

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**THE RESULTS OF TWO ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS  
WITHIN  
STAIRCASES 3 AND 4, PECKWATER QUAD,  
CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD**

**SP 5152 0614**

*On behalf of*

*Christ Church*

**FEBRUARY 2007**

**REPORT FOR** Christ Church  
St Aldates  
Oxford  
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**FIELDWORK** 5<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2005 and 24<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006.

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## SUMMARY

*Excavation was carried out in advance of new floors being laid in the basement of Staircase 4 and part of Staircase 3, Peckwater Quad. The site was occupied late in the Saxon period with at least two pits surviving later activity. Further pits of mid-late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century were also present. An early 13<sup>th</sup> century cellared building had its cellar infilled early in its use. Various drains at ground floor level suggest its subsequent use was as a shop. Little 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century and later activity survived from the excavation of the present basement.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION.

John Moore Heritage Services carried out archaeological excavation for Christ Church in advance of refurbishment of the basement of Staircase 4 in Peckwater Quad and part of Staircase 3. This was in response to a condition attached to the listed building consent for the works. The work was carried out over the period of 5<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2005 and 24<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006. A report was produced on the first stage work (JMHS 2006a). This report is of the results of the two pieces of work. In addition architectural features in Rooms X and XI were recorded (JMHS 2006b).

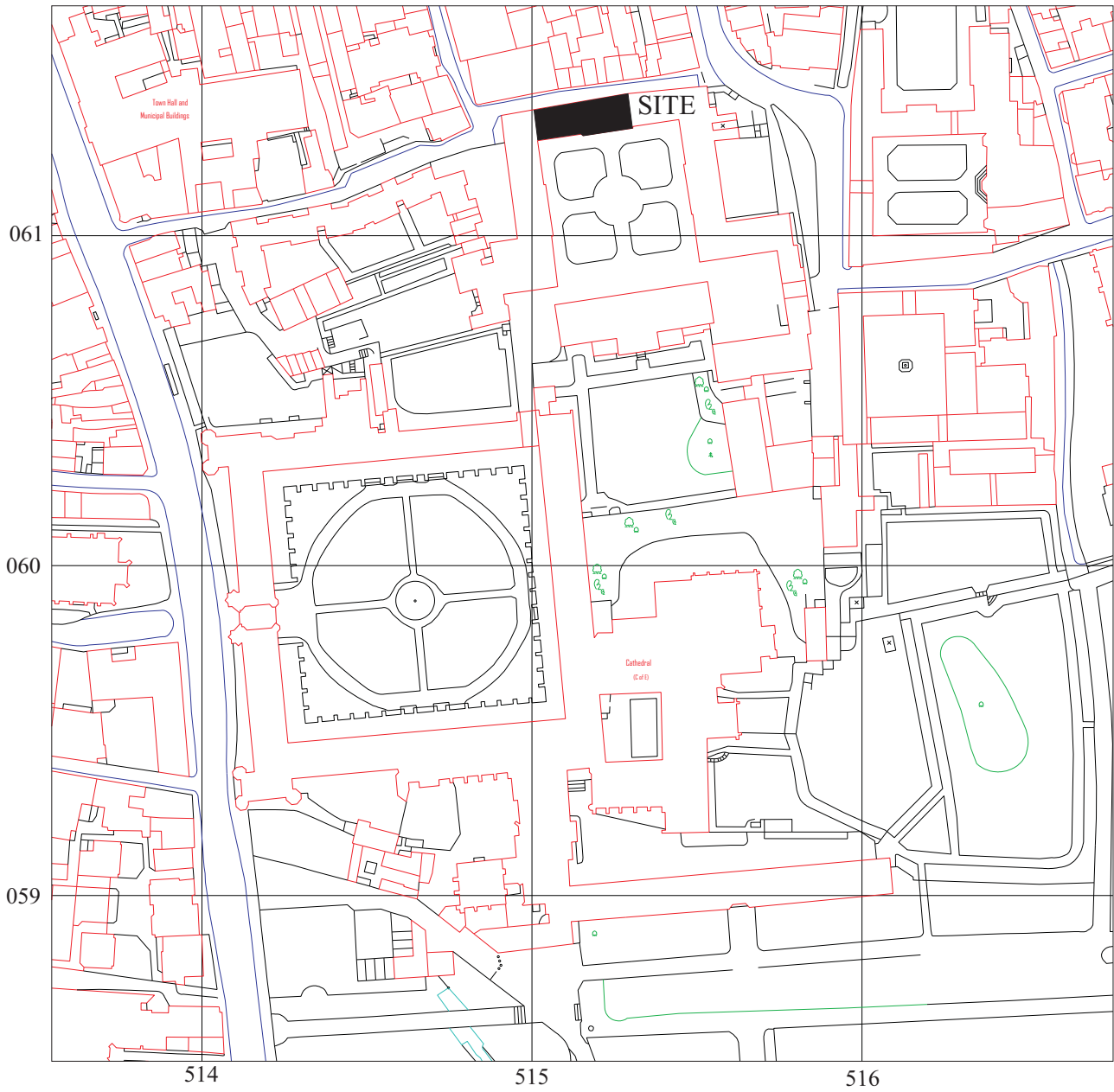
### **Location.**

The site lies at National Grid Reference SP 5152 0614 (Fig. 1), and is within the north range of Peckwater Quad. This part of the college is situated on the second gravel terrace (BGS 1982).

### **Historical and archaeological background.**

The north side of Peckwater Quad lies on the south side of Bear Lane (formerly Little Jury Lane). The reconstruction of the buildings of Peckwater Inn resulted in the present nine staircases of Peckwater Quad being opened in 1707 and completed in 1714 on three sides of the Quad. Each side has fifteen bays, rusticated to first-floor level with huge pilasters above. The central bays on each side have giant columns and are topped by an enormous pediment. There are a total of nine staircases. The building replaced the buildings of the former Peckwater Inn and the quadrangle was named after a medieval Oxford family, one of whose members, Robert Peckwater, gave Peckwater Inn to St Frideswide's priory ([www.chch.ox.ac.uk/objects/downloads/christchurch\\_history](http://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/objects/downloads/christchurch_history)).

The excavations in Staircases 3 and 4 were across the medieval plot of Soler Hall (Salter 1960) fronting the south side of Little Jury Lane. The property is first mentioned in the Oseney rentals in 1277 and as Soler Hall in a will of John De Dokelinton in 1349. In c. 1527 John Franklen of Horspath and Robert Freman of Church Cowley sell the moieties of a toft called Soler Hall to New College when New College was making a large holding at Vine Hall but Henry VIII took it all about 1546 (Salter SE 116). It is unknown how Eynsham Abbey obtained the adjacent property to the east. In c. 1526 Henry VIII granted to New College a garden next to Vine Hall, late in the tenure of Daniel Style apothecary (Salter SE 234). To the west was a large corner tenement, but before 1240 it had been divided into three, each of which paid a quitrent to Oseney. The northern half adjacent to Little Jury Lane, was divided into two, which by 1364 had become one as Little Canon School (*ibid*).



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Figure 1. Site location

Originally Peckwater Inn lay to the east of St Edward Street and must have been very large. It is first known about 1220 as a house dimised for ever by St Frideswide's to Rad. Plente and another house to Laur. Plente (Salter SE 120, 238). Later the house was sometimes of Richard Peckwether and Radulph Peckwether his son, praetor of Oxfordshire in the reign of Henry III. In about 1260 the last conveyed it to John Giffard, baron of Brimsfeild, who constituted and converted it into a house for students in the Civil Law. It so continued until the utter decay in Henry VIII's reign (Wood 1889, 171). Dr John Fell (Dean of Christ Church 1660-86) built the east part and half the north part of Peckwater's Inn, which was sometimes an orchard belonging to one of the Cannons. Then he built to the west part (*ibid*, 192).

Loggan's map of 1673 shows the Peckwater Inn buildings in the same location as the later buildings of Peckwater Quad. The earlier map of Agas (1578) shows the north and west range as the same with a shorter east range and an east-west range joining the south end of the west range. The latter map names Peckwater Inn.

During 1974-76, Christ Church re-furbished the basements of Peckwater Quadrangle, involving the removal of c. 300mm from the earth floor, and the digging of some service trenches. Archaeological remains were exposed. These included pits under Staircase 2, severe disturbance from presumed pits under Staircases 3 and 4, and extensive areas of soft organic fill over 1m deep under Staircase 7. The last was assumed to be the backfill of cellars of the seventeenth century quadrangle replaced c. 1705. Stratified pottery was recovered from the last context while pottery was kept from other locations. The pottery salvaged from Staircase 4 included some unusual pitchers and a lobed dish of probable late fifteenth to early sixteenth century date (Durham & Mellor 1977). Rubbish pits of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century date were observed in building operations in Staircase 9 (Sturdy & Sutermeister, 1964-5, 192).

## 2 EXCAVATION STRATEGY.

New concrete floors were to be installed within Rooms I-II, IV-IX in 2005 and within Rooms III, X-XI in Staircase 3 in September 2006 (Fig. 2). The rooms were numbered in the order that they were excavated. The formation level for the floors in Rooms II and IV was 60.74m OD while elsewhere it was 60.88m OD. In addition a new drain was to be installed between Room VIII and Room II. The trench for the drain only penetrated below the formation level for the new floors within Room VIII (here was only previously disturbed material from the creation of an existing manhole) and Room I. The work commenced under a watching brief strategy but it soon became apparent that significant archaeological remains were present. The upper surface of the earth floors was found to be material dumped from the 1974 - 6 excavations for the new concrete floors. This material was removed by the main contractors along with the upper part of the pre-1974 earth floors. This material was too dry and compacted to distinguish any possible stratigraphy. After that a team of archaeologists carried out all excavation. The rooms were numbered in the order they were excavated.

Within Room X the western half was excavated under a watching brief during excavation for a new service in July 2006. The eastern half of the room, along with Room XI, was totally excavated by archaeologists down to the formation level in August 2006.

Conditions were not ideal with variable lighting, restricted space and contractors using some of the rooms during excavation for access.

### 3 THE SITE.

The top of the surviving Second Terrace Gravel deposits were found at the following levels:

Room	m OD	Comment	Room	m OD	Comment
I	c. 60.64	Truncated by pit	VII	60.96	
II	60.91		VIII	-	All truncated and gravel not seen
III	60.99		IX	61.03	
IV	60.98		X	61.28	
V	61.04		XI	61.45	
VI	60.91				

Table 1. Heights on the top of surviving Second Terrace Gravel deposits by room.

Modern street level slopes down from 62.83m OD at 9m west of Room III to 62.63m OD opposite Room VIII to 62.30m OD at the east end of Room VI a fall of 530mm over a distance of 39m.

The phasing is based on the stratigraphic record in association with the pottery assemblage. Paul Blinkhorn's context-specific dates in the pottery analysis have been refined after further examination of the stratigraphical record. Therefore some phasing given below will not relate to the dates in Appendix 1 below. The Phases used below relate to Blinkhorn's pottery phases.

Only the top parts of the majority of pits were excavated as most extended deeper than the level of construction. The construction cuts for the existing basement walls are not shown on Figures 2-5.

#### Phase 1. 10<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2)

Two pits have been positively dated to this phase, pit [107] and [2015]. [107] lay in Room III and was probably circular with a known diameter of 1m east/west. It was filled by mid brown sandy silt with 20% gravel and 15% charcoal (108). It was truncated on the south side by the later pit [73]. Pit [2015] was recorded in the northwest corner of Room XI; this was recorded as measuring 900mm north/south and was cut by pit [2017] on its eastern edge. [2015] was filled by a soft dark brown gravelly silt (2014). A further pit [149] within Room I pre-dates a pit belonging to Phase 3 and therefore could be of 10<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> century date although no dateable artefacts were recovered from the fill of it (147). The pit was heavily truncated by two later pits [146 & 150]. The fill of it was a compact orange-brown and pale grey-brown clayey silt with 30% gravel and some pieces of limestone (147).

#### Phase 2. Early-mid 11<sup>th</sup> century

There were no features or deposits definitely attributable to this phase but see above.

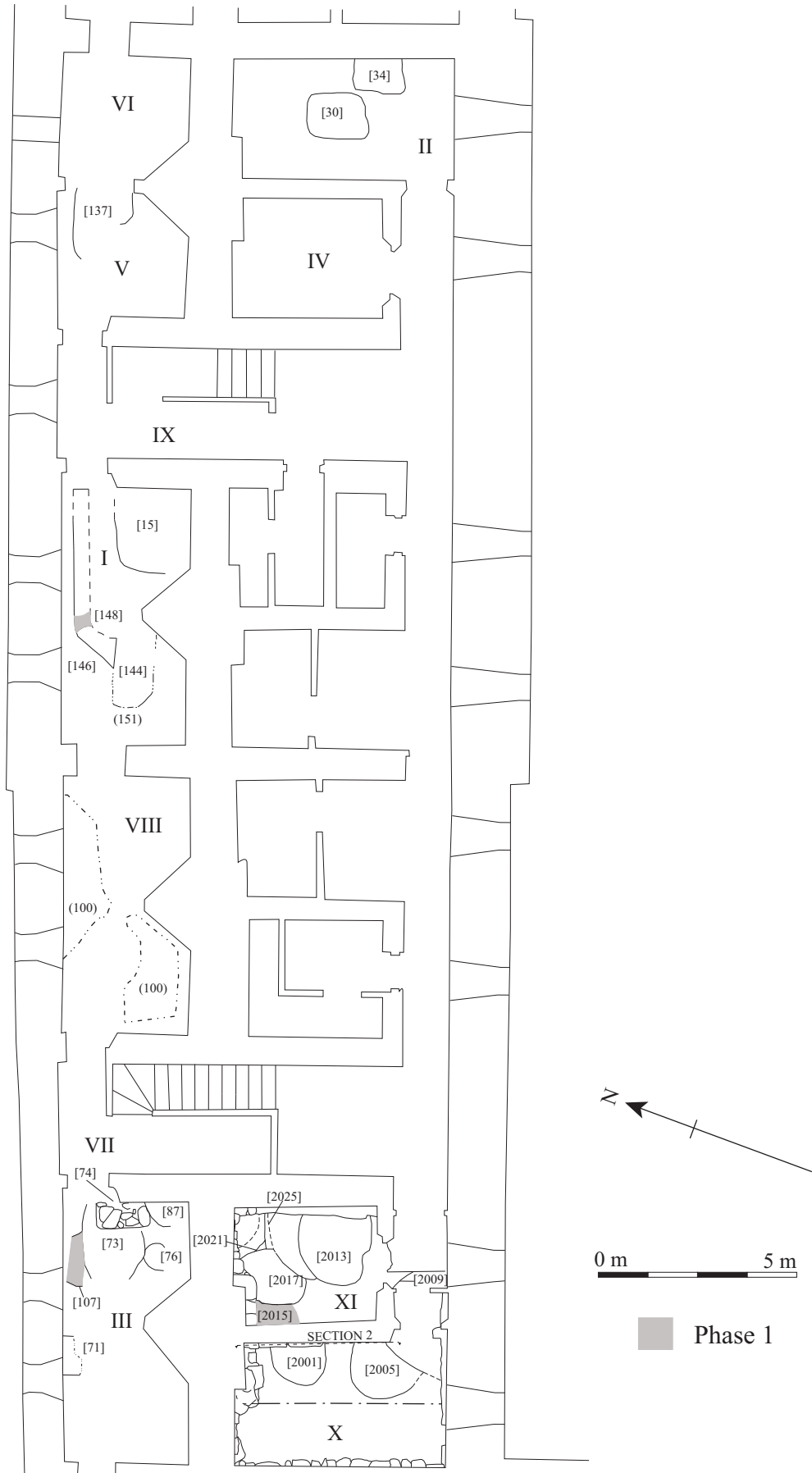


Figure 2. Phase 1- Phase 3 activity



### Phase 3. Mid-late 11<sup>th</sup> century to 12<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 2)

There were three pits in the east side of Room III. The largest [73] was irregular with north/south dimension of 1.25 and in excess of 1.80m east/west. It was filled with compact dark grey-brown deposit with fine gravel, small fragments of limestone and charcoal flecks (72). On the east side of the pit was a short stretch of walling [74]. This measured 1000m north/south and was at least 500mm east/west. It was constructed from rough limestone slabs up to 300x200mm in size with at least three courses. It was impossible to say whether this foundation was cut into the pit or was associated with it as a base for a structure over a cess pit. To the south was a small sub-circular pit [76] of *c.* 540-600mm diameter that was filled with soft, very dark grey-brown deposit with fine gravel and charcoal flecks (75). Close by was a further small sub-circular pit [87] whose diameter cannot be estimated. This was filled with a deposit dark brown-grey in colour and again containing gravel, limestone pieces and flecks of charcoal (86).

The later building within Room III cut a further pit of this period or earlier. Pit [71] was also truncated by the north wall of the present building and was sub-circular with a diameter of *c.* 860mm. The fill (70) was a loose dark brown-grey sediment with frequent small gravel.

Two pits [2001] & [2005] belonging to this period were found cutting into the natural gravels in Room X. Pit [2001] was circular with a diameter of 1.10m. It had near vertical sides and was filled by (2000) a dark brown gravelly silt with occasional lenses of yellow-orange clay. This pit was excavated to its full depth of 60.28m OD so consequently the date for this feature is firmly fixed. Pit [2005] was seen 0.50m to the south of [2001]. This pit was also circular and had a diameter of 1.40m; it was filled by (2004), a dark reddish brown gravelly silt. Cutting the latter pit was another much larger pit [2009] of the same period, which also extended into the corridor between Room X & XI. Pit [2009] measured at least 2.40m across (E/W). It was filled by (2008), a dark brown gravelly silt.

Four pits in Room XI were also assigned to this phase; they were inter-cutting each other and clustered in the northeast corner of the room. Pit [2021] was seen furthest north, no discernable relationship could be recorded between this pit and pits [2017] and [2025]. Pit [2017] was cut by [2025] on its eastern edge; pit [2025] was possibly cut by [2013] on its southeastern side. Pit [2012] was *c.* 1.5m in diameter while [2017] was *c.* 1.2m in diameter. With the exception of pit [2021] the three other pits had the same fill; this was a dark brown gravelly silt. Pit [2021] was filled by (2020) a green-grey sandy silt.

Room VIII had been heavily disturbed by modern services and only the southwest corner contained archaeological deposits. Under the cleaning layer of the trampled earth surface was a layer of dark brown-black gravelly soil (100) containing a single sherd dating to this period and thus the dating is tenuous. Underlying this layer was a compact red-brown gravelly clay (101), which was undated. No interpretation of these layers can be made.

Two pits of this period definitely belong to this phase within Room I. Pit [150] survived 330mm deep with a flat base and 45<sup>0</sup> sides. This was filled by mid grey-brown sandy silt with 30% small and medium sized gravel (149). Pit [15] was a large sub-rectangular pit at least 1.55m wide east/west and more than 1.25m north/south. The upper fill of this pit was a loose grey-brown sandy silt with frequent small limestone chips (11). A further two pits have been tentatively assigned to this phase based primarily on the spacing of them in relation to other features and their stratigraphic relationships. Pit [146] appeared to be sub-circular in shape with a near vertical northeast side. It was filled with pale-mid grey-brown

clay with sandy silt containing 10% fine gravel (145). This pit was cut by a large pit [144] which also cut the fill (151) of another pit further to the west. This filling material was a compact mid-dark grey-brown clayey silt with 10% small gravel and moderate flecks of charcoal. Pit [144] was filled by dark grey-brown silt with less than 1% small gravel (143). Two pits of this period, or possibly earlier, were found in Room II. Pit [30] was sub-rectangular and small at 1.24m north/south and 1.04m east/west. The upper fill was a compact dark grey-brown sediment with numerous small limestone fragments and small gravel (29) overlying a lens of dark grey-brown sediment with frequent very small limestone fragments (31). Close by was another sub-rectangular pit [34] 1.04m long north/south and more than 660mm wide. The upper fill as seen was a compact light yellow-grey sand and gravel with numerous limestone fragments (33). While both of these pits did not contain any dating material in the upper parts that were excavated they pre-date 13<sup>th</sup> century features [28 & 32].

A pit [137] within Room V has been assigned to this phase. Although it did not contain any dateable material and it pre-dates a 13<sup>th</sup> century pit it could still be of this phase or the later Phase 4. This was an irregular pit with an estimated length of 1.6m and a width of *c.* 1.15m. It was only 160mm deep and filled with friable grey-brown sandy silt with 5% fine gravel (138).

#### Phase 4. 13<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 3)

The major remains surviving from this period was a cellared building within Room III. The three walls within the investigation area [50, 51, & 69] were formed of two faces of dressed limestone with a rubble core. The facing stones did not exceed 240mm in length with some as small as 90mm. The wall was very well laid with the stones in an earth matrix. The northern wall [51] was 600mm wide while the other two were *c.* 560mm wide. Two small sondages showed that the walls survived at least 900mm deep in 10 courses. The top of the external face of the north wall had been removed during the construction of the present building while the top of the external face of the east wall [69] had been damaged by later activity. This last wall was not quite at a right angle to the north wall. The internal width of the building was 2.20m.

The cellar had been deliberately filled by soft mid grey-brown sandy silt with 30% mixed gravel and moderate flecks of charcoal (68) part of which was excavated within two sondages (110 & 111). Sealing this infill was a 140mm thick deposit of soft grey-brown sandy silt with 20% fine and small gravel with the occasional small piece of limestone (63). Running alongside the internal face of the west wall was a drain [67] formed from ceramic and stone roof tiles set on their edges to form two sides. These were mostly removed before their function was recognised. It is probable that the base was lined with tiles as well. The drain was *c.* 120-140mm wide and led to an outlet through the west wall [50]. The outlet was just an unlined roughly rectangular hole. There was a further drain through the north wall at a higher level, which was 100-130mm wide.

Lying above this material in the north-west corner of the building was a deposit of very pale grey-brown sandy silt with 10% small gravel some 10mm thick (62). This may have been the remnants of a surface. The drain [67] along the west side of the building pre-dated this surface and was associated with deposit (63). It is likely that the higher drain would have been associated with this later surfacing and a later surface of generally compact but with

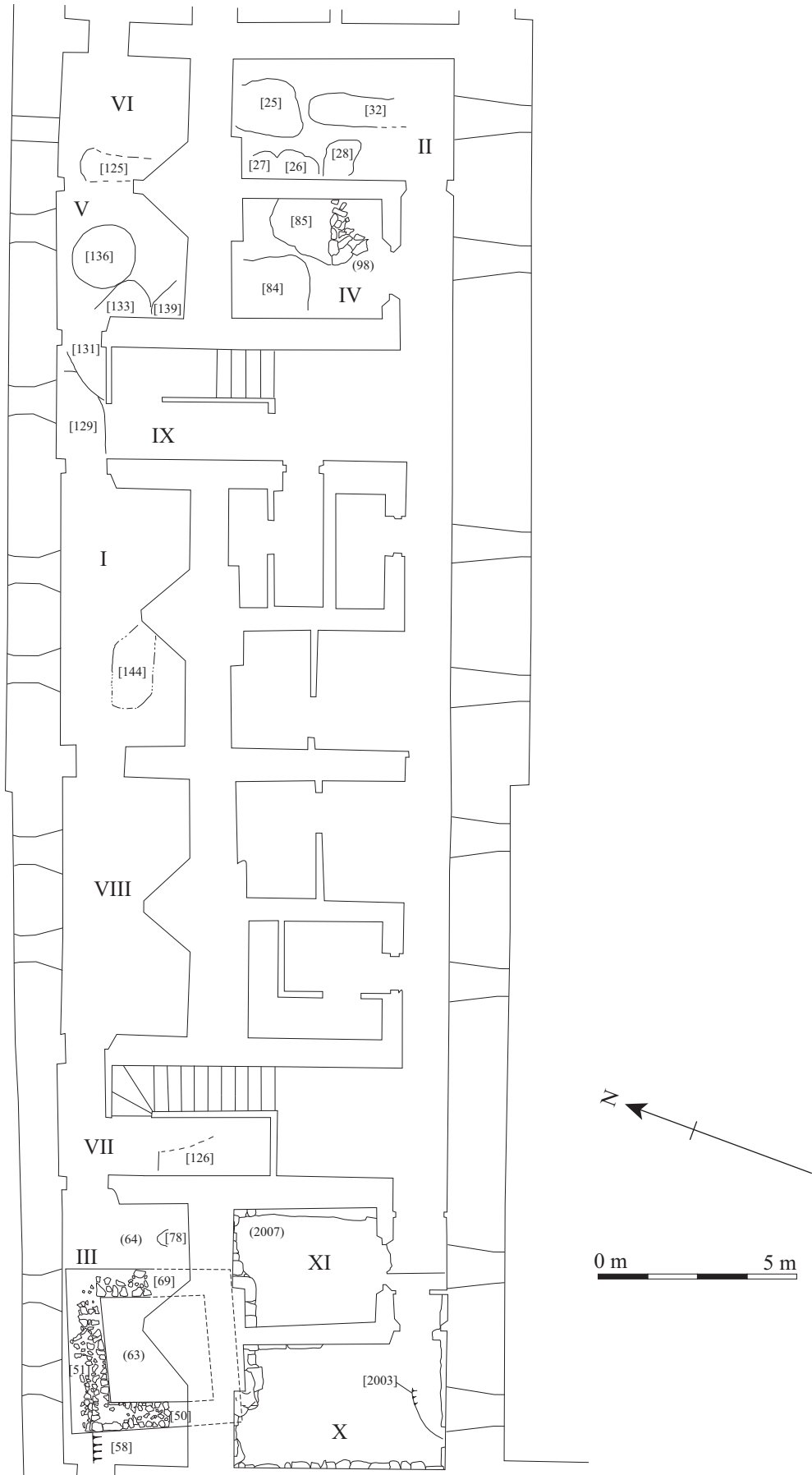


Figure 3. Phase 4 activity

softer areas of pale-mid grey-brown sandy silt with 5-10% fine gravel in the softer areas and 20% gravel elsewhere (59). This surface was slightly more compact east of the drain through wall [51] and it continued outside of the building to the east where it overlaid an earlier surface (61 & 64); see below.

The external deposit for the early phase of the building prior to the infilling of the cellar on the east side must have just been the top of the infilled pits. This was cut by pit [78] filled with deposit (77). The later external deposits to the east after the infilling of the cellar were a mid brown-grey sandy silt with 20% fine gravel and occasional charcoal flecks (66) some 60-70mm thick. This was a make-up layer for a surface of very compact pale red-brown clay with lenses and discontinuous layers of gravel, mixed with pale-mid grey-brown very sandy silt with 30-40% gravel (64, 2007). This was 20-60mm thick, very compact forming a hard surface. This overlaid part of the east wall [69] and there must have been an entrance through this side of the building. It continued to a point level with the east side of the drain through the north wall. A small part of the surface had been patched with gravelly sandy clay and sandy silt (61).

To the west of the building the investigation did not proceed below the level of the drain outlet through the west wall, which was just below the level of proposed impact level. It is possible that there was a ditch along this side, which would have flowed southwards. A cut [58] virtually level with the front of the building was immediately west of the building. The short length seen was straight. This was filled by dark red-brown sandy silt with 30% fine and small gravel containing medium sized limestone and river cobbles (56) seen at the extreme north edge of the cut and overlaid by similar material but without the rubble content (49). The upper fill partly overlaid surviving top of the west wall suggesting this feature was finally filled after the building was demolished. The upper fill contained finds of 13<sup>th</sup> century date, which may indicate that this building did not have a long life or that the 'ditch' was deliberately infilled using material containing residual rubbish.

To the south of the building within Room X was a single pit [2003]. It measured 1.50m across and was filled by (2002), a soft dark brown gravelly silt.

To the east of the building, in Room VII, was a pit [126]. This was heavily truncated by a later pit and therefore its form could not be determined. It was only partly excavated and its upper fill was a friable brown silty sand with 40% mixed gravel and the occasional piece of limestone (89). A pit [144] within Room I has been tentatively assigned to this phase. This feature was ovoid in shape and *c.* 1m wide and at least 1.6m long and was filled by soft dark grey-brown silt with less than 1% small gravel and occasional charcoal flecks (143).

Within Rooms IX, V and VI were a series of pits cut into the natural gravels. A large sub-circular pit [129] with sides at 60-70° was filled with silty sand with 20% gravel and occasional limestone fragments (128). This pit was cut by a further large pit [131] that may belong to a later phase as the dating is only based on one sherd recovered from the silty sand with 30% gravel fill (130). It is possible that it is the same feature as pit [133] in Room V, which appears rectangular in plan. The fill (134) was similar in being a sandy silt with 20% fine gravel and some charcoal.

To the south was part of another pit [139], fill (140). Pit [136] was circular with a diameter of 1.25m and filled by dark brown sandy silt with some clay and 30% fine gravel and charcoal inclusions (135). Again only the upper part was excavated. To the east in Room VI part of a heavily truncated pit [125] was part excavated. This appeared either oval in

shape or linear with a rounded north end. It was at least 760mm wide and at least 1500mm long north/south. It was filled by dark brown-black silty clay (115).

To the south within Room IV, pit [84] may have been a continuation of pit [139] to the north. Pit [84] was sub-rectangular with surviving dimensions of c. 950mm x 1600mm within the room. The fill was firm dark-medium brown silty material with some sand and inclusions of gravel and some charcoal (82). Adjacent to it was another pit [85], probably sub-rectangular in plan. The dimensions surviving within the room were 900 x 1100mm. It was filled with compacted dark brown silty soil with some coarse sand, pebbles and gravel inclusions (83). On its south side was a foundation of limestone blocks at least 1.30m long and 400mm wide with a wider foundation on the west end some 750mm wide. There were at least three courses of limestone blocks ranging in size from 100x150x60mm to 400x400x150mm [98]. This was cut [99] into the natural gravel.

Three pits lay within the west side of Room II. The northernmost [27] was sub-circular and filled with orange to grey-brown gravelly silt incorporating gravel lenses with numerous charcoal flecks and small to medium limestone fragments (22). To the south pit [26] was irregular and filled with similar material although there was less gravel (23). The relationship between the two pits could not be determined. Further south was a further irregular pit [28] filled with compact yellowish/brown-grey material with frequent small gravel and occasional limestone fragments (24). A large sub-rectangular pit [25] c. 1.24m wide and at least 1.42m long was filled with grey-brown sandy silt loam with frequent very small limestone fragments and occasional flecks of charcoal (20). South of this was a linear feature [32] aligned north/south. The north end had rounded corners and the south end could not be traced beyond that shown on Fig. 3. The fill was a compact mass of limestone blocks set in a matrix of small gravel (21). This feature was 700mm wide and at least 2m long. Again the base was below the impact level of the proposed new floor. This feature may have been the remains of a foundation for a building or industrial/craft structure.

#### Phase 5. 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 4)

Very little of this period survived the excavation for the existing basement. Fill (49) of the probable ditch in Room III probably occurred in this period (see above). To the east of this was a demolition layer (52-54) covering the building and the area east of the building. Within Room VII was an ovoid pit [127], which was not excavated. It contained a surviving upper fill of friable brown sandy silt with 20% mixed gravel and occasional charcoal flecks (91). A further large pit [121] was present in Room IX. This was possibly rectangular and was at least 2.60m long and at least 1.10m wide. It had near vertical sides. The fill of it was sandy silt with 25% small-medium gravel, 5% limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks (122). Only the top 150mm of it was excavated. Within room IV was a small part of a pit [96] that cut through a 13<sup>th</sup> century pit. The fill was silty sand (97).

#### Phases 6-7. 15<sup>th</sup> – mid 16<sup>th</sup> century

There were no features or deposits attributable to these phases.

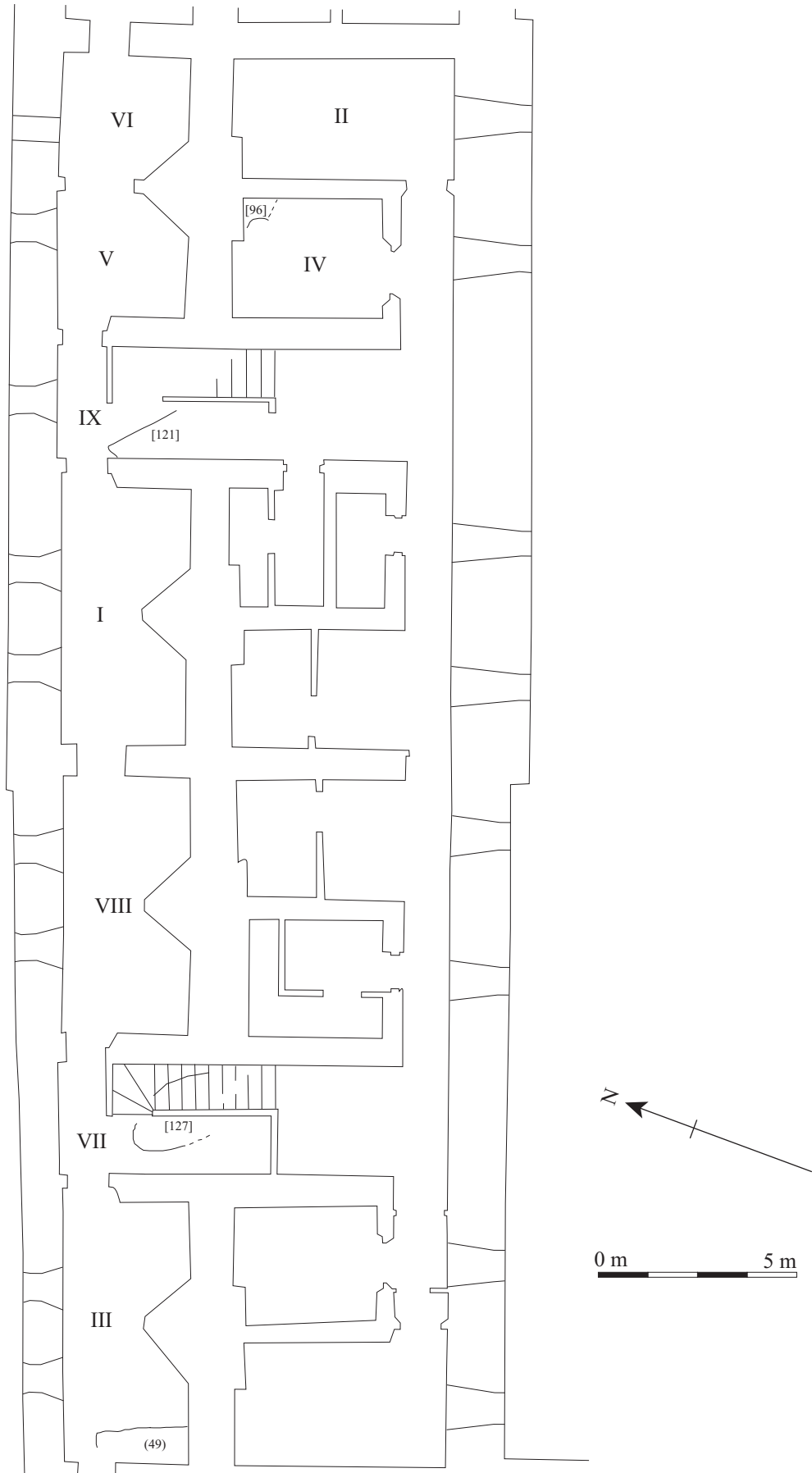


Figure 4. Phases 5 and 8 activity

### Phase 8. Mid 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century

Within Room III was an apparent construction level probably for the previous building represented by a deposit of very compact small and medium stone with crushed stone or stone dust (47) overlaid by slightly gravelly sandy silt deposit for the room's floor (46).

Within Room VI was a deposit of gravel (116 & 117) and dark brown-grey silty clay (115) that had been laid down to level up the subsidence of the underlying pit [124]. This contained earlier material of medieval and early post-medieval date. This layer was subsequently cut by the construction cuts for the present basement walls.

### Present building

Within the east side of Room III a 50-80mm deposit of compact pale-mid grey brown sandy silt with small and small-medium pieces of limestone with 1-2% rounded gravel increasing to 10% in places had been laid down as a levelling deposit. This was overlaid by an intermittent deposit of scorched sandy silt *c.* 3mm thick and charcoal (44), which covered the threshold between Rooms III & VII and represents use within the present building. In Room XI were the remnants of a mortar floor (2011).

The south side of Room V contained a substantial cobbled surface (95). The limestone pieces were laid on their sides and were mostly 160-300mm long and 50-120mm thick with smaller pieces infilling gaps. Larger stones were used as a curb along the north side (illustrated on Fig. 5).

In other rooms the existing earth floors were removed without recording, as they were too compacted and dry to describe.

The footings of the existing building were recorded in Rooms X & XI as cut [2019], which was filled by (2018). This deposit was a dark brown gravelly silt which contained a mix of pottery ranging from the middle to late Saxon through to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The remains of what appeared to be a cream white mortar floor/surface (2011) was recorded in Room XI, it was patchy and only survived in the eastern half of the room.

### Undated (Fig. 5)

A linear feature [13] ran the whole length of Room 1 but was not seen in the adjacent rooms; the room to the west (Room VIII) had been heavily disturbed by services. The surviving width varied between 500 and 660mm and the depth was 140mm. The cut was loosely filled by small and medium sized limestone in a pale grey-brown sandy silt with 30-40% gravel (09). The sherd of late 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century pottery is considered residual. The impression gained was this was the base of a robber trench. The feature had been cut to the north by another linear cut [17]. This had a maximum width of 460mm before it in turn was cut to the north by the construction of the present basement wall [14]. The fill was a compact dark grey-brown very coarse sandy material with small gravel and frequent limestone chips (10). This had been disturbed as it contained intrusive 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This linear feature may be the base of the foundation for the building replaced in *c.* 1707-14 by the present building.

Possibly cutting the first linear feature [13] described above was a pit [16] that was sub-rectangular. The width is estimated at *c.* 800mm and it was filled by loose dark grey-brown sandy silty loam (06).

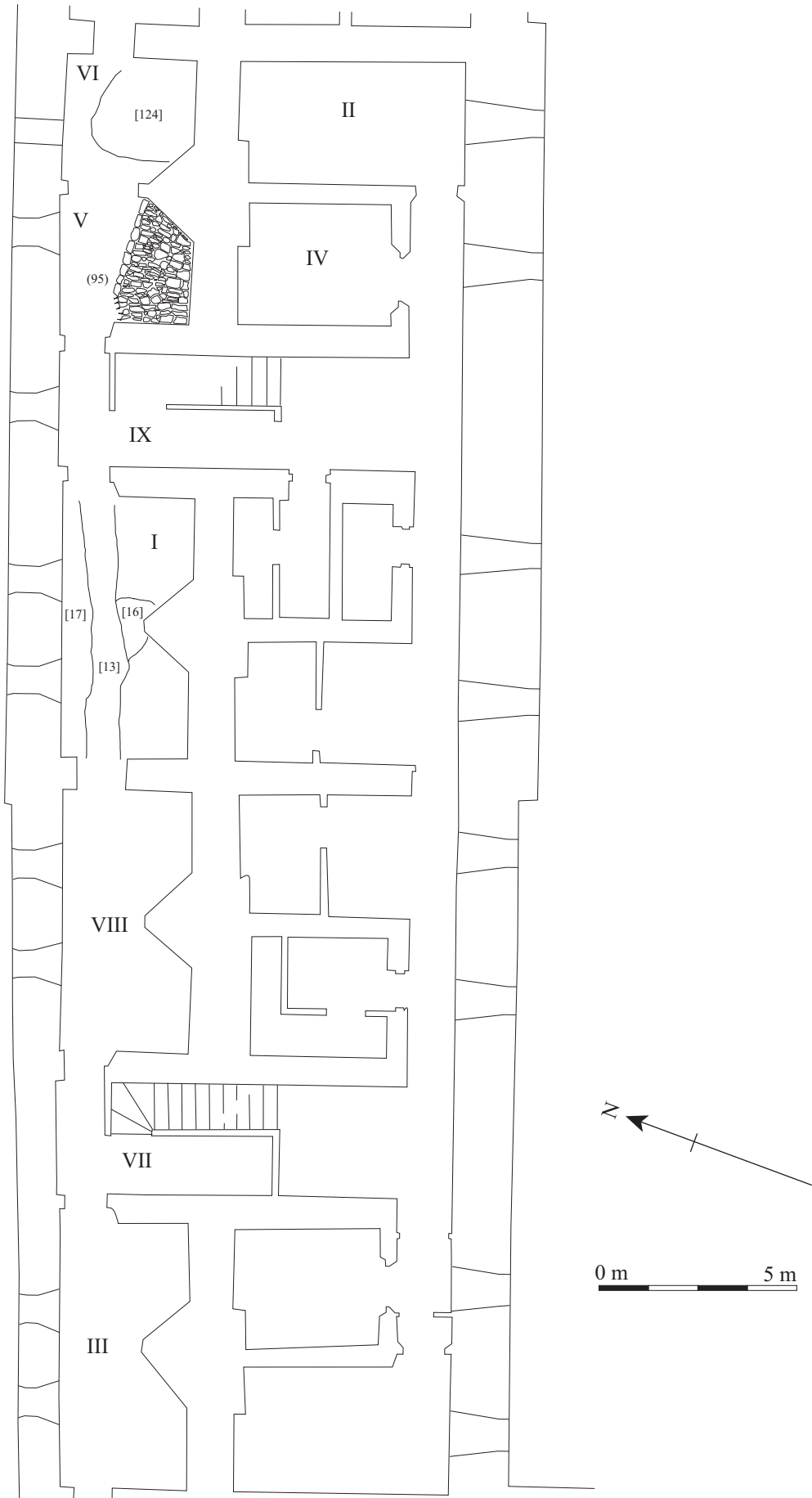


Figure 5. Undated activity



A large pit [124] in Room VI was present. It was sub-rectangular and was at least 1.8m long and wide. It was filled with grey-brown sandy silt with some limestone fragments and charcoal flecks (123).

#### 4 THE FINDS

##### Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 1,021 sherds with a total weight of 15,841g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 9.02. The range of ware types present indicate that there was virtually unbroken activity at the site from the late Saxon period onwards, but much of the pottery from that period is redeposited, indicating that there was considerable disturbance of the strata of that date

##### **Analytical Methodology**

The pottery was initially bulk-sorted and recorded on a computer using DBase IV software. The material from each context was recorded by number and weight of sherds per fabric type, with featureless body sherds of the same fabric counted, weighed and recorded as one database entry. Feature sherds such as rims, bases and lugs were individually recorded, with individual codes used for the various types. Decorated sherds were similarly treated. In the case of the rimsherds, the form, diameter in mm and the percentage remaining of the original complete circumference was all recorded. This figure was summed for each fabric type to obtain the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE).

The terminology used is that defined by the Medieval Pottery Research Group's Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998) and to the minimum standards laid out in the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-roman Ceramics (MPRG2001). All the statistical analyses were carried out using a Dbase package written by the author, which interrogated the original or subsidiary databases, with some of the final calculations made with an electronic calculator. All statistical analyses were carried out to the minimum standards suggested by Orton (1998-9, 135-7).

##### **Fabric**

The pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

- OXB: Middle to Late Saxon Oxford Ware. 1 sherd, 15g, EVE = 0.05.
- OXR: St. Neots Ware, AD850-1100. 70 sherds, 1084g, EVE = 1.94.
- OXZ: Stamford ware, 850-1100. 7 sherds, 50g, EVE = 0.45.
- OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 249 sherds, 3,689g, EVE = 2.15.
- OXBFB: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050 – 1400. 35 sherds, 642g, EVE = 0.37.
- OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 534 sherds, 7,818g, EVE = 3.36.
- OXBK: Medieval Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1350. 1 sherd, 10g, EVE = 0.
- OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 101 sherds, 1,974g, EVE = 0.45.
- OX68: Potterspury ware, Late 13th - 17th century. 1 sherd, 8g, EVE = 0.04.
- OXBN: Tudor Green Ware, late 14th century - c. 1500. 1 sherd, 1g, EVE = 0.02.
- OXST: Frechen Stoneware, AD1550 – 1700. 1 sherd, 11g, EVE = 0.02.
- OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 4 sherds, 270g.
- OXCE: Tin-glazed Earthenware, 1613 – 1800. 3 sherds, 26g.
- WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, mid 19th - 20th C. 3 sherds, 17g.

A total of six sherds (120g) of residual Romano-British pottery was also noted. In addition, the following, not included in the Oxford type-series, also occurred:

*London ware* c. 1150-1350 (Pearce et al., 1985). Sandy ware, common in the City of London and in small quantities throughout the Home Counties and distant locations such as Exeter, King's Lynn, Ipswich, Northampton, Hereford, Gloucester and the east coast of Scotland (ibid. 6-7 and figs. 4 and 5). Source unknown, but likely to be close to the City of London. The jug was by far the most common form, and these were often highly decorated, sometimes copying imported pottery from Northern France (e.g. ibid. pl. 2).

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. The given dates have been adjusted with reference to the stratigraphic matrix.

The range of fabric types is typical of other sites in late Saxon and medieval Oxford. The sherds of London ware are a rare find in the city, but increasing amounts of the material have been noted in recent years at other places in the Thames Valley, such as Reading.

### Chronology

The range of relatively well-dated wares at the site allows the following phases, based on the known start-dates of the wares in the city of Oxford (Mellor 1994). The phasing, and pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds and EVE, is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Ceramic phasing: pottery occurrence per phase by number and weight of sherds and EVE*

Phase	Defining wares	Date	No Sherds	Wt. Sherds	EVE	Mean Wt
CP1	OXR, OXZ	10thC	20	348	0.76	17.4g
CP2	OXAC	E-M 11 <sup>th</sup> C	0	0	0	0
CP3	OXBF, OXY	L11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> C	507	8338	4.08	16.4g
CP4	OXAM	13 <sup>th</sup> C	326	4080	2.95	12.5g
CP5	OXAM*	14-15 <sup>th</sup> C	20	316	0.34	15.8g
CP6	OXST, OXBN	15 <sup>th</sup> C	10	192	0.20	19.2g
CP7	OXAM*	L15 <sup>th</sup> – M16 <sup>th</sup> C	18	353	0.19	19.6g
CP8	OXDR	M16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> C	8	192	0	24.0g
CP9	OXCE	17 <sup>th</sup> C	3	42	0	14.0g
Totals			912	13861g	8.52	

\*Based on fabric and form

The data shows that there was more or less continual activity at the site from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The peak of pottery deposition occurs in the late 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and there is very little stratified pottery dating to before that time, although the effect of the construction of the cellars at the college may well have skewed the data by removing all but the deepest earth-cut features. Certainly, the amount of redeposited St. Neots and Stamford wares (see below, Table 3) indicate that there had been substantial late Saxon activity at the site. The few CP1 features that were intact produced fairly large, well-preserved sherds.

The mean sherd weights reflect the nature of the assemblage i.e. all the context specific groups comprise sherds in reasonably good condition.

### Pottery Occurrence

The occurrence of the major fabrics per ceramic phase is shown in Table 3. It shows that there is a degree of residuality in some phases. In CP3, over 4% of the pottery is residual late Saxon wares, and in CP4, these represent nearly 8% of the assemblage and nearly 5% during CP5. In CP6 and CP7, early medieval pottery (OXAC and OXY) makes up a large proportion of each assemblage. The amount of residual pottery rises to nearly 48% in CP8, although the small assemblage size is doubtless a factor; a single Roman sherd accounts for over 20% of the pottery by weight from this phase.

There seems little doubt therefore that there has been considerable disturbance of the late Saxon and early medieval deposits at the site by late medieval and later activity, with the construction of the college cellars undoubtedly the main factor. The fact that all the Roman pottery from the site was found in deposits of CP4 or later would seem to support this.

*Table 3: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase by fabric type, expressed as a percentage of the total wt per phase, major fabrics only*

Phase	OXR	OXZ	OXAC	OXBF	OXY	OXAM	OXDR	OXCE	Total Wt
CP1	97.7%	2.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	348g
CP3	4.0%	0.2%	20.6%	4.5%	70.7%	-	-	-	8338g
CP4	7.6%	0.3%	36.5%	3.5%	31.7%	18.8%	-	-	4080g
CP5	0	4.7%	8.5%	11.4%	11.4%	59.4%	-	-	316g
CP6	0	0	18.8%	0	32.8%	42.7%	-	-	192g
CP7	0	0	13.9%	0	0	84.7%	-	-	353g
CP8	1.0%	0	0	0	3.6%	19.3%	52.1%	-	192g
CP9	0	0	0	0	0	0	42.9%	57.1%	42g
								Total	3297g

### The Assemblages

The range of fabrics from this site is generally comparable with those from other contemporary sites in the city of Oxford. There was virtually unbroken activity at the site from the late Saxon period to the present day, although the earliest deposits appear likely to have been disturbed by later activity. It is curious that there are no groups of pottery which can be directly assigned to the 50 years or so before the Norman Conquest (ceramic phase 2). This may be due to several possible factors. The area of the late Saxon town may have been abandoned at that time, or it may be that all strata of that date were removed by later activity. Certainly, OXAC, the defining fabric for CP2, is plentiful in later phases, especially CP6 and CP7, when it was largely residual, so it may have been activity at that time which removed any deposits of CP2 date.

Previous excavations at Peckwater Quadrangle produced medieval pottery, including a number of near-complete Brill/Boarstall jugs, some of which had virtually unique lettering and maker's marks (Durham and Mellor 1977). A near-complete 'Tudor Green' lobed cup

also occurred. This assemblage has not produced anything like that, although Brill/Boarstall ware and Tudor Green ware were both noted.

Very little pottery occurred which could be related to the replacement of the Quadrangle in 1705. A few sherds of 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery were noted, but these formed just a tiny part of the assemblage.

The late Saxon and earlier medieval vessel types were entirely limited to jars, bowls and jugs, apart from a Saxo-Norman crucible fragment and the stems of two early medieval lamps in fabric OXY. The later medieval assemblage was a little more varied with a few cup and mug fragments present, but this is to be expected, and, generally, this is an assemblage which could have come from anywhere in Oxford, and has no characteristics which reflect the nature of its place of deposition.

*Ceramic Phase 1, 10<sup>th</sup> century. 20 sherds, 348g, EVE = 0.76.*

The stratified late Saxon assemblage, although small, was well-preserved. It appears likely, as noted above, that a lot of late Saxon features were disturbed by later activity.

The assemblage was dominated by St. Neots ware, as is typical of late Saxon Oxford, along with a few sherds of Stamford ware. The St. Neots assemblage comprised mainly jars (88.2%), with the rest bowls. All the Stamford ware was glazed bodysherds, probably from pitchers.

*Ceramic Phase 3, late 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> century. 507 sherds, 8,338g, EVE = 4.08*

This is the largest phase assemblage, with most of the pottery (477 sherds, 7964g, EVE = 3.72) occurring in area X (CONTEXT 2000+). It is again typical of sites in the period in Oxford, being dominated by Oxford ware (70.7%), along with smaller quantities of Cotswolds-type ware (20.6%), and a little East Wiltshire ware (4.5%), St. Neots ware (4.0%) and Stamford ware (0.2%).

The Oxford ware assemblage is dominated by jars (EVE = 1.70), with bowls (EVE = 0.04) and glazed tripod pitchers (EVE = 0.24) very much in the minority. Some of the Oxford ware jars were exceptionally large, but at least one had sooting on the outer surface below the shoulder, a typical pattern for a vessel which had been heated rather than damaged in an accidental conflagration. The only other vessel type was represented by the stem of a pedestal lamp. The Cotswolds ware assemblage consisted of jars and bowls, with the former by far the most common. Two unusual sherds East Wiltshire ware sherds were noted. A rim, probably from a pitcher, had an upright, slashed rim with an internal lip, and another, probably also from a pitcher, had a slashed, applied collar on the outside of the rim. The rest of the assemblage consisted of jars.

*Ceramic Phase 4, 13<sup>th</sup> century. 326 sherds, 4,080g, EVE = 2.95*

This phase sees the introduction of Brill/Boarstall ware, which leads to a decline in the use of OXY, which in this phase represents 31.7% of the pottery. However, Cotswolds ware is much more common than in the previous phase, making up 36.5%. This could be due to changes in the pottery supply to the city, but it seems likely that residuality is a factor. Certainly, St. Neots ware, which is residual by this time, nearly doubles its occurrence when compared to the preceding phase. East Wiltshire ware drops slightly to 3.5%, as perhaps

would be expected. These, along with a few sherds of Stamford ware, including a crucible rim, and three sherds of Roman pottery, were the only types present.

All the Brill sherds are from glazed jugs, as is typical of the period, with the other fabric assemblages comprising jars and bowls, apart from two rimsherds from glazed Oxford ware tripod pitchers.

#### *Ceramic Phases CP5 – CP9, 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century*

All the remaining phase groups are small, and consisted of a few sherds of contemporary wares along with residual material. In many cases, the residual material made up around half the assemblage.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

Six sherds of Roman pottery were found along the whole length of the investigation. While it is not uncommon for Roman pottery to be found on Oxford sites the small assemblage represents 0.58% of the total pottery recovered during this investigation. Although this percentage is skewed due to the lack of later post-medieval deposits normally encountered on Oxford sites it is notable when compared with some other recently excavated sites (Telecom House, Paradise Street – 0.78% after ignoring 17<sup>th</sup> century and later pottery; Codrington Library, All Souls College - 0%; Royal Mail Depot, Becket Street – 0%). In addition excavations along St Aldates have only produced one or two sherds of this date (Dodd, 2003). While residual Roman sherds of pottery were found at St Aldates Church the number is unknown. A number of residual Roman sherds were also found at All Saints Church (ibid, 336-7). While the total number is not stated it appears there could have been more than the usual number. Roman coins were said by Major Evans to have been found c. 1918 in Bear Lane just immediately east of this excavation during the laying of Post Office cables. In addition a sherd of Samian ware was found nearby in 1965 in a medieval pit in the coal-yard at Christ Church (Sturdy & Sutermeister 1964-5). A further (or the same) sherd of Samian ware is reported from a medieval pit during excavations in Blue Boar Quad, Christ Church in 1965 (Wilcox & Hunt, 1966, 199).

It is tempting to speculate that the site of a Roman building/settlement lies in the area between Peckwater Quad and All Saints Church and that the gravel terrace further south was used for agriculture. This would lie at the end of the Second Gravel Terrace with the First Gravel Terrace to the south and west. While a settlement is known at Mansfield College and probably extends northwards into the Science Area (Booth & Hayden, 2000), the Roman tiles found at Queen Street (Hassall *et al*, 1989, 90, 196 & fig, 43) are more likely to have come from a closer source.

The site is in occupation during the late Saxon period with at least two pits dating to this period. Other pottery of this date in residual contexts covering the whole length of the excavation suggests that the occupation levels have been extensively disturbed by later activity as have been deposits of the early-middle 11<sup>th</sup> century. However the lack of any pits or finds of the early-mid 11<sup>th</sup> century may be indicative of an abandonment of this part of Oxford perhaps the result of the documented sack by the Danes in 1009. The following phase of mid-late 11<sup>th</sup> century-12<sup>th</sup> century is characterised by several pits. It is unknown whether this is a continued part of the localised retraction of settlement seen elsewhere and the land was only used for pit digging for cess and rubbish disposal (Dodd, 2003, 51 & 59). It is possible that there were buildings between the pit clusters whose foundations have not

survived later activity and the excavation of the basement. One pit [73] of this period with the probable associated masonry foundation [74] is similar to a late 11-12<sup>th</sup> century feature seen at Codrington Library, All Souls College (JMHS 2004, 9 & fig. 17) and also to one in Room IV in Phase 4.

In the western part of the excavation the pit digging continued into the early 13<sup>th</sup> century before the construction of the cellared building seen in Room III. Surprisingly this building appears to have had a short life. The cellar is infilled early in its use, and the presence of the successive drains indicates the use of this room fronting what was Little Jury Lane suggest that the building was a shop. No artefacts survive to indicate what activity was carried out here. The eastern part of the room just inside the entrance from the east had a heavier duty floor. Externally to the east, there was a very compact yard surface laid after the cellar had been infilled. The ground floor part of the building may have extended into Rooms X and XI where there is space for a similar sized second room before the Phase 4 pit further back. It is likely that the building occupied the west side of what was later known as Soler Hall with the ditch on its west side being on the boundary between that and corner plot on Little Jury Lane and St Edward Street or Vine Hall Lane. The ditch did not continue south of the cellared part into Room X. This may be explained by it only being need for the drain from the ground floor above the cellar and probably from a drain out of a rear room. This would have flowed into a roadside drain on Little Jury Lane.

The lack of pits in Room VIII suggests that there might have been another building here. The pits in Rooms VII and IX and further east show that the whole street frontage was not built up during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and that yards existed adjacent to the street. The possible foundation [32] within Room II in Phase 4 is probably associated with a minor structure possibly for industrial/craft activity. The boundary between the later Soler Hall holding and the property to the east lies just to the east of the investigation area.

Little can be said for later activity on this street frontage as the basements have destroyed all but deep pits. The lack of pits would seem to indicate that most of the frontage was occupied by buildings. Alternatively the lack of pits of 15<sup>th</sup> century date may reflect a phenomenon seen in many towns where night cartage was introduced after the Black Death (Taylor-Moore 2007, 14).

The linear cut [13] in Room I may have been a robber trench for a Peckwater Inn building (perhaps replaced by Fell's rebuilding) and the later cut [17] the remains of a robber trench for the building pre-dating the existing one. These, plus the 13<sup>th</sup> century building, show that the road alignment has remained practically the same since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The rear of the present building has subtle changes of angle to accommodate the very slightly curving nature of Bear Lane.

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**Appendix 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type**

Cntxt	OXB		OXR		OXZ		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXBK		London		OXAM		OX68		OXBN		OXST		OXAM*		OXDR		OXCE		WHEW		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
0			2	49			7	73	1	13	5	52																				U/S	
1							4	141			1	17					3	116														U/S	
2			1	16			4	64	2	54	6	95			2	97	2	40														19thC	
5			2	27					2	14	2	27																				CP3	
9											1	21																				CP3	
10			2	25			1	10	1	13	60						3	111							1	2			3	17	19thC		
11					1	15	2	21			10	122																				CP3	
19							1	9	1	26	4	24					3	73														CP5	
20					1	4	2	27			2	15					9	98														CP4	
21							1	9			3	26																				CP4	
22									1	10	3	15					2	24														CP4	
23											2	20					1	3														CP4	
24									1	11	3	33					2	25														CP4	
40																	1	30														CP8	
45																											1	18	2	24		CP9	
46											1	11																				CP8	
49			2	49	1	1			2	54	2	32																				CP4	
52			1	2													1	7								1	76					CP8	
53			1	2													1	8														CP4	
54							3	54	1	16																						CP4	
59											1	44																				CP4	
64																	1	7														CP4	
65											1	15																				CP3	
66											1	5																				CP4	
69											1	4																				CP4	
72							8	38			10	63																				CP4	
75			1	29							1	5					1	48														CP4	
77																	2	110														CP4	
80			1	11			2	37			7	72	1	10			2	35														U/S	
81			1	4			3	45	1	40	3	30																				CP3	
82									1	5	1	17					1	16														CP4	
83			2	7			4	168			26	243																				CP4	
88							1	7									2	92														CP5	
89							1	27									1	8														CP4	
90																	1	41															U/S

Cntxt	OXB		OXR		OXZ		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXBK		London		OXAM		OX68		OXBN		OXST		OXAM*		OXDR		OXCE		WHEW		Date				
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt					
92							1	16			1	48					2	63									1	152					U/S				
93										1	7	15	165					3	35							1	4						U/S				
97																	1	14															CP5				
100												1	8																				CP3				
105												1	7																				CP3				
108			3	54																														CP1			
110							1	26				1	28				4	19																CP4			
111												2	29				1	33																CP4			
112												2	7																					CP8			
115			1	2	1	3											1	6																CP4			
117																											1	24							CP8		
118							3	49									14	299							1	5									CP7		
119							4	29				1	14				3	21			1	1												U/S			
122					1	15	1	11	1	10	3	12					1	16	1	8														CP5			
128							5	76				1	16				1	22																	CP4		
130																	1	19																	CP4		
132							2	36				5	63				2	82				1	11												CP6		
134												1	4				1	1																		CP4	
135							1	3									1	2																		CP4	
140							1	6									1	9																		CP4	
149									3	14	2	28																								CP3	
2000			2	18					4	118	2	37																								CP3	
2002							10	175			4	37					10	250																		CP4	
2004			1	2			6	84	5	67	34	341																								CP3	
2007			8	92	1	4	50	644	1	6	66	648					7	43																		CP4	
2008			1	13			19	337	1	40	23	352																									CP3
2012			4	87			91	1162	2	8	209	3618																									CP3
2014			16	286	1	8																															CP1
2016			9	183								3	198																								CP3
2018	1	15	9	126								2	22				2	11																			CP4
2020							1	53				9	184																								CP3
2022							1	40	3	116	38	669																									CP3
2024							1	22				8	215																								CP3
Total	1	15	70	1084	7	50	249	3689	35	642	534	7818	1	10	2	97	101	1974	1	8	1	1	1	11	3	11	4	270	2	24	3	17					

\*Brill/Boarstall 'Tudor Green' type, AD1475-1600