

# Chapter 3: Before town planning - the late Saxon to Anglo-Norman periods

by Alan Hardy

*Our lives through various scenes are drawn,  
And vexed with trifling cares,  
While thine eternal thoughts move on  
Their undisturbed affairs.*

Isaac Watts

## Introduction

One of the project's key research questions relates to the origins of the medieval tenement layout, and the degree to which elements of it can be discerned in the archaeological remains of the late Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods. The documentary evidence provides some indication of the tenements that were established by the later 13th century (the beginning of the high medieval phase; see Chapters 4 and 7). Given that it would be misleading to use the medieval tenement numbering at this earlier date, the evidence for the late Saxon to Anglo-Norman periods is described below using three zones (1-3), themselves subdivided into western and eastern parts (Fig. 3.1). These zones have been established broadly on the basis of the position and density of surviving features and are also considered in terms of tentative properties. Each zone (and the possible properties within it) is individually illustrated, using the eastern and western identifiers. Evidence for the earliest activity consisted almost entirely of pits, virtually all cut, truncated or disturbed to some degree by later activity. Very little physical evidence was identified of linear boundaries that may have defined properties.

## Late Saxon (c 900 to c 1066)(Fig. 3.1)

The distribution of late Saxon features across the site suggests a number of possible foci of activity, suggesting nine conjectural 'properties' (Properties A-H and J; Fig. 3.1). This impression may, however, be distorted by the uneven density of later activity and by the presence of areas inaccessible to the present excavation. Taken at face value, the distribution of late Saxon features clearly points to a concentration in the eastern part of the site, with other smaller clusters of features also being apparent. The distribution of features within two plots (Properties B and H) indicates the possible location of early buildings, while two possible sunken-featured buildings were found at Property D.

## Zone 1, west (Fig. 3.2)

### Property A

In the north-western corner of the site were five pits, two of which (3479 and 3446) contained layers of silty clay and charcoal, producing 36 sherds of late Saxon flint-tempered ware. A sequence of three intercutting pits (3475, 3472, 3462) cut into pit 3479 and extended towards the northern baulk. All contained flint-tempered late Saxon pottery, although a single possibly intrusive sherd of later Norman gritty ware was recovered from pit 3462, which also contained a rabbit bone and the bones from at least two large hake. The rabbit bone provides evidence of possible high-status diet, since at this time rabbits were an expensive commodity. Pit 3475 also produced fragments of two querns of collared (projecting hopper) design. The four intercutting pits appeared to respect or define a north-south aligned boundary at this point, defining the rear boundary of Property A.

### Properties B and C

The position of features within putative Property B led to the suggestion of a possible building ranged along the road frontage. Close to the putative southern limit of Property A was a sub-circular pit (4705), with steep sides and a flat base. Its fills, some of which were tipped in from the north, were of silty clay containing animal bone, pottery and fired clay. Further east was the surviving base of a sub-circular pit (4050), which was not bottomed. It contained a variety of silty clay and brickearth fills, as well as a charcoal-rich deposit. Pottery of 10th- to 11th-century date was recovered, along with a rabbit bone from an ashy rubbish deposit at the top of the infill sequence.

Some 10 m further south, the remnant of a large pit (4496) displayed a possible clay lining. Its fills contained a small amount of 10th- to 11th-century pottery and a fragment of a Greensand upper rotary quernstone. Nearby a truncated small pit (4528) produced 12th- to 13th-century pottery, shell and burnt clay. To the east lay the remnants of a large pit (4151) with vertical sides and evidence of a clay or wattle lining. The lowest excavated fill contained Roman (samian) and late Saxon pottery. This was



Fig. 3.1 Late Saxon features in relation to putative properties, showing geographical zones

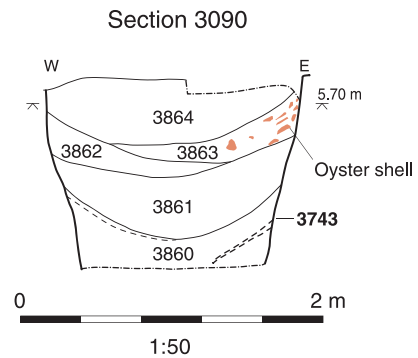
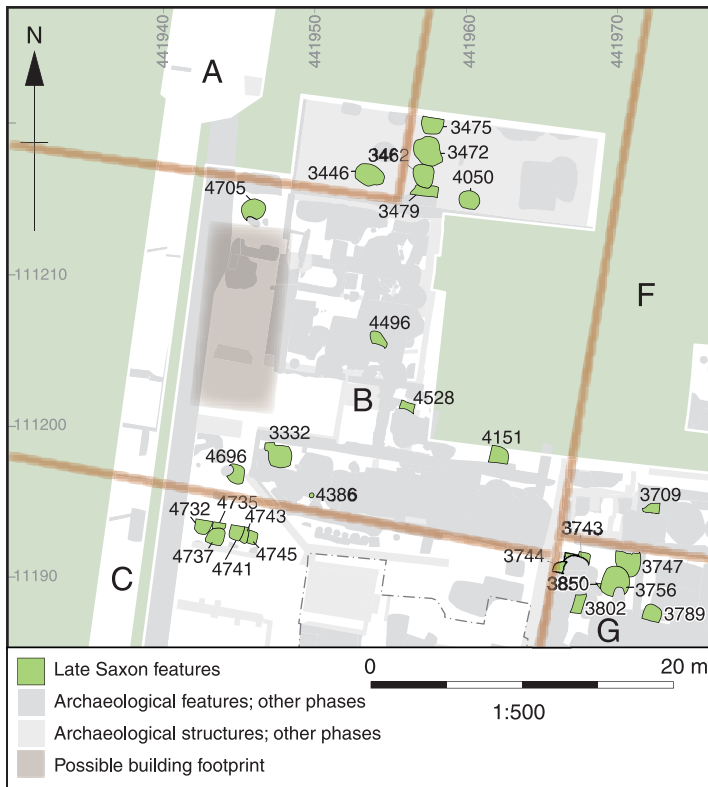


Fig. 3.2 Late Saxon features, Properties A-C and F-G (Zone 1 west)

sealed by gravel capping, then a subsequent layer that contained slightly later pottery (12th century). This feature may represent a late Saxon well adapted to serve as a rubbish pit.

Further pits and a posthole (4386) lay to the south-west, their contents demonstrating the varied types of rubbish disposal in operation. A shallow, sub-rectangular pit (3332) with steep sides and a flat base contained several silty clay fills and produced 10th- to 11th-century pottery, animal bone, charcoal and shell. In contrast, two nearby shallow pits (4696 and 4547 – the latter seen in section only) contained single dumps of charcoal-rich debris and 10th- to 11th-century pottery. To the south, a cluster of five other shallow, sub-rectangular rubbish pits (4732, 4737, 4741, 4743, 4745) may have defined or respected an east-west aligned boundary between two plots (Properties B and C).

#### Property F

Lying at the south-western corner of this possible property was a small remnant of a steep-sided pit (3709); this was not bottomed and yielded shell, animal bone and charcoal from its silty clay fill.

#### Property G

A group of nine pits lay to the east, two of which (3747 and 3756) were between 1.7 and 2.0 m deep, and were characterised by cess deposits in their lower fills. Finds included late Saxon pottery, a skate made from a cattle metacarpal (Fig. 5.52, No. 7) and fragments of fired clay oven lining. Pit 3743 immediately to the west contained a dump of oyster

shell (3863, Fig. 3.2, Section 3090) overlain by cessy material, possibly providing an example of the redeposition of cess material from feature to feature. An adjacent heavily truncated pit (3744) produced fired clay with wattle impressions. Two other pits to the south (3802 and 3789) were not fully excavated. In addition to the pits, a very short length of a possible ditch or gully (3850), aligned west to east, had been cut by pit 3756.

#### Zone 1, east (Fig. 3.3)

##### Property F

A scatter of pits were recorded along the eastern side of this possible plot. One example (5332) had been truncated on all sides by later building activity. More closely datable was a truncated deep and steep-sided pit (5346), identified to the west. Its fills included greenish grey cess, along with dumps of redeposited midden waste containing charcoal and shell fragments. Finds included late Saxon pottery.

Pit 5303 cut the southern edge of pit 5332, and may represent a recut of that feature. Fragments of 10th- to 11th-century pottery came from an environmental sample. The mollusc-rich layer at the top of the fill sequence (Fig. 6.7) contained slate fragments, which should not be present on the site until it was imported as roofing material in the 12th century: its presence here may therefore be the result of the subsidence of later deposits. Dietary evidence retrieved from the sample from pit 5303 comprised an elder seed and hazel nutshell fragment, oyster, cockle and the largest assemblage of mussel shells

retrieved from site (see Campbell, Chapter 6). Fish bones include thornback ray, herring, eel, flatfish, flounder and smelt bones. Wheat grains (some germinated) were found, along with barley and possible rye. A green-stained deposit was found in an adjacent oval pit (5320), with lower fills of greenish cess. Both late Saxon and Anglo-Norman pottery were found in the upper fills, indicating later subsidence of overlying material.

To the south, a shallow oval pit (5078) containing a mix of silty clay and brickearth was cut by a substantial pit (5072), surviving to a minimum depth of 1.2 m and a width of 1.5 m: the bottom was not reached due to safety considerations. The fills comprised mixed layers of silty clay and brickearth with inclusions of charcoal and shell fragments. Several sherds of late Saxon coarseware came from the lower exposed fills, along with a fragment of North French painted ware.

To the east was a steep-sided sub-rectangular pit (5327), not bottomed, with fills of redeposited clay and brickearth yielding a sherd of late Saxon coarseware. This pit was cut to the west by a shallower ?recut (5326), which was lined by a band of decayed organic matter, overlain by redeposited brickearth containing a single sherd of late Saxon coarseware. A heavily truncated pit (5186) to the south produced a silver penny of Edmund or Eadgar, minted between 939-946 or 959-973 (Allen *et al*, Chapter 5, No. 3).

A relatively 'empty' area lay to the south, within which were two substantial pits (5191 and 5192), the latter partially cutting the former. The lower erosion fills were overlain by cessy deposits and dumps of silt and wood ash: a sample proved to be dominated by oak trunkwood. Pottery from both features principally comprised late Saxon coarsewares and a

sherd of Norman gritty ware, which may be intrusive since both features were disturbed by later activity. Wall daub with wattle impressions was found within pit 5192. The base of another pit (5126) was filled with dumped layers of brickearth. A single sherd of late Saxon pottery came from an upper fill. Two other truncated pits (5297 and 3716) lay to the west.

**Zone 2, west (Fig. 3.4)**

**Property C**

Surviving archaeological evidence was limited in this area. An isolated cess pit (4797) lying close to the western edge of the site was sub-rectangular in plan and contained cessy fills, sealed by a capping layer of silty clay and then substantial dumped layers of rubbish, followed by a further capping layer. Late Saxon pottery was found throughout with the exception of the top fill, a later subsided levelling layer, which produced 12th- to 13th-century material. A smithing hearth bottom (542g) came from the late Saxon fills. A small sub-rectangular pit (4790) just to the east notably contained a golden thread (Fig. 5.26, No. 45), along with a spouted jar or pitcher in late Saxon flint-tempered ware (Fig. 5.1, No. 2).

**Property D**

A northern group of five features within this plot included a large pit (8418), measuring 3.3 m by 3.6 m. The lower fills were tipped in from the south, and comprised a succession of cessy deposits that produced only two late Saxon pottery

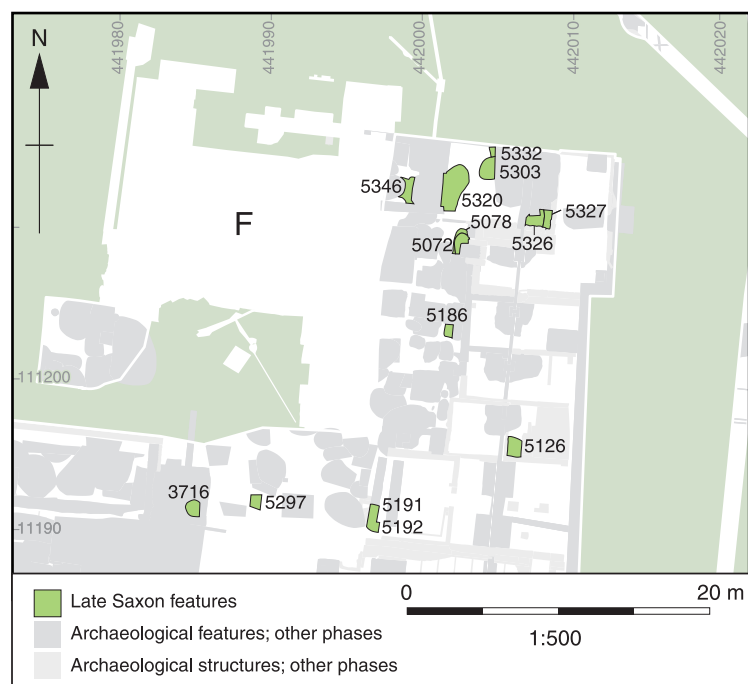


Fig. 3.3 Late Saxon features, Property F (Zone 1 east)

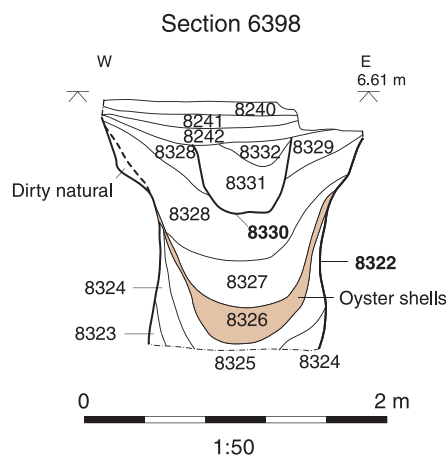
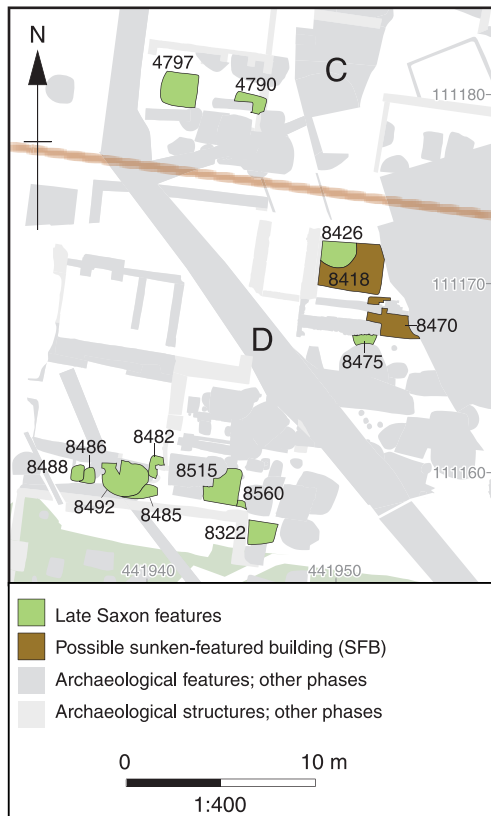


sherds and occasional bone and daub. The uppermost fill was redeposited brickearth, evidently a sealing layer. The shape of the pit could suggest that it originated as a sunken-featured building, subsequently used as a rubbish/cess pit. Immediately to the south were the truncated remains of a rectangular pit of similar (original) size (8470), containing a cassy grey silty clay fill and very few finds; again interpretation as the remnants of a building is possible. Two small oval pits lay close by (8426 and 8475), the former cutting into the fills of pit 8418.

Another group of features to the south-west consisted of numerous pits of varying sizes and

degrees of truncation, some of which may have served as quarries (8486, 8488, 8492, 8482, 8485, 8515, 8560 and 8322). Most of these produced very modest amounts of pottery, charcoal and bone. In contrast, a shallow charcoal-filled pit (8560) was cut by pit 8515, a large sub-rectangular vertical-sided pit 2.4 m deep. Although this feature contained only ten sherds of pottery, it yielded a large quantity of animal bone from its lower fills, possibly a dump of butchery waste. Other finds included a quern stone fragment and a possible hammerstone.

To the south-east lay a large rectangular cess pit (8322, Fig. 3.4, Section 6398). Its lower fills produced late Saxon pottery and a concentrated dump of



Pit 4797 facing east



Pit 8515 facing north

Fig. 3.4 Late Saxon features, Properties C and D (Zone 2 west)





been removed elsewhere for further processing. Three further sub-rectangular pits lying close by contained a mixture of domestic waste and cess deposits (672, 1103 and recut 687).

The presence of a timber structure was indicated by a truncated beamslot (247) oriented west-east, measuring 1.70 m long by 0.43 m wide by 0.24 m deep. Pit 753 lay just to the north of this slot. Its primary fill of ash and charcoal was sealed by an upper fill of silty clay; the fills notably contained a fallow deer bone. To the east of these two features pit 622 may have functioned as a latrine. Originally sub-circular it was vertical sided and contained cumulative cessy lower fills, overlain by dumped soil layers.

To the west, a large vertical-sided cess pit (48) was later used as a rubbish pit, which was not bottomed. Its lower cessy fills were sealed by layers of orange brown redeposited brickearth. A large quantity of fired clay deriving from oven walling was recovered (principally from the layers above the brickearth), together with a piece of wall render with a cream plaster wash and an over-fired fragment that may be furnace lining. A sample from this feature produced abundant seeds, grains, fishbone and nutshell fragments, with sheep/goat bones being hand-collected. Other finds included late Saxon pottery, an iron object of uncertain function and an iron strip. An adjacent vertical-sided oval pit (105) produced 10th- to 11th-century pottery, charcoal, daub, and fragments of render with a whitewashed surface. This may represent part of the exterior surface of the same oven as that found within pit 48, or perhaps elements of an enclosing structure.

Just to the north of this group, pit 188 was clay lined and not bottomed but was at least 1.20 m deep; both its depth and lining suggest a possible origin as a well or cistern. A total of 135 sherds of pottery were recovered from this feature; the lower fill of organic silty clay produced 24 late Saxon sherds and also contained crushed shell. Also recovered from the pit's main backfill were two sherds from a crucible. This pit contained a significant quantity of cattle bone, showing a dominance of elements of skull and metapodials, with a distinct lack of fore- and hind-limbs.

Immediately to the west, pit 266 again contained a substantial quantity of animal bone (butchery waste?), including a probable vertebra from a larger dolphin or whale. Possibly a backfilled cess pit, it also produced two silver pennies of Aelfred, fused together (Allen *et al.*, Chapter 5, Nos 1 & 2) and minted between *c* AD 880 and 899, from a later (Anglo-Norman) fill. Pottery included a fragment of late Saxon flint-tempered socketed bowl (Fig. 5.1, No. 5), while other finds included a bone needle (Fig. 5.51, No. 2).

Further south was a partially truncated, vertical-sided rectangular pit (116), which apparently served for the disposal of both cess and general refuse. The exposed fills comprised greenish cessy material,

sealing clay layers, and a substantial dump of shells.

Adjacent pit 943 was sub-circular and vertical sided. A layer of decayed organic matter sealed its lower fills, and may represent the sealing of noxious cessy deposits in the (unexcavated) base of the pit. The partial remains of various other pits lay in the surrounding area.

Along the western side of the putative building footprint, were a further nine pits. One large example (7013) may have been used specifically for the disposal of butchery and other kitchen waste. Near to this feature was a shallow quarry pit (6894). To the south, pit 7322 was a large but heavily truncated feature that produced some oven wall clay, including one piece with evidence of the curved edge of an opening in the wall. More clay was found in two sub-rectangular pits which lay close by (6219 and 6339). In addition two polished pebbles (possible whetstones) were also retrieved from pit 6219. Pit 6339 also contained a layer of burnt wood, perhaps representing discarded brushwood, rather than an *in-situ* structure. A group of four sub-circular pits completed this western group: 6336 (which contained deposits of animal bone), 6520 (with cessy lower fills), 6518 and 6519 (both shallow rubbish pits).

To the south-east a scatter of 10 pits (7252, 7205, 7191, 6139, 6533, 6538, 6460, 6158, 6781 and 6779) produced a total of 112 sherds of pottery (including one northern French blackware fragment) in very varied quantities, suggesting much less intensive activity in this area. Only pits 6139 and 7191 contained fragments of fired clay, and the material from the latter displayed very clearly the process by which the silty organic rubbish lower layers were sealed and the pit infilled and capped by the upper redeposited clay layer. Rabbit bones were recovered from pit 6139.

An east-west oriented ditch (6604) marked the southern edge of the putative property, measuring 1.2 m wide by 0.7 m deep. The lower fill appeared to represent natural erosion silting, but a later fill was a greenish cessy clay. No finds were recovered from the ditch, although a pit that cut through it (6420) contained late Saxon pottery and fired clay. Some distance to the west of this ditch, a square pit (7108) with steep sides and a flat base was identified. The three fills produced no cess, and the feature's possible clay lining may suggest it was a well or cistern, rather than a latrine or rubbish pit.

### Zone 3, west (Fig. 3.6)

#### Property E

A short length of a possible north-south oriented ditch (8128) in this area was 1.1 m wide and yielded charcoal fragments and shell from its fill, but no pottery. To the east a shallow pit (8207) contained a late Saxon flint-tempered ware lamp (Fig. 5.1, No. 3) as well as charcoal and shell. Another pit or large posthole (8120) produced similar finds. The

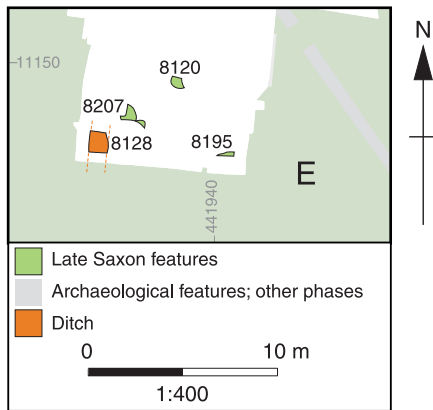


Fig. 3.6 Late Saxon features, Property E (Zone 3 west)

remnant of a possible midden deposit (8131, 8135) up to 0.20 m deep, with shell, pot and bone in a mid brown silty clay was identified in section to the east of pit 8120. A small remnant of another rubbish pit (8195) was exposed in the southern baulk.

### Zone 3, east (Fig. 3.7)

#### Property J

A scatter of seven pits in this area were all truncated to some degree. The finds assemblage was fairly modest which, along with the absence of evidence of cess in any of the pits, suggests that this area was not a focus of occupation. Twelve metres to the south-east of ditch 6604 (see above) was a square flat-based pit (7528), which was later recut. The lower fills contained charcoal, pottery and bone. The upper fills produced 13th-century pottery, providing evidence of later subsidence and the deposition of levelling material. Immediately to the west was the base of a

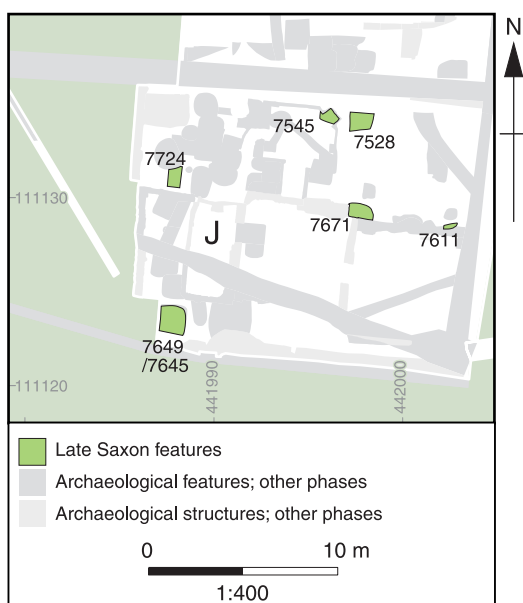


Fig. 3.7 Late Saxon features, Property J (Zone 3 east)

small rectangular pit (7545) truncated by a 19th-century cellar. The lower fills were of silty clay, with inclusions of charcoal, shell and some pot; the upper layers were generally sterile, again suggesting backfilling/levelling material.

Against the eastern side of the area the surviving part of pit 7611 was steep-sided and contained silty clay and brickearth fills, yielding 10th- to 12th-century pottery, a quantity of animal bone, and a whittle tang knife blade. To the west were two isolated pits (7671 and 7724), both steep sided and not bottomed during excavation, containing silty clay fills. Both produced charcoal, bone and pottery.

Part of a large steep-sided pit (7649) and its possible recut (7645) were identified at the southern edge of the site. No finds came from the fills of the original cut, with a single sherd of 10th- to 12th-century pottery being recovered from fills of the recut.

### Anglo-Norman (c 1066 to c 1250) (Fig. 3.8)

By the Anglo-Norman period, the cumulative evidence suggests the presence of 13 possible properties (Properties 1-13, Fig. 3.8), forming the basis of the medieval tenement pattern that was to follow. The remnants of a timber building survived at Property 2, while possible sunken-featured buildings were found at Properties 5, 6 and 11 (see further discussion in Chapter 7). A minor route – Brewhouse Lane – probably now ran between tenements, effectively separating the site into two blocks. A stone structure was found at Property 9. Although a stone house may have been present at Property 2 by the end of the Anglo-Norman period (see Chapters 2 and 4), accompanied by the well (3145) in the adjacent courtyard, these features are described and discussed in the following chapter, with the remainder of the stone-built phase at this tenement.

### Zone 1, west (Figs 3.9-3.10)

#### Property 1

The distribution and density of features of this period suggest a redefinition of the property boundaries in this area, and possibly the emergence of a forerunner of later Polymond's Hall (Tenement 237). In the north-west corner of the site, close to the limit of excavation, lay a scatter of five pits. Three (3441, 3453 and 4023) were shallow with few finds (pit 3453 contained a notable assemblage of oak charcoal); two were only just visible under the northern baulk (4019 and recut 4021), but appeared to be substantially deeper. To the east, beyond the apparent boundary suggested by the alignment of late Saxon pits (see Property A above) two large intercutting pits (4058 and 4060, Fig. 3.9, Section 3144) were exposed. The earlier pit (4060) contained layers of cessy material (4125) and oyster shell (4123) interspersed with sealing layers of





Fig. 3.8 Anglo-Norman features in relation to putative properties, showing geographical zones

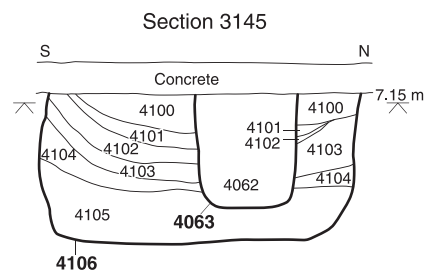
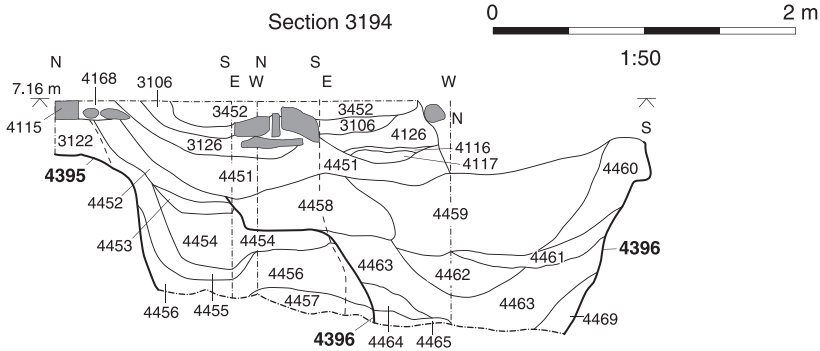
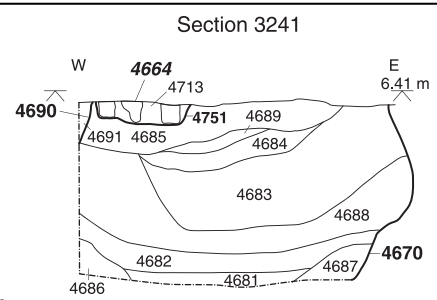
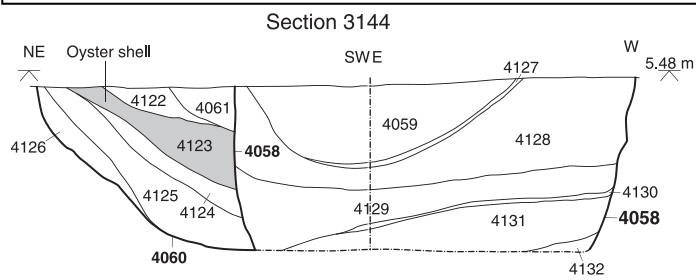
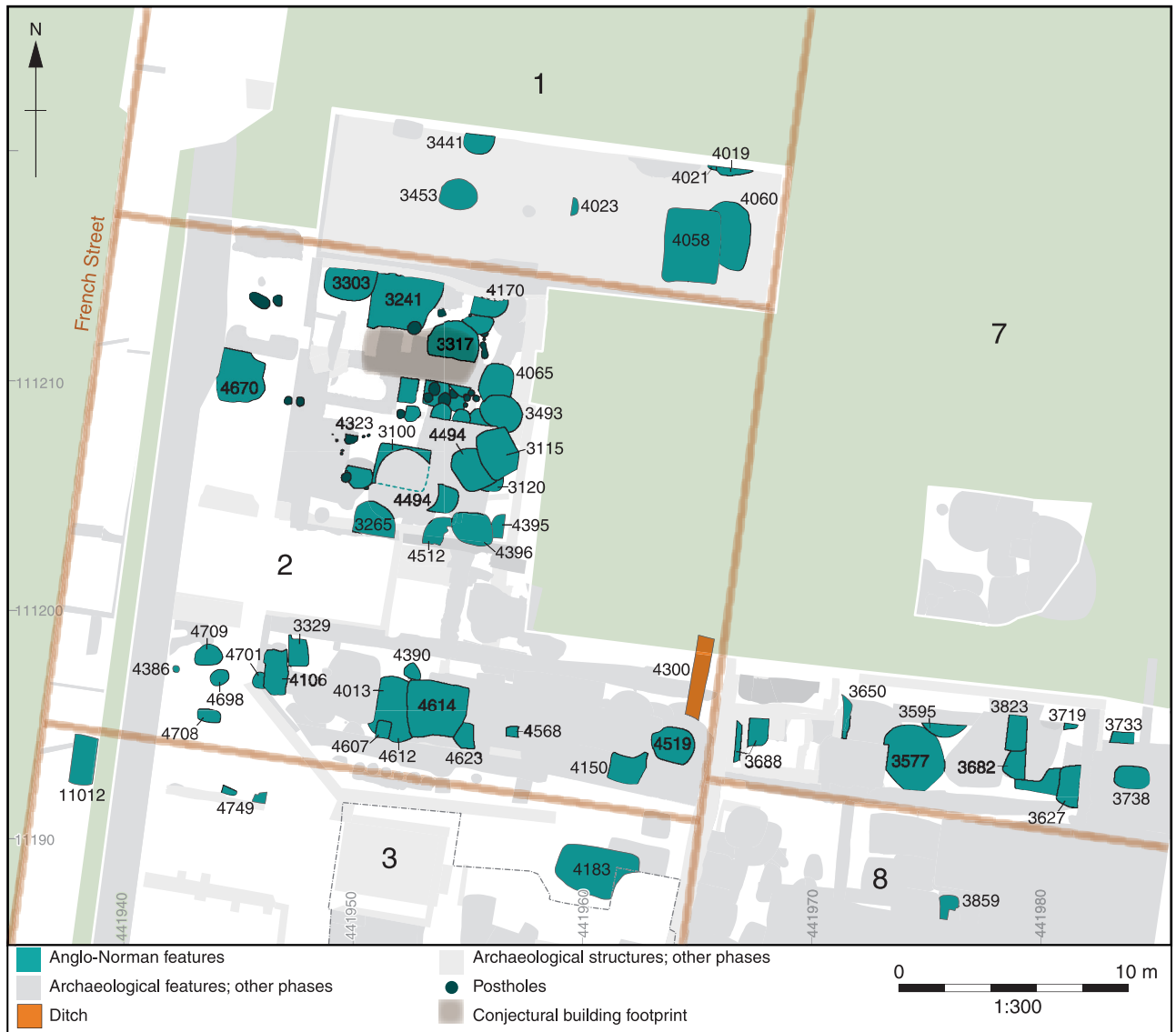


Fig. 3.9 Anglo-Norman features, Properties 1-3 and 7-8 (Zone 1 west)

redeposited natural. The later pit (4058) contained dumped layers with high concentrations of fragments of ceramic building material interspersed with sealing layers. The building material included Anglo-Norman flanged and curved roof tile (Fig. 5.15, Nos 1 and 2), suggesting the presence of a high status building in the vicinity.

### Property 2

To the south a dense cluster of pits and postholes appeared to respect the same north-south line of a group of four late Saxon pits (see Property A above), suggesting that a boundary may have been in place here, or that the pits respected the line of a building footprint to the east. A total of 21 postholes was identified (Fig 3.9 & 3.10), clustered around and extending to the west of, the remains of a possible hearth base defined by a burnt clay layer (4018), most of which had been cut away by a later pit. These features appeared to define one or (probably) more post-built structures or buildings, although there is uncertainty as to the possible footprint of the structure(s). Some of the postholes contained daub, which may indicate the fabric of the super-structure. The northern postholes were often cut into infilled earlier features, such as a large sub-rectangular rubbish pit (3241), which displayed numerous laminated fills and was also cut by a small round bowl-shaped pit (3137). This pit produced a knife blade from its single fill.

Patches of brown silty clay and gravelly dumps (shown as forming a composite layer with ?hearth 4018 in Fig. 3.10), were identified in the central area of the possible building footprint, and could either represent levelling over earlier pits or rudimentary floor surfaces within the structure. Of note amongst the finds were a bone chess piece (Fig. 5.52, No. 9) and a curved roof tile. To the north of the possible floor surfaces was a possibly contemporary pit (4170), from which a large assemblage of 11th- to 13th-century pottery was recovered, along with a knife blade of medieval type.

Little clear evidence for a water supply was seen in this area although pit 3303, situated just to the north of the building's footprint, may have been dug as a well. Revealed under a post-medieval wall and not fully excavated for safety reasons, it was a sub-circular, near vertical-sided shaft, approximately 2.4 m wide by at least 1.80 m deep. There was no trace of a stone or wooden pit lining and the dumped fills indicate secondary use as a rubbish pit. A total of 232 sherds of 12th- to 13th-century pottery came from its fills, clearly indicating intense domestic activity nearby. The assemblage included a late Saxon flint-tempered handled jar (Fig. 5.1, No. 4), while other finds included a small domed copper alloy object of uncertain function (Fig. 5.31, No. 70) and swan bones.

A possible garden soil or midden dump of grey brown silty clay (3091) was identified in section immediately south of the focus of activity noted

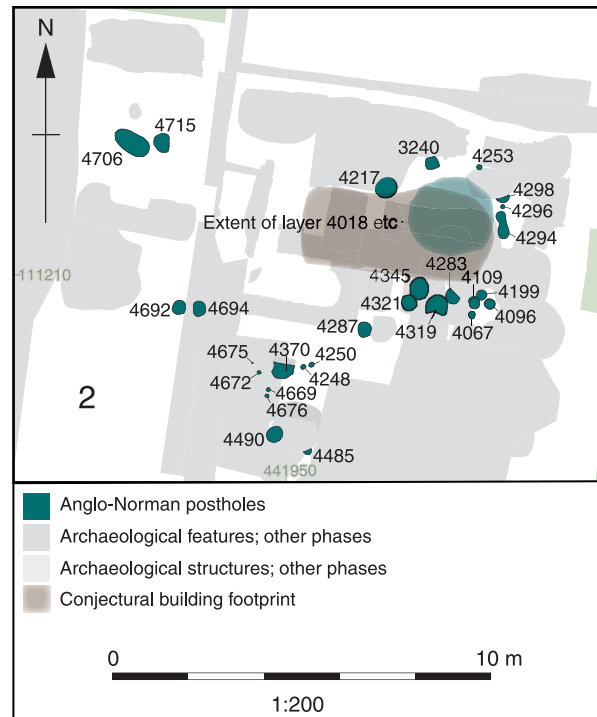


Fig. 3.10 Anglo-Norman features, Property 2 building (Zone 1 west)

above. This deposit survived up to 0.5 m deep, and yielded metal finds, including a copper alloy scale balancing arm and pan (Fig. 5.28, Nos 13 and 14), fragments of daub, ceramic building material and animal bone. To the south of layer 3091 was a square rubbish or cess pit (3100), largely truncated by the construction of a later stone-lined well.

Extending southwards immediately to the east of the structural footprint was a sequence of inter-cutting pits (including 4065, 3493, 3115, 4494, 3120, 4395, and 4396) that seemed to be aligned on the same line as a group of late Saxon pits to the north. Pottery recovered from their fills (including a jar/cooking pot rim in scratch-marked ware and another with a pierced raised lug from pit 3115; Fig. 5.1, Nos 10 & 11) indicated an Anglo-Norman date, which suggests that the north to south aligned boundary, suppressed to the north, was extended into (or perhaps maintained) in this area. Pit 3115 notably contained bones from fish species including red mullet and dragonet, while pit 4494 contained charred grains, perhaps of cultivated oat.

Two similar pits were located to the south (4395 and possibly its recut 4396, Fig. 3.9, Section 3194). Both were steep sided and not bottomed with lower organic layers, relatively devoid of pottery but containing shell and bone. These were sealed by layers of silty clay and gravel, containing significant quantities of pottery. The pottery in the upper fills of the recut is later 13th century, either indicating that this was a transitional feature or the result of later levelling. Pit 4396 cut pit 4513 to the west, a sub-circular feature that contained a few fragments

of 12th-century pottery and ceramic building material in its only fill. To the west, sub-circular pit 3265 was partially revealed under later foundations and produced a mixed assemblage of pottery, animal bone, daub and an iron awl.

To the west of the possible building was a single large oval pit (4670, Fig. 3.9, Section 3241), which, although truncated along its western and northern sides, displayed in its fills a good example of the 're-deposition' process at work, possibly stretching from the Anglo-Norman to the high medieval period. The pit contained lower fills of dark organic cassy material, devoid of pottery. The interface between fills 4688 and the later 4683 possibly represents a partial emptying of the pit, perhaps a considerable time later, as the middle layers contained later 13th-century pottery, bone and shell, and the upper layer (4685) produced late Saxon pottery, including a decorated pitcher rim (Fig. 5.1, No. 7). A plausible interpretation is that the partially emptied pit was re-used as a rubbish pit for a cleared midden, and then levelled up with redeposited late Saxon material (presumably from the excavation of another pit).

Other features to the south-west were generally small and shallow pits (4698, 4701, 4708, and 4709); a larger rectangular feature (4106, Fig. 3.9, Section 3145) appears to have been a purpose-built latrine pit, on the basis of its very cassy lower fill (4105) and redeposited clay and brickearth upper (sealing) fills (4102, 4103), although no evidence suggesting the existence of a superstructure was recovered.

To the east of this focus of activity two large sub-rectangular pits were exposed (4612, cut by 4614). Both were only partially excavated, but on the basis of their laminated and varied fills and the composition of their finds assemblages, they appear to have been domestic rubbish pits. Pit 4612 contained a notable quantity of cattle bone, while pottery recovered from it included a late Saxon flint-tempered cooking pot (Fig. 5.1, No. 1) and a hemispherical bowl (Fig. 5.1, No. 6). Ceramics from pit 4614 included an Anglo-Norman coarseware lamp (Fig. 5.1, No. 14) and fragments of a non-local Anglo-Norman unglazed pitcher (Fig. 5.1, No. 18). A smithing hearth bottom came from an upper fill of pit 4614. To the east of these large features were the truncated remnants of other pits (4623 and 4568).

A 3.5 m length of shallow ditch (4300) found at the eastern end of this plot ran from north-south. The northern end extended under the baulk, while the southern end was truncated by later features. This may represent a boundary separating Properties 2 and 7.

### *Property 3*

An isolated large pit (4183), measuring 3.6 by 1.3 m by at least 1.5 m deep, appeared to have served as a butchery waste pit. Its main fill of organic material contained a large quantity of sheep and pig bones.

Cess was also evident in the upper fill of the feature. Very little pottery was recovered from the feature, consistent with it being some distance from any domestic focus.

### *Property 7*

In the south-western part of this possible property lay a scatter of seven pits, mostly sub-circular and bowl-shaped in profile, apart from one sub-rectangular, steep-sided probable cess pit (3823), and one large (3.5 m diameter) bowl-shaped pit (3577) which butted up against its predecessor (3595). To the south of pit 3823 was a sub-circular gravel and rubble filled feature (3682) which may provide evidence of consolidation of the area. A number of features here were only partially revealed under later features (for instance pits 3513, 3688 and 3650), the latter having been truncated by the construction of a high medieval well. To the east lay a probable cess pit (3733) with a silty organic lower fill containing bone and worked antler, but no pottery. Samples from this deposit yielded evidence for intestinal parasites.

### *Property 8*

A small cess pit (3859) may have been dug late in this phase. Its cassy lower fills were sealed before it was recut in the medieval period.

### *Zone 1, east* (Fig. 3.11)

### *Property 7*

In the north-eastern part of the site was a scatter of pits, lying behind the modern cellars along the High Street. As a result of the depth of these modern features, any earlier archaeological deposits within their footprint had been completely truncated. The principal surviving features included a cess pit (5026, and its recut 5028), with a flat base and steep sides. The recut contained successive cassy deposits, with sealing layers of clay and (in one case) possible brushwood. A substantial single dump of shell formed one of the upper layers. Two shallow pits (5174/5175), both containing some daub and shell, were cut by pit 5028.

A large steep-sided pit (5358) of possible late Anglo-Norman date was partly exposed against the western baulk. Its lower fills, of silt, sand and gravel contained 12th- to 13th-century pottery (Fig. 5.1, No. 17), animal bone and a double-sided composite bone comb (Fig. 5.51, No. 6). A hearth was set into the infill of the pit. Another possible late Anglo-Norman feature was a large pit (5160) to the south-east. Again, its lower sandy silt fills contained pottery and animal bone along with two fragments of slag. Upper dumped fills also produced slag and high medieval pottery. Both of these features appear to have begun life as cess pits, later reused and infilled as rubbish pits.





Fig. 3.11 Anglo-Norman features, Property 7 (Zone 1 east)

To the south was a further group of eight pits, including 5090 and 5149, both of which produced a substantial quantity of burnt daub (Fig. 5.13). A recut of pit 5149 (5147) cut into a shallow undated feature (5144), and produced cereal grains, legumes and an apple pip from a bulk sample. It also contained three tile discs, all from the same fill: these may have served as pot lids (Fig. 5.21, No. 23 a-c).

This immediate area produced one of the largest groups of fired clay, with the bulk of the assemblage concentrated in the Anglo-Norman phase and only small quantities of non-diagnostic fragments occurring during the remainder of the medieval period: all was found discarded in pit fills. The main assemblage from pit 5090 consisted of fired clay from an oven structure, mainly walling with wattle impressions, but also including edges of vents or stoke-holes and organic impressions on the exterior surface indicative of some form of insulation material.

At the southern edge of this group, a large pit (5172) produced 292 sherds of pottery (117 of which are Anglo-Norman), including imported wares. The

presence of later pottery suggests that the feature may relate to a transitional phase. Also recovered from this pit were 91 tile fragments and pieces of fired clay. Grain, fig, wild radish, mineralised apple and prune pips came from environmental samples, which also contained bones from cod and numerous small and very small fish. Partly cut into pit 5172 was a sub-rectangular rubbish pit (5139) which produced late 12th- to 13th-century pottery, including part of a Michelmersh-type jar (Fig. 5.1, No. 8) and a ridge tile. A single posthole (5053) lay to the east.

Three pits to the south (5196, 5209 and 5211) lay between modern foundations, having been truncated by later pitting. A sub-rectangular vertical-sided pit (5196) contained cess staining, with a significant quantity of burnt daub in its upper fills.

Three probable pits (10050, 10054 and 10060) were partially revealed during the watching brief along the excavated north-south aligned service trench to the east of the site. No dating material was recovered, although the character of the fills suggests a probable Anglo-Norman or medieval date.



**Property 5**

A group of shallow pits were identified to the south-east (7253, 7379, 7423, 7359, 7298, and 366, and 486), all characterised by their fills as rubbish pits, with the exception of pit 366, which contained cessy primary fills. A possible fragment of a small rotating whetstone was recovered from this feature. Nearby a possible beamslot (7412) and parts of two further rubbish pits were identified (7419 and 7442).

Further to the south-west one or possibly two phases of a structure or structures was defined by a complex arrangement of features. The earliest of these was a large sub-rectangular shallow flat-bottomed pit (8547), reminiscent of a sunken-featured building, and lying along the side of a large flat-based pit (8568). No floor surfaces were evident in the base of either 8547 or 8568, suggesting that they may have served as a sunken storage areas beneath one or more suspended ground level floor(s). Nearby was a spread of 15 postholes, overlying the possible sunken-featured building. Amongst the western group of postholes was another group of eight sub-rectangular shallow pits (8514, 8496, 8525, 8528, 8534, 8572, 8509, 8563) which may represent settings for post pads for a structure, possibly associated with a north-south aligned beamslot (8544). A possible indicator of the form of one of the superstructures was provided by the 14 fragments of fired clay (showing wattle rod impressions) that were recovered from posthole 8334. Other finds from the vicinity included six pieces of Welsh roof slate.

To the east was a sequence of four intercutting pits (8434, 8363, 8429 and 8391), generally sub-rectangular in plan and of varying depths. These each contained organic layers and assemblages of domestic rubbish including pottery bone and shell. Pit 8429 contained a high medieval coarseware curfew rim (Fig. 5.2, No. 27). Slightly to the south of the structure was a pair of rubbish pits (8505 and 8537). The former contained a high medieval sandy ware lid (Fig. 5.2, No. 28), while the latter yielded a buckle fragment (Fig. 5.24, No. 25) from a dump of shell in the upper fill.

The remnant of a small cess pit (8061) was identified to the west of the structural focus described above, and a sub-circular pit against the western baulk (8175) with vertical sides produced pottery, animal bone and ceramic building material. A small cluster of pits (8429, 8260 and 8280) to the south all contained large deposits of marine shell, perhaps suggesting systematic and discriminatory rubbish disposal. To the west of this group another sub-rectangular, flat-bottomed and fairly shallow pit (8044), possibly an infilled quarry, also contained a substantial quantity of shell in a single deposit.

**Zone 2, east (Figs 3.13 and 3.14)****Property 9**

In the northern part of this area, pits appeared to be clustered immediately to the west of some stone footings (1221 and 1223), which defined the north and east walls of a structure. Within the angle of the structure was a steep-sided pit (1340), which was not bottomed. A blueish grey tinge to the colour of the lower excavated fills suggests that it was originally used as a cess pit, and the fills excavated represent its secondary use as a rubbish pit. Among the fills was a layer of marine shell.

To the west, a possible north-south oriented possible beamslot (1314) produced silty clay fills and charcoal. Pottery recovered from the fills included a nearly complete 12th- to 13th-century coarseware jar. A sequence of pit recuts (1317, 1316, 1315), followed. Pit 1315, the latest and the best-preserved, was a sub-circular pit with a sterile basal fill but pottery and bone in overlying deposits, including a broken bone needle.

To the south of this sequence, a shallow irregular pit (1238) was cut to the west by a large approximately square pit (1236) steep-sided and not bottomed, measuring at least 2m deep. Successive layers of silty clay with shell and charcoal inclusions comprised the fills. An intrusive modern coin (SF249; Specialist Download F7) was recovered from its middle fill. Cutting the western side of the feature was a large sub-rectangular pit (1242). Its laminated fill was cut to the north by the final flat-based and bowl-shaped pit in this local sequence (1300), which also cut pit 1315 to the north. None of this activity appeared to extend chronologically into the high medieval phase. The pottery from all fills in pit 1300 was consistently of a 12th- to 13th-century date. To the west of this concentration of features the area had been completely truncated by modern activity. Immediately to the south of pit 1242 was a sub-rectangular cess and rubbish pit (1304), and its recut (1308), as well as a late rubbish pit (1082) which was recut in the following phase.

South-east of structure 1221/3 was pit 1261 (a recut of adjacent pit 1269) with vertical sides. It contained a substantial layer of shell tipped in from the west, and later dumps of orange brown clay as a sealing or consolidation layer. To the north of pit 1261, parts of three intercutting pits (1293, 1289, and 1295) were partially exposed under modern concrete ground beams, but not excavated.

Fewer features survived to the south, although there were further examples of repeated pit-digging on the same spot. A group of three intercutting pits (1203, 1205 and 1199, Fig. 3.14, Section 210) showed some common features. The earliest fill of all three pits consisted of decayed wood, suggesting that the features may represent a well, periodically re-dug and re-lined. A further scatter of pits, mostly of shallow or medium depth, was identified (including pits 675, 671, 679, 987 and 863). A single



Fig. 3.13 Anglo-Norman features, Properties 8-11 (Zone 2 east)

sub-rectangular cess pit (681) contained a lower fill of cesty silt, sealed by a woody layer, while the upper fills comprised backfilling and midden clearance. To the west, surviving the severe disturbance by later medieval features in this area, were a few small pits (950, 1123, 1040 and 1133).

Two rubbish pits (1275 to the east and 1308, itself a recut of pit 1304, to the west) were characterised by substantial dumps of marine shell in their fills, each overlain by gravelly silt capping. In both cases little pottery was recovered, suggesting a degree of discrimination in rubbish disposal. A possible knife blade fragment was recovered from pit 1275.

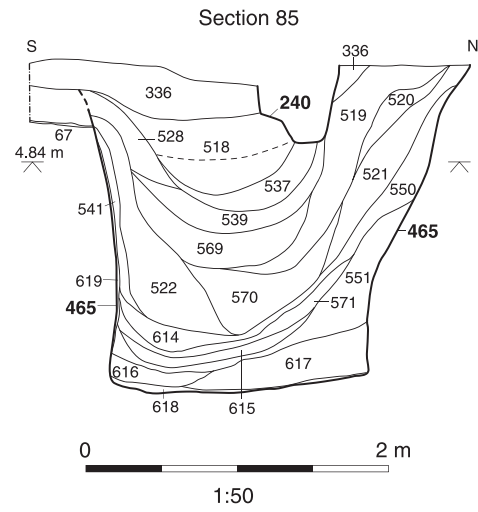
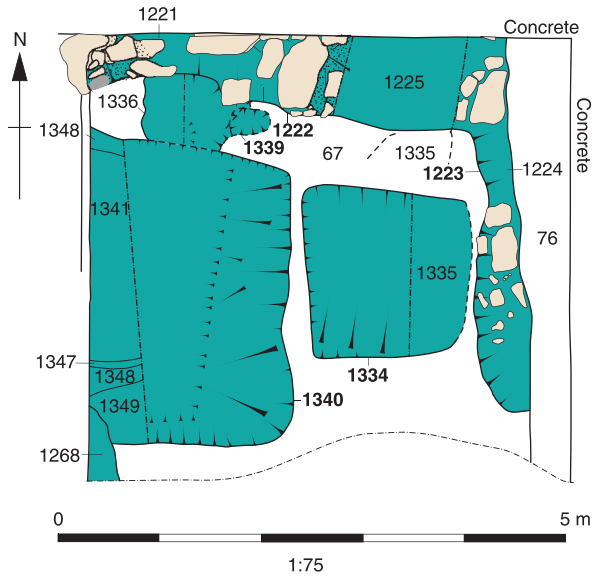
A layer (206) slumping into late Saxon pit 105 yielded four hearth bottoms, and a similar layer (288) in the top of a late Saxon pit (287) also

produced what could be part of a smithing hearth bottom, possibly indicating metalworking in the vicinity.

#### Property 10

A late Saxon cess pit (622) was partly truncated by an Anglo-Norman replacement (621, cut into contemporary midden soil 394), which was itself cut by a third pit (465, Fig. 3.14, Section 85). The latter contained lower cesty deposits overlain by tipped midden clearance deposits of 12th- to 13th-century pottery and bone. A fourth vertical-sided cess pit (799) added to the sequence, cutting pit 621; it contained cess deposits sealed by a charcoal layer, with a later backfill containing much daub. A sub-





Pit 1340 Facing West



Pit 465 Facing West

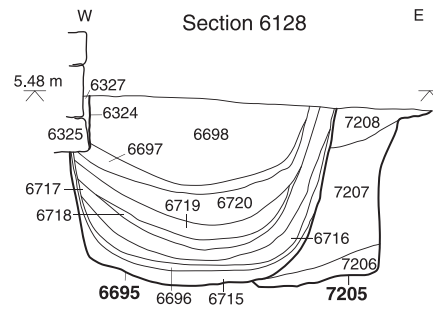
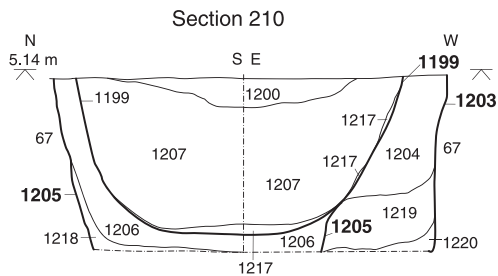


Fig. 3.14 Anglo-Norman features, Property 9, Structure 1221-1223 and related pits

circular cess pit (384) was located to the east. No pottery was found, but waterlogged grains and pulses were recovered from the fills. A sub-rectangular pit (820), with cessy lower fills, was located to the south. To the east was an isolated large sub-rectangular rubbish pit (6832). The primary fill was a thin shelly dump, with general midden deposition above, including charcoal and ash.

Nine other pits had been severely truncated by later activity (including pits 179, 229, 506, 751, 752, 761, and 7242). The largest (7091) was a sub-rectangular steep-sided pit with charcoal lining the sides, suggestive of a wooden lining. Its silty clay fills produced a varied assemblage of 12th- to 13th-

century pottery, including Normandy gritty ware, animal bone and occasional shell. A fragment of a rotary quern was also recovered. Part of a 10th- to 11th-century double-sided bone comb was recovered from pit 7242 (see Fig. 5.51, No. 5). Some 6 m to the west two further isolated small pits (110 and 309) were identified.

#### Property 11

A sequence of three rubbish pits (7031, 7032, 6733) and a large rubbish pit (6733) were located in the northern part of this area, producing mixed assemblages of pottery, animal bone and shell, with some

daub and two fragments of slag. The pottery from pit 7031 included a bowl or lamp in Anglo-Norman coarseware (Fig. 5.1, No. 13). Close by was another sub-rectangular rubbish pit (7250), containing well-mixed layers of brown and pale brown silty clay with inclusions of ceramic building material, daub, 12th- to 13th-century utilitarian pottery, charcoal and animal bone. To the east a small square cess pit (6667) was identified, containing in its grey brown silty backfill a mixture of pottery, bone and occasional stone and ceramic building material.

A single shallow gully running north-south (7167) contained silty clay, with a high proportion of pieces of slate, suggesting that the feature may have had a drainage function. Immediately to its east (and apparently contemporary) were two large roughly square rubbish pits (6251 and 7095): the former contained a sherd of decorated pitcher in early medieval glazed ware (Fig. 5.1, No. 9). To the west of the gully (and possibly later than it) a large sub-rectangular pit (7084) cut into a late Saxon pit (6781). The later pit contained greyish silty clay fills interspersed with thin black charcoal and sealing layers, and produced 12th-century utilitarian pottery and animal bone. An adjacent posthole (6590) may have been associated with this feature.

A large sub-rectangular rubbish pit (6695) was situated to the west of pit 7084 (a recut of late Saxon pit 7205; Fig. 3.14, Section 6128). It contained lower laminated deposits of shell and bone dumps, followed by backfilling and levelling layers of clayey sand and brickearth. A decorative late Saxon copper alloy stud or mount was recovered from one of its basal fills (Fig. 5.24, No. 19). This feature was later cut by a large posthole or small pit (6640), which contained a fragment of glazed ridge tile.

To the south was a large cess pit (6096). Although not bottomed and heavily truncated by later features, this feature displayed a sequence of cessy, charcoal-rich and sandy fills, predominantly tipped from the east down the side of the pit. Directly to the south-west was a sub-rectangular pit (6063), again heavily truncated by later pit cutting, but containing, in its lower surviving fill substantial quantities of animal bone, notably including 148 sheep/goat bones and 78 cattle bones. A bias was noted within these bones towards elements of the skull (see Bates, Chapter 6). Also within this assemblage were a small number of rabbit bones. This is a much higher quantity of bones than is typical of other rubbish pits on the site, and may suggest that this pit was dedicated to the disposal of butchery waste. To the west, a sub-rectangular pit (6059) was cut by later medieval pitting, and to the south lay the remnants of a shallow rectangular pit (6160).

Two further sub-rectangular pits were identified to the east (6528 and 6114). The former was flat bottomed and contained a layer of charcoal and blue grey clay in its base overlain by a layer of sandy silt with lumps of fired clay. The charcoal proved to have come from oak and a range of other species.

At the southern edge of this property were two large pits. Pit 6296, displayed a sequence of silty clays containing bone, pottery and shell. A bone needle (Fig. 5.51, No. 1) was recovered from its middle fill. As with many of the features, the upper fills were slumped levelling deposits and contained pottery of a 13th- to 14th-century date. By contrast, to the west pit 7150 was shallow and flat-bottomed, its fills of grey silty clay containing only a small quantity of animal bone. This feature is atypical of the site, and may represent the cavity under a suspended floor, characteristic of a sunken-featured building. To its west, just exposed against the baulk, was a large bowl-shaped pit with vertical sides (7109). Its lower organic fill was sealed by a thin layer of clay, suggesting it may have been a cess pit; insects recovered from it include granary pests and other taxa which indicate the presence of dung or rotting material. This evidence is supplemented by a large assemblage of unidentified cereal bran and corncockle from an environmental sample.

Quantities of fired clay were found scattered through several of the pits in this area, mostly in small quantities, apart from one larger group of fragments from a small sub-rectangular cess pit (6667) situated to the east of the main group of features. The fired clay included pieces of oven wall structure and a triangular or wedge-shaped block that may have formed part of the oven or an associated enclosing structure.

A single rubbish pit (10041) was partially revealed along the excavated north-south aligned service trench to the east of the site. The feature was shallow and bowl-shaped, and produced Anglo-Norman pottery and marine shell.

### **Zone 3, west (Fig. 3.15)**

#### ***Property 6***

A cluster of features was identified in the south-west corner of the site. Two small pits (8212 and 8215) were cut by a large shallow and possibly sub-rectangular pit (8200), oriented approximately east-west, and measuring 3.4 m long by at least 1.9 m wide. The uneven depth of the feature, at no more than 0.86 m, suggests that it may have served as a cavity under a suspended floor of a sunken-featured building. The fills of the feature were generally dumps of bone, mussel shell and burnt brickearth, with a little pottery (of 12th- to 13th-century date, including a North French whiteware pedestal lamp, Fig. 5.1, No. 20), suggesting the proximity of craft or industrial activity.

Immediately to the west was another large shallow pit (8114), containing a single dumped midden fill that yielded pottery bone, and a silver penny of William II (Allen *et al*, Chapter 5, No. 4) dating to the early to mid 1090s, along with slag and iron working scrap fragments. To the north of pit 8200 were two intercutting truncated pits, one possibly sub-circular (8118), the other sub-rectangular (8136).

A possible structure or structures, perhaps later than the features noted above, was indicated by a number of postholes and clay/gravel surfaces, although its footprint could not be clearly defined. Some of its elements appeared to overlay or cut the fills of some of the pits (ie 8200) suggesting that it may well be late in this phase or even the early part

of the high medieval development in the area. A large feature (8126) to the west of the postholes could have been a limestone pad post-setting (8124), although its position at the corner of a high medieval stone feature (8098) suggests that it may have been consolidation for that feature. This and nearby postholes (8160, 8162, and 8116), were respected by burnt clay surfaces and gravel make up layers (8105, 8091 and 8109/8154/8155), extending around the main feature (8126). Environmental samples yielded a range of cereal grains from floor surface 8091 and abundant cereal grains from pit 8200. The base of a Purbeck limestone pot quern was found in levelling deposit 8109: it retains its iron spindle and spout (Fig. 5.46, No. 2).

A group of five postholes (8167, 8171, 8173, 8189 and 8197) lay close to the south baulk. They appear to have been contemporary, but may have belonged to a separate structure.

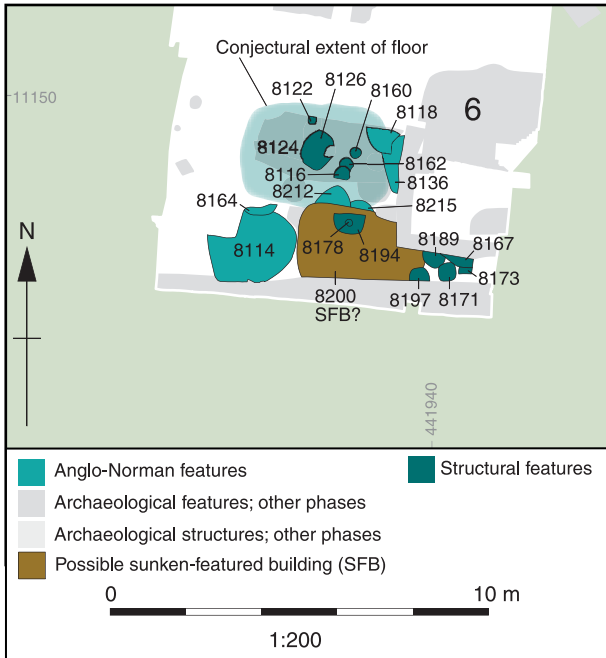


Fig. 3.15 Anglo-Norman features, Property 6 (Zone 3 west)

**Zone 3, east (Fig. 3.16)**

**Property 12**

Two pits (7748 and 7749) that clearly predated the establishment of a medieval tenement wall were identified in the northern part of the area. Neither were excavated or dated, and they may predate this phase.

A scatter of nine pits further south included a substantial and largely complete cess/rubbish pit (7572, Fig. 3.16, Section 6247) 2.0 m deep, with cessy lower fills, followed by a deposit of burnt stone,

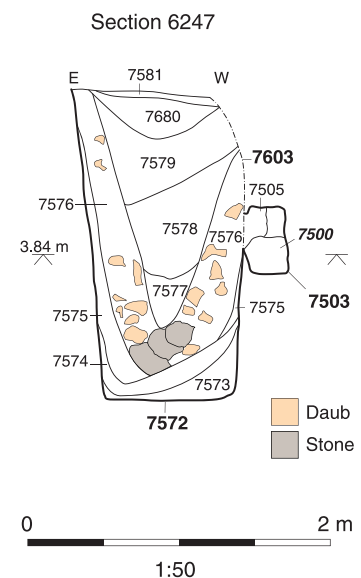
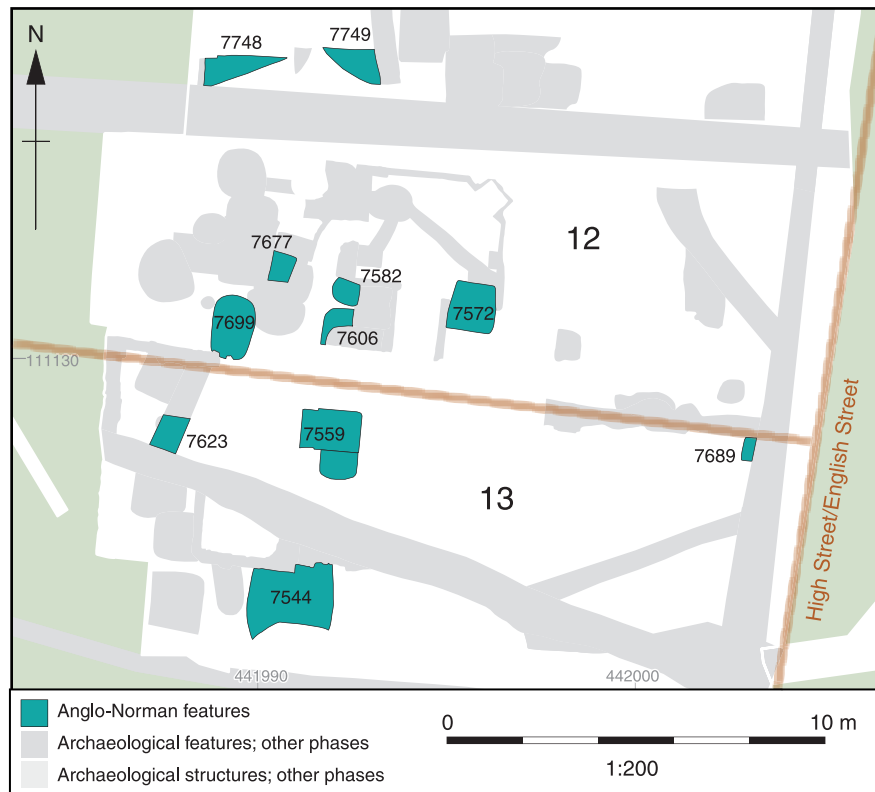


Fig. 3.16 Anglo-Norman features, Properties 12 and 13 (Zone 3 east)

daub and charred wood and upper fills containing pottery, bone, shell and charcoal. The latter was dominated by oak, with a range of other species: this material may have been used to absorb odours. Environmental samples from the pit fills produced grain, hazel nut shells, pulses, vetches, weedy taxa and fruit remains and abundant fish bone and prune pips. Fragments of a relatively coarse wool textile recovered from lower fill 7574 may have been used as a toilet wipe or they may have been part of the general domestic rubbish dumped into the pit.

To the west of pit 7572 was an oval pit (7699) apparently used for the disposal of butchery waste. It produced a considerable quantity of bone from its redeposited natural fills, the latter presumably being used to minimise the smell emanating from the pit's contents. To the north of this pit a heavily truncated steep-sided rubbish pit (7677) formed the first in a sequence of intercutting pits extending into the high medieval period. Vestiges of two other small pits (7606 and 7582) were identified close by.

### ***Property 13***

Lying on the putative boundary between Properties 12 and 13 was the construction trench for a later stone-vaulted cellar, which may have disturbed a backfilled rubbish pit, represented by remnants of its silt clay fill (7689). A quantity of Anglo-Norman pottery, bone and a piece of slag was recovered from this deposit.

A pit (7559) which lay approximately 4 m to the south-west contained a sequence of organic cessy fills followed by rubbish dumping. There was a notable absence of pottery or animal bone from the fills. At the southern baulk, a large pit (7544) was identified. A thin band of decayed wood was noted as 'lining' the base of the cut; this may suggest either that this was a cess pit that was emptied and then used as a rubbish dump, or that it served as a water cistern and was later used as a rubbish pit. To the west, a truncated rubbish pit (7623) produced pottery and animal bone.