

# Chapter 1: Introduction

By Tim Allen and Alan Crossley

## THE MOUNT HOUSE

*In the modern house which passes under this name, are still to be seen massive foundations, narrow windows, and remnants of arches, shewing that a larger edifice once stood upon the spot. The inequality of the ground in a circuit round it, and a high terrace extending for some distance on the top of a wall once embattled, shows that the place was of great strength, and it is supposed by sound antiquaries, to have been the palace or manor house of the bishops of Winchester. Little or nothing of its former grandeur still survives.*

*The Revd J A Giles (1852, 39)*

This monograph report records the excavation of a manor house of the bishops of Winchester, completely lost to view during the last 100 years, which was formerly the centre and origin of the bustling town of Witney (Fig. 1.1). The buried remains of the Norman stone manor house were found beneath an unpretentious garden just off the church green (centred National Grid Reference SP 3570 0928). Despite its physical disappearance, knowledge of the manor had been perpetuated in local histories because of its historical association with the bishops of Winchester. This chapter outlines the place of the manor house in a remarkably well-documented historical landscape, the circumstances of its re-discovery and the fraught process of ensuring its long-term protection.

## THE GEOLOGY AND ANCIENT AND MODERN TOPOGRAPHY OF THE AREA

Witney lies on the west side of the river Windrush at the foot of the Cotswold dip-slope. At this point the river leaves its constricted upper valley, which is cut through the oolitic limestone of the Cotswolds, to enter a much broader, open vale on the Oxford Clay (Geological Survey Sheet 236). The town is situated to take advantage of two different geologies (Bond 1978a, 4). The town centre stands on limestone cornbrash: the Geological Survey describes this as fine-grained shell-debris limestone with thinner marl and mudstone horizons, and evidence of considerable reworking and bioturbation. In the grounds of the Mount House this appeared as 'clay' overlying compact limestone, into which the north ditch of the manor house had been cut.

This limestone outcrop is an island, which was once completely surrounded by the river Windrush. The western arm of the river is now an abandoned meander, whose former course is perpetuated by a

drain known as Emma's Dyke (Rodwell 1975, 179; Fig. 1.3). The limestone is, therefore, surrounded by alluvial clays on all sides. The topography of the town still strongly reflects the configuration of the old meander, and before the meadows established on the damp alluvial flats of this meander were drained, this boggy area gave the site a considerable degree of natural protection. The alluvial floodplains would also have been valuable economic resources to the Saxon and medieval community as both hay meadow and water-meadow.

On the east side of the river Windrush a narrow tongue of Forest Marble projects into the alluvial floodplain (Fig. 1.2), forming a low spur on which Cogges church and manor house stand. This spur narrows the valley floor, making this a natural crossing point. The general alignment of an early east-west route can be traced from Cogges Church Lane to an early ford, continuing from it west along Crown Lane and Corn Street (Bond 1978a, 3). The development of Witney, therefore, was encouraged by natural defensibility, good communications and local resources.

Until the late 19th century the church of St Mary, which lies across the end of the triangular Church Green, lay at the south end of the town. The Mount House occupies the south-east corner of the green east of the church (Fig. 1.1). A lane led from the green to a former mill on the river Windrush, commemorated in the name Farm Mill Lane, and gave access to the manorial farm, which was still active (though no longer owned by the bishops of Winchester) until 1899, when it was sold to the Marriott Family and became the Mount Mills blanket factory. To the south there were only open fields (served by a track which ran along a hollow-way between the church and the Mount House) until the development of the railway in 1861 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms Top Oxon. D.213, F.142). By the mid-19th century the track was called Pound Lane, and after 1861 Station Road; it is now Cokethorpe Road.

The rectory lay west of the church in the south-west corner of the green. Both Beresford (1959) and Bond

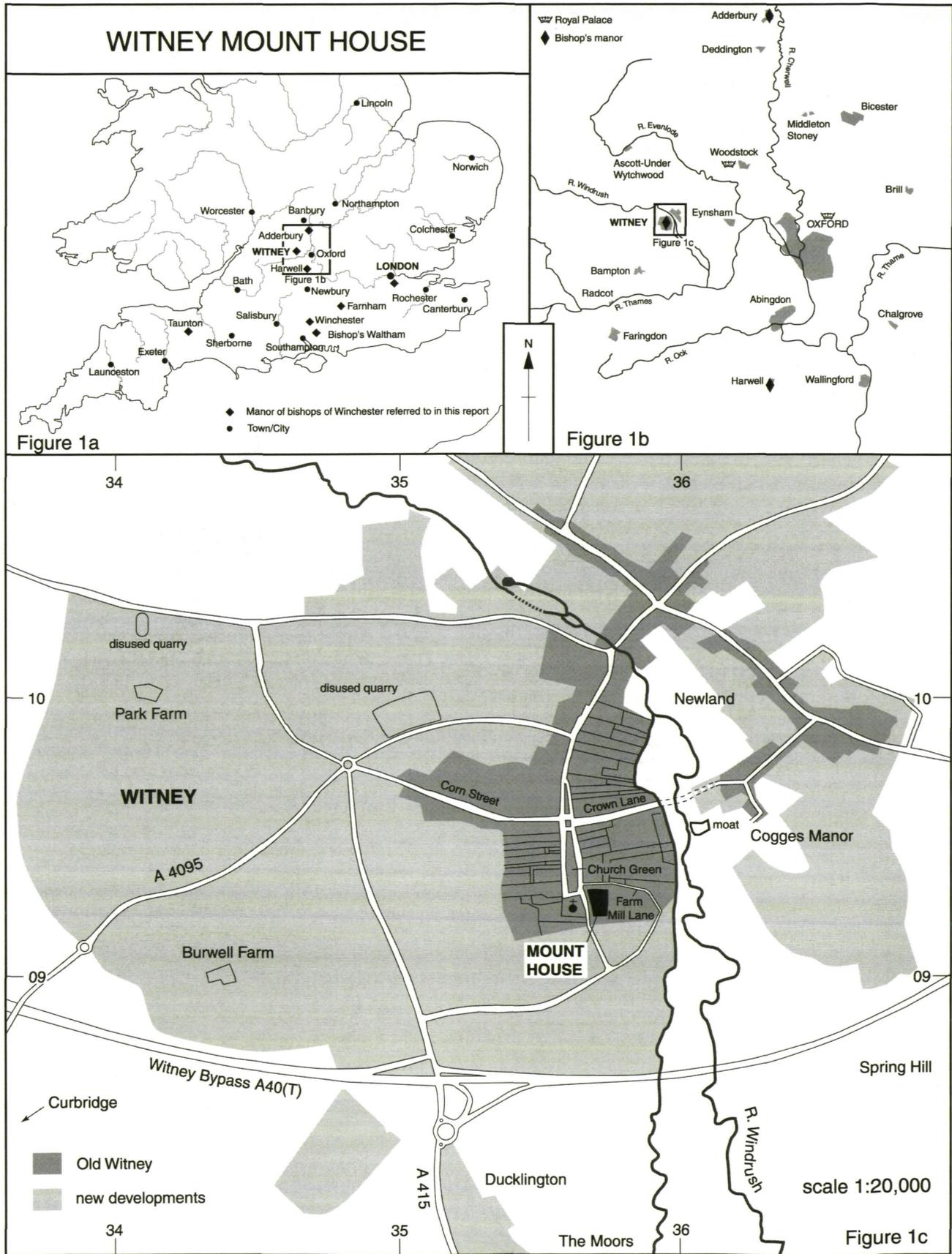


Figure 1.1 Location map showing the site, the historic core of medieval Witney in relation to the modern town and principal ecclesiastical sites mentioned in the report.

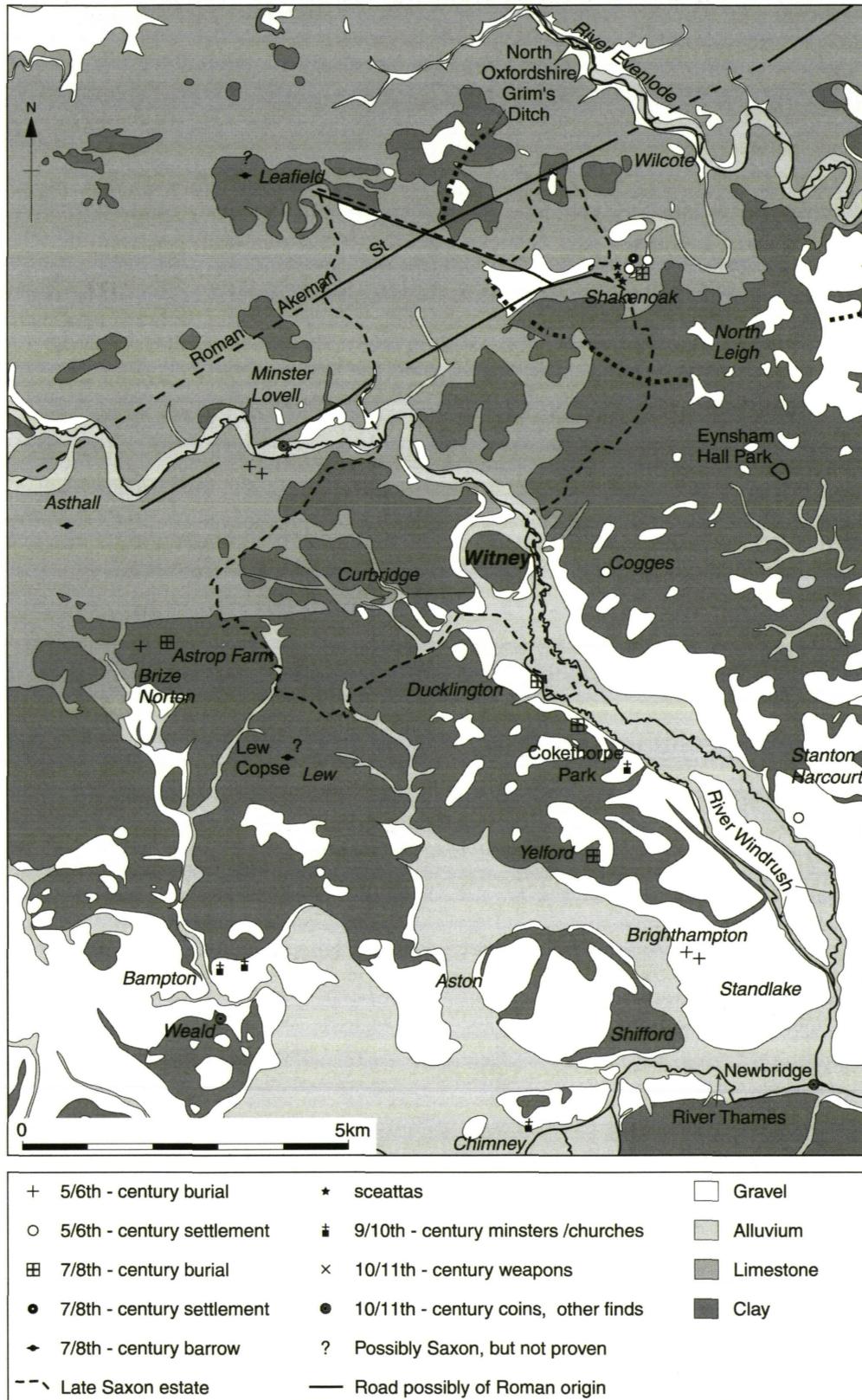


Figure 1.2 Historic topography and geology of the Windrush Valley including upstanding prehistoric monuments, Roman roads and Saxon sites.

(1978b, 11–13) recognised that the triangular green and the plots either side were the result of deliberate re-planning. The 'new town', which they dated to the start of the 13th century, had the manor, church and rectory in line at the foot of the large market-place which is now the green. The line of Church Green follows the central spine of the limestone island, and geology may have influenced the form taken by the newly planted town. The Mount House lay towards the south-east edge of the limestone plateau, as the ground dips gently away to the east and south onto first gravel terrace deposits, and then onto the floodplain of the river Windrush.

Since the late 19th century the medieval core of the town has been swallowed by development. The present Mount House was built c 1904 by mill owner Marriott, with a communicating doorway through the east terrace to the Mount Mills blanket factory beyond. The south-west corner of the Mount House had a separate house built against it in 1950, which was sold off by 1954. The decline of blanket weaving in the 1970s led to the abandonment of Mount Mills and the decision to sell the Mount House. This is the starting point of the investigation reported here. The site of the Mount Mills has since been redeveloped for commercial offices (Des Roches Square, named after an early bishop of Winchester) and for a superstore and its car parking.

#### THE GROWTH OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT IN THE LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY

A brief summary of the archaeology of the area around Witney is given below. On the accompanying figure (Fig. 1.2) only upstanding prehistoric and Roman monuments are shown, whereas later discoveries are treated more comprehensively.

Apart from the excavations reported here, only one small investigation, close to the Butter Cross, has been carried out in historic Witney (Chambers 1980; Chambers 1982; Chambers and Gott 1983), and any conclusions, therefore, about its pre-medieval history (or the absence of any such past) are almost entirely speculative. It is instructive that the very first evaluation to be carried out since Chambers' work revealed Roman settlement features (see below), and it is likely that more pre-medieval activity remains to be discovered. The evaluation was located at the rear of Oakfield House, east of Church Green.

#### Prehistoric, Romano-British and early to mid-saxon Settlement

During the Neolithic and Bronze Age the major henge monument of the Devil's Quoits, east of the river Windrush at Stanton Harcourt, was surrounded by numerous barrow groups, and this suggests that the focus of early prehistoric settlement lay on the gravels downriver (Barclay *et al.* 1995), though Neolithic long barrows such as Hawk's Barrow east of Minster Lovell, and upstanding barrows north of the Windrush around Leafield and Asthall show that

the area around Witney was also inhabited. Neolithic axes and pottery have been found at Witney and Ducklington respectively (Steane in Briggs *et al.* 1986, 175, map 4), and a bronze sword of late Bronze Age date was recovered from the line of Emma's Dyke (see Fig. 1.3) about 500 m north-west of the Mount House (Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record, Public Record Number [PRN] 1496; Case 1957,106).

A hillfort, Eynsham Hall Camp, 5 km to the east between the river Windrush and the Glyme (Hingley and Miles 1984, 56, Fig. 4.2; Allen and Robinson 1993, 146–7), was probably constructed during the succeeding Iron Age, and this may have become the focus of Iron Age settlement in this area, though very little is known about it. A dense pattern of early and middle Iron Age settlements has been found and excavated on the gravel terraces lower down the Windrush (Harding 1972; Lambrick 1992), and recent excavations 2 km west of Witney at Deer Park Farm (Walker 1995) show that Iron Age settlements also existed on the Kellaway clays.

Late Iron Age settlements are even more common on the gravels, extending up the river Windrush from Standlake to Ducklington (Chambers 1976a; Chambers and Williams 1976), and pottery suggests another settlement near Spring Hill, Cogges, just above the Windrush floodplain (Bond 1978a, 6). The only other evidence near to Witney is a couple of Celtic coins (PRN 1504, 1505; Bond 1978a, 6). Just north of Eynsham Hall Camp, some 80 sq km was enclosed by the north Oxfordshire Grim's Ditch, a series of late Iron Age earthworks tentatively interpreted as defining a tribal territory (Copeland 1988, Fig. 2, 280, 283–8). However, while one stretch of the Grim's Ditch circuit still marked the northern boundary of the estate of Eynsham Abbey in AD 1005 (Copeland 1988, 277), the late Saxon estate of the Witney manor (Fig. 1.2) crossed one of the most conspicuous lengths, showing that there was no continuity of this land parcel into the historic period.

Akeman Street was built soon after the Roman Conquest between a fort at Alchester (near Bicester) and another at Cirencester, while a small fort was also planted subsequently where Akeman Street crossed the river Windrush at Asthall (Booth 1998, 10–11). Alchester became the major Roman town in this area. In Roman Oxfordshire there is a major divide between the settlements on the gravels of the Thames Valley, which are densely populated with low status native settlements (as in the Iron Age), and those on the Cotswolds and Corallian ridge, both of which are dominated by higher status villas, clustered along the river valleys. Witney lies at the junction of these zones; there is only a single probable villa to the south (on the west bank of the Windrush at Ducklington (Booth 1998, 8, Fig. 4)), but several others to the north at Shakenoak Farm (only 5 km to the north-east of the Windrush) and at Widford and Worsham some 7 km upriver (Brodrick *et al.* 1978, Fig. 1). Below Ducklington native settlements are clustered around Stanton Harcourt and Standlake on the gravels of the Lower Windrush to the south-east

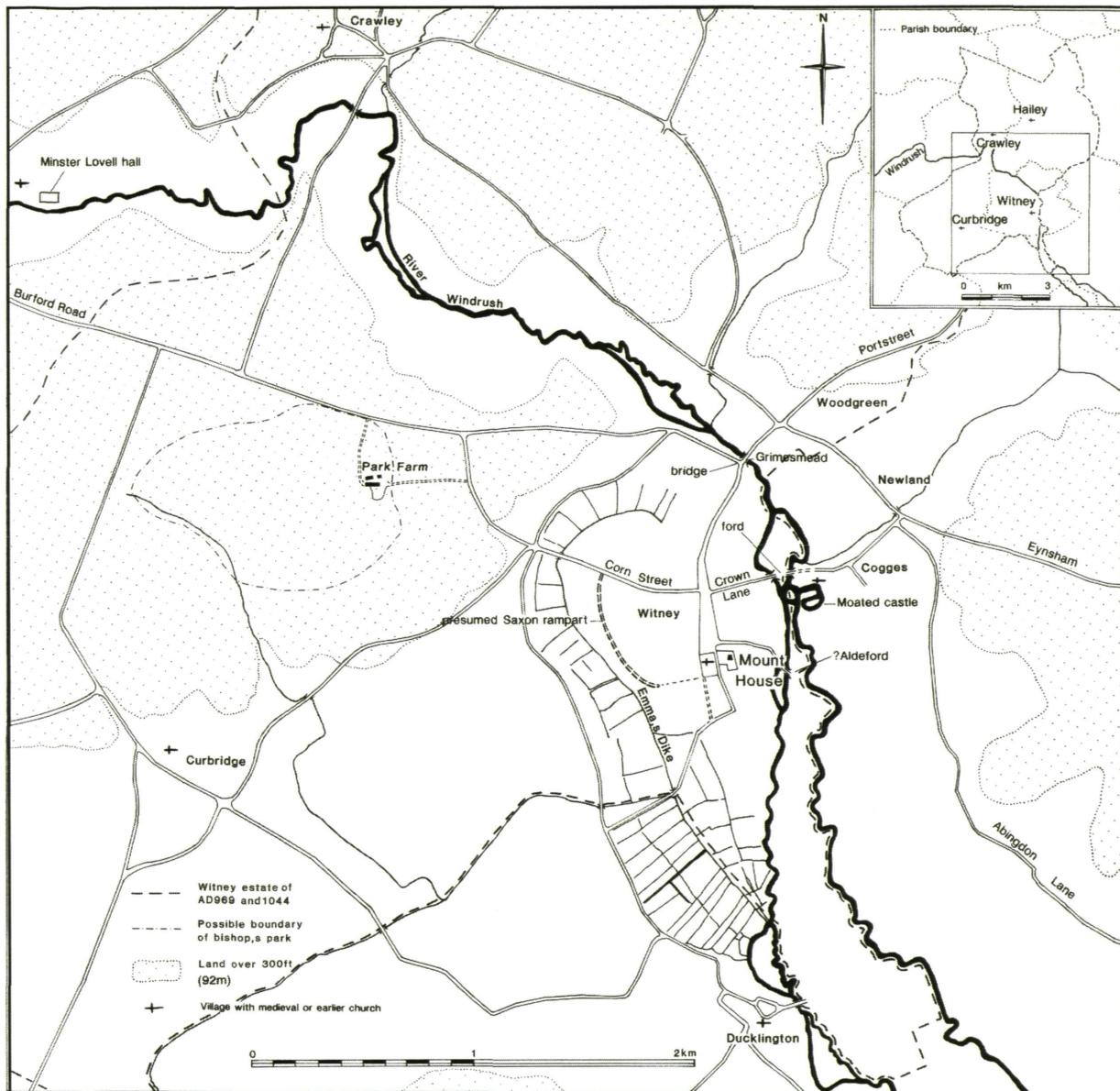


Figure 1.3 Map of late Saxon estate, medieval or earlier churches in the vicinity and roads and other features of late Saxon or medieval date in Witney.

(Brodrribb *et al.* 1978; Benson and Miles 1974, 45–50, maps 20–22). In the area dominated by villas native settlement seems to have been concentrated in large roadside settlements, almost small towns, which developed along Akeman Street at Asthall (near Burford), at Wilcote and at Samson's Platt north of Woodstock (Brodrribb *et al.* 1978, Fig. 1).

A few other native settlements are known. To the west there was a Roman settlement at Curbridge, with a late Roman burial ground (Chambers 1976b). At Witney itself recent excavation at Oakfield House, east of Church Green (and only 150 m north of the Mount House), has revealed Roman settlement features of 2nd-century date (PRN 16105). There are also a few Roman sherds from excavations at Cogges and, less than 1 km to the east, several 2nd-

to 3rd-century urns, possibly indicate a cremation cemetery, were excavated (PRN 9517; Bond 1978a, 8), suggesting another settlement. This may indicate that the ford between Witney and Cogges (Fig. 1.3) was already in use.

A crossing over the river Windrush formed the basis for a late Roman settlement at Gill Mill, just over 3 km downstream of Witney (Wallis and Lambrick 1989, 49–50). A Roman road from here may be indicated by the straight boundary between the later parishes of Cogges and Eynsham (VCH XII, 54–5, 64), echoing the more conspicuous use of Akeman Street as the north boundaries of the Saxon estates of North Leigh and Combe. Blair (1994, 11 and Fig. 77) suggested that a number of lanes running parallel to Akeman Street (including perhaps the Port Street

forming the boundary of the Eynsham estate of 1005) might have had early, possibly even Roman, origins. None of these alignments, however, leads to the river crossing between Witney and Cogges.

One or two of the Roman settlements in the area, notably Standlake, may have survived to the present day, but the majority did not, nor did the villa estates. The excavators of the Shakenoak villa suggested possible boundaries to the estate, and postulated that its land was subsumed into a larger late Roman estate based upon the villa at North Leigh (Brodrigg *et al.* 1978, 183–5 and Fig. 54), but if so, this estate does not appear to have survived in the Saxon documentary records. The evidence for Roman settlement at Witney is at present all 2nd- to 3rd-century, and there is no late Roman material to suggest continuity.

Pagan Saxon evidence of the 5th and 6th centuries is mostly from cemeteries along the Windrush (Fig. 1.2), and includes two rich burials at Bighthampton (Blair 1994, 10, Fig. 13). A settlement has been found by excavation at Cogges (Rowley and Steiner 1996, 139–141), and another at the site of the former villa at Shakenoak Farm (Brodrigg *et al.* 1972). Downstream an isolated sunken-featured building of probable 6th-century date was excavated near Stanton Harcourt (Lambrick *et al.* forthcoming), but the pattern of pagan Saxon settlement is unclear.

During the 7th century, the period of Mercian domination, there was a significant increase in burials in the lower Windrush valley. These occur at Ducklington and at Yelford just 2 to 3 km south of Witney, at the cemetery around a barrow at Stanton Harcourt (Blair 1994, 33, Fig. 31) and most significantly, the princely Anglian cremation burial in the Asthall barrow some 6 km upstream (Blair 1994, 38 and 48). Shakenoak continued to be occupied in the 7th century; there was also a cemetery there, and three sceattas show continuing activity in the 8th century (Brodrigg *et al.* 1972; Brodrigg *et al.* 1978). The survival of the Roman river crossing at Gill Mill may be indicated by the mid-Saxon burials and the very early church known at Cokethorpe (Fig. 1.2) on the south-west side (Blair 1994, 131, figs 77 and 137). At Cogges stray finds of pottery led the excavators to suggest that there was continuity into the mid- to late-Saxon periods (Rowley and Steiner 1996, 122–3). It is possible that there was also a settlement on 'Witta's island (Witney)'; the use of a personal Saxon name perhaps suggests that it was re-founded during the mid-Saxon period.

Other evidence for mid-Saxon settlement is very scarce. The Witney area should be considered in the context of other well documented estates in the Thames Valley. Excavations at Eynsham have confirmed the documentary evidence for the 8th-century origin of the minster, and Bampton may have been a minster foundation of similar antiquity (Blair 1994, 64). Bampton was certainly established by the 10th century. Minster Lovell (*Minstre* in 1086), which lies just three miles up the Windrush Valley from Witney, has no evidence for a mother parish (Blair 1994, 55 and 66, Fig. 48), but it is possible that this was another early minster site to which Hailey and

Crawley were attached. The Minster Lovell Jewel, dating to c 900, and now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, certainly suggests that it was a place of some importance by the 10th century.

#### The late Saxon estate and the manor at Witney

It is in the late Saxon period that the estate upon which the manor at Witney was based took shape. The estate is first mentioned in 956–7, when 17 hides at *Crydan bricge* (ie Curbridge), owned by the abbot of Abingdon, were transferred to Brihthelm (bishop, possibly of Wells) in exchange for Kennington (Gelling 1978, 202–6 Charter 76). Curbridge appears to be recorded as a separate estate at that date, but was amalgamated with Crawley, Hailey and Witney to form an estate of 30 hides when it was granted by King Edgar to Aelfhelm in 969 (Gelling 1967, 99 Appendix II; Blair 1994, 133, note 204). This late Saxon and medieval estate 'at Witney' is described in two charters, of 969 and of 1044, when it was granted by Edward the Confessor to Bishop Aelfwine of Winchester (Gelling 1967, 101–3).

The charters record a series of topographical features, most of which can still be followed on the ground today, and the estate survives in modified form as the modern parishes of Crawley, Curbridge, Hailey and Witney. The charter boundaries have been discussed exhaustively by modern scholars, and plans of its likely extent have been published by Gelling (1967, 99–103), Bond (1978a and 1978b, 9–14) and most recently by Blair (1994, 131, Fig. 77), who has walked the entire circuit. His version is reproduced on Figs 1.2 and 1.3. Blair's major change from previous versions is the incorporation of a length of the narrow strip of land between two arms of the river Windrush south of Witney.

The estate formed a transect of the Windrush valley from high land on the right bank to higher on the left. Other mid-Windrush parishes have a similar form, although the more typical upper Thames parish is a transect from river to high ground on one side only. Witney's 7180 acres or 3000 ha (OS Area Book 1877) represent the 30 hides of the 10th-century charter.

The description 'at Witney' in the charter of 969 is clear evidence that the manorial centre was established at Witney by this time. The increase in size of the estate, over half of which lay north-east of the Windrush, may have been sufficient reason for relocating the manorial centre from Curbridge to a new site closer to its centre. The choice of Witney may have been determined by the factors already described: the natural defences of 'Witta's island', its location at the junction of two geological zones, the crossing point of the Windrush, and perhaps the presence of a pre-existing settlement opposite at Cogges. Other factors are also likely to have been relevant. The position of Witney offers easy access to the low-lying ground between the arms of the Windrush downstream, which Blair considers to have been a highly-valued resource (Blair 1994, 130). In addition, although not quite central to the estate, a manorial

centre on the west side of the Windrush may have been chosen because much of the north-eastern part of the estate was wooded (Schumer 1984, 18, 25–7; Blair 1994, xix, Fig. 2), and the bulk of the cultivated land would have lain in the south-western half of the estate.

In 1005 the road to Bladon passing through Witney was described as the 'Port-street' (Fig. 1.3) and there was also an important early east-west route from Witney to Eynsham (Rowley and Steiner 1996, 3). Blair notes that, whereas the charter of 969 starts on the west of the estate at Hawk's Low, the 1044 charter begins at Witney, confirming its key role within the estate by that date (Blair pers. comm.).

The location of the late Saxon manorial centre at Witney is unknown. There is no evidence of Anglo-Saxon work in the existing church of St Mary (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 843–5; Blair this volume). If the estate had an older church it may have been elsewhere, perhaps on the line of Corn Street or Crown Lane leading to the ford to Cogges, as suggested by Monk (1894). Two landscape features at Witney are ascribed to the Saxon period. One of these is Em's dyke not far west of the Mount House, linked to Queen Emma (*Aelfgifu*), who was the widow of two kings of England, Ethelred II and Cnut, and who was one of the witnesses to the grant of the estate to Bishop Aelfwine in 1044. The dyke is in fact a former natural channel of the river Windrush (Rodwell 1975, 179), and Monk has suggested that Em's dyke is not a shortening of Emma, but is derived from Ham's dyke, meaning the drain of the water-meadows (Monk 1894, 14). The charter of 1044, however, does refer to a 'new ditch' of some kind, which Kaye speculated might have been Emma's Dyke (Kaye 1978, 10).

A Saxon rampart is also marked on the 1st edition 1:2500 OS map (1876) running around the west and south sides of the church (see Fig. 1.3). Construction of a new housing estate and the cutting of a cable trench in 1959, however, failed to find any trace of these features west of the church (Rodwell 1975, 179). This feature is further discussed in Chapter 2, Mount Mills trenches, below.

### The bishops of Winchester at Witney

As stated above, the estate was back in royal hands in the 11th century, and was granted to the bishops of Winchester in 1044. The manor of the bishops of Winchester at Witney was the centre of an extensive sub-Cotswold estate managed for the benefit of its absentee lord. It was one of the two largest estates of the bishopric outside Hampshire, the other being Taunton (Bond 1978b, 11).

A Table of the bishops for the period from 1044 to the end of the medieval period is reproduced here.

Documentary references to the early medieval history of the manor are few. The Winchester episcopal pipe rolls do not begin until 1208, before when information has to be gleaned from disparate sources, such as the chronicles of the Norman Kings, the royal pipe rolls and the royal itineraries (see also

Table 1.1 *The bishops of Winchester 1044–1501 (after Powicke and Fryde 1961), showing dates from acquisition of temporales (secular control of the diocese)*

Stigand	1047–70	Richard de la More	1280–82
Walkelin	1070–98	John of Pontoise	1282–1304
William Giffard	1100–29	Henry Woodlock	1305–16
Henry of Blois	1129–71	John Sandale	1316–19
Richard of Ilchester	1173–88	Rigaud of Assier	1320–23
Godfrey de Lucy	1189–1204	John Stratford	1324–33
Peter des Roches	1206–38	Adam Orleton	1334–45
Ralph Nevill	1238–9	William Edendon	1346–66
William Raleigh	1244–50	William of Wykeham	1367–1404
Aymer de Valence	1250–60	Henry Beaufort	1405–47
Andrew London	1261–2	William Waynflete	1447–86
William Taunton			
John Gervais	1262–68	Peter Courtenay	1487–92
Nicholas of Ely	1268–80	Thomas Langton	1493–1501
Robert Burnell	1280		

Chapter 6). The chronicles, among which the *Gesta Stephani* is the most detailed, do not include any reference to Witney, and Witney is not among the six estates on which Bishop Henri de Blois is recorded as having built or strengthened castles in 1138 (*Annales Monastici. Vol. 2 De Wintonia* ed. Luard 1865). The first documentary reference to the bishop's activities at Witney is in 1162, when the (royal) pipe roll records that the bishop of Winchester owed the king 20 marks for Witney (8 Hen. II, *Pipe Roll Society*, v). This entry comes under the heading 'New pleas and agreements', and implies some privilege granted to Bishop Henri de Blois by King Henry II, but what this was is not recorded. In the same year the advowson of the church of St Mary was granted to the Hospital of St Cross at Winchester (British Library, Lansdowne Ch. 679).

Vacancies in the bishopric of Winchester, at which times the manors reverted to the king, occurred in 1129 after the death of William Giffard, in 1170–71 after that of Henry de Blois and in 1204–5 after that of Godfrey de Lucy. The entries for these years in the royal pipe rolls, however, do not mention Witney at all. In 1179 a further entry in the royal pipe rolls records the fine of half a mark imposed on a weaver of Witney for the false raising of hue and cry, but this sheds no light either upon the status of the vill or the character of the buildings of the manor.

The royal itineraries of the Norman and Angevin Kings, which show where the monarch stayed on his travels, have been plotted for Oxfordshire (Rosevear 1995). These do not mention Witney until 1214 during the reign of King John. Whether this is of any significance is, however, doubtful; the king and his entourage will have stayed at palaces roughly a day's ride apart, and Witney is not as much as a day's ride either from the royal palaces at Woodstock and Beaumont, Oxford, or from Bampton, where the kings did stay when coming from the west.

In 1202 a fair at Witney was granted by King John to Bishop Godfrey de Lucy (Beresford 1959, 189 note 6). The Winchester episcopal pipe rolls, a fairly complete series of annual rolls which engross the annual manorial accounts, and later the borough accounts, for each of the 43 manors held by the bishops across southern England, start for Witney in 1208–9. The accounts continue until the manor was sold in 1862, but from c 1500, after the buildings were leased out, there is much less information. No borough court rolls survive before the 16th century. Only four of the Winchester episcopal pipe rolls have been published (Hall 1903; Holt 1964; Page 1996; Page 1999). Patricia Hyde, however, has studied the Witney rolls, together with those of Adderbury, the other manor of the bishops of Winchester in Oxfordshire, for a B. Litt. thesis (Hyde 1954), and her information provides the basis for much of the detail outlined here. The building accounts from 1208 to 1396, and selectively thereafter from 1398 to 1498, have been studied in detail by John Blair to comprehend the layout of the manor (see Chapter 6), but the other sections have not been re-examined. A comprehensive study, however, is in progress for a forthcoming volume of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History, and relevant documentary references gathered by Alan Crossley, Chris Day and Simon Townley up to July 2000 have been incorporated here (see also Chapter 6).

The bishop's demesne appears to have been increased during the early 13th century, and by 1231 included around 886 (probably customary) acres of arable lying in seven fields in Curbridge, and 222 acres of pasture and meadow. Demesne wheat was grown chiefly for sale, though spring barley, oats, and small quantities of peas, beans and vetches were also grown, and were used mostly on the manor for wages and fodder (Hyde 1954, 135, 139). The bishop also owned seven water-mills on the Windrush, four corn-mills and three fulling-mills, which were very profitable; in 1245, for instance they brought in £22 16s 8d compared with less than £40 assized rent (Hyde 1954, 63). Fishing rights on the Windrush were also the bishop's prerogative (*Rot. Hund.*), and fish were also farmed in the large ponds south-east of the Mount House, which were restocked in 1254 (Winchester Account Rolls).

During the early 14th century vines were also cultivated, but these are not heard of again after 1312 (Hyde 1954, 144). Livestock is mentioned occasionally in the account rolls: the manor farm included barns, a cowhouse, a pigsty, a goat-house, dovecots and stables. In 1346 Bishop William of Edenden restocked the manor with 2 cart horses, 14 plough oxen, one bull, 15 cows and calves, 600 sheep, 2 sows, a drake and 4 ducks, a cock and 4 hens (Ballard 1916, 192). The acreage of demesne arable may have fallen during this time, as it is recorded as being only 244 acres in 1346 and 279 acres in 1347 (Hyde 1954, 48–53 and table IV). Hyde, however, argues that the apparent decline may simply reflect a changeover from customary acres to measured acres during this period.

The bishop had a park at Curbridge just west of Witney, which was managed from a moated enclosure at Park Farm (Monk 1894, 28). The first documentary reference to the park is in 1246/7, when expenses are recorded on digging stone *ad parcum claudend* (Winchester Account Rolls), and thereafter references are common. Wages for a park keeper are recorded in 1253, and a new ditch was made in 1261. Rights of pasture were sold there, and revenues were obtained from honey, apples, nuts and deadwood. Various accounts mention hunting in the later 13th century, and the re-stocking of the manor in 1346 also saw the stocking of the park with 36 does (Hyde 1954, 44–5 and 144–5).

As well as detailing work on the manorial buildings (see Chapter 6), the Winchester account rolls shed light on the development of the town. The layout of properties either side of a triangular green, with the church of St Mary at its base, lines of burgage plots on either side and a road crossing the apex, is clearly planned, not the result of organic growth around the Winchester manor and church (Rodwell 1975, 179; Bond 1986, 138). Bond comments that 'an annual payment of 6d is by far the commonest rent recorded in the Hundred Rolls of AD1279', a degree of standardisation typical of a new town (Bond 1986, 137–8). The manor house, church and rectory house all lie in Curbridge, outside the limits of the medieval borough or town of Witney (Fig. 1.3). Crossley believes that this arrangement results from a rationalisation at the time when the borough was created, leaving the church and manor free of interference from the borough (Crossley pers. comm.).

The account rolls show that the borough of Witney was already in existence by the time they begin during the episcopacy of Peter de Roches (1206–38). The *purchasia* of 1208–9 include the entry *de Burgo xx s. pro pace habenda* and the expenses that year three men *pro libertate novae cartae*. This may indicate the granting of a new borough charter. There is an entry for a borough reeve in 1210–11 (Beresford 1959, 189 note 6). There was a market on Thursdays (*Rot. Hund.*), for which there is no recorded grant, but which was probably already in existence in 1208, as there is an entry for the mending and roofing of market stalls (*seldis de burgo*) in 1210/11. Large scale assarting in Hailey during the 13th century may have been associated with the foundation and growth of the borough, since most of the 500 acres cleared by 1237 were apparently held by leading Witney burgesses, as was another 200 acres cleared before 1279 (Hyde 1954, 33–4 and 78).

Bishop Peter des Roches was a close advisor to King John. The king stayed at Witney in June 1207, in January and March 1209, in November in 1213 and again in 1214 (Monk 1894, 18). The bishop was also tutor to Henry III, who was at Witney in 1221. Hyde notes that in 1210 King John's hunting dogs were kept at Witney for 57 days, at a cost of 3s. 3½ d. In the same year Bishop Peter des Roches paid 2s 10d for a pitcher and tub for a bath for the king, and paid for presents for the king at Woodstock, and birds for the

queen. The following year the accounts show wages and expenses for the knights to attend the Welsh campaign (Hyde 1954, 28). The presence of the king or his retinue was a burden on the bishop's pocket, but a source of revenue for the town.

The borough was extended beyond the bridge across the Windrush at Bridge Street by 1219/20, when borough income included 16s from 16 messuages situated in the meadow next to the bridge towards Cogges (Winchester Account Roll 1219/20: 11M59/B1/8). The income from the borough was separated from that of the manor in 1218/19 (Winchester Account Roll: 11M59/B1/7). Whether this change of accounting at Winchester reflects the growing income from the borough, which now merited separate accounting, or implies that the borough was still of recent origin is unclear. Another fair was granted to Peter des Roches by Henry III in 1231, and Witney was clearly thriving in the first half of the 13th century. In 1279 the Hundred Rolls record 255 tenants holding 314 tenements (Bond 1978b, 11).

Nevertheless, except in 1225 and 1247, when the manor was at fee farm, the borough was managed throughout the medieval period by the bishop's bailiff and by two reeves (Hyde 1954, 66), who maintained close control. Hyde doubted that medieval Witney was a centre of trade at any time after the early years of the 13th century (Hyde 1954, 87). The gross rents climbed very slowly, from £9 4s 6d in 1232 to £9 7s 7d in c 1300 and only £9 8s 11d in 1350, while the tolls from the fairs fell from £4 11s 6d in 1220 to £3 3s 0d in 1232. After 1320 all market and fair income was let to the reeves for 56s per annum, consisting of 18s tolls with 2 fairs, 18s stallage and 20s seldage (Hyde 1954, 66-9 and table VII).

Witney was only infrequently rated as a borough for taxation purposes; in 1296 it was counted as such, but in 1334 it was taxed at one fifteenth, not one tenth, that is as a vill not a town (Glasscock 1975, 237). Members were sent irregularly to Parliament between 1304 and 1331, but after 1348 the burgesses sought and obtained exemption from the expense (Hyde 1954, 71-2). The Black Death affected the manor and borough alike, and there were numerous empty tenements for some years afterwards.

The effect of the Black Death on the manor was catastrophic, killing two-thirds of its tenants (Hyde 1954, 167). Nevertheless it was long-term population decline that led to a drastic change in the agricultural regime, in which Witney became a collection centre for wool, which was brought there from the other episcopal estates at Adderbury and Brightwell near Harwell (Hyde 1954, 180-2). The sole references to the wool trade before the 14th century are to a weaver at Witney fined in 1179, and to fleeces from Eynsham Abbey sold to a wool merchant at Witney in 1268. From the time of Bishop Orleton in 1334 there were 700-800 sheep at Witney, and under Bishop Edington there were 1043 (Hyde 1954, 149-55). In 1382 a total of 1100 sheep were shorn at Witney and 1500 fleeces came from the other estates. Men were hired to sort, clean and pluck the wool (Hyde 1954, 180-2).

By the late 14th century, in common with most ecclesiastical landowners, the bishop ceased to maintain the demesne, and the estate was increasingly leased out (Hyde 1954, 181).

### Post-medieval history by Alan Crossley

In the early 16th century the buildings remained the working centre of the Winchester manorial estate at Witney, a manor house in the sense that manorial courts were held there, and a working farmhouse with barns, dovecot, fishponds and so on to serve the demesne land, which by then was consolidated immediately west and south of the town in Curbridge township. Part of the demesne, the enclosed Witney Park with its hunting-lodge, the later Park Farm, was let separately to the Wenman family of Caswell for much of the 16th century. The bulk of the demesne, from the late 14th century, had usually been let as a single farm for terms of years, but it is not clear whether the manor house site was included in the leases.<sup>1</sup> Certainly from 1509 the demesne lessee, William Brice, had the manor house and dovecot,<sup>2</sup> and the fact that the rent for the demesne (£20) was unchanged since 1474 implies that the arrangement may have been long established.<sup>3</sup> Even so the bishop evidently reserved a right of access, and as late as 1479-80, when he was intending to visit, he paid for extensive repairs and a new chamber at the Witney manor house.<sup>4</sup>

In 1551 the temporalities of the see of Winchester were granted to the Crown in exchange for a large annuity, and Witney was granted in the same year to Sir Andrew Dudley; it was restored to the bishops of Winchester together with their other estates in 1558.<sup>5</sup> The Brice family, first established as demesne tenants in 1497, occupied the manor house for over 150 years. The head of the family in the later 16th century, Stephen (d. 1620), was involved in the blanket industry.<sup>6</sup> From 1583 Stephen Brice was also sub-lessee and later lessee of Witney Park; by the early 17th century he was evidently living in the park lodge, while his son Thomas occupied the manor house, by then usually called Witney farmhouse.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Brice, associated as farmer of the manor with his father Stephen in the early 17th century, was joint farmer with his son Robert from the 1620s.<sup>8</sup> Robert was tenant of the manor house during the Civil War, and in 1647 paid £180 of rent arrears for the bishop's Witney estate to the local Parliamentary Committee.<sup>9</sup>

After the Civil War the bishop of Winchester's lands were confiscated and sold off, and in 1649 Witney manor, borough, and park (including the manor house and outbuildings on a 2-acre site) were purchased by two men who were probably acting for William Lenthall, Speaker of Parliament, who was certainly lord by 1652.<sup>10</sup> In 1654 he settled the Witney estate on his son John.<sup>11</sup> At the Restoration the bishop recovered the estate, and in July 1661 let it for 21 years to Sir Henry Hyde (d. 1709),

Lord Cornbury and later earl of Clarendon. Thereafter the lease was held by members of Hyde's family.<sup>12</sup> In 1662 Hyde was taxed on a nine-hearth house at Witney, which was evidently the manor house.<sup>13</sup> Then or soon afterwards Hyde's tenant at the manor house was Robert Brice, who may well have lived there throughout the Lenthall interlude.<sup>14</sup> The duration of Robert Brice's tenancy of the manor is not known. A few Brices, minor figures in the clothing trade, continued to be recorded in Witney, but not in connection with the manor house.

By the later 17th century there seems to have been a tenurial division between the manor house and its outbuildings. In 1697 a large section of the demesne (the land which later became Burwell farm) was let by the earl of Rochester to John Horne, to be worked from various buildings including a great barn and the lower part of a great yard 'before the house', but excluding the dovecot 'at the lower end' of that yard.<sup>15</sup> The house in question, 'the farmhouse now or late in possession of widow Deacon', was almost certainly the manor house. In 1705, described as the 'manor house, farm house in Curbridge', it was let to an apparently minor figure, John Warwick, along with 23 butchers' stalls in the market-place and the right to shovel up dung in the streets.<sup>16</sup>

The subdivision of the demesne farm as revealed in 1697 was probably not new, since this southern or Burwell portion seems to have been known already as Pryor's farm, in reference to an earlier (untraced) lease to Matthew Pryor.<sup>17</sup> Horne's lease of 'Pryor's farm' was renewed on similar terms in 1713 and 1730, but his chief farmhouse was Witney Park Farm and it is not certain how long the link between his land and the farm buildings near the manor house was maintained. Certainly the great barn east of the manor house was used by various tenants of the nearby meadows by 1739, and the link with 'Pryor's farm' was finally broken in the 1750s when Burwell Farm was built to serve the southern demesne lands.<sup>18</sup> The manor house itself continued to be associated with a very modest holding, in 1727 being leased with 30 acres of meadow, the shambles, and the right to take dung. In 1741 it was let for 14 years to Walker Middleton, a currier, with only the meadow. The leases reserved the right of access to the manor house for manorial courts.<sup>19</sup>

In 1751 Hyde's nephew Henry, earl of Clarendon, sold the residue of his lease to Charles, duke of Marlborough, whose successors continued to take leases from the bishops of Winchester until in 1862 the sixth duke finally bought the reversion of manor and borough.<sup>20</sup> The transfer of the lease to the duke in 1751 was followed by important changes on the Witney estate, notably the building of Burwell Farm<sup>21</sup> and substantial changes at the manor house. In 1757 the house was let to James Gray, a solicitor,<sup>22</sup> who had long been deputy steward of the manorial court as well as clerk to the Blanket Company.<sup>23</sup> The lease allowed Gray to demolish a stable and use the materials for a proposed addition to the house; he

was also given a large deduction from his first rent to allow for rebuilding and repairs to the house, outbuildings, and walls. Probably this dates the transformation of the house into a gentleman's residence with the name Mount House (see Chapter 6, Post-medieval evidence for the buildings). In 1795 Gray's lease passed to Thomas Dolley,<sup>24</sup> and in the early 19th century the Misses Dolley held Mount House and c 82 acres of land, mostly meadows between the house and the river Windrush.<sup>25</sup>

Mount House and the associated farm land seem to have been separated by 1818, when the Misses Dolley still held the land, while the house was occupied by Charles Henderson. Henderson, who appears variously as bailiff of Witney and deputy ranger of Wychwood Forest, was still living there in 1830.<sup>26</sup> By 1840 a schoolmaster, Richard Heel, was resident, and by then the Mount barn and outbuildings were the working centre of an estate of about 150 acres, including the meadows to the south and east, leased from the duke by James Marriott, whose residence was in High Street.<sup>27</sup> The manor courts continued to be held at Mount House.<sup>28</sup> For much of the later 19th century Mount House was occupied by a succession of Wesleyan ministers, probably at the behest of the duke's immediate lessees, the Earlys.<sup>29</sup> The farm buildings to the east continued to be associated with a sizeable farm, being held in 1858 by Thomas Shuffrey and in 1863 by Elizabeth Shuffrey, who was still the duke's tenant there in the 1890s.<sup>30</sup> A drawing of the farm buildings made in the 1850s by Langford, with the Mount House and the church in the background, is shown in Fig. 6.3.

In 1886 Mount House, still let to an Early for £35 a year, was sold by the duke to James Shayler, a retired bookseller, who was still living there in 1891.<sup>31</sup> In 1899 James Marriott bought some 14 acres to the east of the house and built Mount mills, completed in 1900 and opened in 1901;<sup>32</sup> when Marriott died in 1904 he was still 'of High Street', so the rebuilding of Mount House some time after 1898 may not have been his work but that of his son James Francis Marriott (d. 1929), who was living there by 1907.<sup>33</sup> The house continued as a private residence until 1983.

#### STATUS OF THE SITE BEFORE THE 1984 EXCAVATIONS

Alan Crossley has shown that the remains of the manor house had disappeared in the mid-18th century (above and Chapter 6). A detailed pen and wash drawing of 'Whitney Palace in the County of Oxford' by Samuel Buck (Fig. 6.4), dated c 1729 (Bodleian Library, Gough Maps 26, F.60), illustrates a complex of buildings of Romanesque character. This picture does not include any unequivocal landmark to locate it in relation to the surviving town. By contrast the earliest detailed map, an estate map of 1814-16 (BL, (R) MS C 17:49 (276)), shows only two ranges. A similar footprint is repeated until

the present house was constructed in the early 1900s (see also Chapter 6, Fig. 6.2).

Despite its demolition, sufficient fragments and foundations remained to associate the Mount House firmly with the site of the medieval manor and it was recognised as such in the two 19th-century histories of Witney, that of the Revd J A Giles quoted above, and that of William Monk, who described 'foundations of a more pretentious building' (1894, 8). Early Ordnance Survey maps of the town, however, marked Park Farm as the site of the bishop's palace. No further research was carried out until Hyde's work in the 1950s. She identified the central buildings of the bishop's manor at Witney as 'probably on the site of what is now the Moat (*sic*) House, as they were divided only by a wall in frequent need of repair from the cemetery' (Hyde 1954, 126). After the reorganisation of county boundaries in 1974 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) published a survey of the Historic Towns of the enlarged county of Oxfordshire (Rodwell 1975) as an aid to the district and county planning authorities. On the map of Witney's archaeology this marked the Mount House as the site of the bishop of Winchester's manor, though the accompanying text leaned towards the alternative site at Park Farm.

In the exceptionally dry summer of 1976, Richard Early, the owner of the Mount House, recorded a rectangular arrangement of parch-marks in the south lawn, which two years later were reported in the *Witney Gazette* as evidence of 'an archaeologist's feast' (25 May 1978). His sketch (held in the archive) corresponds remarkably well with a vertical photograph that summer (Fig. 5.1) and with the excavated remains. The Witney Historical Society was formed in 1977, and began to publish a series of *Newsletters* dealing with the history of the town. *Newsletter 4* (1978) included a summary of the Saxon and early medieval history by James Bond, which firmly identified the Mount House as the site of the bishop's palace (Bond 1978b, 13).

## THE EXCAVATIONS, THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY AND EVENTUAL DISPLAY OF THE SITE

### The planning background

When C H Pearce Homes bought the site outright and applied for planning consent for sheltered housing development in 1984, the site, therefore, was known to have archaeological potential. At the time the procedure for registering an archaeological constraint was by formal comment from the County Archaeologist in consultation with the director of OAU, but by a combination of oversights they did not see this application and no representation was made to the planning authority. The Historic Towns Survey failed to act as a failsafe in alerting the District Council Conservation Officer to the potential of the site, and the planning committee resolved to

issue consent on 22 May 1984 subject to conditions to be bound up in a planning agreement.

### The rescue of the bishop's manor house

The developer's programme left two-and-a-half months before construction was to begin, and as soon as the mistake was realised the OAU asked for access to undertake evaluation trenching funded by English Heritage, which was granted. Trenching in late June rapidly established that well-preserved stone buildings survived below ground, and was followed in early July by a rescue excavation (see Frontispiece) lasting until the end of August to record the areas most threatened (again funded by English Heritage).

At the end of July English Heritage began to negotiate for the redesign of foundations to protect the remains below ground, and on 17 August West Oxfordshire District Council announced that it was consulting with leading planning counsel on whether the 22 May resolution constituted planning consent, or whether the council could reconsider its decision in the light of the archaeological evidence. On 14 September the Lowland Planning Committee met and duly reversed its decision, and later the same day the site was designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (now SAM 21834), a decision supported by the local MP (and Home Secretary) Douglas Hurd. The Planning Committee's decision was ratified by full council on 3 October 1984.

Pearce Homes and West Oxfordshire District Council were unable to agree on a price for the purchase of the site, and on 9 October Pearce Homes issued a Notice requesting judicial review of the local authority's action. Over the winter of 1984-5 OAU analysed the finds and prepared for publication of the excavation, in the expectation that the site would be backfilled and the finds demanded back by the owners. The Queen's Bench hearing took place on 4 and 5 November 1985, the judge expressing surprise that 'the question of what constituted planning consent had not arisen in the 25-odd years in which the modern town planning code has been in force'. Judgement was made on 6 December, ref CO/181/84. On 12 December *The Times* reported as follows:

Regina v West Oxfordshire District Council,  
*ex parte* CH Pearce Homes Ltd

*The written formal notification of a grant of planning permission, and not the planning authority's resolution to grant planning permission, constituted the grant of planning permission, Mr. Justice Woolf held in the Queen's bench division on 6th December, when refusing an application for judicial review of decisions made by the West Oxfordshire District Council on a planning application made by the applicant.*

### **The subsequent history and eventual display of the site**

During the subsequent two years the Mount House remained unoccupied and in the ownership of Crest Homes (which had taken over CH Pearce Homes) while the District Council and English Heritage attempted to find a mutually acceptable long-term future for the site. Access for weatherproofing of the exposed remains was only obtained by the council in December 1986. OAU was instrumental in finding a suitable purchaser and occupant in the Thames and Chilterns Tourist Board, which exchanged contracts on 9 November 1987. As a condition of the transfer the finds from the excavations were donated to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service.

### **The Tourist Board: refurbishment and occupancy**

In order to rehabilitate the house the Tourist Board needed Scheduled Monument Consent for further below-ground works, for which OAU carried out the archaeological recording early in 1988. On 9 June the Tourist Board called a summit meeting at which its proposals for display, and those of English Heritage, were debated. It was resolved to open the site to the public prior to backfilling any part of the exposed remains, and this occurred over the weekend following the formal opening of the Tourist Board's offices on Friday 9 September. On 3 November Jane Sharman of English Heritage chaired a second summit meeting, at which a protective covering for the remains was first mooted. Following a third meeting in February 1989 final excavations were carried out on the North Range, and after the reinstatement of this area the Tourist Board constructed a commemorative wall marking the outer face of the North Range.

From 1989 to 1991 OAU continued to advise English Heritage upon the tower display proposals, and put forward proposals for further work in the tower area both to resolve questions left unanswered by the 1984 work and to explore areas that would be affected by the anchorage points of the proposed protective covering, a teflon tent. This work was carried out in June 1991. The foundations were constructed during the latter half of 1991 by Bennets of Minster Lovell under the supervision of English Heritage's architect Jacqui Allen; the tent was designed by Italia I, and was erected in a week. Site information panels and displays for a small information centre, constructed with funds provided in March 1992 by West Oxfordshire District Council, were prepared by John Lange of the Oxfordshire County Museums Service, and the building opened in May 1992.

Public display might have been the closing chapter of the rescue, but there was still a twist to come. The Tourist Board's assets, including the Mount House, had in early 1993 passed to the hands of the liquidator, who had failed to find an appropriate purchaser, and it was possible that the site might again revert to a private residence. It was finally purchased in June

1993 by Oxfordshire County Council, following the active campaigning of the late Geoffrey Fowler. In July 1993 *British Archaeological News* celebrated what was estimated as the sixth 'rescue' since 1984 under the headline 'Nine lives for the Bishop's Palace'.

In 1994 OAU began discussions with English Heritage to complete the writing up of the excavations for publication, incorporating evaluations carried out in 1984, 1990 and 1992 on adjacent properties to the east and the south. An assessment of the post-excavation work already carried out in the 1980s was carried out by Graham Keevill and Angela Boyle, and work on the final publication began in earnest in January 1997.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE EXCAVATIONS AND POST-EXCAVATION RESEARCH DESIGN**

The excavations at the Mount House were directed by Brian Durham throughout. The bulk of the post-excavation analysis, however, was carried out by Tim Allen, who supervised the excavation of one of the two principal areas examined in 1984, assisted by Jonathan Hiller, who was part of the excavation team in the work carried out from 1989-92.

The stated objectives of the 1984 investigation were 'to recover the ground plan and building sequence of the palace and to ascertain the presence or absence of a (previous) late Saxon nucleus'. Trial trenching had established the presence of a moat marking the northern limit of the complex, and had suggested that the medieval buildings were laid out around a central courtyard. Excavation was largely restricted to the footprints of the proposed new buildings, which in practice meant examining the south-east and north-west corners of the medieval site.

An interim account of the 1984 excavations was published at the end of that year (Durham 1984). Considerable post-excavation analysis was carried out in the winter of 1984-5, as it was expected that the finds would at any moment have to be returned to the developer, but a publication report was not completed. The conclusions reached in the interim report remained the framework within which limited further excavation work was carried out in 1988, 1989 and 1991.

When the future of the site was finally assured after its purchase by Oxfordshire County Council in 1993, an assessment of the work needed to incorporate the results of the 1988-91 excavations was carried out, and nine further research aims were identified. Aims 1-3 and 7 were to integrate aspects of the data gathered in 1988, 1989 and 1991 with that already analysed in 1984, and in so doing reassess the dating of the stratigraphic sequence, with specific reference to the pottery (see Chapters 2 and 7). Aim 4 was 'to place the Mount House structures in their archaeological and architectural context by comparing them to contemporary castle, palace and manorial structures in plan, elevation (where rele-

vant) and architectural detail' (see Chapters 3, 7 and 8). Aim 5 was 'to examine the historical context for the construction and development of the Bishop's Palace at the Mount House site' (above and Chapters 6 and 8), and Aim 6 'to assess the significance of the palace as an estate centre in the Witney area, especially in relation to Cogges' (see Chapter 8, Introduction). Aim 8 concentrated upon reassessing the pottery for the light it might shed upon the supply of ceramics in medieval Oxfordshire, with particular reference to comparison with Oxford city (see Chapter 3), and Aim 9 was more generally 'to examine the status and economy of the site in the light of the artefactual and ecofactual evidence in comparison to other sites in the region' (see Chapters 3, 4 and 8).

When post-excavation analysis resumed, the opportunity was also taken to investigate new lines of evidence that had not been possible in the hurried investigations of 1984. These included an examination of aerial photographs, particularly those of the dry summer of 1976, and the commissioning of a geophysical survey of the open areas of the site, the results of which are published in Chapter 5. The report also benefitted from the inclusion of the summary of the post-medieval documentary evidence for the site by Alan Crossley and other documentary references uncovered by Simon Townley during research (undertaken while this report was in preparation) for the forthcoming volume of the VCH (above and Chapter 6).

### The archive

The paper archive has been microfilmed and a copy deposited with the National Monuments Record. The finds have already been donated to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service (Accession No. 1985.50), and the paper archive has now been deposited in the same repository.

### END NOTES

1. P Hyde 1954, App. VI, list of demesne tenants.
2. P R O, C 142/77, no. 41.
3. Hyde 1954, App. VI. The rent increased to £32 in the 1580s after the addition of woods and a mill: Hants R O, 11M59/B1/281.
4. Hants R O, 11M59/B1/206-7.
5. *Registra Stephanni Gardiner et Johanni Poynt, episcoporum Wintoniensium* (1531-55), trans. and

- ed. H. Chitty, Cant. & York Soc. 37 (1930), xix-xx; *Cal. Pat. Rolls. Edw. VI, IV, 1550-53* (1926), 153; *ibid. Philip and Mary, IV, 1557-58* (1939), 147.
6. e.g. described as a tenter: P R O, REQ 2/174/51.
7. P R O, PROB 11/107, ff 376-9; Blenheim Mun., B/M/144, fol. 39.
8. Witney account rolls in Hants R O, 11M59/E2/159478/b80; *ibid.* 159517/b158.
9. P R O, SP 28/213, f 33.
10. *Ibid.* C 54/3418, mm. 39-46; BL, MS. Top. Oxon. d 215, f 115.
11. Berks R O, D/ELL F 18/1.
12. Hants R O, 11M59/E2/155643, 102-03.
13. P R O, E 179/255/4, f 28.
14. *Hearth Tax Oxon.* O R S 21, 214: for Price read Brice.
15. Blenheim Mun., box 156, lease of 1697.
16. *Ibid.* box 156, lease of 1705.
17. Cf. leases of 1697, 1713 in *ibid.* box 156.
18. *Ibid.* box 156, leases, *passim*.
19. *Ibid.* box 156, leases of 1727, 1741.
20. Hants R O, 11M59/E2/155643; *ibid.* cal. lease registers 1747-1836; Ch. of England Record Centre (CERC), file 20325; Blenheim Mun., box 152, abstract of title and other docs.
21. Blenheim Mun., box 156, leases of 1756 and 1774 to Thomas Staley.
22. *Ibid.* box 156, note of lease with attached plan folded into an unrelated lease of 1780 to Phipps Weston.
23. e.g. Blenheim Mun., shelf C 1, box of pps. inc. note of manorial officers; Oxf. Jnl Synopsis, 28 Mar. 1767.
24. Blenheim Mun., box 156, docs. folded into lease of 1780.
25. Hants R O, 11M59/E2/248950; Blenheim Mun., E/P/31.
26. Hants R O, 11M56/E2/248950; O R O, MS. d.d. Par. Witney b 14, f 79v.; *Pigot's Dir.* (1930).
27. O R O, Curbridge and Witney tithe awards and maps; Census, 1841.
28. *Gardner Dir.* 1852, 573-4.
29. Census, 1851-81; trade directories *passim*; CERC, file 20325; Blenheim Mun., E/P/58: survey of 1863.
30. CERC, file 20325; Blenheim Mun., E/P/58; shelf D 6, tin box.
31. O R O, Dr V/i/1; Census, 1891.
32. Blenheim Mun., modern deeds; *Witney Gaz.* 8 Sept. 1900.
33. *Witney Gaz.* 16 July 1904; Kelly's Dir. (1907); Witney Methodist Ch. dds.

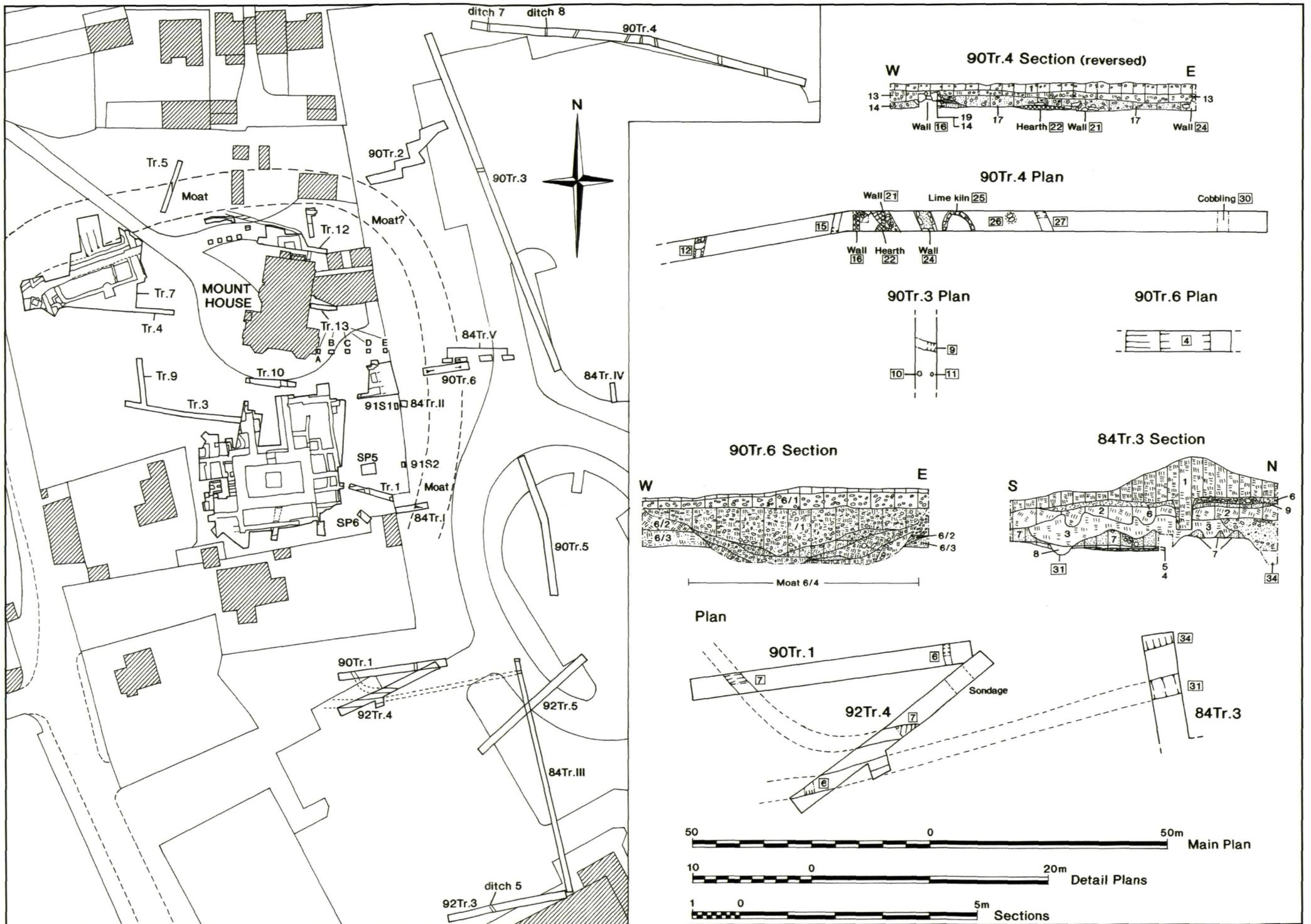


Figure 2.1 Location of excavations in and around Mount House.