

◆ Turris de Pevenesel – another view

By Tony Chapman

The 2011 publication of the report on the excavations in the 1990s at Pevensey Castle marks over a century of archaeological, architectural and documentary research. For the first time, the investigation around the keep and elsewhere on the site was carried out to modern standards of excavation, which produced evidence for a revised construction date of both the Roman fort and the medieval walls. In particular, the date of the keep is now placed around 1200. This article reappraises the archaeological interpretation of the trenches within the keep, and correlates it with the earlier investigation of the site by Harold Sands in 1910. The historical sources are also re-examined, to question the date and context of the keep reached in the recent report. As a result, an alternative, earlier, date for the great tower in the reign of Henry I is proposed, set against recent research on Romanesque great towers in England.

INTRODUCTION

The 1993–5 series of excavations at Pevensey Castle opened several trenches within and on the eastern side of the ruined keep. The excavators' research design aimed to investigate whether there was any evidence for medieval towers on the east side of the keep, establish the character and date of any remains found, re-examine the structural history of the keep in the light of this evidence and excavate the foundations of the collapsed Roman fort wall in this location (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 8; the authors hereafter referred to as 'excavators' in the text.)

These trenches revealed a complex sequence of archaeological strata and masonry, representing 15 phases of occupation or construction on the site from the late 3rd century to the second world war. Phase 6 was the construction of the keep some time in the 11th, 12th or 13th century (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 9, 126). The archaeological evidence for this phase, along with documentary references and architectural comparison, consequently enabled the excavators to reassess the 'date and architectural context of the original construction of the keep' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 123). The keep is thus seen as part of a major development of the castle site that included the gatehouse, and royal building accounts of the early 1190s apparently mark the start of its construction. This re-assessment will no doubt be included in future editions of the English Heritage guide to the castle, establishing a fresh explanation of the site to visitors and students, first interpreted in Charles Peers' official guide published by the Office of Works in 1933.

Yet before the revised significance of the keep is accepted into mainstream castle studies, we should review carefully the published and unpublished sources relating to Pevensey Castle. The desire for archaeology to provide a measurable approach to the explanation of an individual site needs to be tempered by a range of contextual criteria.

THE END OF THE GREAT TOWER

Artists' views of Pevensey Castle in the 18th century show that the walls were largely in the same condition as they are today. Two such views are reproduced in the 2011 excavation report, an engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck in 1737, and a bird's eye view based on a 1783–5 watercolour by Samuel Grimm (1733–94). Both apparently show the keep covered by a substantial mound (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 5, 6).

The Buck brothers' view of the castle from the north-east has been reproduced since 1970 in editions of the official guide to the castle. Drawn from a position in front of the Roman east gateway, it offers an oblique view of the keep, yet appears to show that the Roman wall forming the east side of the keep is still standing. A mystery cylindrical structure is shown on or near the keep's north bastion, leaning at about 30 degrees. The keep's preservation is confirmed by a less well-known view by the Buck brothers from the south-east (Fig. 1). In this view, the Roman wall of the keep is evident by its brick-tile banding, and a garderobe block stands almost to the height of the adjacent Roman bastion. Behind, the mound over the keep is visible, with the surviving fragment of the first

THE SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF PEVENESEY-CASTLE, IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

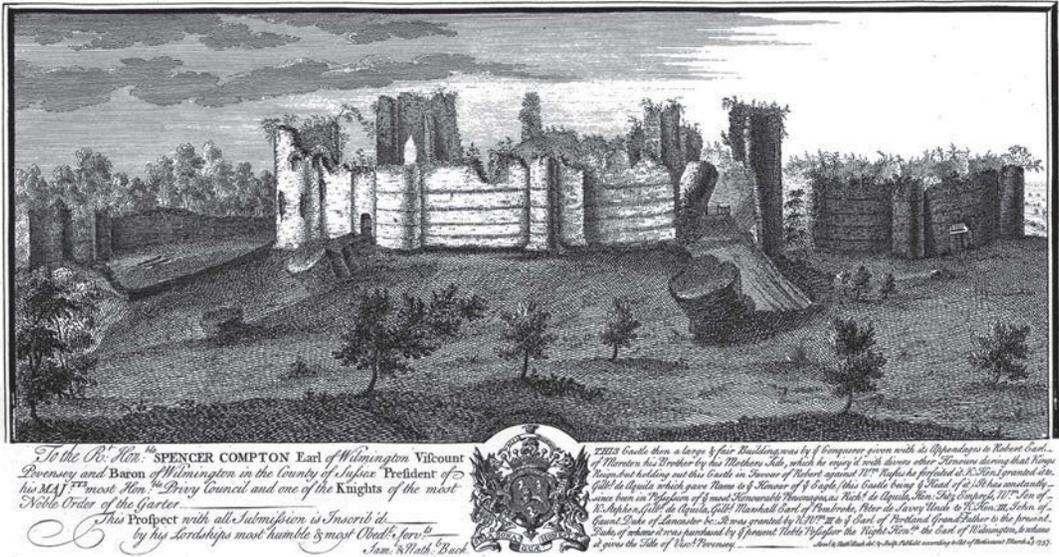


Fig. 1. The South-East View of Pevensey Castle, Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, 1737 (author's collection).

floor protruding from it. The section of the Roman wall between the keep and the 13th-century curtain has already collapsed, now covered by a landscaped ramp with a low wall on the north ascending up to a gate and hurdle. The leaning cylindrical structure is visible again, roughly located on or near the keep's north bastion. (This leaning 'tower' may be related to the undated apsidal foundation excavated on the north side of the keep in 1910; Sands 1910, 28.) You can also spot the castle's two Elizabethan cannons in the Roman enclosure (on the far left), proof of the Buck brothers' concern for detail, if not perspective. (A mystery feature is the Roman bastion beside the postern; the vertical construction joint in the ancient wall here was possibly misunderstood by the engraver.)

Grimm's bird's-eye view, while imaginative in some respects, is useful because it shows that the Roman wall on the east side of the keep has now collapsed. This view is one of a number of watercolours Grimm made of Pevensey Castle, which are now freely available to see on the British Library website. Among them, one shows the partly buried and overgrown keep from the west, drawn within the inner ward. More important for us is Grimm's view of the east side of the castle (Fig. 2), looking at the junction of the Roman circuit and the 13th-century curtain ([\[bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/topdrawings/p/largeimage84295.html\]\(http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/topdrawings/p/largeimage84295.html\)\). The collapsed Roman wall is buried under the mound that has slipped down from the keep, and the garderobe block is now a stub against the Roman bastion. This stub partly blocks the north embrasure in the bastion, while there is no sign of an inner latrine wall near the rear doorway of the bastion. These views must confirm that the excavators' Phase 13 period of collapse in fact occurred between 1737 and 1789 \(Fulford and Rippon 2011, 31\).](http://www.</p>
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One possible cause of the collapse of the keep wall is the robbing of the putative towers that may have been built against, and supported, its east side. Pottery evidence excavated beneath the Roman wall suggests the 18th century for this Phase 12 robbing of the mural towers (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 31). Certainly, the towers were gone by 1737. Subsequent removal of the collapsed Roman masonry must account for the 18th- and 19th-century activity of Phase 14, rather than further robbing of the putative north-east tower (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 33). Another, perhaps complementary, explanation for the failure of the Roman wall is the fracture and subsidence of the keep's north wall. Part of this slipped wall, still upright, is buried in the slope below the keep (Sands 1910, 5, 18; see below).



Fig. 2. Watercolour view of Pevensey Castle, 1789, by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm © British Library Board (Add. MS 5671, f. 65[119]).

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE GREAT TOWER

Seven trenches were excavated around the keep in 1993–5, of which two were directly situated against its standing masonry (Fig. 3). Trench 7 was located around the north-east broken stub, while Trench 1 was set against the inside face of the west wall. Trench 2, separated from Trench 1 by an unexcavated baulk, continued the line of it to the outside face of the former Roman fort wall (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 7).

Trench 7 re-opened the excavation by Harold Sands in 1909 and enlarged by him in 1910 (Fulford and Rippon 1995, 8). At that time the ground level was at about 2ft (0.61m), or two or three ashlar courses, above the chamfered offset on the stub, and sloped downhill from the stub at about 30 degrees (Sands 1910, 4, 7). Sands' excavation was dug either side of a central west–east baulk – which was found in 1995 (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 17) – and the spoil was cast downhill on to the site of the 1993–5 trenches 4 and 6 (Sands 1910, 15). The 1910 excavation extended five feet north of the baulk, and eight feet south of the baulk. (The keep wall is about 11ft thick at this point.) The purpose of the excavation was to discover the depth of the foundation of the keep. This deep shaft went down about 20ft (6.1m), and required shoring after parts

of the south side about level with the end of the wall stub fell in (Sands 1910, 11, 18). The final west–east length of the southern trench was 15ft (4.6m), the northern 19ft (5.8m), both overlapping the keep's stub.

Comparing the areas of the excavations, it seems that Sands' dig largely contained the 1995 trench (as shown by the eastern section of Trench 7), and greatly exceeded it in depth. (The eastern section of Trench 7 was almost level with the inside face of the former Roman wall.) Nonetheless, the 1910 south face was apparently recovered in 1995, and the recorded sections show the post-Roman dark-earth sequence into which the keep's foundations were dug, and the steep slip caused by the collapse of the Roman fort wall in the 18th century (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 17, sections B, C). These contexts re-appear on the same alignment in Trench 2 nearby to the south. However, apart from the central baulk (i.e. the fill of a robber trench (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 31)), the archaeological artefacts of Trench 7 can have little certain value with regard to the construction of the keep. A so-called 'foundation trench' is in fact Sands' backfill of his narrow trench along the inside of the keep's north wall (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 13, 16, context F749; Sands 1910, 3, 4, 18). (Another plan of the keep made for Harold Sands,

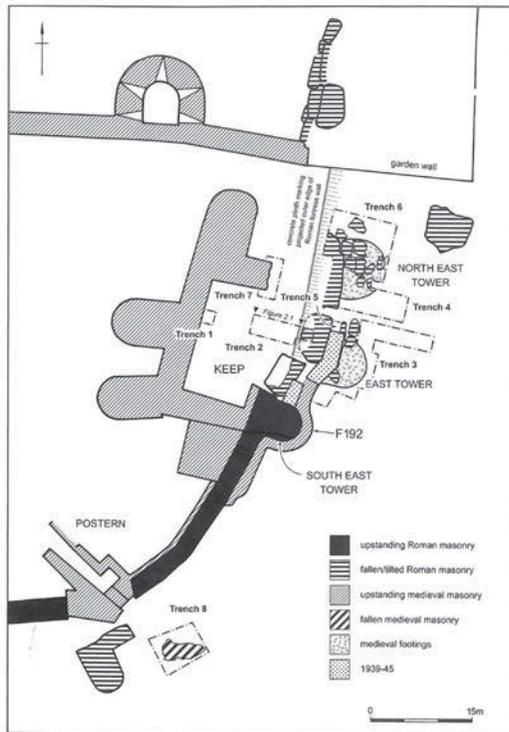


Fig. 3. Excavations at Pevensey Castle 1993–5, showing the location of trenches. (© Reading University and Wessex Archaeology.)

now in the library of the Society of Antiquities, also shows this trench; Derek Renn pers. comm.) Consequently, the nature of the undated 0.5m deep layer of clay above the dark earth is ambiguous. (Its top level was probably truncated by the slippage of Sands' southern trench.) The excavators' section shows that the clay layer predates the 20th-century 'foundation trench', and aligns with part of the keep that appears to be trench-built (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 17, fig. 2.6 section C). Yet it has no corollary in Trench 2, although the layer may be associated with the backfilled 'foundation trench' in Trench 1. Given the equivocal evidence recovered from Trench 7 in 1995, therefore, it is regrettable that the exposed concrete foundation of the keep's stub was not drawn for its matrix, whereas the masonry excavated in trenches 3 and 4 was recorded.

Near the eastern end of his trench, Sands found part of the missing piece of the keep's north wall, which once butted the Roman fort wall (Sands

1910, 5, 18). It was probably the sub-surface foundation, as no offset or chamfered plinth was found and the matrix was 'rough rubble work' (Sands 1910, 11, 19). When the Roman wall collapsed in the 18th century, this section of the keep wall seemingly broke off and slipped south-east down into the void, but was held upright by the now horizontal Roman masonry. The robber trench in Trench 7 must therefore post-date the collapse, and it indicates the removal of the upper part of the dislocated keep wall (Sands 1910, 31, Phase 12). Alternatively, a fracture in the keep wall may have contributed to the collapse of the Roman fort wall, in addition to the robbing of any putative eastern towers (Sands 1910, 31).

The excavation of Trench 2 within the keep reached the Roman fort construction horizon at 2.8m below the present ground level, and the silt natural at about 3.5m (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 10, Fig. 2.1). The Roman foundations for the east fort wall went deeper through the natural scarp, to about 5m below our ground level inside the keep. From his excavation on the site of Trench 7, Sands appears to have found, but did not recognise, the Roman fort construction horizon when his shaft he had finally found the bottom of the keep north wall foundation at about 18ft below the chamfered offset on the north face, reaching a bed of stiff yellow undisturbed clay (Sands 1910, 7, 18; cf. Sands 1908, 26). Evidently, the keep builders went as deep as the Romans to achieve a sound footing, but had to dig through the post-Roman dark earth occupation deposits to get to that level, probably guided by the external height of the 3rd-century wall. They would have laid their foundation of lime-rubble concrete in short horizontal lifts, perhaps similar to the layers visible in the keep's core (0.5m–0.7m high; Fulford and Rippon 2011, 139), and also evident in the 13th-century north curtain where the external batter has been robbed. These lifts do not necessarily represent the medieval building season, but instead good practice to allow the lime-mortar concrete to set or carbonate (Holmes and Wingate 2003, 4). The source for the lime mortar was probably the chalk downs running from Eastbourne to Lewes, perhaps near the medieval greensand quarries (White 1926, 39, 84; Salzmänn 1906, 12). Purer chalk will produce a non-hydraulic lime putty (calcium hydroxide) that requires absorption of

carbon dioxide to set; the slow set can allow the concrete foundations or the structure to settle without fracture. Impure chalk (for example the marls of the downs near Eastbourne, such as at Alciston; White 1926, 48; Holt 1971) can produce a hydraulic lime mortar, which sets due to the presence of water and also carbonation. Such mortar can allow faster construction in a trench where the buried concrete layers could not react with the atmosphere and fully set (Holmes and Wingate 2003, 12).

Taking just the footprint of the keep's three medieval sides (Peers 1933, plan), an 18ft foundation trench would produce 987 cu m of spoil (clay and dark earth), or 1234 tonnes (assuming a soil bulk density of 1.25kg/m³; Natural Environment Research Council soil portal). Sands found that the foundation of the keep's north wall had narrowed by 3ft at the bottom; the omission of the three bastions in my calculations should allow a reasonable tolerance for variations in the trench dimensions. The pre-collapse sequence in Trench 2 contained only a narrow horizon of clay, so the keep's trench spoil cannot account for all the slumped or dumped clays outside the fort wall (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 13).

The smaller Trench 1 against the inside of the keep's west wall exposed three layers up from an excavated depth of 1.8m: the post-Roman dark earth, above this a tapering 'foundation trench' backfilled with a series of clays, and finally a post-medieval layer of yellow clay. Again, as in Trench 7, the matrix of the keep wall was unrecorded, and the modern ground level was omitted from the section drawing (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 16, fig. 2.5). The excavators here make a distinction between the keep's 'trench-built' foundation and, above this, the footing constructed in a 'foundation trench', though subsequently referred to as a 'construction trench' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 13, 31, 49). They also state that the interior of the keep's free-standing wall was built using a facing of roughly dressed blocks (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 12). Yet to judge by the irregular vertical profile of the keep wall in figure 2.5, the footing corresponding to the foundation trench is probably rubble concrete placed within a dug trench. We must imagine the keep builders standing on the edge of an excavation almost 18ft deep and about 10ft wide (excluding the west bastions). Unless the top of the trench subsided, as happened in Sands' deep shaft around

the north wall, it is unlikely they would excavate a shallow cut for the top of the foundation, as this would make construction more difficult without formwork. Moreover, there is no certain evidence of a corresponding 'foundation trench' for the north wall of the keep. Instead, this clay layer (and the same in Trench 7) is more likely to represent the levelling of the castle site in the late 11th century, raising the medieval enclosure above the post-Roman site, using spoil from the original moat or ditch. In this scenario, we can understand why the archaeological evidence from the 'foundation trenches' was found to be wide-ranging, and 'dating from the pottery remains elusive' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 46).

However, the post-Roman dark earth sequence in Trench 1 does provide the excavators with some evidence for the interpretation of the date and context of the keep. Two upper layers contained a few sherds of 12th-, 13th- or 14th-century pottery (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 11, 126). One layer especially, 250 in Trench 1, is important because it occurs near the top of the dark earth, through which the keep foundation was 'trench built' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 16, fig. 2.5). According to the excavators, this layer 'stratigraphically appears to correspond with a distinct layer of oyster shells at the interface of layers 25 and 31 in Trench 2' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 11). It is unfortunate, therefore, that these layers in Trench 2 'produced a handful of 7th- to 11th-century sherds from an overwhelmingly Roman assemblage' (Fulford and Rippon 2011; cf. page 43). Meanwhile, the corresponding horizon of dark earth in Trench 7 (718) produced 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, 12th- or 13th-century pottery (Fulford and Rippon 2011), though this was recovered from an extremely thin section following Sands' 1910 excavation here. Returning to Trench 1 and the excavation report's finds analysis, we find that the pottery evidence for the dark earth:

is less clear-cut chronologically as there were sherds of Pingsdorf ware [11th to 12th century; Fulford and Rippon 2011, 152] and medieval fabric LOCMED1 [11th, 12th or 13th century; Fulford and Rippon 2011, 151] present in [layer] (250), and a further medieval cooking pot from [layer] (245) suggestive of a date from the 11th century The equivalent horizon in Trench 7 was aceramic' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 40).

The last horizon is unidentified, though the 1995 bottom of Trench 7 is not deep enough to offer a true comparison. Its dark earth layer is noted above. Doubts about the stratigraphic value of the medieval ceramic sequence are clearly raised in the report (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 44, 53), and the evidence from the dark earth or overlying clay is really not strong enough to support any narrow period for the construction of the keep within 200 years of the Conquest. Consequently, we will need to look again at the documentary and architectural evidence for a way forward.

The remains of two medieval D-plan towers were excavated in trenches 3 and 4, outside the line of the former Roman fort wall. While the excavators consider that one or both of them may be related to the original construction of the keep, the archaeological evidence for their dates is as inconclusive as the trenches against the keep itself – they may belong to the 11th, 12th or 13th century (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 16, 21). Nor is the argument for their relative ages compelling, based as it is on a circular argument of differences in construction methods. Thus they are not considered as part of this paper, except to add a note for the putative ‘east tower’. During September 1993 I was an undergraduate student excavating this tower. The two lower courses of greensand facing blocks had been partly exposed, and I drew an east–west section of the trench from the east tip of the tower apse. The section showed that the facing blocks here were leaning eastward out of perpendicular, and this was recorded on the drawing sheet. For such subsidence to occur, the tower must have been completed to a considerable height, though the structural failure may have prompted the builders soon to take it back down. The excavation trench was subsequently extended around the edges of the tower, and a section from the north-east curve was published in the excavation report (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 21, fig. 2.9). This section does not show both courses of the greensand ashlar, nor the modern ground level for comparison between the two towers. (Derek Renn (pers. comm.) even suggests that the irregular ashlar joints of the East Tower shown in Plate 4 could be due to re-use.) It remains unproven whether the east or north-east tower was ever completed, and unexplained why the putative second phase of the east tower was partly constructed on the made-up ground of

the backfilled robber trench of the original tower (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 20, 31, fig. 2.7).

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE GREAT TOWER

The original building accounts or instructions for the keep have not survived. Yet the excavators recognise that ‘a *terminus ante quem* is provided by the first certain mention of the ‘Keep’ in relation to a record of repairs to its windows in 1284’ (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 126). This work was part of a renovation of the castle from about 1283 to 1291 for Eleanor, the queen dowager (died 1291), formerly queen consort of Henry III (died 1272). Prior to this activity no building accounts for the castle survive since the reign of Richard I. No works can be attributed to John, except the dismantling of the castle in 1216 to deny it to supporters of Prince Louis. Nor is there record of remedial repairs by the royal constables who administered the castle into the minority of Henry III. From 1232 the castle was granted to a succession of royal favourites, the last of whom was Peter of Savoy, uncle of Eleanor, who held the castle from 1246 until he died in 1268 (Thompson 1997, 215, 216). It is likely that he was responsible for building the curtain walls and mural towers. Yet, despite these very substantial works, we have only a vague reference to building at this time in the royal Close Roll for 1250 (*see below*), and a *terminus ante quem* provided by damage to the walls during the siege of 1264/5 after the Battle of Lewes. Until the 13th century works, the excavators dismiss references to ‘a *turris*’ in the Exchequer Pipe Rolls due to the lack of specificity of this term. When combined with the equally uncertain archaeological evidence, it is not surprising that the excavators quickly move on to the architectural evidence to support their interpretation of the building (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 126).

Yet it is worth looking again at the early references to the castle at Pevensey, especially during the Anglo-Norman period. Abigail Wheatley has demonstrated that context and language are critical factors for interpretation of the documentary record, and our modern definition of castle terms may not have been that of medieval audiences (Wheatley 2004, 22). Indeed, in early post-Conquest England, the word castle ‘is borrowed into English ... to reflect the terminology

of the dominant social group, but not to mark a completely new form of defensive architecture' (Wheatley 2004, 25). Even commentators and historians belonging to the dominant social group itself, writing in Latin and French, could attach a range of meanings to castle words, including the word *turris* (Wheatley 2004, 28). Accordingly, the name Tower of London is 'based on a medieval appreciation of the symbolic importance of the White Tower, at the heart of the fortress', and the name is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under 1097, soon after its construction (Wheatley 2004, 34; cf 35, 130; Douglas and Greenaway 1981, 182). Even when it was no more than 50 years old, Geoffrey of Monmouth was able to project the Tower 'back into Britain's legendary past' in his own native *History of the Kings of Britain* (Wheatley 2004, 34). More prosaically, Derek Renn (pers. comm.) points out that sheriffs would know what they had spent money on, and mention of 'turris' at the Exchequer probably meant a great tower or keep.

Pevensey was, of course, the beachhead for Duke William of Normandy's conquest in 1066, as dramatically illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry frieze. William's subsequent military victory over the English was written up by his chaplain, William of Poitiers, with Classical parallels that 'recall the Roman conquest of Britain and the Greek victory against the Trojans, pre-empting British claims to superior status through their supposed Trojan ancestry' (Wheatley 2004, 131–2). In the chaplain's own partisan account about the Battle of Hastings:

Duke William excelled [all his counts and followers] both in bravery and soldier craft, so that one might esteem him as at least the equal of the most praised generals of ancient Greece and Rome (Douglas and Greenway 1981, 242).

Like the Tower of London, the medieval walls of Pevensey Castle had the potential to embody the legendary past, in this case Roman and Norman: 'it is associated with these ancient [Roman] remains through location, but also takes on a similar form, with its rounded bastions and straight stretches of wall' (Wheatley 2004, 145). And where the keep re-uses and re-creates part of the Roman defences, such 'material *translatio* is an architectural analogue to Norman Classical allusions, likening the structural achievements of the Normans to the architecture of the great empire

which had preceded them in conquering England' (Wheatley 2004, 132). So is the keep such a Norman structural achievement?

It has been noted above that the 'keep' is first mentioned as such only in 1284. Yet this reference is a translation of the medieval Latin source by Louis Salzman, who was writing about the castle in 1906, just before it was about to be excavated by Harold Sands. Salzman could even doubt whether any medieval masonry was added to the Roman fort before the reign of Henry II (1906, 3). For the 1288 building accounts, Salzman was assisted in the translation of the 'Latinized mixture of French and English' technical terms by Charles Peers (Salzman 1906, 9), who would subsequently visit the 1910 excavations and later write the official Office of Works guide to the castle as Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments. These 1288 accounts refer to 'the keep', but which is 'the tower' or 'the great tower' in the 1289–91 accounts (Salzman 1906, 11–12)? Salzman here always uses the definite article, which is absent from Latin noun words. Then in the 1307 accounts we are shown that the translation 'keep' is from *turris* (the tower; Salzman 1906, 17). In the 15th century it is subsequently referred to in the building accounts as *le Dungeon* (Salzman 1906, 24–6), though we should beware of the use of 'dungeon' from the 14th century for a basement place of incarceration (Pugh 1968, 353–5). The castle was used as a prison at this time, and the term here might also relate to one of the mural or gatehouse towers. In his discussion of the Pevensey accounts, therefore, Salzman never presents 'keep' as a medieval word, only as a text translation. The Middle English word 'keep', relating to a castle building, begins to appear in medieval documents from the late 14th century, though specifically to Guînes in the Pas-de-Calais department in northern France (Kenyon and Thompson 1995).

There are three references to *turris* at Pevensey in the surviving 12th-century Pipe Rolls, the earliest during the reign of Henry I. We should therefore consider whether he was responsible for the construction of the great tower. The wisdom of Henry, son of William the Conqueror, is attested with Classical parallels by the historian William of Malmesbury (who died in or after 1142). In his grant of the Rape of Pevensey after the fall of William of Mortain, the king was careful to retain Eastbourne and Pevensey Castle as a strategic royal

foothold (Douglas and Greenaway 1981, 319; Thompson 1997, 212). The reference to *turris* at Pevensey in the 1129–30 accounts, the only Pipe Roll surviving complete from Henry I's reign, has been translated by the excavators as 'a tower', a structure that they do not identify or correlate to subsequent works. (A new edition of Pipe Roll 31 Henry I (2012) was published too late for consideration in this article (<http://piperollsociety.co.uk>.)

This translation, or interpretation, undermines the principle of the *History of the Kings Works*, where 'the tower' is interpreted as a significant feature of a castle, if not the castle itself (Colvin 1963, 37–40). Only four cases of '*turris de*', tower of, are mentioned in a castle context in the 1129–30 Pipe Roll: London, Pevensey, Gloucester and Old Sarum (1929, 144, 142, 78, 13). Gloucester no longer survives, but other 12th-century references clearly show that the 'character of Gloucester Castle' comprises the tower and the castle, the 'two distinct factors' that 'went to the making of the mediaeval "castle"' (Round 1892, 329, 331). Further, by comparison with the singular Romanesque buildings at London and Old Sarum, the place name *Turris de Peuenesell* in the Pipe Roll must surely be 'the Tower of Pevensey' (Sands 1908, 22).

The 1129–30 Pipe Roll also mentions £25 spent on London Bridge. The grant of estates or manors from the Crown often included an obligation to contribute to work on bridges and fortifications (Colvin 1963, 8, 24). William I had granted Alciston in Sussex to his foundation of Battle Abbey, and this manor contributed to works on London Bridge (Colvin 1963, 25). A few surviving writs authorised by Henry I exempt the abbey from both this burden, which was patently real, and also *nominatim de/maxime de opere castelli de Peuenesell*, 'especially work on the castle of Pevensey'. The writs are dated by the witness lists to about 1114, but not later than 1125 (Hardy 1869, i, 3; Loyd and Stenton 1950, 43), and 1129 to 1133 (Johnson and Cronne 1956, 253). Clearly, the work at Pevensey was in progress over several years, and other manors that were tied to the castle for work on fortifications may have concealed expenditure or resources that would otherwise appear in the Pipe Roll.

References to building work at Pevensey Castle appear again through the reigns of Henry II, Richard I and John, noted in some 19 account

years in the Pipe Rolls, Curia Regis Rolls and Close Rolls. Conspicuously, one mark spent in *operatione gaiole de Peuenesell* is recorded in 1178–9. (This reference was overlooked by Pugh; 1959, 69–70. The next recorded expenditure on a Sussex gaol was at Chichester Castle in 1198.) In the following year (1179–80), £3 10s. was spent in *operatione et emenditione domorum turris de Peuenesell*, 'work and repair of the houses/rooms of the tower of Pevensey'. Finally for the 12th century, *operatione turris* is among the works at the castle during 1193, though it is not possible to allocate how much of the total £30 15s. 3d. was spent on the tower itself. Perhaps the main conclusion to be drawn from the building accounts of the Angevin kings is that there is no evidence of expenditure necessary for the construction of a great tower. (Henry II's tower of the Peak at Pevensey cost at least £184, but the rocky site required no foundations and it also provided materials (Eales 2006, 13; Colvin 1963, 776).) Since I have argued elsewhere that the gatehouse was built or begun during the reign of Richard I, possibly in the 1190s, the remaining expenditure in the accounts cannot support a date for the keep or great tower in the late 12th century (Chapman 2007, 108, 113). The reason for the relatively small expenditure at Pevensey during this time is no doubt due to the existing Roman walls, Norman walls and timber defences, and Henry I's great tower.

Derek Renn (pers. comm. 3 July 2012) has pointed out that the £31 1s. 3d. overspend at Pevensey Castle in the 1192–3 Pipe Roll could be attributed to the works there. The reimbursement of this sum to the constable in the 1193–4 Pipe Roll does not specify clearly how the refund should be allocated, and consequently this sum was not included in my previous table of works (Chapman 2007, 114). Even if it is added to the known expenditure of works in 1193 (£30 15s. 3d. + £31 1s. 3d. = £61 16s. 6d.), the sum still does not account for extensive works, but does more reasonably allow for the construction of the gatehouse and related ramparts. The £13 6s. 8d. allowance *ad muniendum ... castellum* in the *Novis Promissis* of the 1192–3 Pipe Roll does not appear to have been spent, but it could suggest that some fortification works were done or planned in the seemingly blank year of 1193–4. (Derek Renn (pers. comm.) points out that *muniendum* may also translate as 'provisioning', perhaps building materials.)

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

It is difficult not to agree with the excavators' observation that the 'Keep is an odd construction with its asymmetrical disposition of towers on the landward side and mixing new work with Roman' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 127). Even Nikolaus Pevsner was almost lost for words about 'a keep entirely different from the standard types which the Normans had brought from France ... [with its] enormous spurs or buttresses ... set in various directions with no principle apparently guiding them' (Nairn & Pevsner 1965, 43). Consequently, the *sui generis* nature of the building, and the lack of surviving architectural features, make it difficult to place it within a recognised art historical framework. Charles Peers, even as the tower was being excavated from a covering mound of spoil in 1910, initially believed that the north bastion of the tower belonged to the 13th-century works (Sands 1910, 48, 55). Similarly, the excavators see the tower and the gatehouse related in their design and disposition. 'It is hard not to believe that the Gatehouse was planned and, indeed, under construction when the Keep was being built' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 127). The context for this work is 'the new ideas about military engineering ... circulating in the years immediately before 1200 and through the first half of the 13th century', and which are exemplified at the royal castle of Dover (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 128). Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence of large-scale 'military engineering' at Pevensey during this period, despite a continuous run of annual Pipe Roll accounts.

The architectural and spatial relationships between the great tower and the gatehouse are rather more apparent than real. It is claimed that 'there are ... clear similarities in the size and treatment of the greensand blocks used in the Keep and Gatehouse to suggest a degree of contemporaneity' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 126). The source of this claim is an interim report following the July 1995 survey of the medieval walls (Chapman and Eaton 1995). It is contrary to Sands' notice of the great tower's distinctive 'wide-jointed masonry' when compared with the gatehouse and walls, and which suggested to him an early Norman date (Sands 1910, 55–6; Fig. 4). Wide mortar joints are characteristic of the late 11th century, as found at William I's foundation at Battle Abbey, and the

building technique is related to the coursing of roughly squared facing stones (Alexander 2007, 66). The increasing proliferation of masons' marks through the 12th century appears to be related to the improvement of stone cutting and thus narrow joints (Alexander 2007, 70), though the mere two masons' marks visible on the great tower's north bastion are insufficient to provide evidence of a significant period of craftsmanship (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 140). Wide joints still persisted in the early 12th century, even with improvements in stone cutting, while the availability of resources and specific design could also result in a variable finish (Alexander 2007, 69, 72; Fernie 2000, 292). Thus the use of Caen stone at Pevensey can be interpreted as evidence of an inadequate supply of local stone (cf. Parsons 1990, 9), or as conspicuous consumption.

I completed the survey of the medieval curtain walls and towers only in October 1996, including an inspection of the usually inaccessible upper chambers of the south and east towers. There was structural evidence to suggest that the top storeys of the towers were later additions or modifications, which prompted a review of the gatehouse. It then became clear that the top storey of the northern gatehouse tower was coeval in design with the top storey of the mural towers. The gatehouse, therefore, is of two builds spanning a period of about 60–90 years, a fact obscured by the seemingly uniform ashlar facing. Consequently, the interpretation of the 1995 interim report is now partly superseded by these findings (Chapman 2007). Admittedly, the 1995–6 recording of the medieval walls involved no metric surveys, but was based on visual identification of stone types and masonry and architectural contexts (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 137). Nonetheless, this method was robust enough to observe that no medieval wall or tower in the whole castle has wholly consistent masonry, whether facing or concrete core (see, for example, the exposed end of the north-east curtain). Further, the first floor of the great tower has some remains of Caen ashlar, a Normandy limestone that has not been found or survives in the gatehouse (the purchase of Caen stone is only mentioned in the 1288 and 1302 building accounts; Salzmann 1906, 9, 12). So an analysis of the medieval masonry alone is insufficient to prove that two separate features are coeval at Pevensey.



Fig. 4. The greensand ashlar of the great tower's south wall, showing the wide thumb-thick (25mm) joints. The later addition to the right has 5mm joints. Monopod height 1.52m.

The close disposition of the tower and gatehouse does suggest a relationship – whether functional, aesthetic or symbolic – which may belong to a single phase. But spatial evidence alone can be a circular argument. Thus the north-east curtain of the medieval enclosure is clearly too close to the north bastion of the great tower to allow space for the planned mural hall, chamber or lodging, a particular feature of the castle which has received little or no attention. Indeed, the planning of the gatehouse and the subsequent masonry enclosure may have originally envisaged the demolition of the tower (or its north bastion), a fate avoided by Peter of Savoy's likely failure to complete the new castle in the 1250s (Close Roll 34 Henry III, 1250: '*rex proponit firmare castrum suum de Pevenes*' – the king proposes to strengthen his castle of Pevensey). The well-documented work of Edward I's reign simply made good half-finished and siege-damaged walls and towers. Further, the date of the masonry moat dam, a potential third feature in a spatial explanation, offers no certain chronology. Lyne's analysis of the 1939 excavation suggests a 13th-century date (2009, 47, 55), whereas the post-excavation edition of the official guide places the dam around 1100 (Peers 1952, plan). Peers, or his editor, was possibly influenced in the dating by the fact that the existing moat stops some 20m beyond the dam at the gatehouse bridge, and by the dam's alignment with the 11th- or 12th-century rampart where the south Roman wall had collapsed (Lyne 2009, 46–7). (An early 20th-century plan of the castle by Duncan Montgomerie, who was the surveyor on Sands' excavations in 1910, shows the moat then ending at the gatehouse; Armitage 1912, fig. 24.) More certainly, the original dam suggests a wet ditch at a level lower than that of the existing moat, which was formed when the inner bailey was transformed from a rampart enclosure to a retaining curtain wall in the 1250s, and the clay spoil was partly dispersed over the Roman enclosure. Without further evidence, it is difficult to present a coherent spatial explanation.

The two western bastions of the great tower are just as likely to be a coda to the Roman west gate and the high-status Romanesque church at Westham (Fernie 2000, 226, 227). But perhaps a reasonable explanation of the enigmatic architectural plan lies in the ambivalent north bastion of the great tower, which once rose above the adjacent Roman wall, but created a small shadowy area between. While

this may be an example of 'medieval engineering', a simpler observation is that it looks directly towards the ancient towers on the Roman circuit, as do the two western bastions. As Sands noted over a century ago, the Roman mural bastion incorporated in the east side of the great tower 'must have strongly influenced the builder of the keep, who has copied it so closely in the three huge solid apsidal towers' (1908, 25). This bastion, too, is singularly conspicuous for its Roman stonework, which is 'eminently superior to that elsewhere [in the fort]' (Lyne 2009, 19). Further, the tower's south wall narrows in width towards the Roman bastion, possibly to allow first-floor access to a lost stage above the infilled chamber of its surviving upper storey (Lyne 2009, 11, 47). Thus the great tower, with its implausible defensive bastions, incorporates and rises upon and above the Roman fort walls, which it no doubt sought to emulate and exceed.

While the ground plan of the great tower is clear, no complete architectural features survive to indicate a period style or purpose. Little of the first floor remains except a single-splayed, round-headed window on the south and fragments of Caen limestone ashlar facing (Fig. 5. Sands 1908, 21; Sands 1910, 56; Fulford and Rippon 2011, 140). There are also traces of a chamber on the south-west bastion. Abigail Wheatley has highlighted several Roman sites with later castles, including Pevensey, which 'reveal a close understanding by the Norman builders of Roman materials, construction methods and even architectural forms' (2004, 127–8). This understanding, as well as being pragmatic and practical, could also decide the location of a castle, to present a legible association with Roman imperial heritage or its legendary individuals. The association could also authenticate the authority of the Norman builder. The Roman fort wall at Pevensey has characteristic bands of bonding brick-tiles and small squared facing stones, and the great tower itself re-uses part of this wall and a tower (Lyne 2007, plate 3). Yet this masonry style is not directly repeated elsewhere in the great tower. Nonetheless, Wheatley has made the case that the series of horizontal banding at Henry II's great tower at Dover, of Caen ashlar and Kentish ragstone, 'seems to invite comparison with the much earlier Roman [*pharos*, lighthouse] tower, but outdoes it in the richness and scale of its materials' (Wheatley 2004, 135). At Dover the comparison is



Fig. 5. The south wall of the great tower. Above the single-splayed window are 11 courses of Caen limestone ashlar. The platform to the right is a later addition. Monopod height 1.52m.

underpinned by contemporary literature, which refers to castles and towers in Classical contexts (Wheatley 2004). Admittedly, the fragments of Caen ashlar at Pevensey do not allow a qualitative comparison with the banding that is still evident at Dover, but the absence of the Normandy stone in the basement walls of Pevensey's great tower must indicate a decision to import and conspicuously use lighter masonry at first floor level (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 143; the contrast between the two

stone types is now more evident in the western nave columns of Eastbourne parish church). Moreover, between the tower's western bastions, 15 courses up and above a peculiar thin greensand course, are seven courses of small ashlar blocks which may also be Caen (Fig. 6).

It is not recommended in modern conservation to place limestone above sandstone in an exposed location; the action of calcium bicarbonate from the limestone could erode the sandstone (Dimes



Fig. 6. The west wall of the great tower, between the bastions, showing the wide-jointed greensand ashlar. Above the 15th course the surviving seven courses are smaller blocks and may be Caen limestone. Monopod height 1.52m.

1990, 129). Medieval repairs to the greensand ashlar facing are noted in the 1994 survey of the keep, but we cannot be certain of the cause (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 140). Similar repairs occur on the curtain walls even where there is no Caen stone above, and these repairs must date to the late 13th century or later.

Henry I's motive for building a consciously 'Romanesque' tower at Pevensey may have been in part due to a particular 'Classical' individual

in recent history, his own father Duke William. As a planned monument, it possibly recalled William's conquest and claim to kingship, which authority Henry now sought to display in the Rape of Pevensey. Among the Classical references in William of Poitiers' account of William's deeds is Vegetius, whose *De re militari* 'seems to have been reintroduced into England from France after the Conquest' (Shrader 1979, 283, 290). The 4th-century Roman author sought to revive

‘the principles which the builders of the Roman Empire long ago observed’ (Milner 1993, 2), and accordingly his book is largely a treatise on military logistics. Yet, according to Vegetius, when one built a ‘properly constructed’ fort, it offered protection akin to a walled city, when cities were the very civilisation and ‘idea of the state’ (Milner 1993, 113; cf. Wheatley 2004, 38). So as well as a military primer, Vegetius offered a political model for the elite of the Middle Ages utilising monumental construction (Johnson 1983, 32). Soon after the Conquest, William himself had founded Battle Abbey on the spot where Harold had fallen, just some 10 miles from Pevensey. More than just a penance for the battle, the monastic church was also a ‘splendid war memorial’ (Burton 1994, 30). The Benedictine monks at Battle were brought in from the monastery of Marmoutier in the Loire valley, near Tours, to oversee the building work. Such was the abbey’s status that the Conqueror imported Caen stone for this novel building at his own cost (Colvin 1963, 49). It remains debatable whether the abbey church was based on churches at Tours or Rouen, but the importation of monks and ideas from abroad ‘[laid] down a marker for the breadth of the king’s future interests, architectural as well as political’ (Ferne 2000, 102).

There is an oft-quoted account of Count Geoffrey V of Anjou, who sought advice from the folios of Vegetius during a siege of Montreuil-Bellay, Maine-et-Loire, in 1147 (Bradbury 2004, 306). The count was assisted in this matter by a monk from Marmoutier (Murray 1978, 127–9; Contamine 1984, 211). Geoffrey himself was married to Henry I’s daughter Matilda, and one of their sons was later Henry II. Despite this intellectual milieu, we cannot prove that Vegetius or other Classical authors were the direct inspiration for buildings such as Battle and Pevensey ‘the [contemporary] society and government to which classical architecture and classical allusions had to be fitted ... were not classical. Roman phrases were an inspiration for the better formulation of medieval concepts’ (Reynolds 1984, 217). Nonetheless, we know that the stronghold of Montreuil-Bellay was founded in the early 11th century by a previous count of Anjou, Fulk Nerra, who was also influenced by the wisdom of Vegetius and the symbolism of Rome. This count’s ‘*neo-romanitas* was not merely patina but structural as well’, evident in the

reintroduction of ‘stone fortifications on a massive scale’ (Bachrach 1993, 198, 257). Fulk developed relations with the monastery of Marmoutier for political advantage within the Loire valley, and the first abbot of his foundation of Saint-Nicholas at Angers was a monk from Marmoutier (Bachrach 1993, 166–7). William the Conqueror’s subsequent importation of Touraine monks was clearly no novelty.

Meanwhile, in a different political context in East Anglia, ‘Norwich boasted not only a great cathedral but a [royal] castle keep of comparable pretension’ (Heslop 1994, 65). The Norwich tower’s ‘architectural language of conspicuous consumption and display’ was to be seen not only by the population of the growing city, but also by the earls of Norfolk (Heslop 1994, 5, 59). Likewise, perhaps inspired by Norwich, the second phase of Colchester’s great tower saw the creation of a vast ceremonial space on the first floor (Marshall 2010, 188). These castles and Pevensey, therefore, can remind us of the varied experiments in castle-building whereby Henry I exercised royal authority in the post-Conquest period.

One final observation of the great tower remains. It is noted in the excavation report that the inner face of the Roman fort wall was robbed before the ‘keep’ was built against it (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 137). As part of the keep’s construction, the Roman wall was restored to its original thickness, in order to support the superstructure. The evidence is that the rebuilt inner half of the wall is ‘not as clearly coursed [as the Roman core] and had at least one bonding course of Greensand running through its thickness’ (Fulford and Rippon 2011, fig. A.2, 139). The sketch elevation in the report shows that the adjacent Roman bastion also has an original greensand bonding course, so this feature is not an absolute criterion for dating. In fact, the greensand course on the bastion also has an architectural value, whereby this string course marks the parapet level (Lyne 2009, 10, fig. 3E, 11). But unnoticed in the 1994 survey was the characteristic offset on the inside of the wall, which indicates that this is Roman build. Unfortunately, the survey was misled by the 20th-century repointing of the broken Roman wall, which has altered the character of the wall core or its construction method (Lyne 2009, plate 3). Thus the plan in the first edition of the official guide remains valid (Peers 1933), and so the robbing or refacing of the Roman wall

south of the great tower and platform post-dates their construction (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 143).

Yet we are still left with a conundrum in the interior facing of the collapsed Roman wall (i.e. the great tower's east wall), which consists of 'partially dressed blocks' (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 137). This wall has leaned over, so it is not easy to compare like-for-like levels with the visible standing walls. But if the excavation survey of the garderobe block is accurate within the constraints of the site, then the width of the tilted wall shows that this facing probably belongs to the medieval lining of the great tower's east wall (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 24, fig. 2.12). The excavators' proposed date and explanation of this lining or thickening, or even relining, are based on relative butt joints and assigned to a 'fourth period' in the excavation report, perhaps 13th or 14th century (Fulford and Rippon 2011, 140, 144). However, the survey of the keep walls failed to notice that the masonry lining behind the Roman bastion has a horizontal offset 1m above ground level, and below this offset the masonry contains tufa, a calcium carbonate deposit that forms around springs. This durable stone is known for its porous nature and light weight, and is therefore relatively easy to transport. Sources in Sussex are not known to the present writer, but it was found in Kent and appears in the late 11th-century crypt of Rochester Cathedral, and the contemporary or later tower of St Leonard's at West Malling (McAleer 1999, 28–9; Blows 2011, 15). It was also used in churches on and around Romney Marsh, taken from the Roman fort at Lympne, and tufa occurs in the quoins of the Romanesque north transept of Westham church, close by Pevensey Castle. Seemingly exhausted as a building material by the end of the 12th century, the presence of tufa suggests that the lining of the Roman curtain belongs with the construction of the great tower or soon after (Clapham 1934, 114).

CONCLUSION

The final publication of the excavations at Pevensey Castle from 1993 to 1995 aptly complements the ongoing debate about how archaeologists, historians, art historians and conservationists can together best achieve a synergy for the explanation of a landscape, site, artefact or heritage asset (McClain 2012, 133). Indeed the 'consideration of context becomes essential to our understanding

of how people understood and utilised material culture' (McClain 2012, 139). So perhaps for the first time the 2011 excavation report provides an empirical basis of archaeological evidence on which students can further study the range of human experiences at the medieval castle. Meanwhile, the excavators bravely propose a revised historical period for the construction of the great tower, based on material evidence and royal accounts.

A recent overview of royal great towers of the 12th century has emphasised how the buildings were 'the product of a complex of the needs of ceremony and display' (Dixon 2008, 275). This same research assigns the 'small scale' tower at Pevensey to the Count of Mortain, some time in the late 11th century (Dixon 2008, 274). My own view, above, suggests that the great tower was built on the orders of Henry I as a political and metaphysical statement of his kingship, a unique monument carefully located within the bridgehead Rape of Pevensey. But in seeking a full explanation of its architecture, we have, perhaps, gone only a little further than the first edition of the Office of Works guide (Peers 1933).

Previously, in the final interim report of the excavations, it was believed that the evidence from the 1995 trenches 'served to establish more clearly the extent of the re-shaping and re-building of the keep in the late 13th to mid-14th century' (Fulford and Rippon 1995, 13). While the archaeological assemblage yet remained to be fully analysed, it appeared that during the 13th century the east wall of the great tower was subsiding, and it had to be levered over to a 'horizontal position' to provide 'a platform for the reconstruction of the east wall of the keep and the north-east tower' (Fulford and Rippon 1995, 13). This explanation found its way into the new English Heritage guide to the castle, along with the revised date for the construction of the great tower, c. 1200 (Goodall 1999, 8). The explanation was also used in the same author's recent overview of castles in England, where the great tower's 'design explores the late 12th-century fashion for fragmenting architectural designs into compositions of towers' (Goodall 2011, 148). The 1999 English Heritage guide no longer included the Buck brothers' view of the castle from the north-east. Yet if the Bucks' view of the castle from the south-east had been included, then at least the model of collapse and rebuilding would be seen to

be untenable; the Roman wall forming the east side of the great tower still stood in the 18th century. Regrettably, the reliance on archaeology without a full appreciation of all the historical sources clearly led to a misunderstanding in this instance (cf Platt 2012, 295).

English Heritage's *Conservation Principles* (2008) states that 'In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time (Principle 3.3)'. The potential to understand a place in the past is based on its evidential value, though:

the study of material remains alone will rarely provide sufficient understanding of a place; the information gained will need to be set in the context of knowledge of the social and cultural circumstances that produced the place (English Heritage Principle 3.3, para 63).

Clearly, if we are unable to understand the fabric, then we cannot identify the significance. Consequently we will be unable to manage

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