

**RETAINING WALL
SAFFRON WALDEN CASTLE
SAFFRON WALDEN
ESSEX**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AND MONITORING



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

FEBRUARY 2010

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CONTENTS

	Page No.
SUMMARY	1
1.0 INTRODUCTION	3
2.0 BACKGROUND	4
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	6
4.0 METHOD	6
5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS	7
6.0 FINDS	10
7.0 DISCUSSION	12
8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS	15
 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	 16
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 17
 APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1 Context Data	
APPENDIX 2 Finds Data	
APPENDIX 3 Pottery Data	
APPENDIX 4 Contents of Archive	
APPENDIX 5 Essex HER Summary	
 FIGURES	
Fig. 1 Site location	
Fig. 2 Lower trench detail	
Fig. 3 Sections 1 & 2	
 PLATES	
Plate 1 Section 1 looking south-west	
Plate 2 Detail of fills 15-18 in cut 20 looking south-east	
Plate 3 Layers 7, 10 and 11 looking north-west	
Plate 4 Two sequences of orange sand, flint and chalk at edge of builder's trench looking south-east	
Plate 5 Section 2 looking north-east	
Plate 6 Blocked subterranean structure in retaining wall looking south	

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AND MONITORING

Client: Uttlesford District Council

NGR: TL 53808 38713

Site Code: SW 56

Scheduled Monument No.: 20671

OASIS No.: essexcou1- 69300

Date of Fieldwork: 16th July to 6th August 2009

SUMMARY

Archaeological excavation and monitoring was carried out during rebuilding of the retaining wall to the rear of 30 Castle Street and on the north side of Saffron Walden Castle, which is a scheduled monument. The castle was originally built in the mid 12th century and refurbished in the 14th century following a license to crenellate granted in 1347. A 4m long trench was excavated across the line of an earth bank and underlying deposits to the south of the retaining wall, with the aim of recording and dating the castle's inner bailey defences.

A build-up of deposits c. 2m thick was recorded. Above the natural chalk, a buried medieval topsoil was overlain by a series of compacted sand, flint and chalk deposits interpreted as the foundations of the mid 14th-century inner bailey curtain wall. A rammed chalk and flint foundation for the curtain wall was recorded at the southern end of the trench, with a rubble base to its north, presumably for a bank against the foot of its outer face. The foundations were found to extend along the length of the retaining wall during monitoring of construction works. No evidence was found of the original mid 12th-century inner bailey rampart, possibly because this was located closer to the inner bailey ditch which has previously been recorded to the north beneath Castle Street.

After demolition and robbing in the late medieval or early post-medieval period, the castle grounds were landscaped in the 19th century, probably when the museum was constructed in the 1830s. The medieval castle wall foundations are sealed by a sequence, c. 1.5m thick, of layers of levelled topsoil, so that the material forming the bank to the rear of the retaining wall is entirely modern. The retaining wall itself dates to the later 19th or 20th century, and both it and a blocked brick underground structure were cut into the outer edge of the medieval wall foundations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological excavation and monitoring undertaken before the replacement of a retaining wall to the rear of 30 Castle Street, which forms the north-western boundary of the grounds of Saffron Walden Museum, formerly the inner bailey of the medieval castle (Fig. 1). The excavation was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of Uttlesford District Council.

In August 2008 the 3.4m high retaining wall to the rear of 30 Castle Street was reported as being cracked and dangerous. As the wall belongs to Saffron Walden Museum, owned and administered by Uttlesford District Council, its Property Services department put forward a scheme to construct a replacement.

The retaining wall is thought to follow the line of the rampart of the inner bailey of the medieval castle, designated a scheduled monument (SM 20671) protected under the Ancient Monuments Act 1979, so any below-ground construction works would require scheduled monument consent and archaeological mitigation. As a result a site meeting was held on 15 August 2008 between Andrew Hurrell, Estates Surveyor for Uttlesford District Council, Debbie Priddy, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage, Peter Riding, the owner of 30 Castle Street, and Patrick Allen and Trevor Ennis of ECC FAU, to discuss a practicable scheme of archaeological investigation and recording. Richard Havis of ECC HEM, who provides archaeological advice for Uttlesford District, was also consulted.

The ECC FAU submitted a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological excavation, which was agreed by all parties, and provided a basis for the application for scheduled monument consent for the works. The archaeological fieldwork was to consist of the excavation of a 4m long trench through the possible rampart deposits to the rear of the retaining wall, followed by monitoring of machine-excavation by the builders along the remaining length of the retaining wall.

Scheduled monument consent for the wall replacement works and the related archaeological investigation was granted by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on 02 October 2008, following the advice of Debbie Priddy, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage.

Copies of this report will be supplied to Uttlesford District Council, English Heritage, ECC HEM, Peter Riding and the Essex Historic Environment Record. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology (Fig. 1)

The site lies on the north-western boundary of the grounds of Saffron Walden Museum, to the rear of 30 Castle Street, Saffron Walden (TL 53808 38713). The museum grounds occupy the area of the keep and inner bailey of the 12th-century Walden Castle, with the line of the inner bailey ditch respected by the surrounding streets, especially Castle Street and Museum Street (Fig. 1).

A 1m-high earth bank in the site area, to the west of the museum, is believed to be a remnant of the inner bailey rampart. Beyond the bank to the north-west, terracing to the rear of no. 30 Castle Street had created a vertical drop of 3.4m, retained by a brick wall. The earth bank of the rampart was overgrown with trees and shrubs, with additional soil probably dumped in the area during landscaping of the castle grounds in the 18-19th centuries. The retaining wall in front of the rampart had bowed and had a major crack running from top to bottom hence the need for a replacement wall. Prior to excavation a number of trees and shrubs were removed to facilitate access and the damaged wall was shored to prevent collapse during the works.

The castle and museum are situated on the top of a promontory known as Bury Hill. The uppermost geology is Chalk of the Lewes and Seaford Formations patchily overlain by grey glacial clay.

2.2 Archaeology and History (Fig. 1)

The following archaeological and historical background makes use of the historic town survey for Saffron Walden (Medlycott 1998) and a published report on previous archaeological excavations of the town and castle (Bassett 1982). Reference is also made to site investigation reports on small trenches excavated more recently in the castle's inner

bailey (Andrews 1987; Ennis 2009) and across the outer bailey ditch on the opposite side of Castle Street (Ennis 2005).

Saffron Walden had its origins in the later Saxon period and developed into a prosperous market town during the early medieval period. In the 13th-16th centuries the town was a major centre for the cloth trade and was famous for the production of saffron dyestuffs, from which its name is derived.

The castle, around which the town developed, was built in the mid 12th century, as in 1141 Geoffrey de Mandeville was given permission to remove the market at nearby Newport to his castle at Saffron Walden. It is assumed that by 1141 the keep and its earthworks were well advanced and probably substantially finished by 1143 (Bassett 1982, 15). The castle had inner and outer baileys, with the outer bailey to the west of Museum Street containing the parish church of St Mary and the original market place. In 1157 the castle was ordered to be slighted but was possibly refortified after 1167. The castle keep and inner bailey are designated a scheduled monument (SM 20671).

The town expanded in the early to mid 13th century, with a planned rectilinear street grid and a new market place added to the south of the castle's outer bailey. The enlarged town area was enclosed within a new defensive earthwork, the *magnum fossatum* (great ditch), although the northern length of the town defences used the existing outer bailey ditch. The castle's keep and inner bailey were still intact in 1347, when Humphrey de Bohun, 7th Earl of Essex, was given permission to crenellate, and the entire inner bailey was provided with a stone curtain wall (Bassett 1982, 16 and 18).

A trench excavated at 63a Castle Street (Fig. 1) recorded the outer bailey ditch as having been sealed over by chalk rubble in the 14th century or soon after (Ennis 2005). This is interpreted as a deliberate levelling of the outer bailey earthworks, with the rampart material used to infill the ditch. The earliest houses on both sides of Castle Street date to the 16th century, and it is reasonable to assume a late medieval demolition of the castle and town defences in this area, with Castle Street and Museum Street set out on the line of the former inner bailey ditch.

A small trench excavated for a time capsule 15m south-east of the site area recorded a vertical-sided pit or cellar sealed by chalk rubble and floor surfaces, undated, but probably medieval. These were sealed by a further chalk rubble levelling layer containing a sherd of

16th-17th century pottery (Andrews 1987). Further layers of levelling and landscaping were recorded in trial pits 50m to the south of the site (Ennis 2009). These contained residual sherds of 12th and 13th-14th century pottery most likely derived from occupation within the castle's inner bailey.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The general aim of the archaeological excavation was to record any remains of the rampart of the inner bailey of the medieval castle that would be destroyed by the construction of the new retaining wall.

3.2 Objectives

The research objectives for the excavation were in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). Understanding the specific activities and functional areas within medieval towns, and their interrelationships, is an important regional research aim. In this case the aim was to understand the establishment and decline of the castle in relation to the rest of the town, and in particular the development of tenements along Castle Street in an area formerly occupied by the castle's defensive outworks.

Specific objectives were to investigate and record:

- The character and date of the original rampart of the medieval castle's inner bailey;
- The date of deposits relating to the disuse and levelling of the inner bailey rampart;
- The sequence and date of later landscaping of the inner bailey rampart.

4.0 METHOD

A stepped trench was excavated under archaeological supervision by a mini-excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket. It was located to cut through the earth bank at the rear of the retaining wall and expose potential rampart/wall deposits below. Initially a trench, broadly rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 4m north-east/south-west by 4.5m north-

west/south-east, was excavated through the overburden to a maximum depth of 0.9m (from the top of the bank). Part of this material was investigated by hand to check for dating evidence and the rest removed by machine. A second trench 4m long by 1m wide was then hand-excavated through this lower area to the top of the natural chalk, a further c. 1m below. Prior to backfilling it was possible, with the aid of the machine, to partly widen this lower trench to the north-east to further expose layers 7 and 10.

After the excavation was completed, archaeological monitoring was then undertaken on ground reduction to the rear (south) of the retaining wall. A trench 3m wide by 11m long trench was excavated to the top of the natural chalk at a depth of c. 2m. The work was carried out by a mini-excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket in conjunction with a dumper. Due to the confined nature of the trench, between standing wall and steep trench side, observation of the ground reduction could only safely be carried out from above the trench while the machines were in operation.

Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout. ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and all work was carried out in accordance with IfA by-laws and guidelines (IfA 1997; 2001) and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003).

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS (Figs 2 and 3)

Archaeological deposits of probable medieval, post-medieval and modern date were present within the excavation area and are described below. Section 5.1 details the excavation results and Section 5.2 records observations made during the ground reduction phase. Detailed context information is presented in Appendix 1.

5.1 Excavation Trench

At the base of the excavated sequence (Fig 3, Section 1) (Plate 1) was a layer of solid, if somewhat degraded, natural chalk bedrock. This was sealed by a layer of mid greyish brown silt (14), 0.44m deep, interpreted as buried topsoil. This deposit contained two small fragments of brick of possible Roman date, fragments of animal bone, and a tiny sherd of sandy orange ware broadly dated to the 13th-16th centuries.

To the south, layer 14 was truncated by a flat-bottomed trench 0.20m deep (20) that contained a series of highly compacted horizontal layers (15-18). From the bottom up, these comprised a layer of flints in orange sand (18), overlain by compacted chalk (17), overlain by further flints on a film of sand (16) with a second layer of compacted chalk at the top (15) (Plate 2).

To the north, the remainder of the buried topsoil was sealed by a thin layer of orange sand (13) upon which, at the south end and bordering cut 20, was a roughly linear (east-west) deposit of flint with occasional chalk lumps (12). Further sporadic flints were noted upon the sand to the north where they were overlain and mixed within a layer of chalk rubble (11), up to 0.2m thick. Sealing the chalk rubble was another layer of orange sand (10) that was quite clean in appearance and which formed a bed for a more intact layer of deliberately placed flint (7) (not visible in section 1) (Plate 3). These flints and underlying deposits 10 and 11 were further recorded in the second trench opened to the east of the main trench (Fig. 2). Here, the flints (7) were noticeably more sporadic and may have been subject to previous disturbance.

Above the flints, and located mainly in the southern half of the trench, was a looser, more-mixed deposit of greyish brown silt and orange sand (6) that was entirely different in character from the preceding compacted deposits. It contained fragments of animal bone, roof tile and a small piece of worked stone and was sealed by a mixed layer of chalk rubble and grey silt (5) up to 0.18m thick. This layer varied in composition with larger pieces of chalk and silt to the south and a more dense collection of smaller pieces of chalk to the north. In the south-west of the trench layer 5 was overlain by a thick (0.3m), but localised, deposit of mixed sandy silt (19).

Above this was an extensive layer of light brownish grey silt (4) containing common chalk flecks which in some areas became more intense. A variety of finds were recovered from this deposit including fragments of post-medieval brick and tile, single fragments of slate and worked stone, and four sherds of pottery, all broadly dating to the 19th century. An array of similar finds was also recovered from chalk-flecked silt layer 3, which was essentially the same as layer 4, but from above the safety step bordering the central part of the trench. At the top of the investigated sequence (above 3, not in section) was an area of chalk rubble (2) that was exposed during the initial machining and contained sherds of post-medieval/modern green bottle glass and the largest piece of worked stone recovered from the excavation. Above this was up to 0.6m of root-disturbed grey topsoil capped by a further

0.4m of dark topsoil that was root-congested and more organic in nature. In the north of the trench was a curving step-sided feature (9), over 1.8m deep, that cut through all of the archaeological deposits and most of the topsoil apart from the more organic material close to the surface. It was filled with loose mid to dark grey brown silt (8) that contained modern (late 19th to 20th century) pottery and fragments of gas pipe with decorative fittings.

5.2 Monitoring

Observation of ground reduction to the north-east of the excavation area (Fig. 1) revealed the basic sequence of buried topsoil overlain by layers of orange sand, flints and chalk (14–11) as extending the full length of the builder's trench. Intermittently, along the southern edge of the trench (Plate 4), it was possible to discern two sequences of orange sand, flints and chalk. In general these were overlain by mixed, sometimes banded, chalk and silt deposits sealed by thick, heavily root-disturbed topsoil. Modern disturbance was noted to the immediate rear of the retaining wall for its entire length suggesting that the ground here had been cut back when the wall was constructed and subsequently infilled. The majority of the retaining wall appeared to be constructed from frogged bricks.

After the ground reduction was completed the section at the north-east end of the builder's trench was recorded (Fig 3, Section 2) (Plate 5). At the base of the sequence was further mid greyish brown silt (28), 0.32m deep, interpreted as buried topsoil. Above this, was a silty layer containing numerous small chalk pieces (27) with a more compacted chalk layer (26) above. Partly overlying 26 and more extensively directly overlying the buried topsoil (28) was a layer of orange sand and flints (25). In section, the sand and flints appeared to make one homogenous layer but in reality the flints overlay, and were bedded upon, the sand. The sand and flints were sealed by a layer of chalk rubble (24), 0.10m thick. Whereas layers 27 to 24 may have been deliberately deposited for constructional purposes the remaining layers (23 to 21) in the section were more silty and appeared to be part of a more general build-up. Layer 23 was 0.33m thick and comprised of fairly light grey to greyish brown chalk-flecked silt. The layer above that (22) was 0.65m thick and comprised of a series of mixed bands of light grey brown to light pink chalky silt and chalk rubble. A few fragments of post-medieval brick and tile were recovered from a pinker part of this deposit and one presence of one piece of slate was noted. Silt layer 21 near the top of the section contained the occasional fragment of post-medieval tile and was essentially root-disturbed topsoil. This topsoil was cut by a modern vertically-sided feature (not numbered) either associated with construction of the retaining wall or with a projecting boundary wall to the immediate north-east. All the deposits were capped by 0.25m of darker organic topsoil that was heavily root-congested.

The builder's trench did not extend far enough back from the retaining wall to expose feature 20 and the compacted flint and chalk deposits within it. However, modern feature 9 was further exposed and was revealed as the corner of a construction cut for a subterranean brick structure (Fig. 1), presumably some form of store room, extending beneath and beyond the retaining wall and which had subsequently been blocked-up (Plate 6). After the ground reduction was completed and the retaining wall dismantled the solid but degraded chalk was exposed in section to a depth in excess of 1.4m and was therefore confirmed as natural bedrock.

6.0 FINDS by Joyce Compton

Finds were recovered from eight contexts. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context; full quantification details can be found in Appendix 2. The finds are described by category below.

6.1 Pottery by Helen Walker

A total of twenty-one sherds, weighing 829g, was excavated from four contexts. Most of the pottery is modern, but there is a single residual sherd of handmade early medieval ware, dating from the 10th to early 13th centuries. There are also two sherds of late medieval sandy orange ware, one unglazed and one showing an external amber-coloured glaze. The glazed sherd has a distinctive fabric, characteristic of the Saffron Walden area and indicating a local production site. Later still is a single sherd of unglazed Tudor red earthenware, and as the name suggests, this dates to the late 15th to 16th centuries.

There are a few sherds of post-medieval red earthenware, spanning the later 16th to 19th centuries. Of interest is a base sherd from a flared dish or bowl, which shows a small piercing in the wall, done after manufacture, suggesting some kind of specialised use. The hole is rather small for drainage and may have been for suspension.

The remaining pottery spans the late 18th to early 20th centuries and comprises a mixture of table wares and kitchen wares. Finds include a complete stoneware blacking bottle made by Doulton of Lambeth, its black internal residue suggesting some of the contents remain. There is also the base of an industrial slipware bowl, and a tiny porcelain rim with a blue willow pattern design.

6.2 Brick and tile

Five contexts produced fragments of brick and tile, amounting to thirty-six pieces, weighing 1760g. All of the fragments are undiagnostic and all are post-medieval, except for those from layer 14 which could be Roman.

6.3 Metalwork

Post-medieval and modern metalwork, most of which are unstratified, metal-detected finds, was recorded in three contexts. The unstratified items include copper alloy pierced fittings, a plain disc/possible halfpenny of diameter 27mm, a small button and a cartridge case stub, a section of iron pipe, lead/white metal flashing and off-cuts, a section of lead pipe and various sizes of lead shot. Also metal-detected is a well-patinated, copper-alloy Nuremberg jetton of 16th or 17th century date.

Layer 4 contained two encrusted, but relatively recent nails, and the fill of cut 9 produced two sections of iron pipe with decorative copper-alloy fittings. These comprise straight sections of pipe, one with two fittings, the other with one, and decoration in the form of an eight-petalled flower with wavy edges to all three connections. These sections, along with the unstratified example, probably represent Victorian gas-piping with decorated tap sockets. The taps are no longer present.

6.4 Glass

Three contexts produced recent glass, amounting to six pieces, weighing 190g. A complete blue-green sauce bottle was found unstratified, and layers 2 and 3 produced several small green bottle body sherds.

6.5 Worked stone

Three pieces of worked stone, all apparently limestone, are present. The first, from rubble layer 2, is a substantial but broken block with tool marks and striations visible on all but one surface. The second is a fragment from layer 4 and has faint tool marks on one corner. Layer 6 produced the smallest fragment; this has diagonal striations across the flatter surface.

6.6 Animal bone

Small amounts of animal bone (29 pieces, weighing 288g) were recorded in five contexts. The bone has been scanned for condition and completeness, and basic identifications of the taxa and the skeletal elements were carried out, where possible, using Schmid (1972).

Generally, the bones are fragmentary and in relatively good condition, with some surface pitting. Cattle and sheep/goat were certainly identified but the assemblage is too small for further worthwhile comment.

6.7 Other finds

Slate fragments were noted in three contexts; a yellow, sandy, flint-and-lime mortar fragment was found in layer 6, and a fused ashy slag mass came from the fill of cut 9. This appears to be of recent date since there is wood, and other burnt materials, embedded within it.

6.8 Comments on the assemblage

A range of post-medieval and mainly modern finds was recorded. A tiny potsherd of medieval or late medieval date was recovered from the bulk sample taken from buried soil layer 14. Single sherds of medieval and late medieval pottery were also found unstratified and, residually, in layer 3. Of interest are the pieces of worked stone, probably representing discarded pieces and trimmings from repairs to buildings in the vicinity.

No further work is required on any of the finds. The modern metalwork, the glass and most of the brick and tile have been discarded following recording. Most of the remainder could be discarded at the archiving stage, although the Nuremberg jetton and some of the earlier pottery should perhaps be retained.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The archaeological investigation has recorded a sequence of stratified deposits c. 2m thick, of which the earliest are clearly associated with the medieval defences of the castle's inner bailey, and the later with 19th-century landscaping of the castle grounds.

7.1 Inner bailey defences

The series of deposits at the base of the sequence (Figs 2 and 3) clearly represent the deliberately laid and compacted remains of a solid structure, most likely the foundations of a stone wall and a related bank. At the southern end of the excavation trench, the highly compacted flint and chalk layers 15-18 within trench 20 are interpreted as the foundation for a wall whose upper part had been robbed. This wall would have run 4m to the south of the retaining wall, but no further part of it was exposed as its line lay to the south of the builder's trench. A further foundation, however, ran the entire length of the builder's trench, between

foundation 15 and the retaining wall. This comprised one, or sometimes two, sequences, with a bedding layer of orange sand overlain by a layer of flints in turn overlain by a layer of chalk rubble (7 and 10-13 in the excavation trench). This was a deliberately laid foundation, although less compacted than foundation 15, and is best interpreted as the base for an earthwork. It seems slightly unusual that these foundations were constructed directly on buried topsoil (14/28) rather than on the natural chalk which was only 0.3m below, although the compacted nature of the foundations suggests they would have been stable.

Dating of these foundations is difficult due to the absence of reliable dating evidence. It was initially assumed that the foundations date to the original construction of the castle in the mid 12th century, but this seems unlikely as the inner bailey defences are not thought to have carried masonry walls until after the mid 14th century (Bassett 1982, 19). It is possible that wall foundation 15 was a later insertion into an existing earth rampart, presumably the original inner bailey earthwork constructed in the 12th century. However, the close similarity of materials used in the two foundations instead suggests that they were contemporary, consisting of a curtain wall (foundation 15-18) with rubble material (foundation 7 and 10-13) banked up against the foot of its outer face. On balance, the most likely interpretation is that both foundations formed part of a mid 14th-century stone curtain wall constructed after the 1347 license to crenellate. The tiny sherd of sandy orange ware, broadly dated to the 13th to 16th centuries, that was recovered from the underlying buried topsoil would be consistent with the later date for the foundations. This dating evidence is extremely tenuous, however, and the main evidence for dating the inner bailey defences consists of their identification with what is known from documentary sources.

If this identification is correct, then the excavation and monitoring recorded no evidence of the original 12th-century inner bailey rampart. It is possible that the original rampart was located within the excavation area and had been levelled, but the way in which the recorded foundations cleanly overlay buried topsoil argues against this. The alternative is that the 14th-century rebuilding in stone followed a different line to the original 12th-century rampart.

The presumed line of the inner bailey rampart lies some 20m from its corresponding ditch, which was recorded in sewer trenches beneath Museum Street and Castle Street in 1911-13 (Bassett 1982, 19). Even if the ditch ran along on the south side of Castle Street and extended beneath the front of the houses on that side, the resulting gap between ditch and rampart would still have been 15m, which seems excessive. The explanation most likely lies in the chronology of the various defensive elements. The inner bailey ditch was part of the initial mid-12th century phase of castle construction and was no doubt accompanied by an

adjacent rampart formed from the upcast material. This rampart would therefore have been located in the position of the later houses and backyards on the south side of Castle Street and would explain why no obvious rampart remains were found during the excavation. The rampart may have been levelled and the ditch in-filled during the slighting of the castle in 1157 or in the succeeding centuries. It is worth noting that the outer bailey ditch, to the north of nearby 63a Castle Street had been infilled by the end of the 14th century or soon after (Ennis 2005). The construction of a curtain wall around the inner bailey in 1347 may have been a deliberate re-defining of the castle enclosure at a time when the older defences were being eroded and infilled. The new inner bailey wall appears to have encircled the very top of the hill and was set back from the down-slope position of the former rampart and thus explains the apparent gap between wall and ditch.

7.2 Landscaping of the grounds

At some point towards the end of the medieval period or early in the post-medieval period the curtain wall was demolished and robbed of its component flints for building and repair work in and around the town. Documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that the keep had become ruinous by 1594 and was regularly robbed up to the mid 18th century (Bassett 1982, 50). The profile of the top of foundation 15 is consistent with robbing.

Layers 3 and 4 (Fig. 3, section 1) and layers 22 and 23 (Fig. 3, section 2) and most of the overlying topsoil as well, represent quite recent levelling and landscaping deposits following the demolition of the wall and subsequent robbing. Finds from these deposits suggest a 19th century date for this activity. This would appear to be later than the thorough landscaping of the ground around the keep which occurred in the 18th century (Bassett 1982, 61) and which might have taken place at the time of recorded repairs to the keep and the construction of an additional turret in 1796. It is more likely that the 19th-century landscaping occurred when the nearby museum building was constructed in the 1830s. The landscaped material was truncated to the north by construction cuts for the retaining wall and the subterranean feature all of which are likely to date to the later 19th or 20th century.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The excavation has made an important contribution to understanding the Saffron Walden castle scheduled monument, and has established the character of the inner bailey defences in the area to the west of the museum.

The earth bank that marks the line of the inner bailey rampart is entirely of modern origin, dating from the 19th century onwards, and is the result of landscaping of the museum grounds. Up to 0.4m of medieval stratigraphy survived, sealed beneath a build-up of 1.4-1.7m of recent levelling. The foundations that were recorded are interpreted as the remains of a 14th-century curtain wall constructed after the granting of a license to crenellate in 1347. Although the foundations are not closely dated by artefacts, their character strongly suggests they should be identified with the documented rebuilding of the inner bailey defences in stone. No evidence was found of the original 12th-century earth rampart, and it is argued that this followed a different line to the later curtain wall, nearer the line of the inner bailey ditch previously recorded in Castle Street.

The excavation results are significant as no physical evidence for an inner bailey curtain wall has been recorded before. It is likely that the original 12th-century rampart has been destroyed by the construction of houses along Castle Street and terracing of their backyards into the hillside. This process appears to have begun in the late medieval period and had been completed by the 16th century, the date of the earliest surviving houses in Castle Street. The recognised outline of the castle's inner bailey is considered to be the result of a 14th-century rebuilding of the inner bailey rampart as a stone curtain wall on a new line following the Bury Hill hilltop more closely, at a time when the original castle earthworks were decaying or were being levelled.

The excavation results suggest that any remains of the medieval castle that have survived robbing should be well preserved across the scheduled area beneath thick layers of topsoil laid down during landscaping of the museum grounds. In particular, it is concluded that the foundations of the 14th-century stone curtain wall survive, but that no evidence survives of the original 12th-century inner bailey rampart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Essex CC FAU would like to thank of Uttlesford District Council for commissioning and funding the archaeological excavation, and especially Andrew Hurrell of Uttlesford DC for his help and support. Thanks are also due to Debbie Priddy, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments for her advice and for help in obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent for the works. The archaeological excavation was undertaken by Trevor Ennis and Andrew Letch of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. The spoil heaps were metal detected by Tony Carter of Saffron Walden Museum. Finds were processed by Phil McMichael and analysed by Joyce Compton and Helen Walker. The report was prepared by Trevor Ennis with illustrations by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and English Heritage by Richard Havis of ECC HEM.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DATA

All dimensions given in metres

Context	Type	Description	Period
1	Finds	Unstratified finds from machining	Modern
2	Layer	Light grey silt and chalk. 2.6m x 1.8m x 0.18m thick	Modern
3	Layer	Light grey to brownish grey silt, common chalk flecks. 0.40m thick	Post-med
4	Layer	Light grey to light brownish grey silt, common chalk flecks. 0.24m thick	Post-med
5	Layer	White to light grey chalk rubble. Some grey silt. 0.18m thick	Medieval
6	Layer	Mid greyish brown to orange sandy silt, occasional flints & chalk flecks. 0.18m thick	Medieval
7	Layer	Pale brown chalky silt, common sub-angular flints. 0.06m thick	Medieval
8	Fill of 9	Loose mid to dark grey brown silt, common chalk flecks, roots	Modern
9	Pit	Steep sided, not bottomed. 1m+ x 0.8m+ x 1.8m+ deep	Modern
10	Layer	Orange sand, occasional flecks of chalk & small pebbles. 0.06m thick	Medieval
11	Layer	White chalk, occasional sub-angular flints. 0.20m thick	Medieval
12	Layer	Common sub-angular flints, occasional chalk lumps. C. 0.0.05m thick	Medieval
13	Layer	Orange sand. 0.02m thick	Medieval
14	Layer	Mid greyish brown to brown silt, common chalk flecks. 0.44m thick	Medieval
15	Layer	Compact white chalk, 0.05m thick	Medieval
16	Layer	Abundant sub-angular flints & film of orange sand, 0.06m thick	Medieval
17	Layer	Compact white chalk. 0.10m thick	Medieval
18	Layer	Orange sand, common sub-angular flints, 0.05m thick	Medieval
19	Layer	Light grey to orange sandy silt, common chalk flecks. 0.30m thick	Medieval?
20	Unknown cut	Steep sided, flat bottom. 0.8m+ x 1m+ x 0.20m deep	Medieval
21	Layer	Mid to light grey silt, occasional chalk flecks & pieces. 0.68m thick	Modern
22	Layer	Mixed bands of light grey brown to light pink silt & chalk rubble. 0.65m thick	Post-med
23	Layer	Light grey to mid greyish brown chalky silt. 0.33m thick	Post-med
24	Layer	Chalk rubble. 0.10m thick	Medieval
25	Layer	Orange sand, common sub-angular flints. 0.06m thick	Medieval
26	Layer	Compact chalk. 0.05m thick	Medieval
27	Layer	Light grey silt with common small chalk pieces. 0.09m thick	Medieval
28	Layer	Mid greyish brown silt, common chalk flecks. 0.32m thick (equals 14)	Medieval

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	u/s	3	10	Copper alloy; Nuremberg jetton, well patinated; coin/plain disc, dia 27mm; button, dia 15mm	Post med/modern
		3	6	Copper alloy objects; cartridge case stub; pierced fittings (Discarded)	Modern
		1	40	Iron pipe section, as 8 (Discarded)	Modern
		6	382	Lead/white metal objects; flashing; pipe section; melted mass; offcuts (Discarded)	Modern
		5	86	Lead shot, diameters 18, 13, 12 and 10mm; the 18mm shot still has attached sprue	-
		1	166	Glass; complete bottle (Worcester sauce type), blue-green, weathered surface, applied lip (Discarded)	Post med.
		6	615	Pottery; complete stoneware bottle, marked DOULTON LAMBETH; rim, base and body sherds	Modern
		2	26	Pottery; body sherds	Med/post med
2	Rubble	1	16	Slate fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	2530	Worked stone block, incomplete, tool marks on all but one surface, 165 x 130 x 90mm	-
		4	22	Glass; green bottle body sherds, one weathered (Discarded)	Post med/modern
3	Layer	1	20	Animal bone; cattle molar	-
		2	20	Slate fragments (Discarded)	-
		1	2	Glass; green bottle body sherd, weathered (Discarded)	Post med.
		3	158	Brick fragments, one with part-vitrified surface (Discarded)	Post med.
		18	870	Roof tile fragments, one with peg hole (13/468g discarded)	Post med.
		5	60	Pottery; rim, base and body sherds, one body sherd is pierced post-firing	Post med/modern
4	Layer	2	34	Iron nails, encrusted (Discarded)	-
		12	168	Animal bone; maxilla fragment with two molars, half a loose molar, loose incisor, cattle; mandible fragment with three molars, sheep/goat; vertebra fragments, unfused, large mammal; long bone shafts, unfused radius, proximal end, incomplete calcaneus, medium-sized mammal, prob sheep/goat	-
		1	6	Slate fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	330	?Worked stone	-
		2	144	Brick fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		5	266	Roof tile fragments, one mortared, one with peg hole (3/94g discarded)	Post med.
		4	10	Pottery; body sherds	Modern
6	Layer	3	66	Animal bone; rib sections, large mammal; tibia, distal end, sheep/goat	-
		1	106	Mortar fragment, sandy, yellow, flint and lime inclusions	-
		1	122	Worked stone, tool marks on one surface	-
		3	70	Roof tile fragments (Discarded)	Post med.

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
8	9	2	520	Copper alloy and iron pipe sections with decorative fittings - ?gas piping with tap sockets (Discarded)	Modern
		1	775	Slag/fused ashy mass (wood fragments, burnt flint and other burnt material embedded within) (Discarded)	-
		3	124	Pottery; rim and base sherds	Modern
14	Layer	13	34	Animal bone; cattle astragalus; 12/2g fragments inc sheep/goat molar from soil sample	-
		2	176	Brick fragments, the retained piece, depth 34mm, could be Roman (1/24g discarded)	Undated
		1	1	Pottery; tiny body sherd, from soil sample	Medieval
22	Layer	2	38	Brick fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	38	Roof tile fragment (Discarded)	Post med.

APPENDIX 3: POTTERY DATA

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	u/s	1	9	Early medieval ware body sherd	10th to 13th C, residual
		1	17	Post-medieval red earthenware, hollow ware sherd with all over glaze	16th to 19th C
		1	39	Creamware, footring base from carinated bowl showing grey and brown slip banding – industrial slipware	c.1830
		1	91	Yellow ware, rim of flared bowl	late 18th to early 20th C
		1	453	Modern stoneware: complete blacking bottle with lead, rather than salt glaze, impressed DOULTON LAMBETH just above basal angle	late 19th to 20th C
		3	27	Modern white earthenware, joining sherds showing mottled blue decoration on the outside surface	19th to 20th C
3	Layer	1	2	Late medieval sandy orange ware with external amber-coloured glaze	14th to 16th C
		1	7	Tudor red earthenware, unfeatured body sherd	late 15th/16th C
		1	32	Post-medieval red earthenware base of flared dish or bowl, the wall pierced post-firing	17th to 19th C
		1	15	Yellow ware footring base fragment	late 18th to early 20th C
		1	2	Porcelain, rim of ?saucer decorated with willow pattern	late 18th century onwards
4	Layer	1	5	Post-medieval red earthenware body sherd with all over glaze	late 16th to 19th C
		2	3	Creamware, joining sherds perhaps from a plate	later 18th to early 19th C
		1	2	Modern white earthenware with blue foliage transfer-print	19th to 20th C
8	9	3	124	Modern white earthenware comprising plate with pale blue floral transfer-printed design, base of cylindrical vessel with relief-moulded decoration, and an undecorated discoloured base	Victorian to 20th C
14		1	1	Sandy Orange Ware, unglazed, undiagnostic (from soil sample)	13th to 16th C
		21	829		

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

Site Name: Retaining Wall Saffron Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex

Site Code: SW 56

Index to Archive:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Client Report
- 2.2 Finds Reports

3. Site Archive

- 3.1 Context Record Register
- 3.2 Context Records (1 to 28)
- 3.3 Plan Register
- 3.4 Section Register
- 3.5 4 A4 plan/section sheets
- 3.6 Levels Register
- 3.7 Trench location plan
- 3.8 Photographic Registers
- 3.9 Site Photographic Record (1 set of Black & White prints, 1 Set of digital images on disk)
- 3.10 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

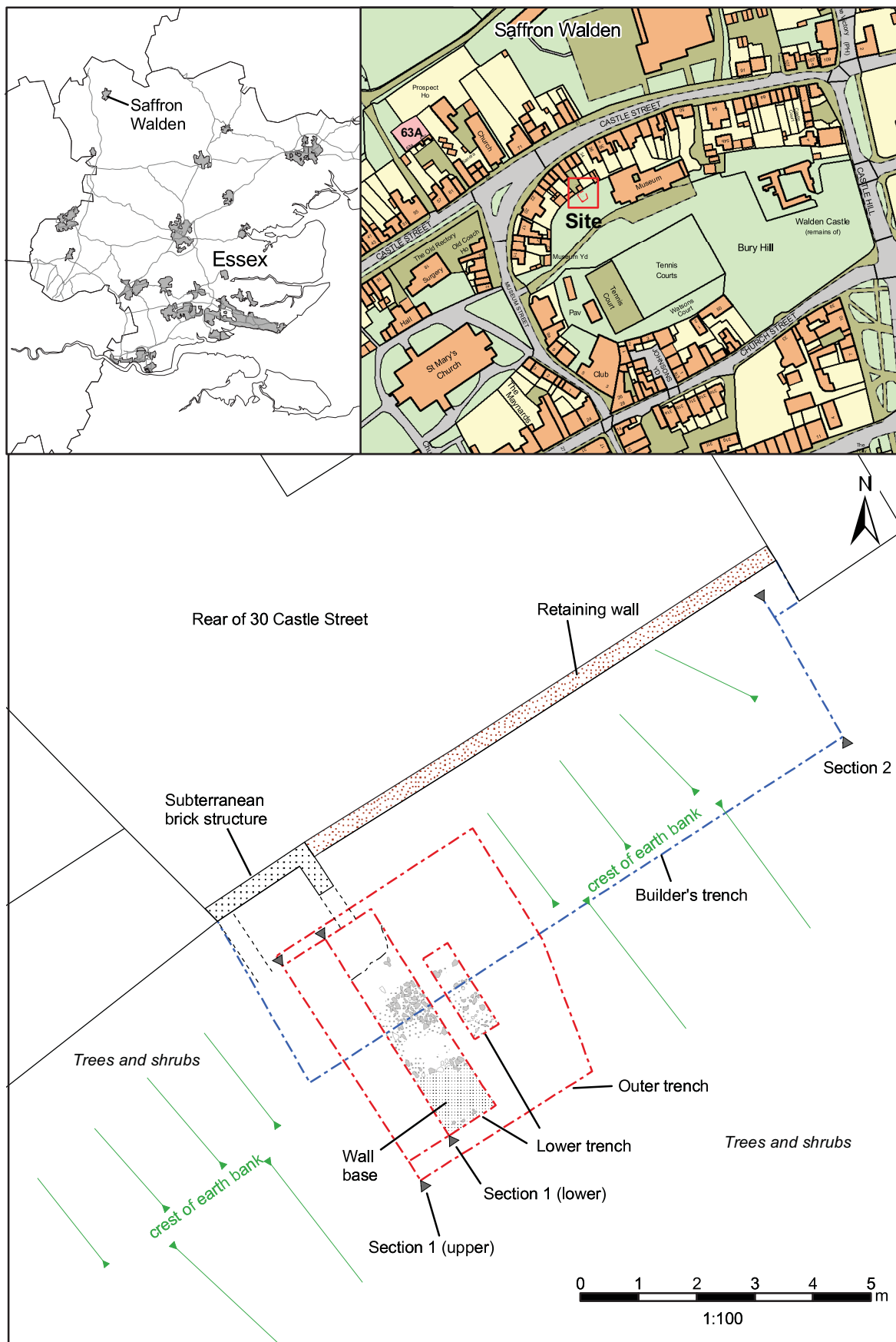
Two large section drawings

Finds

The retained finds occupy one box.

APPENDIX 5: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Retaining Wall Saffron Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex	
Parishes: Saffron Walden	District: Uttlesford
NGR: TL 53808 38713	Site Code: SW 56
Type of Work: Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring	Site Director/Group: T. Ennis, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 16th July to 6th August 2009	Size of Area Investigated: 33 sq m
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding source: Uttlesford District Council
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: - 411
Final Report: EAH Shorter Note	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 69300
Periods Represented: Medieval, post-medieval, modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: <i>Archaeological excavation and monitoring was carried out prior to and during repair work to the retaining wall between the north side of Saffron Walden Castle and the rear of 30 Castle Street. A 1m-wide trench, stepped for safety, was excavated through the deposits to the south of the wall. Natural chalk was exposed in the base of the trench at a depth of c. 2m below the ground surface. This was sealed by buried medieval topsoil upon which were a series of compacted sand, flint and chalk deposits interpreted as the foundations of the mid-14th century inner bailey curtain wall. The foundations were found to extend along the length of the retaining wall during monitoring. No evidence of a rampart was found although this is likely to date to the initial (mid 12th century) phase of construction and may have been located closer to the inner bailey ditch which has been observed beneath Castle Street to the north.</i></p> <p><i>After demolition and almost complete robbing in the late medieval or early post-medieval period the area was landscaped in the 19th century most probably when the near-by museum was constructed in the 1830s. The retaining wall itself and a blocked subterranean structure built within it all appear to date to the later 19th or 20th century.</i></p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports: none	
Author of Summary: T. Ennis	Date of Summary: February 2010



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Fig.1. Site location

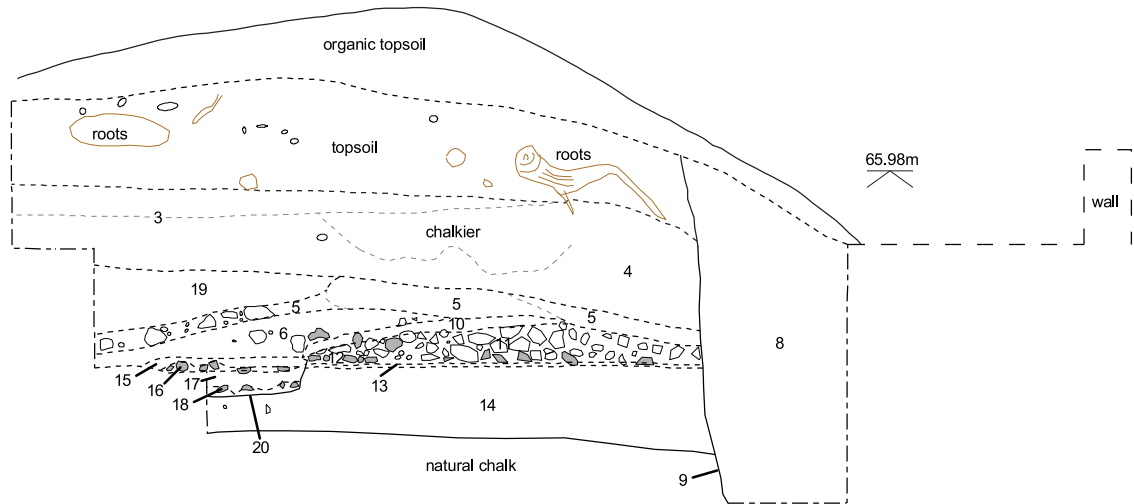


Fig.2. Lower trench detail

Section 1 (composite)

SE

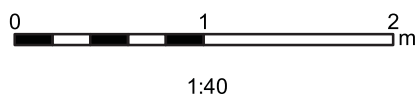
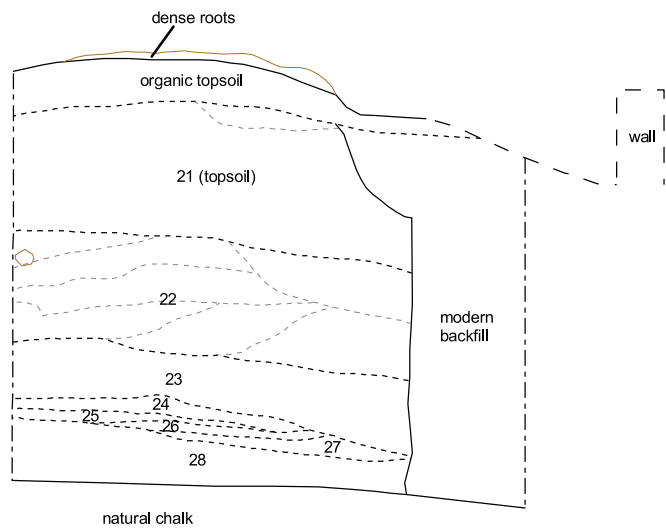
NW



Section 2 (reversed)

SE

NW



Key

- flints
- chalk pieces
- roots

Fig.3. Sections 1 & 2



Plate 1. Section 1 looking south-west (2m scale)



Plate 2. Detail of fills 15-18 in cut 20 looking south-east (0.25m scale)

Plate 3. Layers 7, 10 and 11
looking north-west
(1m scale)

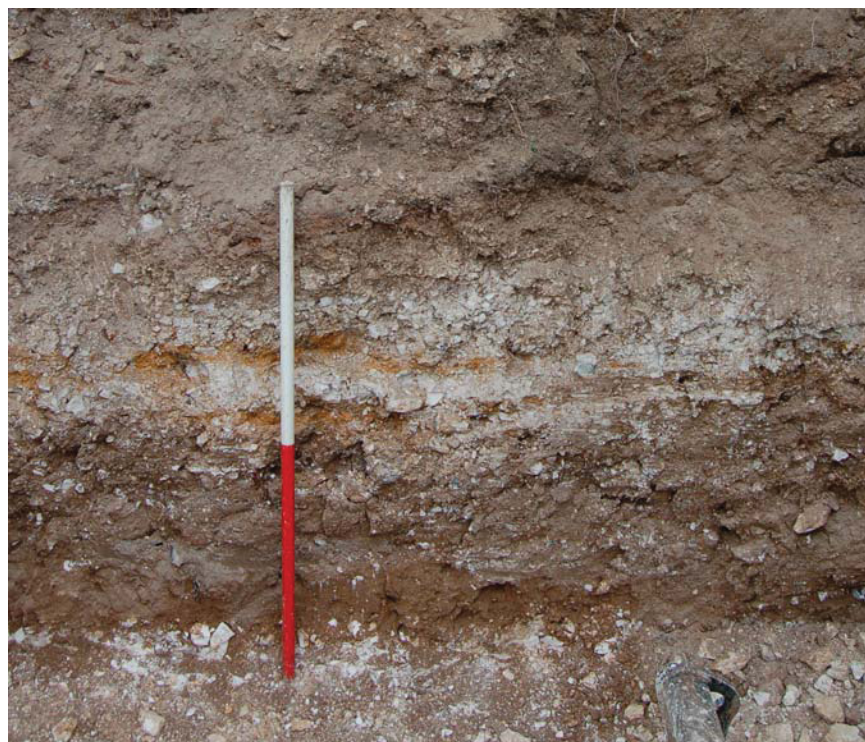


Plate 4. Two sequences of orange sand, flint and chalk at edge of
builder's trench looking south-east (1m scale)



Plate 5. Section 2 looking north-east (1m scale)



Plate 6. Blocked subterranean structure in retaining wall looking south