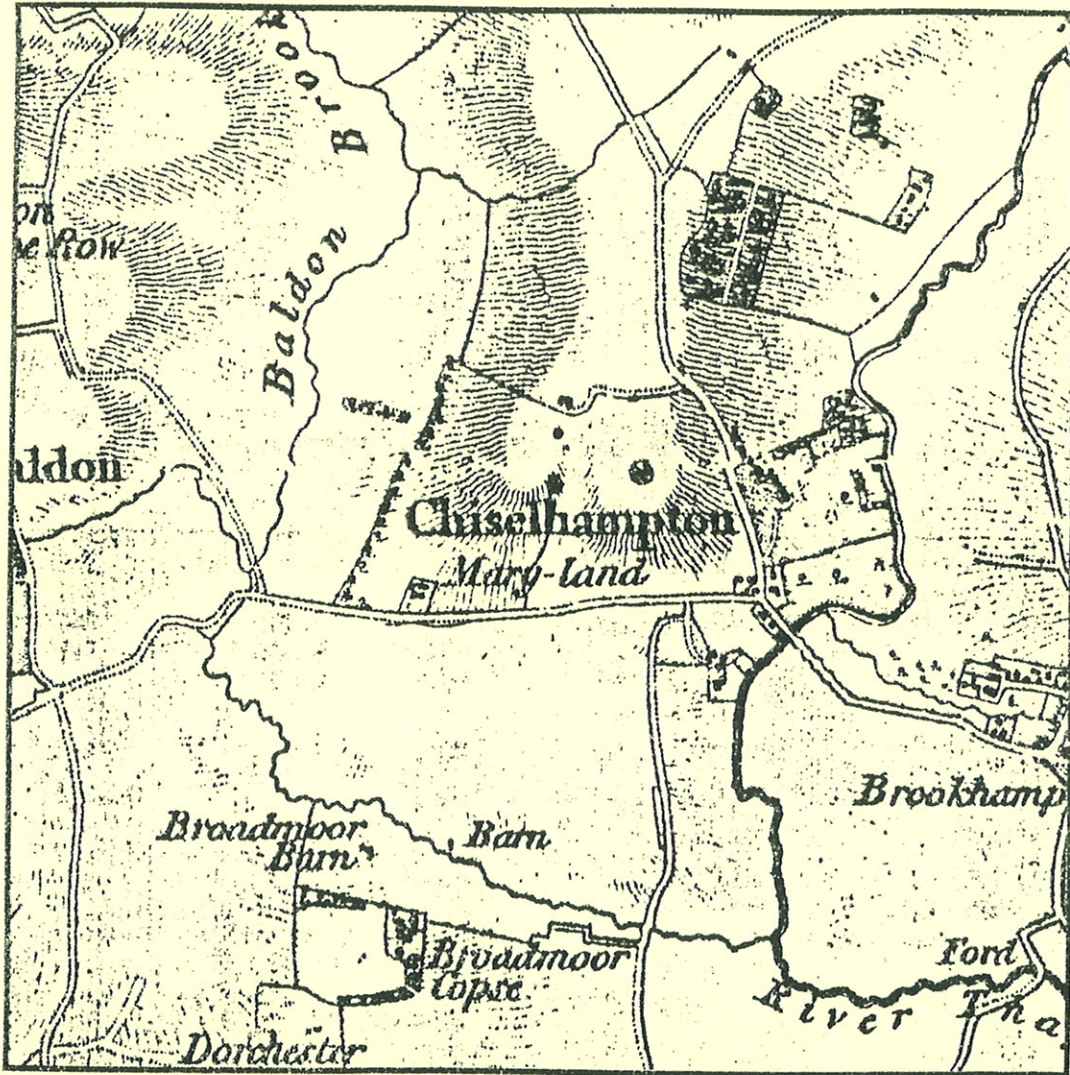


CAMOYS COURT CHISLEHAMPTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



CAMOYS COURT, CHISELHAMPTON



INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a small scale archaeological evaluation at Camoys Court, Chislehampton, Oxfordshire. The work was undertaken between 11th and 13th of January 1993.

Three trenches were positioned on the E side of Camoys Court; within the area of a proposed house extension, between the 19th-century E wing and a water filled N/S ditch.

TOPOGRAPHY (see location map)

The moated site of Camoys Court, PRN 1923, (SU 59229858) is situated adjacent to the river Thame in Chiselhampton. It has a fragmented pentagonal ditch enclosing an area of approximately 1.2 hectares. The eastern arm appears to have been formed by the river Thame. A fishpond adjacent to the river is probably contemporary with the moated enclosure. The moat is most well defined along its southern arm. Situated on the S side of the house it probably became a feature of the garden.

The house occupies a high area at the S end of the moated enclosure. The area of garden to the S and W of the house is level ground but 13m E of the house the ground slopes down fairly steeply to a wet open ditch/drain (showing as a curving drain on the OS map). This ditch although appearing to be associated with the moat, it was dug c.1960s (information from the owner Mr. Hall). The line of the ditch is represented on the 1st edition OS map (1876) by a boundary/fence delimiting the area to the E of the house. In front of the house on the N side the ground slopes down to a pond.

In the floodplain of the river Thame to the E, the geology consists of alluvial deposits, but the house itself is situated on the very edge of the floodplain on an area of Kimmeridge Clay.

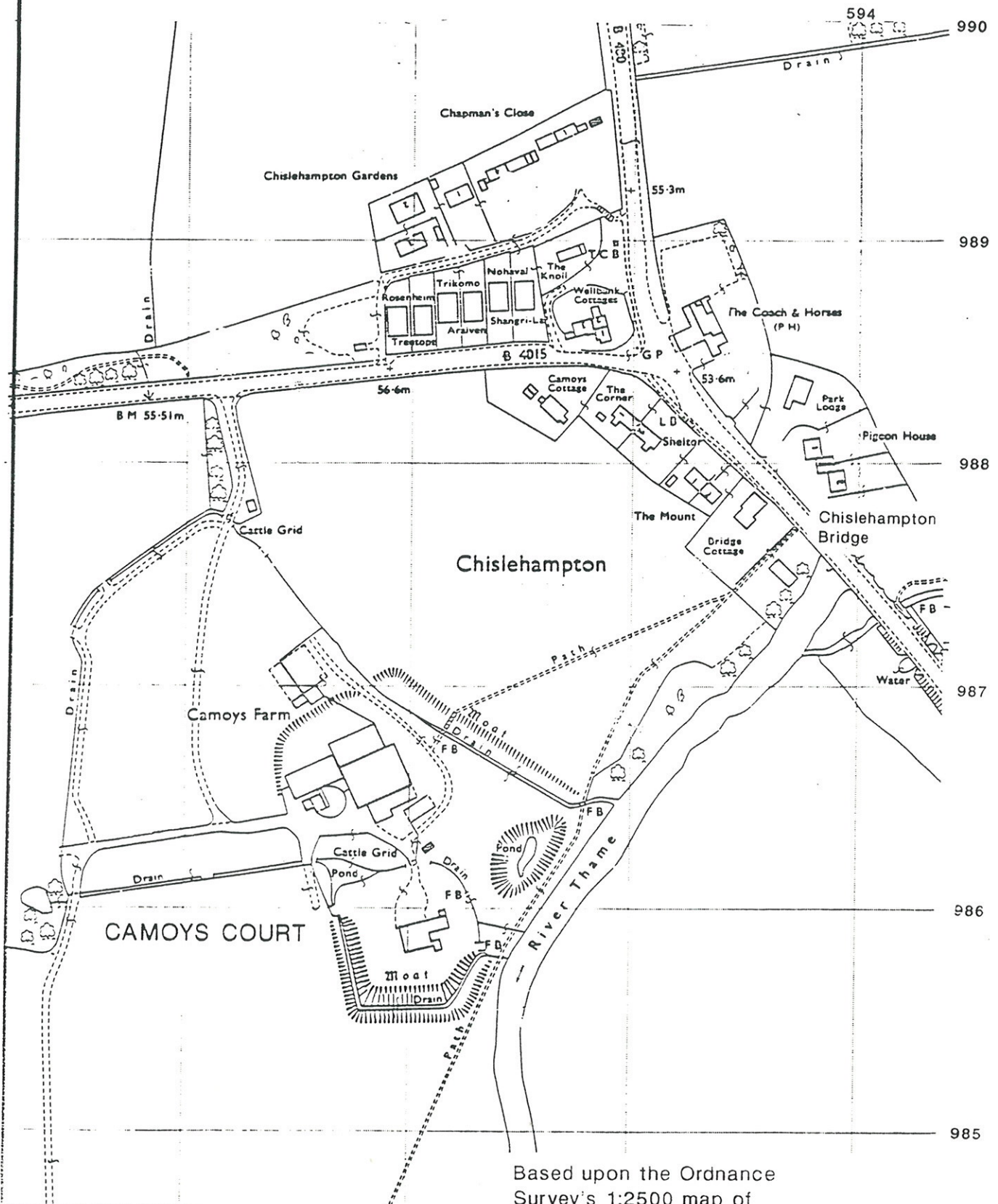
ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A royal 'Licence to Crenellate' was granted in 1318 (VCH VII, 1962). The present building of Camoys Court incorporates part of what is presumably the chamber block of a large 14th-century medieval hall house with a 'garderobe tower' attached to the SE corner. Associated domestic buildings were probably situated to the W; now partly occupied by the '17th-century' wing.

STRATEGY (see trench location plan)

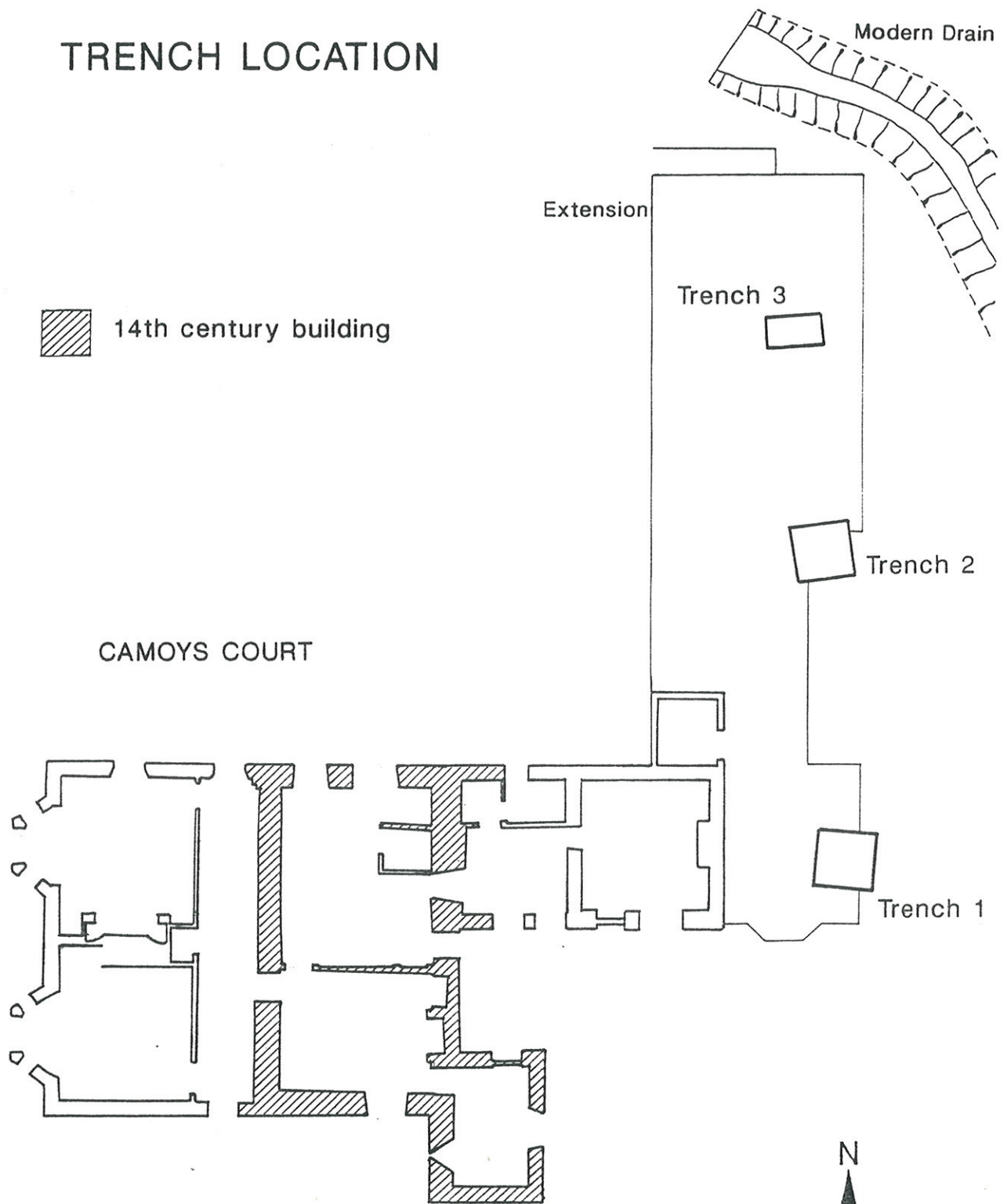
Three trenches were hand dug to establish the character, extent, condition and date of any archaeological remains. Trench 1 and 2 were 2.0m x 2.0m square; Trench 3 being 2.0m long and 1.25m wide. The area of the trenches represented a 7% sample of the proposed development area.

LOCATION MAP FOR CAMOYS COURT.



Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:2500 map of 1972 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

TRENCH LOCATION



Finds were kept from all layers excavated. The topsoil and overburden were removed down to the level of the archaeological horizons. The aim of the work was to be able to interpret the archaeological remains yet cause the least disturbance to the buried archaeology.

RESULTS

Various service pipes were encountered during the excavation. A 0.02m metal pipe was located in all three trenches. A black plastic PVC water pipe, leading N to the greenhouse, was encountered in Trench 1 and 2. In Trench 1 a sewer pipe cut through the W side of the trench.

These service pipes in Trenches 1 and 2 restricted the area which could be examined for archaeological deposits.

Trench 1 was positioned on the highest ground adjacent to the E wing. The ground surface here was 0.18m higher than Trench 2 and 0.60m higher than Trench 3, however the natural undisturbed subsoil in Trench 1 was 0.08m lower than in Trench 2.

TRENCH 1 (see trench plan and section)

Trench 1, (2.0m square), was located 3m E of the present building, 12m E of the main 14th century and 10.50m NE of the 'Garderobe tower'.

The turf and topsoil 1/1 overlaid an ash and charcoal layer 1/2. Below 1/2 a silty layer 1/3 was revealed which contained 60% limestone rubble and mortar. To the W layer 1/3 overlaid a layer of undetermined depth 1/4. To the E it overlaid another ash and charcoal layer 1/8.

Below 1/8 a layer 1/9 contained 50% limestone rubble and sloped down to the E.

The bulk of the red clay roof tiles (59 fragments) occurred in contexts 1/4, 1/9, and 1/10.

Layer 1/9 overlaid a layer 1/10 which produced red roof tiles and a coxcomb crested glazed ridge tile. This layer sloped down to the E. Below this a thin layer 1/11 also sloped down to the E and sealed two possible ditches 1/12 and 1/14. Ditch 1/12 contained a tile fragment which can only be dated to some time within the medieval period. Some of the finds from 1/10 and 1/11 had a distinctive greenish sandy silt encrusted on them, which was also witnessed in Trench 3 (layer 3/7).

Ditch 1/14 occurred 0.90m below the present ground surface. The 'ditches' 1/12 and 1/14 appear to be running parallel orientated N-S. Due to the small area and rising water table it was difficult to be sure of their exact nature. It may be significant that these features appear to be running along the top edge of a slope.

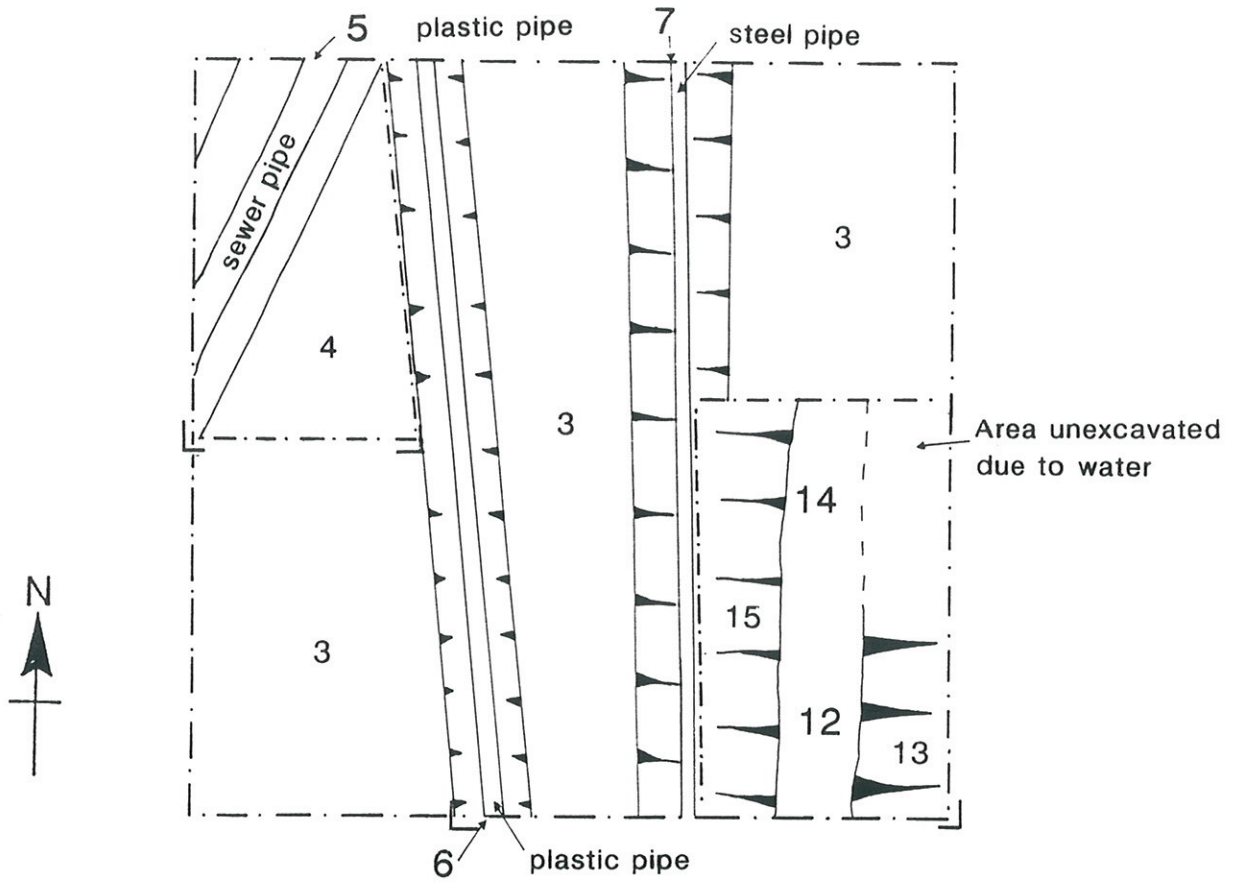
TRENCH 2 (see section drawing)

Trench 2, (2.0m square), was located 4.50m from the present store building and 13m NE of the 14th-century building.

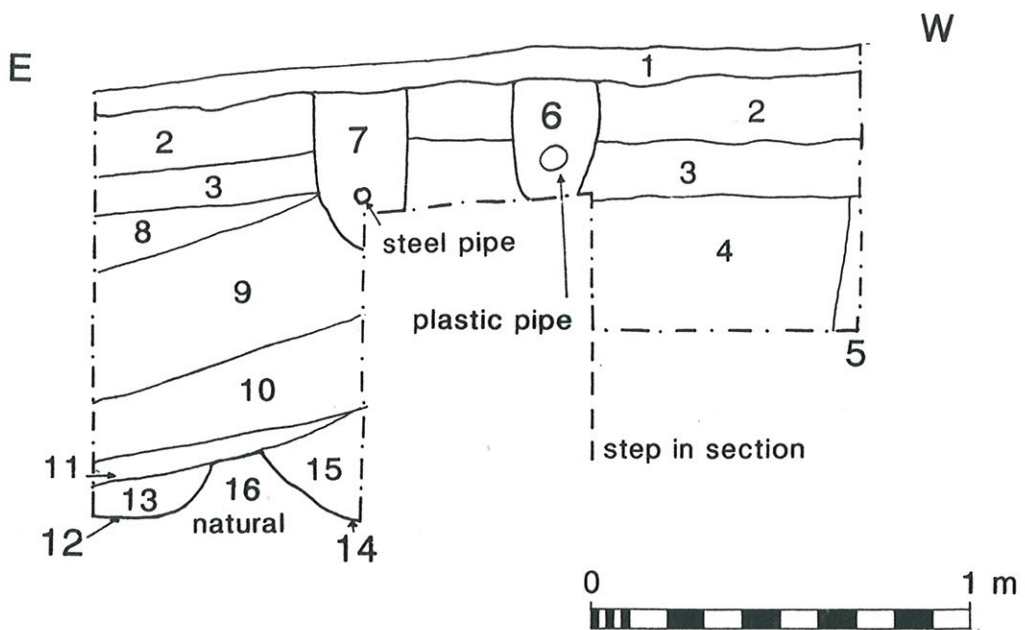
The turf and topsoil 2/1 overlaid an earlier garden soil 2/2. Below 2/2 a layer 2/3 sloped down from W to E. At the W end its depth was 0.16m while at the E end it was in excess of 0.43m.

Red roof tile was less prevalent in Trench 2 mainly occurring in 2/3 and 2/2.

TRENCH 1

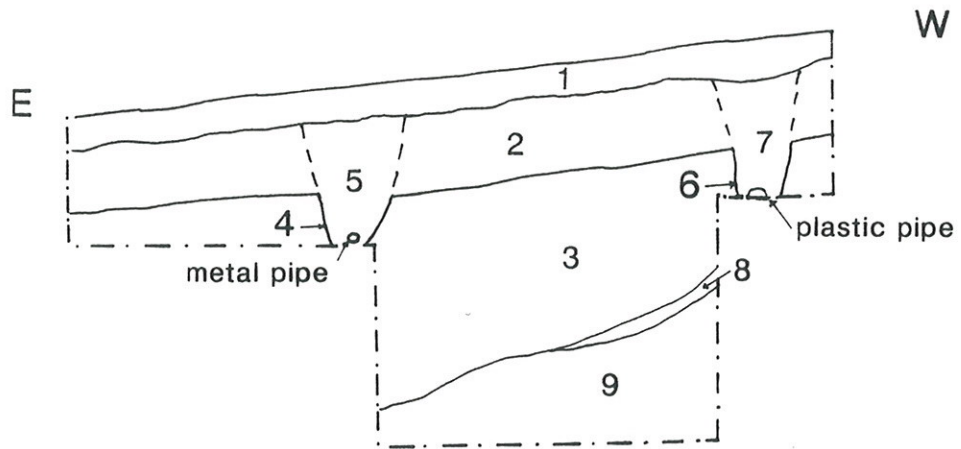


Section



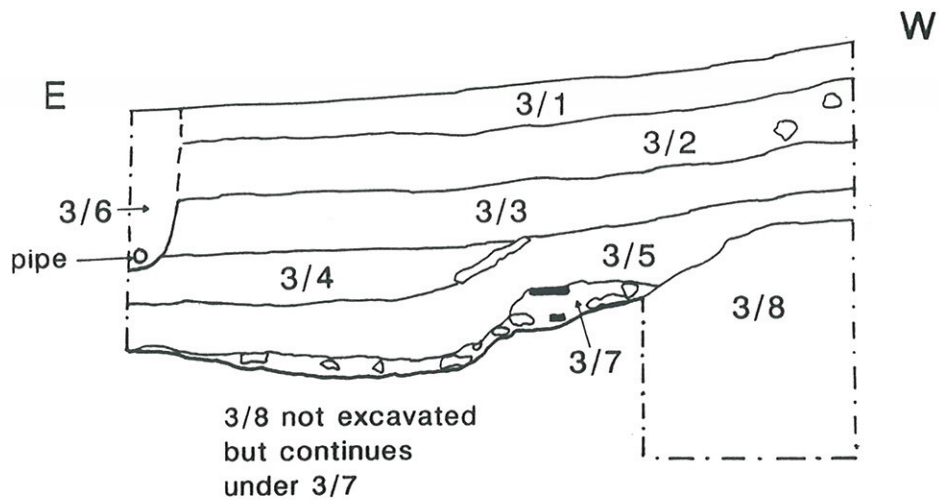
TRENCH 2

Section



TRENCH 3

Section



Below 2/3 an olive greenish sandy silt layer 2/8 (same layer as 3/8 in Trench 3) sloped down to the N and E. This layer produced no finds. It was 0.04m in depth at the S end and 0.028m at the N end. A lumpy silty clay 2/9 at the bottom of the trench sloped down to the ditch/drain. No gravel was encountered and this deposit is presumably undisturbed Kimmeridge clay.

TRENCH 3 (see section drawing)

Trench 3, (2.0m long by 1.25m wide), was located 11.50m from the existing store building and 17m NE of the 14th-century building.

The turf and topsoil 3/1 overlaid an earlier fine silty humic garden soil 3/2. Below this a layer 3/3 contained 20% angular flint gravel, red roof tile and lumps of limestone, the limestone was typically 0.05m across. Below 3/3, a similar layer 3/4 only occurred on the E side of the trench apparently filling a dip in the slope. The layer 3/4 overlaid 3/5 which was similar in character to the two layers above.

Below 3/5 a rubble layer 3/7 contained larger fragments of red roof tile, pottery and much larger lumps of limestone up to 0.16m long x 0.17m wide and 0.02m thick. Most of the tile and limestone was lying flat within the layer. The rubble occurred on the side of the slope and at the bottom, it did not occur at the far W end of the trench. Amongst the rubble was a near complete glazed floor tile. The bulk of the red roof tile occurred in contexts 3/5 and 3/7 (55 fragments).

The rubble layer 3/7 overlaid an olive greenish sandy silt layer 3/8, 0.48m below the present ground surface. Some of the rubble from 3/7 was embedded into the top of 3/8. Layer 3/8, (same as 2/8 in Trench 2), was different in character to any of the layers above. A considerable amount of the layer was excavated, though no pottery was recovered. The deposit did however produce a fragment of bone and a tooth. Apart from occasional charcoal flecks the layer gave the impression of being a 'clean' deposit. Where in contact with 3/7 the olive green sandy silt had formed a crust on the tile fragments. The slot dug into 3/8 did not establish the bottom of the layer but 3/8 could well be at least 1.10m in depth. The high water table prevented any further examination.

The greater depth of the silt layer 3/8 in Trench 3 is either due to a fall off in natural subsoil where the silt has accumulated or that 3/8 has filled the top of a deep feature. The small size of the trench means it is difficult to be sure of its exact nature. It is possible however, that some of 3/8 has derived from or come into contact with cess deposits or cess seepage. Although it produced no datable finds the impression was that 3/8 and 2/8 was probably medieval in date. This is supported by the position of this layer in Trench 2 overlying the natural subsoil.

FINDS Cathy Underhill Keevill

Five sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from contexts 1/11, 3/3 and 3/5. The fabric types indicate a date range from 12th-13th-century. The highly decorated sherd from 1/11 is however late 13th-14th century.

The only other vessel form of note is in 3/5 and 3/7 and consists of a shallow bowl form with clubbed groove rim and splashed green glaze. This is 15th-16th century in date and probably a Brill/Boarstall (Bucks.) product.

CONCLUSIONS

Two possible ditches were located in trench 1. Although producing no datable finds, the earliest layer in Trench 2 and 3 is probably medieval in date. Five medieval pottery sherds were found; apart from possibly 1/11, none of them were in a firm medieval context, all were small or abraded. The area adjacent to the house (Trench 1) contained the highest concentration of residual medieval glazed floor and roof tiles suggesting it derives from refurbishment of the house possibly in the 15/16th-century.

APPENDIX A

CAMOYS COURT, CHISELHAMTON (SCCC 93)					
CXT	TYPE	WIDTH	DEPTH	COMMENTS	DATE
TRENCH 1					
1/1	Layer		0.10	Turf and topsoil	Modern
1/2	Layer		0.16	Ash and charcoal	c. 19th-century or later
1/3	Layer		0.18	Limestone rubble and mortar	c. 19th-century or later
1/4	Layer		0.36+	Sandy silt and clay with limestone rubble and brick fragments	c. 18th-century or later
1/5	Pipe			Sewer pipe	Modern
1/6	Pipe			Plastic PVC pipe	Modern
1/7	Pipe			Metal pipe	Modern
1/8	Layer		0.14	Ash and charcoal with 5% limestone rubble	c. 18th-century or later
1/9	Layer		0.32	Sandy clay silt 50% rubble	c. 18th-century or later
1/10	Layer		0.22	Sandy clay silt 10% mixed gravel	c. 18th-century
1/11	Layer		0.08	Sandy gravel	Medieval?
1/12	Cut	0.30	0.12	Ditch?	Medieval?
1/13	Fill		0.12	Fill of ditch 1/12	Medieval?
1/14	Cut	0.28	0.30+	Ditch?	Medieval?
1/15	Fill		0.30	Fill of 1/14	Medieval?
1/16	Layer		0.15	Natural subsoil?	
TRENCH 2					
2/1	Layer		0.10	Turf + Topsoil	Modern
2/2	Layer		0.30	Old garden soil	Recent
2/3	Layer		0.54	Accumulated stony soil possibly dumped	Late 19th- century
2/4	Cut	0.18	0.34?	Pipe trench	Modern

CAMOYS COURT, CHISELHAMTON (SCCC 93)					
CXT	TYPE	WIDTH	DEPTH	COMMENTS	DATE
2/5	Fill	0.18	0.34?	Fill of pipe trench 2/4, same as 3/6	Modern
2/6	Cut	0.15	0.34?	Cut for plastic water pipe	Modern
2/7	Fill	0.15	0.34?	Fill of 2/6	Modern
2/8	Layer		0.23	Green silt	Medieval.?
2/9	Layer		0.40+	Natural subsoil	
TRENCH 3					
3/1	Layer		0.12	Turf + topsoil	Modern
3/2	Layer		0.16	Old garden soil	Recent
3/3	Layer		0.16	Stony soil	19th-century
3/4	Layer		0.13	Accumulated stony soil possibly dumped	15/16th-century or later
3/5	Layer		0.16	Accumulated stony soil possibly dumped	15/16th-century?
3/6	Fill	0.12+	0.42	Fill of pipe trench	Modern
3/7	Layer		0.10	Limestone rubble and tile	15/16th-century
3/8	Layer		0.60+	Green sandy silt	Medieval?

Measurements in metres

APPENDIX B

The summary of finds denotes the number of finds recovered from each layer. The tile mainly refers to red fired clay roof tiles. None of the tile was complete but most were large fragments. Where ridge tile or glazed tile occur they are mentioned at the bottom of the table. The nails and iron objects occurred in the later layers and their presence is indicated by an X.

SUMMARY OF FINDS FROM CAMOYS COURT CHISELHAMPTON (SCCC 93)							
CXT	Br	Tile	Bone	Pot	Nails	Iron Obj	Other
1/1	5	11	5	4	X	X	2 Sewer pipe, glass, slag
1/2			4		X	X	Lead cames
1/3				4	X	X	Glass
1/4		15	2	25			2 Clay pipe stems, glass, slag
1/5			2	8			Clay pipe stem
1/6		2		1	X		
1/7			5	3 +1?	X		wire
1/9	9	23	3	6	X		Glass
1/10		25*	4	4			
1/11		10*	4	3			
1/13				1			
2/2		5	4	4	X		
2/3	1	16	2	7	X		Glass, lead,
3/1	4	8	8	1			Wire, slag, glass
3/2		3		5		X	2 clay pipe stems, glass
3/3	1	17		6			Glass
3/4	1	3		3			Welsh slate
3/5	1	40	1	11		X	
3/7		16*		7			
3/8			2				

CXT = Context

Br. = Brick

Iron Obj = Iron object

*1/10: Included in the tile was a large fragment of coxcomb crested glazed ridge tile and a green glazed roof tile.

*1/11: Included in the tile was a small fragment of glazed floor tile and a small fragment of glazed ridge tile.

*3/7: Included in the tile was a complete glazed floor tile.



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