

Chapter 3

Development of the 18th-century landscape

This chapter first provides an overall account of the background history, in summary form, for the history of Bath, and in more detail, for Combe Down. The landscape changes which developments in quarrying after c 1700 introduced at Combe Down, including development of the village are considered. More detailed accounts for both underground and surface quarrying will be the subject of later chapters and the documentary and archaeological sources for information used in describing the landscape will be found therein unless otherwise stated.

Bath and its rebuilding: a brief history

Bath's World Heritage Site status, which extends over Combe Down, has resulted from its development within the 'Valley of Pleasure' as it was called in the 18th century. Its site is on the north side of a loop in the River Avon rising to Lansdown in the north and to Odd Down, Combe Down, and Claverton and Bathampton Downs to the south. Its fame was established by the time of the Romans who renamed a former Celtic shrine as the Temple of Sulis Minerva and the settlement as *Aquae Sulis* (the Waters of Sulis) from its thermal springs. It was established close to the river crossing of what was initially a military road (Cunliffe 1986). The Romans built their baths, with lead linings, and bath houses in stone, and although no precise location for their quarries has been found – it might be Lansdown (north of the City) or at the southern Downs – there was almost certainly minor quarrying at Combe Down where a Roman villa and stone coffins have been found. The town and springs, though decayed in their bathing function for a long period after Roman society collapsed in the 5th century, remained important for those wishing for a cure of diseases and for those using the baths and the surroundings for pleasure, in a similar way as happens at the current time.

In medieval and early post-medieval times, however, it seems likely that use of stone was limited to the more prestigious buildings, such as the new Cathedral commenced in about 1091, of which the present Abbey is largely its nave (Davenport 1988), or to the city walls. Most houses then seem to have used cheaper timber framing methods of construction, and re-used stone, sometimes from the walls. In the late medieval period Bath had become a regionally important

cloth town, but by the mid 16th century was in a state of decay, despite expansion elsewhere of population and the woollen industry. This decay was despite (or perhaps because of) the advantages of the hot baths which were pointed out by Dr William Turner in 1562. They were then described as a danger to body and health with a lack of drainage and with indiscriminate mixed bathing. However a visit by Elizabeth I in 1574 appears to have stimulated civic pride, and the 'rebuilding of Bath', including a separate Women's Bath dates from about that time (though mixed bathing was again condemned in 1625).

Soon after the streets were described as full of 'swaggering swordsmen' and the days of 'ancient and honest trades of merchanting and cloths were over'. Fear of fire and civic pride led to the widespread use of stone, and in the mid 17th century it was described, not quite accurately, as being a city built entirely of stone. It catered for medical patients and those with fat purses in 'petty palaces' rather than common lodgings (Manco 1992).

By the beginning of the 18th century and the onset of the Golden Age it was thus already the resort of the noble or rich and the city had been described as the 'prettiest in the kingdom'. Bath's accommodation was in handsome but vernacular building style, mostly within the old walls but without any of the formal planned layouts and classical styles of later. The earliest phase of improvement had used recovered stone, but by then the main source of the new stone used was from around present-day Odd Down alongside the old Roman route from the south known in the 18th century as the Fosse, which led, via the Holloway and over Bath Bridge, into the city.

The golden metamorphosis of the City was associated especially with three men. Richard or Beau Nash (1674-1762), who exhibited 'a veneer of gentility ... personal dignity and a willingness to do anything for money' who, arriving early in the 18th century as a mere gamester, transformed the social aspects of Bath as Master of Ceremonies (Eglin 2005), away from that of 'swaggering swordsmen' to something closer to his own persona. Ralph Allen (1693-1764), a Cornishman who arrived as a thirteen year-old boy about 1710, provided entrepreneurial and business skills and the stone by which the new parts of the city were built, though his extreme wealth came from his Post Office contracts. He will be considered in

much more detail later. The third was John Wood (1704-1754), originally a joiner who had already developed into an architect and building developer when he arrived about 1726. He championed high-quality building design in the classical mould. He and his son, also John (1726-1782), were responsible for many of the exquisite buildings so well revered in Bath today. These men, of course, were the most notable of those who developed Bath; there were also the rich landlords, such as Mr Pulteney who is remembered for his shop-lined bridge, and others who backed them financially. There were other architects and skilled masons too, less fashionable but busy and competent, like John Strahan whose accomplishments included Avon Street, the City's red-light district. This combination of quality and sleaze, as in 20th century Las Vegas, proved irresistible, and though its zenith of fame and quality came by about 1790, Bath's fame and attractiveness have lived on to produce the modern city.

Combe Down prior to 1700

Prehistoric

Perhaps because Combe Down was subsequently so extensively quarried and built upon, few pre-Roman remains and no certain Iron Age artefacts have been recorded. Early occupancy of the wider area including Combe Down is demonstrated by a flint-working site, which also produced Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts, in the grounds of a school

south of Claverton Road (SMR/NMR number ST 76 SE 5), and there is another site with numerous flints on Claverton Down (ST 76 SE 28). A round barrow (ST76 SE7) seen on Claverton Moor in the 1920s is now ploughed out, and a late Bronze Age spear-head was found at Midford Brook in the southern part of the area (ST76 SE 6).

There is evidence within modern Combe Down of a later prehistoric field system at Claverton Down Hospital, which may have been part of a wider field system at Claverton Down and Rainbow Wood (ST76 SE 3). Aerial photographs of Bathampton Down c 1.5 km to the north show a large area covered by field boundaries and it is possible that Combe Down originally had similar features, which may have survived in use into the Roman period.

Roman

The proximity to Roman Bath is reflected in a much greater assemblage of finds in both Combe Down and the wider area than for prehistory. It is reasonable to assume that quarrying was carried out in Combe Down to provide for local building and for stone coffins found there. However, for the principal buildings in Bath it is more likely that stone was carried down the old Fosse Way or Holloway route from quarries at Odd Down (via Lyncombe), the then major route from the south into the city (Peach 1895a, 11), or from Lansdown on the north side of the city, both closer to the centre of Bath than Combe Down.

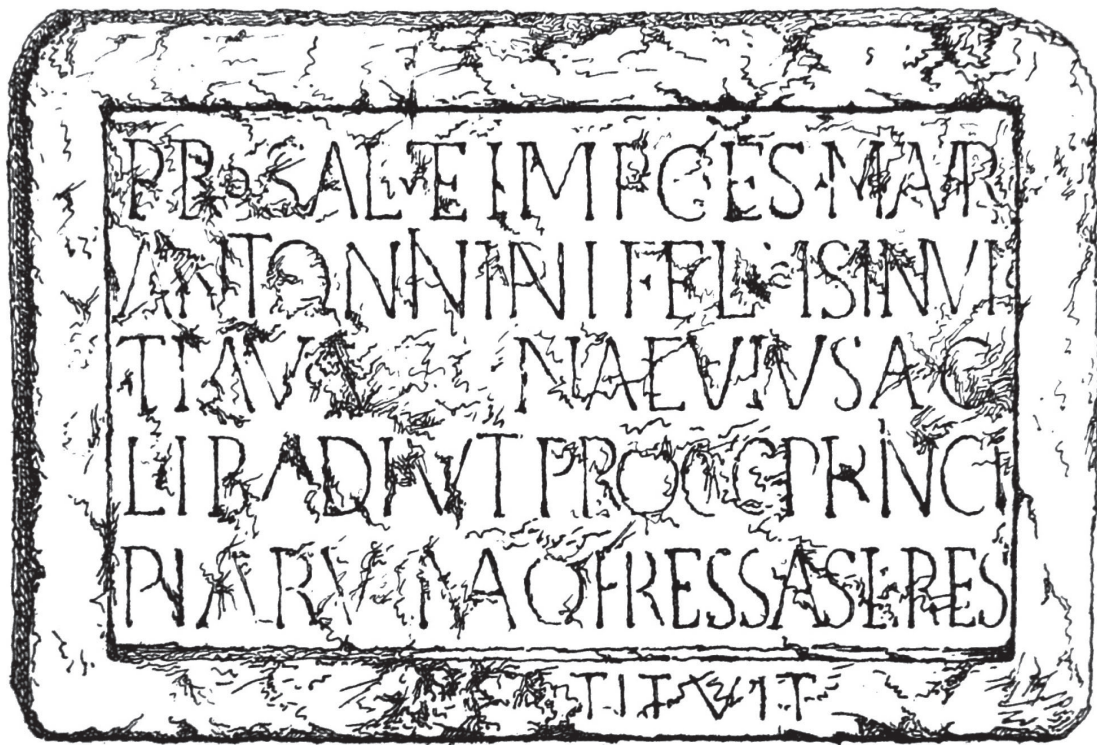


Fig. 3.1 *Inscription found on a Roman stone coffin-lid at Combe Down. Illustration by C S Beckett, in Scarth 1864*

A courtyard-style villa was found about 1860 at Belmont whose stone Addison (1998, 14) suggests came from Vinegar Down Quarry. A more likely source may have been just uphill at the main outcrop into which it is built. Stone coffins were located nearby. Pitcairn and Richardson (1924, 47) list these as found in 1822 in the field adjoining Summer Lane, below Grosvenor Lodge. In 1844 more were found in the foundation works for Belmont House, with a coin of Licinius. In 1854 two coffins and a skeleton were found in levelling mounds between Belmont and the Upper Schools and below the vicarage garden (Scarth 1864, 75). A large slab over a coffin was inscribed (Fig. 3.1). A hoard of coins of the later emperors were also found (see also Page 1906, 309-11). Construction of the Foxhill housing estate in the 1950s produced pottery, broken querns and animal bone, and a number of shallow pits yielded more pottery, building material, a bronze bracelet and a child's skull (Cunliffe 1979, 131). Another stone-coffined burial and some Roman pottery were found at Combe Down Quarry in the 1930s when a gallery collapsed. There was another cemetery about half a kilometre north of Combe Down at Perrymead where three stone coffins were found in the 19th century and a further one in 1952 (Cunliffe 1979, 132).

The field systems noted above on Claverton Down and Rainbow Farm may well still have been used in Romano-British times with pottery beads and building material recovered from the ditch fills suggesting a Roman occupation site not far from the round barrow. It is possible that, as well as engaging in agriculture, with perhaps some quarrying, some Roman-British people used its fine outlooks and bracing climate to site villas outside the city, much as happened there after 1800.

Anglo-Saxon

Little archaeological material of the early part of this period has been found, the main exception being a spear from the site of the Roman villa excavated in 1860 (BN1814 ST76 SE15). There is, however, the major feature of the Wansdyke, which crosses the area from west to east, en route from Portishead near Bristol to near Andover. This is a 6th- and 7th-century fortified embankment and ditch probably marking the boundary between the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia. It is visible as it enters the area near Odd Down, and appears to terminate at the head of Horsecombe Vale. It seems likely it then followed the natural north side escarpment of the combe (Shepherds Walk), leaving it to cross Firs Field and the south end of Prior Park and over Bathampton Down (Major and Burrows 1926, 88). An aerial photograph shows a soil mark in the Park on the suggested line. This and another feature appeared on earlier Ordnance Survey maps as crossing Prior Park School sports ground, but are not shown on the modern maps. The possible

former route, based on topographic considerations, was shown as a footpath or ride across from Shepherds Walk and Firs Field to the Prior Park gates (opposite the Hadley Arms Public House today) on the post-1764 Allen Estate Map (Chapman 1996), though the route hereabouts is now lost. However, a later reassessment (Fox and Fox 1960, 36) suggested that the soil marks described above were possibly earlier field systems or natural landslip features. Features of possible medieval origin north of Combe Down towards Perrymead are now considered natural landslips partially modified for agriculture. This is perhaps more credible on the latter site, which is on or just above the underlying clay slip-strata, than at the former, which are on the top of the Down.

Medieval

A manor of Lyncombe was held by the church from the 7th century. The name Widcombe first appeared in the Domesday survey of 1086. That year the Bishop of Wells bought Bath, including Widcombe and Lyncombe, from William Rufus (Peach 1895a, 6 and 23), and in 1091 the building of a cathedral was begun (its nave is the larger part of Bath Abbey today). Subsequently the transfer of the See from Wells to Bath led to the Bishop becoming Abbot of the older Bath Abbey, and the Prior becoming subordinate to him. Disputes between Wells and Bath led eventually to the emergence of a Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Cathedral was designated a Cathedral Priory. (Davenport 1988, 7-8).

Under the Bishops the slopes and top of the whole area must have been used for grazing the bishop's sheep, perhaps giving the name Shepherds Walk to the track along the northern edge of Horsecombe Vale. Lyncombe and Widcombe was not sold after the Dissolution, but leased. By the early 17th century it was held by Hugh Sexey whose executors established Bruton's Hospital with the estate as a trust (Chapman *et al.* 1998, 4).

A priory and deer park had been early established at Combe Down, the boundary of which followed Claverton Down Road to the south and east, ran west just north of Rainbow Wood and came up Hanginglands Lane (Popes Walk today). The outline is shown on the mid 18th-century map of Ralph Allen's estates. King John probably hunted in this park in 1212-16 when he visited Bath. In 1223 part of the Bishop's holdings, including the western half of the deer park, were transferred to the Prior of Bath Abbey (Chapman *et al.* 1998, 2). Thus there was subsequently both a Bishop's Park and a Prior's Park and to the present day a wall runs along the boundary between the two. The Prior's Park had apparently been detached in the 16th century (Peach 1895a, 40) and parts were sold off. When Leland visited Bath around 1540 he described the walls as ruinous and the parks without deer (Toulmin Smith 1910, 98). The walls have been repaired at intervals, but some medieval stretches

appear to have survived (Chapman 1996, 17). By the early years of the 17th century the Park was owned by the Poole family of Monkton Combe.

Most of the land around Combe Down beyond the parks was also in church hands during this period. Monkton Combe, then called *Cume*, was also owned by Bath Abbey until the Dissolution. After the Dissolution Combe was granted by the Crown to Humphrey Coles, but it soon reverted and in 1564 was given to John Robinson of Gravesend, whose descendants held it until 1706 when John Robinson sold it to Thomas Poole. At some stage in late medieval times the waters available at Tuckingmill and lower downstream in Monkton Combe village must have become utilised for the mills there, probably also using the Fullers Earth from a nearby outcrop higher up Horsecombe. By the early 18th century the Tuckingmill was in ruins (BRO. 339/4/10). The various bishops also held a 'Liberty of Claverton and Bathampton' from 1250 (Chapman 1996, 19). By the early 18th century Claverton was held by the Rector and Bathampton by the Holder family, into which Ralph Allen later married. Small-scale quarrying may have taken place during this period, but agriculture would still have been very important despite Bath's decline as a centre for the cloth industry from at least the mid-16th century.

Quarrying certainly was taking place in the area around the Combe Down in the mid 16th century, most likely at the present-day Odd Down and probably at Claverton and Bathampton, supplying the two villages and the city. Monkton Combe must also have had quarries, and field observation suggests these were probably at a site immediately above the village around the present Mount Pleasant and Shaft Road with the old route from there down to the village a shorter one than Summer Lane.

Leland described his journey in *c* 1540 from Midford Brook to Bath through 'mountayne ground and quarre' (Toulmin Smith 1907, 139), suggesting quarrying was a significant feature of the then landscape. In 1663 Oluf Borch visited Bath and recorded the first mention of underground working. The site was identified by John Wood as that bearing the name Horsecombe Quarry, no longer identifiable but most likely near the head of the combe just east of the present day Cross Keys Inn (Addison 1998, 15). Probably the main area of quarrying then was at Pitts Quarr, working the escarpment near Barricks Farm, the most convenient of all sites by distance and road to Bath.

In the late 17th century and the first decade of the next, the area now known as Combe Down was, however, still predominantly agricultural and its 'sleights hills and mountains' in Monkton Combe and the area to the west in Lyncombe and Widcombe as far as Entry Hill (known as Combe Down or Greendown) were still largely regarded as sheep grazing. Some enclosure had taken place, on such as the large Widcombe Field, which was at

least partially arable, and there were many small parcels of enclosed land on the slopes of Horsecombe, as well as Greendown and Claverton Down, Bathampton Down and an area (sheep pasture) east of Greendown and north alongside Prior Park known as The Lawns (Chapman 1996). Areas marginal to the Down, closer to settlements or on gentler slopes below the escarpment were mostly suited to arable, for which enclosure by walls was considered necessary.

Historical overview of the area after 1700

The term Combe Down originally referred to that part of the downland most remote from the parent parish of Monkton Combe, when it was usually also referred to as Greendown which included the adjacent part of neighbouring Lyncombe and Widcombe. After Ralph Allen built his small settlement there for his workers in *c* 1729-30, the name transferred to the settlement and adjacent quarries on both sides of the parish boundary. The present Combe Down parish and ward of the City of Bath originated in 1854 when the growing village formally took in the outlying uplands from the three parishes of Monkton Combe, Lyncombe and Widcombe, and Claverton. This study extends outside the parish to the contiguous part of Prior Park, the home of the principal landowner(s) and via linkages, mostly transport, to the Avon Navigation and later canals and railways and, in a very limited way, with Bath itself. The boundary, with the known former quarries at surface and underground is shown in Figure 3.2. This demonstrates that a very large portion of area has been quarried, though, as the key shows, much smaller portions were affected by active quarrying at any one time and the land thus as a whole had substantial, and often more important alternative uses, as it does today.

In the 18th century the main impact came from features related to the underground quarries, and the impact of surface quarrying in that century was still subdued, though surface quarrying was growing in importance much faster than underground in the late 18th century. The middle years of the century were dominated by Ralph Allen's quarries, but only the surface expression of these is considered here.

The end of the 18th century ended badly for the Combe Down Quarries with extremely difficult economic conditions in the late 1790s leading to very low output indeed but, after the 1801 Peace of Amiens, there seems to have been a considerable degree of economic buoyancy in Combe Down, presumably reflecting that in the City of Bath and despite some very bad years of depression around 1825 and 1830, quarrying seems to have recovered rapidly.

In the 19th century surface quarrying dominated, with the core areas of underground mining almost exhausted by the mid century, though they staged a

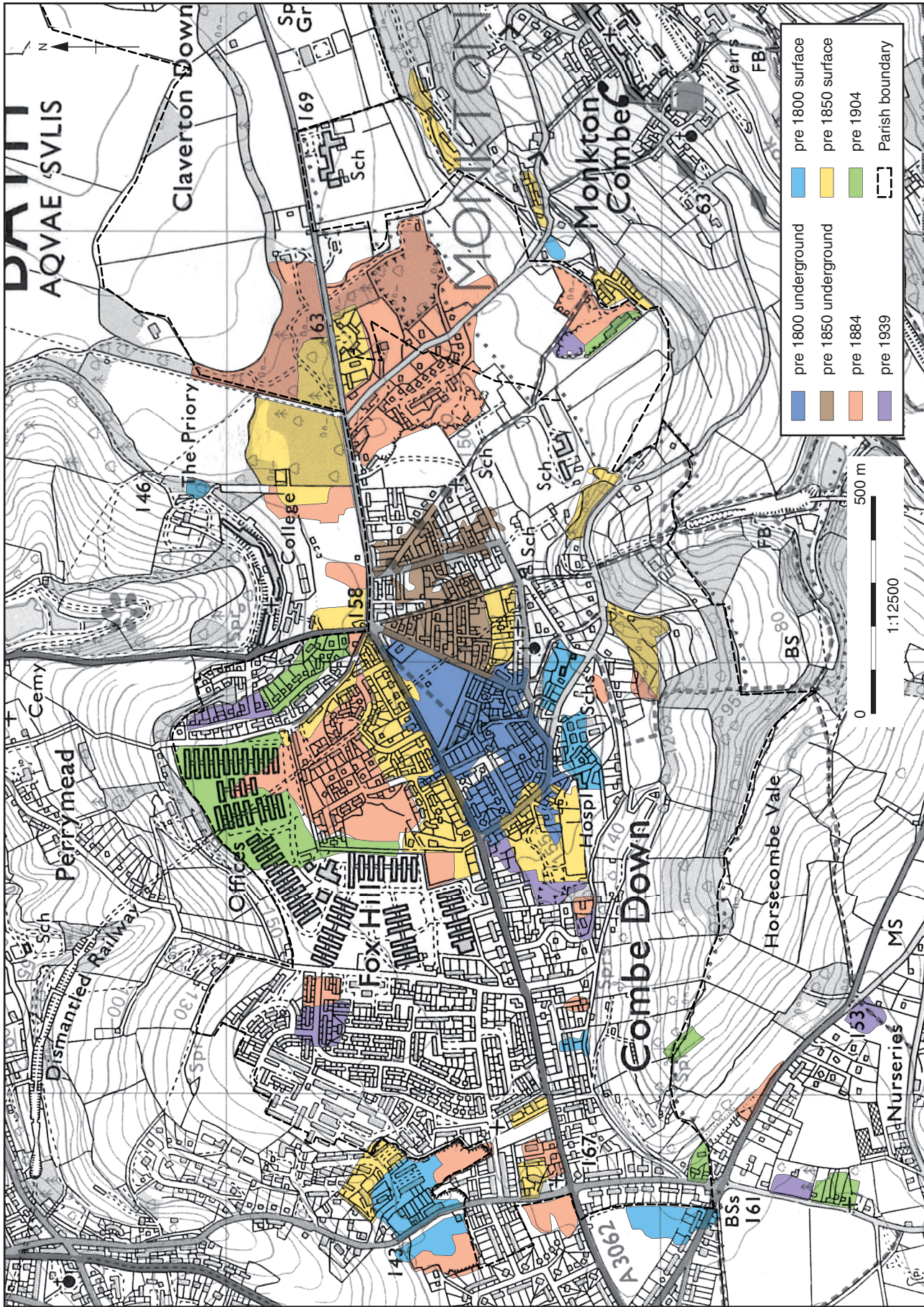


Fig. 3.2 Map of the modern ward of Combe Down, showing surface and underground quarries, updated from the 2000–2001 field archaeological survey

late revival near the century's end. As active quarrying retreated, so housing development advanced, beginning in the late 18th century, with planning for a settlement around 1800, and developed enough to form the nucleus of a new parish by the mid century. The modern core village, still dominated by quarrying, was largely developed by the 1860s, though there has been much subsequent infilling and the village then would have had a much more open aspect than it does today. The extensive building outside the core area seen today is very much a 20th-century phenomenon, but in many cases has also taken advantage of land released as quarrying ended. There are wide areas of quarrying dereliction (or land regenerating spontaneously) but many old quarries were filled after the Second World War by building debris from Bath and can be identified today as 'greened' recreational areas such as football and rugby grounds.

The pre-quarrying landscape

The landscape of Combe Down around 1700 was dominantly agricultural, though quarrying must have taken place for local purposes. Most of the area was rough grazing for sheep, the 'sleights and mountains' of Green Down or Combe Down as they were described in documents, which seem, partly to have been stinted pastures. The name 'The Lawns', a substantial area just east of the modern core of the village and extending down the east side of Prior Park, gives us some idea of the likely appearance of the down itself, which had only slight undulations and would have been close-cropped by sheep. The north-western area, formerly part of Lyncombe and Widcombe, was known as Widcombe Field and parts of it were certainly used for arable, probably the parts closest to Entry Hill at the west end of the area. A switch to arable from pasture seems to be reflected in documents, but this has not been quantified and it was probably overwhelmed by the impact of quarrying anyway. Parts of the steep slopes beyond the south rim down to the Horsecombe Brook were also arable and enclosed, mainly by hedges. Part of this area was known as the Vineyards, (now Vinegar Down) though this use was long abandoned. Parts of the steeper slopes on the south margins were wooded, above Tuckingmill and south and west of de Montalt Mill, including the Beechwood. Prior Park on the north side in 1700 was a decayed medieval deer park with low remains of walls and probably buildings, which had originally taken advantage of the valley overlooking Bath for hunting (Chapman 1996, 16).

The earliest proper pictorial indication from which details of the pre-quarrying landscape can be inferred comes from the *Survey of Five Miles around Bath* (Fig. 3.3) by Thomas Thorpe published in 1742, though by that date it naturally showed Mr Allen's freestone quarries so his house and park and quarry features must be ignored for present purposes. Routeways were few. The Down and head of Prior

Park was crossed by the Claverton Road – a rough track which ran east-west, and which was later turnpiked (c 1770). It was joined by Summer Lane, which slanted up the south side slope from Monkton Combe and before or soon after 1700 it had a small farm at the junction, probably giving its name, Stonehouse, to the site. These were probably the only significant ways for wheeled traffic, leading across to the old Fosse route to the west and down to Bath. There were two through footpaths: Shepherds Walk came along from the top end and north edge of Horsecombe and possibly marks a former boundary, now a linear bank, of Wessex and Mercia, extending from the Wansdyke, to the west. It possibly continued across by a path over modern Firs Field and the top of Prior Park. The second, known sometimes as the Long Drung, came over the Down from Monkton Combe via Tuckingmill, and went on down to Bath. Though a farm cart might use either of these paths on the Down, they would have been often impassable on the steep slopes. There were probably another two footpaths from the western side down to Bath, both also very difficult for wheeled traffic.

There were a couple of small farms or similar east of the modern core area of the village by 1742 at least. By or soon after 1700 there was the Cross Keys Inn at the important crossing point at the head of Horsecombe, and, within the Combe, there was Horsecombe House. Both were possibly built with stone from a small quarry nearby within Horsecombe, but there was little other settlement until later and then mainly below Entry Hill. To the south-east, Tuckingmill was derelict.

Some areas were made into smaller, individually occupied enclosures. Hedges and perhaps fences were used on the slopes of Horsecombe which was divided into long and narrow enclosures, and stone walls were probable or on one side of the Claverton Road or on the Widcombe Field. It was a partially enclosed open field, though internally it was still partly divided into strips. Probably some small surface quarries had developed to supply material for walls, on the escarpment rims or perhaps at the Sheeps House Quarry on Combe Down, using the poorer shallower stone of the Twinhoe Beds.

The impact of early quarrying pre-1729

The archaeological evidence for the location of pre-Allen underground quarries is somewhat negative, in that some underground workings seem to have early characteristics, but were apparently abandoned in the area he took over. These and comparative features within other quarries not then affected by his ownership, point towards some quarrying on a scale greater than purely local use on Combe Down even before the documentary record indicates, that is before about 1715. Later quarrying near the south rim below the modern village may also have removed evidence of any early activity there.



Fig. 3.3 A segment of Thomas Thorpe's Survey Five Miles Around Bath (1742). It shows Summer Lane in its earlier position extending to buildings where now Stonehouse Lane meets the Claverton Road. The Long Drung is only sketchily shown. Note the Cross Keys Inn, and the road there and another to the west going by the 'Old Stone Quarries' at Barrocks (Barrick's farm), associated with the old Roman route down to Bath. (Image courtesy of Bath Record Office)

What is likely to have been called Sheeps House Quarry, now known as Rock Lane and Quarrymans Court, had demonstrable pre-Ralph Allen workings with one underground area having a dated inscription of 1725 when it was clearly well established. The Sheeps House Quarry had several other small underground workings from entries on its sides and there may have been similar early underground working on the east and west sides of the Long Drung, perhaps especially near what is today The Brow.

Underground quarrying of a similar type also took place north of Shepherds Walk at both sides

of the former Lyncombe and Widcombe/Monkton Combe boundary either side of Rock Hall Lane. Possible such workings were destroyed by modern construction of Byfield Place. Competition from Allen's quarries would have made it hard for others to continue in business for long in the area.

Underground quarries such as these would have little impact on the landscape. They would have small scars of tipped spoil in front of the underground entries and perhaps a small cliff over the level or sloped entry, since the freestone would have been several metres below ground level. Underground workings might have utilized older

surface quarries to make entry underground easier. A network of tracks would have led from the quarries on to the main track over the Down or back to Monkton Combe.

Further east, above Monkton Combe village, around what is today Shaft Road and Mount Pleasant, field examination suggests early quarrying probably took place at the surface. This was the most convenient point for stone used in building the village. No other site has suitable stone and ease of access. Remains of possible but undated quarries can be seen along the edge of the Shaft Road and along the edge near Combe Manor and extending towards Brassknocker Hill.

It seems clear, therefore, that the core area of Combe Down and some parts outside it, were already involved in quarrying, even if the larger part was hidden underground. In the core area which is now the village, the absence of any substantial group of contemporary buildings built of local stone implies that stone from there was conveyed a considerable distance from its point of production rather than being simply a resource for parish use, as the workings above Monkton Combe and at Horsecombe probably mainly were. What there may have been in this overwhelmingly agricultural landscape was overspill activity from the long-established quarrying area further to the west, around Barrick Farm, with the old Fosse Way to Bath. These were old and apparently substantial quarries in 1742 and at Combe Down we may be seeing competing small specialist masons opening their own small quarries, or already at work anxious to secure control of their own supplies as Bath began to expand.

Expansion of quarrying 1729 to 1764

Ralph Allen's substantial investment into quarrying at Combe Down from about 1729 had an immediate and increasing impact on both the surface landscape and underground. He seems to have allocated a specific area of his eventually much larger estate to quarrying from the beginning, concentrating his activities there and keeping both this and other areas minimally affected, a policy apparently continued by his estate after his death in 1764. Most of his investment went into an improved stone handling and transport system between the quarries on Combe Down and his wharf, stoneyard and building sites in Bath, a distance of some two miles, down a fairly steep slope. These will only be outlined here, as they affected the landscape, with the development of Allen's business examined (and sourced) in Chapter 5.

In quarries without a crane or railway, typical of Allen's competitors, the stone had to be loaded on to horse-drawn wagons outside the underground entrance and was carted away directly to the stoneyard or building site. But the generally already-poor roads were damaged further by this, and it was a laborious, slow and hazardous process.

Each of Allen's underground quarries had a similar and relatively efficient arrangement (Fig. 3.4). The entrance was placed at the base of a small quarry dug into the rock some 10 m below the general ground surface and reached by a sloping track from the top of the Down. Above the entrance was a vertical cliff. The entry or entrance went almost level into the freestone beds that were to be worked, and worked stone was dragged to the outside on barrows, carts or wagons.

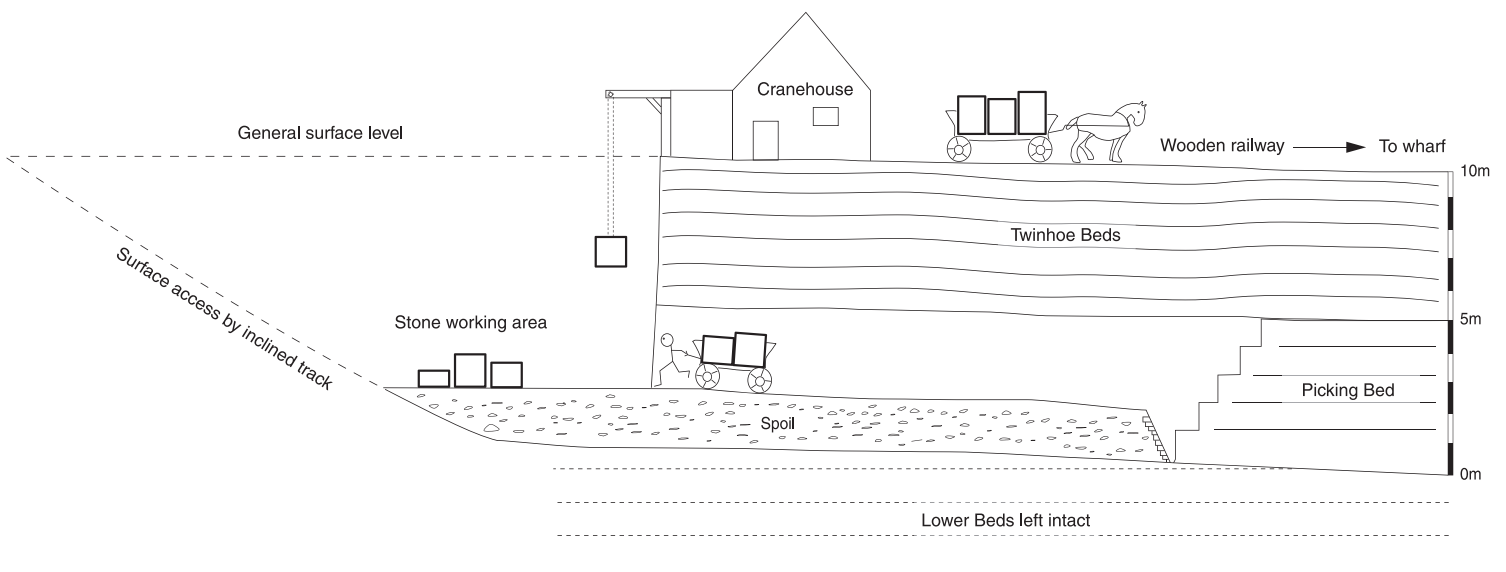


Fig. 3.4 Schematic representation of typical surface and underground arrangements at the entries of Allen's underground quarries

At the top of the cliff, at the normal ground surface level, a crane was mounted with its jib projecting over the edge to haul up stone from below. At the top the stone would be lowered directly onto a carriage on the wooden railway, from

where it was dragged by horses to the top of the hill and down to the wharf.

At the wharf the stone could be slid off the waggon, or unloaded by crane at the stone yard, or loaded by crane on to a boat (to Bristol and

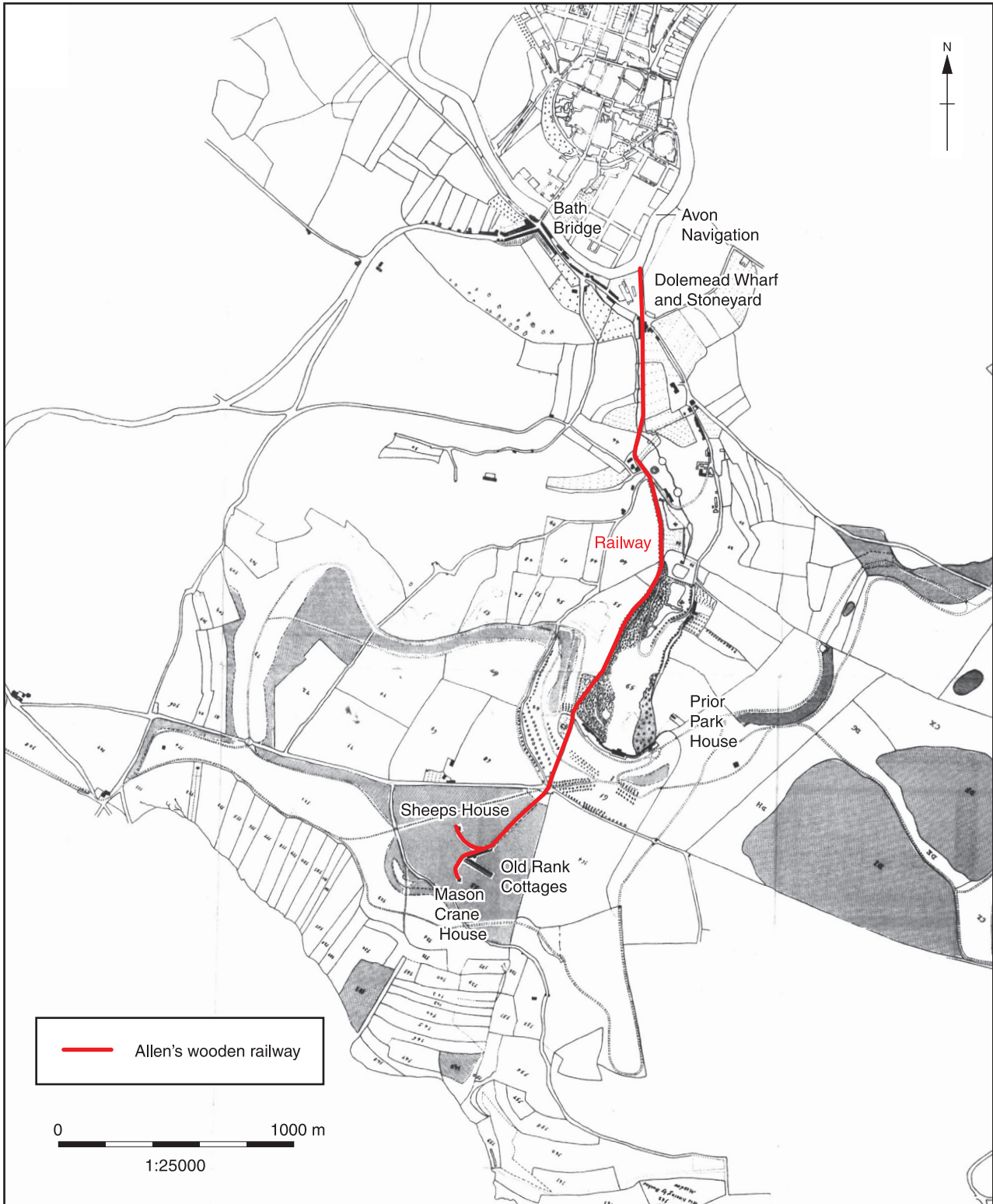


Fig. 3.5 Route of Allen's wooden railway from the Combe Down Quarries to Dolemead Wharf at the Avon Navigation, Bath (after Chapman 1996)

onwards). Alternatively the loaded wagon could be run on to a barge and moved by river (and another wooden railway if necessary) to the building site.

The area involved in Allen's quarries was south of the Claverton Road (North Road today), east of today's Combe Road (the then parish boundary), and west of the Long Drung, extending from here to the southern escarpment or rim. Allen also reduced the impact of quarrying by concentrating all the underground entries and associated surface areas on the southern side of the area, furthest from his intended house. This is the area within the Monkton Combe part of his initial purchases, though the remaining areas bordering it came into his ownership soon after. Previous quarrying within this area, and sometimes outside it by others seems to have stopped, but some underground quarrying seems to have continued in others' ownership even after he acquired the surface, perhaps because it was underground and barely visible.

The main surface impact away from the southern area came from his one and a half mile (3 km) wooden railway which connected both surface and underground quarries to the River Avon Navigation. It followed his own (and friendly neighbour's) carriage drive at the side of Prior Park (Fig. 3.5). Its novelty, at a time of considerable interest in industry and science, perhaps encouraged this unusual dual usage, and certainly it

created great interest among visitors to Bath (Fig. 3.6). The railway led to Allen's Stoneyard on the south bank of the Avon Navigation, from where it was loaded onto barges or river boats for transport to site (Fig. 3.7).

At both the Combe Down and the Navigation ends of the railway Allen erected a small group of houses and an inn (Figs. 3.8 and 3.9). The houses were designed by John Wood as a classical style terrace, with a pediment for the central house at Combe Down. This was occupied by the Clerk in charge of his stone business, Richard Jones. Each house had a small garden and the row was central to and overlooked the nearby quarrying activities. Other houses and the Carriage Inn alongside the railway were erected and probably designed by Jones, who was a very competent draftsman as well as mason. It was not until late in the century that more houses were added to the proto-village. This early settlement and route of the railway is shown on the 1742 Thorpe map, though at a very small scale, and a better representation is given by an estate map of about the time of Allen's death (1764) but missing some of the earlier elements. Figure 3.10 is a reconstruction derived from these maps and from data found underground, showing the probable four crane sites and related entries and a surface quarry and stoneyard and crane as they probably were sited about the mid 18th century.



Fig. 3.6 Allen's wooden railway, at the lower end of Prior Park about 1750. The nearer carriage contains block stone, the other seems to contain walling stone. From an engraving by Anthony Walker *Prior Park: The Seat of Ralph Allen* (courtesy of The Building of Bath Museum)



Fig. 3.7 Ralph Allen's stone yard and wharf at Dolemead, alongside the Avon Navigation in about 1734. The nearby large buildings are a brewery. Detail from *The South East Prospect of Bath*, an engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (image courtesy of The Building of Bath Museum)



Fig. 3.8 The Old Rank of the eleven cottages at Combe Down, designed by Wood for Allen's workmen 1729-30

The cranes and house and railway must initially have been very visible across the down, but Allen soon began planting rapidly-growing fir trees (see Figure 3.10). These initially defined the carriageway (as the railway was known) and other roads and tracks, but later infilled the whole quarrying area and other adjacent areas. On the c 1764 Allen Estate map, the quarrying area was defined by the trees. He also moved the end of the old Summer Lane from Stonehouse to the present location of Combe Road. His industrial quarried landscape was thus part of a fairly typical estate landscape with estate activities concealed within woodland. The railway also functioned for building his house, probably using a small branch, and an early self-acting branch, where the weight of one wagon going down drew the empty back up, was certainly used by Jones to build the Palladian Bridge in the grounds.

Sometime around the mid-century, by which time Allen's trees must have provided useful concealment, he also began to quarry substantially at surface at or near the southern escarpment. The largest quarry ran along the southern edge, almost gradually linking along the whole length of the modern Quarrybottom, extending from Byfield across to Belmont. The top of the quarry, c 1759 on Thomas Robins sketch is shown on Fig. 3.11 in front of the row of cottages. Earlier, as shown on the 1742 Thorpe Map the crane had been sited further to the west, but expansion of the Masons Crane House Quarry had probably led to this new location, with a substantial area below occupied by a stoneyard

with the usual piles and heaps of stone and spoil and small sheds for the masons. There may have been a limekiln too, since he also began lime-burning, but he may have preferred to place this nearer the navigation and cheaper coal supplies, as well as closer to his market.

After Allen's death 1764 – 1803

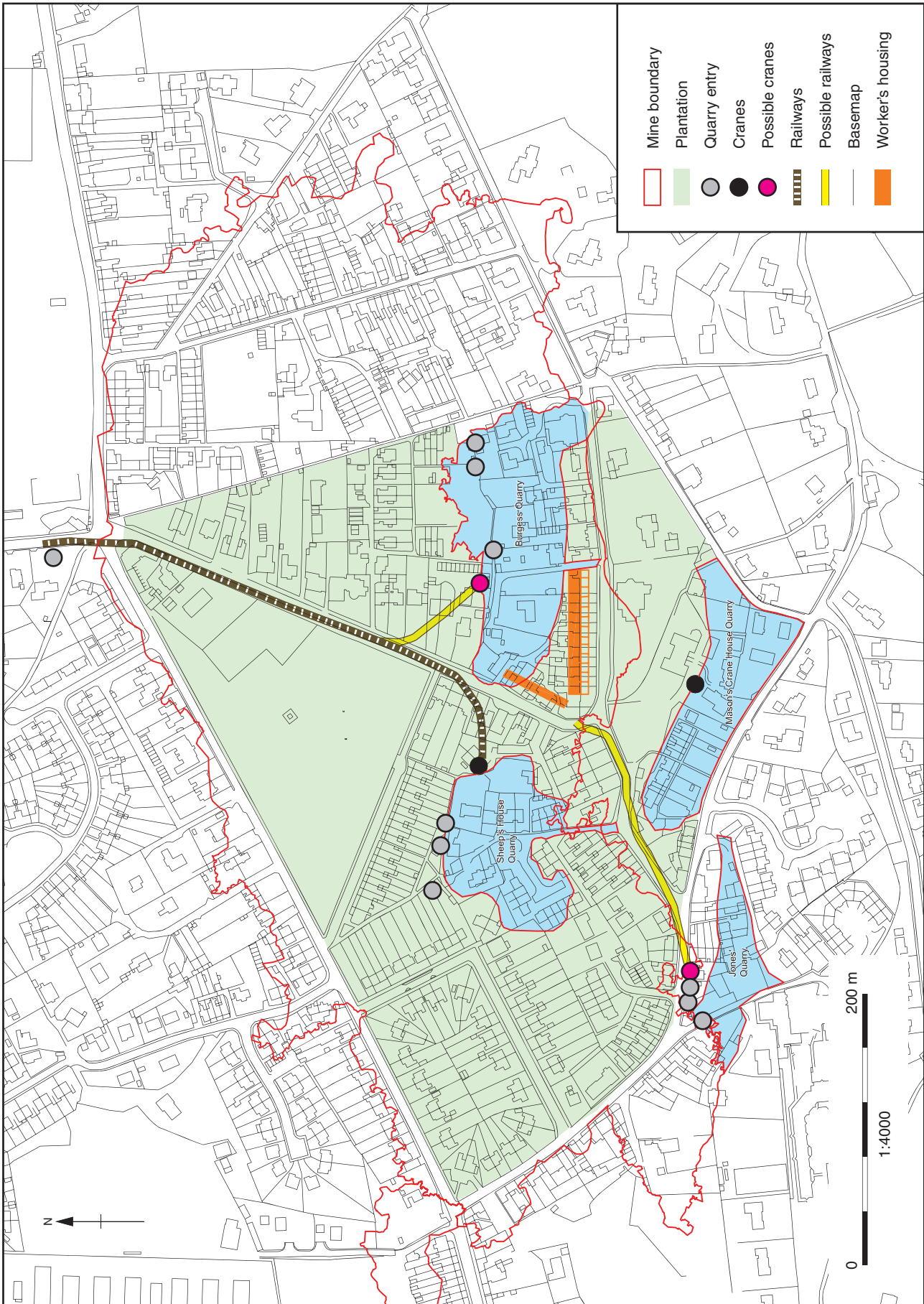
After Allen's death in 1764 the railway was abandoned and transport reverted to the use of horse and carts. It was perhaps about this time that a second surface quarry was begun behind the row of cottages with its west end near the Carriage Inn and extending east to what became Quarry Lane, adjacent to Claremont on Church Road. The west end was worked out by 1800 and the east end, behind Hopecote Lodge, almost so. There was almost certainly surface quarrying too at the Sheeps House Quarry and possibly, for a short time, at Jones Quarry, at the old parish boundary. The open quarries growing in extent must have had a very significant landscape impact, with men very visible at work.

The increased use of horses and carts meant inevitable damage to tracks and to the newly developed (by 1770) turnpike. This followed the old Claverton Road, across the down, either west to an improved Entry Hill route to the city, or east either to the city by a longer, gentler route via Bathampton, or down Brassknocker Hill. It is doubtful too that the individual quarry-masters who took over



Fig. 3.9 *The cottages built for the stoneyard workers at Dolemead, at the lower end of the railway*

Fig. 3.10 (facing page) *The railway and probable quarry entries at Combe Down, derived from the Allen Estate and Thorpe maps, and archaeological evidence*



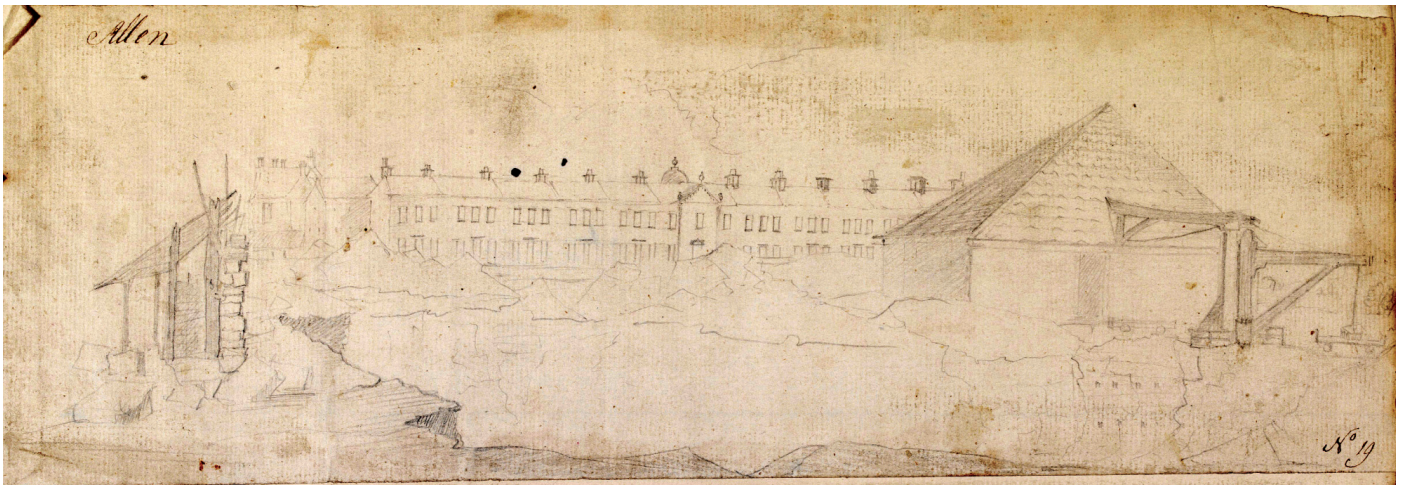


Fig. 3.11 Ralph Allen's Freestone Quarry at Combe Down showing the Masons Crane House Quarry and crane, with the Old Rank, including Dial House (where Richard Jones lived) in the background. Sketch by Thomas Robins the Elder, probably around 1750 (by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



Fig. 3.12 Freestone Quarries near Bath by J. Hassall, about 1800. The site may be near Entry Hill. Note the use of bow-sawing and the wagon awaiting loading. (copyright Victoria Art Gallery, Bath & North East Somerset Council)

were as concerned to protect the area as Allen had been. Prior Park itself was isolated from quarrying impact by the maturing fir trees and by banning of wheeled vehicles from the Prior Park Drive, other than by specific consent: a small illustration (BRO. 313) shows a fine ornamental double gate built between two pillars blocking access at the top of the drive.

Underground the quarries were also advancing to the north, concealed under the surface. However, as they advanced, the difficulties of drawing stone out of the levels southwards and, after closure of the railway, having to taking it back northwards across the surface to the turnpike must have been increasingly troublesome. The need to ventilate the workings had led to the use of shafts. These at first were very small, a metre or so across, and thus were easily concealed in the trees. Some time in the second half of the 18th century, however, it became normal to use what became known somewhat misleadingly as 'light shafts', which in fact were used for winding stone. Each was some 4 m or more across, needing a fence or wall and a lifting mechanism, store yard and track to service it. With perhaps half a dozen of these in use by the end of

the century, when the quarries were leased out to independent owners, they would become obvious landscape features to people walking or riding within the trees.

The Masons Crane House Quarry was the largest of those at work and exploited the southern cliff-like edge north of Summer Lane, and seems to have developed from the western end eastwards. It would have had a face some 10-12 m high, of which the top 5 or 6 m would be exposed as rather 'brashy' stone or 'ridding' – soft, broken, thin bedded and clayey – which would form a slightly sloping cliff. Some could be used but much would simply be dumped. Small spoil heaps seen on the 1759 Robins' sketch of the site are possibly the same heaps visible today in the churchyard. Much of the spoil from these and stone-working must have been dumped on the quarry floor to form a level working surface, or used to improve the tracks and roads around the site. The freestone beds would be more carefully worked, probably in steps or benches. A contemporary picture of a 'Quarry near Bath', which may have been at Entry Hill (Fig. 3.12), shows large blocks being levered off the cliff to the floor, with a man below using a large bow saw to cut 'wrought'

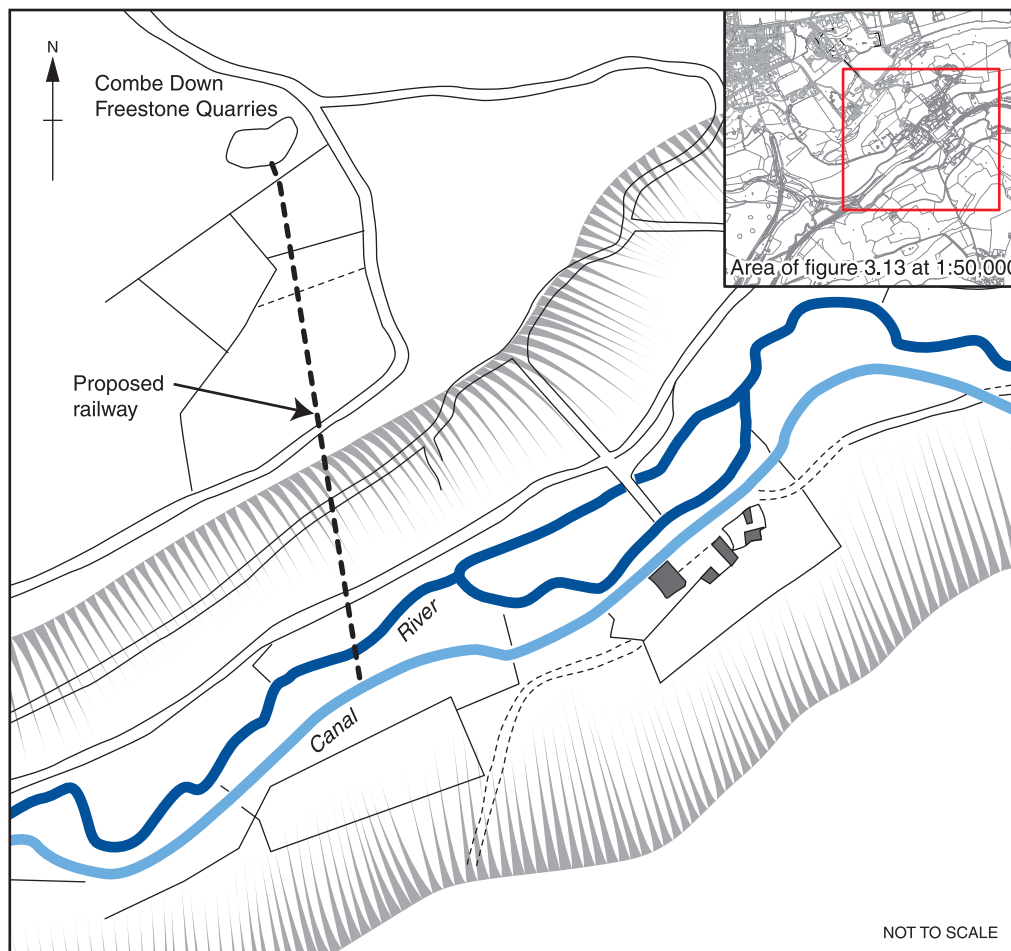


Fig. 3.13 A proposed railway from Mount Pleasant Quarry (Shaft Road) down to the intended Somersetshire Coal Canal. There is no evidence it was ever built. Detail from plan supplied by David Pollard

slabs or ashlar off a rough block. A horse and cart awaits loading nearby. The large quarry at Combe Down would have had similar scenes. The picture shows substantial vegetation, indicating a cessation, if temporary, of working in some parts of the quarry, but most of the working areas and faces would be raw, whitish rock with the quarry floor away from the banker masons workplaces, either dry, dusty and rutted, or wet, muddy and rutted. There would be a number of small simple stone or wood and, possibly, thatched sheds for the banker masons, and a map of c 1803 shows a stable. There may have been a pump over a well and horse trough, as there certainly were at the Carriage Inn. As well as the crane, it is uncertain whether other lifting devices such as shear legs were used, but it seems likely such simple tools of the mason would be there.

The second open quarry behind the Old Rank must have been similar, though this was a 'hole quarry' reached down the slope of Quarry Lane next to Claremont and presumably worked east and west from its bottom. This lane also appears to have been made to serve the underground entries which apparently preceded the surface quarry. This quarry also facilitated access to 'undermined' workings under the back yards of the row of houses erected by Allen for his men.

There may have also been small areas of surface working associated with the Rock Hall Lane and Rock Lane (Sheeps House Quarry), both of which appear to be much larger than would have initially have been required for the underground entries. At the Sheeps House Quarry, the original crane site as shown on the c 1764 Allen Estate Map was quarried away, almost certainly by this time, and quarrying may have been developed to the west along the same line of frontage to allow new entries and cartways to have been driven in from there.

There are several references in documents to unidentified quarries, possibly associated with Combe Grove, then belonging to the Vaughan family. These may have included what became the Mount Pleasant (surface) Quarry (2373), at the south end of Shaft Road, from which a tramway was planned about 1795 (Fig. 3.13), leading down towards what was to become the Somerset Coal Canal branch of the Kennet and Avon. However, the tramway was probably never built (Pollard pers. comm.) and there is certainly no remaining trace on the ground. The probable quarry there is today occupied by the row of houses built for later quarry workers while their gardens (often car parking spaces now) appear to be on the waste tips of the quarry. Surface quarrying had also begun along both sides of Shaft Road near the main Turnpike but in 1800 this still had little overall impact on the landscape (see Fig. 3.2) for a plan of these sites in their developed form). There may also have been a small development just east of Prior Park, possibly for estate purposes.

The largest new developments were related to the improvement of the Entry Hill route into Bath

(Fig. 3.14). They are shown on the 1799 Charlton map of Lyncombe and Widcombe (SRO DD/583 c/212: copy in BRO.). Quarries are shown on the west side of the Entry Hill road across to Crossway on land owned by 'The Parsonage', one at Crossway, the other at the steep section near the top of Entry Hill itself, later used as a corporation depot. On the east side at Entry Hill, the land was owned by the Magdalen Hospital, and was part of the Widcombe Field. Two quarries are shown within what became Combe Down (two more are shown in the adjacent part of what is now Odd Down). One was the roadside part of the later Springfield Quarry, and was partly an underground quarry which was filled in as part of the recent Stabilisation Scheme (Quarries 2374 and 2375). The other borders the Bradford Road Turnpike. No other quarries are shown on the Charlton map including the area of Green Down or Quarr Down, 'Late Collibeys', west of the Combe Road boundary with Monkton Combe. These became an important area of quarries after 1800. These Entry Hill sites would have particular advantages with respect to

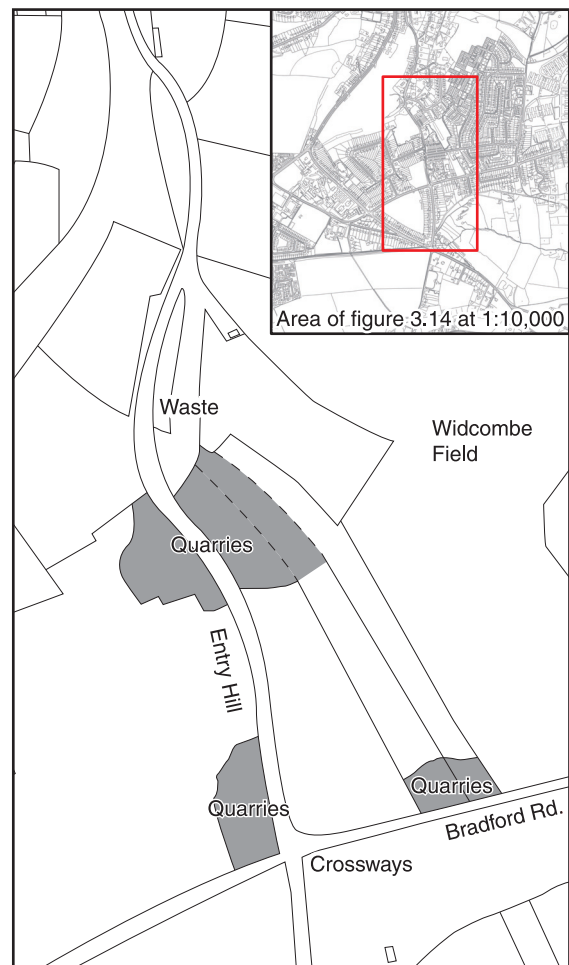


Fig. 3.14 Quarries at Entry Hill in 1799. Those on the east side were within Combe Down. Detail from the 1799 Charlton Map of Lyncombe and Widcombe

their distance from Bath but those on the east side of the wider area were also closer than the core area of Combe Down, via the Bathampton route, to the City. In about 1800 the level of economic activity was still very low, but normally the turnpike roads would have had scores of two-wheeled carts or four-wheeled wagons on them, the wheels retarded on the slopes by scotches to prevent runaways.

Open quarries, unless very small, are nearly always very conspicuous with high impacts on the surrounding environment, and the commencement of surface quarrying indicates that the original

discrete estate aims of Allen were being abandoned even in his lifetime in response to commercial pressures, and to a growing extent thereafter. However, there were still extensive tracts of grassland remaining between these sites, though this appears to have been in a process of private and piecemeal enclosure, as were the turnpike road bounds. This may have just been fashionable among landowners, but fences and walls protected animals from the nearby quarries and may have been a response to the needs of the growing city not far distant.

