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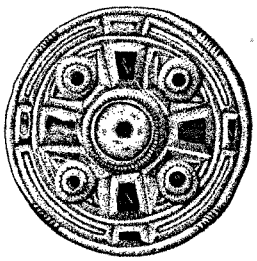

Archaeological Field Unit

The Castle Inn, Castle Street, Cambridge
An Archaeological Assessment

Judith Roberts

1996

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A78

Commissioned By Simon Merrett, Architect, on behalf of Adnams Brewery

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SUMMARY

In August and October 1994 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council was commissioned by Simon Merrett, Architect, acting on behalf of Adnams Brewery, to carry out an archaeological assessment in advance of development at the rear of the Castle Inn, Castle Street, Cambridge. A test pit revealed pottery dating from the 13th century to the present, post-medieval features, together with building debris and domestic refuse. It is possible that a medieval floor layer or wall foundation was reached in the bottom of the test pit but the area opened was too small to allow precise identification. Archaeological deposits continued beyond the base of the test pit.

In spite of the limited scope of the work undertaken on this occasion there was good evidence that the boreholes encountered the line and western edge of the Castle Ditch to the rear of the present building. The western edge of the ditch appears to rise up towards the back wall of the Castle Inn whilst the greatest depth reached, 4m, was beneath the present garden. The bottom of the ditch and eastern edge were not encountered.

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An Archaeological Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

During August 1994 Cambridgeshire County Council were commissioned by Simon Merrett, Architect, acting on behalf of Adnams Brewery, to monitor an auger survey being carried out by the structural engineers at the site of the proposed development at the rear of the Castle Inn, Cambridge. A member of the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of the County Council visited the site and recorded the results of the auger survey. Following this, in October 1994, a team from the AFU also carried out an auger survey, and a test pit was dug in the area previously occupied by an extension of the Inn, as Castle Hill had been identified by earlier work as having significant archaeological potential.

2 BACKGROUND

Castle Hill is a strategic point with wide views over the surrounding countryside and over the river crossing at the base of the hill. Excavations have revealed Iron Age and Roman occupation of the hill and records show that twenty-seven Saxon houses were destroyed during the construction of the 1.6 hectare motte and bailey castle. Construction of the castle during the 11th century involved the mounding of earth surrounded by a wooden palisade on the bailey banks and wooden tower on the motte. The surrounding water filled ditch would have acted as a defensive moat. The castle was rebuilt and ditch re-dug during the 13th century and modified during the 17th century (Palmer 1976). The earthworks were brought into military service during The Commonwealth when 15 of the nearby houses were cleared away and angular bastions were added. At this time there was a large scale cleaning of the medieval ditches. Excavations to the south west of the castle mound, in 1989, exposed ditches at least 4m deep (Malim and Taylor 1992). During the 19th century the moat was filled and a jail constructed. In 1842 the last remaining gateway was pulled down and a court house built on the site. The remains of the Norman castle and Cromwellian earthworks are Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM Nos. 14 and 48).

The site (see *Figure 1*) at the rear of the Castle Inn lies within the area of Romano-British settlement activity. Roman deposits have been found in the vicinity of Shire Hall, immediately to the north, across Castle Street at Nos. 77-85 (Haigh 1988, pers. comm.), and in the grounds of Kettles Yard (Evans 1994). Investigations in 1989, at the back of Nos. 10-20 Castle Hill (in advance of development) revealed a 10m wide steep sided ditch, surrounding the castle mound. The ditch was found to be waterlogged and over 4m deep. Other ditches of lesser proportions were discovered further from the castle and it is assumed these are of more recent date. Other sightings of the various ditches, possibly related to the castle, have been made in recent years behind 73 Castle Street and to the north under a housing development to the west of Castle Street.

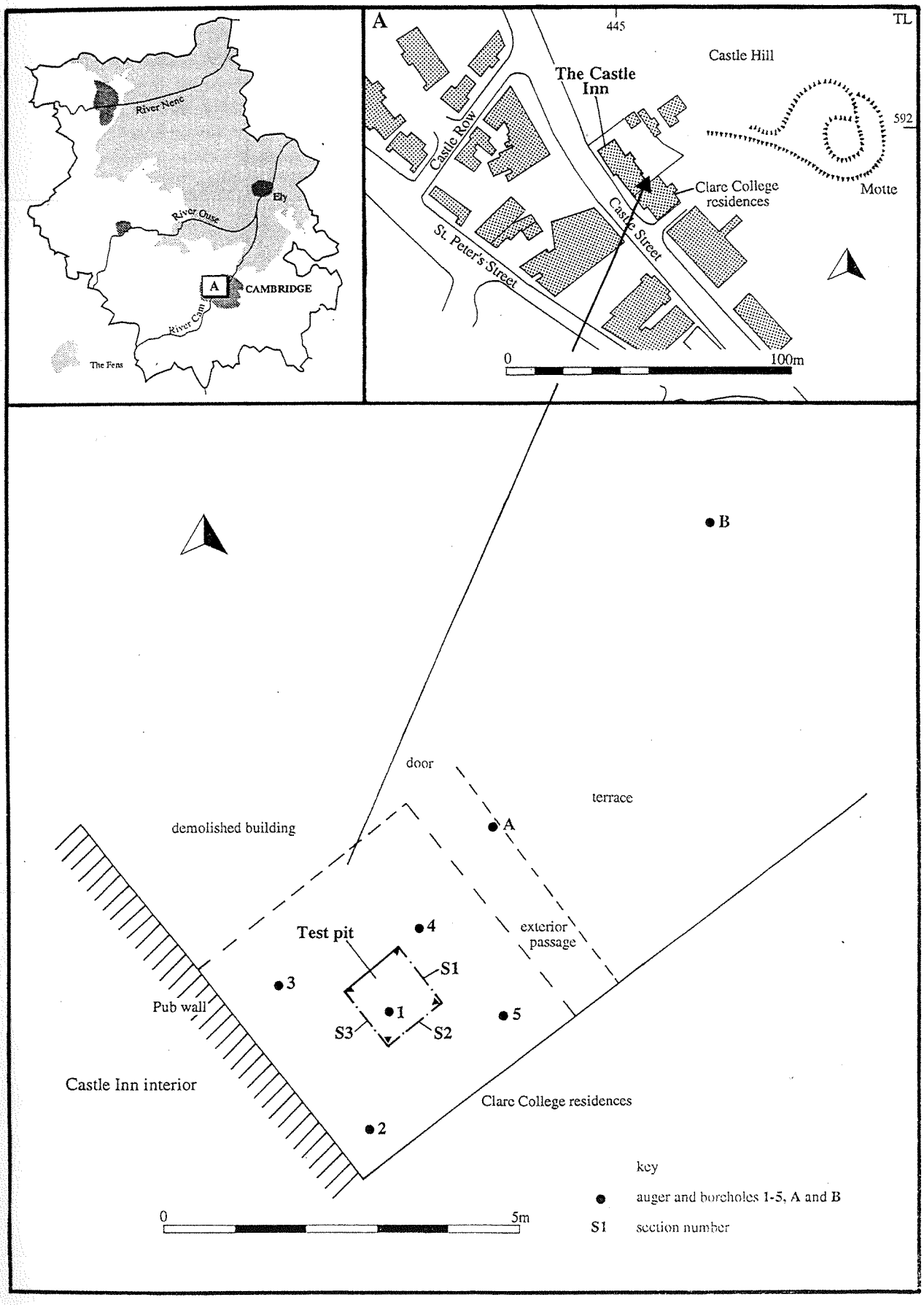

Figure 1 *Location map*

3 METHODS

Two boreholes sunk by the structural engineers (see *Figures 1* and *2*) were monitored by a member of the AFU. Following demolition of the rear extension of the Inn and removal of the concrete floor five auger holes were made, using a hand auger, by members of the AFU, and the contractor dug a test pit (approximately 1m square), at the request of the AFU, with a toothed bucket. The test pit was subsequently cleaned by hand and extended to a maximum depth of 1.2m (depth limited by Health and Safety Regulations). The test pit was photographed and sections drawn and recorded using the standard techniques of the Archaeological Field Unit.

4 RESULTS

Borehole A, sunk by the structural engineers using a hand auger, was immediately behind the existing extension at the back of the Inn (see *Figure 2*), in an outside passage 1.35m lower than the terrace garden and extended to a depth of 3.6m. The initial 0.3m was made up of modern building materials which sealed a layer of dark silty organic deposit with fragments of building material. Below this at a depth of 0.7m was a band of clay with a large proportion of clunch. At 1.2m the column reverted to a silty clay with ceramics, building material and flecks of charcoal. The amount of clay increased with depth with occasional patches of grit and flecks of charcoal but little artefactual material. By 1.8m this had reverted to a silty clay with gravel and small fragments of brick. Beyond 2.4m the silty clay of the column was less compact with gravel and sand. At 3.3m there was a distinct change to a sandy silty clay with grit and gravel beneath which was a sandy gravel over chalk marl. These two lower layers were assumed to represent natural strata.

Borehole B (5m east of Borehole A and 4.3m from the southern boundary wall) was started at a height 1.35m above the ground level of Borehole A) and extended to a depth of 4.2m. The upper 0.7m of the column was made up of garden soil, concrete, rubble and gravel. Below this was a deposit comparable with the layer below the concrete in Borehole A but containing animal bone, fragments of red brick and flecks of charcoal. The clay content increased with depth to approximately 2.8m when a less compact deposit was encountered with less gravel but with red brick flecks and organic inclusions. From 3m the amount of gravel increased with a sharp transition to clay with grit and pebbles at 3.2m. Below this the sand content increased and chalk inclusions were noted. By 3.8m redeposited marl was reached below which was a fine sandy clay with pea grit. Boring stopped at 4.2m when the auger was unable to penetrate further.

In October 1994 a team from the AFU sank further boreholes with a hand auger in the area of the proposed development, beneath the floor of the extension, which had been removed by this stage. The first auger hole penetrated an upper layer of loose rubble, gravel and clay silt with flint gravels, the amount of gravel increased to 0.46m when a sandy clay was encountered. Below this the proportion of gravel decreased and at 0.67m there was an interface with a silty clay with fragments of mollusc shell, red brick fragments and flecks of charcoal. At 1.2m substantial fragments of charcoal were observed together with chalk inclusions and grit but no gravel. This deposit continued to 1.4m when coarse sandy grit was noted. Beyond 1.75m the chalk component increased as did the proportion of gravel. Augering ceased at 1.8m because of the impenetrability of the deposit (see *Figure 2*).

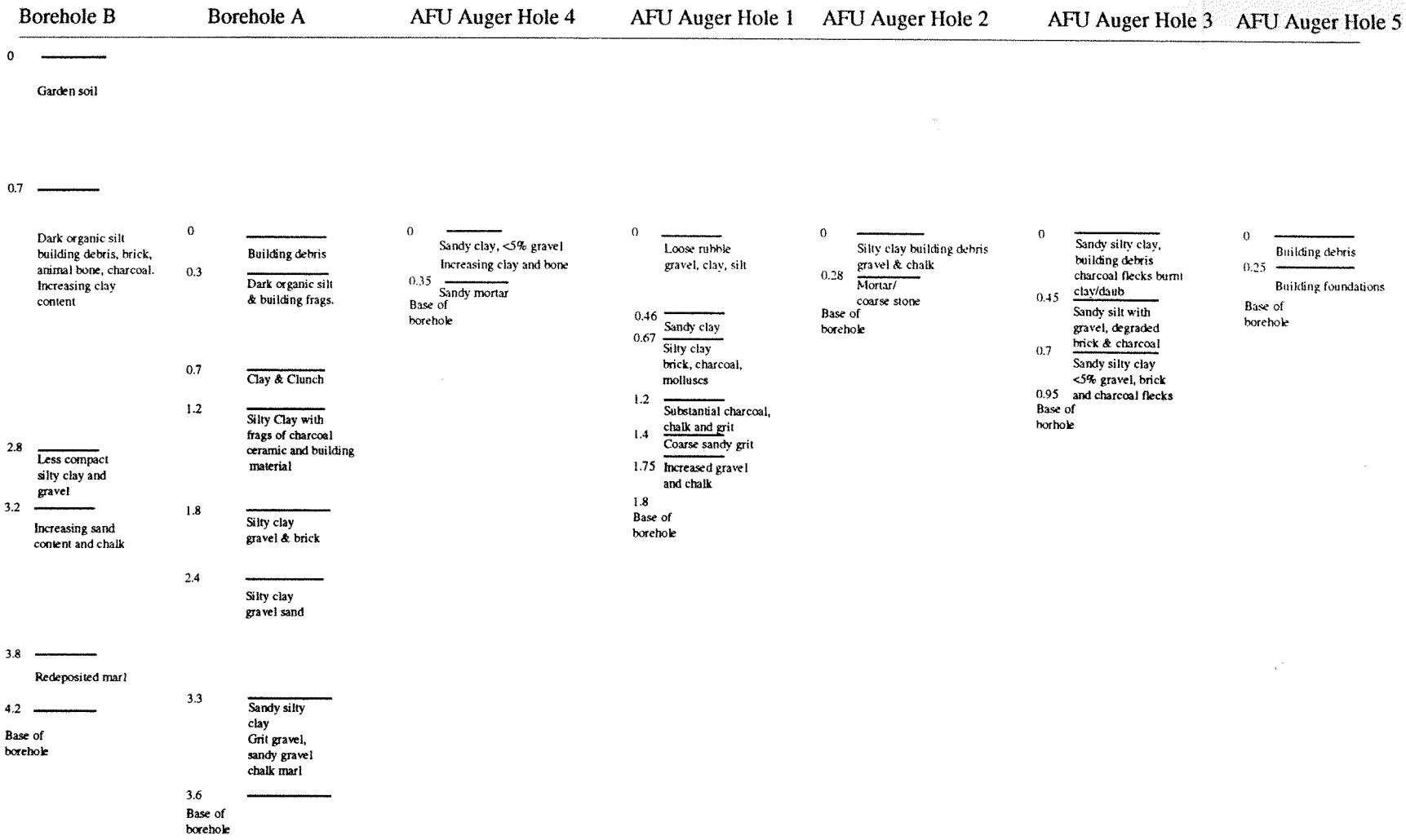

Figure 2 *Boreholes and auger holes from north east to south west*

The second auger column revealed a sandy, silty clay with modern building debris, gravel and chalk fragments. At 0.28m the auger hit a layer of mortar/coarse stone, possibly related to the foundations of the adjacent buildings, and it was impossible to continue with this hole.

The third auger hole passed through similar modern made up levels to that encountered in the other columns. The background deposit was a sandy silty clay with grit, gravel, red brick fragments. At 0.7m there was an increased amount of gravel but this declined and gave way to chalk inclusions. The auger could not penetrate beyond 0.95m.

The first 0.1m of the fourth auger column was a dark greyish brown sandy clay with very little silt and <5% gravel with occasional charcoal flecks. This deposit continued to approximately 0.3m with occasional clay lumps and fragments of bone. At 0.35m the deposit was a dark olive brown silty sandy clay with chalk fragments and large (10-20mm) charcoal fragments. A sandy mortar was reached just beyond 0.35m and augering ceased.

The fifth auger hole was started near the residential development to the east. The column consisted of modern made up ground surface with building debris and at 0.25m flint pebbles (possibly from the foundations of the adjoining building) prevented further augering.

A test pit (approximately 1 x 1.5m) was dug by machine in the centre of the proposed development. The upper deposit (4) covered the whole site to a depth of approximately 0.45m but in the south western corner a feature [**2**] had been cut into this deposit, to a depth of 0.8m, the lower part of this was filled with concrete (3) to a depth of 60-80mm, and above this was a fill (1) of sandy silt with gravel, chalk nodules, building rubble and occasional charcoal flecks. Underlying fill (4) was a layer of gravel (5) which varied in depth between 40-90m, rising towards the east. This was present over the whole area of the test pit and was cut by [**2**]. A dark grey clay silt with some fine sand and occasional pieces of gravel and fragments of building material (6) covered the test pit, under layer (5). This context was deepest in the south west facing section, at 400mm and decreased to 30mm in the western corner. This context extended beyond the base of the test pit in the north eastern section but in both the south western and south eastern section it was underlain by a silt with coarse sand occasional gravels and flecks of charcoal (8). This deposit contained quantities of building material, bone, mollusc shells and glazed pottery. In the western corner was a deposit (10) which had been cut by feature [**9**] (containing deposit (8)) which sloped steeply beyond the base of the test pit. Deposit (10) was a silt with coarse sand and sub-angular gravels, clunch or chalk fragments, fragments of limestone, bone fragments, charcoal flecks and pieces of 13th century pottery. In the opposite section were the possible remains of a floor or structural remains (12) with weathered chalk/clunch blocks forming a level deposit 550 x 450mm and whose base was not exposed in the test pit. Redeposited chalk/clunch lumps (13) were noted in the section above this deposit.

5 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Borehole A probably located the rising western side of the castle ditch. The soil profile was similar to that noted in 1989 and it is on a line that is likely to be a continuation of the ditch revealed in the earlier excavations. The borehole B appears to have passed exclusively through ditch fill but it is not clear whether the base of the ditch was reached.

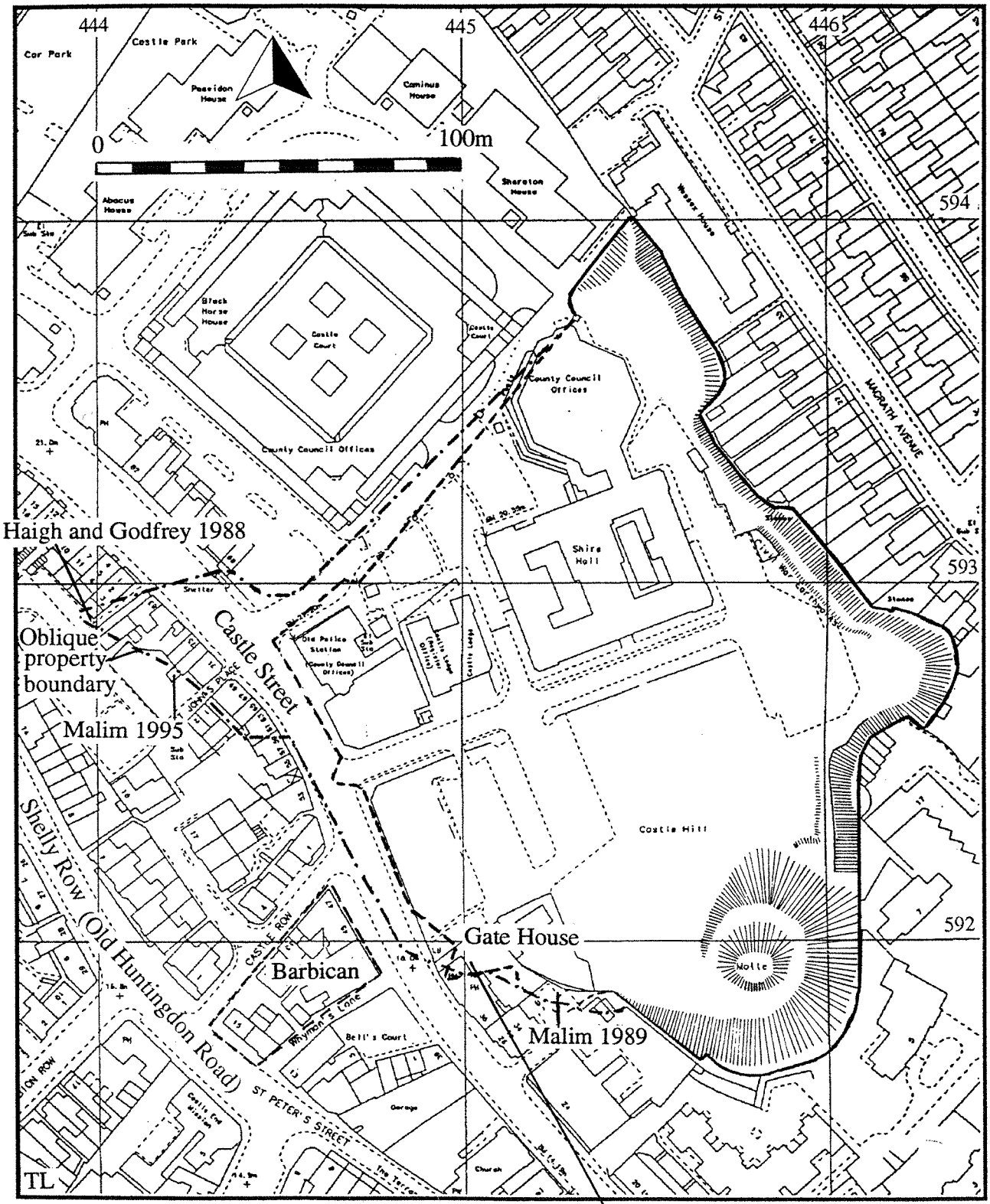

Figure 3 *Cambridge Castle*

The attempts to auger by the Archaeological Field Unit were hampered by the amount of gravel and general hardness of the sub-soils or contexts within them. The test pit revealed considerable post-medieval and modern disturbance. The most obvious modern feature [2] cuts a layer of gravel (5) and the dark grey clay silt (6) which appear to seal all underlying contexts. Below context (6) there is evidence of considerable activity including a possible post-medieval ditch cut [9] and perhaps a recut [7] evident in the south western face which has been truncated by context (12) which may represent a floor or other structural remains. There was insufficient artefactual evidence to date any of these features directly.

It is clear that this area has seen considerable medieval/post-medieval activity. The test pit and auger holes were unable to penetrate to a sufficient depth to identify any phases in the Castle Ditch. The boreholes did go deep enough to indicate that the western side of the Castle Ditch was probably encountered but no good evidence for the base of the ditch or eastern edge was found during work on this occasion.

Recording work behind 73 Castle Street, Cambridge, in April 1995 (SMR No. 11718) exposed dark organic fills to a depth of at least 3m, and archaeological features to a depth of 4.5m (and continuing beneath this level), perhaps confirming that the Castle Ditch extended to this location, where it might have formed part of a star-shaped Civil War bastion as suggested by excavations between 1956 and 1980 in this area (Alexander, Pullinger and Woudhuysen, unpublished ms). This is supported by the oblique property boundary to the north-west of 73 Castle Street which diverges from the line followed by Castle Street (see *Figure 3*). Excavations to the north (Haigh and Godfrey, pers. comm) in 1988 also revealed the western edge of a large ditch with a similar dark, organic fill, running in a north-westerly direction. This was interpreted at the time as being part of the Castle Ditch but from examination of Loggan's plan of the castle yard in 1688 (Palmer 1928) it would appear that Castle Street runs along the line of the castle ditch on the south western side. Palmer records also that Castle Street followed the line of the castle moat during the 13th century with a barbican (parts of which survived into the 17th century) to the west of Castle Street and that during the reign of Elizabeth I the moat was spanned by a stone arch and connected the castle with the old Huntingdon Road which ran beside St. Peter's Church and along Shelly Row. During the early 17th century the moat had largely been filled in the south western portion and cottages built over this area. Despite remodelling of the earthworks in 1643 the south western earthworks were no longer visible by the 19th century as the bank had been thrown into the moat to widen Castle Street and heavily built over.

It is clear that the deep stratigraphy and evidence of surviving medieval deposits indicate the high archaeological potential of this part of Cambridge both for medieval and post-medieval archaeological remains and for deposits from the Anglo-Saxon, Roman/Romano-British and Iron Age occupation of the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Adnams Brewery for commissioning and funding this project, Simon Merrett, Architect, and J. Chalker and S. Laughlin, Structural Engineers, for their co-operation during the work. This report was written in response to a brief provided by the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (Development Control).

Archaeological Field Unit Project Managers were Tim Malim and Tim Reynolds, site staff were Malin Holst and Judith Roberts and illustrations were produced by Melodie Paice

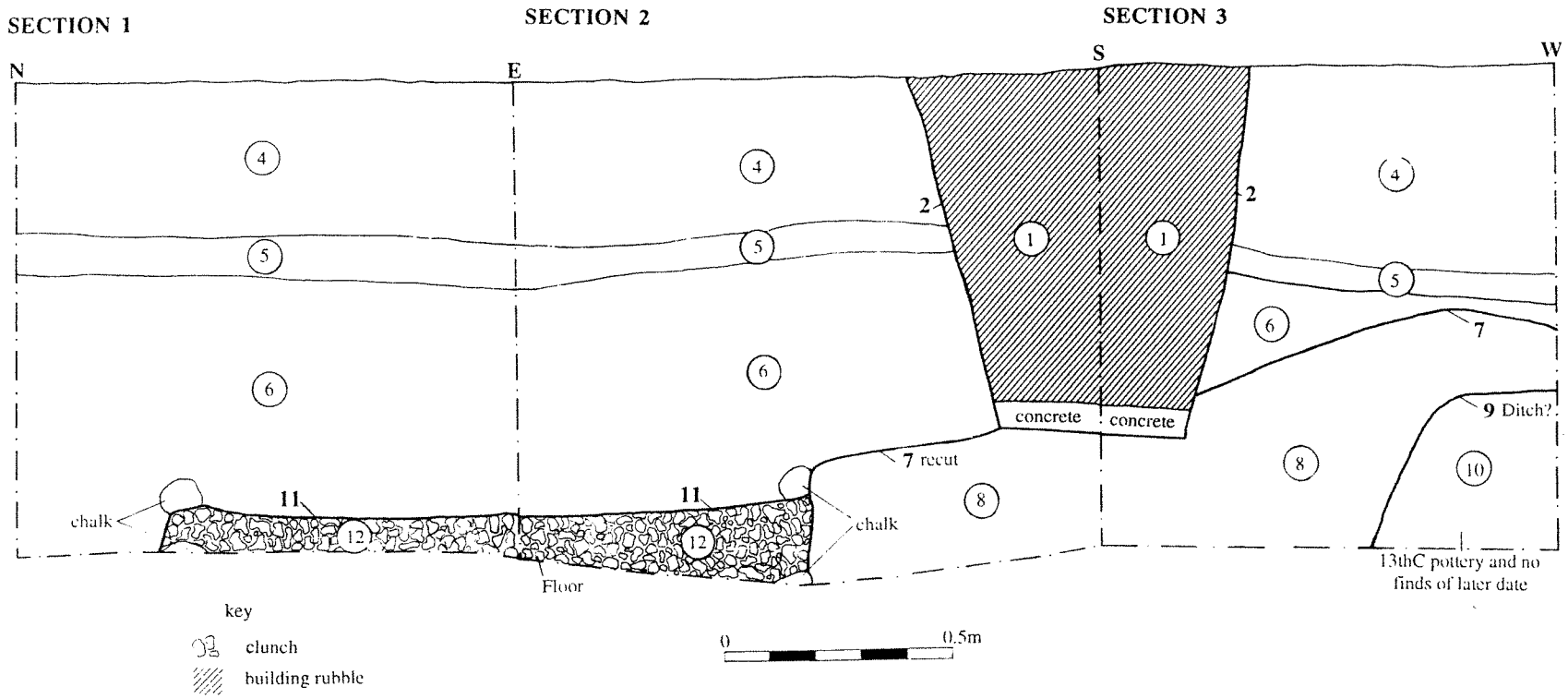

Figure 4 *North east, south east and south west facing sections of test pit*

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APPENDIX I

Borehole A

Depth	Colour	Munsell	Component	Inclusions
0-0.15			Concrete	
0.15-0.3			Sand	
0.3-0.7	Dark grey brown	5YR 4/1	Sandy silt	30% sandy brick and occasional small pebbles
0.7-1.2	Light brownish grey	10YR 6/2	Clay	50% clunch and occasional pebbles
1.2-1.6	Dark greyish brown	10YR 4/2	Silty clay	Flecks of charcoal, pot/brick, pebbles and pea grit
1.6-1.8			Increased clay	Flecks of charcoal and grit
1.8-2.4			Silty clay	50% gravel and frags of red brick
2.4-3.3			Silty clay	40% grit, gravel brick fragments
3.3-3.4	Dark greyish brown	10YR 4/2	Sandy silty clay	Pea grit and gravel
3.4-3.6			Sandy	Gravels

Borehole B

Depth	Colour	Munsell	Component	Inclusions
0-0.15			Topsoil	
0.15-0.25			Concrete	
0.25-0.7			Soil	Modern rubble and gravel
0.7-2.5	Dark grey	5YR 4/1	Silty clay	Pebbles
2.5-2.7	Dark grey	5YR 4/1	Silty clay	Pebbles animal bone, burnt bone and red brick frags
2.7-2.8			Increased clay	
2.8-3.0			Softer with dark organics	Soft red brick flecks
3.0-3.2				Increased gravel and pebbles, red brick fragments, coal/charcoal flecks and burnt bone
3.2-3.4	Dark yellowish brown	10YR 4/4	Stiff clay	Red brick and charcoal flecks, pea grit and pebbles
3.4-3.5	Yellowish brown	10YR 5/4	Sandy clay	Chalk fragments, flecks of brick and charcoal
3.5-3.8			Fine sandy clay	Pea grit and gravel, flecks of brick and charcoal, iron fragment at 3.7m
3.8-4.0	Light grey	2.5YR 7/2	Stiff clay	Possibly re-deposited marl
4.0-4.2	Brown	10YR 4/3	Fine sandy clay	40% pea grit flecks of brick, sandstone and flint

AFU Borehole 1

Depth	Colour	Munsell	Component	Inclusions
0-0.11	Dark greyish brown	2.5Y 4/2	Silty clay	<30% worn flint gravel and loose rubble,
0.11-0.21	Dark greyish brown	2.5Y 4/2	Sandy silty clay	<20% rounded flint gravel
0.21-0.3	Dark greyish brown	2.5Y 4/2	Sandy silty clay	Increased gravel
0.3-0.4	As above	As above	As above	30% gravel and occasional pebbles
0.4-0.46	As above	As above	Sandy clay	Gravels
0.46-0.86	Very dark grey brown	2.5Y 3/2	Silty sandy clay	Decreased gravel, mollusc shells and charcoal flecks
0.86-1.0	Dark grey	2.5Y 4/1	Silty clay	Increased grit
1.0-1.25	Very dark grey brown	2.5Y 3/2	Silty clay	Increased clay and decreased grit, charcoal fragments, chalk flecks, no gravel
1.25-1.4			Grit and coarse sand	Occasional pebbles
1.4-1.6	Very dark grey brown	2.5Y 3/2	Silty clay	Burnt clay/daub, bone fragments and occasional flints
1.6-1.8	As above	As above		Increased gravel, chalk fragments, mollusc shell and charcoal flecks

AFU Borehole 3

Depth	Colour	Munsell	Component	Inclusions
0-0.1	Dark greyish brown	2.5Y 4/2	Sandy silty clay	Modern rubble
0.1-0.45	As above	As above	As above	Brick and charcoal flecks, burnt clay/daub and occasional pebbles
0.45-0.7	Very dark greyish brown	2.5Y 3/2	Silty sandy clay	Small amount of gravel, degraded brick fragments, charcoal
0.7-0.95	Dark greyish brown	2.5 4/2	Sandy silty clay	<5% gravel, no large stones or pebbles, brick and charcoal flecks

List of Text Pit Contexts

Context	Description	Nature	Below	Above	Finds
1	Deposit	2.5Y4/2 Dark greyish brown silty sand with gravel and calcareous nodules & building rubble	-	3 & **2**	Building rubble
2	Cut	Foundation	1 & 3	4	-
3	Deposit	Compact gravel and sand	1	**2**	-
4	Deposit	2.5Y4/2 Dark greyish brown clay silt with coarse sand and flint gravel	**2**	5	-
5	Deposit	Gravel lens	4	6	-
6	Deposit	2.5Y 4/1 Dark grey clay silt with fine sand and gravel	5	**7**	Tile & brick
7	Cut	Gently sloping foundation trench or ditch re-cut	6	8	-
8	Deposit	2.5Y4/2 Dark greyish brown silt with coarse sand and gravel	7	**9**	Building rubble, mollusc shell, bone, glazed pot, charcoal
9	Cut	Ditch cut	8	10	-
10	Deposit	2.5Y3/2 Very dark grey brown	**9**	-	13thC pot bone and charcoal
11	Cut	Linear/rectangular	12&13	-	
12	Deposit	Weathered chalk/clunch	6 & 13	**11**	-
13	Deposit	5Y7/3 Pale yellow marl with some sand and charcoal flecks	6	12	-

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