

◆ The excavation of a post-medieval site at Herstmonceux Castle, 1998–2003

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In 1998, following the discovery of previously unknown, below-ground, brick walling during drainage works in a field about 100 metres to the west of Herstmonceux Castle, archaeologist Jenny Compton began a five-year investigation resulting in the discovery of the footprint of a three-phased, rectangular building.

Associated features and recovered archaeological material from the excavations strongly suggest a stable and possible coach house which probably originated during the final years of ownership of the 8th Lord Dacre (to 1708) and was rebuilt, or enlarged, during the ownership of the Naylor family (to 1777).

INTRODUCTION

The site (NGR: TQ 6453 1037) lies about 13 metres above sea level on Tunbridge Wells Sand (1:50.000, British Geological Survey, Sheet 319, Lewes), at the base of a gently sloping field on the southern slope of a shallow valley to the west of Herstmonceux Castle, a scheduled monument (1002298) (Fig.1). It is within the westernmost edge of the castle's Grade II* listed park (Historic Parks and Gardens; 1000231).

To the immediate north of the site is a low-lying area which is prone to pooling. In 1996, in an effort to stem the possibility of flood water from the field travelling towards the castle, the estates department began drain trenching. During this work, the remains of brick walling, a section of a brick drain-like feature and an area of demolition rubble were revealed.

As a result, work ceased and a small-scale investigation by consultant archaeologist Peter Leach, on behalf of Stuart Page Architects, revealed the foundations of the north end of what appeared to be a large building, loosely orientated north-south, interpreted by Leach to have once served the castle. Although the date of construction could not be determined at that stage, a stable, forge and slaughterhouse, recorded in a survey of the castle and grounds in 1570, was thought to relate to these remains (Leach 1996).

In response to the Leach report, the castle's estates department invited Jenny Compton to undertake an archaeological survey of the area. In

1998, with support from the castle authorities and staff, Andrew Woodcock, then East Sussex county archaeologist, University of Sussex (CCE) students and other professional archaeologists, work at the site began.

The principal aims of the project were to conduct a non-intrusive, geophysical survey of the area of previously revealed features to establish their extent; to examine the immediate surroundings of the site to ascertain its role within the landscape, via a systematic metal detecting survey, and to establish the chronology and function of any building(s), and their relationship to the castle itself, through a full excavation and analysis of the findings.

The project lasted for five years and was funded through donations from participants. The post-excavation analysis was initiated by the director, Jenny Compton, and carried out *gratis* by accepted professionals.

In early 2016, Steven Bednarski of the Herstmonceux Projects and Director of Medieval Studies at St Jerome's University, Waterloo, Ontario, approached the author with a view to producing a report. Consequently, with help from Jenny Compton and support from colleagues, this report was produced.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin and historic development of Herstmonceux Castle and estate has been the subject of extensive and detailed consideration,

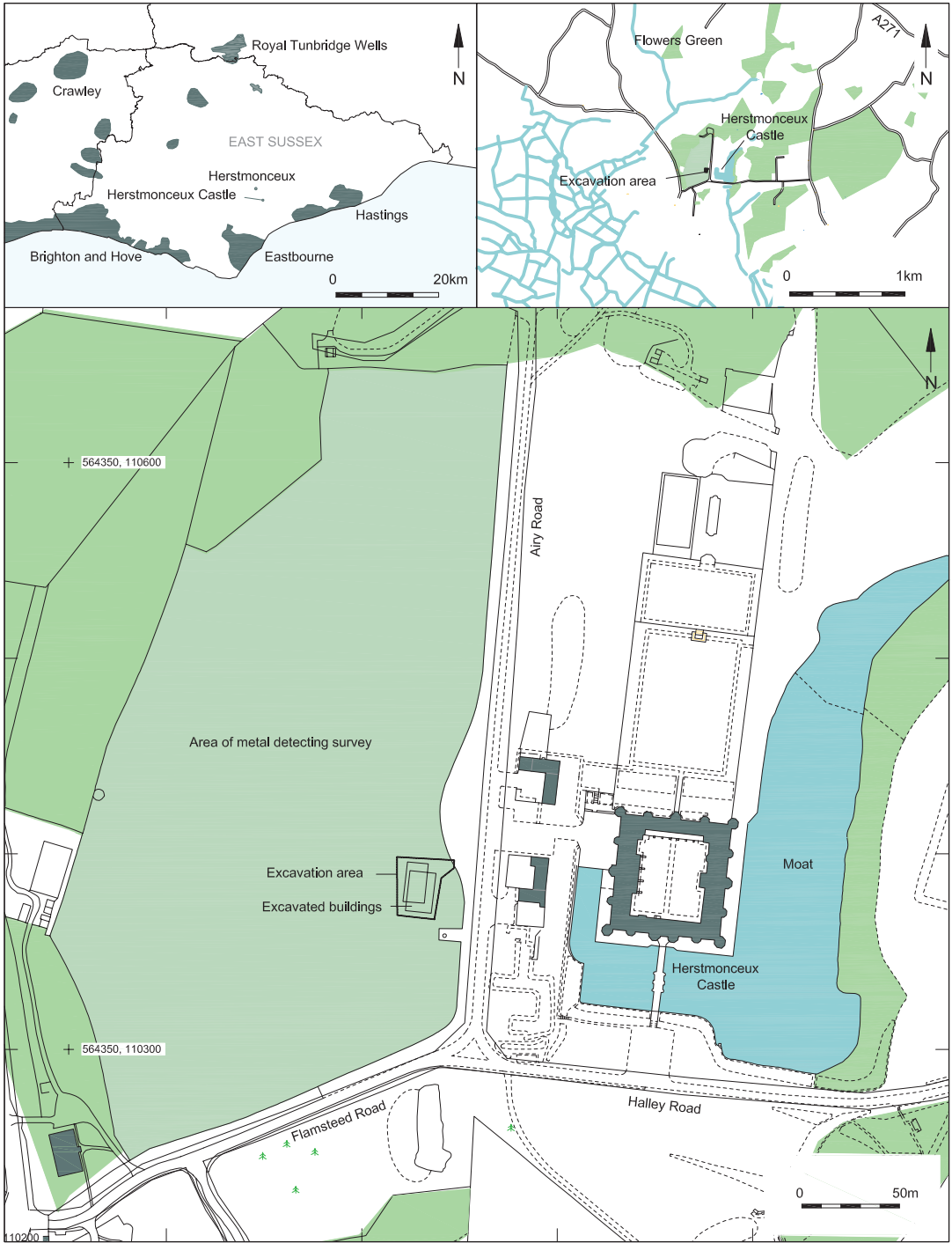


Fig. 1. Site location.

more recently by Calvert and Martin (1994) and online at historicensegland.org.uk and need not be discussed in detail here.

However, it is necessary to put the excavations into an historic and archaeological context and to that end a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) and at East Sussex Record Office, the results of which are tabulated and expanded upon in the full excavation report for the site, 2016.

That the field in which the site is located has always played a part in the life of the castle and grounds is clear. The HER locates it within an area of medieval, post-medieval and modern development, presumably originating from the activities of the successive lords of Herstmonceux manor and their retainers.

Although the extent attached to an inquisition post-mortem of 1360 (TNA C135/151/14) describes a manor house here, there is no guarantee that the present castle was built on the same site; indeed, it seems likely that it lay in close proximity to the church on the west side of Church Road (Christopher Whittick pers. comm.).

When the castle was constructed by Roger Fiennes in the 1440s, the field would have been enclosed within the park pale, the western extent of which is considered to have been the eastern side of Church Road, as indicated by the Sussex Archaeological Society's Herstmonceux tenement analysis (ESRO HBR 9/23/2, 9/23/76).

The manorial survey of 1683 (ESRO XA/18/1) excludes the demesne, while the earliest cartographic evidence drawn at a scale capable of showing the building is Yeakell and Gardner's survey of Sussex, 1778–83. It shows the area of the excavation occupied by an orchard, with no sign of any building, a depiction repeated by the survey of 1793–6 for the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (ESRO AMS 6008/2/1/4).

The Herstmonceux Tithe survey of 1839 (ESRO TD/E 89) shows the area devoid of buildings and divided up into two arable enclosures (1659 and 1689) of about six acres, each called Old Hop Garden, with a large meadow, Church Hill (1607) to their east and north.

The 1st Edition 25in. Ordnance Survey map of 1874 shows the same area as a single open expanse, except for a clump of brush within the broad area of the site and no sign of the (earlier) arable enclosures or of any buildings, a depiction followed by all subsequent editions.

The lack of cartographic evidence demands recourse to written material. In 1776, Dr William Burrell took extracts from a survey of the manor of Herstmonceux, made on 23 August 1570. The original, then in the hands of Robert Hare of Herstmonceux Place, has not been seen since, but Burrell's extracts (BL Add MS 5679 f. 563, printed by Parry 1833) describe the castle's outbuildings as well as the main structure.

The survey names the park keeper as Thomas Cardyff. He rented two fields of 3½ acres called The Keepers Crofts, perhaps to be identified with the enclosures shown on the tithe map. The estate included

'a lodge covered with thatch, and a stable very ruinous in timber and covering, wherein the keeper now lieth. There are besides the manor house of Herstmonceux other edifices, namely an old stable, forge and slaughterhouse, without the moat. There is a fair barn, a stable and a mansion house near adjoining, lying together with a court and curtilage near the park pale, between the church lyten of the west and the park east, and the great Hebney south, used by the lord's bailiff for hay. There is also one little house with a curtilage adjacent to the church on the west.'

At least some of these buildings, notably the barn, stable and mansion house, were almost certainly on the west side of Church Road, but it seems likely that the remainder of the description encompasses the site of the excavated building.

An inventory made of the castle in 1662 for Francis Lord Dacre (TNA PROB 4/9634, discussed in ESRO HBR 9/23/32), recorded a clock house, granary, milk house and stable along with a list of other service rooms, but these were almost certainly housed within the castle walls.

Further mention of a stable occurs in a description by Francis Grose (1785), based on observations made in 1777, but clearly refers to a room within the structure of the castle: 'The left side of the south front, beyond the great gatehouse, is occupied by a long waste room, like a gallery in old times, and seems as if intended for a stable.'

'THE STABLE'

Although the castle itself has gone through multiple ownerships, occupancies and extensive restoration projects since the early 20th century, the field in which the excavation site sits appears to have

remained largely undeveloped and is generally used for pasture, except during the month of August, when it is turned into a campsite for re-enactors participating in the annual Medieval Fair within the castle grounds.

It is certain that, prior to 1996, there had been no archaeological investigation of ‘the stable’ area and that, until trial excavations by Leach revealed the north end of the Phase 1 and Phase 1a footprint, there was no tangible indication of a building or buildings in the immediate vicinity, although it is generally accepted that the service side of the castle was to the west.

In 2001, a systematic metal detecting survey of the field, undertaken as part of the excavation project, produced a mixed assemblage of material from the topsoil only. While some of the finds date from the 18th to 20th century and are most probably related to agricultural activity and the more recent use of the field as a campsite, a concentration of 17th-century items also recovered undoubtedly relates to activity associated with the excavated buildings. The distribution plots of the objects found, and a full listing of them, forms part of the archive.

Unfortunately the survey was unable to provide evidence for buried archaeological features within the wider area of the site and it remains uncertain whether there were any other service buildings within the field.

THE RESULTS

By the close of fieldwork in 2003, an area of about 22m by 27m had been excavated to reveal the footprints of a multi-phased building below two topsoil overburdens with a combined thickness of 0.16m–0.45m (context 1 and 2) and a total of 236 contexts located above and cutting into the natural geology (Figs 2 and 3).

The bulk of the contexts included the outline features of the building(s), comprising *in situ* brick and stone footings, walls and trenches. Evidence for internal dividing walls, flooring, post-holes, gullies and the remains of five, predominantly brick-built drains was also present.

In addition, several horizontal deposits were either sandwiched between the overburdens and building remains (contexts 7 and 42) or located along the east and west edges of the site,

outside the footprint (contexts 65, 66, 129, and 162) (see Fig. 4). In the main, these consisted of shallow (about 50mm to 150mm) spreads/layers of one or more of the following: crushed ceramic building material, collapsed masonry, mortar, burnt debris and late 17th- to early 18th-century artefacts (predominantly metalwork). These were interpreted as relating to demolition events, except context 129, the composition of which suggested either a primary or secondary location for midden material.

During the metal detecting survey, context 129 was discovered to extend westwards, beyond the limits of the excavation, into the surrounding field, from where the remains of a discarded, probable 17th-century bridle were recovered within an associated ‘tight scatter of copper-alloy buckles and leather decorations’ (Barber 2003a). This context also produced a pottery assemblage dominated by mid-late 17th- to early 18th-century earthenware jars and German stoneware and the bulk of animal bone from the site (Sibun 2003).

Altogether, nine classes of finds were retrieved during the project, the largest groups being metalwork and ceramic building material with the remainder made up of smaller assemblages of pottery, clay tobacco pipes, glass, coins, stone and bone, little of it found within secure or sealed contexts.

Although some of the dateable assemblages contained items that spanned the Romano-British period to the present day, the bulk of the archaeological material appears to suggest a possible function and date for the building and also hints at day-to-day activities. The relatively large quantities of metalwork were dominated by equestrian-related finds which can best be placed within the late 16th/early 17th to mid-18th centuries, while the post-medieval pottery assemblage was from around 1650–1700/1720. The clay tobacco pipes fell predominantly between around 1640 and the early 18th century.

While the finds analysis considered that a proportion of the material probably came from the excavated site, some finds will have originated from, or relate to, the castle as a consequence of its dismantling during the latter part of the 18th century.



Fig. 2. Photograph of excavation looking NNE (source: site archive).

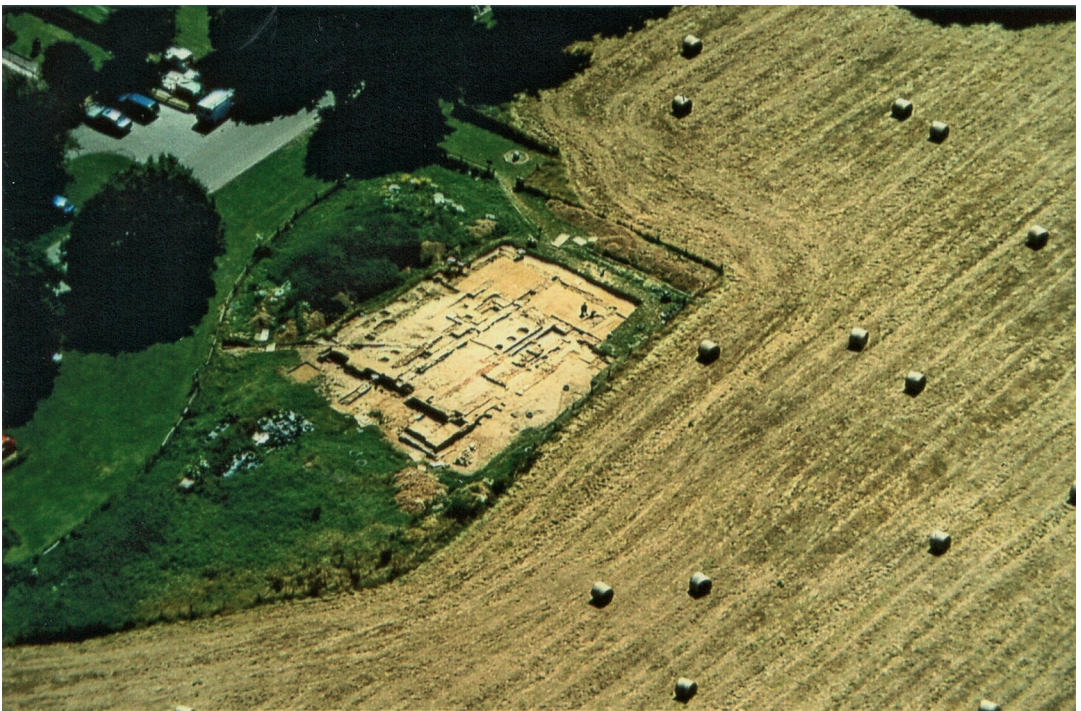


Fig. 3. Aerial photograph of fully-excavated site taken from the NW (source: site archive).

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE
EXCAVATED BUILDINGS

by David and Barbara Martin,
with additions by Philippa Whitehill

This phasing report was produced in 2003 and submitted to East Sussex Record Office (HBR 1/1492). An additional technical description of the excavated foundations and drains, arranged phase by phase, forms part of the site archive.

PHASE 1 (MID/LATE 17TH OR EARLY 18TH CENTURY)

Measuring about 19.85m by 6.5m, the earliest structure located by the excavations was a rectangular building, in the main represented by the below-ground foundations of three walls to the east, west and south (contexts 3, 112/ 113/ 156, 196, 197) (see Figs 4 and 5). Of the north wall, nothing remains but its alignment can be interpreted by the northern end of the west wall and the north wall of the Phase 1a building.

To compensate for the south–north fall of the site, the base of the foundations incorporates brickwork steps, thus the below-floor brickwork increased in height towards the north end of the building.

Both the east and west walls (contexts 3 and 112) survive in part along their course and are fully bonded to the southern wall (contexts 196 and 197).

The scant remains of a brick partition/cross wall (context 26), straight jointed to the east wall and located roughly halfway along the length, suggests the ground-floor internal space was divided into two rooms. Midway along the east elevation, issuing from the external wall face immediately to the south of the partition, was a brick-built drain (context 4), heading north-east towards the low ground.

Whether this drained the interior of the building via a dished gully in the floor and an outlet through the brick wall, or served a gutter collecting rainwater from the roof is unclear, for the floor and upper levels of the foundation walls had been destroyed at this point. A second drainage channel of similar construction (context 110) is clearly located within the southern room, aligned parallel to the western wall, draining northwards.

The southern end of the drain survives and is located about six metres to the north of the southern wall's internal face. Although the northern end has all but disappeared, it is possible to see on the ground a faint trace of its progress

extending north, possibly for the length of the building, where it is presumed it would have issued out through the north wall to the low land beyond.

Little information on the ground survives to indicate doorways but there were two discrete 'breaks' towards the north end of the east and west walls that may point to these being possible locations for them.

Internally, the floor levels were at least partially made up to compensate for the slope of the site, although whether this was sufficient to give a completely level floor is unclear. Only in the south-west corner of the southern room does anything of the Phase 1 floor survive, and even this is restricted to a small spread of mortar (context 198), presumably the bedding for some form of paved surface.

The below-ground brickwork increases in width towards the base, stepping out on both faces. Although no walls survive above original floor level, parts of the substructure walls do stand above the original external ground surface, giving an indication of the thickness of the ground-floor superstructure walls.

At ground-floor level both the eastern and western side walls measure 380 mm in width, being one-and-a-half bricks thick. Thus, the walls are not overly sturdy for a building of this size, although there could be several reasons for this. It could be an indication of the late date of the building (the thickness of brick walls tends to be reduced in later periods), or it may indicate that the structure was single storeyed, or that the walls supported a timber frame with its soleplate located either just above floor level or at first-floor level. Which of these was the case is now impossible to tell.

That the thickness was not influenced by economy is suggested by the southern end wall (contexts 196 and 197), which at approximate floor level is twice the thickness of the side walls, measuring three-bricks (820 mm) wide. One explanation for this thickness of the south wall may be that, whereas the side walls were either totally or partially timber-framed, the end gable was of brick for its full height, an arrangement seen in some standing buildings of the late 17th to early 18th century.

Of particular significance is the fact that the surviving above-ground brickwork in the west elevation is laid in Flemish bond, expensive and used for display, while that in the east elevation is

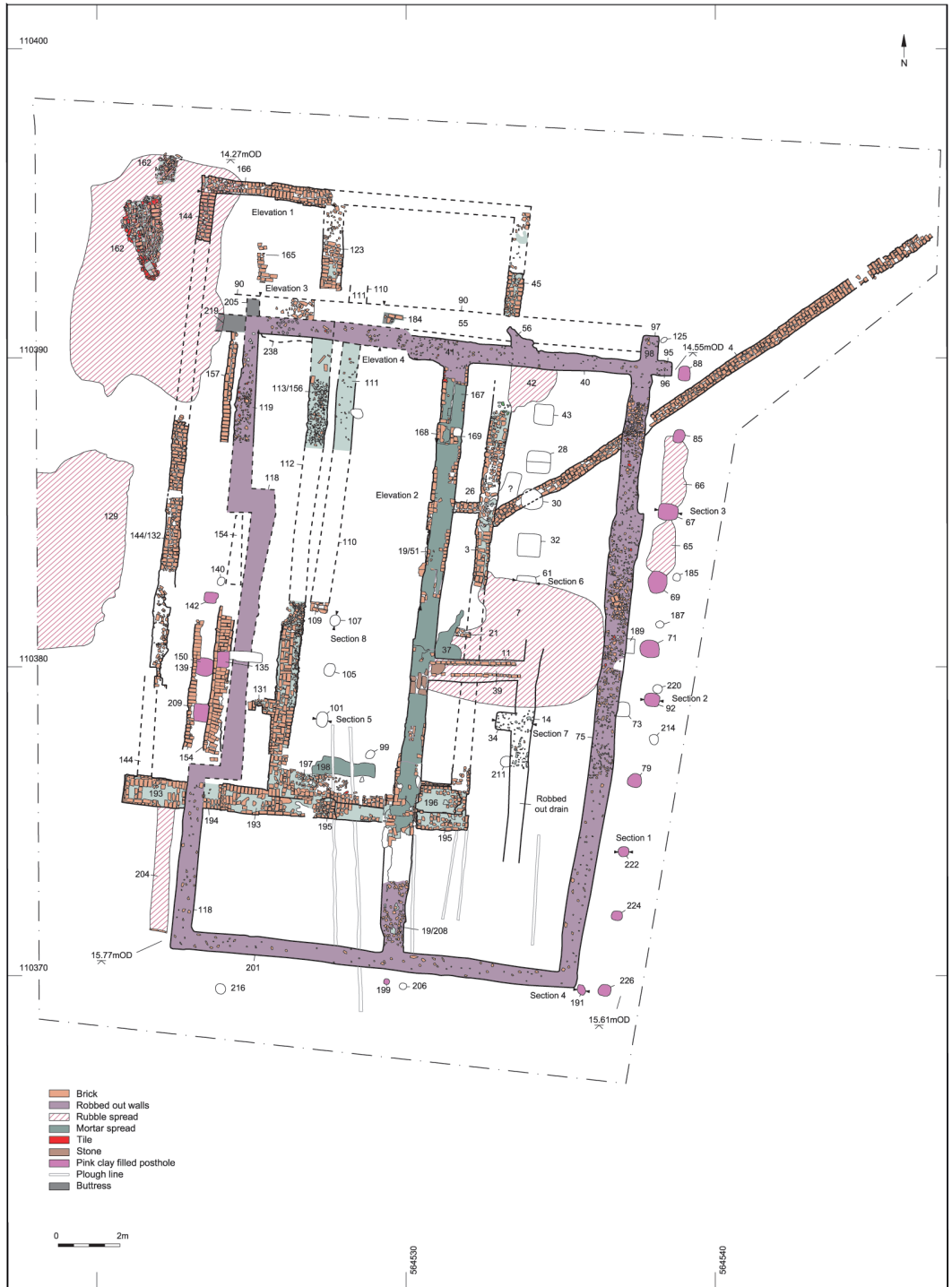


Fig. 4. Excavation plan.

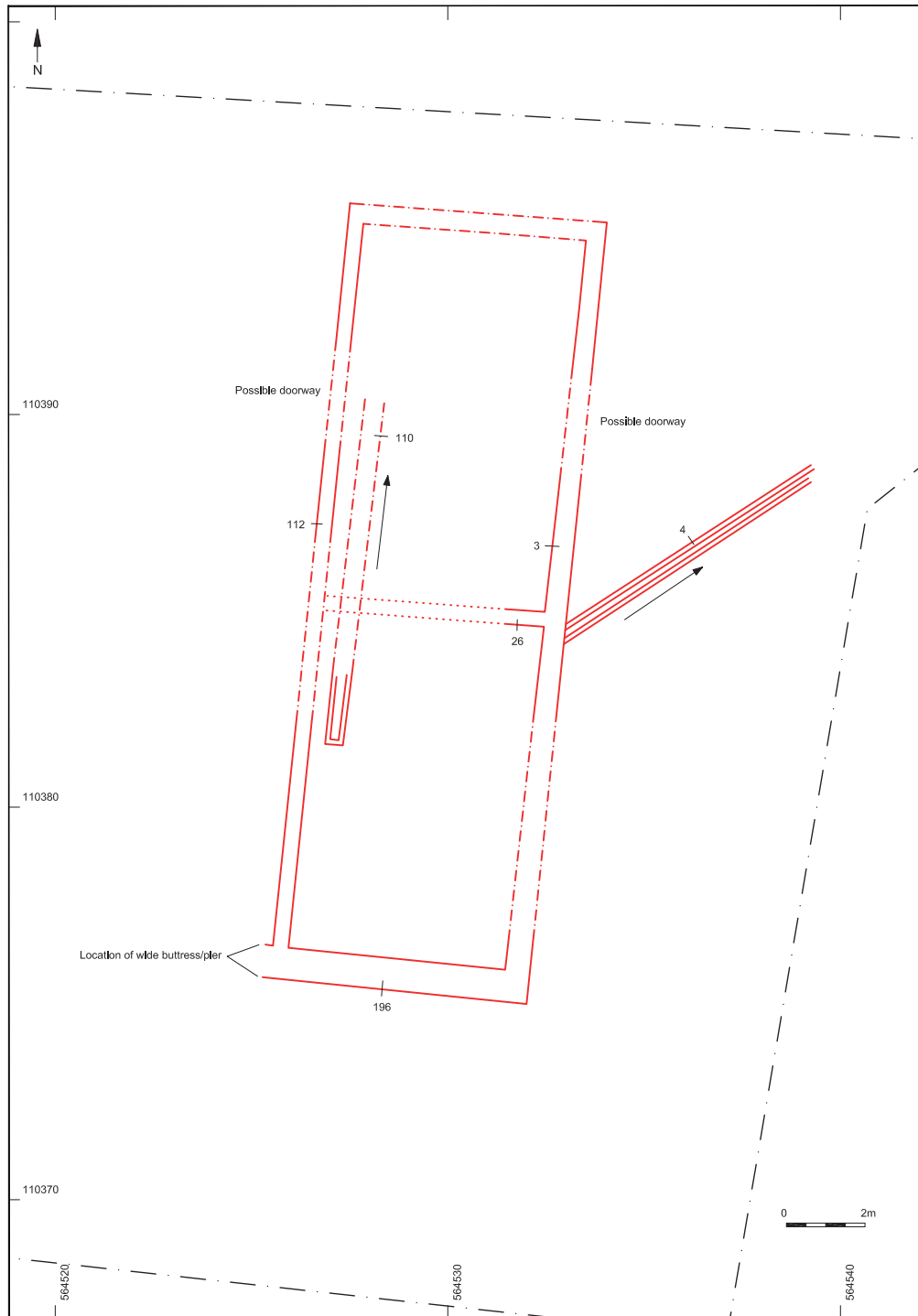


Fig. 5. Phase 1 plan (D. and B. Martin 2003).

in English bond. Where this variation in bond is seen in surviving buildings of the period, the more expensive Flemish bond is always found within the principal facade.

Thus, although it is the east elevation which faces the castle, albeit the service side, it would appear that it was the west elevation (and perhaps the south elevation too) which was visible at close quarters to people of status. There are other indications which reinforce this impression (*see* Phase 2 below). However, it should be stressed that so little of the above-ground eastern wall survives that it is possible that the wall reverted to Flemish bond at a slightly higher level, and thus the apparent variation may be misleading.

Although the east and south walls met without a buttress, the southern end of the west elevation is scarred where a substantial, 0.61m wide, westward projection was cut off during construction of the Phase 1a additions. This projection probably took the form of a buttress. An alternative interpretation may be that it supported the southern end of a first-floor jetty which extended along the west elevation.

Against this is the likely late date of the building. Flemish-bonded brickwork was not introduced until the early 17th century and was used only occasionally before the late 17th century, which is too late for the use of a jetty. Therefore, the possibility that the extant brickwork represents later underbuilding and that a brick gable was added to a once fully timber-framed building cannot be ruled out; the new brickwork would have destroyed the earlier walls upon the same alignment.

PHASE 1A (EARLY 18TH CENTURY)

Phase 1a (*see* Fig. 6) represents a period of enlargement, at which time the projecting buttress/pier at the southern end of the west elevation of Phase 1 was removed and the building was widened by approximately four metres along the full length of its west elevation. Although the east-west span of the extension is not great, it is nonetheless too wide to represent the addition of a lean-to outshut. Even so, it would seem to be too narrow to be covered by a roof aligned parallel with that of the earlier main range. It would therefore be unwise to suggest a likely period 1a roof layout.

A further modification carried out as part of the Phase 1a works was the refacing or remodelling of the south elevation (contexts 193, 194 and 195), presumably to give a unified front to the building

when viewed from the main entrance road leading to the castle. However, this new facade to the existing part did not appear to take the form of a simple refacing, but the planting-on of a further two-and-a-half brick (600mm) thickness of wall.

Given that the southern wall of the new addition was even more massive in its construction, being three bricks, or 765mm wide, and that the overall thickness of the combined Phase 1 and Phase 1a southern wall measures approximately 1.40m, the likelihood must be that the Phase 1 southern wall was entirely demolished to floor level and the new Phase 1a wall carried through at a consistent 765mm thickness, partially oversailing the southern edge of the earlier foundation.

Evidence to support this is that, along a large part of its length, the northern face of the Phase 1 foundation has been roughly hacked away, although it should be stressed that the date at which this occurred is unknown.

As with the Phase 1 south wall, the western end of the Phase 1a south wall (context 193) likewise projects slightly proud of the west elevation to form a wide, shallow, buttress (also context 193). With this phase, too, there is no corresponding projection at the eastern end of the wall, nor at the north-western corner. There are other similarities between the Phase 1 and Phase 1a work in that there is a similar variation in wall thicknesses. Despite the 765mm thickness of the south wall's superstructure, the surviving upper levels of the west and north foundations measure only 380mm wide, or 1½ bricks, although, as with the south wall, they do step out below ground level to give a slightly greater width, as is normal practice in the 17th century and later. The base of the foundations steps down quite steeply towards the north-western corner to take account of the rapid fall in ground level. (Fig. 7, Elevation 1).

Lying on the low-level ground surface in this area is a tumbled fragment of the superstructure wall from the west elevation (context 162). It measures only one brick thick (240mm), suggesting that it originated from the first-floor level. Walls of this period often reduce in width on the internal face at the level of the first-floor joists, although the one-brick thickness at this level suggests an 18th century, rather than an earlier date for this phase.

The wall fragment is built in English bond, as too are the fair-faced above-ground external

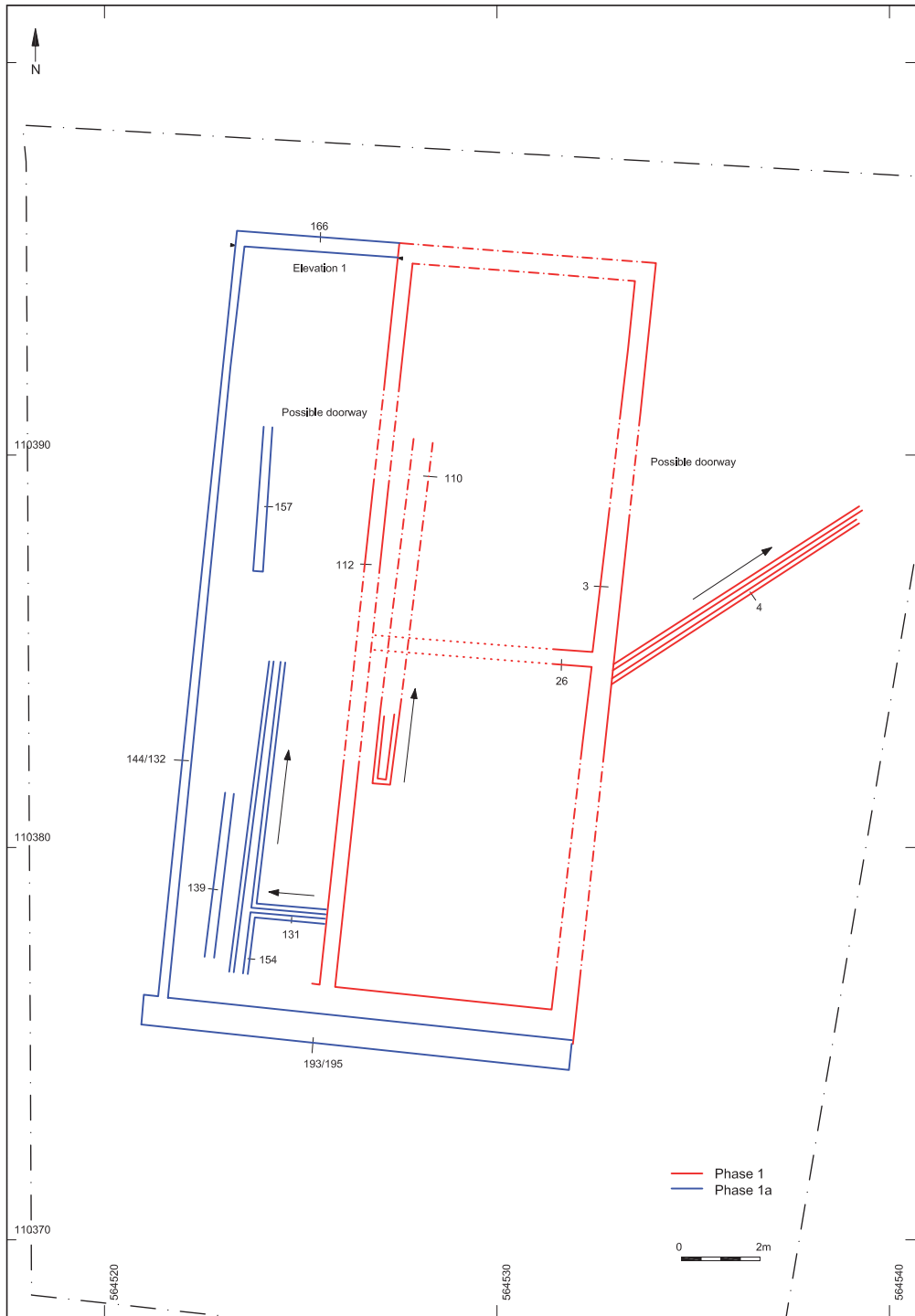


Fig. 6. Phase 1a plan (D. and B. Martin 2003).

elevations of the north and west foundations. Below the tumbled superstructure walling is a thick destruction layer of tile (context 162), indicating that the roofs were clad in plain clay tiles.

No information could be recovered regarding the location of doorways giving access to the Phase 1a building, but that might be due to the possible doorways of Phase 1 still being in use.

Internally the extension contains two isolated fragments of one-brick internal partition and two fragments of drain (contexts 139, 157, 131 and 154 respectively; see Fig. 6). Both sections of partition are aligned north–south and positioned to give a passage-like area to the west, and a stall-like area to the east. They do not, however, align precisely with one another and are therefore unlikely to be fragments of the same wall.

A little to the east of, and running parallel to, the southern section of partition are the remains of a brick-lined drain (context 154), with a main fall towards the low ground to the north of the building.

Only a relatively short length of drain survives, the sections to north and south having been destroyed by the west wall of the Phase 2 building. Being a brick-sided drain, rather than a scoop in the floor, it was presumably intended to be covered, perhaps by some form of capping, with the floor running over it.

To the east are the slight remains of what appears to be a spur drain (context 131), extending up to the Phase 1 western wall.

PHASE 2 (MID-18TH CENTURY)

Rather than carry out further improvements to the existing building, during Phase 2 the entire Phase 1 and Phase 1a structure was demolished down to ground level and rebuilt upon roughly the same site, displaced slightly to the south and east (Fig. 8).

Construction of the Phase 2 building

A number of pink-coloured post-holes (see Fig. 4.) were revealed, aligned north–south on the east side of the site, parallel with the eastern wall of the Phase 2 building at a distance of approximately 0.9–1m from it, aligned east–west along the south side of the site (parallel to context 201) and north–south alongside the Phase 2 west wall/context 118. These are distinct from post-holes (28), (30), (32), (34), (43), (61), (101), (105), (107) and (211) (see Fig. 8), interpreted as relating to internal structures. See Fig. 9. for examples of the two types of post-hole.

The pink-coloured post-holes typically measured about 0.5 m by 0.4 m, ranged in depth between 0.20m to 0.5m and contained a fill of pink-coloured clay, either lining the internal face or capping the post-holes, or mixed in with rubble soil.

The southern and western groups are fewer in number than those on the eastern side of the building, but it is unclear why this should be so. The eastern alignment is set at centres which measure, on average, 2.1–2.4m apart. It is almost certain they relate to scaffolding needed for the construction of the Phase 2 building and they are omitted from the outline reconstruction (Fig. 8).

The new building took the form of a double-pile, rectangular block with the two ends of the west elevation pulled forward in the form of slightly projecting wings. When this building was itself subsequently demolished, the foundation of the central spine wall (context 19/51) was retained *in situ*, but the foundations of all other walls (contexts, 40, 75, 118, 201), except for fragments of northern buttresses, were totally grubbed up and are thus evidenced today by robber trenches only. It is therefore impossible to obtain precise dimensions. Approximate external dimensions are 20.8m long north–south, with a south elevation of about 12.5m and a north elevation of about 13.1m.

The northern and southern wings (located midway along context 118) which project from the west elevation each measure approximately 6.2–6.4m wide north–south, with the central set-back section between them measuring about 8.3m long.

To judge from the robber trenches, the wings did not project the same distance; the southern wing was brought forward of the central section by approximately 0.6m, the northern by approximately 0.8m.

The spine wall running through the building north–south is set centre span of the building's width, taken across the recessed central section. Apart from the spine wall, no clear evidence of internal partitions was found, although two rows of post-holes aligned north–south along the centre line of each of the east (contexts 28, 30, 32, 34, 43, 61 and 211) and west (contexts 101, 105 and 107) (see Fig. 4; Fig. 9, 5–8) parts may indicate posts set beneath spine beams.

Positioned at approximately 1.3–1.6m centres, they may have delineated stall divisions. However, it should be stressed that their allocation to phase 2 is based solely upon their relationship to this building;

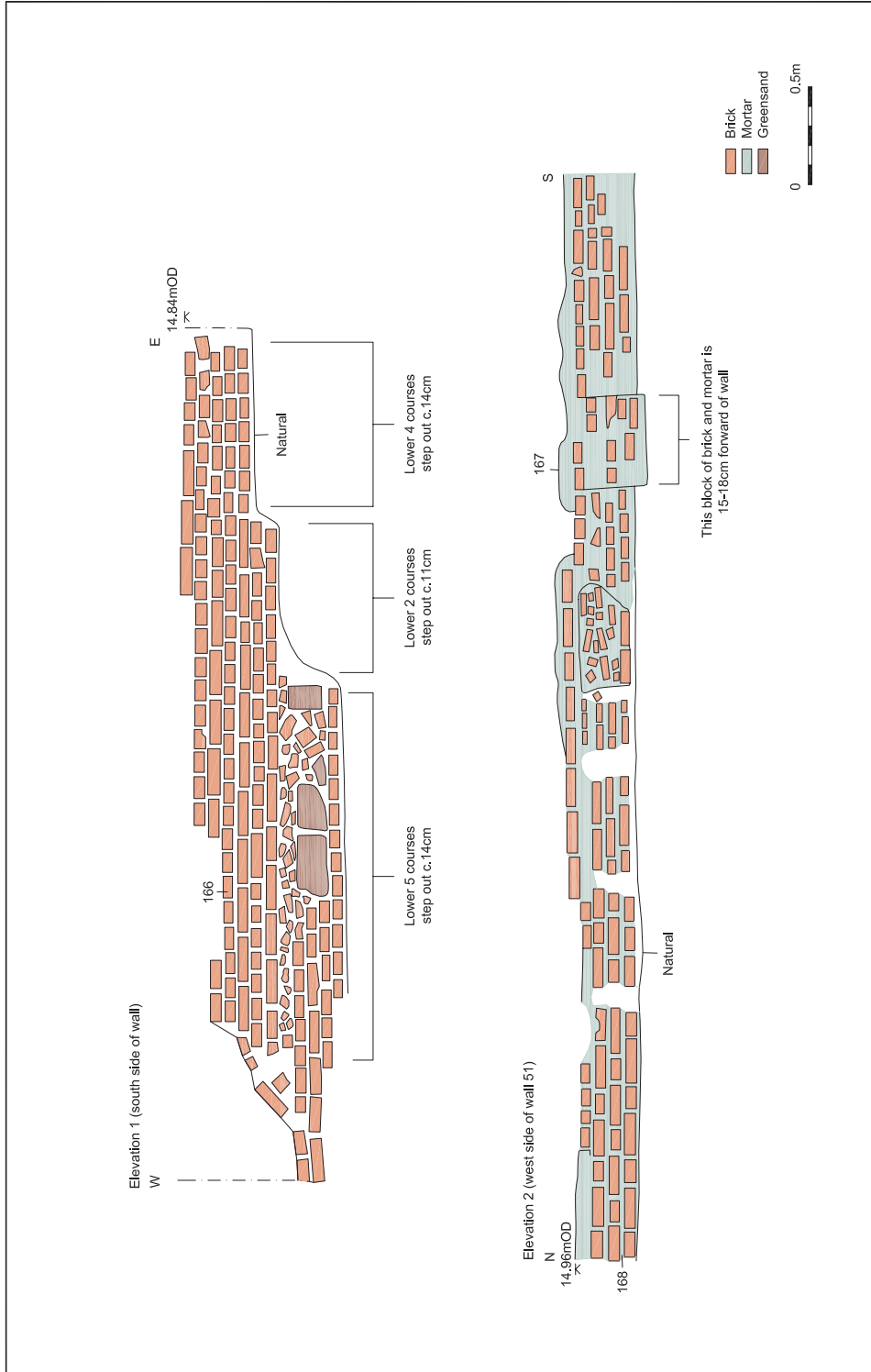


Fig. 7. Elevations 1 and 2.

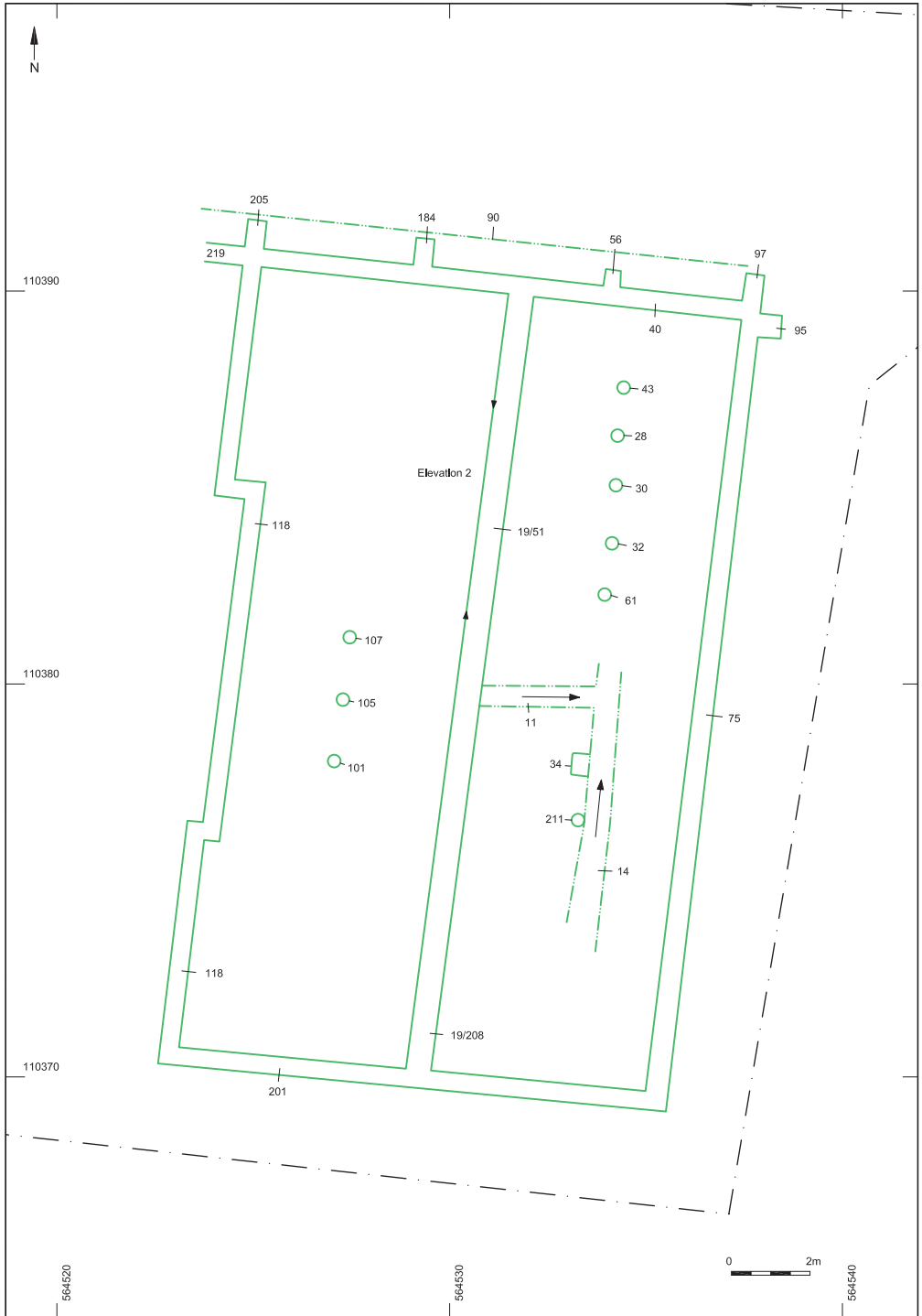


Fig. 8. Phase 2 Plan (D. and B. Martin, 2003).

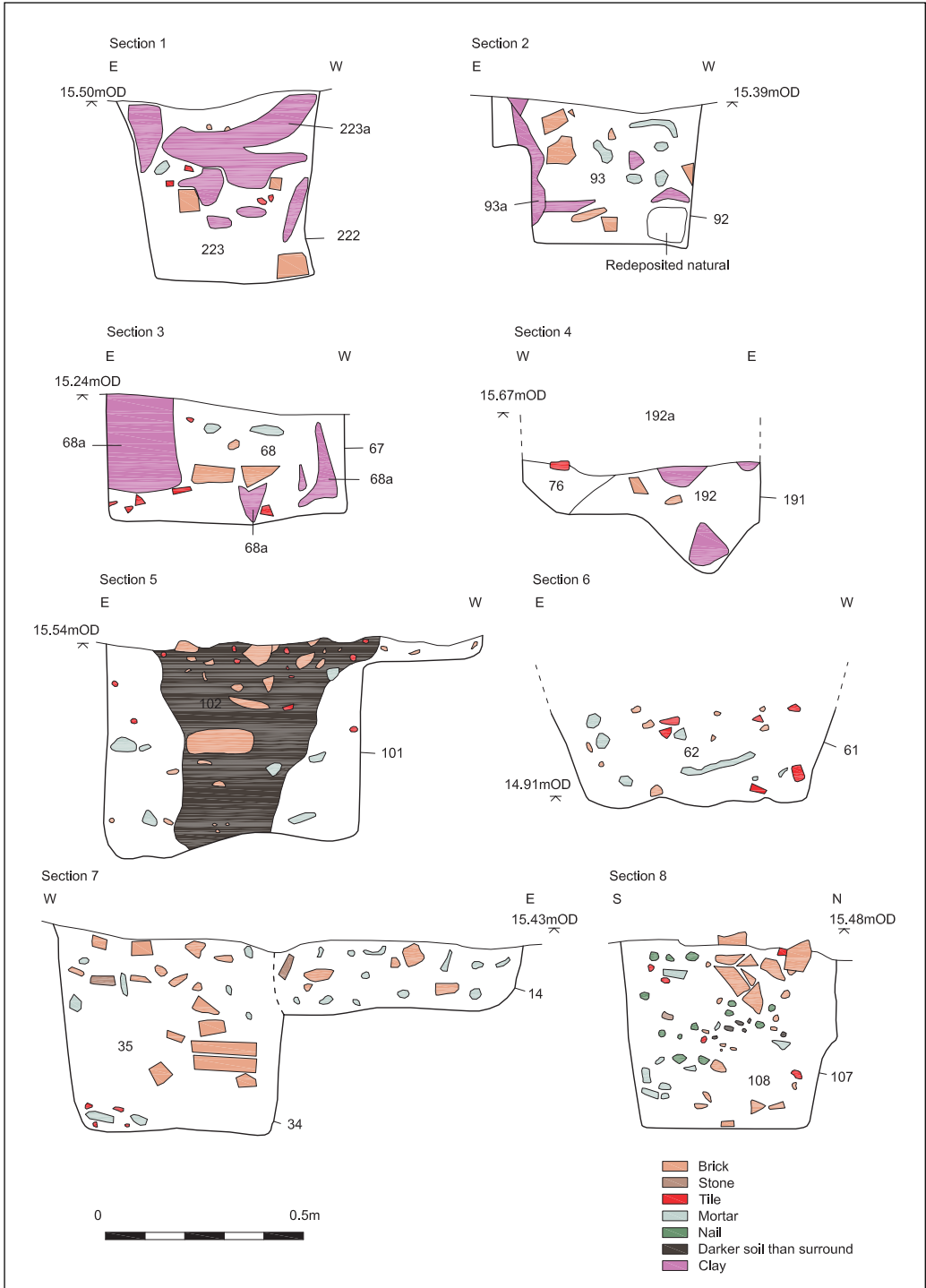


Fig. 9. Post-hole sections.

they could date from Phase 1 and if so, they are likely to be associated with scaffolding.

Curiously, the spine wall sits upon a foundation made up of two rows of re-used sections of Phase 1 or Phase 1a mortar-bonded brick wall (contexts 168 and 169), mostly 1½ bricks wide, three-four courses high, and ranging in length from 0.4m to 1m (Fig. 7; elevation 2).

Overall, they give a foundation which measures 0.75m wide, although the western edge is very ragged in places, due to sections only one brick wide within the western half. The re-used sections of wall are neatly laid into the trench but are not mortar bonded. Although this arrangement sounds structurally unsound, the surviving sections of new brickwork which it supports show no signs of settlement or cracking. Sufficient superstructure of the Phase 2 spine wall survives to indicate that it measured 0.65m wide at its base. However, being slightly below floor level, the faces may have been stepped-in above this point to give a superstructure wall of slightly less width. Even so, it is unlikely to have been less than two bricks in width.

As with the earlier phases, little or no definitive information could be recovered regarding the location of doorways giving access to the Phase 2 building.

The only other sections of Phase 2 brickwork to remain are buried fragments of buttresses built against the northern face of the north wall (see Fig. 10). These were left *in situ*, but isolated, when the foundation of the northern wall (within robber trench/context 40) was grubbed out to its full depth.

At this point a wide drain/sunken area of paving (contexts 90 and 91), considered contemporaneous with the Phase 2 building, extended along the external (north) face of the wall. Thus, for more than 12 courses of its height, and perhaps as many as 20 courses, the base of the north wall of the Phase 2 building doubled as a retaining wall for the drain.

No evidence survives to suggest what the primary use of the drain/sunken area of paving was, but it is possible that it was used as a retainer for liquid (water storage?). If so, the constant state of damp against the north wall and the weight of earth behind it (i.e. below ground level within the building) would have necessitated a method of strengthening, hence the need for the buttresses.

The most complete of the buttresses, context 184, (see Figs 10 and 11), revealed in full below rubble

backfill/context 55, is located towards the centre of the north wall. It is two-bricks (0.5m) wide and projects by 0.63m at its base. The front face of the buttress steps in slightly at each course so that, 13 courses above the base at its greatest extant height, it projects by only 0.24m from the projected face of the wall. Thus, by floor level the buttress would have battered back to nothing. Both this buttress and the remains of that at the north-western corner (context 205), incorporate a small drainage opening through their base (Fig. 11).

The buttresses at the north-eastern end of the wall had been robbed, but the system of drainage below them remains *in situ*, matching that at the north-western end.

Prior to demolition of the building, the drain/paved area (90), (91), had been backfilled up to ground level (context 55), at which time a narrow drain with a stone slab base was formed over the earlier brick paving. This re-used the openings in the buttresses.

A second method of drainage was noted: a series of small gullies (contexts 170, 172, 176, 178, 180, 228, 229, 232; Fig. 10), randomly spaced and north-south aligned along the bottom of the brick paved area, the most complete of which was located at the north-western end of the big drain area, below context 205. It is unclear whether they were dug just prior to the backfilling of the drain/paved area or were there when it was open and in use, but when discovered it was obvious that they had remained open and in use beneath the backfill, as they appeared not to have been filled in.

It is interesting to note that one gully (context 232), abutting the west side of the most complete buttress (context 184), appeared to be lined with timber (Context 233 Fig. 10). The timber was concave in section. The other 'gullies' did not contain similar linings, but pieces of timber were excavated from the area around them.

The remains of further drains were found within the building (Fig. 4). The principal of these (context 14) had been entirely robbed out and was only evidenced by its impression in the ground. It ran northwards down the centre of the eastern of the building's two halves, slightly offset towards the east of the 'room'.

A spur drain (context 11/39), extends westwards from it, as far as the central spine wall. This survives in far better condition and has a brick base and half-brick side walls which survive to a height of



Fig. 10. Plan of drain.

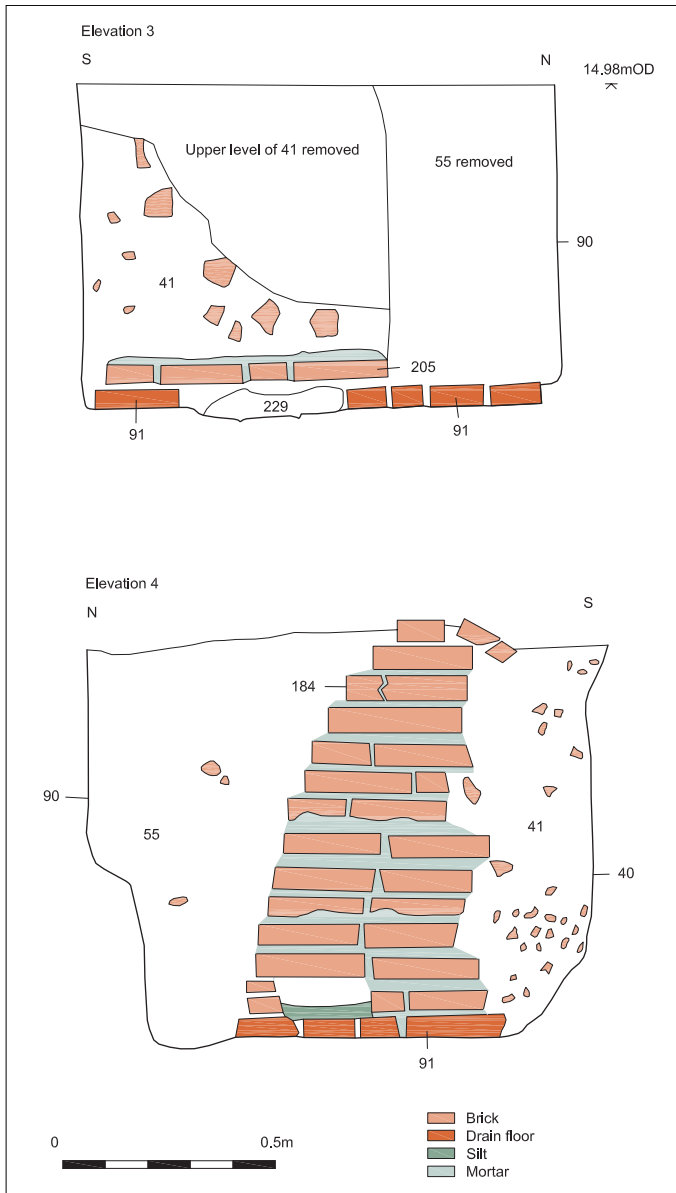


Fig. 11. Elevations 3 and 4.

one course only. The internal width of the drain is 280–320 mm. At the extreme western end, hard against the spine wall, the base is formed by a large slab of stone. Whether this was placed here to avoid the subsidence of the drain's base where it was laid over the backfill to the foundation trench, or to avoid erosion at the base of a downpipe draining

the central valley of the building, is unknown.

As with the brick-built drains of Phase 1 and Phase 1a, both drains were almost certainly capped by cover slabs, with the floor running continuously over them. There are likely to have been other drains, but, like the floors, these have not survived.

DISCUSSION

When attempting to create a picture of the stable site and its immediate environs before and after the construction of the castle, we can draw upon the evidence gleaned from the excavation and the information extrapolated from available documentation.

The documentary and cartographic evidence has been useful in determining a predominantly agrarian economy within the immediate landscape of the castle from before the 1440s (as is suggested by the 14th-century inquisition post-mortem) until fairly recently, if relying on the manorial survey of 1683 (ESRO XA/18/1). By combining the information given by the HER we can say with a degree of certainty that the church of All Saints and a smattering of farmsteads would have been established by and during the 14th century, with settlement patterns remaining more or less the same up to the late 17th century, with the addition of dwellings close to the church.

Frustratingly, as none of the earlier documents/surveys mentioned were accompanied by plans, we cannot know for certain whether there were any buildings located within the field under discussion until the construction of Phase 1.

That said, and despite the lack of archaeological evidence on the ground, the existence of a timber-framed structure, pre-dating the interpreted stable

cannot be discounted. The evidence associated with posts and beam slots would have been easily destroyed by the construction of something as substantial as the Phase 1 building.

What is clear, however, is that the field in which the site is located was subject to agricultural activity either before and/or after the construction of the phased building. While it cannot be proved that the small assemblage of chalk present was the result of marling, several plough ruts recorded across the site (Fig. 4) and the abraded nature of some of the pottery collected would attest to this, as would the cartographic evidence, at least since the Tithe map of 1839.

It is not known why the stable buildings were constructed on this spot. It may simply be that other service buildings were located on the west side of the castle.

It has been suggested that at least the first two phases of the stable block were likely to have been fairly grandiose, due to the extant Flemish bond brickwork of the western elevation of Phase 1 and the substantial foundation of the southern end of Phase 1a.

The presence of one of the principal, and possibly original entrances to the park, Flamsteed Road, about 85 m to the southwest (Fig. 1), may indicate why the southern ends of the buildings were designed to impress.

Flamsteed Road runs past the stable to the castle's southern gate/drawbridge and is described in a letter of 1752 by Horace Walpole as 'a brave old avenue to the church, with ships sailing on our left hand' (Horsfield 1834). Although there is little remaining of the Phase 2 foundations to tell whether this, too, was impressive in appearance, it would also have been visible from the road, unless screened off by trees or demolished by 1752, and therefore also likely to have had a grand appearance, at its southern end at least.

THE BUILDINGS

by David and Barbara Martin

There seems little doubt that both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings discovered by the excavations probably represent the stable and possibly a coach house, which was known not to have been housed within the castle, perhaps incorporating other uses, particularly on the first floor. A clock house, granary, milk house and stable are all included in the 17th-century Dacre inventory.

For an easily accessible and good indication of the size and grandeur of the stable buildings associated with houses of the gentry and aristocracy see Christopher Powell, *Stables and Stable Blocks* (Shire 1991), which also gives a clear indication of the wide variation in plan forms used. They vary from very long, single-pile ranges (often with slightly projecting end wings or broken-forward central pediments), to double-pile blocks and courtyard buildings. Many incorporated a cupola housing a clock, bell or both.

Parallels

Although large, having overall ground-floor areas of 129m² (Phase 1), 215m² (Phase 1a) and 260m² (Phase 2), in comparison to some stable blocks both phases of buildings at Herstmonceux are relatively modest. For example, the larger Phase 2 building is slightly smaller in length and width than the mid-18th century combined coach house and stable serving lawyer Thomas Medley's relatively modest three-storeyed mansion at Buxted Park, East Sussex.

The Buxted coach house and stable has a ground-floor area of approximately 300m². The original internal layout of its ground floor is known from a detailed plan of 1798. It incorporated space for three coaches and stalls for a total of 20 coach and riding horses [ESRO HBR 1/1243].

The coach house and stable built at Kidbrooke Park, East Grinstead, by William Nevill, Lord Abergavenny around 1736 is constructed around a small, 7.95m by 8.2m central courtyard and has overall dimensions of 22.55m by 22.80m, giving an overall ground-floor area of approximately 450m². This is almost double the size of the Herstmonceux building, although it does include two entrance areas to the courtyard. As with Buxted, this too included an area for three coaches [ESRO HBR 1/1457].

A third comparative example is the combined stable and coach house at The Vyne, Hampshire, probably built in the mid-17th century by Chaloner Chute, Speaker of the House of Commons. It is a single-pile range (originally two storeys high), measuring a very impressive 39.70m long. Despite its length, being single pile, it has an overall ground-floor area of only 267m², not dissimilar to Phase 2 at Herstmonceux (Wilson, 1998).

Two further local stable blocks, neither of which have been surveyed, are worth mentioning. In Hastings Old Town survive the extensive stables

(now a theatre) of John Collier, built in the 1740s, while in Dallington the stable of the mansion called Herrings likewise still stands and formerly incorporated stabling for 20 horses as well as a coach house (ESRO ASH 2364-6). Both are two-storeyed buildings which, like the Phase 2 structure at Herstmonceux, incorporate projecting wings at the ends of their principal facade.

In comparing the size of all these buildings with those excavated at Herstmonceux it should be remembered that, although Herstmonceux Castle is, as far as is known, the largest domestic building to have been constructed in East Sussex during the late-medieval period, the wealth of its owners reduced over time.

With the building of Chevening, near Sevenoaks, Kent, by Richard Lennard, 6th Lord Dacre of the South, between 1616 and 1630, Herstmonceux became a second home. The wealth of its owners reduced still further when debts forced Thomas Lennard, 8th Lord Dacre of the South, to sell the estate. It was purchased by the lawyer, George Naylor. Thus, during this period, the castle was probably much larger than required by its owners and so, in comparison, the stables were likely to have been small. The possibility that the building only housed the stable, and that the coach house was a separate structure, must also not be overlooked.

DATING

Although the castle is a brick-built, mid-15th-century structure, there is no doubt that the extant Phase 1 brickwork is of considerably later date. This is indicated by the Flemish bond, a bond not used until the 17th century. However, it is possible that this represents brick underbuilding to an earlier timber-framed structure, and thus may not necessarily indicate the initial date of construction.

A good clue as to the date of a building is the thickness of its walls (Martin, D. and Martin, B. 1989). However, given that the Phase 1 walls may support timber framing, this is less helpful in this instance. The 1½-brick thickness of the side walls suggests a mid/late 17th-century date at the earliest, and a likely date in the early/mid-18th century, entirely consistent with the use of Flemish bond. The fallen section of superstructure wall relating to Phase 1a (context 162), is similarly slender, again suggesting the same date range.

It would therefore seem that the Phase 1 and Phase 1a brickwork was either constructed by the

Lennard family during the 17th century, or perhaps more likely by George Naylor during his ownership from 1708 until 1730. If so, this Phase 1 building stood for a very short time, for the Phase 2 structure which replaced it must itself have been demolished at the same date as the interior of the castle in 1777, if not earlier. This observation may reinforce the possibility that the Phase 1 brickwork merely represented improvements to an already existing timber-framed building.

Given the Phase 2 building's double-pile plan, an early/mid-18th century date would be very acceptable for this phase. Such a date is not inconsistent with the artefacts recovered from the wide drain/sunken area of paving (contexts 90/91), against the northern end wall of the Phase 2 building. It is therefore possible that the rebuild was undertaken by George Naylor's nephew, Francis, described as 'of St Paul, London', in a settlement of 1734, but as Francis Hare, alias Naylor of Herstmonceux, in 1743 (ESRO P23/2).

THE FINDS

The exact source of the material found on site is uncertain, since most of it comes from loosely stratified but unsealed topsoil overburdens, demolition layers/spreads and fills. It is difficult, therefore, to discuss the established status and economy of the stable solely from the finds. However, we must conclude that some of the material derived from the site as it is unlikely that two buildings, functioning during the periods interpreted, would not have accumulated artefact material somewhere within their boundaries and this appears to be indicated by the finds analysis.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The recovery of a large assemblage of ceramic building material from the site is no surprise when one considers that the *in-situ* foundations, and possibly the south and west walls of the Phase 1 and 1a structures, were of this material.

Around 7,220 pieces of unfrosted brick were recovered from 120 contexts. They comprised examples showing vitrification to one or more surfaces, as seen on some of those of the castle itself, and it is reasonable to assume that areas of the above-ground brickwork of the stable could have been constructed to mirror its exterior walls.

The origin of the brick is uncertain but may be indicated by the HER which lists a brickyard/brickmaker within the park pale (MES 29353). The 1839 Tithe Apportionment also records a house and brickyard (plot 1766) and a portion of land named brickyard field (1767a), to the south of the castle.

As bricks are considered to have been produced on the estate since the 15th century, providing for the construction of the castle (Beswick 1993), it is likely those used for the stable were also manufactured close by. Having said that, if they were not made on site, there were plenty of brickmakers operating in East Sussex at the time the stable was established, the closest being at nearby Ashburnham.

The predominantly unworked stone found on site is thought to have been used as a composite building material, especially the Upper Greensand, ironstone and sandstone, as evidenced by the north end wall of the Phase 1a building (context 166, Fig. 7). The presence of Horsham Stone, slate and flint cobbles could relate to their use as roofing and building materials.

Around 1,000 pieces of ceramic tile were found, mostly comprising peg tiles for roofing or cladding and a handful of floor tiles, generally undecorated, except for two with glazed surfaces and one bevel-edged.

Also within this assemblage were two fragments of highly decorated Delft polychrome tile (Fig. 12), found in context 119 at the southern end of the Phase 1 building. The style of the motif on both pieces, like that of late-16th-century Dutch 'Medallion' tiles, was fairly crude in its execution and therefore most likely to have been produced by a London maker in the early 17th century.

While it may seem unlikely that a stable would have been decorated by tiles of this type, it has been suggested that these fragments could have come from a demolished fire surround, possibly from a room within a stable of this status. However, the date of the fragments is earlier than that interpreted for the first phase of the excavated building and it may be that they were either re-used or redeposited on site following the 1777 demolition work at the castle.

Constructional ironwork

The assemblage of 1,458 iron nails of the 17th and 18th century recovered from the excavation site (and not from around it during the metal detector

surveys) was confidently interpreted as relating solely to the phased building.

Five types were identified, and the range would suggest heavy-duty usage, such as structural work, or assorted interior tasks such as fixing roof tiles and battens to fixing lathes. The high proportion of complete examples indicates a deliberate removal from timber during the dismantling and demolition of the buildings (Barber 2003a) (Fig. 13, 1–3).

The iron metalwork also included several pieces relating to fixtures and fittings, including a wall hook, door keys (Fig. 13, 4 and 5), part of a door bolt and lock housing, fixing staples and U-shaped brackets.

Glazing

A large proportion of the glass assemblage was represented by fragments of window panes, small diamond shaped panes of opaque, light green glass, impossible to date but happily sitting within the dates for the phased building.

In keeping with the window glass, a fairly large assemblage of lead came was also found on site, several of which presented with a date and maker's stamp on what would have been the underside of the came strip into which the glass pane was fitted (Fig. 15, 33 and 34).

These examples all date to 1700 and the maker's initials of EW could be those belonging to known makers in Kent (Geoff Egan, pers. comm. 2002). This early 18th-century date is in keeping with Phase 1a and 2 and, despite the prohibitively expensive cost of glazing at the time, it would not have been unusual for a stable of Herstmonceux Castle's standing to have had at least a few glazed windows, even if only within the elevations visible to visitors.

THE METALWORK

The nature of a large proportion of the metalwork dates to between the 17th and 18th centuries and gives us perhaps the best evidence for the building's usage.

Despite the variable condition of some of the assemblage, most of it was identifiable as to form and function and included relatively large groups of iron and copper-alloy equestrian equipment and dress accessories (Figs 14 and 15), including farriers' nails for shoeing, horse shoes, spur fragments, harness buckles, strap guides, a harness ring and chain fragments.

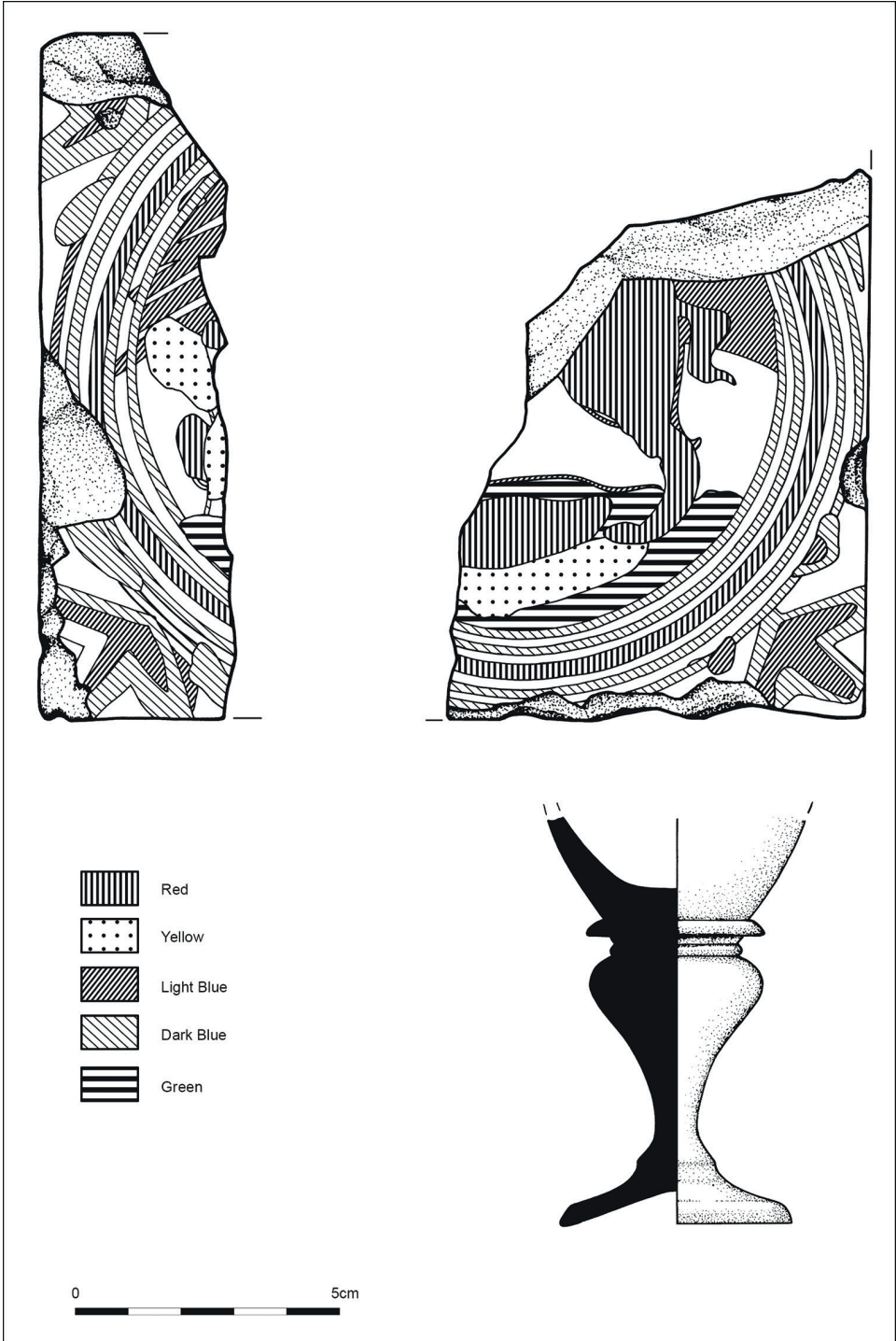


Fig. 12. Polychrome tile fragments and the foot of high-status, Irish wine glass.

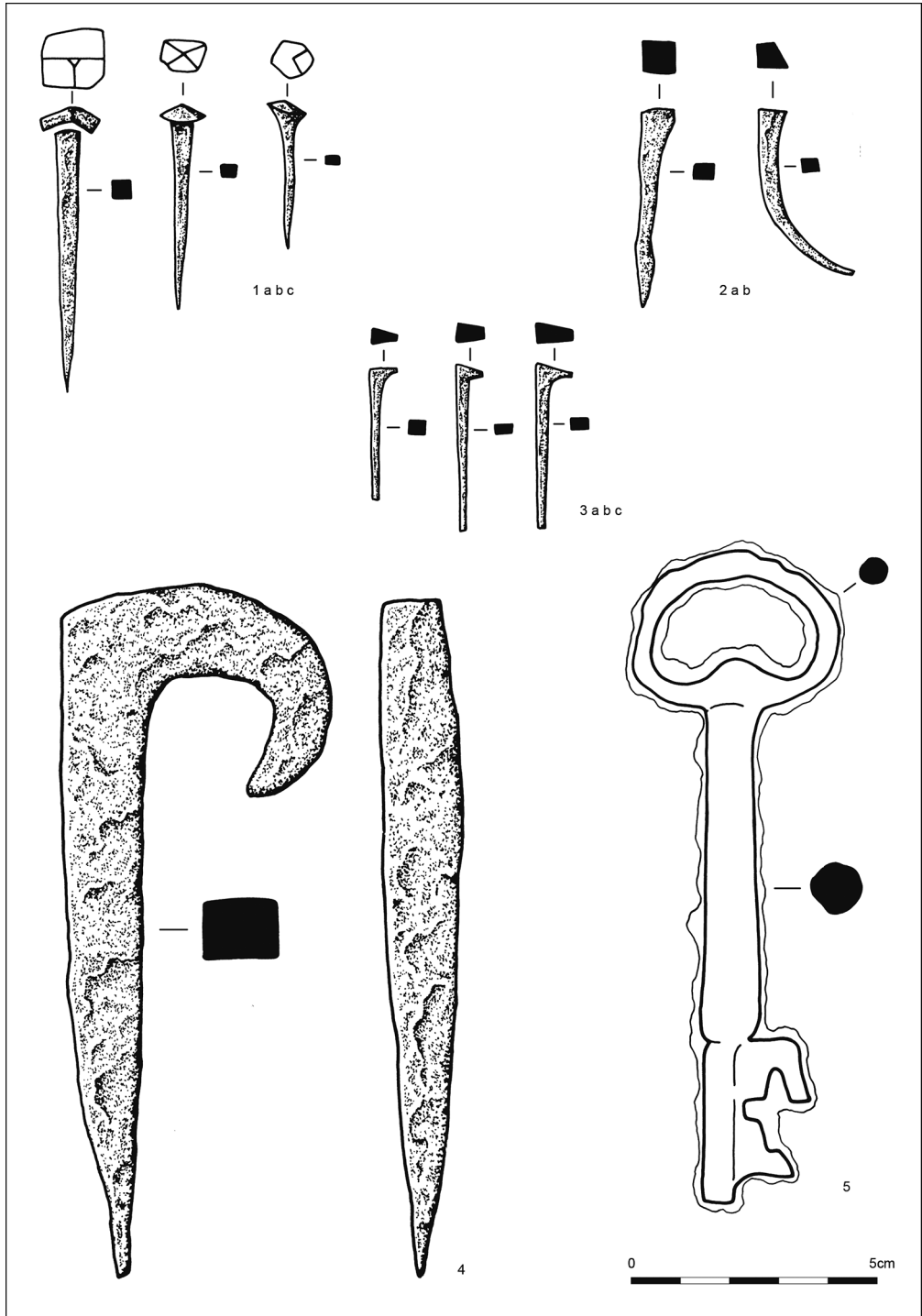


Fig. 13. Metalwork. 1-3: construction-related nail types; 4: iron wall hook; 5: door key.

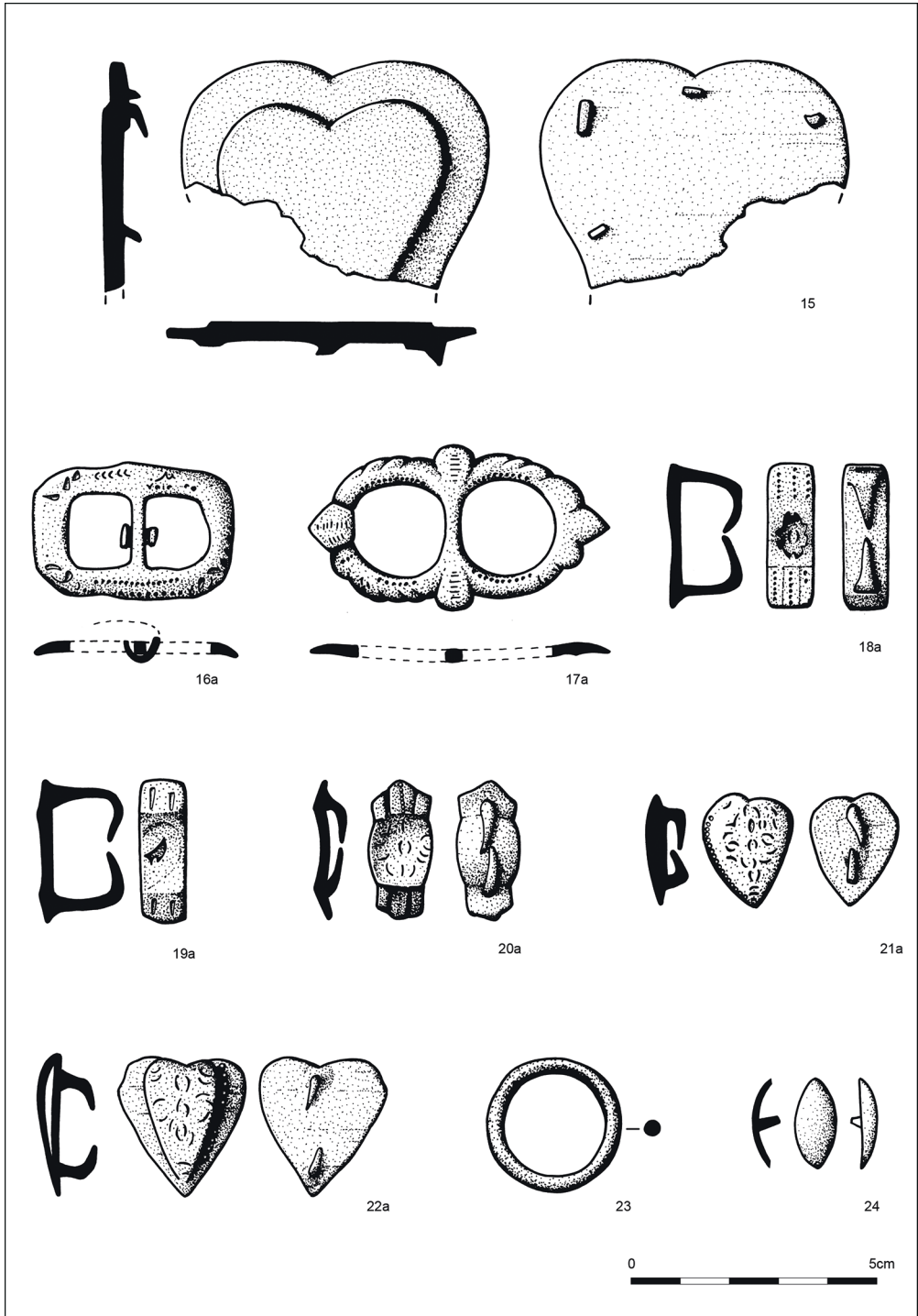


Fig. 14. Metalwork. 15–24: horse brass, bridle buckles, bridle rings, strap fittings and studs.

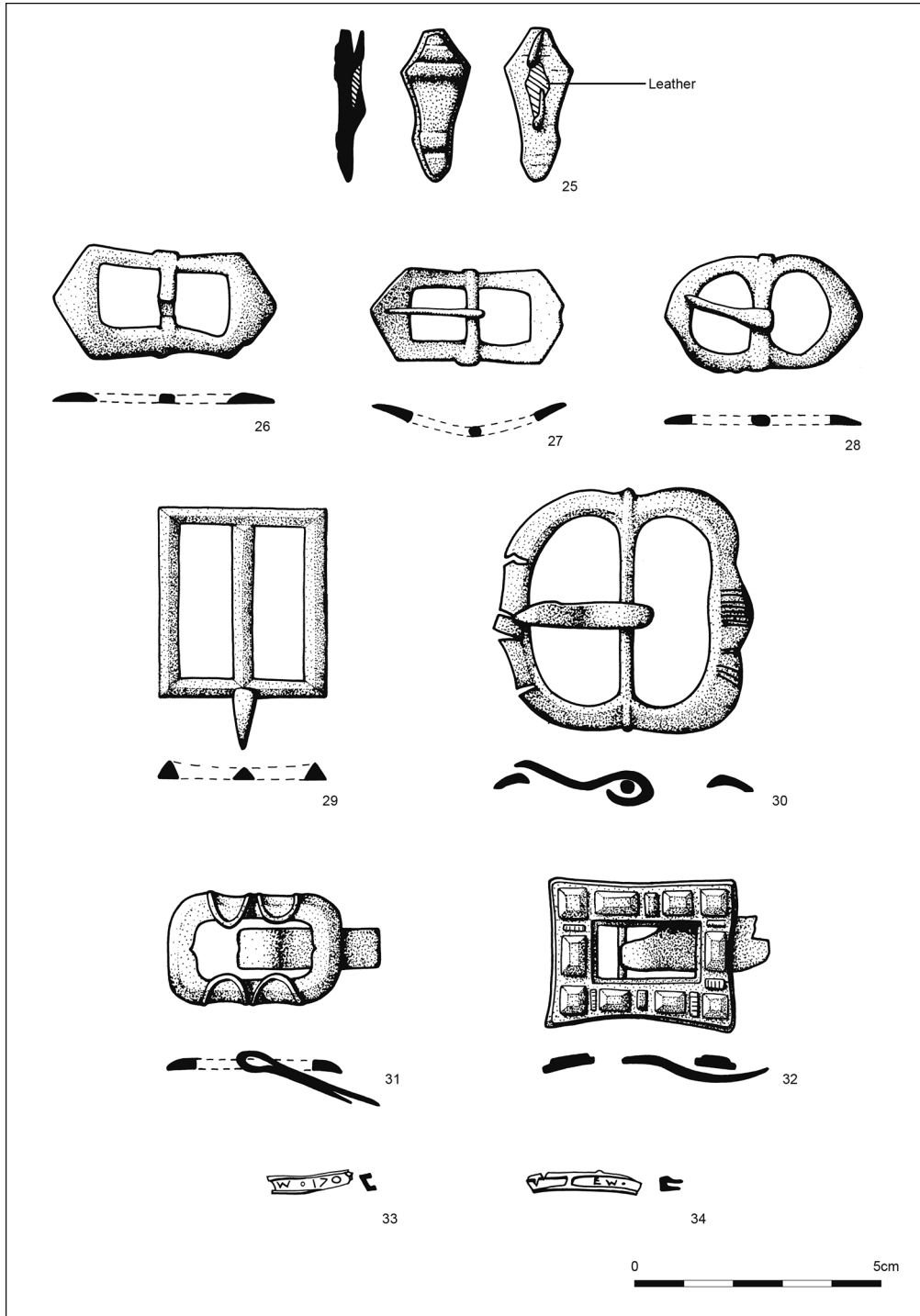


Fig. 15. Metalwork. 25: copper alloy leather fixings; 26-32: dress accessories; 33 and 34: lead window comes.

Of the copper-alloy finds, one third of this group was recovered from the metal detecting survey west of the excavation and in proximity to context 129. Here were found further examples of decorative equestrian-related metalwork to that recovered from the excavations, all in a style considered to be in keeping with the status of a site such as this.

THE POTTERY

Although the condition of the pottery assemblage was poor, 32 fabrics of mixed local, regional and imported origin were identified from 955 sherds, with the bulk of the material comfortably dating to the same period as the metalwork and also probably relating to the excavated buildings.

Three sherds of Romano-British East Sussex Ware and a surprisingly small number of medieval sherds, given the medieval context of the surrounding landscape, were all found to be heavily abraded and are therefore likely to be the result of manuring.

The largest single group of vessels (from context 129), considered to fit within the second half of the 17th century or first two to three decades of the 18th century, were predominantly those associated with drinking: Bellarmine bottles, mugs, tankards and costrels, with storage jars, lids, ointment pots and a smattering of bowls and plates making up the remainder (Fig. 16).

Only one definite cooking vessel, a tripod pipkin, was present, suggesting that although the deposit contained material associated with food preparation and consumption, the group did not represent normal domestic/kitchen refuse.

The analysis also identified that the majority of the 17th–18th-century vessels being supplied to the site was of local manufacture, with regional/English and imports (Cologne, Frechen and Westerwald Stonewares and Saintonge among them) making up proportions of the assemblage. Generally, the regional fabrics, such as the Borderwares and London products, are typical of the 17th to early 18th centuries, whereas the English wares from further afield, such as Staffordshire products, tend to share 18th- to early 19th-century characteristics.

Although the majority of the assemblage would be just as comfortable on a low- or high-status site, the presence of such high proportions of German drinking vessels, together with the Saintonge Green and Brown costrel fragment and the shell-shaped handles from the serving vessel, hints at an underlying trend indicative of a generally higher

social status. Pottery groups will be needed from the castle itself before proper comparisons can be made between assemblages from truly domestic and ‘out-building’ contexts.

THE GLASSWARE

Within the glass assemblage, and falling into the day-to-day category, were the remains of wine and beer bottles dating (based on the ‘kick-up’, the upward dome at the centre of the base of the bottle) to the late 17th–18th century (Leeds 1941) and the stem and partial bowl and foot of a high-status, lead crystal wine glass (Fig. 12), recovered from the same context as the polychrome tile and identified as originating from Ireland during the 17th century (Peter Francis, pers. comm. 1999).

Wine and beer bottles in a service building context is not a mystery when one considers the price of a bottle was around two pennies at the time (Andy McConnel, pers. comm. 2004) but quite why a single wine glass should find its way on to the site is a little puzzling. However, the possibility of the lord and his guests enjoying ‘refreshment’ from such a vessel, before or after riding out, in a finely adorned room (with a polychrome tile fireplace surround?) in a grand stable befitting the status of Herstmonceux Castle is not so far-fetched (Luke Barber pers. comm.).

THE ECOFACTS

Food consumption was represented by animal bone and shell, with the exception of a single human tooth, the presence of which remains a mystery.

The bone was in a reasonable state of preservation, with little or no surface erosion, and represented cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse, red deer, dog, small mammal, fish and bird, the first two dominating.

Analysis of the assemblage suggested that both butchery and kitchen waste were present and that animals may have been butchered as well as consumed close to the site (Sibun, 2003). Domestic fowl, fish and possibly rabbit may have supplemented the diet along with oysters and, to a lesser extent, mussels.

THE COINS

Fifteen coin examples and a 17th-century trade token were recovered from excavation spoil and the overburden topsoils (Rudling 2003). All but four (those of William III and George III) most probably

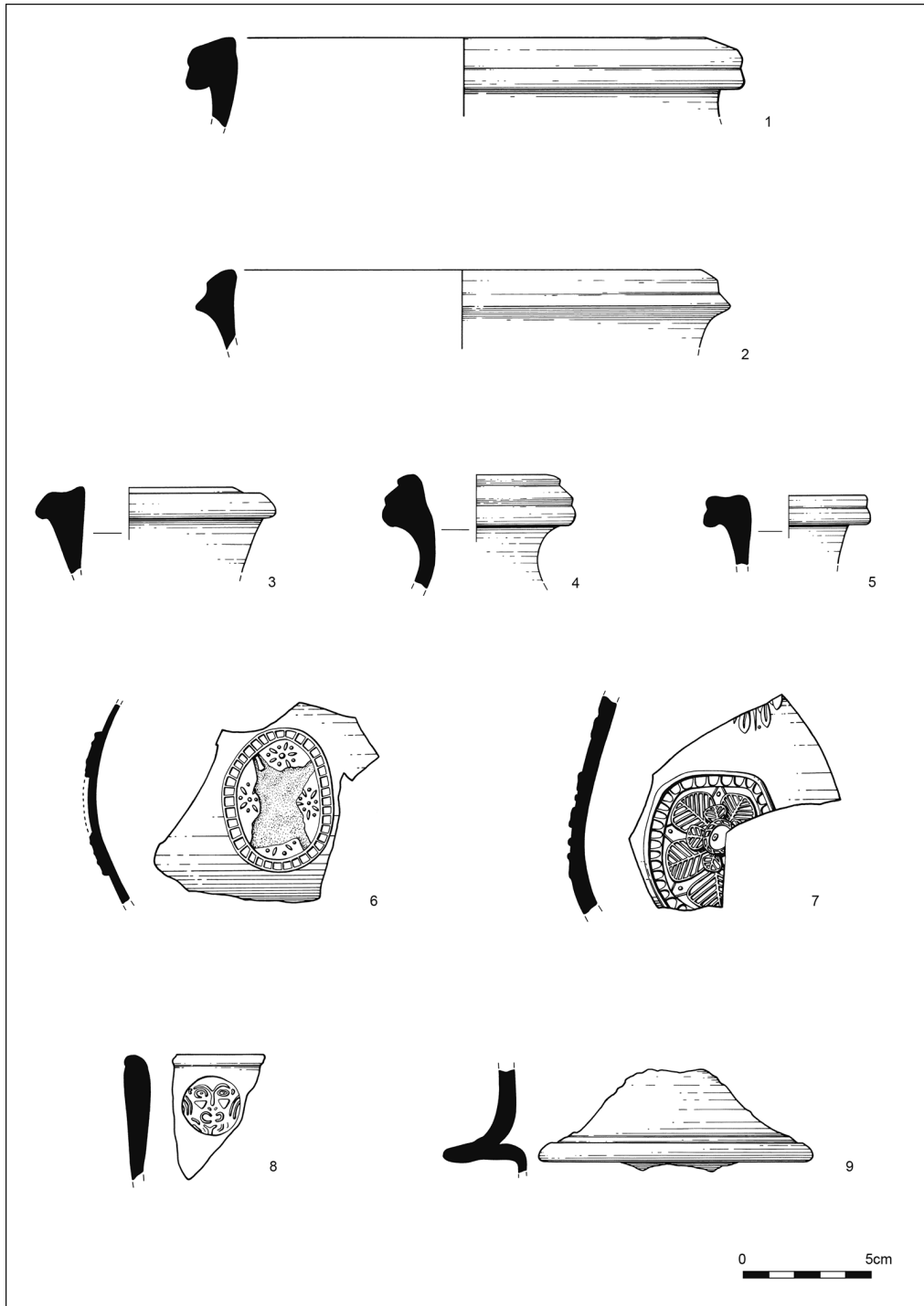


Fig. 16. Pottery. 1-5: storage jar rims; 6 and 7: Frechen Bellarmine bottle medallions; 8: rim of a Frechen drinking mug with applied mask detail; 9: candlestick body sherd.

relate to the castle and not the excavation site, apart from a silver penny of Edward I, very worn and clearly pre-dating the construction phase of the castle, and two coins of Henry VI which may have been in circulation during building or the early occupation phase.

Coins of the 19th and early 20th century most certainly relate to the practice of visiting the castle as a ruin and taking tea in the grounds, as does the fragment of 19th-century ceramic forming part of the pottery assemblage.

CONCLUSION

Today (2018), the remains of the stable are overgrown, with no indication to those passing by of what lies beneath.

When excavations ended, the estates department, with backing from castle management, suggested the area be landscaped and the floor plan of the structure(s) marked out on the ground in gravel, to form part of the overall visitor experience. Unfortunately, this idea was abandoned.

In May/June of 2016, the far north end of the phase 1 and 1a building was cleared of overgrowth to facilitate the Bader International Study Centre's Field School in British Archaeology, a week-long training in basic archaeological fieldwork techniques. This exercise was repeated in 2017 on

another part of the phased building footprint and it is hoped that these areas of the site have now been re-buried and that the resultant reports from the training events will form an addendum to the original report.

A copy of the full excavation report was deposited with the East Sussex Historic Environment Record in 2016. Following cataloguing and recording in 2003, most of the finds were redeposited within the east-west drain (90), (91), prior to back-filling, and the remainder, more specifically those mentioned and illustrated in the finds reports, returned to the castle in 2008 and retained for future study.

The post-excavation report, including supplemental information and additional finds analysis and finds reports, can be found on the ADS website at <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sac/> Follow the link to Sussex Archaeological Collections Vol 156.

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The ADS Supplement.

- Pottery by Luke Barber (SAS).
- The Clay Tobacco Pipes by Philippa Whitehill (with comments from D.R. Atkinson).

- The Coins by David Rudling.
- The Metalwork by Luke Barber
- The Bone by Lucy Sibun (ASE).

Also included:

- Quantification and identification of The Ceramic Building Material by Philippa Whitehill.
- Identification of the window leads by Geoff Egan (MOLAS to 2010).
- Partial analysis of The Glass by Philippa Whitehill (with additions from Peter Francis).
- Partial analysis of The Stone by Luke Barber and Philippa Whitehill.
- Quantification and identification of The Shell by Philippa Whitehill.
- A summary of the Historic Environment Record.

As accompanying separate documents:

- Context Register
 - A brief description of the excavated foundations and drains, arranged phase by phase (an Appendix to 'An interpretation of the excavated buildings') by David and Barbara Martin
-