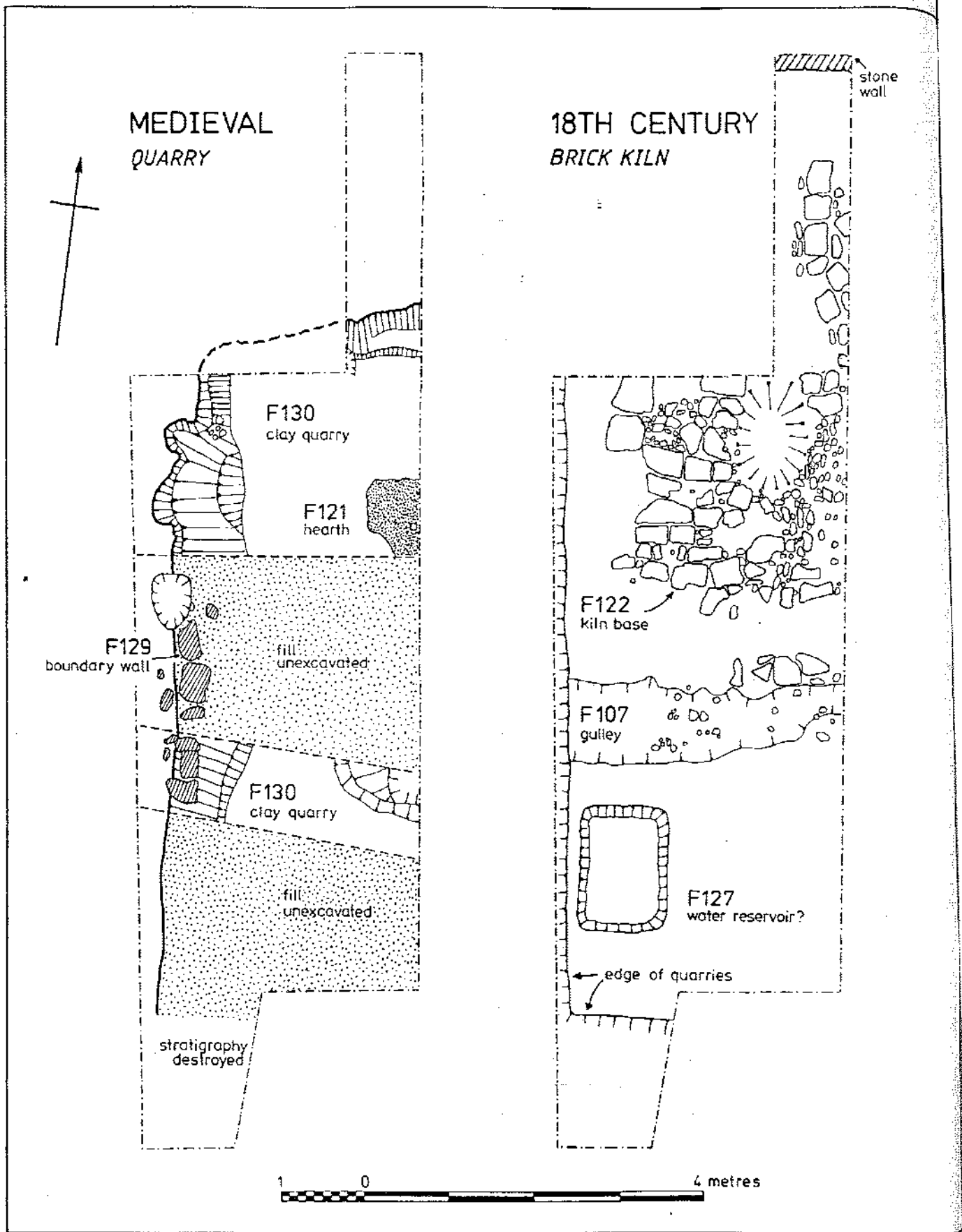


Fig. 3 TRENCH A9 excavated features

stone wall

fact that it did not penetrate the underlying stony clay suggests that the requirement was a plastic and stone-free material for use in building or pottery manufacture.

Upon disuse, natural weathering must have quickly deposited the 15cms thick layer of clay which covered the floor of the quarry. There was also a shallow hearth towards its northern edge (F121), presumably the quarry had proved an attractive shelter for some shortlived industrial or domestic activity.

#### STONE WALL

Once the quarry had been backfilled with soil, a line of rough limestone boulders and rocks was laid out on a north-south alignment coinciding with the western edge of the former quarry (F129). These stones had previously been exposed during the evaluation and interpreted then as a property boundary stretching back from a building fronting the street to the north. In the event, the excavation failed to find any trace of such a structure. Although the street frontage area had been destroyed by the brick kiln discussed below, the rest of the trench was devoid of any of the pits, postholes or walls that could be anticipated had there once been a structure fronting the road. Although a property boundary is still the most likely explanation of the line of stones, any associated structure is likely to have been further to the west, presumably in the area subsequently destroyed by the clay quarries.

#### BRICK KILN (Fig. 3)

By the middle of the 18th century the boundary wall had disappeared under an accumulation of dark "garden" soil. At this date the eastern part of the estate was given over to clay quarrying for brick manufacture, and the excavation brought to light the levelled remains of the clamp kiln used to fire the clay into bricks. The northern third of the excavation and the extension up to the street frontage was covered by a pavement of large stone blocks and smaller cobbles surrounding a shallow hole cut into the underlying soil (F122). To the south, features associated with the paved

area included an east-west aligned gulley (F107) and a clay-lined rectangular pit (F127), the latter probably serving as a water reservoir. The most intense burning occurred over the paved area, particularly the central depression, and lenses of burnt soil and brick wasters spread southwards away from the pavement. There can be little doubt that the paving was the base of a clamp kiln, a simple bonfire construction in which the freshly quarried and fashioned clay was fired. Following the last firing, the remains of the bonfire were levelled and used to backfill the adjacent clay quarries. The eastern part of the estate then reverted to gardens and the kiln base became buried under a 90cm thick topsoil. The present stone boundary wall along the street frontage was probably constructed at this time.

## SUMMARY OF THE SITE'S DEVELOPMENT

The two excavations have contributed sufficient new archaeological information to enable the broad outline of the area's development to be reconstructed. The sequence begins some 700 years ago in the 12th century, a century when the town itself developed following the construction of the castle around the year 1135.

Before any substantial structures were built on the south side of Paradise Street, the area appears to have been exploited for its clay resources, as evidenced by the quarry pit excavated in trench A9. This quarry was probably not the only one dug at this time on the site. What may have been the edge of a second quarry was uncovered, 80 metres to the west in the earlier evaluation trench B4 (although interpreted at the time as a rubbish pit) and most probably others still await discovery elsewhere on the estate or have been destroyed by later, 18th-century clay extraction.

The 12th century development and the construction of the nearby castle and parish church provide the most likely explanation for this initial activity. The erection and maintenance of both structures, as well as the construction of domestic buildings and the start of pottery manufacture would have created numerous demands for clay, most expeditiously satisfied by quarrying from waste, undeveloped parts of the town. One can envisage that the south side of Paradise Street would have been just such an area of waste, because of its steep natural slope. It would have remained open ground until land became scarce for building in the more level areas to the north and along the terraced streets to the south. Contemporary with the quarrying was probably the illdefined activity represented by the earliest features in trench B5.

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Upon disuse, the clay quarry in trench A9 was backfilled with soil and overlain by a boundary wall, as was the quarry previously uncovered in the evaluation trench B4. Also around this time, buildings were constructed along the street frontage, shown by the structure excavated in trench B5.

Taken together these changes testify to the spread of occupation onto the former waste area, most probably caused by a growing shortage of building land as the town's population expanded during the late 12th and early 13th centuries. This problem was not relieved until the westward expansion of the Newborough in the middle of the 13th century. Although the reasons for these developments are fairly clear, little has yet been discovered about the nature of the buildings erected along the south side of Paradise Street. Trench B5 only revealed part of a structure, which nevertheless proved to have had quite a complex history of at least three phases. The absence of any building remains to the east in trench A9, in contrast to the numerous remains uncovered to the west in trench B5 and evaluation trenches C1-C11, suggests that the disposition of properties was not uniform across the Paradise site.

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At some time during the 13th or early 14th centuries the structure in trench B5 was demolished down to its foundations and the street frontage enclosed behind a stone boundary wall. Not surprisingly, with direct access to Paradise Street now denied, the structure was never rebuilt and the area has remained open ground ever since.

Evidence for a marked decline in occupation was repeated elsewhere on the Paradise site. To the east, the boundary wall in trench A9 disappeared beneath accumulations of garden soil, which suggests that the upkeep of boundary rights was no longer of importance as the level of occupation declined. Likewise, on the west of the estate the evaluation trenches uncovered medieval remains undisturbed by any later buildings, and beyond the estate 18th and 19th-century maps indicate that a great swathe of open ground once existed across the north of the town as far west as Tollergate. Here, like the Paradise site, excavations have discovered few traces of occupation following the decline of the pottery industry in the 14th century.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the decline evident on the Paradise site was only one element in an overall reduction in occupation over the northern part of the town and

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which documentary evidence suggests took place gradually over several centuries. Even as early as the 15th century, the few documents available for Paradise indicate substantial areas were given over to gardens, suggesting that the decline in occupation had already begun. That it was still continuing over 300 years later is evident from a comparison of the first two town maps of 1725 and 1747. Between these two surveys, several houses disappeared from the east side of Church Stairs steps.

In general terms, this decline can probably be explained by the physical movement of townsfolk to the more economically active southern and western parts of the town, combined with an actual decline in population numbers occasioned by the town's economic problems in the later middle ages. Against these general factors, a more specific explanation of the changes observed at Paradise might lie with the activities of the Cistercian monks who controlled the revenues of the parish church for much of the middle ages. As has previously been discussed, the name Paradise suggests that they lived in this part of the town, and moreover, the documented enclosure by the Cistercian monks of eight properties around the year 1250, probably to establish their monastic cell, might explain the sequence of demolition and enclosure revealed in trench B5.<sup>3</sup>

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Archaeological evidence is minimal for the further development of the Paradise site until the start of brick manufacture on the eastern part of the estate in the middle of the 18th century. Documents of the 16th and 17th centuries cast some light on the area, referring to houses and gardens, but none of them can be accurately located. A reference in 1619 to two enclosures at Paradise<sup>4</sup> might include the stone boundary wall on the north of trench B5 which was certainly in existence at that date.

With the 18th century a clearer picture emerges of the Paradise area and the activities then taking place. Apart from Paradise House, there was a coach house and stables (probably the building on the opposite side of the street to Paradise House) and surrounding these buildings were gardens, an orchard, a meadow, several limekilns, a waltkiln and a deep draw well.

The brick kiln excavated in trench A9 can be added to this catalogue, and dated to around 1763<sup>5</sup> when mention is made of land at Paradise "lately a brickyard". Evidence for the systematic quarrying of clay from most of the eastern half of the estate to supply the kiln was discovered during the earlier evaluation. It is probable that the whole operation of quarrying and firing the clay lasted only a couple of months before supplies of the uppermost plastic clay were exhausted. The bricks were probably required for work on Paradise House or were sold to help the owners of the land, then the Cockerill family, overcome some financial crisis.

With the cessation of brick manufacture the area, now much more level as a result of the clay extraction, was restored to gardens. Successive plans of the estate then document the relatively minor changes that have occurred over the past two hundred years as garden walls and paths were re-aligned or rebuilt. In archaeological terms, the depth of topsoil that has accumulated on top of the archaeological remains in both trenches is clear testimony to the prolonged use of the area as gardens.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is gratifying to record the interest of the site owners G.E. and W.D. Bowser in giving permission to excavate and in providing the necessary financial assistance. The North Yorkshire County Archaeology Office assisted in the organisation of the project which was successfully undertaken by members of the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society. The Field Unit's participants were Andrew Hussain, Laurence Jones, Steve Litherland, Ed Newton and Jon Sterenberg (supervisor). The many members and friends of the Scarborough Archaeological Society who worked on the dig or who otherwise assisted the project were Patrick Argent, Kevin Bland, Bill Broadmore, Dorothy Chaplin, Margaret Cheetham, Brian Coyne, Norman Crossley and family, Ron Davies, Charles Gavan-Duffy, Marion and Ken Gover, Doreen Gullen, Chris Hall (supervisor), Frances Hall, Norman Murphy, Margery Musgrave, David Pearson, Peter Robson, Mike Roberts, Mary Stansfield, Jonathan Swale, Lilly Webster, Rene, Wally and David West. Thanks are also

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