

Chapter 4: Periods 3-4 - Medieval and Post-Medieval Activity

PERIOD 3: MEDIEVAL FEATURES

Medieval activity was concentrated entirely at the southern margin of Area B (Fig. 4.1). Sampling of features in this part of the site was at a low level and there may originally have been more features of medieval date than are identified here. In addition, while the dated activity seems to have concentrated in the 13th century the presence of spatially related features apparently of post-medieval date may indicate more extended low level activity in the late medieval period.

A ditch *c* 0.9-1.0 m wide (group 10350) extended approximately northwards from the southern margin of Area B. Its course was partly obscured by later features but it probably ran up or very close to a possible waterhole or small pond (10078). This feature, up to *c* 7 m by 5 m, lay just south-east of the Phase 2 ditch 9060 and contained a fill (10077) which produced 13th century pottery (see Chapter 6 below, Assemblage 42).

In the vicinity of feature 10078 were two pits of medieval date. To the north-east pit 9987 was oval in shape with steep sides and a narrow rounded base and was 2.65 m in diameter and 0.85 m deep. The primary fill was a substantial dumped deposit of grey silt clay which contained a large amount of domestic debris including charred remains and pottery fragments (see Chapter 6 below, Assemblage 43) and an iron bucket handle (SF1534), overlain by a grey silting deposit. To the south, pit 10131 had moderately sloping sides a rounded base and measured 2 m in diameter and 0.4 m deep. This similarly was filled with a substantial dumped deposit containing a large amount of wood charcoal and fragments of burnt clay, overlain by another grey silting deposit.

The remains of an oven 9978, located immediately south-west of feature 10078, consisted of a sub-circular pit with gradually sloping sides and a flat base. A series of sixteen stakeholes within the bottom of the half-sectioned pit survived to an average depth of 0.07 m below the base of the pit. The primary fill within the remains of the oven was a lining of redeposited natural clay which showed evidence of *in situ* scorching. This was overlain by a charcoal-rich silt-clay, in turn sealed by a mid grey silting deposit with infrequent charcoal flecking and small sub-rounded stone. There was no direct dating evidence from this feature. A medieval date is assumed but not proved.

Two approximately parallel lengths of gully, groups 10310 and 10300, were recorded east of these features. The latter, some 0.7-0.8 m across was approximately 18.5 m long, with a roughly-defined terminal at each end. Gully 10310 was narrower (0.4-0.5 m

wide) and both ends were obscured but it is unlikely to have been much longer than 10300. Both features produced small groups of medieval sherds in a similar fabric to that of assemblages 42 and 43. A third gully, to the east of 10300 and similarly aligned, was not dated. It has been assigned to the post-medieval period, but an earlier date is possible.

PERIOD 4: POST-MEDIEVAL FEATURES

A number of post-medieval field boundaries were present in Areas B and C. These are not treated in any detail here. The most significant of these alignments were parallel ditches 10000 and 9000 running NE-SW through Area B, the former keeping roughly to the alignment of the Weald to Canterbury road. A series of ditches and some slighter features ran approximately perpendicular to these boundaries. These included an existing hedge-line which extended NW-SE through Area B, but further boundaries were present which had not survived into recent times. Overall the boundaries indicate the existence of a pattern of fields of more than one phase. This consisted originally of rather smaller fields than survived just prior to the excavation, and was for the most part similar to the pattern seen on the Tithe Map of 1839. This pattern of smaller fields is therefore of early 19th century or earlier date.

At the southern margin of Area B the layout of probable post-medieval boundaries departed from the fairly regular rectilinear pattern seen elsewhere in the area and was apparently related in part to earlier alignments. Two parallel ditches (groups 10290 and 10320) running SSE from the line of ditch group 10085 were aligned similarly to medieval gullies 10300 and 10310, while just west of these features, ditch 10340 connected further post-medieval boundaries with feature 10078. The latter, perhaps a waterhole or pond in Period 3, may have continued to serve a similar function in Period 4. To the south of this feature ditch 10360 extended north-eastwards from the edge of excavation for 12 m, before turning through a right angle and running some 9 m to a south-east terminal. The upper fill of this feature was associated with a scatter of post-medieval ceramic building material and a single sherd of pottery possibly of 16th century date. The Kingsnorth Tithe Map of 1839 shows a small building very close to this location.

The base of an isolated wooden post (10515) was encountered towards the south-western end of Area B. This was unremarkable, except that its position correlated closely with that of a feature shown on 19th-century editions of the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map

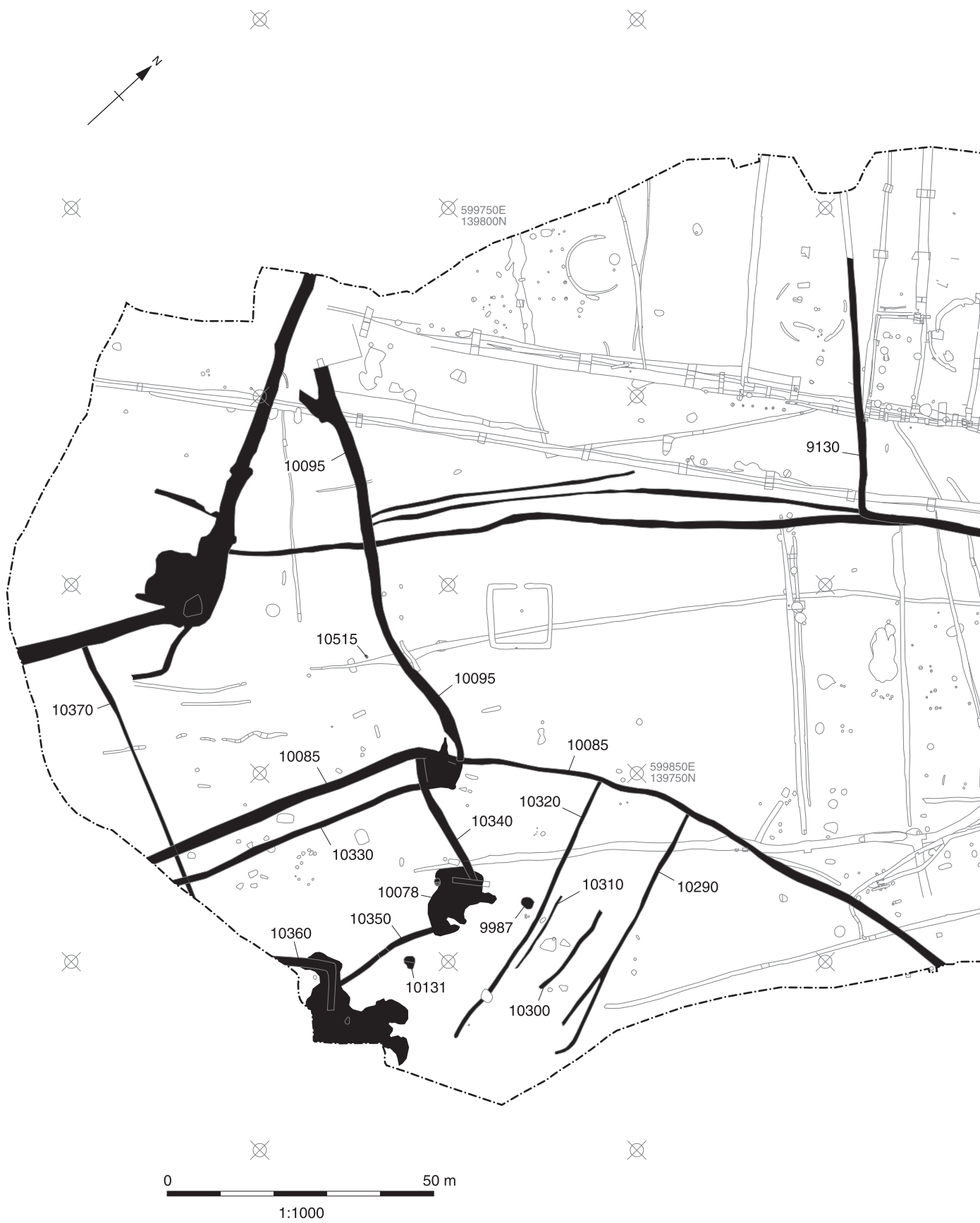


Figure 4.1 Periods 3 and 4, General plan of medieval and post-medieval features.



599800E
139900N

10105

9140

9020

1730

8600

1048

7546

8860

599950E
139900N

9130

7863

883

8600

1650

963

1645

1745

9000

1655

1660

600050E
139900N

600050E
139800N

as marking the south-westerly limit of a projection of the parish boundary of Ashford into land otherwise assigned to Kingsnorth parish. The post, situated in the middle of a field, was presumably intended specifically to mark the boundary.

Other post-medieval features included frequent ceramic field drains and a number of modern disturbances, of which the most substantial was a large pipe trench and manhole cut in recent times at the south-west end of Area B.