Excavation of the Town Defences at Green Street, Northampton, 1995-6

by

ANDY CHAPMAN

with contributions by Paul Blinkhorn, Tora Hylton, Iain Soden and Alex Thorne

SUMMARY

Excavation at Green Street, Northampton has located the best preserved and most complete sequence of Northampton's town defences so far discovered. A clay bank with a timber revetment, and a substantial ditch were probably constructed in the earlier 10th century, either late in the Danish occupation or shortly after the late Saxon reconquest. The revetment was later rebuilt in stone, and a contemporary gateway with metalled road surfaces was aligned on the present Green Street, a minor lane that can now be seen as the fossilised remnant of a major early access road. The gateway was blocked in the 12th century at the construction of the medieval town wall. A final use of the defences in the Civil War is represented by two shallow ditches cut into the largely filled medieval ditch.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed development of a block of land at the western end of Green Street, Northampton for low-rise flats, at what is now Emerald Way, lay on the edge of the Saxon core of the town and south of both the former medieval castle and west gate (NGR: SP 74826034; Figs 1 and 2). The site therefore held the potential to contain significant remains of both the Saxon burh defences and the medieval town defences (Soden 1995).

Evaluation trenches excavated in December 1995 demonstrated that a full sequence of the town defences were present, despite extensive recent ground disturbances (Chapman 1995). Having established that the site contained archaeological remains of national importance Northamptonshire Heritage devised a mitigation strategy which called for a combination of further excavation, a watching brief to deal with threatened remains, and the preservation *in-situ* of all remains which would not be disturbed by the development (Fig 2). This report draws together the evidence obtained in the various stages of investigation carried out between December 1995 and July 1996.

The desktop assessment and all archaeological fieldwork was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology acting for the developer, Home Housing Association Ltd, and the work was funded through the Single Regeneration Budget. Northampton Borough Council sponsored site open days in April 1996 which attracted several hundred visitors and considerable attention from the local media.

The fieldwork was directed by Andy Chapman, project assistants Rob Atkins and Paul Thompson were involved at all stages of excavation, and Tony Baker, Mark Holmes, Chris Jones and Steve Morris assisted with the excavation of trenches 1 and 2. Helen Keeley visited the site and provided advice on the environmental context of the Saxon bank. Mike Shaw has provided general advice and encouragement based on his many years of experience excavating in the town, and has drawn the author's attention to the relevant documentary evidence. However, all errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author. The illustrations are by Alex Thorne.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies at 60-61m a O.D. on the lower slopes of the valley at the junction between the River Nene and the Brampton branch tributary (Fig 1). The town

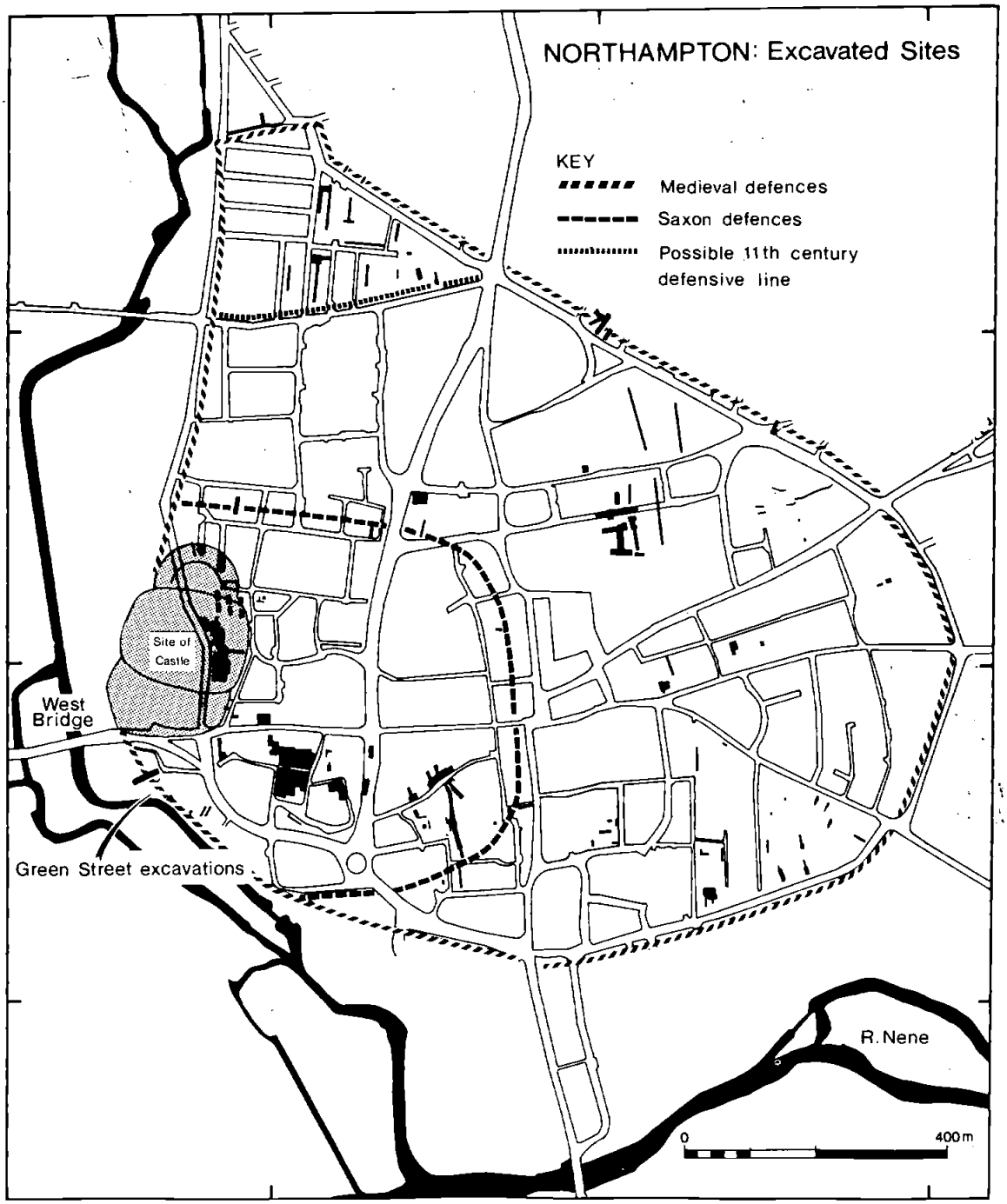


Fig 1 Northampton, location of the excavations

Plate 1 Trench 1, looking south-west and showing: the medieval wall (centre), the Saxon bank partially obscured by later deposits (foreground) and the medieval and Civil War ditches (background), as first exposed in December 1995.

defences, the castle and the river were the dominant topographical features of this area for several centuries and John Speed's map of 1610 provides an evocative image of the final decades of this medieval landscape prior to the extensive levelling of the town walls following the restoration of the monarchy in 1662 and the destruction of the old town in the fire of 1675 (Fig 3).

Subsequent minor changes can be followed through the sequence of 19th century maps. At the end of that century the landscape at the western end of the town was totally transformed by the demolition of the castle and the lowering of the ground level by several metres to accommodate the construction of a new railway station and sidings. The adjacent stretch of the river was also canalised and diverted westward at this time (Fig 1).

The river channel bounding the southern side of the Green Street site is a former mill leat flowing to Mervyn's or (more recently) Cotton Mill (Z on Fig 3), it can be equated with a channel depicted in maps from 1610 onward.

The natural geology beneath the bank at the eastern end of trench 1 comprised an orange brown sandy clay with a slightly gritty texture, at a level of 58.85m aOD. It appears to be a coarser mudstone layer within the more typical blue-grey clays of the Upper Lias deposits which outcrop on the slopes surrounding the western end of the historic town centre (Geological Survey of Great Britain, solid and drift, Sheet 185). A similar clay was exposed at the base of trench 2 but was more mottled and silty, probably as a result of later water action. The Northampton Sand with Ironstone, which covers much of the town centre area, was not present on the site. Clean orange gravel and sand, hardened by iron

Plate 2 Trench 1, section across Saxon bank looking south-east (Fig. 10, S13); with remnants of the late Saxon stone revetment (right), and the medieval town wall (left).

panning, was encountered at the western end of trench 1 at a level of 57.50m aOD. It appears to be undisturbed natural of first terrace river gravels.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The only previous archaeological evidence relating to possible defensive works in this area of the town comes from trenches excavated in 1987 at St. Peter's Way (SP 74926030), to the east of trench 4 of the present excavations (Fig 2, 1987 trenches). This site is unpublished, but in the less disturbed eastern trench there was the heavily robbed remains of a stone wall, 1.20m wide, on the inner edge of a ditch up to 13.40m wide (Shaw 1988).

These features were interpreted as the probable remains of the medieval defences. However, they do not conform in structure or alignment with any features interpreted as defensive works in the Green Street excavations; the wall and ditch would lie inside what is now seen as the line of the defences. It is therefore unclear exactly what these features are, but they seem most likely to represent activity within the defensive circuit, perhaps buildings and quarry pits.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The first stage of evaluation comprised the machine excavation of trench 1 to determine whether any remains of the former defences were present on the site. The trench was 43.0m long and 6.0-8.0m wide, descending in a series of *c.* 1.0m steps (Figs 2 and 7; Plate 1). Work commenced at the eastern end and the

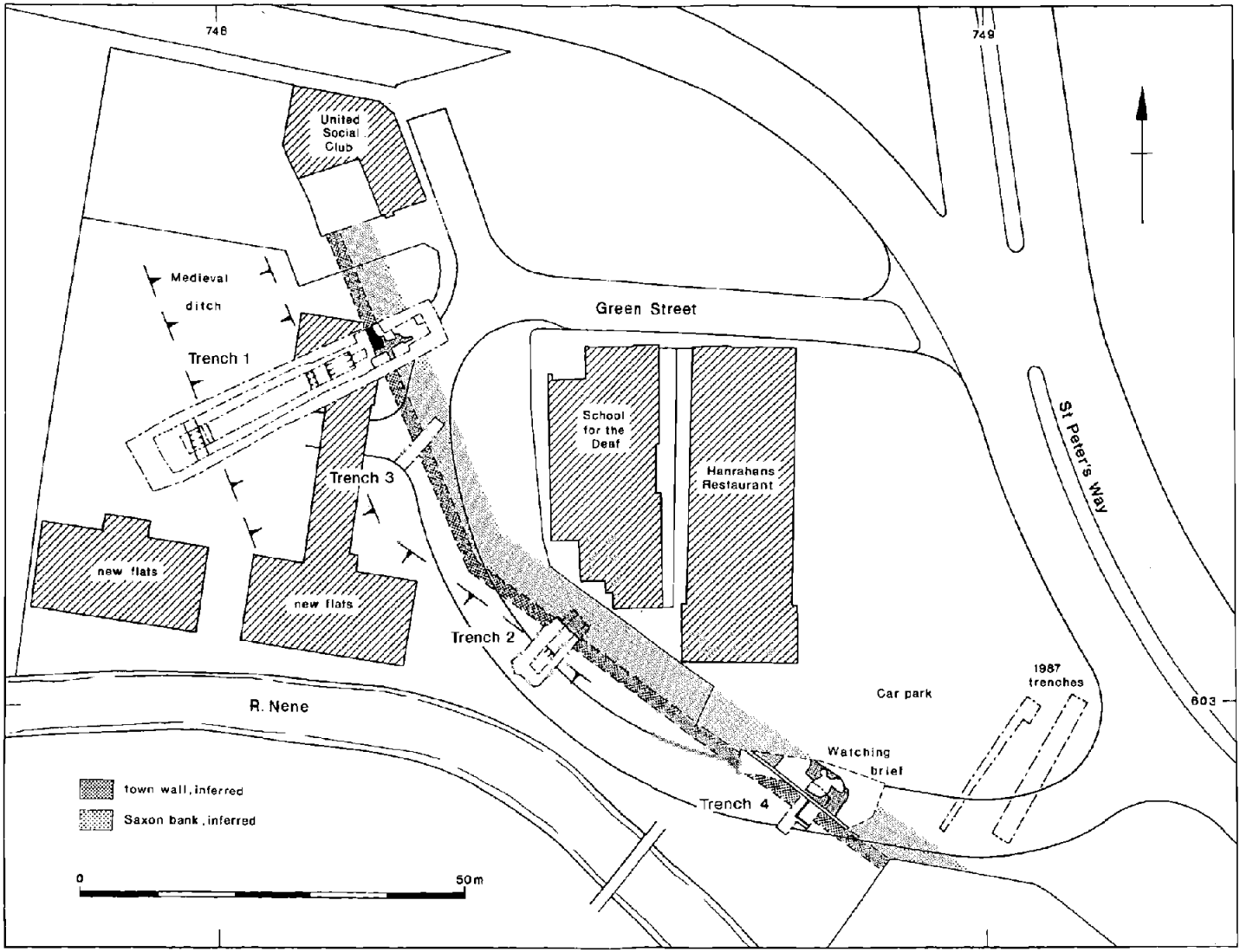


Fig 2 Green Street, trench location, and reconstruction of the line of the defences. (The grid of this map is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office)

Plate 3 Trench 1, section looking north-west (Fig. 10, S12) and showing: the late Saxon revetment slot (bottom left); the late Saxon road metalling; and the overlying medieval town wall, cut by a post-medieval tanning pit (right).

medieval town wall was soon located at a depth of only 0.80m below modern ground level (Figs 4 and 5). Both the wall and an underlying clay bank were exposed but not removed (Plates 2 and 3). Immediately to the west the modern layers dipped downwards indicating the presence of underlying ditches, and the ditch fills were excavated to an agreed maximum depth limit of 3.0m below modern ground level, at which level the water table was encountered.

A trench perpendicular to the river, trench 2, located a further length of the clay bank and possible remnants of a revetment wall (Figs 2 and 6). Only the upper fills at the inner edge of an adjacent ditch could be investigated. A third trench, trench 3, contained no early features; it lay at the northern end of a deeply cellared area and was also disturbed by a sewer pipe.

The mitigation strategy devised by Northamptonshire Heritage comprised three major elements of archaeological investigation. The medieval wall and the defensive bank in trench 1 was fully excavated in March 1996 as this area was threatened by foundation trenches for the proposed new buildings (Plates 4 and 5). A further trench, 4, was excavated in April 1996 to the south-east of trench 2 in the car park of Hanrahan's restaurant, an area which had not previously been accessible for investigation. The objective was to locate the defensive bank in order to confirm its alignment and to determine whether it was threatened by proposed ground works for an access road to the new buildings (Figs 2 and 6, Plate 6). The remainder of the development area and work for the provision of parking bays along the northern side of Green Street was subject to a watching brief between May and July 1996. Particular emphasis was given to the construction of the access road, where machine excavation using a toothless bucket

Plate 4 Trench 1, looking east: showing the Saxon bank in relation to Green Street and St. Peter's Church

was carried out under archaeological supervision. Ground disturbed by recent buildings and cellars was encountered along virtually the entire length of the road and the top of the clay bank was exposed only in the vicinity of trench 4 (Fig 6).

THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

There is no direct evidence relating to any defences enclosing the Danish town and the subsequent Saxon burh, and the present interpretation of its extent is based on the topographical argument of Lee (1954, 164f) that a double street system enclosing the south-western quarter of the medieval town had fossilised former extra- and intramural streets of a Saxon defensive perimeter (Fig 1). A number of previous attempts to test this hypothesis archaeologically had all failed to produce unambiguous results (RCHME 1985, 45-6 and fiche 326-327), and the validity of the assumption has also been questioned by Thomas Welsh in a series of papers (Welsh 1997, and unpublished papers held in the Northamptonshire Heritage Sites and Monuments Record).

There is a considerable body of documentary evidence relating to the medieval town defences, which are believed to have been in existence by the early 12th century. This evidence has been considered in various studies (Williams 1982 and RCHME 1985, 50-2 and fiche 326-330), but it is not within the scope of this report to provide a restatement and reassessment of this evidence. In addition, John Speed's map of 1610 defines the topography of the defences and this can be followed through later maps and into the modern street pattern. The documentary

Plate 5 Trench 1, looking north and showing: the medieval town wall (top centre, with the Saxon bank to the right and the ditches to the left); disturbed by the post-medieval stone-lined pit (bottom centre).

evidence relating to the Civil War defences has been discussed more recently (Foard 1994).

Mike Shaw has drawn my attention to the following specific references to the Green Street area. A rental of Edward I (PRO SC12/13/28) from the end of the 13th century refers to the town wall (*tenemento vasto Walteri de Pedinton iukta murum ville usque aquam - for the empty tenement of Walter of Pedinton next to the town wall as far as the water*). It is the first entry for St Peter's parish and precedes entries mentioning Tanner Street and Mervyn's Mill, which places the tenement somewhere around the Green Street area. A later rental of 1504 (NRO Northampton Borough Records, Royal Charters 29) repeats the entry of the Edward I rental but includes a further mention of the wall and ditch in the area of Mervyn's Mill (*uno curtilagio longo iuxta molendinum Mervyn iuxta murum ville et fossam ibidem - for the long curtilage next to Mervyn's Mill by the town wall and ditch there*).

Another early reference , from 1275, mentions of the "Kings ditch" and a "common way" running between the west gate and Mervyn's Mill (see RCHME 1985, fiche 329).

This same area is described in some detail in an Elizabethan terrier or survey of 1586 which is quoted by Cox (1898, 155) as follows (italics added for emphasis):-

"Landes in the Weste Quarter" include:-

1) *"a piece of grounde sometime called the Towne Dyke extendinge in Lengthe from the weste gate throwghe the ground of Henry Walker to the River syde conteynthe in Lengthe Fowerscore yardes* and at the North end Syxe yardes And at Sowthe End xvj yards and from the Crosse wall

along the River Syde and xl yards in lengthe and Fyfteyne yards in breadthe."

2) A house or tenement of nine bays, with a yard and garden containing a great apple tree, seven other apple trees, and a plum tree; *also a piece of the Town Dyke with willows in it, seventy yards by nine yards;* a back house of five bays; and a kiln house, with a dove house, and a small stable of one bay, with a garden containing an apple tree, nine young ash trees, and other young apple trees; tenanted by Isabel Bradfield, rental 26^{s}. 8^{d}.
3) A little house of two bays next to Bradfield's yard, *once a parcel of the Town Dyke fourteen yards by ten*; tenant John Ainsworth, rental 8^{d}.
4) "*A piece of the Town Dyche From M^{r} Aynsworthe's litle house to Mervels Mylls with dyvers willows in it*", tenant Henry Clarke, rental 5^{s}. 8^{d}.

This survey is quite specific in describing a town ditch running between the west gate and the river and then alongside the river as far east as Mervyn's or Cotton Mill. Two of the accounts also provide a clear description of the state of the ditch. The references to a "piece of ground sometime called the town ditch" and to willows in the ditch indicate that it was not a deep open ditch but largely silted, and perhaps no more than a slightly sunken and low lying area that was damp enough to favour the growth of willows, and perhaps therefore waterlogged in the winter months.

The most important of all the historic sources is John Speed's map of 1610 (Fig 3). It shows the town defences in detail, but the area to the south of the castle is shown unwalled between the West gate (N) and a point east of Mervyn's Mill (Z). However, in

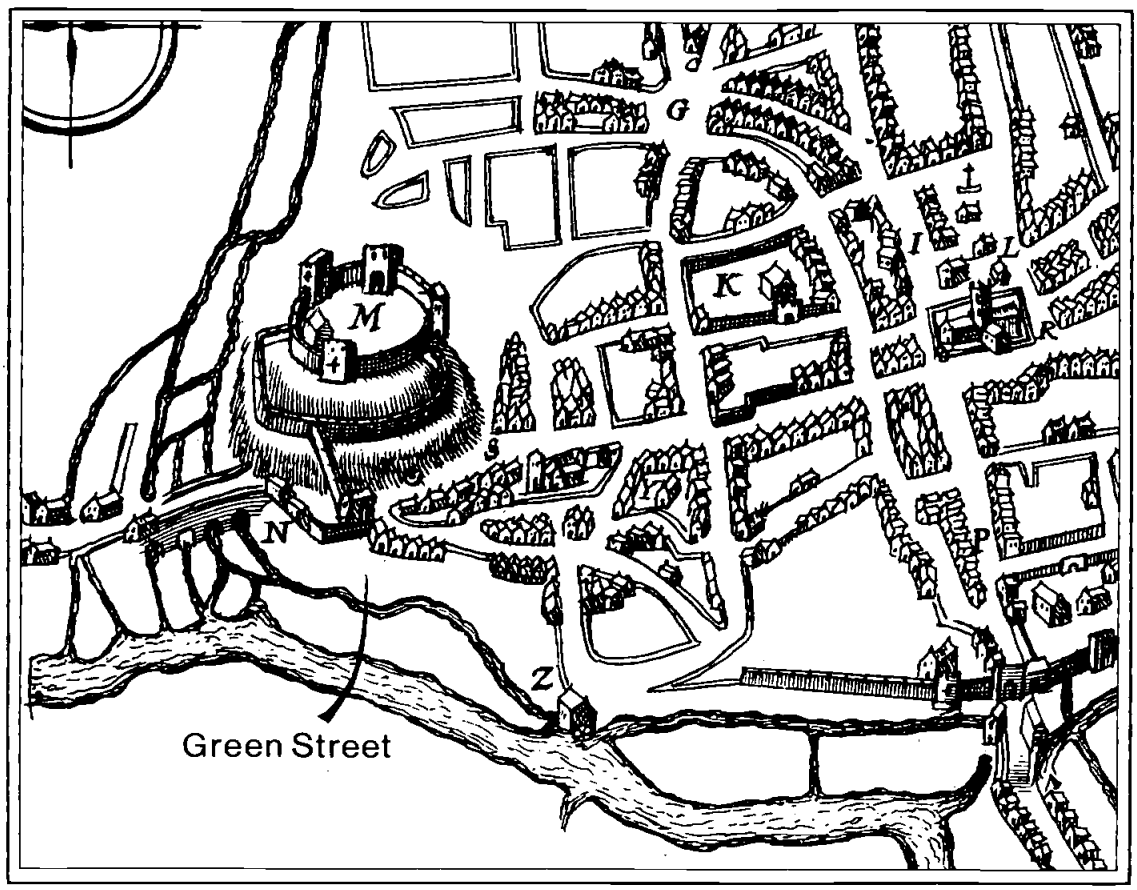


Fig 3 John Speed's map of Northampton, 1610 (Northamptonshire Libraries)

the text accompanying the map Speed comments (1676, 55) " Upon the West part of this Town standeth a large Castle mounted upon a Hill whose aged countenance do daily threaten the downfal of her walls. To this upon the South the Towns wall adjoyneth and in a round circuit meeteth the river in the north extending in compass two thousand one hundred and twenty paces."

This appears to imply the presence of a town wall in the south-west quarter although the terrier of 1586 makes no reference to a wall. Presumably Speed was either assuming the former presence of a wall in association with the surviving, if overgrown, ditch, or there were still sufficient ruinous remnants of a wall to denote its former presence.

THE TOWN DEFENCES AT GREEN STREET

The phased archaeological sequence is summarised and discussed below. More detailed plans, sections, full descriptions of the excavated features, and the finds reports are provided in subsequent sections.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

PREHISTORIC ACTIVITY

Evidence of Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity comprises a scatter of worked flint, including a leaf arrowhead, recovered from a soil horizon directly overlying the natural in trench 1 (Fig 5); a V-shaped ditch may also be contemporary (Fig 9, F137). This is consistent with the recovery of quantities of worked flint and some prehistoric features at other excavations in this area of the town (RCHME 1985, fiche 322-323).

MIDDLE SAXON OCCUPATION, 800 –850 AD

A soil horizon overlying the prehistoric level and sealed by the defensive bank in trench 1 contained middle Saxon pottery associated with a few small postholes; a nearby deep pit may also be contemporary (Figs 5 and 9). This evidence for domestic occupation extends the known limits of the middle Saxon town to the lower slopes immediately above the river. The recovery of Maxey-type ware but the lack of Ipswich ware, as at other nearby sites, may suggest that this activity dates to after *c.*800 AD.

THE SAXON DEFENCES, 900 – 1100 AD

Two major episodes of early defensive works were identified in trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5); the evidence from trenches 2 and 4 is incomplete but it may suggest that there was a slightly different constructional sequence alongside the river (Fig 6).

A date for the construction of the defences cannot be precisely determined as only very small quantities of pottery were found associated with the construction of the clay bank, and no charcoal or other material suitable for radiocarbon dating was recovered. The pottery comprises small and abraded sherds of Northampton Ware and some St. Neots Ware, and at its broadest this should be given a date range of *c.* 900-975 AD.

It is tempting to associate the original ditch, bank and timber revetment with the documented presence of the Danish army in Northampton in the early 10th century, but while the pottery dating is not inconsistent with this interpretation it must also be accepted that the dating is so imprecise that an origin later in the 10th century and, in particular, a date after the Saxon reconquest of the Danelaw in 917 AD, cannot be excluded. The question of who constructed the original defences must therefore remain unresolved.

The original defences comprised a 6.0m wide clay bank, probably utilising alluvial clays excavated from the valley floor. It was no more than *c.* 650mm high in trench 1, but in trench 2 it still stood to a height of 900mm. How much has been lost from the top of the bank is difficult to determine (Figs 10 and 11, contexts 108-110; plate 5). In trench 1 the bank was set immediately below the break of slope, so from the outside even a low bank and revetment would have created a visually impressive barrier when combined with the natural slope and the ditch, while from the inside there may have been no more than a gentle slope. In trench 2, beside the river, the defences were on slightly lower ground so the greater surviving height may reflect the original arrangement.

A steep-sided, linear slot, with post-pits at intervals of 0.75m, ran along the outer face of the bank in trench 1 (Figs 10 and 12, context F97, and Plate 4). It would have held a timber revetment which probably comprised substantial upright posts supporting horizontal planking. There is no evidence for the use of any other substantial timbers in association with the bank. No similar slot was seen at the front of the bank in trench 2 but the appropriate levels were not fully investigated and it is possible

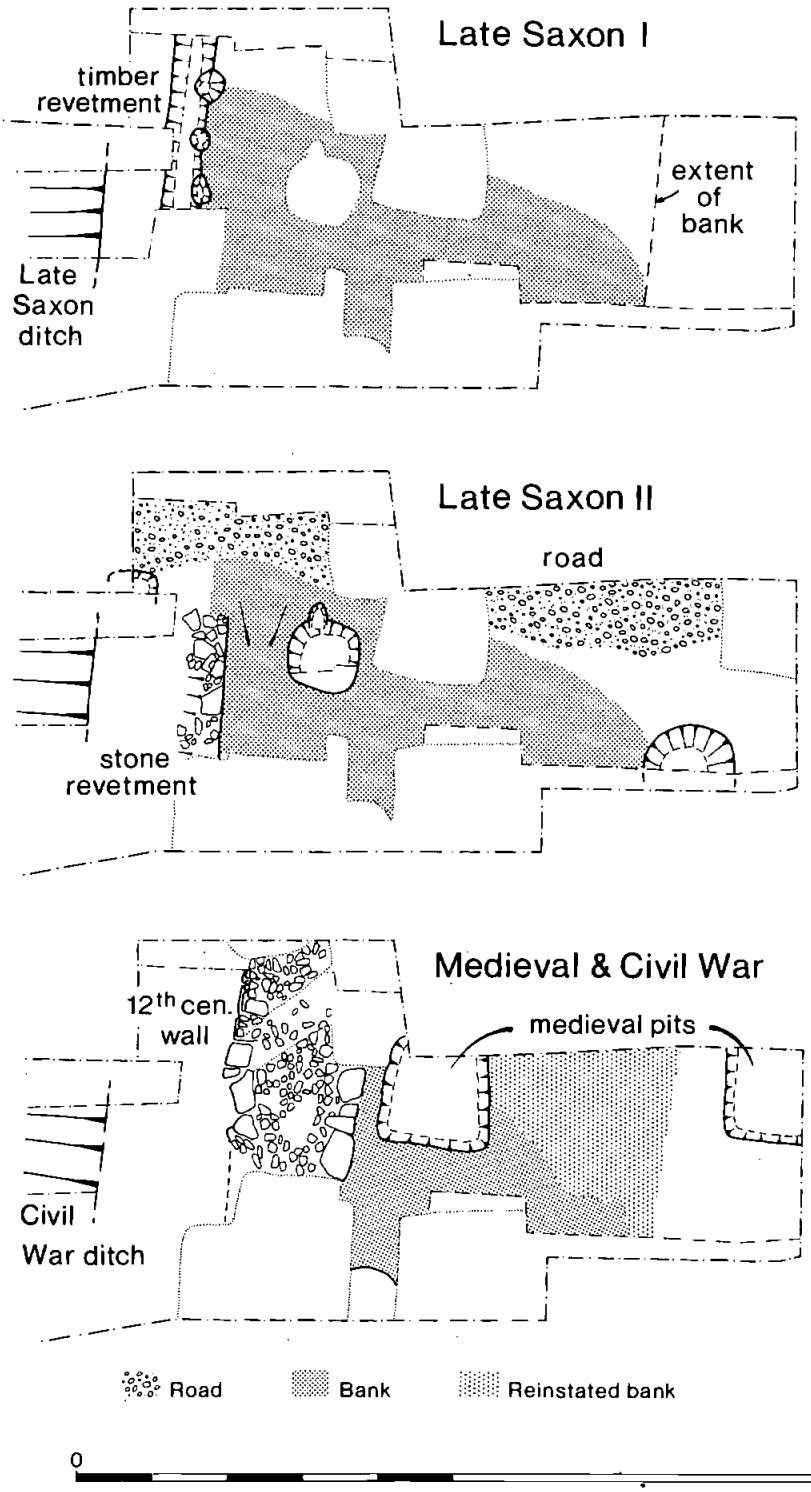
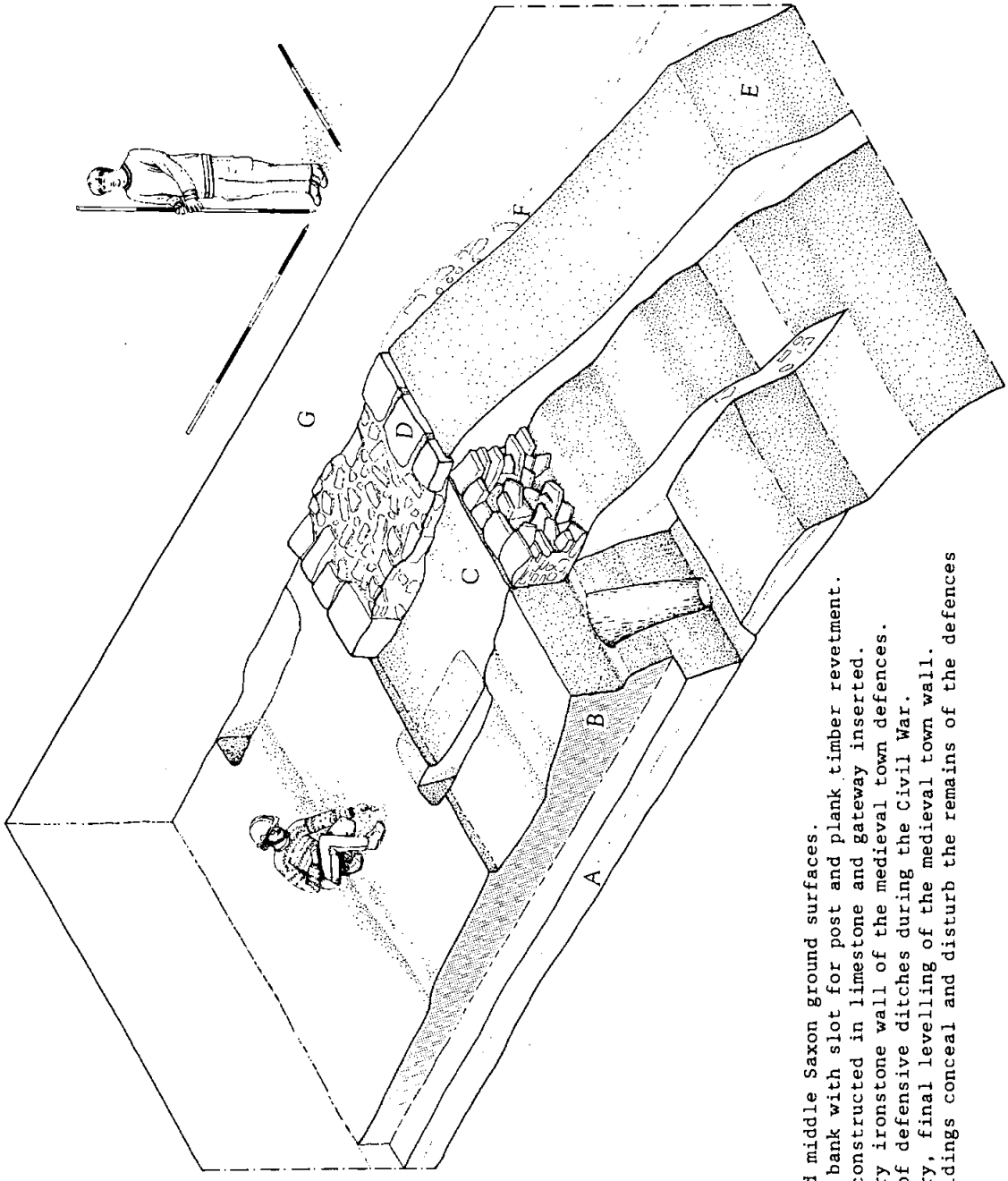


Fig 4 Trench 1, the development of the defences



A Prehistoric and middle Saxon ground surfaces.
B The late Saxon bank with slot for post and plank timber revetment.
C New revetment constructed in limestone and gateway inserted.
D The 12th century ironstone wall of the medieval town defences.
E The recutting of defensive ditches during the Civil War.
F The 18th century, final levelling of the medieval town wall.
G Industrial buildings conceal and disturb the remains of the defences

Fig 5 Trench 1, isometric reconstruction of the defences

that such a feature was either not seen or had been damaged by later revetments.

The inner edge of a contemporary ditch lay only 0.80m beyond the revetment in trench 1, it was probably *c.* 8.0m wide and more than 2.0m deep, but it was only partially investigated (Fig 10, context F81). Alongside the river, in trench 2, there was a steeply inclined edge immediately beyond the revetment wall. This was the edge of either a ditch or of a water course that was a precursor to the present mill race/river channel (Figs 6, 16 and 17).

The second major phase of defensive works involved the provision of a stone revetment wall and the insertion, or perhaps the widening or relocation, of a western gateway with a metalled road surface. There were few finds directly associated with this phase. The gateway is likely to have been in use through the 11th century, but whether the introduction of the stone wall and gateway occurred only in the earlier 11th century or was perhaps a much earlier feature, introduced in the 10th century, cannot be determined. A stone wall was added to the Saxon defences at Hereford in the early to mid 10th century (Shoesmith 1982, 73-75, tables 9-10, fig 129), while the Anglo-Saxon Chroncile records the addition of a stone wall to the defences at Towcester in 917 AD (Garmonsway 1972, 102), and the same may have been true at Northampton.

The absence of any direct evidence for timbers indicates that the timber revetment had been systematically dismantled. The slot was backfilled and the ground surface had been raised with dumped clay prior to the construction of a stone revetment wall. This was built largely in flat-laid but unmortared limestone (Figs 4, 5, 10 and 13, context F96). Only the inner part abutting the clay bank had survived, but scattered pieces of limestone associated with patches of possible lime mortar may suggest that its outer face and/or its upper levels had been mortared. There may have been a similar revetment wall in trench 2, suggesting that there was a wide-spread refurbishment in stone, rather than a localised rebuilding associated with the new gateway, but the only remains were a thin spread of stone at the front of the bank.

In trench 1 the bank was cut away to accommodate a gateway. A large post-pit in the terminal of the bank and a possible post-pit further to the west suggest that there was a timber gatehouse, but as only the southern side was recovered the width of the gateway is unknown (Fig 13, contexts F107 and F119). Two layers of heavily worn road metalling had survived; the lower surface comprised small pieces of limestone and cobbles (Fig 13, context 68/117), and the upper surface was of larger pieces of ironstone and limestone (Fig 14, context 92/104). The earlier road ran directly eastward, on the line of the present Green Street, and so appears to define the origin of this street as the approach to an 11th century town gate. The later road extended further southward, and may have continued around the back of the bank, although the trench did not extend far enough south to be certain of this. If so, it might relate to the introduction an intra-mural road.

The discovery of a west gate through the early town defences raises fundamental questions about the provision of access to and from the late Saxon town as a whole, and the arrangement of the early street pattern. Does it represent merely an additional, and perhaps subsidiary, west gate? Or, does it denote the location of the river crossing and the primary western access route within the late Saxon town?

Unfortunately, these questions cannot be resolved from the available evidence. Taken at face value it appears that this gateway was not part of the original defences, which might imply that it was not the main gateway. However, as only the southern side was located it is possible that it represents a widening or a minor relocation of an earlier gateway. In this instance it can be suggested that Green Street may have been the access to the main west gate of Northampton throughout the late Saxon period, with a ford or timber bridge forming the original river crossing. It this is true then there would have been a major reorganisation of at least the primary east-west access routes in the 12th century at the creation of the medieval defensive circuit.

THE MEDIEVAL DEFENCES, 1100 – 1200 AD.

In the third major phase of defensive works, the gateway was taken out of use when a substantial new wall was constructed on top of and at the front of the existing bank. The wall ran right across the gateway and the bank was reinstated behind it (Figs 4, 5 and 15, context F10). The new town wall was 1.85m wide and was built largely in ironstone, with good courses of roughly squared facing stones and a rubble core bonded with clay (Figs 10 and 12). No evidence was recovered for a wall on top of the bank alongside the river, but it may be that a second stone spread in trench 2 had formed the base of a new

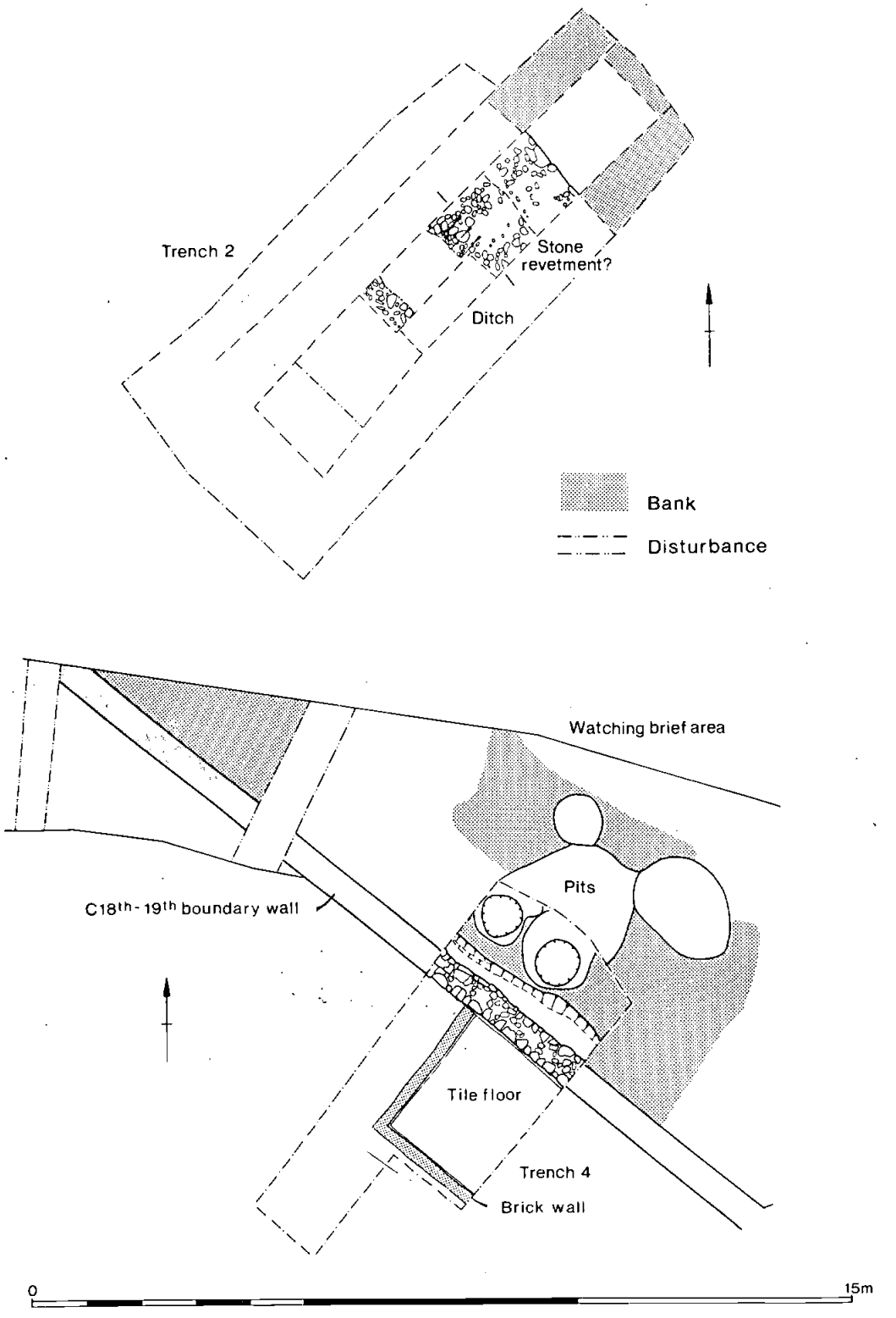


Fig 6 Trenches 2 and 4, the defences

revetment wall at the front of the bank. At less than 2.0m wide this length of the town wall did not form a formidable barrier but, as discussed below, this is not likely to be typical of the remainder of the medieval defensive circuit.

The late Saxon ditch was replaced by a ditch up to 25m wide, but as only the upper fills were investigated it is impossible to tell whether this represents a single massive ditch or was a result of recutting (Figs 7 and 8). To the south this ditch presumably opened into the river channel flanking the southern defences (Fig 2).

Dating evidence is again sparse, but the new wall was probably constructed during the first half of the 12th century, and is therefore to be identified as part of the medieval expansion of Northampton, when the Saxon burh defences were replaced by the much enlarged circuit of the medieval town wall; the castle was also under construction at this time. This work may also have included the provision of both a new western river crossing and a new west gate, relocated northward to lie directly below the castle, where the west bridge has remained to this day. With the blocking of the late Saxon gateway at the end of Green Street the street itself would have been downgraded to the status of a minor back road leading nowhere, and so it was to remain until the present today.

MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY, 1250 – 1600 AD

By the middle of the 13th century, and continuing through the 14th century, rubbish pits were cut into the bank immediately inside the town wall (Figs 4 and 15, contexts F40 and F90). At the same time it would appear that the ditch running between the West Gate and the river was not being maintained, so that by the later 15th century it had largely silted and a stable soil horizon had become established. There would still have been a marked scarp at the front of the bank and the clayey silts in the top of the ditch suggest that it was a boggy hollow, and the documentary evidence has told us that there were willows growing there.

Subsequently, perhaps in the 16th century, ditches cut at both the outer and inner margins of the medieval ditch may have been property boundaries, or perhaps merely drainage ditches, but they were evidently located in respect to the former defences.

The state of the medieval town wall between the 14th and 16th centuries could not be determined from the archaeological evidence in trench 1, where it lay directly beneath recent deposits. However, in trench 2 the stone spreads interpreted as the truncated bases of revetment walls were sealed by a clay layer which may have been deposited at around the end of the 15th century or soon after. This layer may derive in part from bank material collapsed or raked down following the demolition of the revetment wall. The survey of 1586 makes no reference to a town wall and this would appear to suggest that it was either fully levelled, as in trench 2, or at least largely ruinous, as may be the case in trench 1.

John Speed's map of 1610 shows buildings, probably cottages, flanking the western end and the southern side of Green Street (Fig 3). The rear wall of a building and a stone-lined well recovered at the eastern end of trench 1 were not dated or investigated in any detail, but they may relate to either these cottages or successors to them (Figs 7 and 8, context F54). They indicate that a first stage of domestic encroachment onto the defences comprised cottages set immediately inside the bank but probably with yards extending across the bank.

POST MEDIEVAL TANNERIES, 1450 AD onward

Circular clay-lined pits were cut into the top of the bank in and around trench 4. They clearly denote the presence of a tannery here during the 16th century, perhaps spanning the period 1450-1650 (Figs 6, 16 and 17, contexts F410 and F411). This extends the evidence from the nearby trenches excavated in 1987, where there was six circular tanning pits of 15th century date (Fig 2 and Shaw 1996, 113).

This area would have been broadly contemporary with, and probably similar in arrangement to, the extensively excavated tannery complex 100m to the north-east at The Green, adjacent to Tanner Street (Shaw 1996). This was dated 1470-1700 and comprised clusters of circular and rectangular tanning pits and remnants of the wall foundations of the associated workshops.

The documentary evidence for the presence of tanneries within Northampton has also been discussed in detail by Shaw (1996, 108-114). The name Tanner Street is mentioned in a town rental at the end of the 13th century, demonstrating the early presence of tanneries in the south-western quarter of the town. The evidence from Green Street therefore makes a small addition to our knowledge of early tannery locations.

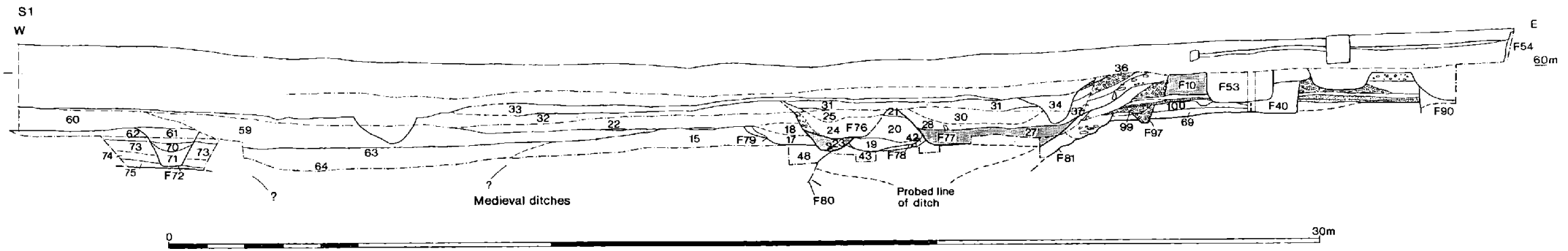


Fig 8 Trench 1, section across the defences

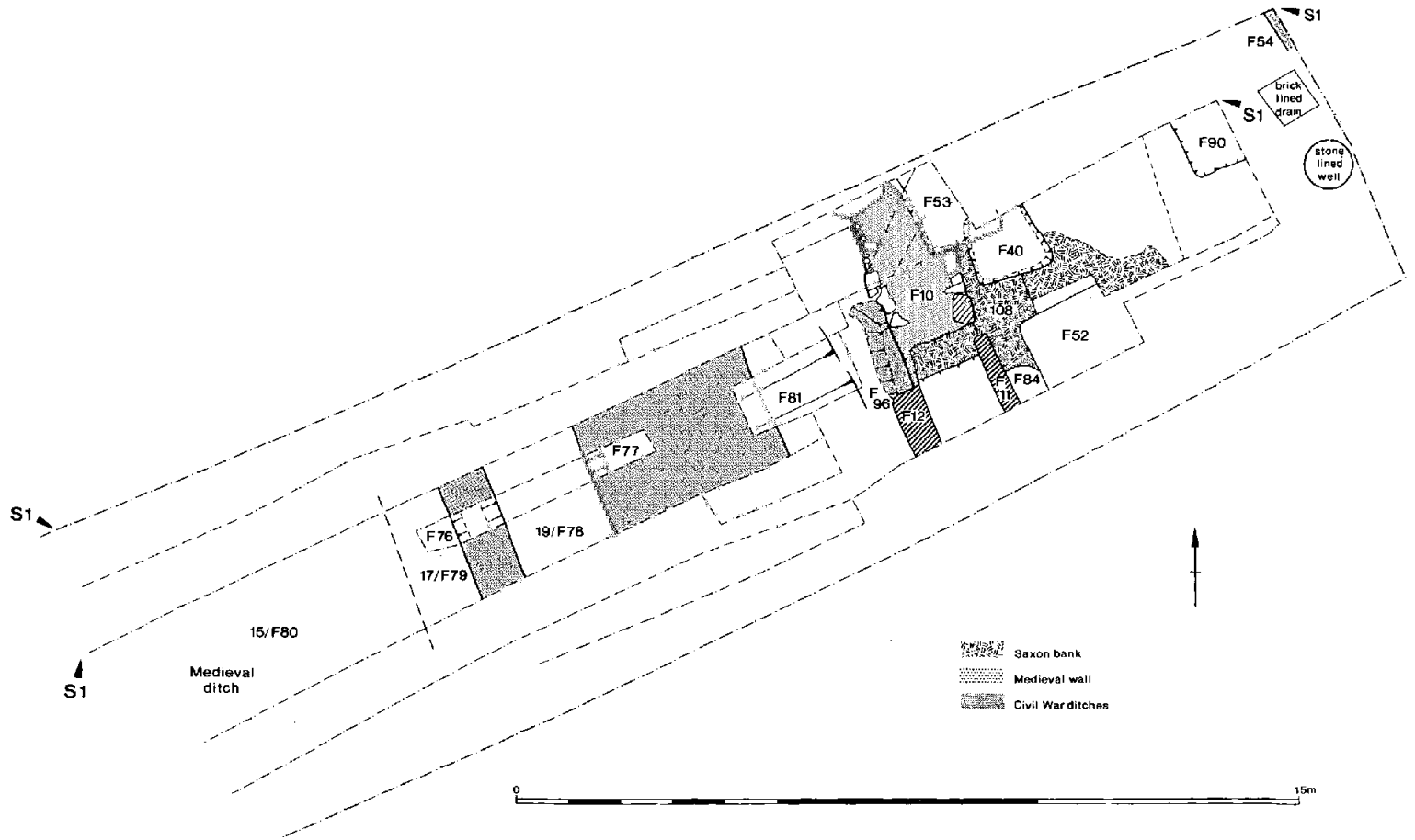


Fig 7 Trench 1, general plan

THE CIVIL WAR DEFENCES, 1640s

Two ditches lay at the foot of the scarp below the former medieval wall in trench 1 (Figs 7 and 8, contexts F76 and F77). The V-shaped outer ditch was 1.0m deep and there was a fall of 1.8m from the surviving top of the bank to the base of the broad, flat-bottomed inner ditch. The cutting of these ditches may be interpreted as part of the refurbishment of the town defences between 1643 and 1646 when Northampton was a major parliamentarian garrison town during the Civil War, although the only dating evidence is an early clay tobacco-pipe bowl dated to 1610-1640. The soils from these ditches may have been used to supplement the existing bank, but no evidence for this had survived.

There is considerable documentary evidence relating to the Civil War defences, but no specific references to the refurbishment of the defences in the south quarter of the town, and it was concluded by Foard (1994, 42) that this area, which had the river as a natural barrier, was given a low priority. This may explain the relatively insubstantial nature of these works.

THE LEVELLING OF THE DEFENCES, 1650 – 1750 AD.

The lower fills of the Civil War ditches were sticky black, waterlogged silts, and the upper fills were sealed by a layer containing scattered fragments and blocks of ironstone most probably derived from the medieval town wall (Fig 10, S12 context 37). This indicates that there was a deliberate levelling and clearance of the site in which remnants of the town wall were thrown down the pronounced scarp between the bank and the infilled ditches. It is uncertain whether this denotes that parts of the wall had still been standing or whether they had merely been re-exposed and disturbed during this clearance. The date of this event has not been established but it must have been either late in the 17th or early in the 18th century.

The soil horizon above this contained substantial quantities of pottery and clay tobacco-pipes dating to the middle of the 18th century, *c.* 1725-1775 (Fig 10, S12 context 35). It indicates an intensification in local domestic activity, in this case rubbish disposal, with a collection of tankards perhaps denoting the presence of a nearby ale house.

RECENT BUILDINGS, 1750 ONWARDS

From the mid-18th century onward much of the area below the west gate and alongside the river had been occupied by industrial buildings, although parts remained open ground until the late 19th century. The walls of these buildings had generally been founded above the level of the former defences, but there had much disturbance from the cutting of pits, and more recently by buildings with extensive cellars. In trench 1 these included late 18th century, clay-lined tanning pits and tanning related animal bone deposits (Figs 7 and 10, contexts F52, F53 and F114); and the site was still a tannery at the end of the 19th century, as depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885.

THE FOSSILISATION OF THE DEFENSIVE CIRCUIT

The location of the defences by excavation makes it possible to examine the sequence of historic maps to identify property boundaries, and other features which were aligned on the defences and have thereby fossilised its former presence. Building developments over the past two centuries have gone a long way towards removing these features but some indicators have survived in the modern topography. To the north-west the alignment of the short northern arm of Green Street and the adjacent United Social Club can be seen to respect the alignment of the defences, while the rear of this building is situated at the edge of the former scarp between the bank and the ditch (Fig 2).

The School for the Deaf and the former Malt House, now Hanrahan's Restaurant, are both aligned on Green Street, but the property boundary to the rear of the School for the Deaf is aligned with the riverside defences. The area at the bottom of the car park for Hanrahan's restaurant, now occupied by the access road to the new flats, was open ground until the end of the 19th century, comprising upper and lower lawns (see Ordnance Survey, 1st edition, 1885, sheets XLV 9.7 and 9.12). The buried remnant of a boundary wall which had retained this upper lawn was seen in and around trench 4 (Fig 6), where it was shown to be constructed at the front of the former defensive bank. This wall was later partially levelled when a small, brick cottage was built over the former ditch, with flagstone steps leading from the lower level onto the higher ground over the former bank.

With the demolition of this cottage and the creation of the car park the physical boundary was lost, but the junction between the bank and the ditch was still marked by the steeply sloping surface of the car park at the time of excavation.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXCAVATIONS

The recovery of a complete sequence of the town defences is an important event in the archaeology of Northampton, perhaps the most important since the excavation of the nearby site of the middle Saxon Palaces to the east of St.Peter's church (Williams *et al* 1985). Many of the implications that arise from this work have already been considered, and the major aspects of its contribution to the understanding of the development of the town as a whole are summarised below.

For the first time excavation has provided unequivocal details of the structural form of several phases of the town defences, including the original late Saxon defences, an early gateway, the medieval town wall, and the Civil War defensive ditches. However, it must be noted that while the form of the late Saxon defences at Green Street may be typical of the circuit as a whole, the medieval defences are most probably completely atypical. The length of town wall at Green Street flanks the south-western corner of the town in an area that was then well defended by the natural barrier of the multiple river channels. The wall was therefore only the final line of defence, and was perhaps provided more for the sake of completeness and visual appearance than for any real need for an effective physical barrier. The situation on the higher ground around the eastern and northern sides of the town, which have no natural defences, is completely different. These areas would clearly have required a much more substantial wall, such as the embattled wall wide enough for six people to walk abreast on as recorded in the late 13th century (Brown 1915-16, 88).

The location of a probable early town gate and its evident relationship to the location and alignment of the present Green Street has important implications for the understanding of the development of the street pattern within the late Saxon and medieval towns, as has already been mentioned. Attention has recently been drawn to several streets within the confines of the late Saxon town which depart from a closely rectilinear plan, including Green Street (Foard 1996, 111), and archaeological evidence may now be providing the explanation for at least some of these variations.

The evidence at Green Street has suggested that there was a relocation of the west gate at the establishment of the new and much enlarged medieval defensive circuit in the 12th century, and this event may have been the catalyst for a widespread realignment of the street pattern. Recent excavation has indicated that Woolmonger Street, another misaligned street, had appeared at about this time (I Soden pers com).

The interpretation of the development of the St. Peter's Street area may also need reconsideration. The excavations have indicated that St.Peter's Street was of post-Conquest origin and therefore may also date to the 12th century reorganisation (Williams 1979 and Williams *et al* 1985). The presence of a gateway immediately to the west of the St. Peter's Church complex in the 10th and 11th centuries is therefore of crucial relevance to the consideration of access to this high status site, even though its status had apparently declined with the stone "palace" having been replaced by fairly 'ordinary' timber buildings..

Finally, the location of the south-western corner of the defences provides a more reliable base for determining future management policy of this archaeological resource, and it may directly assist in the future location and identification of further lengths of both the Saxon and medieval defensive circuits.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS

Archaeological deposits related to the former town defences which could not be preserved within the agreed mitigation strategy were fully excavated. Other deposits were seen but were not excavated and so are known to survive beneath the new flats at Emerald Way, the access road provided by the new length of Green Street, or in adjacent areas; and it is possible to infer the partial survival of other elements of the defences within areas that were not directly observed.

As the site therefore still contains a valuable archaeological resource, with the potential to refine and expand the conclusions of this report, the following notes are provided for future reference concerning the management of this resource.

THE DEFENSIVE BANK

It is likely that the bank still partially survives

immediately to the north-west and south-east of trench 1, although from trench 3 southward it appears to have been totally removed by recent cellars (Fig 2).

The length of bank parallel to the river appears to be particularly well preserved; it stood up to 1.0m high in trench 2 and was seen to survive across an extensive area under the new access road in and around trench 4. South of the School for the Deaf the bank lay immediately below the pre-development ground surface and it has been preserved by raising this level with imported soil, but this stills leaves it only shallowly covered and therefore vulnerable to accidental disturbance by any future groundwork.

THE MEDIEVAL TOWN WALL

The survival of the medieval town wall is less easily defined. In trench 1 it was disturbed by numerous post-medieval features and similar disturbances must occur in the adjacent areas. However, it is likely that it at least partially survives immediately to the north-west of trench 1, where it is founded more deeply within the earlier gateway. This area is therefore of prime importance as it still contains much potential to enhance our understanding of the development of the gateway and thus the development of the street pattern within the late Saxon and medieval towns.

It is likely that the junction between the western and the riverside defences has been destroyed by cellars, and there is therefore probably no possibility of directly determining the relationship between the timber revetment and stone walls in trench 1, and the remnants of probable revetment walls beside the river in trench 2.

THE MEDIEVAL DITCH

The area between the west gate and the river has been raised by dumping over the past two centuries, so that the Civil War and medieval ditches now lie well below the modern building levels; they are therefore well preserved and are likely to remain so. The upper fills of the ditch or river channel adjacent to the present river have been extensively disturbed by buildings and cellars but the medieval levels are probably well preserved and waterlogged.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

In this section the archaeological evidence is described and illustrated in detail (Figs 7-17). The evidence from trench 1 is considered first followed by trenches 2 and 4. Eight major phases of activity have been defined and dated as follows:

Phase 1: Prehistoric soil horizon
Phase 2: Middle Saxon activity
c. 800-850 AD
Phase 3: The late Saxon defences
c. 900-975 AD
Phase 4: Refurbishment of the defences
c. 900-1100 AD
Phase 5: The medieval town wall
c. 1100-1200 AD
Phase 6: Late Medieval activity
c. 1250-1600 AD
Phase 7: The Civil War defences
c. 1640-1750
Phase 8: Post-medieval pits and building
post 1750

The majority of the published sections are composites of the individual faces of the stepped sides of the main trenches. Where possible these composite sections were compiled on-site, so that details and possible inconsistencies could be resolved at the time. In order to provide a clear depiction of the stratigraphy, the breaks between the steps have been omitted except where they denote discontinuities in the layer boundaries. In addition, some sections have been reversed to maintain continuity of viewing direction (Fig 10, S13 reversed and Fig 17, S8R and S19R).

PHASE 1: THE PREHISTORIC SOIL HORIZON

Layers and features preserved beneath the defensive bank were investigated in trench 1. A total area of 6m^2 was exposed and 4m^2 was excavated to the natural. In trench 2 a small area of 3m^2 of pre-bank soil was exposed.

In trench 1 the natural was overlain by a uniform soil horizon of light brown to light yellow-brown gritty silty sand, up to 220mm thick (69/129, Figs 9 and 10). To the east part of a V-shaped ditch, 0.50m deep and at least 1.0m wide, lay within the excavation area, F137. There was some iron panning of the natural at the base of the ditch and the fill comprised a stone-free, whitish-brown to light yellow-brown compact gritty sand. Its relationship to the early soil horizon could not be established, but the fill was similar in colour and texture and was similarly sealed by the middle Saxon soil horizon, 100/128.

No finds were recovered from the ditch but 11 struck flints, including a fragment of a probable leaf arrowhead, came from the early soil horizon and a further three from the fill of the late Saxon timber slot, F97.

PHASE 2: MIDDLE SAXON ACTIVITY

In trench 1 the upper pre-bank soil horizon was exposed and fully excavated (100/128, Figs 9 and 10). In a small area to the west there were patchy deposits of orange-brown to brown gritty sand with small ironstone chips and irregular pieces of pale yellow-brown sandstone, 126 (Fig 12a); it is typical of material derived from the Northampton Sand and Ironstone deposits. The general layer comprised a light brown to light grey-brown sandy loam moderately flecked with comminuted charcoal, it was up to 200mm thick and contained occasional chips or small pieces of ironstone and some large sherds of middle Saxon Maxey Ware, 100/128.

Five small postholes and stakeholes cut into this level, although some were only recognised after its removal. The postholes were up to 300mm in diameter by up to 230mm deep and two stakeholes were 130mm in diameter. They were all filled with light grey clayey silt (Fig 9, F145-F149).

An oval pit, F116, 1.95m long by 1.20m wide, lay beyond the eastern extent of the preserved middle Saxon soils; it was sealed by layers of road metalling and appears to pre-date the defences, although there was no direct relationship to the clay bank. The sides undercut by at least 150mm, and lower down they were near vertical to the limit of excavation at 1.0m, where the water table was encountered; probing suggested the presence of at least a further 0.50m of fills.

The bulk of the excavated fill, 140, was a light to medium brown sandy silt with light blue-grey mottles and streaks. A number of near vertical sided, roughly circular "pipes" contained a much looser fill of mixed and mottled light blue-grey silt and medium brown sandy silt, 139. The upper 250mm of the fill was a loose and soft heavily mottled yellow, light brown, light blue-grey to white sandy silt with sparse charcoal flecks, 138. No pottery, other finds or animal bone was recovered. The function of the pit and the origin of its fills is unknown; the characteristic yellow-green staining associated with cess deposits was absent but the blue-grey coloration and the pungent smell would seem most likely to derive from some form of organic content.

PHASE 3: THE LATE SAXON DEFENCES

The date of origin for the defences is based on four small sherds of Northampton Ware and St. Neots Ware recovered from the base of the clay bank in trench 1, and six small sherds of Northampton Ware from directly beneath the bank in trench 2.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE DEFENCES

Beneath the rear of the bank the ground surface was nearly level, at 60.10m aOD (Fig 10). It sloped gently downward to the south-west, falling by 100mm in a distance of 3.0m, and may have fallen slightly more steeply immediately beyond the revetment slot, F97. The underlying ground therefore has a total fall of 250-450mm in a distance of 4.5m. In trench 2 the base of the bank was at 59.00m aOD, indicating a 1.0m fall in the ground level between trenches 1 and 2.

In trench 1 natural gravel was encountered 30m to the south-west of the bank, beyond the medieval ditches, at a level of 57.50m aOD, up to 1.35m lower than the natural beneath the bank (Fig 8). This indicates that the bank was constructed on gently sloping ground at the margin of a gradually steepening natural slope. The builders therefore took maximum advantage of the natural topography to enhance the height differential between the bank and the ditch.

THE TIMBER REVETMENT

A 2.3m length of linear slot was excavated in trench 1, F97 (Figs 10 and 11). It was 380-480mm deep, cutting through the pre-bank soil horizons and 50-100mm into the natural. The inner edge was steeply inclined and could be followed upward against the face of the bank for 250mm. The outer edge survived to a height of only 150-300mm as a result of a later lowering of the ground level. It was more gently inclined, at *c* 45 degrees, but it is uncertain whether this is original, perhaps serving to aid the insertion of the timbers, or whether it was a result of the dismantling of the revetment, when digging out along the front of the slot would have aided the removal of the timbers.

The flat bottom of the slot was 220mm wide. A circular hollow, 40mm deep, 131, appears to be a timber impression; above this a loose and soft fill of grey sandy silt defined a probable pipe, 100-120mm in diameter, within the more compact slot fills. An oval hollow to the north, 50-80mm deep, was only recognised in the base of the trench.

Three post-pits were set along the inner edge of the slot at 0.70m intervals centre-to-centre, F98, F132, and F133. They were only identified following the excavation of the bulk of the slot fill; the northern and central pits were excavated from the top of the pre-bank soil horizon, at 440mm and 500mm deep respectively. The presence of the third pit, F133, had been suspected at this level, but it was only clearly defined at the natural, a depth of 150mm. They had circular to oval bases, *c* 150mm in diameter and *c* 100mm deeper than the slot (Fig 12, a). In the base of the northern post-pit there was a stakehole, 100mm in diameter by 100mm deep.

EARLY FEATURES IN TRENCH 2

The earliest features in trench 2 were only seen in a small area that lay immediately above the watertable. A close parallel to the timber slot in trench 1 was not found, but it is possible that it could have been concealed beneath later features at the front of the bank. A number of features pre-dated the bank and shared the same alignment, they therefore appear to relate to its construction in some uncertain fashion.

The natural clay, 221 (Fig 17), merged into a more mixed layer of clean sandy clay and light brown to light grey-brown, charcoal flecked clays, 202, containing a few small sherds of late Saxon pottery. A length of wood, 216, at least 500mm long by 50-110mm wide, lay towards the bottom of the layer (Figs 16 and 17), it had been compressed to a thickness of less than 1mm and contained no material substance that could be collected for analysis. It was aligned with the bank and so may indicate that the accumulation of this layer was related to the construction of the defences, perhaps a layer of trampling and disturbance of the existing ground surface.

The soil beneath the front of the bank, 219, was slightly greyer

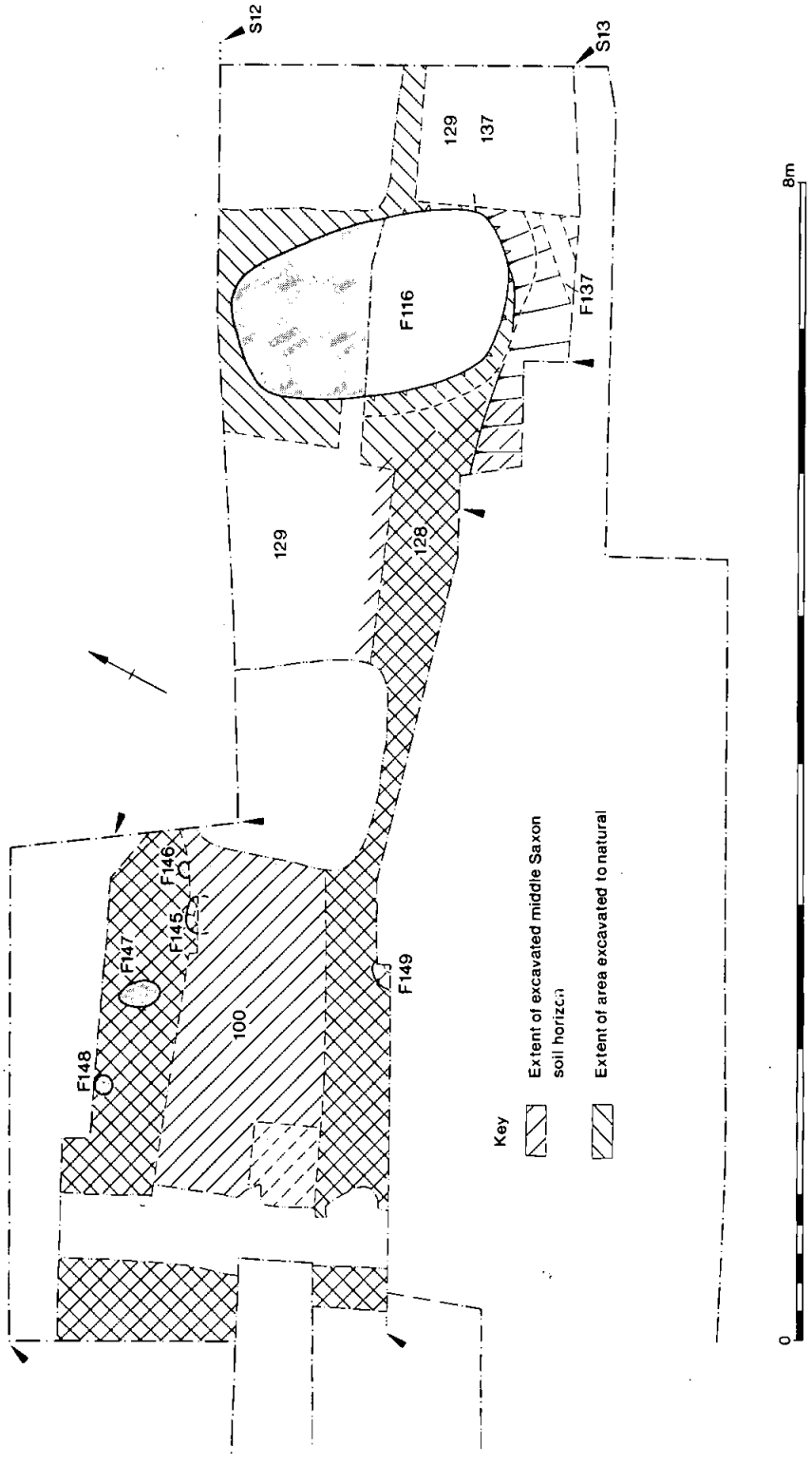


Fig 9 Trench 1, prehistoric and middle Saxon activity

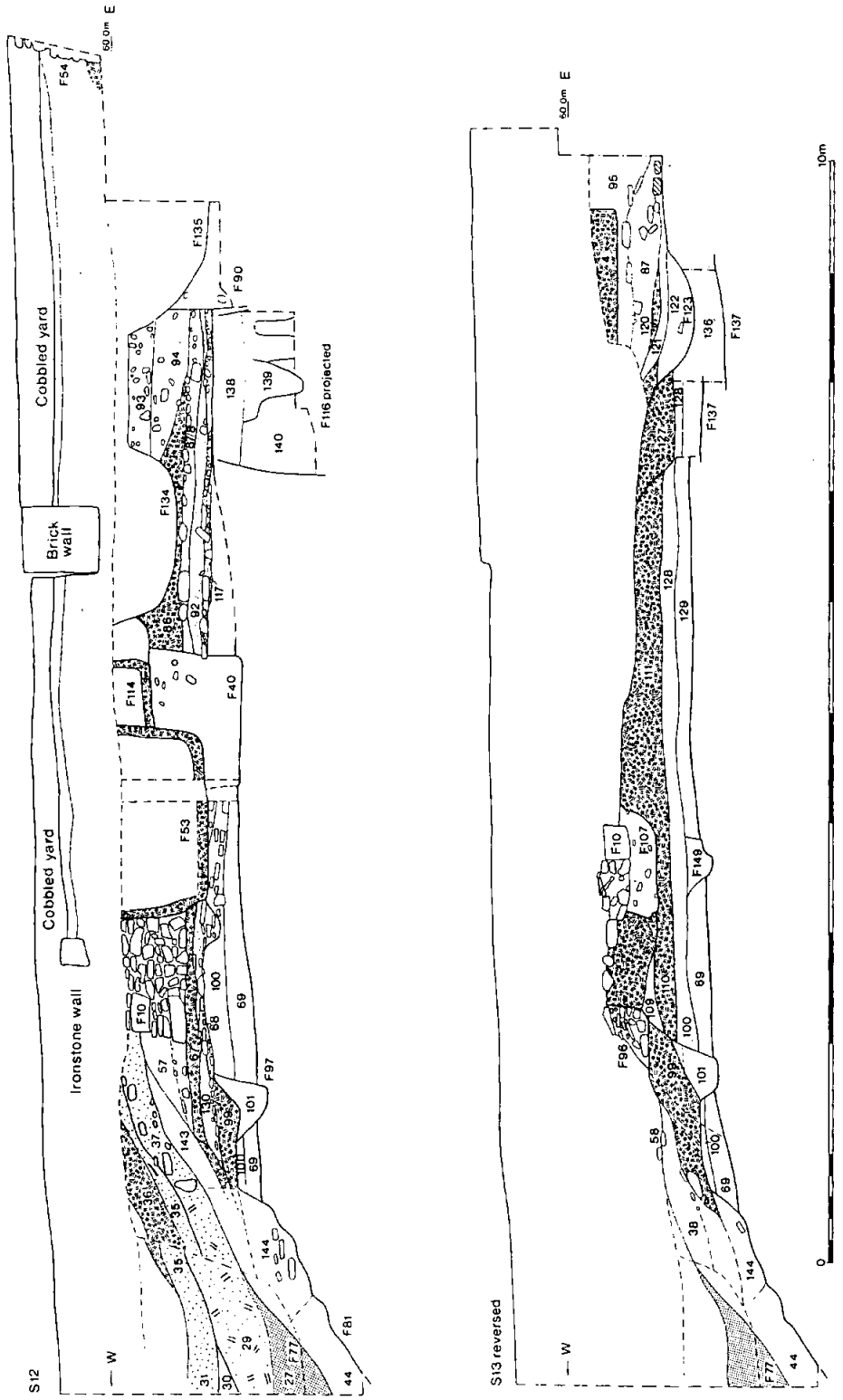


Fig 10 Trench 1, sections across the defensive bank

in colour and contained more charcoal flecking; it apparently filled an ill-defined, shallowly sloping cut, F220, 300mm deep. It was aligned with the front of the bank and its outer edge had been removed by later activity. It therefore appears to be a linear cut under the front of the bank, but was too shallow to have supported any substantial timbers.

The disturbed soil horizon and the shallow cut were sealed by a compact spread, 203, of irregular pieces of ironstone, typically 100-300mm long and lying flat but including some steeply pitched fragments and others inclining gently into 219. This too was aligned with the bank and may have been laid immediately prior to its construction.

Stone layers 204 and 217 were only partially removed, so only a small area of the underlying deposits was seen and evidence of earlier activity could have been missed.

THE BANK

The bank was 6.0m wide in trench 1 and had a maximum height of 650mm towards its outer face (Fig 10, S13); in trench 2 the bank stood 900mm high (Fig 17, S9 and S8). In trench 4 the top of the bank was uncovered but as it could not be investigated to any significant depth its height was not established (Fig 17, S18 and S19). In the watching brief the top of the bank was seen over an extensive area around trench 4 (Fig 6). It had a maximum width of 4.3m with a northern edge running near parallel to a post-medieval revetment wall, which therefore appears to closely respect the alignment of the former bank.

In all three trenches the bank comprised a homogeneous clean light yellow-brown tenacious clay virtually devoid of stones; it contained only the very occasional chip of ironstone no more than 50mm in length. At the front of the bank in trench 1 it was possible to discern three levels of make-up, with the upper and lower clays separated by a layer or lens of mixed clays with yellow and orange-brown sand (Fig 10, layer 109). Over the inner half of the bank, which stood 250-400mm high, only a single layer could be identified, 111. It is possible, however, that additional material was later added against the rear of the bank, where there was a darker deposit of sticky brown clayey loam with some charcoal flecking, 127.

In trench 2 there were two layers of yellow-brown tenacious clays; the upper 600mm, 222, was more friable than the lower 300mm, 208, with the change occurring at a sharp horizontal break (Fig 17). In trench 4 only the uppermost 300mm of the surviving bank was excavated but it showed a similar sequence to trench 2; comprising an upper clay layer, 412, 240mm thick, which was slightly more sandy and friable than the tenacious clay beneath, 413 (Fig 17).

The origin of the clay used to form the bank has not been established. It is not the same as either the underlying natural clay or the blue-grey lias clays that outcrop on the slopes around much of the town. This suggests that most of the material was probably not derived from the length of ditch running down to the river. The most likely local source is the alluvial clays and silts which cover the gravel across much of the valley floor.

THE DITCH

The inner edge of the early ditch in trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.0m, F81 (Fig 10); the original width and depth are unknown but probing located the lower profile of the upper fills, 43, and this suggests that it was probably at least 8.0m wide and in excess of 2.0m deep (Fig 8).

The fill against the inner edge was a light grey sticky clay containing small pieces of ironstone and limestone, 44. The main fill was only seen between the Civil War ditches, it was a waterlogged, grey to grey-black silty clay, with heavy charcoal flecking and containing small pieces of wood, 43. The fill against the upper part of the inner edge was a light grey-brown silty clay containing pieces of ironstone and limestone up to 250mm long, 144. There was a suggestion in section that it may have filled a shallow recut.

The relationship between the ditch and the bank is uncertain. The fill at the inner edge, 144, was overlain by the outer part of a clay layer that post-dated the backfilling of the revetment slot, 99. This might suggest that the ditch was at least partially filled by the introduction of the stone revetment. However, this effect may have been created by later slippage of the clay layer.

PHASE 4: REFURBISHMENT OF THE LATE SAXON DEFENCES

There is very little dating evidence for the various aspects of the refurbishment of the bank and the introduction and use of the gateway in trench 1. Only the end of the sequence can be dated; a layer sealing the road metalling, 87/88, contained 11th century pottery, while a layer of clay directly beneath the medieval town wall, 67, is dated to the first half of the 12th century (1100-1150). This suggests that the gateway was in use through the 11th century and had been blocked at some point during the first half of the 12th century before the construction of the medieval town wall. The levelling of the timber revetment and the creation of the stone wall and the gateway are therefore likely to have occurred by the earlier 11th century at the latest, and with the possibility that they may actually date to some point in the 10th century.

THE LEVELLING OF THE TIMBER REVETMENT

The revetment slot in trench 1 was filled with mixed yellow to light brown sticky clays heavily mottled with orange-brown sand and some light grey-brown charcoal flecked sandy silts, 101 (Fig 10). The lack of evidence for the former presence of timbers indicates that it comprised a backfill following the systematic dismantling of the revetment. The material probably comprises a mixture of the original backfill and material disturbed from the bank and the pre-bank soil horizons during the removal of the timbers. The absence of stones suggests that there had probably been little use of any stone packing.

A number of events can be related to the dismantling of the timber revetment. The lowering of the external ground surface to 200mm below the base of the bank, and the cutting away of the outer edge of the slot may both have occurred at this time, probably to provide easier access to the timbers. The gently inclined inner sides of two post-pits, F132 and F133, and the undercutting of the lower side in post-pit F132 (Fig 12a), might have resulted from the posts being pulled over during their removal.

Over both the slot and the area in front of it, the ground level was rebuilt with a dumped layer of mottled yellow-brown sticky clay, 99, 500mm thick, similar to the original bank material (Fig 10). It contained some pieces of limestone and ironstone, 100-250mm in length. The larger pieces were most often found

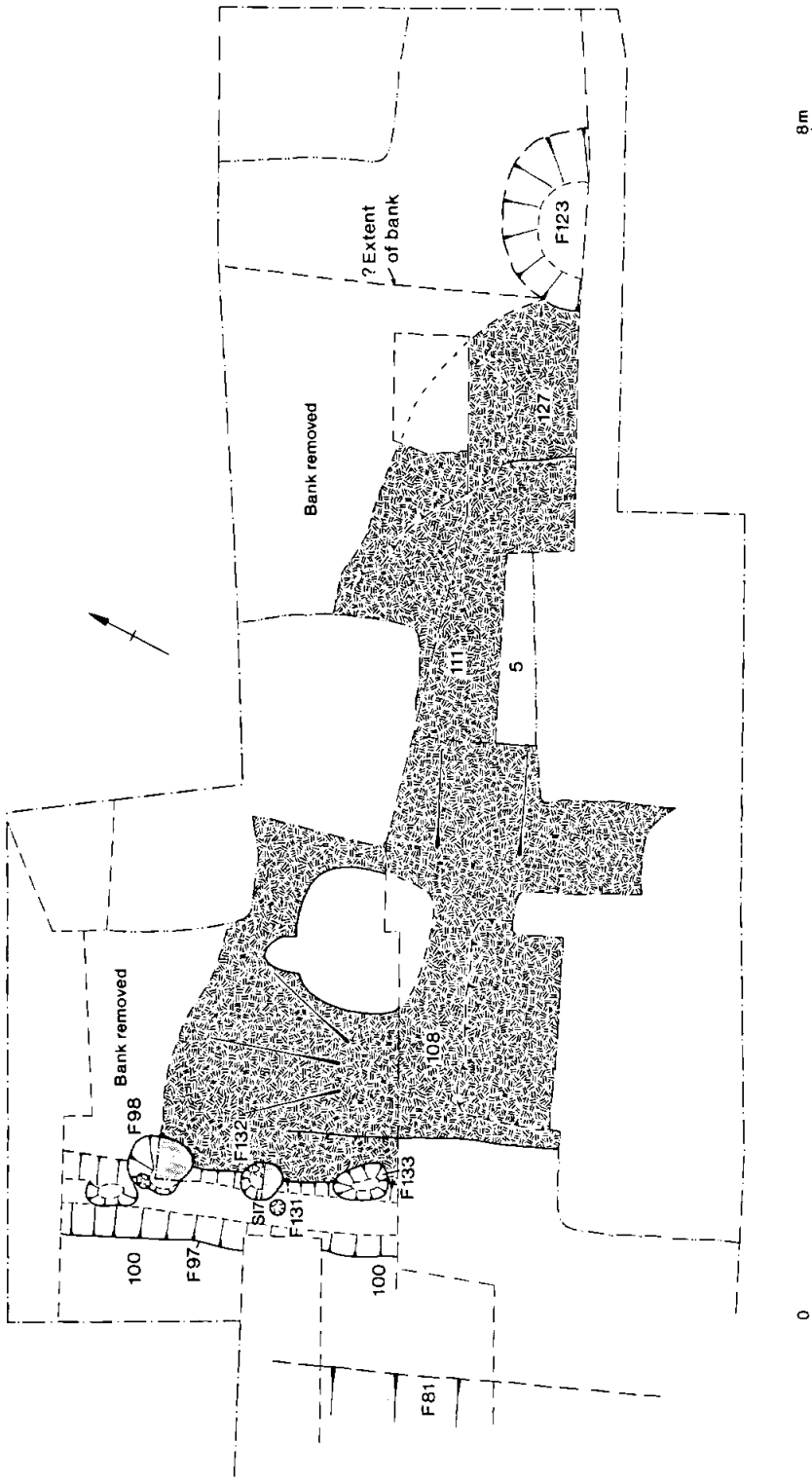


Fig 11 Trench 1, the late Saxon bank and revetment slot

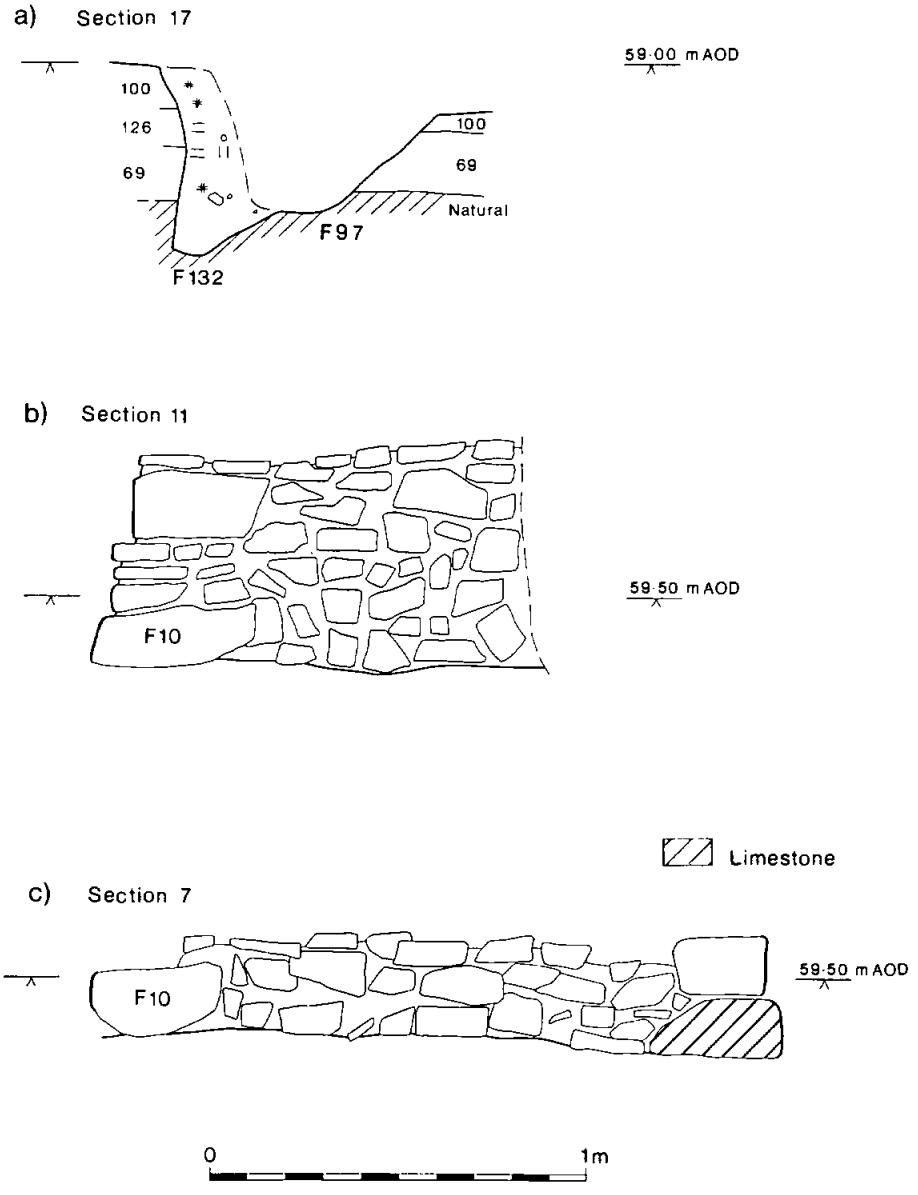


Fig 12 Trench 1, sections: a) revetment slot and post-pit. b) & c) the medieval wall

at the base of the layer and pitched against the sloping surface of the slot backfill, 101, where they may have been deliberately placed to provide a more solid base over the backfilled slot.

This clay extended 1.0m in front of the bank, and continued beyond this for a further 0.75m as a more mixed clay with some pieces of limestone embedded in the surface. The outer part might derive from later slumping and erosion of the outer face of both the clay layer and the revetment wall F96. This distinction is of importance as only the outer part post-dated the fill, 144, against the inner edge of the original ditch, F81 (Fig 10).

THE STONE REVETMENT

The stone revetment, F96, stood on the dumped clay, 99, and against a vertical face cut into the existing bank (Fig 10, S12 and

Fig 13). A total length of 1.8m of the wall survived, standing to a maximum height of 400mm and comprising five rough, unmortared courses of flat laid pieces of limestone and sandstone, with the larger slabs of limestone up to 400mm in length. The wall was in excess of 0.60m wide, but the outer face had been entirely lost to later disturbances. The wall stones were loose, with frequent voids between the stones, but this was at least partially due to outward slumping of the disturbed wall remnant. A later scatter of clay and limestone pieces against the truncated wall and on the surfaces beyond, 58, appear to have come from the wall (Fig 10). The scatter included traces of possible decayed lime mortar and this may suggest that either the outer face or the upper courses of the wall had been mortared.

To the north only the bottom wall course partially survived, however, there was no indication of an eastward return and it appears that there had been only a square butt-end.

THE GATEWAY

A large sub-square pit, F107, was cut into the sloping terminal of the bank. It was 0.96m square and 400mm deep, with steep to near vertical sides and a flat base; a short slot projected from the northern side, 350mm long by 260mm wide and 330mm deep (Figs 10 and 13). The fill was of mixed light brown tenacious clay and light grey-brown sandy clay with some small chips of ironstone and sparse charcoal flecking; it contained no evidence for the former presence of a post.

To the west, beyond the revetment wall, there may have been a further post-pit, but this feature lay in a corner of the excavated area and could not be fully investigated, F119. It was defined by a tight cluster of steeply pitched pieces of limestone, capped by two slabs of limestone, set in a matrix of light brown clay mottled with orange-brown sand which could not be clearly differentiated from the surrounding clay layer, 99. If this was of a similar size to pit F107, and both were related to a single gatehouse structure, they would have held posts set 3.0m apart centre-to-centre. Post-pit F107 could have held a post 500-600mm square, while the adjacent slot might have held a vertical plank. If the post-pits defined the southern side of a timber gatehouse, it would have stood at an oblique angle to the revetment wall, F96, which would have abutted the southern side of the structure.

THE ROAD SURFACES AND RELATED FEATURES

The 1.0m wide strip of excavated road metalling represents the southern margin of a road of unknown width. A change in the alignment of the southern boundary of the metalling suggests that the road probably tapered in to its narrowest point in line with the revetment and beneath the postulated timber gatehouse.

Two layers of metalling survived. The lower surface was an 80mm thick layer of limestone pieces and some cobbles set in a matrix of light grey-brown gritty sand, 68 and 117 (Figs 10 and 13). The stones were typically 100-200mm in length and had been heavily worn. Where it was least disturbed by later activity, it formed a carefully laid continuous cobbled road surface.

Two clusters of small, steeply-pitched fragments of ironstone at the edge of the road, F142 and F141, may mark postholes 200-400mm in diameter by up to 200mm deep, although it was impossible to define any cut edges. They may suggest that there was some form of timber revetment along the entrance passage.

At the southern limit of excavation a shallow, circular, bowl shaped pit, F123, lay at the rear of the bank. It was 1.2m in diameter by 300mm deep and was filled with mixed and mottled clays.

The upper road surface, 104/92, was up to 140mm thick and comprised large, heavily worn, flat-laid slabs of limestone and ironstone, typically 200-400mm long, over a base of compacted ironstone chips, typically measuring 30-80mm, in a matrix of red-brown sand (Fig 14). The metalled surface had been partly lost but was well preserved where it was sealed beneath the medieval wall and to the east where it had subsided into an earlier pit. Over pit F123 the basal layer comprised mixed ironstone and limestone chips, 121, and may be a later relaying of the metalling over the soft pit fills.

A rectangular posthole, F91, 0.50m long by 0.25m wide and 350mm deep with near vertical sides and flat bottom, lay at the rear of the bank adjacent to the road metalling. The fill of grey-brown friable loam contained some steeply pitched pieces of ironstone and limestone which may have been displaced packing stones. It may denote the provision of a timber revetment at the rear of the bank.

A nearby shallow, bowl-shaped hollow, F125, 0.65m in diameter by 150mm deep, was cut into the tail of the bank at the edge of the road metalling. It was filled with tightly packed pieces of ironstone and limestone in a matrix of brown clay. The northern half of this feature had been removed by a rectangular sondage cut as part of the original site evaluation.

THE REVETMENT IN TRENCH 2

A spread of stone bedded in a clay matrix, 217 and 204, has been interpreted as the probable remnant of two former stone revetments of the outer face of the bank (Figs 16 and 17). It was 2.5m wide in total but comprised two distinct halves. The outer part, 217, was of compact fragments of limestone, with the occasional piece of ironstone, embedded in clay including patches of pale cream lime mortar. It was at least 1.5m wide by 250mm thick, but to the south-west it was truncated by the adjacent ditch. The inner half, 204, was 1.0m wide, and comprised a scatter of irregular pieces of ironstone resting on a layer of light brown tenacious clay up to 260mm thick. The inner edge at the foot of the bank was sharply defined and included two large squared ironstone blocks set deeply into the underlying clay.

The relationship of these abutting layers was unclear. However, as the walls in trench 1 were built in limestone and ironstone respectively we can postulate a similar sequence for trench 2. This would suggest that the outer layer, 217, would be the earlier revetment, while the inner layer, which lay at a slightly higher level, would be the remnant of a medieval revetment wall. This would imply that the bank had been cut back by just over a metre at this rebuilding.

PHASE 5: THE MEDIEVAL TOWN WALL

There is no direct evidence for the construction date of the medieval wall. The best evidence is from a clay layer, 67, directly sealed by the wall which contained pottery dated to *c.*1100-1150.

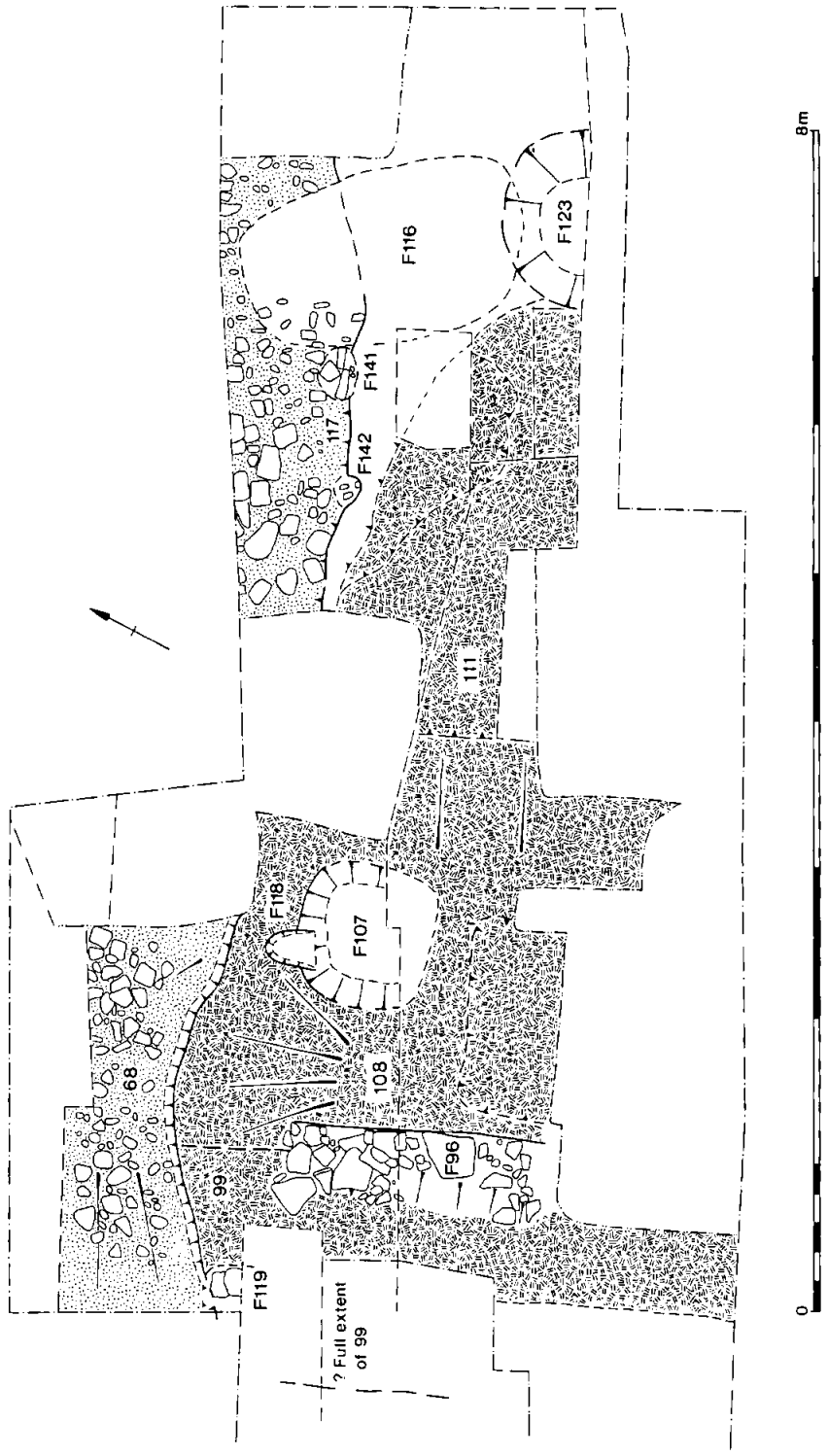


Fig 13 Trench 1, the late Saxon gateway

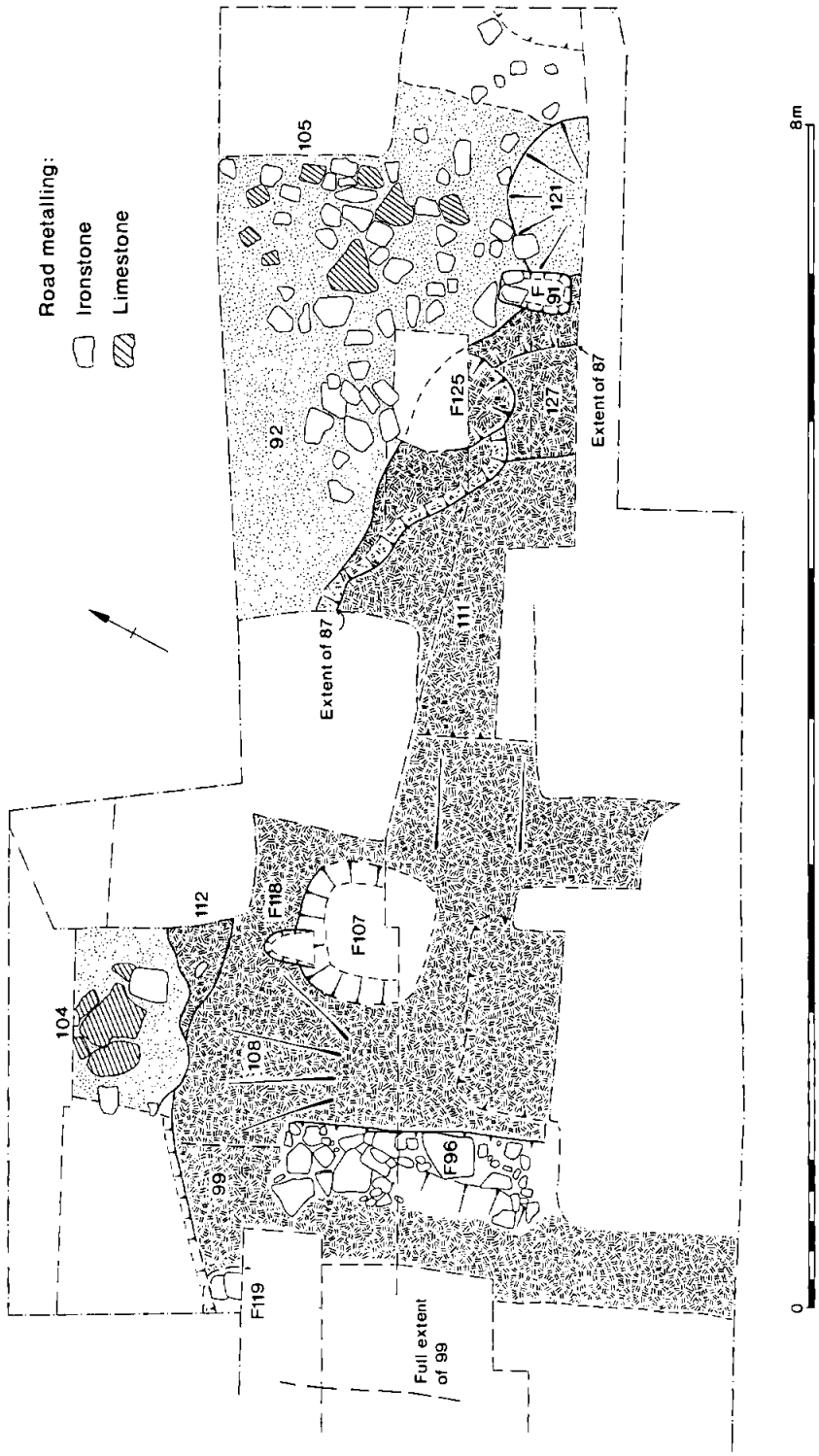


Fig 14 Trench 1, the upper road metalling

THE BLOCKING OF THE ENTRANCE PASSAGE

The road metalling within the entrance passage in trench 1 was overlain by a layer of red to orange-brown gritty sand, 130 and 87/88 (Fig 10), typically 100mm thick but up to 300mm thick to the south-east where it contained large rounded fragments of ironstone and some disordered pieces of worn limestone from disturbed road metalling. There was no indication that this was a further road surface, unless it formed a base for a layer of lost metalling; it seems more likely to represent dumping within the entrance passage as a prelude to the creation of the medieval town defences.

At the western end of the gateway a thin layer of clean clays, 67, were directly overlain by the foundations of the medieval town wall.

THE TOWN WALL

A direct relationship between the medieval wall, F10, and the earlier revetment, F96, was not obtained; but the outer face of the later wall would have overlapped with the rear of the earlier revetment. It would therefore appear that the earlier revetment must have been levelled down to the top of the bank prior to the construction of the medieval wall, although it would still have provided a revetment at the front of the bank, where it would have formed a projecting plinth.

A 3.0m length of the new wall, F10, was recovered in trench 1 (Figs 10, 12, and 15). It had been disturbed by later pits, so that only 1.5m lengths of each wall face had survived, and a recent pipe trench cut diagonally across it. To the south only the bottom foundation course survived, but to the north the wall had been built down into the hollow of the earlier gateway and survived up to 6 courses, 0.55m, high.

The wall was 1.85m wide at foundation level and was built almost entirely in ironstone derived from the Northampton Sands with Ironstone beds which outcrop over much of the area of the medieval town and beyond. The foundations of both the inner and outer wall faces comprised large, roughly squared blocks typically 300-400mm in length and depth and 150-300mm thick; the single limestone block was the largest stone, at 600mm long.

In the short surviving length of the outer wall face, the foundation course was overlain by three courses of smaller roughly squared stones, 100-300mm long by 30-100mm thick and 160-200mm deep. At a height of 400mm there was an 80mm offset and a final surviving course comprised larger ironstone blocks, 150-200mm long by up to 350mm deep and 150-190mm thick. The level of the offset course at the north is equivalent to the foundation level on the bank to the south, so the offset may only be a localised feature defining the surface at which the foundations filling the former entrance passage were brought to a level.

The core of the wall was ironstone rubble, comprising irregular fragments measuring 100mm or less up to small blocks at least 200mm long by 100mm thick, set in a matrix of light brown sticky clay; there was no evidence for the use of mortar. There was no surviving evidence of a construction trench for the wall. The foundation stones were bedded into the underlying clay bank by up to 100mm, but this might have been purely a result of settlement. In the former entrance passage the wall sat directly on top of the earlier deposits.

THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE BANK

The bank was reinstated in the area of the former entrance passage by the deposition of a layer of compact yellow-brown clay, 86, at least 400mm thick (Fig 10). This material presumably abutted the inner face of the town wall, but the relationship had been destroyed by later pits. Only the basal part of this layer was excavated in plan, the upper part was removed by machine excavation where it had been extensively disturbed by later pits.

Brown to grey-brown slightly clayey loams, containing some ironstone chips and charcoal flecking, 94 and 95, had accumulated to a depth of 300-400mm over the tail of the bank. This material was only observed in section, and would appear to derive from medieval activity immediately inside the defences, it was cut by a late medieval pit, F90.

Against the outer face of the wall within the former entrance passage there was an accumulation of sandy clays, 57. The lower part may have been deposited against the wall foundations soon after construction, but the upper part represents a late 13th century accumulation of soils against the wall face.

THE TOWN DITCH

It was only possible to excavate to a maximum depth of 3.0m below modern ground level and, as a result, it was not possible to locate with certainty the edges of the medieval ditches. A steeply angled cut through the fills of the late Saxon ditch, F81, probably defines the inner edge, F80, while a machine cut sondage located natural gravels which must lie immediately beyond the western edge of the ditch (Fig 8). This suggests that the medieval ditch or ditches were about 15m wide. There appears to have been a 7.0m wide berm between the ditch and the bank. The ditch fills were excavated to a depth of 2.0m below the base of the town wall, but it is impossible to provide any accurate estimate of the full depth.

THE MEDIEVAL DEFENCES IN TRENCHES 2 AND 4

No features in trenches 2 and 4 can be specifically assigned to a medieval date but, as already noted, the inner stone layer in trench 2, 204, probably represents the medieval rebuilding of a revetment wall along the front of the riverside bank.

Only the upper fills at the inner edge of the ditch or watercourse in trench 2 were investigated. The earliest excavated fill, a grey clayey ditch silt, 205, contained a small pottery assemblage dated to the late 12th or early 13th centuries (1150-1225), indicating that this feature was open at this time (Fig 17, S9).

PHASE 6: LATE MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY

PITS

Two medieval pits were cut into the bank inside the town wall in trench 1 (Figs 10 and 15). F40 lay only 0.25m from the inner face of the wall, it was 1.50m square by 0.85m deep, vertical-sided and flat-bottomed. The sandy loam fill contained frequent scattered pieces of ironstone and a localised dump of ironstone rubble. A second square, vertically-sided pit, F90, was only partially excavated. It was at least 0.60m deep and was cut through layer 94 which had accumulated over the tail of the bank.

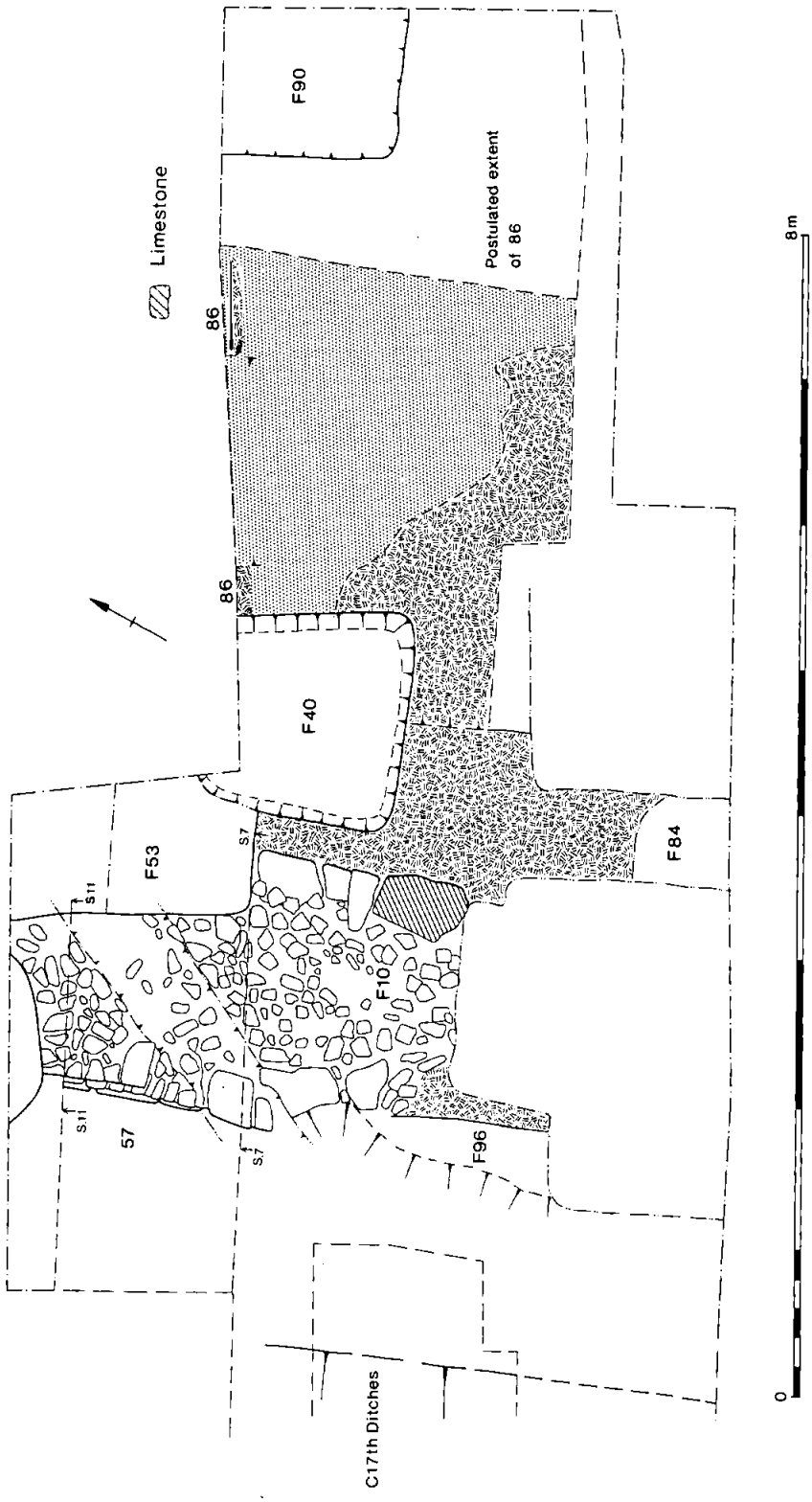


Fig 15 Trench 1, the medieval defences

Plate 6 Trench 4, looking south-west, showing tanning pits cut into the top of the Saxon bank, and the post-medieval revetment wall.

Pit F40 produced a pottery assemblage dated 1225-1250, while pit F90 contained pottery dated to 1250-1400. A possible third pit F84, had been largely removed by post-medieval pits.

In trench 4 a circular pit 1.25m in diameter was cut into the top of the bank, F416 (Fig 16). It was only partially excavated and produced a small pottery assemblage dated to 1250-1500. Two later, circular clay-lined pits, F410 and F411, 0.75-0.80m in diameter and 0.25-0.35m deep, were both filled with a fine silty loam and a single sherd of Cistercian Ware from 411 suggests a later fifteenth or sixteenth century date (1450-1600); further pits to the immediate north were seen during the watching brief (Fig 6). The clay-lined pits most probably belong to a sixteenth century or later tannery (Plate 6).

THE FILLING OF THE DITCH

As it was only possible to partially investigate the upper fills of the medieval ditch in trench 1, the history of its filling cannot be described in detail.

Beyond the western edge of the ditch the natural gravel was overlain by a thin layer of light grey clayey silt, 75, which contained a few sherds of pottery dated to 1100-1150 (Fig 8).

Against the inner edge of the ditch there was a mixed fill of orange-brown to brown gritty sandy clay, with charcoal flecking, 48. Above this there was a homogeneous grey-brown friable loam, 15, at least 500mm thick; to the west this layer became more clayey, 63 and 73-74. These layers represent the establishment of a stable soil horizon across the entire width of the ditch, and pottery from layer 15 is dated to 1450-1500. A 1.5m high scarp would still have given a clear indication of the former presence of a ditch, and the lowest lying area, layer 63, was still wet and boggy.

Beyond the ditch a further accumulation of clayey loams, 62, was cut by a steep-sided linear ditch, F72, 1.70m wide by 500mm deep. The lower fill of grey black organic silt, 71, indicates that the ditch was waterlogged. There was a secondary fill of grey silty clay, 70, and a final fill of orange brown sandy clay, 61, as a deliberate backfill. This ditch is undated, but a 16th century date may be inferred from the dating of the earlier and later deposits.

The ditch was sealed by a friable brown loam, 60, which merged into a more clayey loam, 59, filling the hollow over the clayey deposits of the previous phase of ditch silting, indicating that this area was still sunken and wet.

At about this time a ditch or ditches were cut into the inner edge of the former medieval ditch, F79/F78. They were 0.90m deep, steep-sided and flat-bottomed, and spanned a total width of 5.0m. Later disturbances made it impossible to determine whether there were two ditches or a single broad ditch; the fills typically comprised compact brown sandy clays. They were only seen in section and are undated, but a late 16th to early 17th century date may be suggested.

In trench 2 the revetment wall was removed and the remnant of its foundations was sealed by a brown silty clay containing some small pieces of limestone and ironstone, 207 and 224. This is very similar to the bank material and probably derives from a collapse or partially levelling of the bank following the robbing of the wall (Fig 17). A small pottery assemblage from 207 is dated to c.1450-1500, indicating that the revetments had been levelled by the end of the 15th century or soon after. A compact deposit of limestone and ironstone within the ditch, 215, may derive from this event; the upper fill of mixed sandy clays, 213, contained a small pottery assemblage dated to the late 16th century.

PHASE 7: THE CIVIL WAR DEFENCES

THE CIVIL WAR DITCHES

Patches of comminuted charcoal and cream coloured "mortar" (perhaps deposits of lime from the tanneries) lay on the surface of the upper fills of the medieval town ditch in trench 1 (Fig 8); they may relate to a general clearance and levelling of the area. Above this, a homogeneous soil horizon of grey sandy loam, 22/32, accumulated to a depth of up to 600mm.

Two substantial ditches were cut from this level; the outer ditch was V-shaped, 2.7m wide by 1.30m deep, F76; the inner ditch was 6.0m wide by 1.0m deep with steep sides and a broad flat-bottom, F77 (Figs 7 and 8). The inner edge was 1.0m from the face of the medieval wall and there was a fall of 1.8m with respect to the ground level at the wall. There was no evidence to determine whether they were contemporary or successive ditches; they spanned a total width of 9.0m with a narrow pinnacle between them.

The primary fills of both ditches comprised grey to grey-black waterlogged organic gritty silts, containing numerous small pieces of wood, 23 and 27. Only residual medieval pottery was recovered, but a single clay tobacco-pipe bowl from the primary fill of the inner ditch, 27, is an early form dated to 1610-1640 (see section 4.3). The secondary fill of the outer ditch comprised a grey-brown gritty clay, 24, containing a scatter of ironstone pieces in the looser fill against the outer slope. The later fills of the inner ditch are all related to the final levelling of the medieval town wall and are described below.

There is no evidence for any 17th century recutting of the ditch or leat along the riverside in the trench 2, but this could easily have occurred beyond the excavated area.

THE LEVELLING OF THE MEDIEVAL WALL

Compact deposits of brown sandy clay containing some ironstone pieces, 28 and 29, accumulated against the sides of ditch F77 in trench 1 (Figs 8 and 10). They are probably contemporary with a layer higher up the inner slope, 37, but a cut-back in the side of the stepped trench left this uncertain (Fig 8). Layer 37 was a grey-brown friable loam with moderate charcoal flecking, and to the east it abutted the uppermost surviving courses of medieval town wall. It contained a scatter of blocks of ironstone, typically 200-300mm long, and some limestone. There is little doubt that this stone was derived from the medieval town wall, indicating that the remnant of the wall was either collapsing or was being dragged down as part of the levelling of the site. The main fill of the ditch, 30, was a friable and loose brown loam containing a scatter of mainly smaller pieces of ironstone.

These fills were sealed by a layer of friable grey-brown loam, 31; against the inner slope of the ditch a small area was excavated by hand, 35, and produced substantial quantities of pottery, clay tobacco-pipes and some fragments of hand-made bricks. The pottery is dated to around c.1730-1740 but the clay tobacco-pipes suggest a date for the final accumulation of this layer sometime after 1760. There is therefore no doubt that by the middle of the eighteenth century, at the latest, the medieval town wall had been totally levelled.

PHASE 8: POST-MEDIEVAL PITS AND BUILDINGS

POST-MEDIEVAL HOUSES

At the eastern end of trench 1 the face of a wall constructed in roughly squared ironstone blocks, F54, was recovered in the very corner of the trench (Figs 10 and 7). It stood at least 800mm high but its base was not located. It may have been the rear wall of a building fronting onto Green Street. A nearby stone-lined well, which was not investigated, might also have been related.

POST- MEDIEVAL PITS

In trench 1 the medieval town wall and the bank were both extensively disturbed by post-medieval pits and other features. A square, clay-lined tanning pit, F53, of late eighteenth century date had cut away the inner face of the wall, and to the south the full width of the wall had been destroyed by a rectangular pit, stone-lined along the long sides, F11 and F12 (Figs 7 and 8), and dated by clay tobacco-pipes to the early 19th century. A further probable tanning pit, F52, was not excavated and other pits were only seen in section, F134 and F135 (Fig 10); and the rear of the bank was largely removed by a series of pits filled with tenacious blue clays, 4.

Some of these features and related layers contained substantial animal bone deposits. Samples of this material were collected and will be retained in archive, but it has not been analysed in detail. Mike Shaw has briefly viewed the material to confirm that the high proportions of horn cores and sheep metapoidals are similar to deposits seen at The Green and other Northampton sites (Shaw 1996, 89-102), and is similarly indicative of tanning and related industries, including horn working.

In trench 2 a flat-bottomed platform was cut into the scarp at the foot of the former bank and clayey loams containing pieces of ironstone accumulated on this surface, 210 and 211 (Fig 17, S9). This area appears to have remained open ground and there were some indications that the upper accumulation of dark brown loams, 201/209, may have been cut by a number of pits.

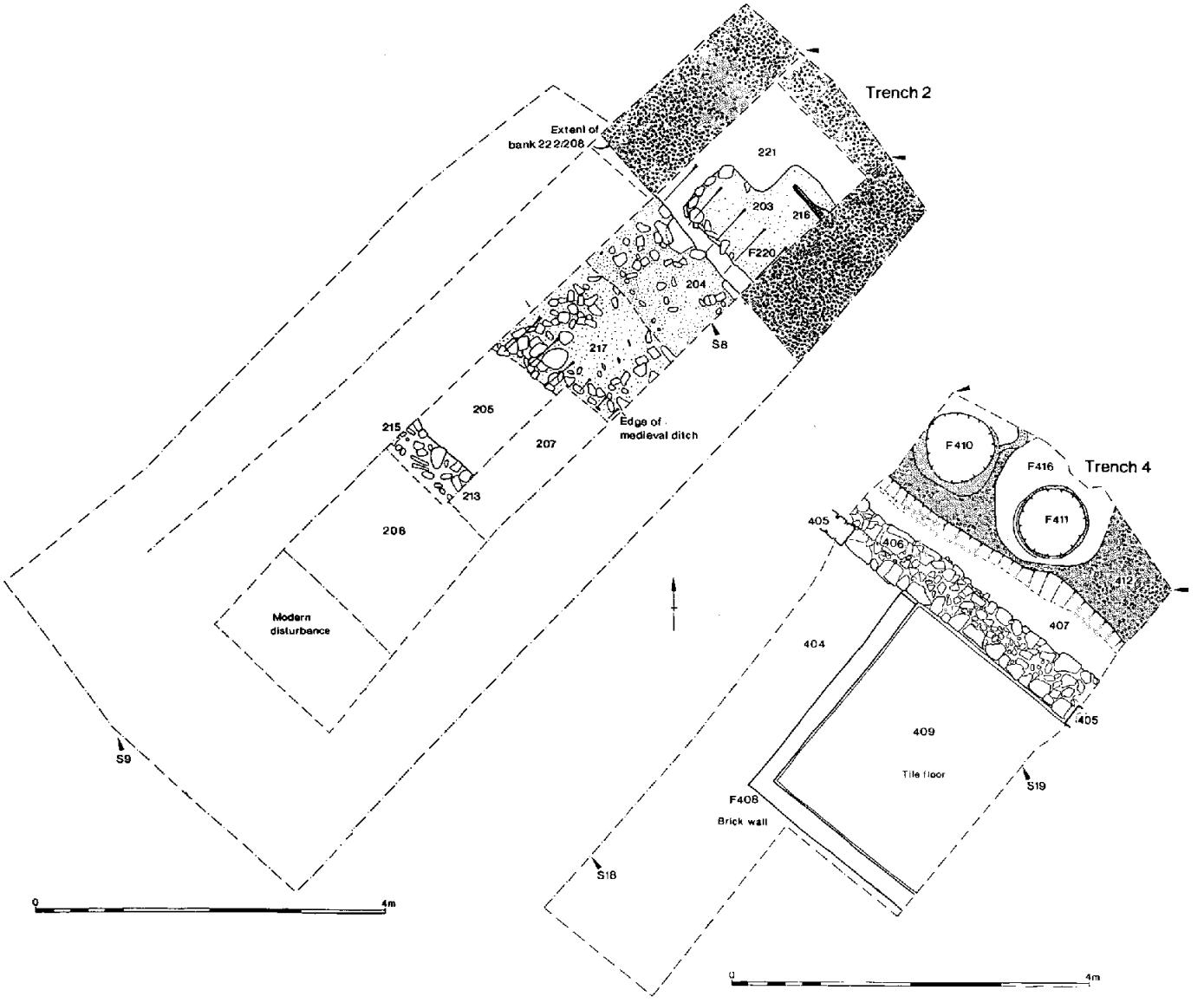


Fig 16 Trenches 2 and 4, the excavated features

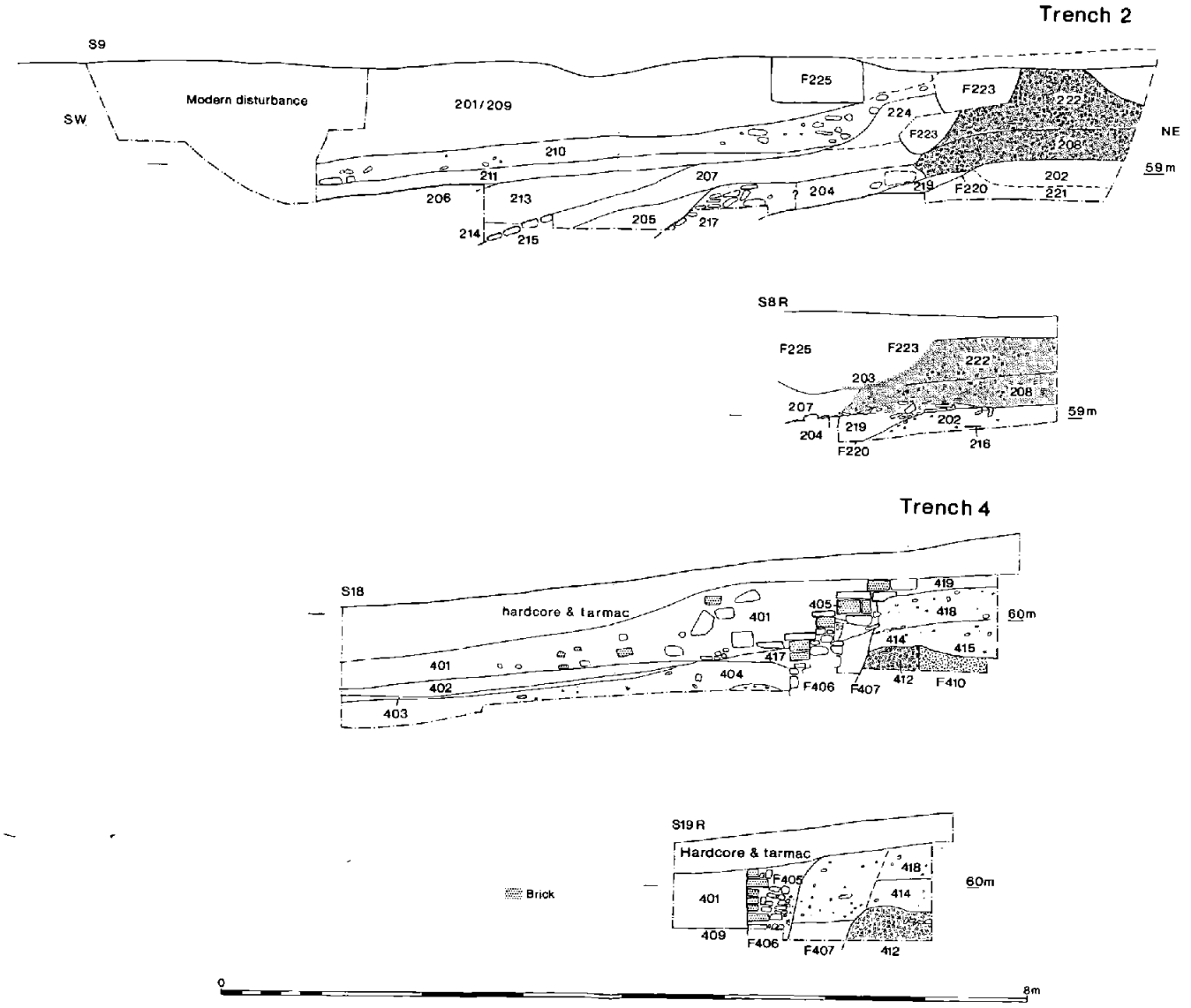


Fig 17 Trenches 2 and 4, the sections

RECENT BUILDINGS

Archaeological deposits relating to the buildings occupying the site from 1800 onward were removed by machine excavation in trench 1. They comprised the uppermost 800-900mm of the deposits over the former medieval bank and up to 1400mm over the medieval ditches. Outline details of these deposits, were recorded in the drawn sections, but most of this is omitted from the published sections, and no attempt was made to record them in plan or to describe them in any detail (Figs 8 and 10).

In trench 2 a steep-sided trench F223 (Fig 17, S9 and S8R), 0.90m wide by 0.80m deep and containing loose and disordered blocks of ironstone, is probably a robber trench of a former boundary wall. A further robber trench filled with ironstone rubble, F225, may be from either a later boundary wall or the first major building on this area. Later brick buildings with cellars had created much disturbance at the south-western end of the trench.

In trench 4 the demise of the tannery is dated to the first half of the 17th century by pottery from the lowest part, 415, of a 700mm thick accumulation of friable brown loams, 414 and 418 (Fig 17). The historic town maps show that this area remained open ground until the end of the 19th century. An ironstone revetment or retaining wall stood at the front of the bank, 406 (Figs 16 and 17), it was observed in the watching brief for a total length of 16m (Figs 16, 17 and 6). The wall was 0.60m thick and built in flat-laid ironstone, and its construction trench, F407, was backfilled with fairly loose soil.

A wall at the front of the bank on the same alignment in trench 2 had been totally robbed, F223.

At the end of the 19th century the retaining wall in trench 4 was partially levelled and utilised as the base for one wall of a brick built cottage, F405, with a chequered floor of red and white tiles, 409. To the north-west there was a yard surface of compact ironstone chips, 402, over a base of ash and cinders, 403. An external flight of flagstone steps, visible in section (Fig 17, S18), provided access to the higher ground over the former bank. The floor of this cottage lay just above the permitted maximum depth of excavation, so it was not possible to examine the nature of the underlying archaeology in this area. The cottage was sealed beneath its own demolition rubble, 401, and by the hardcore base for the tarmac surface of the car park.

THE FINDS

THE WORKED FLINT
by Andy Chapman

A total of 21 struck flints was recovered, 11 came from the prehistoric soil horizon preserved beneath the late Saxon bank in trench 1, 69/129, and 3 were residual in the fills of the adjacent late Saxon slot, F97.

The majority of the pieces are in a good quality vitreous flint, red-brown in colour; they comprise 17 flakes, 2 burnt pieces, a shattered piece, and a broken, pressure flaked implement that is probably a leaf arrowhead. Two of the flakes have edge retouch and 3 have irregular edge damage resulting from utilisation. The flakes from the prehistoric soil horizon include 3 spalls only 9-11mm in length; 8 flakes retain areas of cortex suggesting that they come from relatively small flint pebbles or cobbles, probably local river gravel flint.

Given the small size of the assemblage and the presence of only one diagnostic implement, only a broad Neolithic to early Bronze Age date may be proposed. The quantity recovered from the small area of early soils examined is consistent with the recovery of substantial quantities of worked flint from other excavations in this area of the town, such as Chalk Lane, Marefair, St.Peter's Street and Black Lion Hill (RCHME 1985, fiche 322-323), although there are no pieces with evident Mesolithic characteristics.

THE POTTERY
by Paul Blinkhorn and Iain Soden

A total of 400 sherds (7.49kg) of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered. The majority came from trench 1, 303 sherds, with a further 36 sherds from trench 2 and 61 sherds from trench 4. The middle and late Saxon pottery has been analysed by Paul Blinkhorn and the medieval and post-medieval pottery by Iain Soden. Editing and compilation of the report is by Iain Soden and Andy Chapman.

QUANTIFICATION

The material from trench 1 is broken down by stratigraphic phase with the fabric types related to the County Type Series (CTS), table 1.
The fabrics are as follows:

RB	Romano-British
EMS	Early/middle Saxon
97	Raunds Maxey-type Ware: 800-900 AD.
100	St Neots-type Ware: 900-1100.
130	Northampton Ware: 900-975 AD.
205	Stamford Ware: 850-1100.
200	St Neots-type Ware: 1000-1200.
330	Shelly Coarseware: 1100-1400.
360	Sandy Coarseware: 1100-1400.
302	Sandy Coarseware: 1100-1400.
319	Lyveden/Stanion A Ware: 1250-1400
331	Developed Stamford Ware: 1100-1200
370	Unprovenanced Glazed Ware: 1150-1300
320	Lyveden/Stanion B Ware: 1250-1300
329	Potterspury Ware: 1250-1500
322	Lyveden/Stanion D Ware: 1250-1500

Table 1: Trench 1, stratigraphic phasing of recovered fabric types

CTS Code	Ph2	Ph3	Ph4	Ph5	Ph6	Ph7	Ph8	Total
RB			1					1
EMS								
97	14				1			15
100		3		1	1			5
130		5	8	4				17
205			1	1				2
200			2	2				4
330			1	4	36			41
360				1				1
302					2		2	4
319					3		2	5
331			1		1		1	3
370					2		1	3
320					5			5
329					7	7	4	18
322				1				1
Total	15	8	14	14	58	7	10	126

MIDDLE SAXON

The soil horizon sealed beneath the bank in trench 1, 100, produced 14 sherds from a single Raunds-type Maxey Ware bar-lug vessel: It was in a grey fabric with orange-brown surfaces, the outer face of the vessel was heavily sooted.

Such vessels have a distribution throughout the south-east midlands and southern Lincolnshire, and are different in terms of both form and fabric from the eponymous Maxey Ware tradition of the Welland valley. They have so far been rarely found in Northamptonshire.

In common with other excavations within the boundaries of the late Saxon town the site has produced Maxey Ware but no Ipswich Ware (a single sherd was recovered at Chalk Lane (Gryspeerdt 1981)). Therefore while Raunds Maxey-type Ware can be given a general date-range of 650-850 AD, the lack of Ipswich Ware might suggest that in this area of Northampton it is unlikely to date before *c.* 800 AD. The activity at Green Street pre-dating the defences can therefore be dated to 800-850 AD.

LATE SAXON

The small quantity of St. Neots-type Ware contains vessel types which come into use *c.* 900 AD (Types T1(1) and T1(3) in the Northampton type series Denham; 1985, table 11). This suggests that there was little nearby activity in the second half of the ninth century. All the pottery of this type were plain bodysherds, with the exception of a single strap handle, type T1(2).

The small assemblage of Northampton Ware consists entirely

of plain bodysherds, except for a single everted, lid-seated rimsherd from a small jar, a type typical of the products of the industry. A total of 22 sherds were recovered comprising 17 from trench 1, including 2 sherds from the defensive bank, while the 5 small sherds from trench 2 are all from layer 202, which was directly sealed by the bank.

The appearance of Northampton Ware, with its finely potted vessels reminiscent of Stamford products, marks a watershed in local ceramic traditions. This distinctive Northampton Ware 'horizon' is found throughout the area of the Saxon town; it was first identified at St. Peters Gardens where it was dated to *c.* 900-975 AD (Denham 1985, 55). It is the Northampton Ware associated with the construction of the bank which dates the original defences to the tenth century.

MEDIEVAL

The medieval pottery from Green Street is sparse, comprising a total of 81 sherds from trench 1 (table 1). A half of this total was made up of Shelly Coarsewares and there were some Sandy Coarsewares. Of the finer, glazed wares Potterspury Ware is the most common, while Developed Stamford Ware and Lyveden/ Stanion Wares are present in small quantities. Few of the sherds are diagnostic and all of the types present are seen throughout the town and its hinterland, and betoken ordinary domestic activity nearby. Small assemblages were recovered from pits cut into the top of the bank in trenches 1 and 4 (F40, F93, and F416) and from the final fills of ditches in trenches 1 and 2 (Contexts 15 and 205). Individual context dates are given in the catalogue of the excavated evidence. The remainder occurred as residual finds in post-medieval contexts.

The scarcity of both late Saxon and medieval pottery is consistent with the nature of the site through these periods, as defensive structures are not commensurate with any density of occupation activity.

LATE MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL

One hundred and seventy seven sherds of late medieval transitional and post-medieval pottery were recovered from sixteen contexts in Trench 1. Small quantities were also recovered from trenches 2 and 4.

The material from trench 1 is broken down by stratigraphic phase and the types related to the County Type Series (CTS) in table 2.

The post-medieval fabrics are listed below, they include four new post-medieval types (435-438), along with production dates and the forms represented in the assemblage:

Table 2: Late medieval and post-medieval pottery from Trench 1

CTS Code	Ph6	Ph7	Ph8	Total
401	1			1
403		4	4	8
404		2		2
406		1		1
407			10	10
408		1	1	2
409		3	5	8
410		9	9	18
411		5	18	23
413		40	5	45
415		8		8
416		1	15	16
417		10	1	11
419			2	2
424			2	2
429		6	5	11
430			1	1
432			1	1
435			1	1
436			1	1
437			2	2
438		2	1	3
Total	1	92	84	177

401 Late medieval oxidised Ware; dated c1450-1550. No diagnostic material.
403 Midland Purple Ware; dated c1400-1600. No diagnostic material.
404 Cistercian Ware; dated c1450-1580. Cups.
406 Midland Yellow Ware; dated c1530-1700. Non- diagnostic.
407 Glazed earthenware; generally 16th-17th century. Two handled jars/pipkins.

408 Frechen Stoneware; generally c1600-1675. Jug/drinking cup.
409 Feathered Staffordshire Slipware; dated c1690-1730. press-moulded platters, feathered/combed.
410 Tin glazed earthenware; generally 17th to early 18th century. Ointment pots, bowls. No distinction made here between imported Delft or Bristol/Liverpool/London products.
411 Midland Blackware and Pancheon types; early cruder hollowwares c1550-1650, more competent flatwares c1700-1800, while Pancheons continue down tc c1900. Cups, tygs, night-soil jars, butter pots, pancheons.
413 Manganese glazed Wares; dated c1680-1740. Tankards, Night-soil jars.
415 Creamware; dated c1740-1820s. Plates.
416 Underglaze transfer-printed earthenware; began with black and brown in 1760s, continued predominantly blue throughout 19th and first quarter of 20th century. Plates.
417 Nottingham Stoneware; 18th century. Shaving bowls.
419 Blue shell-edged Pearlwares; c1780-1840. Plates.
424 Marbled Slipware; c1780-1820. Bowls.
429 White salt-glazed Stoneware; c1720-80. Ointment pots or tea-cups.
430 China; 19th century. Plate.
432 Mocha ware; c1830-50. Bowl.
435 Sgraffito ware; 18th century. Non-diagnostic sherd.
436 Porcelain; 18th century. Tea-bowl.
437 Lustreware; c1840-1880. Tea pot.
438 Lambeth Stoneware; 18th century. Flask.

The post-medieval assemblage comprises a typical cross-section of regional imports heavily reliant on Staffordshire types in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. This is a pattern seen across the midlands at many urban centres. Such dominance is due to the astounding success of the potters of the five towns of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation who quickly catered for changing tastes and aspirations at table.

Layer 35, which post-dates both the filling of the Civil War ditch and the final levelling of the medieval wall, produced a large proportion of the pottery. It is dominated by a feathered, slipped press-moulded platter from Staffordshire (*c.*1690-1730) and 39 sherds of Manganese-glazed mottled wares, including 3 tankards (*c.*1680-1740). A further key to dating comprises 6 sherds of white salt-glazed stoneware, introduced during the 1720s and the ware which brought Staffordshire to national prominence during the 18th century. The small ointment pot or tea-cup forms represented are simple and are likely to date to the first 10-20 years of production. Clay tobacco-pipes from this layer include 10 bowls dated 1730-1780 and two dated 1760-1800. Together the evidence suggests that this layer was largely deposited around *c.*1730-1740 although the final date of deposition may be as late as 1800.

There are few high-status vessels and it is noticeable that there is a dearth of tea-wares amongst the later 17th and 18th-century material. This probably indicates that whoever dumped in this area did not belong to the more fashionable parts of Northampton society. Indeed the number of Manganese-glazed tankards represented, together with a small collection of similar clay tobacco-pipes might suggest the close proximity of an alehouse.

THE CLAY TOBACCO-PIPES
By Tora Hylton

A small group of 140 clay tobacco-pipe fragments comprises 25 pipe-bowls and 115 stem fragments, spanning the period *c.*1600-1900. Twenty-two bowls are sufficiently complete to enable dating, following the simplified typology using bowl and foot/spur forms (Oswald 1975, 37-41). The shape of the bowls cover a date range of *c.*1610-1840, with the majority (17) of the period *c.*1730-1840.

The earliest example is a spurred pipe with a small bulbous bowl rouletted around the lip. This type is dated by Oswald (1975, 40) to *c.*1610-40.

Table 3: Dating of clay tobacco-pipes

DATE/	CONTEXT NUMBER												
OSWALD'S TYPE	6	9	12	14	27	35	37	41	66	201	404	415	U/S
1610-40 (16)					1								
1660-80 (6)													2
1680-1710 (9)													1
1730-80 (12,22)						10		1					
1760-1800 (23)						2							
1810-40 (24)		4											1
Number of stems	1	4	1	5	1	85	4	2	3	3	5	1	

Eight bowls are ornamented, either with rouletting or relief mouldings, and four have a partial or complete band of rouletting below the lip, in one case the rouletted band appears as a groove. Four bowls are decorated with relief-moulded decoration; three are decorated with a line of leaves running along the joining seams at the front and front/back of the bowl, such motifs were used throughout England between 1820-60 (Mann 1977, 23); one other is decorated with a 'heart-in-hand' a symbol of the Oddfellows (Moore 1980, Fig 8, 25).

Four bowls have makers marks', in relief on the foot/spur. Two are marked with 'F S', they were manufactured by Fred Street of Northampton (1826-50), and are identical to examples illustrated by Moore (1980, No. 22 and 25). A bowl decorated with a line of leaves and marked 'J C' is by J. Chick of Northampton (1837-74). One other bowl is marked with 'B W' in relief on the foot, which suggests it was made in Broughton Green, c.1700-1820 (*Ibid*, page 30).

OTHER FINDS
By Tora Hylton

The excavations produced a small group of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval finds, comprising mainly structural debris together with small quantities of horse furniture. Finds from 19th century or later contexts were not retained. Of particular interest is a decorated Anglo-Saxon pin.

SAXON

A copper alloy pin stylistically similar to pins of eighth century date with multi-faceted (polyhedral) heads and ornamented with ring-and-dots, was recovered from a post-medieval pit cut into the defensive bank in trench 1 (Fig 18, a). Pins of this type are prevalent in late Roman and middle to late Saxon contexts (Webster 1990, 260), although evidence suggests that they are more common in the middle Saxon period, occurring on monastic sites where they were part of everyday female dress (Webster and Backhouse 1991, 84). It has been suggested that the Roman pins differ from the Saxon because they lack a cordon/moulding sited just below the head (Cool, 1990, 148-82). There are, however, numerous examples of pins without cordons from Saxon deposits, including West Stow (West 1985, fig 246.5), Faccombe Netherton (Webster 1990, fig 7.7, 13-15) and Thetford (Goodall 1984, fig 112, 45).

MEDIEVAL

A complete horseshoe recovered from the fill of a shallow pit, F125, associated with the upper road metalling within the gateway in trench 1, is lobate (wavy edged) and parallels forms in use during the mid-11th to late 12th centuries.

A single fragment of glazed (green) roof tile in a Potterspury type fabric was recovered from the final fills of the medieval ditch in trench 1, layer 73. An equivalent layer, 15, contains late fifteenth century pottery.

A limestone transom/mullion was recovered from the post-medieval boundary wall, F406, in trench 4. Stylistically it represents a cavetto form, it is furnished with grooves for glazing, and is dated to the 15th/16th centuries.

POST-MEDIEVAL

The post-medieval finds comprise mainly structural debris, together with a small collection of copper alloy, iron, glass and stone objects. Of particular interest is a small iron lock-plate from the fill of a Civil War ditch (Fig 18, b). It may have been mounted on a chest or casket, although no organic remains are evident. Similar examples are known from Colchester (Crummy, fig 89, 3245) and Norfolk (Goodall 1993, fig 116, 1243).

A 55mm long fragment of H-shaped, window came is from a layer sealing the Civil War ditch in trench 1, context 31; it is dated to the 18th century by an associated layer, 35.

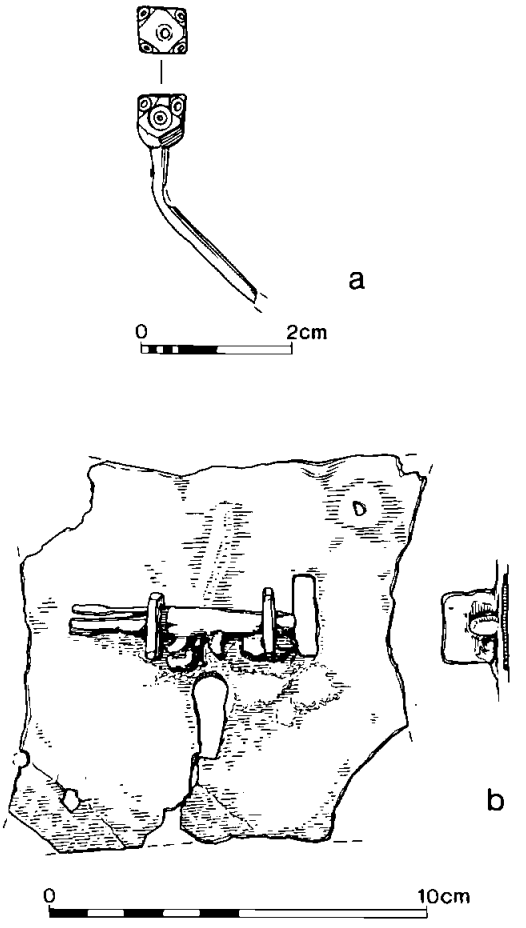


Fig 18 Other finds: a) Saxon pin, b) post-medieval lock-plate

Other finds include a complete post-medieval copper alloy spur, found unstratified in trench 4, and whetstones from pits F410 and F416 in trench 4.

CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED FINDS

Multi-faceted pin, copper alloy (Fig 18, a). Cast with polyhedral head, each face is ornamented with and ring a dot motif. Circular sectioned shaft, point missing.
Length of shaft: 27mm Diameter of head: 7mm
Context F53, Small find (SF) 28, fill of post-medieval pit.

Lock-plate, Ferrous (Fig 18, b). Damaged, square lock-plate, with holes for the key and the staple of the hasp, and corner fixings. Mechanism incomplete; the sliding bolt, fixed by squared loops, has corroded in the open position. Tumbler missing. The square-sectioned sliding bolt has two projections on the underside to allow the key to throw the bolt.
Size of plate: 100x110mm Length of sliding bolt: 58mm
Context 23, SF 24, Fill of civil war ditch F76, 17th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, R. W., 1915-16. The ancient fortifications of the town of Northampton, *Northamptonshire Nat. Hist. Soc. and Field Club J*, 18, 85-102.

Chapman, A., 1995. *Archaeological evaluation of land off Green Street, Northampton, December 1995: An Interim Report*, Northamptonshire Archaeol. Rep.

Cool, H. E. M., 1990. Roman metal hairpins from southern Britain, *Archaeol. J.*, 148-82.

Cox, C. J., 1898. *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, Second Volume, 1550-1835.

Crummy, N., 1988. *The Post-Roman small finds from excavations in Colchester 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeol Rep, 5.

Denham, V., 1985. The Pottery, in Williams et al 1985.

Fairbrother, J. R., 1990. *Faccombe Netherton: Excavations of a Saxon and Medieval Manorial Complex II*, British Museum Occ. Pap., 74.

Foard, G., 1994. The Civil War defences of Northampton, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, IX.1, 4-44.

Foard, G., 1996. The early topography of Northampton and its suburbs, *Northamptonshire Archaeol.*, 26, 109-122.

Garmonsway, G.N., 1972. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Goodall, A. R., 1984. Non-Ferrous Objects, in Rogerson and Dallas 1984, 68-75.

Goodall, I. H., 1993. Lock Furniture, Hasps and Keys, in Margeson 1993.

Gryspeerdt, M., 1981. The Pottery, in Williams and Shaw 1981, 108-118

Lee, F., 1954. A New Theory of the Origins and Early Growth of Northampton, *Archaeol. J.*, 110, 164-74.

Mann, J. E., 1977. *Clay tobacco pipes from excavations in Lincoln 1970-74*.

Margeson, S., 1993. *Norwich Households: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Norwich Survey Excavations 1971-1978* East Anglian Archaeol Rep, 58.

Moore, W. R. G., 1980. *Northamptonshire Clay tobacco-pipes and pipemakers*, Northampton Museums and Art Gallery.

Oswald, A., 1975. *Clay pipes for the Archaeologist*, British Archaeological Report, 14.

RCHME., 1985. *An Inventory of the historical monuments of the county of Northampton; V: Archaeological sites and churches in Northampton*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

Rogerson, A., and Dallas, C., 1984. *Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80*, East Anglian Archaeol. Rep, 22.

Shaw, M., 1988. Northampton sites, *S. Midlands Archaeol.*, 18, 62-3.

Shaw, M., 1996. The excavation of a late 15th-17th century tanning complex at The Green, Northampton, *Post-medieval Archaeol.*, 30, 63-127.

Shaw, M., Chapman, A., and Soden, I., 1997. Northampton, Current Archaeology, 155, 408 – 415.

Shoesmith, R., 1982. *Excavations on and close to the defences. Hereford City Excavations Volume 2*, CBA Research Report 46.

Soden, I., 1995. *An archaeological assessment of land at Green Street, Northampton*, Northamptonshire Archaeol. Rep.

Speed, J., 1676. *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*.

Webster, L. E., 1990. Anglo-Saxon Metalwork and Metalworking Debris, in Fairbrother 1990, 254ff.

Webster, L. E., and Backhouse, J., (eds) 1991 *The making of England, Anglo-Saxon culture AD 600-900*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Welsh, T.A., 1997. Northampton Alternatives: Conjecture and Counter-Conjecture. *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 166 -176.

West, S., 1985. *West Stow: The Anglo-Saxon Village Vol II*, East Anglian Archaeol. Rep., 24

Williams, J. H., 1979. *St Peter's Street, Northampton. Excavations 1973-6*, Northampton Development Copr. mono., 2.

Williams, J. H., 1982. Four small excavations on Northampton's Medieval defences and elsewhere, *Northamptonshire Archaeol.*, 17, 141-152.

Williams, J. H., and Shaw, M., 1981. Excavations in Chalk Lane, Northampton, 1975-1978, *Northamptonshire Archaeol.*, 16, 87-135.

Williams, J. H., Shaw, M., and Denham, V., 1985. *Middle Saxon Palaces at Northampton*, Northampton Development Corp. mono. 4.