# MOSELLE PLACE: FROM A HIGH STATUS MEDIEVAL FARMHOUSE TO A GEORGIAN HOUSE

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## SUMMARY

*Following an evaluation in December 1998, an archaeological excavation was undertaken in April 1999 at Moselle Place, Tottenham, by AOC Archaeology Group, in advance of a housing development. The archaeological investigations revealed the remains of a manor house known as Crook's Farm, which was found to have begun life as a small-scale farmhouse, constructed in the late 15th or early 16th century. Crook's Farm was first recorded on the Dorset Survey Map of c.1619 as belonging to Sir Edward Barkham who became Lord Mayor of London in 1622. The early house was probably timber-framed with chalk-rubble foundations, and ragstone and brick ground walls. Considerable alterations were made to the house during the 17th century, including the addition of a substantial new wing to the south, which contained a cellar and three hearths/fireplaces. Of particular interest was the recovery of a large quantity of moulded plaster, discarded in the remains of the cellar. This material, originating from a decorated fretted ceiling, dates to the late 16th to early 17th century and comes from a decorative scheme of surprisingly high quality, suggesting that the house was of considerably high status. Following the demolition of the house, in the mid to late 18th century, a Georgian mansion house was constructed, known as White Hall. The mansion house was a Palladian style villa with associated landscaped gardens and a large ornamental pond. By 1864 the pond had been infilled and most of the grounds were covered by terraced housing fronting Moselle Street. A portion of the site was still used as gardens and open space. The property was still standing, although much altered, in 1913, but the mansion house was demolished at some point between 1935 and 1961.*

## INTRODUCTION

Moselle Place (Fig 1) is within the London Borough of Haringey (National Grid Reference TQ 3384 9134). The site is a rectangular plot of land, directly bordered by William Street to the west, Moselle Place to the south, Tottenham High Road to the east, and residential flats which front White Hart Lane to the north. The site is located immediately west of the River Lea Valley, upon Kempton Park Gravels (drift geology) overlying London Clay (solid geology).

Planning consent was granted by the London Borough of Haringey for the development of the site for residential purposes, subject to a number of conditions. To fulfil the archaeological condition, in accordance with Planning and Policy Guidance (PPG) 16 (DoE 1990), a programme of investigation was implemented to assess the survival of the archaeological remains. Following recommendations by English Heritage, an archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken in December 1998 (AOC Archaeology Group 1999a). The evaluation identified foundations for several walls on a variety of alignments and constructed in differing manners, which appeared to belong to separate buildings. Due to the nature of the remains encountered, it was considered appropriate that measures be taken to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological remains. A Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC Archaeology Group 1999b), for preservation by record of those parts of the site that would be removed by the development, was designed in

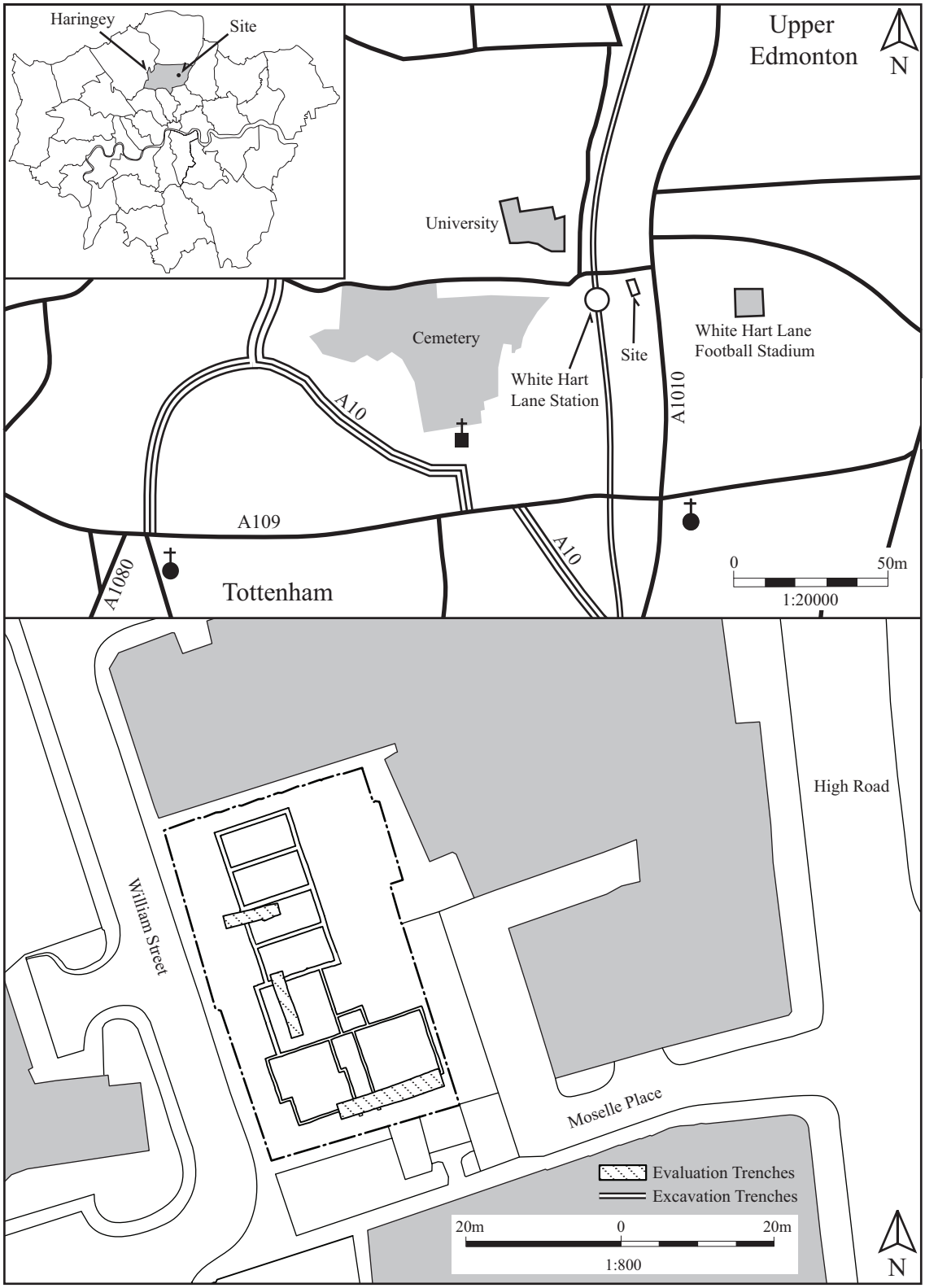


*Fig 1. Site location*

accordance with the Guidance Brief issued by English Heritage and with the agreement of the applicant. The design of strip foundations for the proposed development was such that only 10% of the total area of the site was under threat of removal. Accordingly, excavation was to be limited to the areas of the foundations, to minimise the disturbance to the archaeological remains (Fig 1).

The archaeological fieldwork has been archived at the Museum of London under site code MSP98. What follows is a synthesised report integrating the specialist appendices. The full archive can be viewed by prior arrangement at the London Archaeological Archive Research Centre (LAARC).

## HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Little is known about the early origins of Tottenham. Prior to the Norman invasion, Tottenham was in the administrative division of the Hundred of Edmonton. The place-name of Tottenham suggests it has Saxon origins. It is described in the Domesday Book in 1086 as *Totta's Ham* (VCH 1976, 313), which could translate as 'the homestead of Tote' or 'Tote's people'. It is thought that the Saxon settlement bordered the Roman road, Ermine Street, which runs from London to Lincoln, skirting the Lea Marshes along the line of the present day Tottenham High Road, which is situated immediately to the east of the site (Murray 1993, 7). The Domesday Book states that the Lord of the Manor of Tottenham at this time was *Waltheof*, the Earl of Northumberland (Murray 1993, 10). Tottenham consisted of *c.*872 acres of common land and pasture and heavily wooded areas. Much of the area surrounding Tottenham would not have been suitable for cultivation, but the rich marshes close to the River Lea would have been suitable for farming (Murray 1993, 7).

Medieval settlement developed along the High Road, the area of Tottenham Hale and a number of Greens, *eg* Wood Green, Page Green and Duckett's Green (VCH 1976, 313). Documentary records indicate that there was a manor house in Tottenham in 1254, probably on the site of the present day Bruce Castle. Tottenham was divided into seven lordships at this time (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 893). Later two more manor houses were built: Tottenham Park along White Hart Lane and Mountpleasant House near Philip Lane (Protz 1998, 5). The area flourished as people passed through on the London to Lincoln road. The site lies towards the southern extent of the Tudor ribbon development along the High Road, running south from Lower Edmonton. By 1600 Tottenham had gained a reputation as a prosperous area (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 893) and the forest had been cleared to such a degree that the only surviving wooded area was that of Wood Green (Weinreb & Hibbert 1983, 893). The Dorset Survey map — named so because the Earl of Dorset surveyed the area when he acquired the manor of Tottenham — of *c.*1619 (Fig 2) shows housing fronting the High Road. By the 18th century Tottenham had become a fashionable village, while local farms grew crops to supply London markets.

The earliest cartographic evidence for the site is the Dorset Survey map, which indicates that by the early 17th century the site was within the area occupied by Crook's Farm, belonging to Edward Barkham (Fig 2). The grounds extended from White House Lane southwards along the west

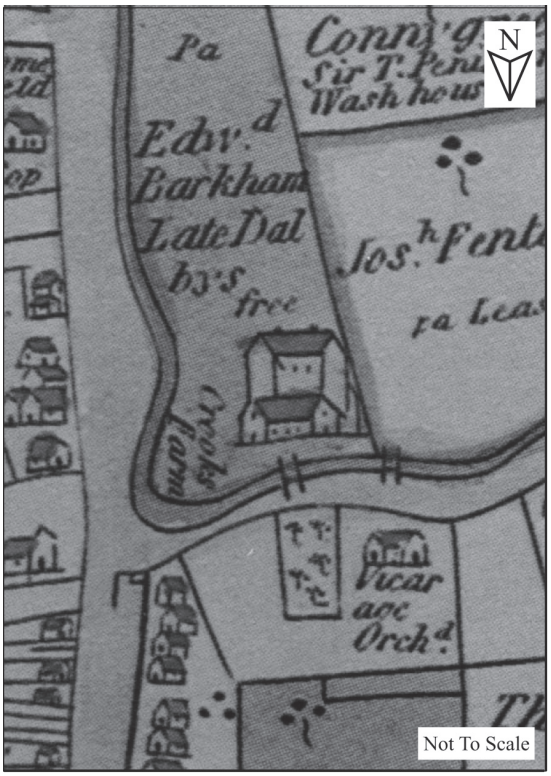


*Fig 2. Dorset Survey Map of c.1619 (note orientation)*

side of the High Road, and were bounded on the east by the River Moselle (VCH 1976, 332). The River Moselle derives from five tributaries running off Highgate and Muswell Hill. It joins the River Lea in South Tottenham near the Markfield Recreation Ground (Pinching & Dell 2005, 61). In 1619 Edward Barkham held the largest freehold estate in the area; he was an alderman of London and held 174 acres in addition to 65 acres of copyhold land (VCH 1976, 332). It is not known whether he actually resided at the property. In 1621–22 he became Lord Mayor of London and was knighted by James I in 1622.

Crook's or Croke's Farm is thought to have been named after John Croke, an alderman who held land in Tottenham at the end of the 15th century. At some point prior to 1619, Lionel Dalby, son of William Dalby, sold the property, with other land, to Edward Barkham (VCH 1976, 332). The award for the 1619 survey states Crook's Farm consisted of:

> One Messuage Tenement or mansion house called Crooks Farme situate at the southeast corner of ye Vicarage lane together with ye Barnes Stables Orchard Garden and backside to ye same belonging containing in all One Close of pasture or meadowe ground adjoining to ye said Messuage on ye north parte and to the streete or high way leading from Ware towards London on the east parte …

In 1634 the land passed to Edward Barkham's younger son Robert Barkham of Wainfleet, St Mary, Lincs. The land was then acquired by his eldest brother, Sir Edward Barkham, and in 1664 the property was assessed as containing 21 hearths — the second highest quota in the Edmonton Hundred (VCH 1976, 315, 332). Edward had been made a baronet in 1623. The property continued to be passed down through the Barkham family until 1728, when the main property was acquired by Ephraim Beauchamp. His son Thomas married Anne Proctor and took the name Beauchamp-Proctor on becoming a baronet in 1744. It is thought that the house was rebuilt around this time and was certainly known as White Hall for some time prior to 1790 when the estate was sold.

A Mr Abrahams from Houndsditch bought the mansion. He converted part of the grounds into a tanning yard and built several barns, store houses, sheds, and additional buildings

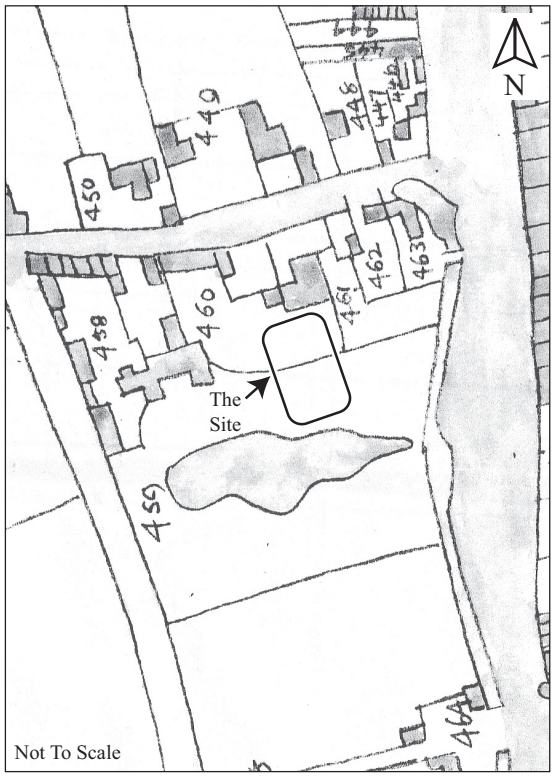


*Fig 3. The Parish Map of 1798*

(Robinson 1840, 124). He became insolvent and it appears some of the buildings were pulled down, the materials sold, and the land sold on (Robinson 1840, 124). The land was bought by Mr Andrews. The Parish Map of 1798 (Fig 3) shows the site at this time. The award for the survey states that the land was owned by Mr Andrews and consists of 'House, Yards, and Offices (458), Garden (459) and Four Acres (460)'. White Hall is shown as being 'C' shaped with an additional wing to the west. An additional building appears to be abutting the property at the rear and the entrance from White Hart Lane is situated to the north. White Hall then passed to Henry Hunt in 1820, then to William May Simmonds, and in 1827 to Charles Soames. Robinson's book on Tottenham was published in 1840 when the land was owned by Soames. The house (Fig 4) is described as brick-built, covered with cement, fronting grounds with a large lake supplied by piped water (Robinson 1840, 125). The illustration shows a three-storey Palladian style villa with a central pediment. The entrance for White Hall was formerly on White

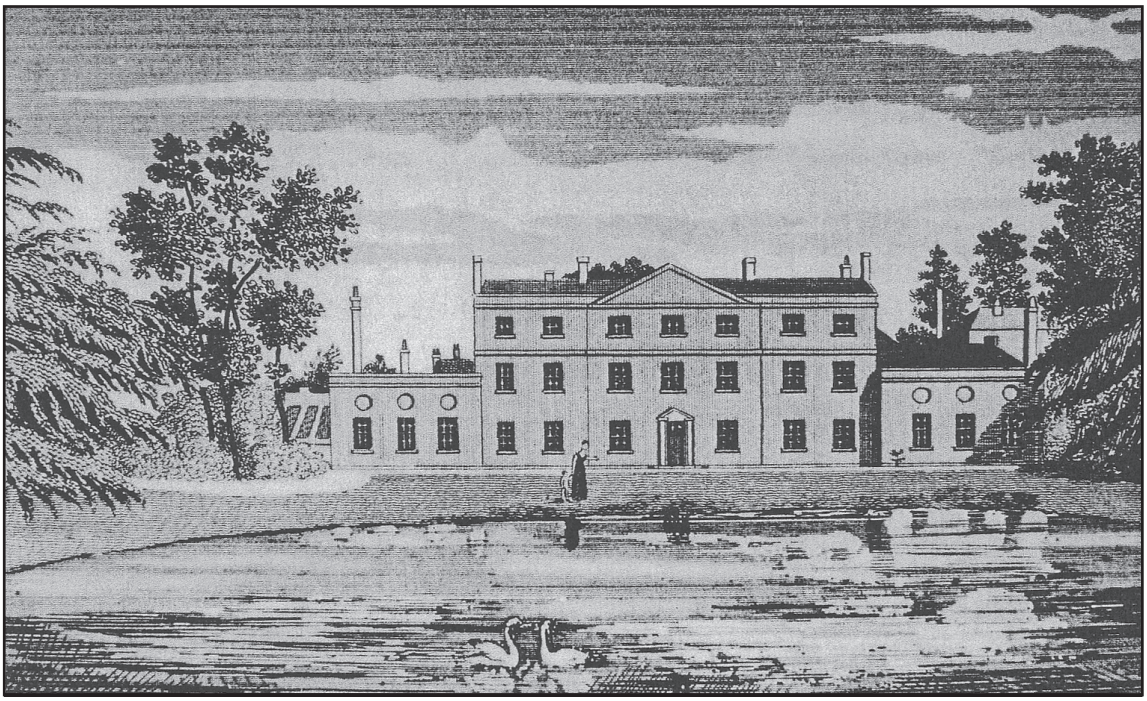

*Fig 4. White Hall 1840 (facing north) (Robinson 1840)*

Hart Lane, but Soames erected a bridge over the River Moselle on the west side of the High Road, divided a barn into two neat lodges, and made this the entrance (Robinson 1840, 125). The Tithe Map of 1844 (Fig 5) also states that Charles Soames was the landowner and occupier. The land consisted of 'Pleasure Ground Paddock, Buildings, Garden (1001), the Lake (1002), two lodges, plantation and garden (1003) and a Serpentine Walk (1004)'. By this time the footprint of the building was much altered; the west wing appears to have been demolished and the east wing extended.

The house gave its name to Whitehall Street by the 1860s. By 1864 the lake had been infilled and most of the grounds were covered by terraced housing fronting Moselle Street. A portion of the site was still used as gardens and open space. Although much altered, the property was still standing in 1913 (Fisk 1913, 98). The land use remained unchanged in 1935. An eye-witness watched the remaining part of White Hall being demolished in 1961 (W Martin pers comm). Some time in the second half of

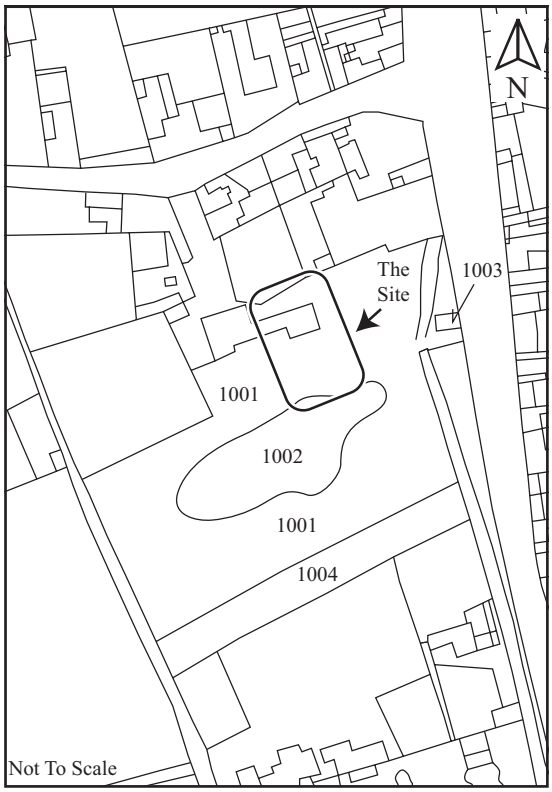


*Fig 5. Based on the Tithe Map of 1844*

the 20th century the site was developed as an electricity sub-station, and garages were built.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The excavation of strip foundations posed a number of problems for the recovery and interpretation of archaeological data. The principal issue was that stratigraphic correlation across the site was extremely difficult to implement. Local stratigraphic control could be maintained within a particular trench, but correlation between deposits and structures in geographically separate trenches was rendered very difficult because of the relative complexity of the stratigraphy, coupled with the piecemeal nature of the excavated areas.

### Period 1: The Natural Deposits

*Open Area 1*

The underlying natural deposit consisted of an orangey-brown clay/gravel mix. The layer was not homogeneous and some patches predominantly composed of clay were encountered, particularly towards the southern area of the site. The deposit was encountered across the site, generally sloping from north, at 11.71m OD, to south, 10.62m OD. The mixed nature of this material suggested that it would not have been suitable for quarrying for use either in the production of bricks or pottery or for use as gravel aggregate in building construction.

Overlying the gravel across much of the site was a deposit of firm grey silty clay. Undulations in the gravel resulted in this layer being over 0.50m thick in some areas, although, generally, the deposit formed a layer approximately 0.30m deep. This clay was itself overlain in some areas by a deposit of mottled grey/orange brickearth subsoil, although this material was not encountered with the same frequency. Both these deposits were largely absent from the south-eastern area of the site, due to later horizontal truncation (Period 5).

### Period 2: *c.*1150–*c.*1500

*Open Area 2*

Medieval ploughsoil

These layers consisted of a dark brown, firm silty clay deposit, which was probably the long-compacted remains of an agricultural ploughsoil. This layer was generally found to be 0.15m deep, although it varied across the site from 0.10–0.33m deep. Pottery fragments were retrieved from many of the areas where this material was identified and provided a general date range for the deposit of *c.*1150–1500. The majority of the fragments were small and heavily abraded, probably indicating that they were deposited during manuring or night soiling episodes.

### Period 3: *c.*1500–*c.*1760 (Fig 6)

*Building 1*

The first building on the site was Crook's Farm. Although an exact date for the construction of the first farmhouse is uncertain, analysis of the ceramic building material (CBM) has provided a generalised date range from the late 15th to early 16th century.

Initial construction

This first building was constructed on fairly robust chalk rubble and mortar foundations, many of which incorporated the CBM fragments used for dating purposes. The building is likely to have been timber-framed with the timber elements built upon ragstone and brick ground walls. The building appears to be on a north–south alignment, respecting the road alignments to the north and east. The foundation trenches were excavated from the level of the ploughsoil (Period 2), or upon a pre-construction levelling layer. These levelling deposits were derived from redeposited natural clays or the local ploughsoil and were dated by CBM to the late 15th to early 16th century. In some excavated sections the areas between the chalk foundations contained no evidence of the ploughsoil of Period 2 and it is presumed that this material was deliberately removed during the construction process, possibly to provide a more consolidated building surface. Early construction debris deposits, dated by pottery to 1480–1650, are thought to be associated with the first phase of construction.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact size and orientation of the building, due to the nature of the investigation, but it is clear that a number of rooms existed within the confines of the building. Even given the limited area of the building exposed, it is possible to define distinct areas of internal and external space. A consolidated, 30–120mm thick, metalled gravel surface was recorded in those areas external to the building, both to the front and rear of the property, and

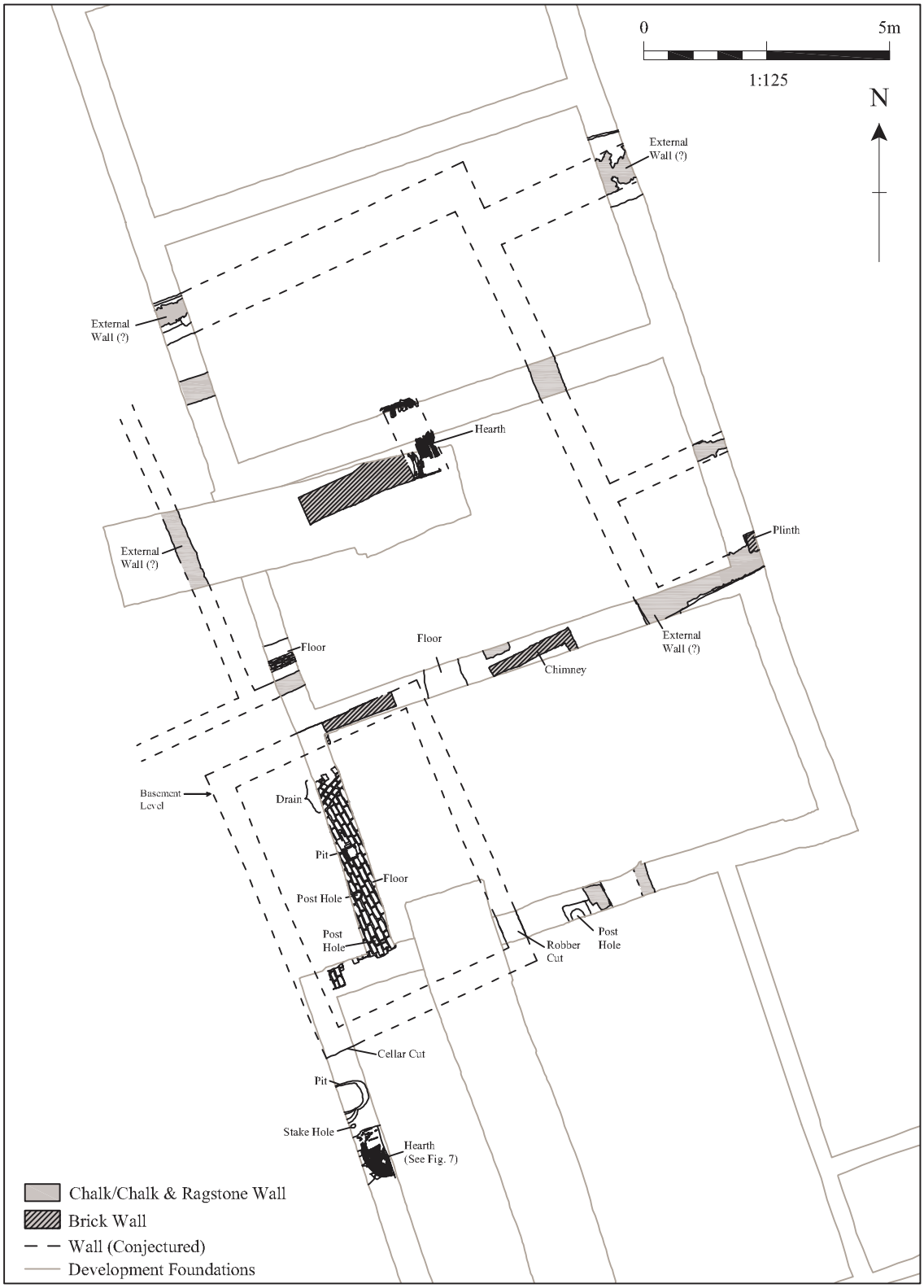


*Fig 6. Period 3*

in some instances butted up to the foundations themselves. Although only seen in section, this layer extended at least 6.6m to the north of what is presumed to be the front wall of the property, where it continued into the northern section. The layer became thinner closer to the building, which could be an indication of wear. No dating evidence was recovered from this layer; however, its stratigraphic position indicates that this material is related to the earliest phase of the building.

Remodelling

In the early part of the 17th century, a substantial southern wing was added to the existing farmhouse. The 1619 map (Fig 2) depicts the farm as two tile-roofed buildings, the southern one with at least two stories, which is indicative of a higher status property. The addition of the southern wing evidently made Crook's Farm an altogether grander residence and this improvement probably coincided with an upturn in the fortunes of the Barkham family when Sir Edward became Lord Mayor of London.

The archaeological sequence identified in this phase consisted of the levelling and demolition of earlier walls, followed by the construction of the new building. The foundations appear to be constructed of chalk with underlying brick and tile hardcore. Other structures associated with this phase of remodelling include a stretcher-bonded brick chimney stack, an east–west internal brick wall, two pitched-tile hearths (Fig 7), a possible fireplace, and a cellar. The construction cut for the cellar was vertically-sided and covered an area of at least 6.77m north–south by 4.6m east–west (31.14m$^2$). The cellar walls were constructed of red brick laid in English bond with lime mortar. Two consecutive brick cellar floors were laid upon a mortar bedding. A north-east to south-west running brick drain was incorporated within the first floor. The brickwork from this floor dates to the late 16th to 17th century. The area was then built up and levelled with a layer of clay and a dump of CBM. Overlying this was a lens of dark silty clay followed by a layer of bedding sand. These layers were sealed by the second brick floor, which was also dated to the late 16th to 17th century. The floor encompassed a gully which protruded into the drainage channel below. The brick floor was cut by several postholes that probably held posts which provided support for the cellar ceiling. It is unclear why two floors were constructed in the cellar; it may be that there was poor drainage or that the first floor subsided.

*Fig 7. Pitched-tile hearth (depicted in south of Fig 6), facing north. Scale 0.5m*

Several internal floors were identified that appear to relate to the remodelling of the building and the construction of the southern wing. Respecting the cut for the cellar was a clay dump overlying a rubble and clay bedding surface within a 0.15m deep cut. Unfortunately there was no dating evidence for these deposits. Respecting foundations to the east and the chimney was a 100mm-thick gravel layer overlying a 200mm-thick 'occupation' layer; the latter consisted of black silty clay with occasional CBM flecks and charcoal. Again there was no dating evidence for these deposits. Another undated, possible floor surface, consisting of black friable charcoal and silt, may have been associated with the northern hearth. Flooring of this type appears quite rudimentary for such a high status property but it is feasible that these deposits would have been covered with floorboards. In one area of the site a floor was constructed of late 15th- to early 16th-century bricks oriented east–west and

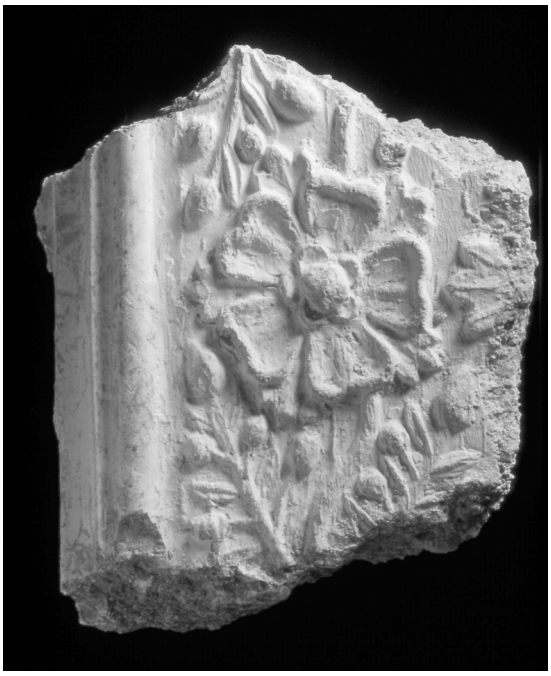

*Fig 8. Late 16th/ early 17th-century moulded plaster run depicting heraldic rose (P87) (Scale 1:2)*

laid upon a chalk foundation. On either side of this floor there was evidence of robbed-out walls, which suggests that this may have been a passage. Evidence of a robbed-out floor respected an internal and external foundation in the northern part of the site.

A large quantity of moulded plaster was discovered in the backfill of a later (Period 4) robber cut within the large cellar (Fig 6). This originates from a relatively high status, decorated, fretted plaster ceiling and coving dating to the late 16th or early 17th century. It is likely that the plasterwork relates to this phase of structural alteration when the southern wing was added. The standard moulding consists of a bead moulding bordering the flat face of a run, with a square quirk and a cavetto moulding on the outer side. The flat faces are decorated with various floral motifs (bugle-like flowers, grapes, heraldic roses), mostly of a running design (Fig 8). Coving decorations consisted of flower bosses and human heads (Fig 9). Fretted ceilings were popular in the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. For a much richer effect the salient components, ribs, bosses, or pendants, might be painted and/or gilded. It is thought

*Fig 9. Late 16th/ early 17th-century moulded plaster bosses (P58, P59, P61 & P62) (Scale 1:4)*

that this was the case at Moselle Place as two pieces show paint: a flat section painted brown and pink with a tendril pattern in black (Fig 10) and a piece of cyma recta painted pink (cyma recta is an S-shaped moulding where the upper section is concave and the lower section convex). There was no evidence of gilding on the plasterwork.

### *Open Area 3*

#### Pitting and postholes

Several pits relating to this period were recorded (not illus). A steep-sided pit with a U-shaped base appears to have been related to the northern hearth. The only find recovered from the fill was a 15th-century copper-alloy token. The token originated from the Low Countries and was inscribed with 'Vive Le Roi'. This may have had a religious significance or could simply be a trade token. In the evaluation phase, a pit, located in Trench 2, measuring 0.64m+ north–south by 1.4m+ east–west by 0.2m deep, contained frequent CBM, dated to 1180–1500, and some mortar. Three other pits of unknown function were undated but were stratigraphically likely to be associated with Period 3. An isolated posthole cut the natural deposits; it measured *c.*0.46m in diameter and 0.23m deep and had a vertical postpipe. It contained pottery dated to 1480–1650. An isolated stakehole [13/026], measuring *c.*0.17m in diameter and 0.17m deep, cut the ploughsoil. It was undated but was stratigraphically associated with this period.

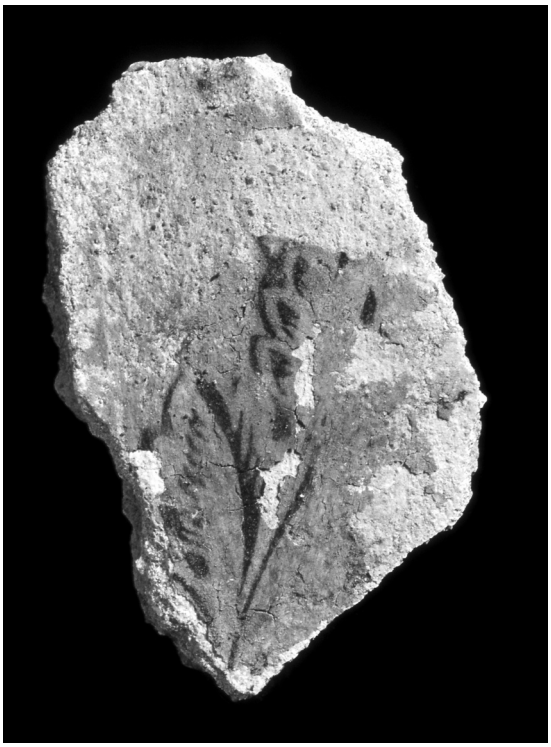

*Fig 10. Late 16th/early 17th-century painted plaster (Scale 1:2)*

## **Period 4: *c.*1760–1900** (Fig 11)

### *Building 2*

This period is represented by the systematic demolition of Crook's Farm, robbing of the materials, and the construction of a Georgian mansion house, known as White Hall (Fig 4). The mansion was situated to the north of the site and had a number of associated outbuildings and landscaped gardens with an ornamental pond/lake. The demolition of the original property occurred at some point between 1744 and 1790.

#### Demolition of Crook's Farm

It seems clear that the demolition episode was not merely an exercise in destruction and levelling, but a well-organised, disciplined removal of the re-useable materials. The demolition backfill of the cellar itself was highly indicative of controlled robbing, being composed almost exclusively of smashed plaster and mortar fragments, ranging in size from the large pieces retained and described below, to something nearer dust — apparent evidence of a concerted effort to clean the brick being recovered from the building of any bonding material. Several 'robber' trenches were identified across the site. These were dated to this period either by their stratigraphic position or through pottery or CBM in the backfill. Demolition layers were identified throughout the site. The nature of these deposits varied across the site; some had noticeable chalk content within their soil matrices, probably originating from the demolition of the earlier chalk foundations of Building 1.

#### Construction of White Hall

Prior to the construction of the mansion house, a sequence of ground levelling occurred through dumping and 'make-up' layers. There was a lack of pottery recovered from these deposits but the CBM dates to 1500–1800. The

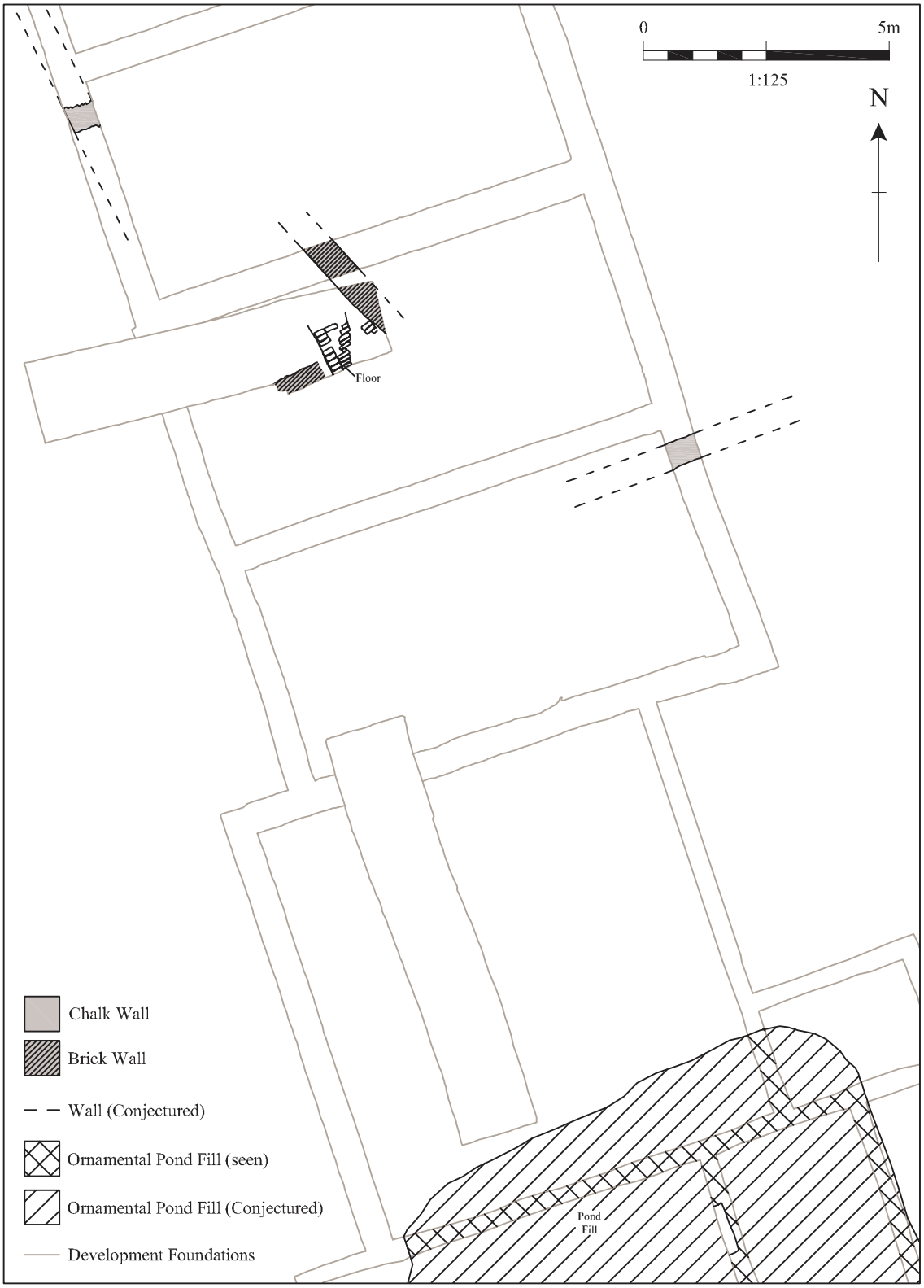


*Fig 11. Period 4*

structures dating to this period are generally located in the northern portion of the site, which correlates with the cartographic evidence (Fig 5). The building appears to be on a slightly different alignment to Building 1 and is oriented north–west to south–east. Building 2 was constructed of brick and mortar; some of the walls were constructed of reused brick, probably originating from Crook's Farm. There was evidence for controlled robbing on site, as discussed above, and it is probable that these materials would have been used. One external wall was constructed of brick which was a mixture of types dating to the late 16th–17th century and the 17th and 18th century. A late 18th-century brick floor and two brick soak-aways (not illus) were associated with Building 2.

There was only limited archaeological evidence for the remodelling of Building 2 shown in cartographic sources. The Parish Map of 1798 (Fig 3) shows a different building footprint (located to the west of the approximated site location) to that shown in 1844 (Fig 5). One wall, constructed of brick dating to the late 17th–18th century, contained a George III coin, dating to 1806, in the fill of the construction cut. There were also two sections of wall which were associated with this period of remodelling. The walls contained brick of an earlier date suggesting that the brick had been re-used from the Crook's Farm building.

#### Garden and lake

Garden soil from the Georgian mansion house was found in two areas of the site. In both instances the layer immediately overlay the external gravel surface of Period 3. The 0.2–0.35m-thick deposit consisted of a silty clay loam with a high gravel content and CBM dating to 1500–1800. A large pond or lake was identified to the south of the site. The historical maps (Figs 3 and 5) show a large irregular feature to the south of White Hall and the award associated with the 1844 map describes this as a lake. The lake can also be seen in the illustration of 1840 (Fig 4). The overall dimensions of the lake were recorded as 12.7+m by 12.4+m by 2.15+m deep. The sides were at an angle of 45° and the base was slightly concave. The primary organic fill was a black sticky organic clay containing pottery dating to 1500–1800 and a 16th-century drinking glass. Above this were layers of natural silting that contained a relatively large amount of broken, unabraded pottery dating to 1560–1750. It seems likely that this material represents localised rubbish disposal. The lake is shown on cartographic sources from 1798 to 1844. It had been infilled by 1864.

### *Open Area 4*

#### Pitting

Four refuse pits are thought to be associated with the occupation of Building 2 (not illus). The largest pit, located at the south of the site, was seen in section only and measured 4.2m in diameter by 1m deep. The pit was filled with successive deposits containing burnt daub, fragments of glass bottles, pottery, CBM, a copper-alloy pin, and finds typical of food refuse (animal bone and cockle, mussel and oyster shells). The CBM and pottery dated to 1580–1900. This is a broad range, but three fragments of glass bottles dating to the late 18th to early 19th century and the percentage of later CBM suggest this pit was in use in Period 4. Also located to the south of the site was a pit containing animal bone, clay pipe, CBM, and pottery dating to 1754–1900, and a pit containing CBM, pottery, animal bone, a corroded piece of iron, and a copper-alloy ornamental fastening. Of particular note was a pantile dating to the 17th–18th century which may be indicative of the type of roofing at Crook's Farm or White Hall. In the evaluation phase a large rectangular pit was recorded. The fill consisted of mixed deposits containing frequent CBM, occasional pottery, slate, and glass. The CBM was dated to the 16th–18th century. Several small pits of unknown function, with no dating evidence, were assigned to this period.

### *Open Area 5*

#### Garden plots associated with 19th-century housing

Between 1844 and 1864 (Fig 12), Moselle Street (the east portion later became Moselle Place) was created to the south of the site and a short terrace of six houses was constructed, the gardens of which encompassed approximately half of the present site. These properties had cellars which removed most of the deposits at the south of the site. Towards the northern area of the site, a number of garden soil deposits and pits were identified which have been assigned to this period (not illus). This area appears to have been used for dumping, indicating 'backyard activity', with evidence noted for possible hearth clearances, rubbish pitting, and general dumping.

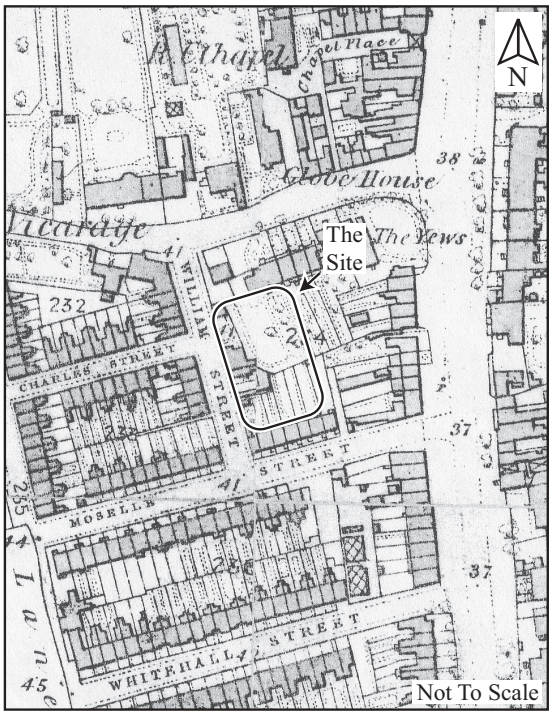


*Fig 12. Ordnance Survey Map of 1864*

## Period 5: 20th century

Following the demolition of the house, which occurred at some point between 1935 and 1961, the site appears to have reverted to an open space. Certainly towards the northern area of the site, no further construction appears to have taken place until that of the prefabricated garages in the 20th century, with what appeared to be garden soils being laid down over the preceding demolition deposits and some pitting and dumping taking place.

In recent times the southern portion of the site was used as a concrete and tarmac playground, with the northern area having two sets of prefabricated garages placed on it, together with an area of hardstanding. This formed the extant landscape when the evaluation was undertaken in 1998 and ground level measured from a maximum level of 12.20m OD at the north of the site to 11.78m OD at the south. These structures had been demolished and removed by the time of the further investigation and excavation commenced during these works at 11.85m OD at the north of the site, sloping to 11.59m OD in the south-eastern corner of the site.

## THE MOULDED PLASTER (Table 1)

*Terence Paul Smith (Museum of London Specialist Services)*

### Introduction

All the pieces are from a single context, the backfill of a robber cut within the large cellar on site, consisting of debris created during the Period 4 demolition of the house in the 18th century.

*Table 1. Catalogue of plaster*

| Catalogue No. | Description |
|---|---|
| 29 | Cyma recta |
| 31 | Part of floral design |
| 33 | Square return and cant; lath impression 27mm wide |
| 35 | Quite large piece with cavetto and egg-and-dart in quirk; armature impressions; better example of P73 |
| 37 | Standard moulding |
| 38 | Flat piece with brown and pink paint and black-painted ?tendrils |
| 39 | Ovolo and cavetto |
| 41 | Floral design — grapes? |
| 43 | Quite large floral element with small bosses |
| 44 | Standard moulding with floral design on flat |
| 45 | Part of standard moulding but with adjoining raked face rather than flat |
| 48 | Standard moulding with floral design on flat |
| 51 | Cyma — recta or reversa |
| 52 | Moulding and floral design — possibly wreath |

| Catalogue No. | Description |
|---|---|
| 55 | Small fragment with floral design |
| 56 | Part of floral design — apparently grape cluster |
| 57 | Part of floral design; lath impression 27mm wide |
| 58 | Human head with hat within concave section with scored frame; conjoins P59; *cf* P61 and P62 |
| 59 | Human head with hat within concave section with scored frame; conjoins P58; *cf* P61 and P62 |
| 60 | Elaborate floral design with leaves and chain of small elements; curved |
| 61 | Part of head similar to P62; *cf* P58/59 |
| 62 | Human head with hair within concave section with scored frame; *cf* P58/59 |
| 63 | Thick curved member — part of boss; scored decoration; *cf* P65 |
| 64 | Cavetto with egg-and-dart |
| 64 | Small ovolo, quirk and cavetto moulding; lath impressions, one 31mm wide |
| 65 | Thick curved member — part of boss; scored decoration; metal fixing rod 7mm diam; *cf* P63 |
| 68 | Standard moulding with rosette (overlapping petals) on flat |
| 69 | Cyma recta with ?honeysuckle below; pink paint |
| 70 | Bead moulding (probably part of standard moulding) and part of floral design |
| 71 | Standard moulding; lath impression >40mm |
| 72 | Small ovolo, quirk and cavetto moulding |
| 73 | Cavetto and egg-and-dart in quirk |
| 74 | Standard moulding with floral design on flat |
| 75 | Part of floral design; lath impressions |
| 76 | Standard moulding, slightly curved, with floral design on flat: small four-petalled flower with stalk and leaves |
| 77 | Floral design with leaves, similar to P60; lath impressions 23 and 26mm wide |
| 78 | Standard moulding with floral moulding similar to P86 on flat; lath impressions |
| 79 | Large floral boss; poor condition; >80mm depth; lath impressions |
| 80 | Cyma recta with fillet and cavetto; armature and lath impressions |
| 81 | Standard moulding, curved + adjoining straight run |
| 82 | Standard moulding with floral moulding on flat |
| 83 | Part of floral design with small bosses; lath impressions |
| 84 | Standard moulding with floral design on flat: five-petalled heraldic rose with tendrils and buds; lath impressions, one 25mm wide |
| 85 | Sunken ovolo moulding |
| 86 | 2 pieces: (i) part of floral moulding; (ii) flat piece |
| 87 | Part of heraldic rose |
| 88 | Standard moulding; lath impressions |
| 89 | Standard moulding with part of floral moulding on flat |
| 90 | Heraldic rose surrounded by overlapping discs — further petals? Conjoins P91 |
| 91 | Heraldic rose surrounded by overlapping discs — further petals? Conjoins P90 |
| 92 | Elaborate moulding with pods, similar to P60; also tiny tendrils; lath impressions 23 and 32mm wide |
| 93 | Small fragment, apparently with grape cluster |
| 94 | Part of ?floral design |
| 95 | Standard moulding; lath impression |
| 96 | Fragment of floral design with tendrils |
| 97 | Fragment of floral design with tendrils |
| 98 | Fragment with bead moulding — probably from standard moulding |
| 100 | Fragment of floral design with tendrils |

## Mouldings and ornament

The fragments include several of unrecognisable form but the numbered pieces and some others are mostly recognisable. Most come from runs which would have decorated a fretted ceiling. A *standard moulding* — that is, one which is common to numerous pieces — was recognised and this term has been used, where appropriate, in the database. It consists of a bead moulding bordering the flat face of the run with, on its outer side — that is, on the edge of the run — a square quirk and a cavetto moulding. The flat faces are decorated with various floral motifs, mostly of a running design (Fig 8). These include bugle-like flowers, what appear to be bunches of grapes, heraldic roses — one surrounded by overlapping discs, possibly representing further petals — smaller flowers, and a pod-like element. Often leaves, and in one case buds, are also depicted, as, occasionally, are much finer tendrils. Most of the runs appear to be straight but some show a slight curvature, indicating that both straight and curved runs were employed in the design of the fretted ceiling. This was normal in such ceilings. Other pieces, all fragmentary (P29, P51, P69, P80, and 6 unnumbered fragments), show a cyma recta moulding, in one case with an adjoining fillet and cavetto: it is likely that all the cyma recta pieces were similar. These larger mouldings may have formed part of a coving at the junction of walls and ceiling rather than the edges of fret runs. This may be the case too with three pieces (P35, P64, P73) which have egg-and-dart ornament within a cavetto.

One piece (P79) is a large floral boss, unfortunately in poor condition. A few other pieces are definitely or probably from similar bosses. Two rather crudely formed curved pieces with scored decoration (P53 and P65) may be from bosses of a different form. The bosses would have hung as pendants from the ceiling, either at the intersections of runs or at the centres of the panels defined by them. Also present are some human heads (Fig 9). Pieces P58 and P59 conjoin to form a single (incomplete) piece. The head is modelled in the round and is approximately oval in shape. The eyes are quite wide, the nose has been lost and only a little of the mouth remains. The head is wearing a hat, with, apparently, a side-lock of hair protruding from it on each side. The head is contained within a concave surface which has part of a frame scored into the plaster. Piece P62 is basically similar but in slightly better condition. The head has hair and no hat; a strange wing-like element protrudes from behind the side-lock on the figure's left (the corresponding right-hand side is missing). There is a ruff or collar around the neck. Again the head is within a concave curve and has a frame partly moulded and partly scored. Piece P61 is a fragment of the lower part of one side of a similar head. The heads are not large, the faces measuring some 75mm long by 70mm broad. It is possible that the heads, against the concave surfaces, decorated a coving at the junction of walls and ceiling, but it is perhaps more probable that they come from an elaborate plaster chimneypiece, like several surviving examples, for instance at Loseley, Surrey (*c.*1565) and at Boston Manor, Brentford, Middx (*c.*1623) (Beard 1975a, pls 5 & 14).

## Date

Fretted ceilings using plaster runs like those from Moselle Place were popular, for those who could afford them, in late Elizabethan and Jacobean times. In the early 18th century, Richard Neve observed that 'plaister'd Ceilings are much used in England, beyond all other Countreys' (Newton Abbot 1969, 101). They did indeed become an English speciality, originating in wooden-ribbed ceilings with square, rectangular, and polygonal panels. Once plaster was adopted, ribs could more easily be made sinuous, and circles, ovals, and other curves were added to the rectilinear forms. Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639) considered 'the graceful fretting of roofs [= ceilings]' to be the chief of the plastic arts (Rowse 1972, 162). It certainly increased the status of plasterers, whose work hitherto had typically been of a more banausic (unrefined) character — daubing walls, the insides of chimney flues, garderobe chutes, and the like. London examples of such ceilings exist at Canonbury House, Islington (1570–1600), 17 Fleet Street (*c.*1611), and elsewhere (Schofield 1995, 119). Other notable instances include Broughton Castle, Oxon (1599), Stockton House, Wilts (*c.*1600), the Combination Room at St John's College, Cambridge (*c.*1600), Bramshill House, Hants (1605–12), Knole, Kent (*c.*1607), and Bolsover Castle, Derbys (1620s). A date in the late 16th or early 17th century is therefore likely for the Moselle Place pieces. A similar date

applies to the heads, whether they were used as part of such a ceiling or in a chimneypiece.

### Working and fixing the plaster

Simple ribbing could be formed by running a template along a block of wet plaster (Beard 1975b, 9–22; Ford 1992, 282; Musson 2000, 6–7). More complex forms would have to be moulded or even formed freehand, but often the simpler forms too were moulded. This was done using wooden moulds coated with nut oil to prevent the plaster from adhering to them. The different methods of shaping could be carried out *in situ* or, more conveniently, at a moulder's bench. In the latter case, the finished pieces were inserted into their correct positions, and temporarily propped in place, whilst the plain plaster of the ceiling was still wet.

The plaster would for the most part be applied to laths nailed to the ceiling beams. Several of the pieces show the impressions of laths in their rear faces. Many are incomplete but others show lath widths ranging from 23mm to 32mm with a median of 27mm, although one incomplete example appears to have been greater than 40mm. Larger pieces might be built up on a timber armature, providing more strength than solid blocks of plaster. Four pieces (P35, P80, and two unnumbered pieces) show the impressions of such timbers: they show ovolo, cyma recta, or egg-and-dart mouldings. The fragment of pendant boss P65 has a metal rod some 7mm in diameter embedded in it: this would have enabled a secure — and safe — fixing of the boss to a ceiling beam.

### Paint

The Moselle Place plaster is off-white and is fairly coarse with a number of small stones in it. Plaster can have a dull look and was often limewashed to give a creamy appearance. For a much richer effect, the salient components — ribs, bosses, or pendants — might be painted and/or gilded. The 'Great Gallery' at Lord Burleigh's now lost Theobalds in Hertfordshire, for example, rebuilt in the 1570s, had 'a frett seelinge with Divers pendents Roses and flowerdeleuces [fleurs-de-lys], painted and gilded' (Summerson 1959, 124). Examples have been found during excavations by MoLAS at Somerset House, probably the work of the Master Plasterer, James Lee (or Leigh, *fl*1611–15) (Mackinder & Smith in prep). Such ceilings would have had a coruscating effect, especially by flickering candlelight, giving point to Hamlet's metaphor for the sky: 'this majestical roof fretted with golden fire'. Only two pieces from Moselle Place, however, show paint: piece P69 has pink paint on its cyma recta and possible honeysuckle moulding, whilst piece P38 is a flat section painted brown and pink with a tendril pattern in black (Fig 10); the brown/pink was probably originally a brighter red. There is no evidence of gilding.

## DISCUSSION

The first activity recorded on site was medieval ploughing. The evidence for this was a ploughsoil that contained a collection of small and heavily abraded pottery (dated *c*.1150–1400). At some point in the late 15th to early 16th century, Crook's Farm, a timber-framed farmhouse with ragstone and brick ground walls and chalk-rubble foundations, was constructed. It is proposed that remodelling of the building occurred in the early 17th century when the property was owned by Sir Edward Barkham, an alderman who later became Lord Mayor of London. By the 17th century it was established practice for both courtiers and merchants to acquire or build houses within easy reach of London (VCH 1976, 314). In 1664 there were at least 15 large houses assessed in the area with more than 10 hearths (VCH 1976, 315). These include The Black House, later 'Rydley', located in the High Road almost opposite Crook's Farm (VCH 1976, 314–15). This property had the highest number of hearths (22) for the area and was owned by Sir Hugh Smithson, whose descendants became the Dukes of Northumberland. The house was the summer retreat of Sir John Coke, the Secretary of State, who stayed regularly at the house between 1625 and 1640 (VCH 1976, 315). Other large properties were the old manor house of Bruce Castle, now Bruce Castle Museum; the Mattisons on the far side of Tottenham Wood, owned by Sir Julius Caesar; and the high-status farmhouses of Ducketts, Asplin and Willoughbies (VCH 1976, 314–15).

Crook's Farm became a property of high status during this period. Documentary evidence of 1664 states that it contained some 21 hearths, the second highest in Edmonton Hundred at the time; three hearths/fireplaces were identified within the limited excavation area. The large amount of highly decorative moulded plasterwork, found within a later demolition

deposit, derives from a fretted ceiling and coving and is attributed to this phase of construction.

The remodelling and addition of the southern wing at Crook's Farm occurred during a period in England sometimes (perhaps misleadingly) known as the 'Great Rebuilding'. Originally defined by Hoskins (1953) as occurring between 1570 and 1640, the 'Great Rebuilding' was characterised by the rebuilding or remodelling of many middle and high status homes in response to changing living requirements as well as improvements in building technology and increased availability of specialised building materials (particularly brick). In many parts of England timber houses were frequently replaced with stone or brick walled houses. Not all higher status medieval properties were replaced; many were adapted and extended to meet new demands. The main development of this period was the flooring over of open halls, the insertion of new chimneys and staircases, and the addition of service wings and ancillary buildings. This appears to be the case at Crook's Farm; Sir Edward Barkham may have required a property which would have expressed his social standing (even if he did not actually live in the property himself).

Gentry life was no longer centred around the communal hall and its adjacent rooms but took place in a series of smaller private rooms and chambers. The rooms used by the family would have been well-appointed with small fireplaces and plasterwork ceilings, evidence of which was found on site. Fittings such as panelling, cloth hangings and furniture have not survived but can be inferred from other houses and numerous contemporary inventories. As in so many houses, rather than demolishing the existing building, it was remodelled to meet the new requirements. There is the possibility, however, that the new range may have been a service wing and did not necessarily provide accommodation for the gentle folk.

By 1790 Crook's Farm had been demolished and a Georgian mansion house, known as White Hall, constructed in its place. The demolition of the earlier property (and its later additions) appears to have been undertaken in a systematic and controlled way, as evidenced by the nature of the demolition deposits within dumps and robber trenches. There is evidence for the reuse of building materials both stratigraphically and from the specialist analyses. Documentary evidence suggests that the house was constructed between 1744 and 1790. The illustration (Fig 4) of White Hall in 1840 shows a Palladian influenced villa; Palladianism was strongest in England between 1715 and 1755, which fits well with the suggested date range for the construction of the house. The excavation also located a large ornamental water feature, which is depicted on cartographic sources from 1798 to 1844. It was infilled by 1864 and most of the grounds were covered by terraced housing fronting Moselle Street. A portion of the site was still used as gardens and open space. The house was demolished between 1935 and 1961. In recent times the southern portion of the site was used as a concrete and tarmac playground, with the northern area having two sets of prefabricated garages placed on it, together with an area of hard-standing.

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