Chapter 2. The Excavations

By Tim Allen and Jonathan Hiller

INTRODUCTION

The structure of the archaeological description

Deposits were linked in stratigraphic order, or failing this were associated using the dating provided by the associated finds (and very occasionally the architectural detail) to produce a stratigraphic description and development for the whole site.

The archaeological description is presented geographically, that is area by area. This is because there were no stratigraphic links between the excavated areas, which lay on the south-east, north-west and north-east of the Mount House site (Fig. 2.1). Comparing the finds between them also indicated that there was also relatively little chronological overlap, making detailed correlation of the phasing between them impossible. The various trenches dug east and south of the Mount House site are also described as a separate group. Each area is described chronologically using the same broad dating framework, which is explained below. As the earliest deposits were found in the trenches outside the Mount House site, these are described first.

The chronology of the site is based on site 'periods'. Periods 1 and 2, which are respectively Roman and Saxo-Norman, are represented by pottery and other finds, but only by a single deposit on the main site, though activity of these periods is present in the surrounding area. The succeeding site periods (from the 12th century to the present) have been defined according to the major changes in the pottery types upon which the ceramic dating is based, since it is the pottery which provides by far the majority of the dating evidence (see Chapter 3). Changes in the ceramic sequence do not necessarily correspond to the dating of major alterations to the structures on the site, and some of the site periods have been subdivided as they contain several major structural changes to the manor. This is true for Periods 3-6 (covering the 12th and 13th centuries). The subperiods do not necessarily reflect chronological divisions within the periods, simply sequences of events within the period as a whole. Thus within the mid 12th century (Period 4) Period 4a is earlier than 4b, and 4b than 4c, but these do not correspond rigidly to chronological divisions (for instance 1140–50, 1150– 60, 1160–75) within the timespan, and they could all have occurred late within this period.

In contrast to the subdivided periods, Period 8 covers both the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, and could have been divided on ceramic grounds. Due to the paucity of excavated evidence from the parts of the site examined, however, this has been left as one period. Period 9, which covers the

17th and 18th centuries, has been divided more arbitrarily because of a phase of robbing and alterations evident from both coins and pottery in the mid 17th century. As with Period 8, the character of the evidence has led to a less detailed treatment than in earlier medieval periods.

Plans summarising the developments in Periods 3–7 (Figs 2.4, 2.8, 2.13, 2.20 and 2.22) accompany the description of the south-east area, and for the reader's convenience those for Periods 4–7 are repeated in the section describing the north-west area (Figs 2.24, 2.27, 2.32 and 2.39).

The methodology of the excavations

All of the excavations on the Mount House site, and the additional trenches dug on the adjacent Mount Mills site, were carried out under the direction of Brian Durham. When in 1984 it was realised that planning permission had been granted for the construction of sheltered housing on the site, OAU sought permission to establish the extent of the threatened remains by trial trenching. The initial trial trenches were positioned to locate a major building complex anywhere on the site, within the constraints imposed by the need to avoid both the existing access road and landscape features, and to keep as close as possible to the areas designated for new buildings (Fig. 2.1). The trenching established that stone buildings were very well-preserved, and suggested that the medieval manor was laid out around a central courtyard. The south-east area contained a complex of buildings centred upon a very substantial tower (Frontispiece and Pl. 2.1); the north-west area revealed a curtain wall fronted by a moat, with ranges up against the inside on the north and north-west surrounding a courtyard.

With funding from English Heritage area excavations were then undertaken within the footprints of the proposed new buildings on the south-east and north-west, commencing early in July and with a completion deadline of the end of August. The developer also allowed additional topsoil stripping in the south-east area to establish the plan of the buried walls, but excavation in this area (the northwest part of the tower area) was restricted. No further work was allowed in areas not directly threatened. The scale of work was dictated by the limited time available.

In 1988, a watching brief was maintained east of the Mount House (Trench XIII) during test trenching carried out by contractors. Six small trenches were excavated in the yard south-east of the Mount House.



Plate 2.1 The Solar Tower from the north, including the central pier 49, the blocked north doorway, part of layer 50=129 (bottom left) and the intrusive modern pit 54 in the south-east corner (upper left).

At the end of the 1984 season excavation of the North Range in the north-west area had stopped at the level of the main mortar floor pending a decision on the future of the site. The area was covered with polythene and the surviving walls and floors were protected with sandbags in case it was decided to preserve, or even to display, the remains. In 1989 it was decided to rebury this area, but prior to this further excavation was carried out in the hope of solving some of the outstanding problems. In particular, this completed the excavation of the North Range to undisturbed natural.

In 1991 further limited excavation was carried out around the tower to clarify the character of the plan and the development of the buildings prior to the erection of a protective canopy beneath which the remains could be displayed. During the construction of the canopy a watching brief was carried out during the contractor's excavation of foundation pits.

In 1984 five exploratory trenches (84.I–84.V) were dug, east and south of the Mount House property within the Mount Mills clothing factory site, in an attempt to clarify the extent and preservation of medieval deposits surrounding the site itself. In 1990 further trenches (90.1–90.6) were dug in advance of redevelopment of the Mount Mills site as a supermarket, and in 1992 yet another group of evaluation trenches (92.1–92.5) was dug. These last trenches were intended both to clarify archaeological features and other deposits revealed in the earlier trenching, and to investigate other parts of the surrounding area. A summary plan of the trenches closest to the Mount House, and of further trenches containing archaeological finds and features, is given in Fig. 2.1.

Site Geology

The earliest deposit exposed during the excavations was the limestone bedrock, known as cornbrash or Forest Marble (Fig. 1.2). The bedrock was capped by clay, which was orange in patches immediately over the limestone, but above that formed a blue-grey layer up to 0.4 m deep (388) covering the whole of the site. This is interpreted as the top of the natural geology (the subsoil). The top of the bedrock was found at 82.26 m above OD on the north of the Mount House site (the moat excavation, Period 4b below), with the top of the natural clay at 82.44 m above OD. South of the present Mount House building (in the centre of the tower excavation area) the top of the natural clay was located at about 83 m above OD. Continuing south-east, the surface of the clay sloped downwards to 82.62 m above OD at the south end of the excavations. East of the Mount House in the Mount Mills site the top of the bedrock lay at 81.2 m above OD and the top of the overlying clay at 81.28 m. The thickness of the natural clay, therefore, decreased from 0.18 m to 0.08 m across the site.

THE MOUNT MILLS TRENCHES

In the area known as Mount Mills a number of features and structures were located in evaluation trenches excavated by OAU in 1984, 1990 and 1992. The trenches closest to the Mount House (and all those containing significant archaeological deposits) are illustrated on Fig. 2.1. These trenches are described first since they contain some of the earliest features on the site. Most are described below; 1984 Trench I, 1984 Trench V, 1990 Trench 2 and 1990 Trench 6, all of which relate to the medieval moat, are, however, described with the north-west excavation area, Period 4b.

1992 Trench 3 - Period 1: prehistoric and Roman

Nearly 70 m south of the Mount House an east-west trench was dug in 1992 (Trench 3). A single ditch (3/5) aligned north-west - south-east ran across the west part of the trench, but was not in line with the similarly aligned ditches in 1990 Trench 1. The only find from this ditch was a struck flint.

1984 Trench III, 1990 Trench 1 and 1992 Trench 4–late Saxon and early Norman, *c* 900–1100

Trench 1, dug in 1990, was positioned south of a series of sheds at the south side of the curtain wall of the Mount House. The limestone bedrock was cut by two ditches and overlain by post-medieval ploughsoils (layer 1/2 containing 19th-century sherds). Ditch 1/7 at the west end of trench 1 was aligned north-west - south-east, was 1.5 m wide and 0.5 m deep, and had sides sloping at 45°. The upper fill of the ditch, a grey sticky clay with charcoal inclusions (layer 1/7/2), contained fragments of late Saxon pottery (c 900–1050). A further ditch (1/6) aligned north - south, to the east of 1/7, contained no dating evidence. Ditch 1/6 was 0.6 m wide and 0.4 m deep, and was filled with a sticky grey clay. The feature appeared to have been 're-cut' on its east side, suggesting that it was a re-used boundary or drainage feature.

Trench 4, dug in 1992, also revealed post-medieval soils overlying the limestone bedrock, which was cut by two parallel ditches running east to west. Ditch 4/6 was 0.37 m deep and 1.4 m wide, and ditch 4/7 to the east was 0.52 m deep and 1 m wide. The fills of ditch 4/6 contained three sherds dated to the 11th to early 12th century, and ditch 4/7 contained a sherd of possibly 12th-century date and a residual Roman sherd. The ditches may have formed part of a system of field boundaries, along with the ditches found in 1990 Trench 1.

The south end of 1984 Trench III was thoroughly disturbed by modern buildings, but the north end cut through a modern bank, and beneath this the

underlying deposits were better preserved. Here the natural limestone was overlain by layer 7, limestone fragments in a silty clay matrix, and this was cut through by a ditch (31) that just penetrated the bedrock below. To the north of the ditch the surface of layer 7 undulated, the series of V-profiled cuts visible in section possibly resulting from ploughing. Ditch 31 was filled with layer 3 = 35, a loam mixed with sand, small stones and traces of charcoal, which also sealed layer 7 to the north.

Another east - west ditch (34) cut the bedrock at the very north end of the trench, but its full width and depth could not be established, as it lay partly beneath an existing road. The illustrated section (Fig. 2.1) suggests that the ditch may also have cut through layers 7 and 3, since its fills abutted them. Alternatively, these layers may represent a bank alongside the ditch. The limestone rose immediately south of ditch 34, and there was some doubt as to whether this was undisturbed or was redeposited upcast. If it were upcast, then layers 7 and 3 above must also have been bank material, though not derived from the ditch. Alternatively, layer 7 may be simply the natural soil overlying the limestone, equivalent to layer 6/3 in 1990 Trench 6 east of the Mount House, and the rise in the limestone simply a natural undulation. Layer 3 may more plausibly represent a bank adjacent to ditch 34.

Ditch 31 was undated, but layer 33 = 10, the silt and sand fill of ditch 34, contained both sherds of a Roman vessel and a sherd of pottery of late Saxon or early medieval type. Ditch fill 33 was overlain by a layer of densely packed stones (3/10), which levelled off the top of the ditch and may have formed a cobbled surface. Layers 10 and 3 were overlain by a ploughsoil (32) that contained post-medieval clay pipe pieces of 17th-century and later date.

The evidence from these trenches is not easy to decipher, but it is likely that a late Saxon or early Norman boundary has been identified, made up of two phases of ditch and apparently accompanied by a bank. It is possible that ditch 31 was superseded and buried beneath the upcast bank of ditch 34. Alternatively, layers 7 and/or 3 could have derived from ploughing to the south, gradually forming a head-land at the north end of a field. This would accord with the stratigraphic sequence recorded in section, the earlier ditch 31 being infilled by ploughsoil and a new boundary ditch being established beyond the headland. Ditch 7 in 1990 Trench 1 was, presumably, another field boundary of the same date.

1990 Trench 4 alongside Farm Mill Lane

Late Saxon and Norman (950-1200)

North-east of the Mount House, 1990 Trench 4 ran parallel to Farm Mill Lane for 71 m (Fig. 2.1). The western end of the trench was taken up with a shallow pond, which was also found at the north end of 1990 Trench 3, and whose dark fills contained 19th-century pottery. East of this was a gully (4/15) containing pottery of late Saxon/early Norman date, and beyond this were a number of wall footings (4/ 16, 4/21, 4/24) between which lay possible floor levels of compacted natural stone and mortar, and cobblestones. Pottery from the floor layers associated with the structures was of 11th- to 13th-century date. The building (or buildings) was filled with stone rubble, probably collapse from the walls.

To the east of footing 4/24 a large semi-circular stone structure (4/25) was revealed, measuring 2.8 m across and surviving to a height of 0.75 m. The stones of its walls showed signs of burning, and this structure was perhaps a kiln or an oven. Pottery from the fill of 4/25 was dated to the late 11th or 12th century. A possible posthole (4/26) was found to the east, and a ditch (4/27) aligned north-west south-east was located east of 4/26. The ditch was 1.1 m wide, 0.85 m deep and had a succession of clay fills. Layer 4/27/1 contained 11th- to 12thcentury material, whilst fill 4/27/3 contained late Saxon sherds. Residual Roman pottery was found in the topsoil and incorporated into wall 4/16.

At the east end of the trench a layer of limestone cobbling (4/30) was found beneath post-medieval spreads. This may have been associated with the medieval buildings, but was not dated. The narrow evaluation trench prevented detailed analysis, but established that there was a medieval building or buildings fronting onto Farm Mill Lane, perhaps separated by property boundaries, of which ditch 4/27 may have been an example.

Mount Mills: 1984 Trench IV, 1990 Trenches 3 and 5

At the north end of Trench 3 dark silts similar to those at the west end of Trench 4 were found. These are interpreted as post-medieval pond deposits. A single east-west ditch (3/9) with two postholes adjacent was found to the south, approximately in line with the northern curtain wall of the medieval manor. Ditch 3/9 was 0.5 m deep and was filled with a reddish-brown clay. These features are undated, and could be either medieval or postmedieval. An undated sheep burial was also found within this trench, and two possible circular features towards the south end. No trace of the building marked on the 1st edition O.S. map was found at the south end of Trench 3. 1984 Trench IV and 1990 Trench 5 were sterile.

MOUNT HOUSE: THE SOUTH-EAST AREA (Figs 2.2 and 2.3)

General excavation strategy

The excavation of the south-east area was based around a large masonry structure identified by trial trenching (Fig. 2.1). This was interpreted as a Solar Tower. The main investigation of this and surrounding buildings was carried out in 1984, supervised by Simon Palmer assisted by Chris Storey and Chris Scull. The purpose of these excavations was to establish the date and character of the buildings and their development, but the scope of the investigation was limited by the time and funding available before the proposed redevelopment. Apart from the Solar Tower itself, therefore, the excavation consisted of a series of trenches dug to establish the stratigraphic sequence, linked by limited clearance of topsoil and recent deposits to expose the tops of walls and the latest archaeological deposits associated with them (Fig. 2.2).

In 1991 further limited excavation was carried out around the 1984 excavation to clarify the character of the plan and the development of the buildings prior to the erection of the protective canopy beneath which the remains could be displayed. This work, which was supervised by Mick Parsons, was generally confined to clearing the overburden to the tops of the walls or robber trenches, and excavation to any depth was only carried out by small sondages, with the exception of one garderobe chamber that was completely emptied. During the construction of the canopy and the excavation of the foundation trenches by the contractor a watching brief was carried out by Brian Durham; walls and archaeological deposits were revealed in all the pits, though the natural clay was not reached (Fig. 2.2).

The scope of the excavations (Figs 2.2 and 2.3)

Figure 2.2 shows the extent of the excavations and marks the principal sections drawn during fieldwork. The numbers are those given on site; sections illustrated in this chapter are numbered on Fig. 2.3. The information has been provided in this way to enable a researcher to relate the published sections, which are often composites of several site sections, to their originals in the archive.

The interior of the Solar Tower (Trench VIII) was fully excavated except for a baulk left on the north side. Internal cross-sections were drawn of the deposits and structures inside the building; the principal drawn sections recorded the stratigraphy across the north - south and east - west axes of the Solar Tower (Figs 2.6 and 2.7).

North of the tower was a second building (here called the East Range). A 1.2 m wide trench (Trench X) was excavated across the full width of the East Range to the natural clay, and another trench (Trench VIII) was dug at the south-west end, also to natural clay (Fig. 2.21). A trench 1 m wide was also dug to natural in the south-east corner (1991 Trench 2), and another trench (part of 1984 Trench VIII) was excavated in the junction between the north-west corner of the Solar Tower and the west wall of the East Range. The natural clay was exposed at the base of the East Range walls. The principal record of the trench was the north-east - south-west section (Section 16: Fig. 2.14), and two east-west sections drawn across wall 9 (Sections 5 and 6: Figs 2.18 and 2.19). Trench 3 (dug in 1991) was excavated to within 1 m of



19

Section 16, in some cases leading to the duplication of context numbers.

East of the Solar Tower a series of sample trenches were dug at strategic points across walls and other structures as they were located. Collectively these trenches formed Trench VIII. Natural was identified in two of the excavated trenches within the east garderobe building (Figs 2.7 and 2.11). A north-west to south-east trench (Trench I) was excavated east of the garderobe block, in order to trace additional structures. The natural clay was not reached within Trench I, where excavation stopped at the level of the top of the revealed walls and archaeological deposits.

North of this, Trenches 2 and 4 (1991) were dug across another stone building (the chapel). The initial trench within this building was carried down to the natural clay in places (Sections 9 and 12: Fig. 2.12), but the trenches dug in 1991 were designed simply to establish the outline of the walls in plan, and were not excavated to any significant depth.

The area south of the Solar Tower was investigated by a single trench 1 m wide, which was dug to the natural clay (Fig. 2.6). In 1991 further areas either side of this were stripped to the tops of the medieval walls (1991 Trench 1).

A continuous trench was dug around the west side of the Solar Tower and the west wall of the East Range (1984 Trench II), and Sections 10 and 6 are the main record of the excavation here (Fig. 2.15). Section 10 ran along the west face of Trench II. Natural clay was not reached within this trench. In 1984 a single trench was dug to elucidate the nature of stonework west of the Solar Tower (Trench XIII), but excavation stopped at the top of the walls and their associated deposits.

Further excavation of the walls west of the Solar Tower was undertaken in 1991 (1991 Trench 3). Most of this operation only involved clearing the tops of the walls, though a garderobe pit was fully emptied, and natural clay was also reached in an adjacent part of the building (Figs 2.16 and 2.17).

North of this, further trenches were dug west of the East Range down to the natural clay through what proved to be the medieval courtyard. The development of the courtyard was examined in an east - west trench (1984, Trench III) that joined with the part of Trench VIII dug immediately west of the East Range. Some localised deposits within the trenches do not appear in the sections. Trench III was extended northwards where the natural clay was also revealed. Limited excavation of the courtyard deposits was also carried out in 1991.

Period 1–Roman

Beneath the later site of the chapel (Fig. 2.3) the natural clay was overlain by a layer of brown mottled clay 0.04 m thick (layer 343), which contained only Roman pottery. This layer overlay shallow features cut into the natural clay and containing limestone. These were undated, but similar features elsewhere on the site have proved to be medieval, and the pottery in 343 may have been residual. Clearly residual Roman material occurred in a number of bulk clay fill contexts in and around the Solar Tower (see Periods 4 and 5 below), which suggests that the clay was being dug from a rural Roman site nearby.

Period 3 – Early medieval, c 1100–1140. The Solar Tower, East Range and surrounding boundaries

Summary

A substantial building was constructed upon the site (Figs 2.3 and 2.4). The known remains of the primary building consisted of a large rectangular tower (hereafter referred to as the Solar Tower) with a long range (the East Range) running north from it. The primary buildings were initially surrounded on the north and east side by a ditch, which had a break, probably for an entrance, on the north.

The Solar Tower-structural description, and construction deposits

The Solar Tower measured 15.8 m by 10.7 m externally and 11.2 m by 6.3 m internally; the walls of the tower were about 2.2 m wide and survived to an average height of 1.7 m (Pl. 2.1). Within the tower, the offset footings of three of the four walls were observed in plan and the upper portions of stonework recorded in section (Figs 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7), but excavation was not carried down to expose the full depths of the footings, or their construction trenches. The footings were constructed of limestone blocks. On the north and south the footings were offset 0.2 m from the inner face of walls 60 and 62. On the west the footing was offset 0.6 m from the inner face of wall 2. The footings of the east wall were not observed.

Externally the exposed areas of the walls were completely covered with white plaster, which survived in good condition. Inside only patches of white plaster survived, and here the walls were constructed of rough courses of large and medium sized rectangular limestone blocks, which were bonded with mortar containing small stones (see elevation Fig. 2.5). The average size of the blocks was 0.3 m by 0.15 m. The external corners of the building, the window and door surrounds were built with larger ashlar quoins of Taynton stone, finely dressed with diagonal tooling. Internally the joints were on average 10 mm wide, flush-pointed in fine lime putty and were 'knife-cut', that is, the smooth pointing was then decorated with an incised line, possibly to imitate finer joints (Pl. 2.2). This treatment survives on the rere-arch quoins of the south-west and west basement lights, and the south-east jamb of the north doorway (see below).

The tower was lit by four internally splayed window openings; the south wall (62) had two window recesses (68, 69), the west and east walls (2



Figure 2.3 Evidence plan for south-east area. (scale 1:150)

and 61) single windows (70 and 71). The north wall (60) had a central door way leading to the East Range (133) (Pl. 2.1). The east and west windows (70 and 71) were not quite central, the north edge of the windows being 2 m from the north wall, the south edge being 2.3 m from the south wall. Within the Solar Tower the window recesses began about 0.75 m above the footings, and the base of the window sloped upwards so that on the outside the windows were about 1.2 m above ground (Pl. 2.1).

All four windows had been robbed or altered to some degree, and in no case did the head of a window survive *in situ*. The best preserved window (70) was that in the west wall (2), surviving 1.1 m high (Fig. 2.5). Large blocks of ashlar lined the edge of the window splay on the inside; five blocks remained *in situ* on the north side and two on the south. The faces of the window recess were covered with wellpreserved plaster. Similar ashlars survived on one corner of the splay of both of the south windows, but had been robbed elsewhere. On the exterior of the building the window surrounds, presumably, were also of ashlar originally, but no ashlars survived except for one fragment on the east window, which did not extend as far as the edge of the window.

The west window was 1.7 m wide internally and, despite being robbed, enough of the splay of the east window and one of the south windows survived to establish that these had been of very similar width. The angle of splay of the west and one of the south windows was such that if projected the two sides would have met at the outside edge of the wall, while the sides of the eastern window were converging towards a point within the body of the wall. The width of the windows on the outside is difficult to establish. The sides of the western window ceased to converge some 0.6 m from the external face of the wall, thereafter running approximately at right angles to an opening 0.55 m wide. The external corners of this opening, however, were not of ashlar, and the parallel section of the window sides lacked the plaster that covered the splays. While this could simply have been due to weathering, it is more likely that this was an alteration to the window (see Period



Figure 2.4 Period 3 plan.



Figure 2.5 Elevation of the west internal face of the Solar Tower.

5a below). On one of the southern windows the side appeared still to be converging only 0.3 m from the exterior wall face, suggesting an aperture only 0.2 m–0.25 m wide.

The doorway (133) was in the centre of the north wall (60), and was also central to the East Range. The doorway was 1.6 m wide and survived about 1 m high. The door jambs were of ashlar; five courses surviving on the north side and one on the south. A rebate suggested that the door was hung just within the face of the north wall of the tower, and opened within the thickness of the wall. The footing of wall 60 on the north side (819 = 831) lay 0.2 m below the level of doorway 133, and was offset 0.45 m (Figs 2.3 and 2.6).

The internal and external stratigraphy of the Solar Tower

The earliest recorded deposits within the Solar Tower were thin layers of clay and limestone 349 = 378 (Figs 2.6 and 2.7), which extended right across the interior. These layers abutted the footings of the tower walls; the limestone was probably derived from the construction of the building.

Adjacent to the walls of the tower above layer 349 was a series of mortar deposits. Although not correlated, the deposit sequence is very similar on the south, west and east, and appears to consist of a grey deposit (numbered 379 on the south) followed by an orange or reddish-yellow mortar (numbered 380, 37 and 385 = 281 respectively). Layer 281 covered most of the floor of the Solar Tower, and probably included layers 380 and 37. Pottery of 12thcentury date was recovered from it. Adjacent to layer 281 on the north was layer 361 (Figs 2.6 and 2.7) which also overlay the footing of the north wall (60) and the threshold of the doorway (133) leading from the tower to the East Range. Layers 281 and 361 appear to have been contemporary, and formed the first mortar floor within the building. A thin pink layer 387, probably mortar or plaster from rendering, overlay layer 281 up against wall 61.

Outside the Solar Tower on the east a layer of compacted mortar (224) 0.1 m thick overlay the foundations of wall 61 and the natural clay beyond (Fig. 2.7). This was interpreted during the excavation as a possible path, but could equally have been construction debris. South of the Solar Tower the equivalent deposit was probably a layer of mortar and gravel 0.08 m thick (91) which overlay the offset footing of the Solar Tower wall (62) and the natural clay (Fig. 2.6). Above layer 91 was a 0.22 m thick deposit of grey clay (90) which was in turn sealed by a 0.06 m thick layer of mortar and limestone (89). These deposits may represent the accumulation of construction debris. They were separated from similar deposits further to the south by the cut of a later wall (354/58). Beyond this wall a 0.1 m thick deposit of small limestone and mortar (353) overlay the natural clay. This layer could have been the continuation of layer 91 or layer 89. It was recorded as abutting a stone wall 350 (see The curtain wall below), and may alternatively represent construction debris from this. Layer 353 was sealed by a 0.1 m thick deposit of gravel, mortar and small limestone cobbles (352). The cobbles were irregularly spaced, but may have formed an early stone surface and 353 was perhaps a continuation of layer 89 to the north.

West of the Solar Tower, excavation did not expose the base of wall 2, and no certain construction deposits or primary occupation layers were seen. The lowest layer exposed was 345, a deposit of orange gravel with some white mortar, limestones and stone chippings. The chippings may indicate that it accumulated during the finishing of the tower, but the layer abutted the wall to a depth of nearly 0.6 m, and was probably later dumping (see Period 4b: the west terrace).

The East Range-structural description

The East Range was of the same build as the Solar Tower and adjoined it on the north. Its walls (wall 9 on the west and wall 88 on the east), which were 1.6 m thick, were traced running north for 11.5 m, but the northern end of the building was not located



Figure 2.6 North-south section across the Solar Tower.



Plate 2.2 Detail of the diagonal tooling and 'knife-cut' mortar pointing of the rere-arch quoin on the north side of the west window of the Solar Tower.

(Fig. 2.3). The range was just over 9 m wide, with an internal width of just under 6 m. The walls of the East Range were constructed of large limestone blocks similar to those of the Solar Tower, and the better preserved east wall survived up to 1.5 m high. The mortar type and faces were not described during the excavation. At the base of the internal faces of walls 9 and 88 a single offset course of stonework was revealed (Figs 2.18 and 2.19). For wall 88, the offset was 0.44 m, and for wall 9 it was 0.18 m. The top of the stone footings on the outside (west) of wall 9 was also revealed.

Approximately 4.5 m north of the Solar Tower, a rectangular cut 0.3 m–0.35 m deep with vertical sides and a flat bottom was excavated into the

natural clay on the west side of wall 9. This was filled with layers of horizontal limestone (276), which also extended over the offset footing on the west side of wall 9. The stones appear to have formed a platform covering an area approximately 3.5 m north-south by 3.25 m east-west, the foundation for a stone buttress or chimney stack 27, which was built directly upon the stones of 276 (Fig. 2.3). The southern limit of 276 corresponded to the line of 27 on the south, but extended nearly 2 m beyond structure 27 into the section on the west and 1 m to the north. The buttress or chimney stack was constructed of limestone blocks with ashlar quoins, and measured 2.6 m north-south and 1.8 m eastwest (Pl. 2.3).

The masonry of feature 27 was of the same build as that of East Range wall 9. The absence of any stratigraphy cut by 276 in the courtyard also shows that it was incorporated into the original building (Figs 2.14 and 2.19). Feature 27 was abutted on the north side by a localised layer of reddish sand (264) up to 0.1 m thick, and this was sealed by a thin orange gravel mortar (287), in turn overlain by a thin white mortar or plaster (263). These were presumably associated construction deposits. At a later date a similar feature numbered 25, possibly a projecting fireplace or support for a first-floor fireplace, was constructed at ground level inside the East Range against the west wall opposite 27 (see Period 5b below), and may have used 27 as a chimney stack. This perhaps indicates that 27 was the base of a firstfloor chimney stack rather than a buttress.

The east wall of the East Range contained a single, original, window recess (Fig. 2.3, 429). The window was of similar style to those in the Solar Tower: the sides of the window, which survived 0.8 m high, consisted of six courses of ashlar, although in places the stonework had been removed by later demolition. On the outside the base of the window was about 1.2 m above the contemporary ground level. The window was 0.45 m wide externally, splaying internally to 1.6 m wide, and the base of the window also sloped down towards the inside. The internal faces of the window recess were covered in places by plaster.

To the north of window 429 a niche or recess 452 was present in the outer face of wall 88. This feature was largely destroyed by the removal of the wall face to bond in a later blocking wall 451 (see Period 4 below). The squared corner at the south end however survived, and the plaster render on the exterior of the East Range wall continued around this corner and into the recess. The recess continued down the wall face for approximately 1 m, below which the corner had been removed. The purpose of this recess is unclear.

Internal stratigraphy of the East Range

Within the East Range three trenches were excavated and although they share a general sequence, the detailed stratigraphy of each is rather different. In Trench 10 at the north end of the excavation thin construction layers of pink silty mortar (Fig. 2.21, layers 333, 334) abutted the bases of walls 9 and 88 and overlay the offset footings of the walls. A similar deposit of light reddish-brown mortar and small limestone 253, abutted wall 9 further south. Overlying these deposits was layer 249 (Figs 2.18 and 2.19), a



Plate 2.3 Chimney stack 27 from south-west.





Figure 2.7 East-west section across the Solar Tower

slightly lighter-coloured mortar 0.05 m thick, which covered the whole width of the building. Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from layer 249.

At the south end of the range a layer of greyishwhite mortar 0.08 m thick overlay natural clay and abutted the footings of the Solar Tower (Figs 2.6 and 2.18, layer 817). The deposit was patchy and uneven, but extended right across the East Range and at least 1.75 m northwards from the Solar Tower. A little 12th-century pottery was recovered from 817.

Above these deposits it was possible to correlate the earliest floors on the basis of the levels. Against the west wall (9) in the south-west corner deposit, 249 was overlain by 231 = 244, a mixture of reddish-yellow mortar and gravel forming a compact surface 0.08 m thick. At the base of Trench X (Fig. 2.21) an equivalent layer to 231 = 244 was a layer of fine sandy gravel (322), which overlay construction deposits 333 and 334, and extended across the full width of the East Range. Layer 322 was 0.1 m–0.15 m thick, and was overlain by a thin mortar surface 321. The surface of both undulated, perhaps as a result of wear.

Masonry (350) south of the Solar Tower

Approximately 5.8 m south of the Solar Tower was the base of a parallel stone structure (350) set into the natural clay (Figs 2.3 and 2.6). It continued south beyond the limits of excavation, and the stonework was not bottomed, but it was at least 1.15 m wide and 0.35 m deep. The remains of five courses of stone survived. This was abutted by layer 353, the stone surface directly overlying the natural clay, making 350 as early as the Solar Tower itself. Structure 350 was not observed in subsequent excavations to the east or west of this, and is therefore difficult to interpret. It may have been an isolated stone structure, but alternatively may have been part of a boundary wall, whose return on the east was robbed by feature 344 (see Fig. 2.4 and below).

Linear boundary 344 and occupation east of the Solar Tower

A linear feature the top of which was filled with flat limestone slabs ran north-south parallel to the main buildings, 8 m east of the East Range and 5 m east of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.3 and Pl. 2.4). Several trenches were dug into this feature, but nowhere was its full width, or its profile, established because it was overlain by a later surviving wall (see below). Feature 344 was between 0.7 m and 1.0 m deep as excavated, with a steep west side, and was at least 0.6 m wide. Generally the feature was filled with layers of loose limestone, many of them burnt, interspersed with lenses of mortar, and was overlain by both the south chapel wall and by the terrace revetting wall 77 (see Period 4a: The chapel, and Period 4b: Extension of the east terrace, below).

Two small areas of flat limestone (341 and 342) were exposed within the later chapel in line with 344.

These are believed to represent a continuation of 344, bringing its length to at least 17.6 m. The gap between 341 and 342 was not excavated to the same depth; this may have been an entrance 1.2 m wide, or the stones may have continued at greater depth (see Pl. 2.5). The linear feature cut a thin layer of mottled clay 343, and further south had an uncertain relationship with layer 359, an occupation horizon on the natural clay east of the East Range (Fig. 2.12). Layer 359 consisted of dark grey clay with frequent limestone and charcoal inclusions and was very similar to the spreads seen in the north-west part of the site immediately above the natural clay (see below layer 543). It is interpreted as the residue from dumps of stone brought onto the site for building, mixed with charcoal from clearance burning. Although the edge of the linear feature was seen in the surface of 359, it was not clear whether it had been dug through the layer, or was simply open during its formation. The feature may have been either the robber trench of a boundary wall, possibly the return of wall 350, or a ditch similar to 558 (see the north-west area, Period 3).

Additions to the buildings - Period 3b

A small room possibly housing a stair was built in the north-east angle of the Solar Tower and East Range.

Room 446 - Period 3b

A small stone room (446) was constructed in the angle between the north wall of the Solar Tower, and the east wall of the East Range (Fig. 2.3). The Solar Tower wall was thicker east of the range (Fig. 2.3).

The north wall of the room (441) abutted the east face of the East Range wall (88), and the east wall of the structure (96 = 442) was in line with the east wall of the Solar Tower (61), but stopped 0.9 m short of it. This gap (numbered 445) was probably a doorway into the new room. The walls of room 446 were constructed of roughly coursed irregularly shaped limestone blocks bonded with yellow-brown sandy mortar, with ashlar quoins at the north-east corner. The walls were 0.6 m wide, and survived to a height of 1.7 m. The east wall was built upon an expanded footing of two courses of limestone in a construction trench only 0.10 m deep. This was cut into clay and sand construction spreads of the Solar Tower and bottomed upon the natural clay.

Internally the room measured 2.8 m east-west by 2.6 m north-south. Only the south-east corner of the interior of this room was excavated. The construction spreads from the Solar Tower were overlain by a layer of medium-sized limestone slabs (493), which also overlay the construction trench of wall 442. The slabs, only a small area of which was exposed, probably represent the floor of the room, and were sealed by a thin surfacing of reddish-brown clay 493/5. This was overlain by 493/3, 493/2 and finally 493/1 = 493/11, a series of thin occupation silts

Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.4 East terrace wall 74 abutting the south wall of the chapel (97), and overlying trench 344.

upon the floor. A clay layer with patches of white mortar (450 = 450/9 and 450/8) overlay the latest of these silts, and may represent a further floor, but the limited area seen in the excavation prevents a firm identification. The function of room 446 is unknown, but it may have housed an external staircase leading to the first floor of the Solar Tower, the thickening of the tower wall being to support the floor at first-floor level.

The external faces of room 446 and the outer face of East Range wall 88 were covered with a 0.02 m thick layer of light brown mortar render (447) (Fig. 2.3). The render was carried along the face of East Range wall 88 and into a 'niche' (452) in the wall, where it stopped. The render covered the external face of the east wall (442) of room 446, and certainly carried into the door jamb.

It is uncertain whether this room was primary or was added slightly later. The fact that wall 441 abutted the East Range suggests that it was secondary, but the thickened tower wall (and perhaps the render running from 441 to wall 88) suggests that it was part of the original design. Although there was no clear edge within the Solar Tower wall on the north-east to indicate that the wall was originally of the same thickness as that further west, there was however a change in the character of the stonework and in the quantity and type of mortar used in the thicker north edge of this wall. This may indicate that it was thickened later,



Plate 2.5 Detail of interior of the chapel, showing stones of 344 below construction level.

but that the thickening was keyed into the face of the original Solar Tower.

Period 4-Mid-12th century c 1140-1175.

The construction of the chapel

Summary (Fig. 2.8)

An east-west building was added at right angles to the East Range. This ran over the top of boundary feature 344, which was levelled and infilled to make way for it. The building was decorated with attached pilasters with engaged shafts, and is interpreted as a chapel. A wall was added running north from room 446 towards the chapel, and a blocking wall was built between the west end of the chapel and the east wall of the East Range. The enclosed space was infilled with clay to create a raised terrace at first floor level.

The chapel-description

Feature 344 was filled with two layers of loose tabular limestone, interspersed in places with lenses of mortar, and was directly overlain by the footings of a large east-west wall (97 = 805). Adjacent to the wall on either side larger limestone slabs were laid flat on top of the fill to provide a level surface for the wall and for the interior of the building to the north (Pls 2.4 and 2.5).

Wall 97 was 1.3 m wide and survived 1.8 m high. The base of the wall consisted of roughly coursed limestone blocks. The north side of the wall was built upon layer 343; thin spreads of mortar interspersed with clay spread north from the wall, representing construction debris. On the south side the wall had an uncertain relationship with layer 358, which overlay occupation horizon 359. Layer 358, a yellow-grey clay, was cut by the wall (and possibly by ditch 344), but the sections suggest that it abutted the bottom of the wall. It appears likely that several successive horizontal layers that are visible on the section overlying 359 were sometimes treated separately by the excavators, and sometimes as one. The earliest of these may well have been a continuation of layer 343 cut by feature 344, but the later layers certainly abutted wall 97, and appear to have run over the stone infill into the top of 344 (Fig. 2.12).

At its west end wall 97 returned north as wall 485. Only 2 m of this wall lay within the excavation, and only the top of the wall, which was 1.6 m wide, was revealed. Wall 485 ran parallel to the East Range, and the gap between 485 and East Range wall 88 was 2.85 m. Both walls were constructed of roughly coursed small and medium sized limestone blocks, bonded with a light whitish-yellow mortar. The internal face of wall 97 was rendered. No plaster survived on the rough coursing of the external face of the wall, but traces of white plaster were found on the ashlar plinth that decorated this face of the wall (see below), showing that this too had originally been rendered.

The external (south) face of wall 97 was decorated with roll-moulded ashlar pilasters 0.55 m wide and 0.15 m deep, which rose from the level of a chamfered



Figure 2.8 Period 4 plan.

28

stone plinth set 0.4 m above the base of the wall (Pl. 2.4). The ashlars survived in a very fresh unworn condition. Below the plinth the pilasters rested on buttresses of coursed limestone built together with the wall and projecting some 0.3 m from it (see also Pl. 2.11 below and Fig. 7.3). The pilasters themselves were mortared onto the wall face, not bonded in with it, but were flanked by lines of ashlars running up the wall face on either side (Pl. 2.4). The first pilaster was 5.3 m from the west end of the building, and the spacing between this and the next pilaster was 2.5 m. West of this only the very top of the wall was cleared, but no pilasters were visible, nor any ashlars in the wall face (Fig. 2.3). Some ashlar pieces were built into the wall, including part of a decorated window head of mid-12th-century date (see Pl. 2.6 and Chapter 3, The Worked Stone, Fig. 3.21).

An area was opened up in 1991 to look for the east end of wall 97 and the presumed north wall of the chapel. The continuation of wall 97 (here numbered 805) was again decorated with roll-moulded pilasters rising from a chamfered plinth, but the spacing between the pilasters here was only 1.7 m. At this point the external face of the wall between the pilasters was rendered. The plan suggests that wall 805 was on a slightly different alignment from 97 (Fig. 2.9), and this could indicate that the building was of two phases. However, the site plan for this trench notes that trees hindered surveying-in an extension to the site grid, and the position and orientation of wall 805 may not be exact.

An area of masonry (806) was exposed 3.8 m north of wall 97 = 805, the south edge of which was traced parallel to 97 for 2.5 m (Fig. 2.3). The masonry consisted of limestone blocks bonded with a light reddish-brown mortar. The stonework had been severely truncated by later pit-digging or robbing, and although 806 appeared to be at least 1.2 m south to north, the stonework was ragged on the north edge, and its full width was not established. Excavation in 1991 was limited, and did not bottom the disturbances or continue down to reveal the full height of the stonework on either the north or south side. Feature 806 is tentatively interpreted as a wall, possibly the north wall of the chapel. Within the masonry of 806 on the north side was a recess (810) arc-shaped in plan, which survived 0.8 m wide and about 0.4 m deep. The face of the arc, which was exposed to a depth of 0.2 m, was covered with mortar render. The recess originally may have been approximately 1 m wide and 0.75 m deep, and was perhaps a later recess for a statue or possibly part of a newel stair.

Midway between 806 and 97 = 805 (0.9 m and 0.95 m respectively) was a rectangular structure (807) which consisted of at least two courses of limestone blocks bonded with light yellow mortar. The stonework measured 2 m north-south and at least 1.15 m east-west (Fig. 2.3). Probing with an auger suggested that the masonry continued east for another 0.5 m. The height of this feature above the floor at this point was not established, but its

truncated top was 1.3 m above the level of the floor of the building where it was exposed further west. Stonework 807 was interpreted by the excavator as an altar, but may alternatively have been a pier supporting a first floor.

East of the exposed masonry of 97, 806 and 807 the roots of protected trees prevented further investigation. Because of the limited excavation the relationship between these features was not clearly established, though it appears that all were abutted by clay layer 809, which is interpreted as deliberate infill (see Period 4b). To the west of 807, and 3 m distant from it, probing suggested that another stone feature (834) lay below ground. Its approximate position appears to lie on the line of wall 806, and to extend slightly south of it, but the masonry was not exposed, and interpretation is, therefore, impossible.

Walls 97 = 805 and 485 formed the south and west walls of a substantial building, which was aligned approximately east-west at right angles to the East Range. Wall 97 = 805 was traced for a length of 16.3 m within the limits of the excavated area; over this distance the alignment of wall 97 = 805 changed slightly along its length, curving slightly to the north. The architectural details, and the architectural fragments built into wall 97, have suggested to John Blair that this building was probably constructed in the mid 12th century (see Chapter 3, The Worked Stone). The external decoration of this wall and the likely east-west alignment of the building to which it belonged suggested that this was a chapel.

It seems that the boundary of the original manor was removed to make way for the chapel, but no relationship was established between this building and the digging of the moat further east, which is described in Period 4b (see below). Two possible reconstructions of this building are offered in Figs. 2.8 and 2.9 (see also Chapter 7).

Early deposits in the chapel

To the north of wall 97 (and within the presumed building) a sequence of probable construction deposits was recorded in a machine-excavated section (Pls 2.5 and 2.12). A layer of mortar, gravel and limestone chips (291) sealed the fill of the construction trench for wall 97 = 805 and abutted its footing. Beyond the construction trench, layer 291 overlay pre-building soil 343. Layer 291 was overlain by a patch of mortar and charcoal (290), and this was covered by a layer (292) of brown silty clay with mortar fragments, which abutted the base of wall 97 = 805. All of these deposits were less than 0.05 m thick. The first floor layer appears to have been layer 279, a 0.05 m thick mortar layer with a hard surface, which overlay the stone fills of ditch 344, here numbered 341 and 342, and construction deposit 290 (Pl. 2.12). Layer 279 is recorded as incorporating a single flagstone with shallow impressions suggesting wear that abutted the north face of wall 97. This flagstone was however, sealed by the mortar, and Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.6 Detail of chapel wall showing monolithic window head (reused).

photographs suggest that this was in fact the top stone or stones of the fill of ditch 344 (compare Pls 2.5 and 2.12). There was no evidence that this stone had formed part of a more extensive contemporary floor surface.

The raised terrace south of the chapel

Between the chapel and East Range a wall 451 blocked access from the north to the yard south of the chapel (Figs 2.3 and 2.9). Wall 451 was attached to the chapel just north of its south-west corner, was 1.15 m wide, and consisted of roughly coursed limestone slabs and blocks bonded with a yellow sandy mortar. The wall was probably contemporary with chapel wall 485, but abutted and cut into wall 88 of the East Range. Wall 451 abutted the bottom of

wall 88, but above this ran into an existing recess or 'niche' in the wall (see Period 3 above). The surface of the recess was cut away to expose the wall core to facilitate the bond between the new wall and the East Range. Towards the bottom the cut into the wall widened, removing the lower part of the squared corner of the recess, the full depth of which is therefore not known. No attempt was made to make good the rough face of the East Range wall in the south part of the recess, and the yard to the south was apparently infilled with clay almost immediately (Pl. 2.7).

South of wall 451 and east of wall 88 a thick layer of blue-grey clay with limestone inclusions (102 = 437) was deposited. This clay layer abutted the east wall of the East Range, filling the cut in the wall made to bond in wall 451, and extended along the full length





Chapter Two

31

of wall 451. The layer was only partly excavated, but was at least 1.2 m deep. The fact that the cut into wall 88 was not made good shows that the construction of wall 451 and the subsequent clay infilling were parts of one operation. One 12th-century sherd was recovered from layer 102. Clay layer 437 also ran across the outside of window 429, blocking it off. The window was filled with two layers, both of which were described as a mixture of pinkish sand, gravel and rubble, and one sherd of 12th-century pottery was found within the infill. No relationship was recorded between the window infill and the sequence of deposits within the East Range. The window infill was interpreted during excavation as belonging to the final post-medieval robbing of the East Range in the period, but it is difficult to imagine that the window opening was left when the area outside was filled with clay. The alternative possibility is that the window was deliberately blocked and that the 'pinkish sand and gravel' is decayed mortar.

On the east side, the dumped clay 102 lay against wall 217 = 232. This wall was constructed against the render on the north face of wall 96, which is the north wall of room 446, and was visible running NNE for 3 m at a slight angle to the East Range (Fig. 2.3). Beyond this point the wall was sealed by clay, which was not removed, but was traced by ground probing to within 1.3 m of chapel wall 97. It was not found beyond this point.

Wall 217 = 232 was 0.65 m wide, and was traced to a depth of 1.7 m on the east side, but was not bottomed. The construction date of the wall and its further stratigraphic relationships, therefore, were not established. The wall was rendered on the east side, possibly twice, suggesting that it was in use for a reasonable length of time. This wall is interpreted as the retaining wall for the clay infill of the area between the East Range, the chapel and the Solar Tower to the west, the area to the east remaining open at ground level. The reason for the infilling may have been to create a terrace or passage at first floor level between the Solar Tower and the newlybuilt chapel. Wall 217 is likely to have continued up to the chapel, and its absence at the north end is probably due to robbing in Period 4b, when this terrace was extended (Fig. 2.8 and see below).

The doorway in room 446 was blocked with a wall of irregularly coursed limestone blocks (445/1) bonded with a reddish-brown sandy mortar (Pl. 2.8). The blocking wall survived to a height of 1.7 m. Over clay layer 450 the room was infilled with a mixture of loose limestone debris and light grey clay (deposit 448 = 448/7 and 448/6) that abutted the blocked doorway. No artefacts were found in the infilling of this room to provide a date, but the east wall 442, including the blocking (445), was rendered, implying that it remained exposed for some time before the clay infilling of Period 4b (see below).



Plate 2.7 Detail of chapel wall 482 abutting the East Range wall 88, viewed from the south-east.

The courtyard west of the East Range

Mortar layer 263 abutting chimney stack 27 lay beneath another localised deposit 262, consisting of grey silt loam and limestone. Also overlying layer 287 was layer 288, and this may have been a continuation of layer 252, a sandy loam and mortar deposit west of layer 262 and abutting it.

West of the chimney stack were successive sandy mortar deposits 270/2 and 270/1 (Fig. 2.14), which had a combined depth of 0.3 m. Layer 270/1 was light grey, and both deposits contained occasional limestone. Excavation immediately west of this in 1991 revealed a similar sequence of deposits (Fig. 2.15). The lowest of these was a layer of gravel and mortar numbered 811, overlain by further mortar layers 498 and 499. Layer 498 consisted of a light grey mortar and was 0.05 m thick, and 499 was a spread of yellow gravel up to 0.1 m thick. Layer 498 is described in very similar terms to 270/1, and 811 may correspond to 270/2.

Period 4b – The construction of the garderobe block, the raised east terrace, the central pier in the Solar Tower and the moat

Summary (Fig. 2.8)

A large building including the garderobe block was added to the east side of the Solar Tower, and a wall was built from the north-east corner of this building to the chapel. The area behind this wall was infilled with clay up to first floor level. The basement of the chapel was also infilled. Room 446 was demolished, and a similar-sized room was built at first-floor level immediately to the east. Within the Solar Tower a massive square central pier was built, probably to support a central column at first- and secondfloor level. To the south and west of the Solar Tower raised banks of clay and soil were constructed up to the level of the base of the windows in the Solar Tower walls. The dumped material may have derived in part from a rock-cut moat that was dug to supersede boundary ditch 588. At the very end of this period a curtain wall was constructed just inside the moat, with a gatehouse on the north. On the south the curtain wall 354 cut through the earlier embanking around the Solar Tower.

The central pier within the Solar Tower

Within the Solar Tower, mortar layers 281 and 385 and layer 378 below were cut by the construction trench (282) for a large square pier (49) (Figs 2.3, 2.6 and 2.7). The construction trench was at least 0.12 m deep and cut into the natural clay, but was not bottomed. The construction trench was visible on the north, west and east sides, but the pier had been built up against the south side of the trench. The pier base measured 3 m by 3 m, survived to a height of 2.3 m and was constructed of roughly coursed



Plate 2.8 Blocking of stair turret (room 446) from the inside.

limestone, including a substantial number of burnt stones, and had large, finely-jointed ashlar quoins (Pls 2.1 and 2.9). The jointing was mostly only 1-2 mm wide, occasionally 5 mm or more, and the joints were flush-pointed. The four faces had been rendered. Several of the ashlars bore mason's marks, and these are paralleled by a mark on an ashlar block in the chapel wall, and another on an arch in the east garderobe (Figs 2.10 and 3.24, no. 33).

Following the construction of pier 49, a white mortar floor 280 was laid overlying the limestone footing 282 on the north and east, and thinner but similar deposits 381 and 383 overlay the footings on the south and west (Figs 2.6 and 2.7). Layer 381 was white; both it and layer 383 were 0.04 m deep and were level with floor 280. On the east, floor 280 was later patched with a similar mortar (386). In the doorway on the north, and overlying layer 361, was a further white mortar layer 360.

Above mortar floor 280 and its repair (386) was a distinctive deposit of dark brown sandy loam with sizeable lumps of charcoal (50 = 129), which extended from pier 49 to within 0.3 m of wall 61 (partly visible on Pl. 2.1). The character of this occupation deposit may indicate that the Solar Tower was used as a store for charcoal during this time. On the north side, between pier 49 and the doorway, layer 50 = 129 was overlain by another white mortar floor (265). In the doorway this is probably contemporary

with layer 268, a loose gravel and mortar surface 0.12 m thick. This layer overlay both 361 and the northern edge of occupation layer 50 = 129. Layer 50 = 129 contained pottery of 12th-century date and an iron knife (Fig. 3.16, SF 52), and there were pottery cross-joins with dump layers overlying floor 265 (see Period 5a below). These dump layers directly overlay 50 = 129 where floor 265 was absent, and it is likely that the cross-joins result from pottery that settled into the top of the layer from above.

The East Range

At the base of Trench X 25 probable stake-holes were found within mortar floor 321, each 0.05 m–0.06 m in diameter and between 0.12 m and 0.18 m deep. The holes were filled with yellow-grey sandy silt. They formed no obvious pattern, but were clustered in three groups: 301–309 and 328–331 on the east, 320 and 324–327 just west of centre and 314–319 and 323 close to wall 9. A possible posthole or larger stakehole 332 lay 0.4 m south-west of 320.

The courtyard west of the East Range

Some 0.8 m south of chimney stack 27 three pitched and flat stones (272) on an east-west alignment ran for 1.1 m westwards from the south face of wall 9



Plate 2.9 Central pier 49 from the west.

Chapter Two



Figure 2.10 Section of garderobe arches.

(Figs 2.3 and 2.18). This lay in a slight cut into the surface of layer 270/1, and was cut on the south and west by the construction trench for structure 271 (see Period 5a below). Another single limestone slab was seen 0.3 m south of the line, prompting the excavators to suggest that this was a surface water drain, or alternatively simply a kerb.

A single pit or posthole (355), 0.48 m wide and 0.2 m deep, was cut from the level of 270/1 into the offset footings of wall 9. A vertical limestone was visible in section within the fill, suggesting that it was probably a posthole, perhaps part of a scaffold to build or repair the upper part of the wall of the East Range. Immediately north-west of the Solar Tower no excavation was carried out to this depth, and the nature of the deposits of this period is unknown.

Construction of the east garderobe block

A substantial building was added to the east side of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.3). The south and north walls were numbered 66 and 76, and together with the east wall (74 = 113) formed a rectangular block measuring 5.6 m east-west and 8.6 m north-south. An internal north-south wall (73) between walls 66 and 76 divided the building into separate chambers, the easterly chamber being the smaller. All of the walls were recorded as being of contemporary build. The walls were built from the level of period 3 mortar layer 224, wall 66 being set slightly into the layer, and walls 66 and 76 were both bonded to the east wall (61) of the Solar Tower. Wall 66 was rendered on the south (outer) side. The east wall ran along the same line as the infilled earlier feature 344. The external walls were 0.9 m thick and were built of coursed limestone blocks; dividing wall 73 was narrower, being 0.65 m at its widest point. The chamber west of wall 73 was filled with a layer of reddish-brown clay (80) at least 1.7 m thick, which directly overlay mortar layer 224 and abutted walls 61, 66, 73 and 76 (Fig. 2.7). The layer appeared to be homogeneous, apparently deposited in one action immediately after the chamber was constructed. The outermost 0.5 m of the east window of the tower was blocked with masonry, presumably at this time. Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from layer 80.

At the base of the east wall 74 = 113 there were three round-headed arches (225, 227 and 228) constructed of well-cut ashlar blocks (Fig. 2.10). Each arch led into a culvert, presumably to drain effluent from a first-floor garderobe above. Only culvert 227 was excavated; this sloped down eastwards at an angle of 30 degrees (Fig. 2.11). The floor of the east chamber was of mortar, which sealed the stone infill of feature 344 beneath, abutted the base of both walls and extended into the floor of the culverts. Above this the east side of wall 73 was abutted by a bank of limestone 0.5 m wide and 0.75 m high, sloping down eastwards at an angle of 50 degrees (Figs 2.7 and 2.11). This both buttressed retaining wall 73 and deflected falling excrement towards the culverts (Pl. 2.10).

Sockets for iron grilles were recorded in the soffits of culverts 225, 227 and 228, and each of these culverts measured 0.55 m by 0.7 m internally. The arches were not evenly spaced along wall 74. Between arch 225 and 227, wall 74 was largely destroyed by the construction trench 151 for a later wall (see Period 6), but on the northern edge of the construction trench the impressions of possible further ashlar blocks might indicate that there was originally a fourth arch. This building is hereafter referred to as the east garderobe block. No excavation could be carried out immediately east of the garderobe block, so where the culverts led is unknown (for discussion see Chapter 7).

The east wall of the garderobe block (74 = 113)continued north as far as the chapel (Fig. 2.3). This stretch of wall was numbered 77. Wall 77 abutted a pilaster on the south face of the chapel wall (97 = 805) (Pl. 2.11), thereby creating an enclosed space to the east of the existing East Range (Fig. 2.8). Wall 74 = 77 was built over the stone infill of ditch 344, and over 358: soil that had accumulated in the top of the ditch. Wall 77 was constructed of courses of large and medium-sized flat limestone blocks bonded with a light reddish-brown mortar. The wall was 0.6 m wide and survived to a height of 1.7 m. The wall bowed eastwards partway up, presumably due to the pressure of the later soil infill on the west side (see below), but extended considerably further westwards at the bottom than the top, and may have been constructed wider at the base (Fig. 2.12).

Room 449 in Period 4b

A small room (449) was constructed north-east of the Solar Tower and abutting the east wall of room

446 (Fig. 2.3 and Frontispiece). The north wall (83 = 444) of room 449 abutted the render on the outer face of wall 442, and the east wall (443) was built against the north wall (76) of the garderobe block. Both walls were constructed of irregularly set courses of coarse limestone blocks and slabs, and were 0.5 m wide. Internally the room was 1.8 m east-west by 1.6 m north-south. There was no gap in the walls for access to the interior at ground level, and the room was filled with a thick deposit of blue-grey 'alluvial clay' (449/1), which was not excavated. The clay filling of room 449 abuts the blocking in the east wall of room 446 and is probably related to the clay dumping around it (see below), which raised the whole area to first floor level. The recorded walls of room 449 were presumably foundations for a structure at this higher level.

Extension of the east terrace to wall 77

Excavation at the junction between walls 97 and 77 revealed that at the base of both walls (and above the level of layer 358) two layers of reddish-brown clay including gravel and limestone, 357/1 overlain by 357/2, had been deposited, raising the ground level by 1.2 m (Fig. 2.12). Both deposits sloped downwards from west to east, away from wall 232. These deposits were interpreted during excavation as dumping to form a raised terrace. To the immediate north of the garderobe block, clay layer 275 abutted wall 76. Layer 275 was recorded in plan only, but is described in the site records as 'forming early terrace' and it is likely that it was the stratigraphic equivalent to clay layers 357/1 and 357/2. Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from layer 275. Two further dumped layers were deposited above layer 275, layer 84/2 overlain by 84/1. Layer 84/2 comprised a thick band of brown silt loam with charcoal inclusions



Figure 2.11 East-west section across garderobe.



Plate 2.10 East garderobe conduit arches and deflecting wall, looking north-east.

and pottery, and 84/1 was a lighter and thinner reddish brown deposit of loam containing mortar fragments. The depths of these deposits were not recorded. Pottery of 12th-century date was found in layer 84/2.

Above clay 357/1 two further clay layers were deposited against wall 77. These were a thick layer of brown clay containing limestone (203) sealed by layer 98, which was a clay layer blackened by charcoal that contained pottery and animal bones. Layer 98 is probably equivalent to layer 84/2 further south. Pottery from 98 included a few residual Roman sherds, but was predominantly of 12th-century date. Both layer 203 and layer 98 sloped from south to north. The combined effect of these

layers was to raise the ground level by another 0.7 m, a total of 1.9 m in all.

The infilling of the basement of the chapel

The interior of the chapel was infilled with thick layers of clay similar to those that formed the east terrace. The filling was done presumably because the external ground level south of the chapel effectively made the internal floor level into a basement. A series of layers was deposited against the north face of wall 97 (Pl. 2.12). The first of these was 278, a layer of gravel and mortar which overlay floor 279. Above this was a 0.4 m thick layer of yellow and grey clay (277) with gravel and rubble inclusions, and this was Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.11 East terrace wall 74 abutting the south wall of the chapel, looking north-east.

overlain by 285, a 0.8 m thick band of yellow-grey clay. Both deposits contained pottery dated to the second half of the 12th century, and layer 277 included sherds of late-12th-century or later date. Layer 285 was overlain by 284, a 0.2 m thick deposit of very dark grey silt loam. This layer extended away from the north of wall 97 for 2.2 m before ending below layer 93, a 0.5 m thick band of reddishyellow clay. Finds from the machine excavation of layer 93 were numbered 274 (although the machin-



Figure 2.12 Section across wall 77, feature 344 and stairs 110.



Plate 2.12 Interior of chapel looking east.

ing also included layer 98) and the pottery was predominantly of 12th-century date with some intrusive 19th-century material. The late-12th-century sherds from layer 277 may also have been intrusive.

To the east of wall 77 within the chapel, similar clay material (809) was found abutting the north face of wall 805 = 97. This layer also abutted the south face of stonework 806 and surrounded masonry 807.

The construction of the south terrace bank

The stratification south of the Solar Tower was split into two sequences due to the construction of a large deep east-west wall (354), which divided the earlier deposits south and north of the wall into separate stratigraphic strings (Fig. 2.6).

Thick clay deposits were laid above layers 89 and 352 against the Solar Tower, sloping downwards to the south towards wall 350. Clay layers 55/5 followed by 55/4 and then 55/3 (= 416) formed a bank with a height of *c* 1.2 m against wall 62. Layer 55/3 contained pottery of 12th-century date, and a 10th-century buckle (Fig. 3.13, SF 21). The buckle suggests that the bank material derived from an area of earlier activity. Above 55/3 was layer 356, a 0.05 m thick layer of brown clay loam, which the excavators suggested was the remains of a layer of turf. There were no finds from 356. The top of the bank was just below the level of the windows in wall

62 of the Solar Tower. The bank was not clearly cut by the construction of wall (354), and it is possible that it was only dumped after 354 was constructed, but south of the wall similar dump deposits were observed cut by the construction trench, which may represent the continuation of the bank (see also Construction of curtain wall 354 below).

South of later wall 354 was rubble layer 299 overlain by a series of gravel and sandy loam layers (298/6 to 298/1). Layer 299 contained pottery dated to the second half of the 12th century, as did 298/6 above it. Although not clayey, it is suggested that these deposits form part of the same embanking as 55/5-55/3, the height of the bank dropping from 1.2 m against wall 62 to 0.6 m at the south. If not, this was only a very low bank. At the south limit of the bank the drawn section appears to indicate that wall 350 was demolished prior to the construction of this bank. The robbing of wall 350 is recorded as being represented on section by trench 351 and its fill. Both layer 352 (which abutted the base of wall 350) and the fill of robber trench 351 were overlain by layer 299, the first bank layer (Fig. 2.6). Layer 296/3, a thick deposit directly overlying wall 350, however, has a very steep interface on its north side where it abuts dump layers 299 and 298, arguably too steep for a dumped earth bank. Layer 296/3 also contained sherds of Fabric 3, which is generally dated after 1180 (see Chapter 3). If this were all part of the primary bank, this must have been constructed towards the end of the 12th century, in Period 5. Alternatively it is possible that layers 299 and 298/6–298/1 were dumped while structure 350 was still standing, overlying its expanded footing on the north side, and that layer 296/3 and layer 351 below it represent the infill of the robber trench of this structure. By this interpretation the robbing was cut from the surface of the dumped bank through layer 299 down to the top of the surviving masonry, and was contemporary with, or followed soon after, the construction of wall 354 (see Period 5 below).

A further sequence of dumped layers was seen just south of the garderobe block during the watching brief in 1991. Overlying the natural clay a dump of burnt limestone approximately 1 m high was seen abutting the garderobe wall, which may represent a continuation of the southern embanking against the tower walls. This shows the diverse make-up of the embankment. Burnt limestone in quantity (none of which was reported as dressed masonry) may have resulted from the use of fire and water to loosen limestone bedrock for excavation, for instance when digging the moat.

The construction of the west terrace bank

West of the Solar Tower a layer of orange gravel with white mortar flecks, limestone and stone chippings (345) abutted the outer face of wall 2 (see Fig. 2.15). This deposit was not excavated. Along the northern part of wall 2 it had a level surface some 0.6 m above the base of the wall, but tailed off towards the south to only 0.25 m above the base of the wall. No finds were recovered from this layer.

Above layer 345 a layer of brownish-grey clay (209) was deposited all along the west wall (2) of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.15). Layer 209 was also seen south of the Solar Tower just beyond the south-west corner. Close to the Solar Tower the top of this layer was recorded at a fairly consistent level, and lay just below the bottom of the west window, feature 70. Where it overlay 345 layer 209 was c 0.5 m deep, but where 345 tailed off layer 209 was correspondingly deeper, and just beyond the south-west corner of the tower was more than 1 m deep. Pottery of types current from the 12th century onwards, together with some residual Roman sherds, was recovered from clay 209. Both layers 345 and 209 are believed to be parts of one dumping process, forming a primary bank continuing from that south of the Solar Tower (layers 55/5, 55/4, 55/3), and both events were most probably contemporary.

North-west of the tower excavation was not carried down to natural. The tailing-off of the clay dump may be inferred from layers 480, 479 and 478, all of which sloped down from south to north between 1 m and 2.5 m north of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.15). No certain evidence of the dump was seen more than 3 m north of the tower, where instead there were horizontal courtyard layers. If the bank tailed off north of the tower it is possible that layers 811 = 270/2 and 498/499 = 270/1 could be equivalent to layers 345 and 209 further south, and that the courtyard outside the East Range was levelled up by dumping. This might explain the lack of a sharply defined edge to the dumping on the north. Alternatively, from the relative levels, it is possible that the primary bank material is represented by another layer of orange gravel 269 higher up the sequence, but this would date the bank in the late 12th century, after the construction of well 271 (see Period 5).

The western extent of this dump was not established. No excavation was carried out to establish the profile of the dump away from the building, although a sondage dug to natural 5.5 m from the Solar Tower did not find any unequivocal trace of it. The evidence of the section drawn south of the Solar Tower would suggest that at this distance the dump was tailing off (Fig. 2.6). The sondage on the west, however, was dug beyond later walls, and the stratification may have been removed in the construction of the later West Block (see Period 5a below).

Period 4c – Construction of curtain wall 354

About 3.4 m south of the Solar Tower a construction trench (297) for a large wall footing (354) aligned east-west was dug 0.7 m deep through the primary dump (Fig. 2.6, layers 298/1 and below) and bottomed on layer 353. Pottery from the construction trench was dated to the 12th century. No construction trench was visible north of the wall, which had a slightly battered north face, and it is therefore possible that layers 55/3–/5 were dumped after the wall was built. Durham, however, suggested (unpublished draft discussion) that the trench was dug from the surface of layers 55/3 and 356, and the stonework of wall 354 built flush against the trench edge.

Wall 354 was constructed of large limestone blocks and, including an offset on its south side, was 2 m wide at the base. The offset was 0.45 m wide, but only two courses deep; the wall proper was 1.55 m wide. Opposite the middle of the Solar Tower 12 courses of the wall survived and were 0.95 m high, and here the wall narrowed slightly as each course of stones was added. Further east, the wall was better preserved, and opposite the south-east corner of the Solar Tower it survived more than 2 m high. Just beyond this the wall finished at a straight edge, with corners incorporating ashlar quoins, indicating either an end to the wall or a doorway (Fig. 2.3). Beyond this a possible robber trench continuing on the line of the wall was noted during the 1991 Watching Brief (not planned). Wall 354 may, therefore, originally have continued eastwards.

West of the Solar Tower at the bottom of an evaluation trench the north face of a wall following the same line was seen. This is believed to be a continuation of 354 (Fig. 2.15). Only six courses of thin limestone were seen, and the wall was not bottomed. No clear construction cut for this wall

through clay dump 209 was recorded, but the north edge of the wall may have been built right up against the edge of the construction cut, as suggested further east. This wall was severely truncated by robbing (Period 5a, trench 258).

No further evidence of this wall was found either to the west or the east. A north-south edge belonging to a further wall (374) on the line of wall 354 was found in 1991 some 3.3 m further east (Fig. 2.3), but is not dated. Some 5 m west of the Solar Tower a contractor's foundation trench was cut across the line of 354 in 1991, but the watching brief records make no mention either of wall 354 or of its robber trench 258, though the north-south edge of a wall (377) was found. The depth of this trench was not sufficient to reach the level of the surviving wall further east, but the robber trench 258 was not observed either. The failure to find robber trench 258 may be due to the difficulty of observation in Watching Brief rather than its absence. Both wall 374 and wall 377 are further described in Period 5b below. This wall is interpreted as a boundary or curtain wall. It is of very similar width to the curtain wall on the north side of the manor (see the northwest area below, wall 530 etc.).

Wall 350 was some 2 m south of wall 354 and, as argued above (Period 4b), it may have been robbed from the level of the top of the Period 4b bank (layers 299 and 298), the same level from which wall 354 was constructed. The most likely context for the robbing is the construction of wall 354 adjacent. Since the fill (layer 296/3) of the robber trench contained sherds of Fabric 3, the construction of wall 354 can probably be dated to the very end of Period 4 (or possibly the beginning of Period 5a (see Chapter 3, Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery).

Period 5a- 1175-1220

Summary (Fig. 2.13)

The curtain wall south of the Solar Tower was partly demolished and incorporated into an extension to the Solar Tower block on the south and west. On the west side of the Solar Tower a building was constructed from the level of the existing clay bank. This consisted of two rooms either side of a central staircase, which presumably led up to a first-floor entrance in the Solar Tower. Beyond the rooms there were garderobes at the north-west and southwest corners of the building. The ground floor of the Solar Tower was infilled and the doorway between it and the East Range was blocked. A well was dug just north of the new West Block and close to the East Range.

At some point the east garderobe block appears to have become unstable as the inner walls of the building bowed outwards. The block was either dismantled, or collapsed, and was immediately infilled with bulk rubble. Additional embanking was added against the east side of the garderobe and east terrace wall, and a buttressing wall was built against the east wall of the Solar Tower, with the construction trench cutting deep into the bulk infill of the garderobe. In the angle between the chapel and the terrace retaining wall a set of stairs was built between the ground floor and the raised east terrace.

The instability of the east garderobe block may have been the reason for an extension of the embanked area on the south. Further soil was dumped south of the curtain wall 354, which had remained standing while the West Block was under construction, and retaining walls for a new terrace were built extending the line of those recently constructed. Finally the curtain wall west of the Solar Tower was robbed out and the trench filled with soil.

Construction of the possible well 271 north-west of the Solar Tower

In the courtyard, just north-west of the Solar Tower, surface 270 = 811 and stone kerb 272 were cut away by the construction trench 271 for a large sub-circular stone structure. The full dimensions of this were not established because the structure was partly overlain by later masonry, and had been heavily robbed in the post-medieval period (Fig. 2.3, masonry 42 and pits 132 and 87), but part of the east and north sides were uncovered. This structure was tucked into the corner between the Solar Tower and East Range, and its edge passed very close to chimney stack 27. It continued southwards beneath later masonry 42, but there was no trace of it impinging on the north wall of the tower itself.

The cut was filled with tightly packed limestone extending at least 0.6 m in from the edges; it was not possible to say whether this was a continuous limestone fill or some form of lining, since the middle of the feature had been disturbed or robbed by pits 132 and 87. Within the fill a sherd of pottery of Fabric 3 was found, suggesting a construction date of the late 12th century or later. The depth of the cut is not recorded, but pit 132 was excavated to a depth of 0.7 m below the top of 271 and was not bottomed, and the stones in 271 were clearly visible to that depth in the sides of this pit (Pl. 2.13). There is no indication that the bottom of 271 was reached. On the west, no sign of 271 was found, suggesting that the edge of the cut lay within the limits of the later pit 132, which extended 2.5 m further west and ended 0.75 m beyond the line of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.3). The maximum dimensions of this feature, therefore, are 3.3 m east-west by 4.3 m north-south. The depth to which this feature was dug into natural, and its position in the angle between the principal buildings, suggest that it was a well.

The stones within feature 272 were overlain by 269, a loose layer of orange gravel and some limestone with a level surface, which also overlay kerb 272 and the fills of posthole 355. This layer is equivalent to a sequence of deposits excavated just to the west in 1991. These are: 497, a 0.08 m thick layer of grey silt, ash and occasional limestone that was partly overlain by 800, a localised deposit of red gravel including charcoal and ash which was 0.05 m thick and suggests a fire close by. Both of these were sealed by a thin orange gravel floor 496. This floor was evident further north as a hard but



Mount House, Witney

Figure 2.13 Period 5 plan.

42



Plate 2.13 Well 271 from above looking east.

very thin orange gravel and mortar surface (251 = 260) that abutted wall 9, sealing a creamy gravel mortar 289 = 261, which overlay layer 252 (Figs 2.14 and 2.19). Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from some of these deposits. A thin layer of charcoal was noted on the surface of layer 251 in places.

Deposits within the east garderobe block

At the south end of the chamber adjacent to culvert 225 were two layers of very dark grey soil (142/2 = 213, under 142/1 and 225/2 in the culvert) that contained charcoal, animal bone, mortar fragments and pottery (Fig. 2.10). The pottery included several virtually complete (or reconstructable) vessels in Fabric 1 (Pl. 2.14 and Fig. 3.2), and 17 sherds of Fabric 3. Layer 142/2 = 213 was 0.3 m thick and sloped down from west to east. Layer 142/1 was a localised deposit whose depth was not recorded. Pottery sherds in this context also joined with sherds in overlying contexts 111/2, 111/3 and 81/2 (see below).

A similar deposit to 142/2 was observed at the north side of the chamber (layer 254) in the area of culvert 228, though this deposit contained less domestic debris. Layer 254 was 0.2 m thick and sloped from west to east into culvert 228. These

deposits represented the latest use of the garderobe and it is unclear if the culverts had been periodically cleaned.

The demolition of the east garderobe block

The east garderobe block became unstable as the internal retaining wall 73 and the east wall 74 bowed outwards (Figs 2.7 and 2.11). The bowing was presumably due to the weight of soil 80 behind wall 73, and the collapse was aided by the subsidence of wall 74 into the fill of feature 344 beneath. Deposits 142 and 254 were overlain by thick bulk fills of reddish-brown sandy loam and limestone rubble, which backfilled the garderobe chamber. Layer 81 comprised the bulk of the fill, and slumped steeply from all four walls of the chamber towards the middle. This layer was subdivided during the excavation into three separate deposits: $81/\tilde{2}$ was given to the interface between the bulk fill and the underlying deposit 142, 81/3 was a deposit of animal bones within the bulk fill and 81/1 was the majority of the fill. Layer 81 was the same deposit as layers 111 and 112, the latter being a discrete patch of brown sandy loam within 111. Layers 81/2, 111/2 and 112 all contained pottery including sherds dating to the late 12th or early 13th century (Fig. 3.3). Cross-joins between sherds in the lowest



Figure 2.14 Section through courtyard including well 271.

bulk fills and those from the underlying occupation deposits probably result from mixing at the interface during backfilling.

Dumping east of wall 77 and staircase 110

East of wall 77, the earliest deposit recorded was a layer of reddish-brown clay (104 = 119) that was 0.9 m thick and abutted the east face of the wall and the south wall of the chapel (Fig. 2.12). This layer, which was similar to the earlier clay terracing layers 357/1 and 357/2 west of wall 77, presumably formed a bank supporting revetment wall 77. Pottery of late-12th- or early-13th-century date was recovered from both layers.

At the junction of walls 97 and 77, to the east of 77, a stone staircase (110) was built on top of layer 119 = 104 (Figs 2.3, 2.12 and 7.3). The staircase consisted of seven steps. The lower three steps abutted the south face of wall 97, with the next four stairs rising to the south alongside wall 77 (Pl. 2.15). The stairs were 0.9 m wide at the base and 0.95 m wide at the uppermost surviving stair. The staircase was at least 1.2 m high, but was not bottomed. It provided access from the lower levels to the east of wall 77 to the top of the terrace west of the wall.

Alterations to the Solar Tower and southern curtain wall

A linking wall (417) was constructed from the southeast corner of the Solar Tower to wall 354, whose north face it abutted (Figs 2.3 and 2.13). Wall 417 was built of coursed limestone bonded with a compact reddish-yellow mortar, and was 1 m wide. Excavation was not deep enough to establish the level from which 417 was built, but it was presumably cut into the primary clay dump. Wall 417 was itself abutted on the west side by further clay dumping over the

possible turf line 356 between the Solar Tower and the curtain wall (Fig. 2.6). Layer 55/2 was followed by 55/1 = 418, which filled this area to above the level of the windows in the ground floor of the Solar Tower. The dumping appears to have proceeded from east to west. During the dumping a change was made to the curtain wall. The upper part of the curtain wall opposite was demolished, and a narrower wall (58), which was 1.1 m wide, was constructed flush with the south (external) face of 354 below (Fig. 2.6). The illustrated section shows that construction of 58 took place after the dumping had proceeded this far west, as the construction trench for wall 58 cuts through layers 55/2 and 55/1, and north of the new wall the construction trench was infilled with different material (layer 58/1). No dating evidence was recovered either from 58/1 or from layers 55/1 and 55/2.

Opposite the south-west corner of the Solar Tower wall 58 returned north (numbered as wall 257) and abutted the south wall of the Solar Tower (Fig. 2.3). Wall 257 was built in a trench cut into layer 209, the primary dumping of clay west of the Solar Tower, which corresponds to layer 55/3. Wall 257 consisted of courses of limestone blocks, and was 0.9 m wide and 3.4 m long. At the junction of wall 58 with wall 257 there was an external buttress 1.6 m long and 1 m wide, which projected 0.55 m on the south side and 0.2 m on the west. This buttress cut through the upper surviving courses of wall 354 at this point, but was also founded upon it. The length of the buttress corresponds to the width of 354, and was presumably intended to mirror the straight end of 354 at the junction with wall 417 on the east (Pl. 2.16). The exact form of the south-east corner, however, is uncertain, as the junction of 354 and 417 was damaged by a later tree-hole, and only a very small length of the southern edge of wall 354 was revealed by the excavations.



Plate 2.14 Corner of east garderobe showing conduit arch and deposit 142 with chamber pots during excavation, looking south-east.

The effect of the construction of these walls was the creation of an enclosed area south of the Solar Tower within which the clay dumping represented by 55/2 and 55/1 was contained (Fig.2.13). Wall 257 was apparently abutted by the clay dumping on its east side, implying that the change of plan occurred during the infilling of the area between the Solar Tower and the curtain wall on the south. The differing preservation of wall 354, highest on the east, might also suggest that the change was effected after the eastern part of the area had already been infilled, and it was too much trouble to remove the pre-existing wall.

To the south of wall 58 a sequence of clay dumping abutting 58 built up over the earlier clay bank (Fig. 2.6). Layers 296/2 and 296/1 that sealed it had

a combined depth of 0.68 m, and both contained 12thcentury pottery. Both layers were similar in character and sloped gradually to the south. Above 296/1 was layer 295, a 0.2 m thick deposit of gravel and mortar, perhaps forming a temporary working surface or a path around the south of the Solar Tower. A 0.8 m thick layer of limestone and clay (294 = 419) was the last deposit to be laid or accumulate south of wall 58, and this layer was sealed by the modern topsoil (1). Layer 294 = 419 produced no dating evidence and could be late in date.

Dumping south and east of the garderobe block

A thick layer of clay (65) containing 12th-century pottery was dumped against the south wall (66) of



Plate 2.15 Steps 110 and wall 74 from east.



Plate 2.16 Junction of walls 58 and 257 from east.

the garderobe block and abutted wall 417 on the west and a north-south wall 72 on the east. Wall 72 abutted the south face of wall 66, and ran south for 2.6 m, where it ended at an east-west robber trench 415 (Fig. 2.3). Although only 0.45 m wide, wall 72 is interpreted as a revetment wall for the clay dumping to the west, similar to internal revetment wall 73 within the east garderobe block, and the wall robbed by trench 415 is seen as the south limit of dump 65. Post-medieval disturbance prevented establishing a relationship between 415 and the robbing at the north end of wall 417. It is not recorded whether robber trench 415 continued east beyond wall 72, but the north edge of a short stretch of wall on the same line (348) was found c 10 m further east, and it is possible that this was a continuation of the same wall (Fig. 2.3).

Wall 66, the south wall of the east garderobe block, was abutted by a continuation wall 346, which cut into the east face of wall 74 = 113. No details of the construction of this limestone wall were recorded, but it was traced east for 4.7 m, where it returned south as wall 347. Both walls were 1 m wide. The alignment of the excavation trench only exposed a short length of the east side of 347 at the junction with 346, but it appears that wall 346 did not continue east beyond wall 347. These walls presumably acted as further revetment walls for dumped soils 367 and 366 extending the terrace south-east of the Solar Tower. The relationship between wall 347 and the wall robbed by 415 is not clear, but beyond wall 347 the dumped soils sloped away to the south-east, suggesting that east of this the ground level had not been raised by dumping at this stage. The walls are massive, and may also have been structural.

Wall 348 was built of courses of thin limestone, was at least 0.8 m wide and survived nearly 1 m high where it underlay the existing boundary wall of the Mount House. The stratigraphic relationship between wall 348 and the base of the boundary wall was not established. Wall 348 sloped down to the west away from the boundary wall, and only 0.5 m from this was a doorway, where the uppermost 0.8 m of masonry ended at a vertical north-south face, with dressed chamfered quoins on the north edge projecting into the doorway, and with a rebate behind (Fig. 2.3 and Pl. 2.17). The wall continued below the doorway, but was not investigated. The door was presumably a postern of sorts providing access from the area east of wall 77 that had not been raised by terracing to the edge of the moat.

The construction of the West Block

West of the tower, five parallel east-west walls were built from the level either of dumping 209 or layer 207 immediately overlying it, and all were linked by a north-south return wall 474 = 423, forming a West Block against the west side of the Solar Tower (Figs 2.3 and 2.13). Four of these walls, 145, 43, 44 and 5, abutted the west wall of the Solar Tower; the fifth and southernmost, wall (256) abutted wall 257 just south of the tower. These walls demonstrate that the West Block was built after the infilling of the area south of the Solar Tower. The construction of all of these walls was of coursed undressed limestone slabs bonded with an orange-yellow mortar, and all included a varying proportion of reddened burnt limestones.

The south room of the West Block

Both walls 5 and 256 were constructed on pitched limestone foundations whose top lay at the level of the surface of clay dump 209 (Fig. 2.15). The footings of wall 256 were not investigated, but those of wall 5 appear from the section to have been shallow. Both walls were built of courses of flat limestone blocks, and were 0.8 m wide. The mortar bonding the stones was not recorded. On the north side wall 5 was abutted by a layer of orange gravel, part of layer 207, a spread of gravel and mortar of varying thickness covering much of bank 209 north of this, upon which walls 43 and 44 were constructed (see below). Layer 207 included lenses of clay mixed with the gravel, but these were all probably part of the same deposit. This layer was not seen south of wall 5.

Wall 5 had subsequently been robbed (Period 9, Trench 4 = 453), and only survived 0.4 m high close to the Solar Tower; it was not uncovered more than 1.4 m from the tower, but the robber trench 453 was traced continuing its line up to north-south wall 423 (Fig. 2.3). Wall 256 was better preserved. At the base of the wall the first few courses formed a footing 0.9 m wide, offset on the south side slightly from the wall above. The wall (including the footings) survived more than 1.1 m high, and narrowed in width slightly as it was built up. Wall 256 was traced west for 3.6 m, beyond which it was robbed (see Period 9, trench 422), but the robber trench showed that it had continued for another 1.2 m up to the line of north-south wall 423, which was also represented only by a robber trench (Period 9, trench 424). Limited excavation to a depth of 0.8 m at the junction of the robber trenches did not find surviving masonry of either wall.

The West Block staircase

Walls 43 and 44 were parallel narrow limestone walls, which were built from the surface of mortar layer 207 and abutted the tower on either side of the west window 70 (Fig. 2.3). This window probably originally had ashlar jambs, but at some stage these were removed and the outermost 0.6 m of the window converted from a splay into a parallel-sided opening some 0.55 m wide, squared off with coursed limestone rubble. The inside face of wall 44 was flush with the repaired edge of this opening, though wall 43 slightly overlapped the opening on the south.

It is possible that the ashlar jambs of both the south and west windows were robbed during the embanking around the tower, and that this window alone was patched up because it was to be abutted by walls 43 and 44. It is equally likely, however, that post-medieval robbing removed the ashlars in the
Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.17 Blocked postern at south-east corner of curia, from west.

south wall. The interim report (Durham 1984, 8) suggested that the western window was deliberately altered to provide a ventilation shaft for the tower basement and to provide more light (see below).

Both walls 43 and 44 were 0.55 m wide next to the Solar Tower, but widened to 0.7 m further west, and were built of coursed narrow limestone pieces, many of them burnt. The gap between the walls was just over 0.4 m, and the overall width across the walls from the north edge of 44 to the south edge of 43 was 1.5 m. Both walls extended west for a distance of 5 m. Some 3.6 m west of the tower the construction of the walls changed. The outer line of the walls was maintained, but the walls themselves narrowed to 0.45 m, so that the gap between them widened to 0.8 m (Fig. 2.3). The widened gap contained three

steps (215) built of small flat limestone pieces ascending to the east (Pl. 2.18; see Fig. 2.17 below). Like walls 43 and 44, some of the stones were burnt. Walls 43 and 44 are interpreted as the supporting walls of a staircase leading up to first floor of the Solar Tower.

The steps were of uneven construction. They lay between the walls, which apparently continued west at the level of the third step, so that the staircase descended between the flanking walls. Only 0.8 m beyond the westernmost step both walls turned right angles, wall 44 returning north as wall 474, wall 43 turning south on the same line as wall 423. Excavation did not uncover the whole of the junctions of these walls, so it is not known whether 43 and 44 continued west of the line of 474 and 423.



Figure 2.15 Section through West Block

East of steps 215 the space between walls 43 and 44 was filled by several dumped deposits (Fig. 2.7). Mortar 207 was overlain by a 0.17 m thick deposit of stones 208. Above 208 lay 53, a clay layer 0.28 m thick, which in turn was covered by layer 45, a brown clay which was 0.7 m thick, and contained pottery of 12th-century date. This clay abutted the inner faces of both walls to their surviving height, and both layer 53 and layer 45 spilled in through window 70 into the Solar Tower, where layer 45 was numbered 35. Layer 35 contained a coin, a billon feudal denier (see Chapter 3, The Coins).

The north room of the West Block

The north wall of the block was wall 145 = 482, which abutted wall 2 at the north-west corner of the

Solar Tower. Wall 145 was constructed of coursed narrow limestone bonded with mortar, was 0.7 m wide and survived at least 0.6 m high. The relationship of wall 145 to the clay dumping 209 was not established, since the wall had been widened by the addition of a narrower wall 144 on the south, which was not removed (Fig. 2.15). The north face of the wall was seen at the corresponding level to the surface of dump 209, and was abutted by an orange sandy gravel 477 that was not removed adjacent to the wall. This suggests that wall 145 was at least as early as the other walls of the West Block.

Although overlain by a later and wider wall (Period 9a: wall 802) the edge of wall 145 = 482 was traced west as far as north-south wall 474 (Fig. 2.3). Beyond the junction with wall 474 a wall continued west, and was numbered 473. This wall incorporated



Plate 2.18 Stair 215 in West Block looking east.

several fragments of earlier mouldings within it. none of which are datable (Fig. 2.16; Pl. 2.19). The excavation plan shows 473 as a continuation of the later wall 802 (see also Fig. 2.3), but as the following description makes clear, 473 was integral to the original West Block. No excavation was undertaken in the angle between walls 145 and 474, both of which were abutted by clay dumping (see below), but the continuation wall 473 was constructed contemporarily with 474 and its northern continuation wall 465. In the angle between 474 and 473 a sondage was dug to natural clay, and here wall 473 was 1.4 m deep and wall 474 1.25 m deep. The lowest course of wall 473 lay at the level of natural clay; no construction trench was recorded, the bottom of the wall being abutted by a thin layer of sandy gravel (492) overlying the natural clay (388). Layer 492 was sealed by a 0.03 m thick layer of white mortar (491), which abutted wall 473 and is shown on section underlying the lowest course of wall 474 (Fig. 2.16). While the records do not state clearly that this was the bottom of wall 474, the coursing of walls 473 and 474 matches, and the two were apparently constructed together.

Wall 474 ran north-south, parallel to and 5 m west of the Solar Tower, and continued north of the junction with wall 145 as wall 465 (Fig. 2.3). Although only uncovered in short sections, which were not linked up during the excavations, the wall was clearly a continuation of the return of staircase wall 44. At its junction with wall 473 the surviving top of the wall was 0.8 m wide. The lowest 0.65 m of wall 473 was nearly 1 m wide, and was built of rough courses of irregular limestone with a very irregular south face. Above this was one regular course of limestone blocks, above which the wall narrowed to only 0.8 m wide, and the six surviving upper courses of stone had smooth flat faces (Fig. 2.16).

A possible vault?

At its junction with 473, wall 474 had a vertical face (Fig. 2.16) but only 0.5 m south of the junction, it widened on the west side to nearly 1 m (Fig. 2.17). Photographs show that this wider section of wall, numbered 475, was built over a yet wider series of rough courses of limestone slabs (Pl. 2.20). These rough courses were on the same level as those of wall 473, but stopped just short of the junction with 473. This in effect created a sort of niche, 0.5 m by 0.2 m, in the corner (Fig. 2.3).

It seems clear that the lower parts of both walls were not intended to be freestanding, and horizontal layers of soil 490 and 471 were laid against both. Layer 490 was a reddish-brown sandy gravel and loam 0.1 m deep, and 471 was a 0.3 m deep layer of



Plate 2.19 Junction of wall 484 and garderobe 488 from the south-west.



Figure 2.16 Section showing walls of garderobe.

51





Chapter Two



Plate 2.20 Junction of wall 474 and wall 473 of garderobe 486, from west.

grey-brown sandy clay and small limestone (Figs 2.16 and 2.17). The pottery from 471 included much of a vessel of late-12th-century, or early-13th-century, date. These deposits raised the ground level by 0.4 m, but did not cover the uppermost ragged courses of the walls.

The wider stretch of wall 474 (numbered 475) was seen over a length of about 2.75 m and survived 0.75 m high. In profile it widened as it rose higher (Fig. 2.17). The widening was most pronounced at the north end, but was evident all along the excavated length of the wall except in the niche at the north corner. Possibly this was the lower springing of a stone barrel vault. The other side of this vault was not positively identified during the excavations, but two courses of horizontal stonework were seen within layer 468 in the west section opposite 475 at the level corresponding to its surviving top (Fig. 2.17), and may have belonged to the corresponding vault springing which lay just beyond the excavation trench. If correct, this would indicate a narrow north-south room only $c \ 2 \ m$ wide. The footings of wall 474 are clearly much deeper than those of the east-west walls of the West Block, probably because 474 was a major load-bearing wall. No excavation of deposits to the east of wall 474 was undertaken to demonstrate the relationship of wall 474 to the clay dump 209, which was not observed west of the wall. Presumably wall 474 was cut into the clay dumping on this side, though it is possible that the dump had

largely tailed off this far west of the Solar Tower, hence its absence west of 474.

On the south side of the staircase stonework 423 was the southward return of wall 43, which continued the line of wall 474 north of the staircase. Wall 423 was robbed only 1.2 m south of the stair, but its line was continued by a robber trench 424 past the line of wall 5 towards the line of wall 256.

Garderobe chamber 486

A small garderobe chamber (486) was constructed at the north-west corner of the range, consisting of walls 465, 464, 473 and wall 488, all of which were recorded as contemporary (Fig. 2.3; Pl. 2.21). The garderobe chamber was rectangular, 2.15 m northsouth by 1.35 m east-west internally. The north wall 464 was 0.9 m wide and was constructed of rough courses of limestone blocks bonded with a yellow sand and gravel mortar. It was not exposed for the full width of room 486, but its south edge was traced west up to the junction with the west wall 488, where the corresponding level on the south side of wall 473 suggests that it was built on natural clay. Both 464 and the south wall 473 were probably constructed upon a layer of large rectangular blocks visible within the coursing of 488 (Fig. 2.16).

The west wall (488) survived 1.8 m high, was 1 m wide and was constructed of courses of thin lime-



Plate 2.21 Garderobe 486 from the east.

stone slabs with some courses of larger blocks; the mortar bonding was not recorded. This wall was 0.7 m deeper than either 473 or 464 and at its mid point a single culvert arch was built into the base of the wall. This was 0.7 m tall and 0.45 m wide, was constructed of large irregular limestone slabs and had a slightly irregular pointed arch. The culvert was emptied for the full 1 m width of the wall. On either side of the arch the base of the garderobe was lined with compacted clay, probably redeposited natural clay. The clay lining sloped downwards from the bottom of the walls on the north, south and east to the culvert to aid drainage. Three putlog holes were recorded in wall 488, and three corresponding holes in wall 465 opposite. Each hole was square and measured 0.14 by 0.14 m, the recess depth of each hole being at least 0.1 m. The top of the holes was 1.5 m above the base of the arch in wall 488 at a height of 83.75 m OD.

The east wall of the garderobe (465) was only exposed down to the top of the clay lining. This may have been the bottom of the wall, as the section drawing shows a thin layer of mortar at this level, on which the wall may have been constructed (compare layer 491). As this is higher, however, than the natural on which the adjoining walls 473, 474 and 464 were built, it is more likely that the base of the wall was not exposed. The mortar may have derived from the construction of the upper part of the wall once the clay lining had been put in place.

It is possible that there was a further garderobe pit at the south-west corner of the building. Although partly robbed in Period 9 (Fig. 2.3, robber trench 425), wall 839 continued the line of wall 5 west of its junction with wall 423 (see Period 9 robber trench 424). This continuation would have formed the north wall of the proposed garderobe. The face of the possible west wall (375) was seen in a stanchion pit during the watching brief in 1991. This wall apparently returned south from 839 = 425. Wall 375 was on the same north-south alignment as garderobe wall 488 to the north and was parallel to 423 = 424. No details of either wall 839 or wall 375 were recorded. The edge of an east-west robber trench (840) was also observed returning parallel to 425 at the south end of wall 375, and the robber fill was identical to that of robber trench 424. The room defined was of very similar dimensions to garderobe chamber 486. The exposed fill inside the room comprised a layer of charcoal and ash, but no finds were recovered. It was thought that wall 839 = 425 may have been added to wall 423, as the east end of the stonework was not very even, but this is not conclusive. The wall robbed by 840 is not a continuation of the line of wall 256, but is offset by 0.75 m to the north.

Between wall 375 to the north and 488 to the south, two courses of limestone were recorded in the west section of the excavation (see Vaulting above) and these may indicate that there was a west linking wall lying just beyond the limit of the excavated trenches.

Cellar beneath the north room of the West Block

At the north-west corner of the Solar Tower within the area defined by walls 145 = 482 and 474, a small room was constructed consisting of a north wall 144, and a west wall 404 that returned to the east as 255 (Fig. 2.3). The north wall (144) was built against the south side of the existing east-west wall 145 and the west wall 404 also abutted wall 145. A gap 0.55 m wide separated the end of the return wall 255 from a small wall (143) that abutted the west wall of the Solar Tower and continued the line of 255. Wall 144 was built in a construction trench 0.2 m deep dug from the surface of dumping 209 and filled with orange clay and limestone (Fig. 2.15). Walls 143 and 255 were built from the level of mortar 207; the construction level of wall 404 was presumably the same. Immediately overlying layer 207 in the south part of this room was a thin spread of white mortar, which probably also derived from the construction.

Internally the room measured 1.8 m by 1.8 m. Walls 255 = 404 and 143 were constructed of limestone blocks; the mortar type was not recorded. Both walls were 0.9 m wide. Wall 144 was narrower, being at most 0.5 m wide; it was well-faced on the south, but its north edge was simply rubble abutting the south face of wall 145. At the junction between walls 144 and 404 a niche (numbered 406) had been created in the corner of the room. This feature measured 0.9 m north-south, and was 0.5 m across and survived for a depth of 0.53 m. The base of the feature was a layer of flat limestone blocks level with the top of the third course of stones in wall 144.

Overlying mortar 207 and the white mortar spread a layer of grey clay 0.3 m thick (layer 394) had been dumped between walls 44 and walls 255 and 143, which extended through the gap in the south walls a little way into the room. There was no evidence of any occupation upon this clay before it was overlain by further dump layers (part of layer 146, see below), which infilled the gap between wall 44 and walls 255 and 143 (Fig. 2.2; Fig. 2.15) to a depth of nearly 0.7 m. Wall stub 143 was only neatly faced on the north and west sides, and was left ragged on the south, suggesting that it was not intended to be visible on that side, and that this infilling immediately followed its construction. The various dump layers were cut or ended at a sloping edge 147 leading down from wall 44 through the gap between walls 255 and 143, and the main part of the room was filled with later deposits (Fig. 2.15 and Period 7 below). This gap, which was too narrow for a doorway, may have been intended for a wooden stair leading downwards from a landing partway up the stone staircase upon walls 43 and 44.

The infilling of the base of the West Block Period 5a (Fig. 2.15)

Within the space defined by walls 256/1 and wall 5 towards the south end of the West Block, a

0.3 m-0.38 m thick layer of brown clay (391 = 392) was deposited over layer 209. This had a level surface that included some gravel, and against wall 256 the surface of 391 was overlain by a thin layer 397 (only 10 mm-20 mm thick) described simply as a turf line. The evidence of the gravel suggests a trampled surface, possibly open to the elements for some time. North of wall 5 a layer of yellowish-green clay (393) of similar thickness to 391 was deposited over layer 207, abutting both walls 5 and 43. The surface of this layer is level with that of 391 = 392, and with that of layer 53 overlying construction debris 208 between walls 43 and 44. North of wall 44 and abutting it, a similar 0.36 m thick layer of grey clay (394) overlay layer 207. The surface of 394 is also level with that of 53, but ended or was cut away 2 m north of the wall. It appears likely that the deposition of these clay layers represented a first stage in the infilling of the West Block.

South of wall 256 a layer of grey-brown clay including limestone (389) was deposited over clay dumping 209. Layer 389 sloped downwards from south to north away from the line of wall 354, showing that wall 354 was present when 389 was deposited, though the wall had later been robbed below this. On the north layer 389 abutted wall 256/1. The surface of this deposit corresponds to that of layers 391 = 392, 393, 53 etc. north of wall 256, and this layer too is likely to have been part of this first phase infilling.

Above 389 a layer of grey clay (390) sloped sharply downwards from the line of wall 354 to abut wall 256/1. The depth of layer 390 adjacent to the line of 354 was 0.65 m, decreasing to 0.2 m where it abutted wall 256/1. This was clearly another phase of dumping while wall 354 was still extant. Over layer 390 was another dump of clay 396 = 146, yellow-brown in colour, which was identified running as far north as wall 43. This layer was also numbered 420 and 421. A very similar soil (also numbered 146) was dumped north of wall 44, and is probably more of the same material. The surface of this dump sloped down towards the north, and in general dumping appears to have proceeded from south to north.

During the 1984 excavations the various layers within the dumping were excavated as a single group to which the number 146 was allocated; a little 12th-century pottery was recovered from these layers.

The infilling of the Solar Tower ground floor and the construction of a temporary staircase

Within the tower, a series of layers were dumped upon occupation layer 50 = 129 and floor 265 (Figs 2.6 and 2.7). West of pier 49, the primary dumping was layer 211 = 383, brown loam and gravel tipped against wall 2. A very similar layer (234, not illustrated) abutted wall 60 to the south. Layer 234 contained 12th-century pottery and one sherd of Brill/Boarstall ware, usually dated to after 1225, which, therefore, may be intrusive. There were crossjoining sherd(s) between layers 234 and layer 139 on the west (see below).

Over layer 211 on the west was a thin layer of mortar and rubble 141 = 384, from which 12thcentury pottery and a needle of late Saxon or medieval date were recovered. Layer 141 was sealed by 140, clay with rubble, mortar and gravel up to 0.16 m thick. Layer 140 contained pottery of 12thcentury date and a single fragment of window glass dated to the later 12th century (see Chapter 3, Glass). A cut halfpenny of the mid 12th-century (SF 54, minted between 1135 and 1152; see Chapter 3, The Coins) also came from layer 140. The layer was overlain by 139, a 0.2 m thick layer of mortar and gravel; this also contained 12th-century pottery, as did 127, a burnt patch of rubble, soil and mortar, 0.08 m thick, which overlay 139. Another intermittent burnt layer 138, which also overlay 139, was probably contemporary. Layer 137 sealed 127, and consisted of a clean yellow gravel and mortar mix 0.1 m thick. This was covered by two layers of clay, 136/2 sealed by 136/1, respectively 0.15 m and 0.2 m thick. Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from either 136/2 or 136/1.

On the east side of the tower the dumping was removed as layer 36/2 overlain by 36/1. Layer 36/2 was a clay deposit that contained limestone rubble and charcoal, and also included part of a coin. The coin (SF 68; Chapter 3, The Coins), though in poor condition with no visible legend, was another cut halfpenny minted between 1135 and 1152. Layer 36/ 1 overlay 36/2, and was recorded as extending throughout the tower (see Fig. 2.7). It is not recorded on section in the south part of the tower, and may here be equivalent to 136/1, whose description is very similar. East of the central pier 36/1 was thicker than 36/2 below it. The pottery from 36/1 included a sherd of Fabric 3 and another of Fabric 6 (Brill/ Boarstall ware). The latter came from the south-east quadrant, where a much later pit had disturbed the deposits, and so is probably intrusive.

Cross-joins were found between sherds in layers 211, 234, 140 and 36/1, and these also cross-joined with sherds in layer 50 = 129. It was suggested (see Period 4a above) that these sherds had been amongst the first dumped material, and had settled into the top of this layer.

The infilling of the ground floor of the Solar Tower continued with a large quantity of bulk fill material removed by machine in 1984 (Figs 2.6 and 2.7, layers 3 = 56). The bulk fill consisted of a mixture of soil, rubble and fragments of masonry, the whole up to 1.1 m thick. Layer 56 contained sherds of Fabric 3, usually dated to the late 12th century, and a complete silver penny of Stephen minted between 1135 and 1152 (SF 58; Chapter 3, The Coins). Similar material (layer 3) was removed from the south and west sides of the tower, and filled the room to a level just below the topsoil. Layer 3 contained several 12th-century sherds and one intrusive 19th-century potsherd. The bulk infill contained at least 50 fragments of dressed and shaped masonry, 15 of

which belong to circular columns and others to voussoirs, quoins and other architectural fragments (see Chapter 3, The Worked Stone). Five of the column sections come from a column over 1.2 m in diameter, and were all weathered both on the circumference and on one of the flat faces. One of these came from layer 36/1, the other four were found in layer 3.

On the north floor 265 was overlain by layer 36/1. Above this two dry-stone walls had been built towards the east end of the doorway, one running SSE, the second, which was bonded in with the first, running WSW between the pier and the north wall 60 (Figs 2.3 and 2.6). Part of this had been removed by machine before it was recognised. The walls were constructed upon a base of roughly coursed flat limestone (128) and survived to a height of 1 m. The stonework was only faced on one side, and behind this was continuous with the bulk fill 56. At the north end the drystone walling ended in a ragged face just south of the doorway, and at the south there was a similar ragged edge just north of the central pier 49. The facing was not aligned upon the east side of the original doorway 133, but some way west of this, implying that it had originally run into the doorway and had presumably turned eastwards to abut wall 60.

The remains of three possible steps (52) were also identified adjacent to these walls, consisting of flat limestone slabs resting upon the stones and soil of 128. The steps were rising southwards over the infill layers away from the doorway (Pl. 2.22–24). Pottery of 12th-century date was found in association with 128. This feature was interpreted at the time as contemporary with the bulk infill to the east (layer 56), and prior to the continuation of this dumping on the west (layer 3). It might have continued as a wide staircase running west between the north wall of the tower and the central pier up to the first floor of the Solar Tower from the ground floor of the East Range, but no further steps were identified during the removal of the bulk infill by machine. It is also conceivable that this was a newel stair, though no evidence of a corresponding retaining wall was found west of the doorway to retain the bulk fill, nor any trace of a newel post. It may however have utilised the west jamb of the Solar Tower door (Durham pers. comm.). The construction was of very poor quality structurally, and was probably only intended to be temporary. It may simply have been a retaining wall built during infilling to allow continued access through the doorway while dumping continued, with steps to provide a firm footing onto the dumped material as the level rose. This would explain why the wall lies on some of the dumped material, and also why it is constructed partway into the doorway. Finds from the bulk infill immediately behind the steps were labelled 51, and comprised sherds of Fabric 3, usually dated to the late 12th century or later.

The retaining wall and stairs imply that the tower was filled from east to west in a clockwise direction, Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.22 Blocked doorway to Solar Tower with stair and central pier behind, from the north.

the same direction in which the embanking and the construction of the additional buildings around the Solar Tower proceeded. The east window of the ground floor of the tower had been blocked in Period 4, when the garderobe block was added, and thereafter light (and ventilation) would have been provided by the southern and western windows. As the infilling proceeded both outside and within the tower, the southern windows would have been blocked, reducing the visibility and ventilation within the basement. The crude alteration to the west window of the tower, which widened the opening, can be interpreted plausibly as another temporary expedient to provide ventilation during the course of the infilling, as suggested in the interim report (Durham 1984, 8). Indeed, the construction of the stair as parallel walls later filled with soil, rather than as a solid masonry block, may also be a result of this.

Both the south windows and the west window were eventually blocked with clay and rubble. Layer 67, the fill of south window 68, contained a lace-tag of post-medieval date, but this is likely to have been intrusive from post-medieval robbing. Layer 35, which filled window 70, was described as the same as layer 45, the infill between walls 43 and 44 of the external staircase outside the west side of the Solar Tower (steps 215). Layer 35 contained pottery of late 12th- to 13th-century date, and also produced a billon feudal denier coin (sf 1; Chapter 3, The Coins), which was minted from 1020, and could have remained in circulation into the 13th century.



Plate 2.23 Detail of steps 52 from north.

The blocking of the Solar Tower door

Following the infilling of the ground floor of the Solar Tower the doorway between the Solar Tower and the East Range was blocked (Figs 2.3 and 2.6; Pl. 2.22). An east-west wall (134) of limestone slabs was constructed between the door jambs on the inner face of wall 60, and overlay the occupation layer (267) in the doorway, which contained late-12th-century pottery. The wall was faced on both sides, and was 1.2 m wide, built approximately flush with the inside edge of the Solar Tower. It was not as wide as the north wall of the Solar Tower, creating a recess in the south wall of the East Range 1 m deep. The blocking survived to a height of 0.85 m.

On the south side, the blocking wall was abutted by layer 126, a layer of small tipped limestone which also

abutted layer 128 at the base of the dry-stone revetment wall. Since the west face of the dry-stone walling originally projected into the doorway, it appears to have been cut back to allow the construction of the blocking wall. This left a gap that was filled with vertical stones (126) that were tipped over the blocking wall (Fig. 2.6). The material abutting the drystone walling higher up is not recorded, as much of this was machined out before the revetment wall was recognised. Pottery of late-12th- or early-13th-century date was recovered from layer 126, and from the stones forming blocking 134.

Alterations to the East Range

Possibly at this time there was a phase of rebuilding or alteration within the East Range. Four small Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.24 Steps 52 from west.

circular features (Fig. 2.3) were identified adjacent to the line of the north wall of the Solar Tower and were cut into layer 817. From east to west, these were 822 (filled by 823), 824 (filled by 825), 826 (filled by 827) and 828 (filled by 829). All of the features had a diameter of 0.3 m, but none was excavated. The features were interpreted as postholes, perhaps part of a scaffold erected for building work at the south end of the East Range. Postholes 826 and 828 cut the footings (831) of the Solar Tower wall. North of the line of postholes was a circular 0.6 m wide patch of ash and charcoal (830) that rested upon a layer of red (fired) gravel within a 0.08 m deep hollow in layer 817. The feature was probably the remains of a fire or hearth, and its location in front of doorway 133 suggests that it was used after the blocking had been completed. The presence of a temporary hearth or brazier in the East Range, and the possible scaffolding postholes, may indicate that part of the floor above was removed and remade during these alterations. Alternatively, if the East Range had a stone vault, this simply may have been a workman's fire.

Period 5b-Early 13th century

The East Range

At the south end of the building, wall 134, which blocked the former access into the Solar Tower, was abutted on the north side by a series of thin occupation layers numbered collectively 266. These did not apparently extend northwards into the East Range proper, and in any case were disturbed and truncated at the north edge of wall 60 when the recess was blocked (see Period 6 blocking 135).

A stone structure (25) was built against the inner face of the west wall 9 of the East Range, and was constructed on top of the first floor (231 = 244)(Fig. 2.18a). Structure 25 consisted of outer walls of limestone blocks, with the core filled with loose limestone and sand. It measured 2.6 m north-south and was 1.4 m wide, with a chamfered plinth. Above the plinth the structure survived to a maximum height of 0.47 m. Two courses of limestone blocks above the base course of the structure were reddened by burning, as was wall 9 immediately adjacent to the north and south. The function of this structure is uncertain. Its size suggests a buttress or similar structure; Durham has suggested (pers. comm.) that it was a pier added to support the first-floor fireplace that is implied by the external chimney stack 27, perhaps after fire had burnt the floor joists. The reddening on both the stones of 25 and the adjacent range wall suggests that this resulted from in situ burning, which suggests either fires adjacent to (or surrounding) the structure, or possibly that the structure itself was either an oven or a fireplace (see also Period 6 The Internal Stratigraphy of the East Range, and Chapter 7). It is also possible that the burning on wall 9 was earlier and that the reddened blocks in structure 25 were reused.

To the east and north-east of 25 were three mortar layers (Fig. 2.18a). Layer 243 overlay 231 = 244, and was a 0.02 m thick deposit of grey sandy loam. The full extent of the layer was not established as it lay beneath more extensive deposits that formed in the junction between wall 9 and structure 25. Layer 243 was overlain by layer 242, a very thin grey-brown mortar spread, probably a floor, which was exposed towards the north of the small excavation trench against structure 25, but did not extend southwards to have a relationship with it. Layer 242 was overlain by a similarly thin layer (241) which was a dark brown sandy loam which contained a quantity of charcoal, and a very few sherds including one dated to the late 12th century or later. Layer 241 abutted structure 25. The level of deposits 243 and 242 suggests that they may also have been contemporary with 25, though it is possible that they predate it.

Further north in Trench 10 mortar floor 321 was overlain by mortar deposits 313 followed by 312, which filled a hollow towards the east side of the East Range (Fig. 2.21). Against the west wall (9) layer 311 formed a slight bank of compacted sand 0.1 m thick containing lenses of charcoal, which sloped downwards and became progressively thinner away from wall 9. The layer extended nearly halfway across the room. This was interpreted as the makeup for an overlying hearth 310, a layer of compact white mortar which was heavily burnt adjacent to wall 9. Stones of wall 9 adjacent were also burnt and some were cracked, confirming that this was either a hearth or lay just adjacent to one. East of the burnt area, and overlying mortar 310 beyond it, was a grey-brown silty clay layer with lenses of organic material, charcoal and patches of yellow and green clay (300). These burnt areas against the wall perhaps imply a series of chimney hoods or louvres against the west wall.

The courtyard west of the East Range

The surface formed by a loose orange gravel layer (269) was overlain by another phase of make-up, represented by a layer of loose gravel (259 = 250) averaging 0.1 m thick. Overlying the make-up close to the south end of the East Range was a series of thin mortar or gravel floors numbered collectively 149 and 273 (Fig. 2.18a). These abutted chimney stack 27 on the north, but were removed by later robbing pit 132 on the west, and were not found west of the chimney block. Further north, however, another orange mortar layer 238, which overlay layer 250 and abutted the East Range wall 9, was probably equivalent (Figs 2.14 and 2.19). Pottery of late-12th- or 13th-century date was recovered from layers 149 = 273.

Layer 259 and its equivalents was covered by 148 = 237, a grey sandy loam and stone layer up to 0.15 m thick. Pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from 148 = 237; some sherds were matched to cross-joining sherds in layer 86 outside the East Range (see Period 8 below). Further west the equivalent deposit was 495, a more compact layer of gravel with a flat level surface (Fig. 2.15).

The robbing of curtain wall 354 and the southern extension to the terracing

Following the dumping of the yellow-brown or yellow-grey clay (part of 146) the curtain wall 354 was robbed west of the corner of walls 58 and 257 by robber trench 258, which was cut from the surface of layer 146 and was dug down through layers 390, 389, and 209 (Fig. 2.15). The north side of the robber trench sloped at 80 degrees onto the top of wall 354. Robber trench 258 was at least 1.2 m wide at the top and at least 0.7 m wide at the bottom; the full width of the robber trench lay outside the excavation area. There were five fills within 258, all of which appeared to have been tipped in from the north side. The bottom fill is not recorded, but above this the fills were either gravel or clay loam and limestone rubble.

A layer of brown clay loam 0.2 m thick (Fig. 2.15, 395) accumulated over the infilled robber trench 258, and is drawn extending northwards over the yellowbrown clay layer 146 up to wall 43. Layer 395 was cut by the later robbing of wall 5 (context 4), and so originally abutted the wall. Between walls 43 and 44 was a similar infill layer 45, and more brown clay is recorded in section (Fig. 2.15) above the yellow-grey clay north of wall 44. It is possible that this represents a further phase of dumping within the West Block following the robbing of the curtain wall. If so, then the curtain wall was removed during construction of the West Block, and the infilling of its robber trench with soil shows that dumping had already been carried south of the line of this wall. It would also suggest that a stone revetment for the dumping around the Solar Tower was already in



Figure 2.18 Sections north-south and east-west through East Range including 25.



Whatever the truth of this, some 5 m west of the Solar Tower the east face of a north-south wall 377 was seen, continuing the line of wall 474 = 423 within the West Block (Fig. 2.3). While the common alignment of these walls may be coincidental, it is more likely that the walls were related. Since 474 was not the outer wall of the West Block, the continuation of its line was probably built during the construction of the West Block, and perhaps acted as a retaining wall for the dumping around the Solar Tower. Although no excavation was carried out beyond the West Block, the levels make it clear that the ground surface in the courtyard to the west of the East Range and further north-west was lower, necessitating a boundary or revetment wall on the west. The fact that wall 377 was found across the line of wall 354, and was not butted up to it, suggests that the decision to rob 354, presumably for the stone it contained, had already been taken, and also that wall 377 continued south of the line of wall 354 (Fig. 2.3).

A parallel north-south wall (374) was found east of the Solar Tower, and although no excavation was carried out adjacent to this wall it is suggested that this wall represented the eastern limit of the dumping around the south side of the Solar Tower.

Both wall 377 and wall 374 are in line with the first re-entrants of the present boundary wall south of the Mount House (Fig. 2.1). Although no direct dating evidence for the origins of the existing curtain wall of the Mount House has been found, it is possible that the modern line of the walls on the south represents the continuations of walls 377 and 374, and that the boundary line may date back to the late 12th or early 13th century. It is also possible that wall 348 continued eastwards, and is the origin of the line of the boundary wall on the east side of the site.

Several sondages were excavated up against the existing curtain wall of the Mount House on the east side to investigate straight joints visible on the external face of the wall, which were initially thought to indicate square towers on the 12th- to 13th- century curtain wall (Fig. 2.1; Durham 1984, 8). On the inside were sondages S1 and S2, on the outside Trench 2 was also excavated within a standing shed building at the east side of the Mount House curtain wall. Sondages S1 and S2 were dug to a maximum depth of 1.2 m, but failed to find any trace of the straight joints on the inside face of the wall. Finds from the fills at this depth were still postmedieval, and the base of the wall was not reached. Trench 2 was 1.5 m long; the only deposit observed beneath the wooden floor of the shed was a layer of compacted brown clay (2/21) which produced fragments of iron slag and coal, and included postmedieval pottery. The layer was thought to represent the remains of a former building surface. The edge of the moat was not seen.

153 204 2221 241-3 241-3 Stepped forward Vatural cla ≥ East removed 6 2521 Soils ≥ Z Natural 984 trench 3 ≥ 260



Figure 2.19 Section from courtyard to East Range

East of terrace wall 77 the offset footing of staircase 110 was overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of grey loam (118), which was the first of a series of deposits accumulating after the construction of the staircase, all of which sloped away markedly to the east (Fig. 2.12). Layer 118 was sealed by 109, a deposit of brown sandy loam which was 0.3 m thick, and which contained pottery dating to the 12th century or later.

At the south-east corner of the site it may have been at this time that the doorway through wall 348 was blocked. Up against the north face of the wall was a long stone block, which ended on the east just beyond the doorway. In section on the west it was at least 0.5 m high, suggesting that this had deliberately been placed to block the doorway (Pl. 2.17).

Period 6 - 13th century developments, 1225-1300

Summary (Fig. 2.20)

Structural modifications were made to the West Block in this period, which involved the strengthening of existing walls and the addition of a further room on the north of the West Block.

The east terrace

Alongside the east wall of the east garderobe block, wall 74, further dumping took place over layer 104. Here four layers of soil (numbered consecutively 283/4-/1) were added, all sloping down from west to east. The latest layer levelled the dumping almost up to the surviving top of the wall, presumably to help stabilise the building. Layer 283/1 contained a single sherd of Surrey ware, dated to the 14th century or later, but all of the pottery from the lower layers was of late-12th- or 13th-century types. It is possible that two phases of dumping are represented.

The east terrace and buttress 94

The east side of the Solar Tower was shored up by the addition of a massive buttressing wall. The eastwest construction trench for this, feature 151, cut through the backfill layers 80 and 81, also removing parts of walls 73 and 74 (Figs 2.3 and 2.10), and with it most of a fourth drainage culvert (226) of the original garderobe. East of the garderobe the construction trench cut layer 283.

Construction trench 151 was 0.6 m deep adjacent to the east face of the Solar Tower, and became progressively deeper towards the east. Where the trench cut into wall 74 = 113, it reached a depth of 2.5 m. Trench 151 was filled by a large wall (94 = 130). The foundations of the structure were 1.3 m wide and slightly offset from the wall proper, which was 1.2 m wide. Wall 94 was constructed of coursed limestone slabs and was built against the infilled window (71) in the east wall of the Solar Tower (Pl. 2.25). The outer face of window 71 contained vertical limestone blocks of similar type to the materials used to construct wall 94 = 130, though these are believed to have been put in place when the east garderobe was constructed (see Period 4b). The construction trench was backfilled with four deposits of similar building debris and soil (151/4,151/3, 151/2, 151/1). Pottery recorded as from the subdivisions of 151 was of late-12th- to early-13thcentury date. A fragment of tile tentatively identified as Fabric 7, which is dated to the mid 13th century or later, was also found. When a construction pit was dug 5 m further east in 1991 no trace of this wall was found, and the wall must have ended west of this. Layer 283 is made up of two deposits, 283/2 and 283/1, layer 283/1 containing 14th-century finds, but the records do not specify which deposit is meant. The material from the construction trench on its own would allow an earlier date, as proposed here.

Alterations to the West Block and the construction of Room 466

In the angle between walls 473 and 474 (on the west side) the surface of layer 471 was overlain by 470, a further layer of clean sandy clay with a level surface that was 0.1 m thick and abutted both walls 473 and 474 (Fig. 2.17). Layer 470 contained pottery of mid-to late-13th-century date. This brought the level of the floor up to the bottom of 475, the springing of the vault from wall 474.

It was probably in this period that Room 466 was constructed north-west of the Solar Tower in the angle between walls 145 = 482 and 465 (Fig. 2.3). The north wall of the room (456, aligned east-west) was built within a construction trench on the south side numbered 481, which was cut through courtyard deposit 480 (Fig. 2.15). Contiguous with 480 to the south was a layer of limestone rubble 479, but it is not clear whether this was earlier than the construction of the wall, or make-up related to it. The foundation trench for wall 456 was 0.4 m wider than the wall, narrowing rapidly to 0.2 m wider. The trench was infilled with $\frac{481}{1}$, a dark grey clay loam mixed with gravel which contained 12th-century pottery. Wall 456 was constructed of medium sized limestone blocks (0.1 m by 0.1 m). On the north side there was no sign of a construction trench, the wall appearing to have been built from the surface of layer 495 (= 259), which was at a corresponding level to the surface of 480 on the south side. On this side the lowest three courses of stones exposed were offset 0.08 m from the north face of the upper courses, the wall being respectively just over 0.8 m wide and then 0.74 m wide. The stones were bonded with a mixed sand and gravel mortar. The offset courses on the north side were abutted by a dumped layer of sandy loam with gravel, limestone rubble and roof slates numbered 467.

Wall 456 was in line with wall 464 to the west, but stopped 1.1 m short of it. At this end wall 456 was squared off with ashlar blocks; the gap between 456 and 465/464 was presumably for a doorway (numbered 463). A recess on the north face of wall 456 may have housed a wooden door. Traces of





Plate 2.25 Buttressing wall 94 abutting Solar Tower on the east (from south).

white mortar render were observed on the south side of wall 456 and on the east face of wall 465. Wall 456 ran east for 3 m. At the east end it was destroyed by a later robbing pit 132 (Period 9), but may have returned south as wall 472, the two walls being almost contiguous (Fig. 2.3). Wall 472 was also robbed by pits 132 and 87, but south of this was overlain by platform 42, with whose west edge it was in line. The level from which 472 was built was not revealed in any of the excavated sections.

Within room 466 layers 480 and 479 were overlain by a layer of dark brown sandy loam and charcoal 478. No relationship with the construction trench 481 is recorded, and it is not clear whether this is a construction deposit or predated the room. Both 478 and the infill of construction trench 481 were sealed by a layer of gravel (477) 0.05 m-0.1 m thick that abutted walls 482 and 456. This layer was not obviously compacted, but may have formed the first floor of the room. It was subsequently overlain by a 0.03 m thick mortar floor (459). No certain relationship was established between floor 459 and wall 465, the mortar layer stopping just short of the wall. It seems likely that floor 459 ran up to the render upon the east face of 465 rather than the stones of the wall themselves; traces of a white mortar were found on the inside of all the surviving walls. The mortar floor rose up slightly at the doorway, abutting and slightly overlying a limestone threshold represented by some limestone worn smooth by wear. This indicates that floor 459 was not primary, hence the possibility of 477 being an earlier floor. The limestone did not abut the walls either side of the doorway, only surviving in the middle, but their south edge followed the line of the south edge of wall 456, and mortar 459 only extended a little way into the doorway. The context records state that there were two successive layers of worn limestone at the door, implying a long period of use, but no pottery other than the residual 12th-century material was recovered from the construction deposits or from the floor of the room.

The pottery from the construction deposits does not rule out an earlier origin for Room 466 in Period 5, but although the relationship of walls 456 and 472 to the possible well 271 was destroyed by later robbing pit 32, it seems likely that the construction of this room would have impinged upon the edge of the putative well. For this reason, and because occupation upon the floor included 14th-century pottery (see Period 7 below), the construction of Room 466 has been placed in Period 6.

The internal stratigraphy of the East Range

Either late in Period 5 or early in Period 6 the recess in the south wall left by the blocking of the door into the Solar Tower was infilled. The blocking (135) consisted of coursed stonework level with the face of wall 60, but with limestone rubble infill behind (Fig. 2.6). The blocking overlay and partly disturbed floor layers 266. Pottery of late-12th-century or early-13th-century date was recovered from the infill.

A layer of limestone rubble 236, which contained a medieval buckle, overlay layer 241 and abutted possible fireplace 25. This appears to have been part of a phase of alterations; a 0.04 m thick layer of clay, charcoal and gravel (240), from which mid-13th-century pottery was recovered, overlay 236, and was in turn sealed by 230, a layer of dark soil and mortar/plaster fragments (Fig. 2.18a).

In Trench 10 further north, an extensive layer (199) of limestone rubble, clay, sand and mortar covered the whole width of the building, sealing hearth 310 and floor layers 300 and 321 (see Fig. 2.21). Layer 199 contained worked stone blocks, stone roof-tiles and pottery of 13th-century date, as well as animal bone, iron nails and a piece of a lead sheet. It was overlain by 198, a levelling layer of green clay with rubble inclusions that also contained 13th-century pottery. The rubble and other material show that this was a phase of alteration within the East Range, and may be linked to layer 236 further south. Layer 199 incorporated much burnt stone, particularly next to wall 9, perhaps indicating that the former hearth in this area was dismantled at this time. Together layers 199 and 198 raised the floor level of the East Range by nearly 0.2 m.

Just north of structure 25, a further sequence of mortar deposits and repairs or make-up layers of silt and clay was identified. Above layer 240 in ascending order were layers 223 (gravel and mortar), 222 (compacted mortar), 221 (silt loam and occasional charcoal), 212 (localised deposit of silt loam with charcoal and pottery inclusions), 210 (a mixed deposit of limestone rubble), and lastly layer 204, a reddish-yellow clay with plaster and mortar inclusions, which was 0.1 m thick. The combined depth of these deposits was 0.2 m (Fig. 2.18a). The sequence of layers including rubble and then clay is broadly comparable to the sequence further north and in the centre of the East Range.

South of 25, fewer deposits were identified: floor 231 = 244 was sealed by 202, a burnt silt containing frequent charcoal inclusions which was 0.22 m thick (Fig. 2.19b). This deposit lay immediately below the level of burnt stones at the south face of 25, and perhaps represented a fireplace, 25 being an adjacent oven. Alternatively it may have been debris from a fireplace on 25 itself (see Chapter 7). Brill/Boarstall pottery of mid- to late-13th-century date was recovered from layer 202. Layers 202 and 204 were stratigraphically equivalent.

The fills of the post or scaffold holes at the south end of the East Range were overlain by a thin layer of sandy mortar and gravel (816) which extended right across the building, sealed the footings of the Solar Tower and abutted its north wall (Fig. 2.6). Layer 816 contained pottery of late-13th- to 14th-century date. Layer 816 was sealed in turn by layer 815, a 0.03 m– 0.13 m thick deposit which contained substantial quantities of charcoal, ash and burnt animal bone. Layer 815 extended across the width of the trench, and contained pottery of 13th-century date. This layer is similar in character to layer 202 adjacent to structure 25, and 816 and 815 together correspond in level to 202, so 815 was probably part of the same deposit.

No relationship was recorded between layer 816 and blocking 135, and the drawn section does not clarify this. Layer 815 is recorded as underlying 135, but two section drawings show that 815 clearly abutted the blocking, and this is the interpretation followed here. Layer 815 was overlain by a 0.2 m thick layer of light grey-brown sandy clay (814) containing gravel and limestone pieces, which also abutted blocking 135. This may have been equivalent to the layers raising the floor level further north.

The development of the courtyard west of the East Range

Above yard layer 148 = 237 was 239/2, a deposit of horizontal rubble and cobbles that appeared to form a distinct surface. Layer 239/1 above was slightly more widespread, and corresponded in level to cobble layer 34 = 38 seen in 1984 Trench 3 to the north-west in the area of the courtyard proper (Fig. 2.1). Layer 34 = 38 extended west for a distance of c 15 m, and was observed in a further trench (Fig. 2.1, Trench 9) to the north. This layer had an average depth of 0.12 m. At the extreme north of Trench 9 a deposit of sandy loam and limestone (46) rested upon the natural clay (388). Pottery of 12thcentury date was recovered from layer 46. Courtyard layer 34 = 38 was sealed by 835 (which was not originally recorded as a separate deposit) and layer 30, which consisted of a 0.03 m thick discontinuous spread of yellow gravel and mortar.

Close to the East Range a localised burnt patch of soil (235) overlay cobble layer 239/1, and might suggest evidence of a fire in the courtyard. The burnt soil 235 was overlain by a layer of soil and rubble (205), which extended away north-west from the corner of chimney stack 27, and appeared to fill a slight hollow in the mortar make-up layers (Fig. 2.19). An oval feature 0.6 m wide and 0.34 m deep was cut into layer 205 only 0.8 m from the north-west corner of the chimney stack 27. This (233, not illustrated) was probably a posthole. Layer 205 was overlain by a layer of loose gravel and mortar 220, which was also confined within the area of the hollow. Layers 205 and 220 were in turn overlain by a layer of clay 206 (Fig. 2.14), which also sealed the fill of posthole 233 and formed the make-up layer for a widespread cobbled surface 22 (see below).

Adjacent to the West Block make-up layers 148, 205 and 220 are probably all represented within layer 467, a thick deposit of sandy loam with limestone and roof-slates that abutted the lowest courses of wall 456, the north wall of room 466 (Fig. 2.15). This was overlain in part by a layer of blue-grey and orange clay 494, probably equivalent to clay layer 206. Pottery of types current in the 12th and 13th centuries was recovered from 467.



Figure 2.21 Section across East Range north of doorway.

North of room 466 and garderobe 486 layers 467 and 494 were overlain by a pale yellow/white sand and mortar surface 462. This layer is very similar to layer 30 in the courtyard a little further north, and is probably also equivalent to layer 22, a cobbled surface laid west of the East Range (Figs 2.14, 2.18 and 2.19). Layer 22 is described as overlying layer 23, which contained Brill/Boarstall pottery of mid-13th-century or later date. No details of layer 23, which was presumably seen during the initial evaluation trenching, are given, but it probably corresponds to one of layers 206, 220 or 205. Layer 22 was a 0.12 m thick layer of sandy gravel and mortar, with cobbles included in the make-up matrix further to the west, and is perhaps broadly equivalent to layer 620 or layer 607 in the north-west area (see below, Period 5).

Just north of Room 466, excavation for stanchion pit 13 in 1991 exposed a section 1.4 m deep, at the bottom of which was a series of three cobbled surfaces, the uppermost being numbered 833. From the surface of this layer a group of pottery of 13th-century date was recovered. Layer 833 was drawn as underlying layer 467, but the level at which 467 appears in the stanchion pit does not correspond to that recorded in the section immediately adjacent during the 1991 excavations, and layer 467 may instead correspond to one of the cobbled layers below 833. In level cobbling 833 is equivalent to layer 462, and the cobbles could equate with those seen in layer 22 towards the west. Cobbles were also observed in the surface of layer 38, a continuation of layer 30 to the west. The lowest of the cobbled layers observed may well have been layer 34.

Period 7 – 14th century, 1300–1400.

Summary (Fig. 2.22)

Alterations were made to the West Block adjacent to the Solar Tower, and the small room within the West Block was infilled. A new door was built into the west wall of the East Range (106/1) at the level of layers 22 outside and 204 inside, and further mortar floors constructed inside the East Range. Some time later the door was repaired, although the time between builds is not quantifiable.

The basement of the West Block

Within the West Block, in the narrow north-south room south of garderobe 486, walls 473 and the possible vaulting 475 was abutted by a layer of greybrown clay (469) that was 0.4 m thick (Fig. 2.17). Layer 469 contained pottery of 14th-century date. This layer was overlain by a mixed layer made up of patches of yellow clay, burnt red clay and charcoal, gravel and mortar patches (455), perhaps forming a working area or trampled surface. Layer 455 may represent the final 'occupation' deposit in this area, or may indicate the infilling of the room at this time.

The infilling of the cellar within the West Block

The small room formed by walls 143, 144, 404 = 255 was deliberately infilled (Fig. 2.15) and the pottery

suggests that this was done during the lifetime of the manor, rather than later. At the base of the room was 147/5, a 0.1 m thick lens of grey clay and charcoal which rested upon the gravel layer 207 and lay against wall 255 (Pl. 2.26). In the niche in the northwest corner of the room a complete Brill jug of 14th-century type was standing (Durham pers. comm.), but this vessel is now lost. This deposit, perhaps an occupation level, was sealed by deposit 147/4, which was a 0.3 m thick layer of black sandy loam with charcoal inclusions. Fill 147/3 above 147/4was 0.1 m-0.3 m thick, and consisted of a light brown sandy loam, in turn sealed by a deposit of ash (147/2). The upper fill in the room (147/1 = 405) consisted of limestone rubble tipping from the north and south in to the centre of the room, and contained a sherd of a glazed vessel (Fabric 6) dated to the 14th century. This deposit was overlain by modern topsoil (1). The combined depth of the fills was 1.05 m.

In section, the fills all tipped downwards from south to north, the larger bulk fills extending through the gap (or entrance) between the ends of walls 255 and 143 to abut the Period 5a dump layers which infilled the base of the West Block. The Period 5a dump layers were all approximately horizontal, and had presumably been trimmed back in the gap, as they did not extend appreciably into the small room (Fig. 2.15). Layers 147/3 and 147/1 were piled up against north wall 144. The inference of this is that the rubble fill occupied an empty space within the gap (or entrance) between the ends of walls 255 and 143, which might have previously housed a wooden stair providing access to the room from above.

Room 466 and the courtyard to the north

Mortar floor 459 was overlain by a layer of charcoal (458) which was 0.04 m thick containing pottery of 14th-century date. The charcoal included large lumps and carbonised twigs. A continuation of this layer was found within the doorway, where it consisted of a dark brown sandy loam with gravel incorporating more of the large charcoal fragments and was numbered 463/1. Layer 458 was sealed by loam layer (457), which also contained charcoal. Layers 458 and 457 abutted the base of wall 482 = 145 to a combined depth of 0.17 m. Pottery of 14th-century date was recovered from doorway 463, probably from layer 463/1. These layers are interpreted as occupation deposits, perhaps indicating that this room was used as a store of some sort.

Outside the room to the north limestone cobbling 833 (the continuation of gravel/mortar floor 462) was overlain by 832, a layer of rubble and slates in a grey-brown silty loam with flecks of charcoal. The charcoal may link this deposit to layers 458 and 463/1. Layer 832 is very similar in both description and level to layer 28, which overlay mortar surface 30 (also equated with layer 462) in 1984 Trench 3 a little further north.



Figure 2.22 Plan of Period 7.

68



Plate 2.26 Wall 255 and infill in the west block, looking west.

Between layer 30 and layer 28 was a patch of reddish-brown clay numbered 29. Overlying both layers 28 and 835 was layer 31, a thin spread of mortar. A circular patch of burnt material (32) upon 31 was perhaps (like 235) evidence of a brazier lit in the courtyard. Layer 31 was sealed by three thin layers of soil and mortar (399 then 398 and lastly 39), the last sealing layer 46 to the north-west. Layer 39 was in turn overlain by layers 48 and 47, localised deposits of sandy loam. None of these deposits are illustrated. Layers 29, 28, 31 and 39 all contained residual 12th-century pottery, and layer 29 also contained Romano-British sherds.

Alterations to the East Range

A doorway represented by a threshold of flat limestone blocks (106/2), was constructed within wall 9 from the level of layer 204 within the East Range, and at the level of external courtyard cobbled surface 22 (Figs 2.3, 2.19 and Pl. 2.27). Two rows of parallel pitched stones (123) were recorded towards the east face of wall 9, extending across the doorway. The pitched stones probably acted as support for a timber sill, the remains of which were represented by a narrow band of dark-brown sandy loam between the rows of stones. Immediately east of doorway 106/2 and overlying layer 204 was layer 153, a 0.06 m thick deposit of brown loam and gravel, which rested against the pitched stone feature 123 and overlay floor layer 204. Layer 153 contained a single sherd of 13th-century pottery.

At the south end of the building adjacent to wall 60 and blocking 135 floor layer 814 was overlain by two courses of limestone blocks (numbered 818 and 293) that abutted the north wall of the Solar Tower (60), and also the blocking (Figs 2.3 and 2.6). The stones of 818 formed a kerb 0.4 m–0.5 m wide around the edge of the east, south and west walls at the south end of the East Range. Layer 814 was overlain by a similar layer 813, which presumably abutted the stones of 818.

In Trench 10 evidence for the continued use of a hearth adjacent to wall 9 was found (Fig. 2.21). Upon layer 198 was a thin layer of 'fired clay' (196) with inclusions of ash and charcoal, extending 1 m from the wall. This was probably associated with layer 194 just to the east, an ashy deposit of silt with mortar fragments overlying a patch of gravel 197. This deposit contained residual pottery of the 12th century and a silver penny of Edward I minted c 1300. The coin could have been in circulation into the late 15th century, but after 1351 this is progressively less likely (SF 69, Chapter 3, The Coins). A date in the mid 14th century is likely for the formation of layer 194. Burnt clay 196 was overlain by a surface of small limestone paving (195) in a matrix of lightbrown mortar.

Further east a series of thin layers of mortar (189–186 sequentially) were laid above clay floor



Plate 2.27 Doorway into the East Range, from south-west.

198. Together these were only 0.05 m deep (Fig. 2.21). All these layers terminated at a point 2.4 m west of wall 88, where they abutted or overlay a group of three limestone blocks. The function of the stones was unclear, and there was no structure evident crossing the trench in plan, but they may have been structural, possibly marking the edge of a partition of some sort.

Above layers 194 and 195 the interior of the East Range appears to have been refurbished. Next to wall 9 a layer of white mortar (193) overlay 195, and was sealed by a thin layer of light brown sand (192) upon which another mortar layer 191 had been laid. These deposits, which all spread east from wall 9, may have derived from repointing the wall. Wall 9 was then rendered with white mortar, the base of the render lying upon mortar 191. Both the render and layer 191 were overlain by a bedding layer of sand 190, upon which two large flagstones were laid next to wall 9. The flagstones (183) were 0.6 m wide and 0.05 m thick. East of the flagged walkway the whole of the interior was covered by a white mortar floor 182. This overlay the succession of mortar spreads which occurred in patches across the floor, and also in places directly overlay clay 198. Layers 183 and 182 raised the floor of the East Range by 0.12 m, but the floor was later worn away in the centre of the building (see Period 8 below). The flagstones, which only occurred against wall 9, may have been equivalent to 'kerb' 818 at the south end of the building.

Period 8 – Late medieval, c 1400–1600 The East Range (Figs 2.18, 2.19 and 2.21)

Wear upon floor 182 appears to have been most severe in the centre and towards the west side of the building, resulting in a hollow. A succession of very thin make-up and mortar deposits (181–177 and 174) were laid along the west side lapping over the flagstones, but ending short of wall 9. These did not fill the hollow in the centre of the East Range, and together these layers were less than 0.1 m thick. Eventually the western half of the East Range floor was resurfaced with white mortar similar to 182 (layer 175 upon bedding mortar 176). This resurfacing did not however reach wall 9, leaving the flags of walkway 183 still partly exposed. Further thin deposits were laid partly overlapping the flagstones (173 and 172), which were finally sealed by another white mortar 171 up against wall 9. This was overlain by an occupation soil 170 which lipped up against wall 9 (Fig. 2.21).

A new flagstone kerb or walkway was then laid, this time 0.9 m wide, of flags (168) bedded upon mortar 169. This was up to 0.08 m proud of the floor, and was abutted on the east by a thin grey silt (160) overlain by a thicker clayey silt (159) that contained charcoal, mortar and rubble. Both layers extended right across the East Range, and either or both layers may have been floors laid to accompany the flagstones. Layer 159 was overlain by patches of mortar (158 and 157). On the south side of the trench the flagstones had been removed later, and a further succession of thin mortar surfaces with occupation lenses upon them survived up against wall 9 (Fig. 2.21, layers 169–163). Eventually the flags were overlain by silt 162, which is interpreted as another make-up layer for a mortar surface 161. This was of similar width to the flagged area below, and west of this another floor 156 was laid over 159 and the mortar patches upon it right across the East Range. Layer 156 was a similar layer of grey-green clayey silt with limestone rubble and charcoal and mortar flecks. It was up to 0.1 m thick and its surface in section is relatively level. It contained two sherds of late medieval bottle glass (Chapter 3, The Vessel Glass, no. 5).

The threshold of door 106/2 was repaired by 106/1, which consisted of less abraded limestone slabs laid above 106/2, and over a small localised deposit of limestone (219) which lay between the stones of the first threshold (Fig. 2.19). A loam deposit (122) overlay stones 219, sealing the first threshold and abutting pitched stones 123. The relationship between the doorway repair and the layers accumulating within the East Range was uncertain.

Inside the doorway, layer 153 was covered with layer 150 = 248, a layer of brown-grey clay loam with rubble inclusions, which was 0.08 m–0.18 m thick, and which also abutted stones 123. Layer 150 is recorded as overlying stone kerb 293 = 818, and therefore appears to have extended to the south wall of the building, where it may be the unnumbered layer shown in section (Figs 2.6 and 2.18). Three sherds of pottery, including a Brill/Boarstall sherd of 14th-century or later type, came from this layer, and sieving recovered a number of bird bones (see Chapter 4). This was the last surviving floor at the south end of the East Range.

External surfaces west of the East Range door

The stones of 106/2, the first threshold of the doorway built into the west wall of the East Range, were abutted externally by a mixed layer of gravel, ashlar fragments and occasional cobbles, layer 20 = 86 = 833, which sealed cobbled surface 22 (Fig. 2.19). Residual pottery of 12th-century date was recovered from this layer, some sherds of which had cross-joins with layer 148 = 237 (stratigraphically earlier in the sequence). These sherds probably resulted from the mixing of finds at the interface of the two layers. Layer 20 = 86 = 833 also produced a horseshoe of 12th- to 13th-century date and a pin dated to the 15th century or later.

This deposit is stratigraphically equivalent to successive layers 461 and 483, which overlay floor 462 just north of room 466 and garderobe 486 (Fig. 2.15). Layer 461 contained pottery dated to the late 14th or 15th century and a wall hook of 13thcentury or later date. Layer 483 is shown in section tailing off only 1 m north of wall 456, and not continuing west beyond 6 m from the East Range wall. West of this layer 462 is shown directly overlain by layer 460, which also overlies 483. This is not certain, however, as 483 is very similar in colour and composition to layer 460 to the west, within which there are signs of flat limestone pieces at the level of the surface of 483.

Use of the Courtyard outside the East Range

Two layers of soil accumulated in front of the doorway 106, above the level of yard surface 20 = 86 (Fig. 2.19). Layer 19 was a 0.2 m thick deposit of dark-brown sandy loam which contained pottery dated to the mid 13th century. This layer overlay the first phase threshold 106/2 and abutted the second, 106/1. Layer 19 was overlain by 107, a 0.04 m thick deposit of loam and mortar patches. Layer 107 was the bedding deposit for a layer of flat limestone (108) adjacent to door 106, and presumably the surface forming the entrance to the door. Layer 19 was also overlain by 18, the first of a series of layers in the area to the west of doorway 106 that accumulated perhaps while surface 108 was in use. Layer 18 was a 0.05 m thick deposit of limestone, gravel, tile and slate, which was in turn covered by a localised patch of grey-brown sandy loam (17). Above 17 was layer 16, a further deposit of gravel and limestone rubble. Both these deposits contained residual pottery of mid-13th-century date.

Layer 18 was probably stratigraphically equivalent to layer 10 south of the chimney stack, which abutted wall 42, and overlay yard surface 20 = 86 (Figs 2.14 and 2.18). This was a 0.2 m thick build-up of layers of roof tile, and lenses of brown sandy loam and gravel. Layer 10 contained pottery of 16thcentury date and some residual 13th-century pottery, together with a piece of body armour (brigandine) dated securely to between 1490 and 1520 (Chapter 3, The Other Small Finds: Armour and Weapons).

These deposits were further examined north of the line of wall 456 of room 466 in stanchion pit 13 dug in 1991. Here layer 10 corresponds in level to the upper part of layer 460, which is higher than the remaining part of wall 456 and overlies it. Its relationship to layer 412 is not given.

In the angle of the East Range and West Block an east-west aligned stone feature (124) was set into layer 10 and extended up to the west face of the chimney block 27 (not illustrated). The structure, perhaps a wall, comprised three courses of flat limestone with a width of 0.35 m. The feature extended for a length of 0.4 m, but its westward extent was removed by later robbing of the stonework (cut 125).

The east terrace in the later medieval period

Above the level of the upper fill of construction trench 151 was a 0.4 m thick layer of reddish-brown clay (85), which extended away to the south and north of the line of wall 94 = 130. This layer sealed the backfill of the garderobe chamber 81, the walls of the building and the dumped soil to the east 283, and is interpreted as further raising the east terrace.

Further dump layers were laid against the west face of wall 347 and over the top of wall 346. Layer 367 consisted of a 0.25 m thick deposit of densely packed limestone, and was sealed by a dump of soil and limestone (366) 0.65 m deep. Layer 366 was sealed in turn by layer 364, which was 0.14 m thick.

Two layers, 373 followed by 372 were dumped against wall 348. Layer 373 was 0.55 m thick and contained frequent limestone inclusions, and abutted wall 348. Layer 372 was 0.3 m thick, and extended over the remains of wall 348 to abut the present curtain wall.

Period 9 – the post-medieval period, 1600-c 1800 late activity east of the main buildings, use of the courtyard and the demolition of the main buildings

Summary

This period saw the continued use of the courtyard. Early in the 18th century the buildings fell into disrepair and were later robbed of their stone walls. It is possible that the East Range remained in use right up to the end, but the latest floor layers here contained no dating evidence and could be attributed to either Period 8 or 9. They have been described earlier rather than later in the text. Some activity was recorded from this period; for instance, a pit containing substantial quantities of animal bone was cut into robber trench fills of the walls at the south-east corner of the site.

Structural changes to the West Block and the Solar Tower in Period 9a

Infilling of Garderobe 486

The garderobe 486 north-west of the Solar Tower was infilled with five similar deposits which sloped from the walls downwards to the centre (Fig. 2.17). The lowest layer (487/5) was a green-brown sandy gravel which was 0.18 m thick and contained limestone fragments and roof tile. This layer was overlain by 487/4, a deposit of grey ash and charcoal with a thickness of 0.04 m, in turn sealed by 487/3, a black loam layer with ash and charcoal lenses which was 0.16 m thick. Layer 487/3 contained pottery dating from the late 13th to the 14th century. Layer 487/2(above 487/3) was a grey-brown sandy loam, 0.2 m thick, containing 16th-century pottery, and was sealed by a 0.38 m thick dark-brown silt loam (487/1) with charcoal flecks and a number of limestone roof-slates, evidence perhaps of demolition of the garderobe itself. Layer 487/1 contained a 15thcentury lace tag, four glass vessels of late medieval date, 17th-century pottery and a 17th- to 18th-century glass vase fragment (Chapter 3, The Vessel Glass, nos 1-4 and 10), and was overlain by a widespread demolition layer numbered 412 (see below).

The dating of the infilling of this garderobe is problematic: the site records suggest that the culvert arch was infilled with clay prior to the infilling, and the lowest fills in the garderobe extended into the partly filled culvert. The clay blocking of the arch was excavated, but no finds were recovered. Whether the clay blocking means that the drain leading out was abandoned and the garderobe converted into a pit that was emptied periodically, or whether the garderobe was abandoned and was simply a place to dump domestic refuse, is unclear. Whilst it seems that the latest layer 487/1 dates to period 9, the earlier layers (487/5, 487/4 and 487/3) may represent period 7 or 8 occupation deposits, as the fills were characteristic of domestic use. Pottery from these layers supports the possibility that the infilling was gradual rather than a single event during the demolition of the manor.

Demolition of Room 466 and construction of wall 802

Room 466 was infilled with a thick layer of dark sandy loam with gravel, charcoal and rubble, including stone blocks and roof-slates, numbered layer 412. This layer included pottery of 17th-century date. Walls 45, 456, 472 and 465 were all reduced to much the same level (Pl. 2.27), suggesting the deliberate demolition and levelling of the room, and wall 456 was overlain by the upper part of layer 412. The bottom of the doorway of the room was partially infilled with limestone, probably falling in during demolition of the walls, and sherds of 16th- or 17thcentury date were recovered from the doorway.

Replacement of the north wall of the West Block

Following the demolition of the walls of Room 466 and the adjoining garderobe late in Period 8 or early in Period 9, the north wall of the West Block was rebuilt. East-west wall 145 was overlain by a wider wall 802 along the same line (Figs 2.3 and 2.15). Wall 802 was constructed in a shallow trench (c 0.13 m deep) sitting upon wall 145 with an expanded footing 0.1 m wider on the north consisting of a single course of flat limestone. Wall 802 was 0.8 m wide, and survived 0.25 m high above the offset level (Pl. 2.28). The wall was constructed of roughly laid courses of limestone blocks, but the bonding material of the stones was not recorded. Wall 802 was planned as continuous with wall 473 of garderobe 486, but wall 473 was contemporary with the original wall on this line, wall 145 (see Period 5a). The north edge of 802 was built in line with that of wall 473, but (as Pls 2.21 and 2.28 show) wall 465 was demolished north of this line to below the level of the offset footing, leaving a slightly irregular edge where it was incorporated into the new wall.

The construction trench of wall 802 appears in section to cut through part of layer 412, but more destruction debris is shown above this. The drawn section appears to have conflated several phases of destruction debris, and the sequence is reconstructed as follows: the first destruction debris presumably involved the demolition of room 466 and the levelling off of the debris, possibly at a level slightly higher than the demolished wall stubs, though wall 145 was presumably still visible. Wall 802 was then built, but was subsequently robbed itself (see layer



Plate 2.28 West Block from the north, showing late wall 802.

413 below). The pottery from layer 412 is therefore mixed and cannot be used to date the demolition of the room; the 16th- or 17th-century sherds from the doorway may be a more reliable indicator of the date when the room was infilled (see also layer 10 below).

The problems with layer 412 may also affect dating of the stratigraphic sequence in the garderobe chamber, where 487/1 was stated to be overlain by 412. The only drawn section (Fig. 2.15) suggests that wall 145 was completely demolished when 802 was built, but at this point 802 was subsequently robbed. Alternatively, it is possible that 802 was bonded into the existing wall 145 further west, leaving the existing structure standing (see also Pl. 2.28). At the east end wall 802 was described as contemporary with stone platform 42 (see below).

Construction of platform 42 in the angle between the tower and East Range

Layer/yard surface 20 = 86 = 833 was cut by a shallow east-west trench 218 (not illustrated), possibly the construction trench for large stone feature 42. Feature 42, which was 4.2 m long east-west and 1.65 m wide, abutted the north face of the Solar Tower and also abutted the east wall of the East Range (as did layer 218) (Fig. 2.3). Feature 42 survived 0.6 m high above an offset 0.15 m wide at the level of layer 20 = 86 = 833 (Fig. 2.14). This offset

was only a single course deep and was abutted and overlain by layer 218.

Whether 42 continued below this offset is unclear: one section suggests that this was the bottom of the wall, but further west three courses of stonework at a lower level were seen in the south edge of a later robbing pit 132, and were labelled as 42. The relationship of this masonry to the main body of wall 42 above was not, however, demonstrated, and it is possible that this lower stonework may instead have belonged either to north-south wall 472, which lay just to the west, or conceivably to stone feature 271 (see Period 4 above). The relationship of wall 42 with wall 472 was not recorded; both shared the same western limit, but from the levels it appears that the top of wall 472 was level with the offset at the base of wall 42, suggesting that the building formed by walls 472 and 456 had already been dismantled. The records indicate that wall 42 was contemporary with wall 802, which overlay wall 145 and whose construction involved the demolition of wall 465, supporting the view that the bottom of wall 42 did lie at the offset course, at a similar level to the base of wall 802. The purpose of this rebuilding may have been to strengthen the north-west corner of the Solar Tower, or alternatively platform 42 may have been the base of an external stair up to the first floor of the Solar Tower.

The construction of structure 42 postdates layer 20 = 86 = 833, which is of 15th-century or later date,

and was abutted by layer 10, which contained finds dating to the 16th century (see below). It was, however, recorded as being contemporary with wall 802, and may therefore date even later to the early 17th century.

Possible re-flooring of the East Range

Layer 156 was overlain by another similar layer 155, a grey-green silty clay up to 0.24 m thick that sealed all underlying deposits across the width of the East Range (Fig. 2.21). Layer 155 contained 17th- to 18thcentury window glass (1 sherd), and a comb of medieval or post-medieval date. A localised deposit of ash and charcoal (154) towards the east side of building overlay 155. Like all of the clayey silt or silty clay floors below it, layer 155 rose up against one or other wall of the East Range. This is unlikely to be the result of subsidence, as the floors were fairly level across the interior, and (if not a deliberate construction technique) most likely resulted from the erosion of the clay by wear and its subsequent sweeping up against the sides of the building, where it stuck. This would explain the general lack of occupation material within the East Range sequence, since the building was kept clean.

The courtyard

The courtyard west of the East Range – period 9a

A soil horizon accumulated west of the East Range above period 8 layer 16, comprising a 0.2 m thick layer of dark-brown loam (15) with some limestone. Layer 15 contained some post-medieval pins. Above 15 was layer 14, a 0.1 m–0.18 m thick deposit of grey-brown sandy loam that included post-medieval pottery, a post-medieval pin and a piece of body armour/brigandine made between 1490 and 1520. This layer was overlain by layer 13, a possible surface of yellow gravel and mortar which also included post-medieval pottery.

Immediately west of the doorway 106, layer 15 was overlain by layer 115, a 0.1 m thick deposit of gravel (Fig. 2.19). This deposit was sealed in turn by 116, a layer of flat limestone pieces. A Nuremberg jetton coin (SF 3; Chapter 3, The Coins) dated c 1530–1650 was recovered from layer 116, which was just overlain by layer 13. Layer 105 sealed 116, filling a slight hollow in the area of the doorway. Layer 105 was the last recognisable horizon adjacent to the East Range prior to the demolition of the manor.

The demolition of the manor – Period 9c

Robbing of the well in the courtyard

Layers 483 and 10 were cut by a deep feature (132 = 489) which also removed almost all of the junction of walls 456 and 472 (Fig. 2.3). The pit lay alongside the edge of wall 42, with which it had an uncertain relationship; plans show 218, the possible construction trench for 42, apparently cutting the fills

of the pit, but this relationship is not recorded in section, though the wall does appear to overlie the southern edge of the pit. One of the drawn sections across the pit shows it cutting layer 10, which abutted wall 42 (Fig. 2.14); the other section suggests that layer 10 was contemporary with the infilling of pit 132.

The pit was oval with the long axis east-west, measured approximately 3.7 m by 2.6 m and was at least 2 m deep with vertical sides. The pit fill contained gravel and quantities of limestone rubble. The lower part of the pit cut through the stone fill of feature 271, and appeared to be centred upon this feature, possibly indicating that upstanding masonry in the middle of 271 had still been visible until this point. Feature 271 is interpreted as a well (see Period 5a).

In the top of 132 was a secondary narrower pit 87, whose infill contained roof-tile, stone debris and some pottery. The pottery was of 17th-/18th-century date, and a post-medieval pin was also recovered. Pit 87 was only 1.5 m wide and 0.9 m deep. It is uncertain whether pit 87 was a separate later feature or was the uppermost fill of pit 132, but it is interpreted as having resulted from the settling of layer 132.

Demolition of the East Range

The latest floor deposits in the East Range were overlain by thick demolition deposits. Fireplace 25 was robbed, and was overlain by layer 24, which was not clearly distinguishable from the general primary destruction layer 26 = 152 that overlay layer 150. The kerb 818 was also partly robbed out by cut 820, filled by soil 821, which was undated. This was overlain by layer 812, which corresponds both to layer 26 and to layer 8 above it (Fig. 2.19 and see below). Further north at the doorway into the East Range (feature 106) the demolition rubble 26 was contiguous with layer 117 in the courtyard to the west, which also ran across the doorway (Fig. 2.19).

Further north in Trench 10, layers 155 and 154 within the East Range were sealed by demolition rubble layer 121 (Fig. 2.21). This layer of limestone rubble, mortar fragments and sand was up to 0.9 m thick, and also apparently overlay demolished walls 9 and 88 of the East Range to the west and east. Layer 121 contained a sherd of a 16th- to 17thcentury glass wrythen beaker, and a sherd of 16th-/ 17th-century window glass (Chapter 3, The Vessel Glass, no. 6). Further south a robber trench 245 was recorded over wall 88, whose relationship to the demolition layer is not recorded. This contained a James I Royal farthing (SF 56; Chapter 3, The Coins) issued between 1614 and 1625, with a period of use up to 1644. A sherd of window glass of 16th-/17thcentury date and another of 17th-/18th-century date were also recovered. In section 18 this demolition is followed by further extensive demolition spreads, layer 120 from the east overlain by a layer of charcoal and then layer 103 = 6 from the west. Layer 103 contained a sherd of a 17th-/18th-century glass

bottle, and also a lead token of uncertain date, though possibly late medieval (SF 90; Chapter 3, The Coins). Also present in layer 103 was a postmedieval comb. These layers are presumably broadly equivalent to layer 8 overlying 26 at the south end of the building. Layer 8 contained glass of 18th- or 19th-century date, and was apparently cut by a localised robber trench 78 of wall 9, the west wall of the East Range.

Slumping within the former East Range (in Trench 10) resulted in two hollows, within which a series of deposits accumulated. In ascending order these were: 335, 336, 337, 338, 340, 339. These were mainly levelling layers of gravel and sand, though layer 338 was a gravel path. Finds from this sequence of late deposits were numbered 57, and included medieval vessel glass and window and vessel glass of 17th-/ 18th-century date.

West of the East Range wall 124, which had been built upon courtyard layer 10, was robbed (trench 125), and this was overlain by layer 6 extending from the East Range. Layer 6 was sealed in turn by rubble layer 7. The latest demolition material observed below the topsoil (layers 11 and 837) were broadly equivalent layers which extended away from the north-west corner of the Solar Tower

Demolition of the tower and walls to the east

In the south-east corner of the Solar Tower a large oval pit (54 = 114) was dug through infill layer 3 = 56 and the underlying backfill into the floor layers (Fig. 2.3; see also Pl. 2.1). The edges of the pit at the top cut away part of the south-east corner of central pier 49 and the inner face of the east wall 61. This pit contained window glass and a postmedieval pin, and the feature was probably associated with trench 59, the robbing of the south wall of the Solar Tower (wall 60). The east wall of the tower (wall 61) was robbed by trench 63, but no datable finds were recovered from either trench. East of wall 61 the buttressing wall 94 = 130 up against the Solar Tower was robbed by trench 79, but this did not produce any dating evidence.

East of the Solar Tower and East Range, and south of the chapel, there was very little evidence to indicate which walls had survived above ground into the post-medieval period, and the robbing trenches provide the best evidence available. The walls of room 446 and of room 449 abutting the Solar Tower and east garderobe block were both partially robbed, apparently at much the same time. Wall 96 = 442 (the east wall of room 446) was robbed by 95 = 246, in which a Charles I 'Richmond' farthing (SF 59; Chapter 3, The Coins), minted 1625-34, was recovered together with a Real of Ferdinand (1474-1516) and Isabella (1474-1504) of Spain (SF 57; Chapter 3, The Coins). The latter coin was probably residual. The backfill of the robbing also included pottery of types current in the 17th and 18th centuries, medieval window glass, post-medieval vessel glass and post-medieval pins. The east wall of room 449 (83) was robbed by trench 82. Layer 82/2 contained another 'Richmond' farthing of Charles I (SF 13; Chapter 3, The Coins) dated between 1625 and 1634. These farthings were in circulation up to 1644. Post-medieval vessel and window glass was present, together with post-medieval pins. The south wall of the Period 4 garderobe block, wall 66, was also partly robbed by pit 75, which contained 17th-/18th-century vessel glass.

Outside the east terrace and wall 77, the deposits that had accumulated against staircase 110 were overlain by further rubble layers. Layer 109 was overlain by 100, a layer of mixed reddish-brown sandy loam containing mortar and pottery dating from the 12th to the 14th century and vessel glass of 18th-century date. Above both layers 100 and 109 was 101, a 0.6 m thick deposit of reddish-brown sandy loam containing frequent limestone rubble inclusions and residual pottery of 12th-century date. This layer was clearly dumped, and probably derived from the demolition of the adjacent buildings. Last in the sequence was layer 286 = 283, which was a level deposit of reddish-brown sandy loam and rubble, which is interpreted as a levelling layer. Pottery from layer 283 dating to the 12th century, presumably derived from the demolished buildings.

Pit 229 (Fig. 2.3)

Evidence for the destruction of walls 346 and 347 was shown by a cut feature/robber trench (365) being dug from the level of layer 364 into the stonework. The trench had vertical sides and was 0.75 m deep to the top of wall 347. The backfill of the trench consisted of limestone rubble (365), which did not produce any dating evidence.

In the south-east corner of the site a large feature (229, filled by 371) was cut through the infill of robber trench 365 and into layer 372. This feature (interpreted as a pit) contained a substantial quantity of animal bones, particularly some 3000 horse bones, which were deposited as a result of horse knackering (see Chapter 4 and Wilson 1996). There was no pottery or other dateable finds to date this activity more precisely, though it was clearly post-medieval.

The south wall (97) of the chapel was robbed, but the date of this is slightly uncertain. The fill overlying the wall (93, and further east 476) was given the same number as the bulk infilling of the chapel to the north and of the courtyard to the south (see Period 4b above). Layer 93, however, also contained two post-medieval sherds, one of them of 19th-century date, and a sherd of 18th-century window glass, and it is possible that these come from the robbing. Layer 476 included Brill/Boarstall ware, dating to 1225 onwards. Within the chapel the stone pier or altar 807 was robbed by trench 803, but this did not contain any finds, nor did the general demolition layer 99 which overlay clay layer 93 in the area of wall 97.

The demolition of the manorial buildings appears to have been undertaken in at least two phases. This is demonstrated in places by the stratigraphy, as for instance where the robbing of part of wall 9 cut into layers that sealed the main demolition deposits within and overlying the East Range. This, however, need be only the localised robbing of upstanding short stretches of ruined wall. The presence of three coins dating to the first half of the 17th century is more significant. These coins occur in the robber trenches of the East Range wall 88 (SF 56) and in the two small rooms 446 (SF 59) and 449 (SF 13) in the angle between the East Range and Solar Tower (Chapter 3, The Coins). The dating evidence for the demolition of the East Range is consistent with a mid-17th-century date, and it may be that some limited demolition of buildings in the south-east corner of the manor was carried out during the Civil War (see also Discussion, Chapter 7).

Robbing of the West Block

The demolition deposits above the structures at the west side of the Solar Tower were varied and were observed in a number of excavated parts of 1991 trench 3. The robbing of wall 256 was observed cut through upper terrace clay layers 420 = 421. Trench 435 was 1.5 m wide and survived up to 0.4 m deep (Fig. 2.15). A deposit of reddish-brown clay and limestone 436 abutted wall 256 and infilled the trench. Unusually, at the point where the section was drawn the robber trench was dug below the surviving top of wall 256 on either side, extending 0.3 m down the sides of the wall in section. The robber trench for wall 5 (trench 431 filled by clay 432) was also seen in plan west of the surviving wall cutting clay layer 421. Trench 431 was at least 1.2 m wide, but was not excavated. The robber trench returned south at the west end of robbed wall 5, implying that walls 5 and 423 were robbed at the same time.

Where the walls had been robbed to the bottom two apparently separate cuts and fills were seen in plan, a central cut and fill corresponding to the width of the wall flanked either side by another wider cut and fill. For wall 5 these were cut 454 filled by layer 4 = 453 flanked by cut 431 filled by 432, and for wall 256 cut 422 filled by 438 flanked by cut 435 filled by 436. The outer cut and fill was interpreted on site as representing a construction trench, but Figure 2.15 shows that this interpretation is incorrect. Instead, the robber trenches are wider than the walls towards the top, with gently sloping sides, but lower down have vertical faces little wider than the walls themselves. When the robber trenches are backfilled the soil in the deeper part of the robber trench settles, and later soils slump into the resulting hollow, creating the observed effect. At the junction of robber trenches 425 and 453 = 4 (walls 423 and wall 5) it appeared that 425 cut across 453 = 4, and so was robbed later. Wall 474 = 423 was however deeper than wall 5, and this apparent relationship could alternatively also be due to differential slumping.

At the junction of walls 43 and 474 = 423 the robbing was numbered 247, and further south wall 423 was robbed by trench 424. This was apparently continuous with the robbing of a wall continuing west marked by trench 425 (and filled with layer 440). A post-medieval pin was recovered from the fill of trench 4. None of the other robber trenches produced any dating evidence except for layer 428, the number given to soil excavated at the junction of robber trenches 424 and 422 (walls 423 and 256). Here, pottery current in the 16th and 17th centuries was found. The excavators were unclear whether this was fill of the robbing or later disturbance, but it clearly postdates the use of the building.

In the West Block layer 455 was sealed by demolition deposits accumulating when the buildings were dismantled (Figs 2.7 and 2.17). Over the steps between walls 43 and 44 and covering the bottom two steps was a layer of reddish-brown sandy loam and limestone (214). Pottery of 12th-/13th-century date was recovered from 214. Within the narrow northsouth room with a possible vault formed by walls 473 and 474 was a similar layer 468, consisting of 80% limestone blocks in a matrix of yellow-brown sand, which overlay layers 455 and 469, and was also seen to cover wall 473. This deposit clearly represents the collapse or demolition of the room. Residual 12thcentury pottery was recovered from 468, probably incorporated into the original construction of the West Block; layer 469 (earlier in the sequence) had produced 14th-century material. Layer 214 (= 468) was cut by the robber trench 247 at the west end of the staircase.

North of wall 145 = 482 room 466 had been infilled by a thick deposit 412 (Fig. 2.15). This was a composite deposit, as the upper part extended outside the limit of this room and overlay the fill of robbing pits 132 and 87. Above 412 was layer 411, a 0.1 m deep layer of sandy gravel containing pottery of 16th- and 18th-century date, which was sealed in turn by layer 410 = 413, a further rubble layer which was 0.3 m thick. Pottery of 17th-century and Victorian date was recovered from this layer, together with fragments of tile, a post-medieval pocket knife and a post-medieval lace-tag. This layer was overlain at the extreme west of the excavated area by a thin soil horizon (484), which was sealed by a late patch of limestone cobbling (409) containing 18th-century pottery, and further south by 414, a patch of burnt soil probably derived from a relatively recent bonfire. Up against the Solar Tower and East Range stone feature 42 was robbed by feature 41; this is undated.

South of the Solar Tower wall 417 was robbed by trench 415 filled with soil 430. This area was disturbed by a later garden feature, but 18th-century pottery was found on top of the surviving wall, and this probably derives from the robber trench. A spread of demolition material above the backfilled robber trenches to the south-west and south of the Solar Tower was given a general context number (407), which was sealed by the present topsoil. Layer 407. contained pottery of 18th-century date, and some Roman sherds.

Period 10 – 19th century and later

The latest soil levels associated with the Mount House garden and some modern features were removed in all excavated trenches. In places these soil layers directly sealed the demolished buildings.

Wall 838 crossing the courtyard was overlain by layer 33, limestone rubble 0.3 m thick. Finds from layer 33 were issued a context reference number: these included a French type of jetton (SF 2, Chapter 3, The Coins) dating to the 15th to 17th centuries. Pottery sherds of mid-13th-century date were present, as were 17th- to18th-century sherds of vessel glass, and window glass dated to the 16th to 18th centuries. This may largely have been a destruction layer of Period 9b, but modern window glass was also recovered from 33/40. A thick recent topsoil layer (836) overlay 33, and was in turn covered by 837, a layer of mortar and general demolition material. Layer 837 was covered by the topsoil (1). Neither 836 nor 837 were originally recorded.

Topsoil (1) was removed across all excavated areas including two trial holes against the east wall of the present curtain wall, where late garden soils (400, 401, 402, and 403) were partly removed. Pottery of 19th-century date was recovered from all of the modern layers. An earth bank at the west side of the site was removed prior to excavation. Context 200 was issued as a finds reference number for all the worked stone, and a contractors' test pit was also issued with a context number (216), but was not otherwise recorded.

Modern soils and services at the east side of the site

These were found just below the topsoil and were allocated context numbers, and are briefly described below. Layer 64 = 92 overlay the infilling of robber trenches 63, 75, 79, 82, and 95. Window glass of 17th-/18th-century date and vessel glass of 18th-/ 19th-century date were found in layer 64 = 92 together with modern glass. The infill of robber trench 803 was cut by a live service cable (808). In the extreme south-east corner of the site soil layers 362 and 370 overlay the fill of the post-medieval animal bone pit 229. A modern garden path (368 over make-up layer 369) extended north-south in this area of the site.

Structural remains north of the East Range and east of the Mount House

In 1988, a watching brief was maintained east of the Mount House (Trench XIII) during test pitting work carried out by contractors. Six small trenches were excavated in the yard south-east of the Mount House and these were issued letter codes A-F under a group Trench number of XIII (Fig. 2.1). Trench A adjacent to the Mount House east wall showed the construction trench for the wall, and trenches D and E produced make up layers for the tarmac surface. In trenches B and C a layer of yellow gravel and mortar

was present to a depth of 0.6 m-0.9 m and perhaps represented the remains of a demolished/robbed structure or wall. Trench F was longer, running east from the Mount House north of trenches A-E. Two possible walls were observed in Trench F: wall 951 was aligned east-west with a mortared north face, and seemed to return to the north as wall 952. Neither feature was however fully uncovered or bottomed within the limits of Trench F. A layer of grey clay lay between and abutted the structures. The clay was 0.1 m–0.2 m thick, and appeared to overlie a layer of stones. No finds were recovered from these trenches, and all of the structures and layers observed lay immediately beneath the makeup for the tarmac surface. The date of the structures is unknown.

MOUNT HOUSE: THE NORTH-WEST AREA

General excavation strategy

The area was first trial-trenched by machine; Trenches 4 and 7 were dug in the form of a T, and north-east of these Trench 5 was dug where the ground sloped down towards the north (Fig. 2.1). Trenches 4 and 7 showed that there were buildings on the north and west, with courtyard surfaces south and east of these. In Trench 5 there was a thick deposit of destruction material, but no buildings, and below this a series of layers sloping downwards into a large deep feature, which was thought to be a moat. A wide wall running east-west at the north end of Trench 7 was therefore seen as the curtain wall of the manor on the north, and the walls to the south of this as belonging to the North Range and gatehouse (Fig. 2.23).

Excavation was designed to examine those areas that would be destroyed by new housing. The area available was limited by the driveway and services on the north and east and by trees to the south, and further constraints were imposed by the need for spoil heap areas and access around the trenches. Ŵithin these parameters the intention was to examine the courtyard, the North Range, the curtain wall and the moat. This was carried out by open-area excavation of the curtain wall, the North Range and the adjacent courtyard to the south, but the moat was only trenched, and a full profile across this could not be obtained (Fig. 2.23). At a late stage in the 1984 excavation it proved possible to extend westwards in order to find the west wall of the range and the return of the curtain wall. This area however proved complicated and was not completely excavated.

Tim Allen supervised the excavation of the open area, assisted by John Moore. John Moore also supervised the excavation of the trench across the moat. At the end of the 1984 season this area was covered with polythene and the surviving walls and floors were protected with sandbags pending a decision on the future of the site. In 1989 it was decided to rebury this area, but prior to this limited further excavation was carried out under the supervision of Mark Roberts in the hope of solving some of the outstanding problems. In particular, this completed the excavation of the North Range to undisturbed natural.

The scope of the excavations in the north-west area

Topsoil, destruction debris over the moat and a thick post-medieval garden soil (layer 502) were removed by machine. The majority of the curtain wall had been robbed out, and the robber trench was also emptied by machine. South of this robber trench towards the east edge of the excavation another area of thick destruction material was found, which filled the interior of a room within the North Range. This was machined down almost to floor level inside the range (Fig. 2.41), and in the process may have removed a little of the internal stratigraphy.

Once the robber trenches of the North Range had been recognised, this building was excavated in quadrants, running sections being drawn both north-south (Fig. 2.25) and east-west (Fig. 2.31). A north-south baulk was left in place until the main mortar floor of the building (context 602) had been exposed, so that the overlying deposits were excavated in two halves. In 1984 this floor was not removed, and investigation of the underlying deposits was limited to a strip along the north edge, where the floor had been destroyed in the medieval period. A small area in the north-west corner of the range was not excavated due to the limited time available.

In 1989 the remaining stratigraphy in the northwest corner was excavated. The mortar floor of the North Range (602) was completely removed, as were most of the underlying floor and construction deposits, though the underlying features were only partly exposed and excavated. Sadly, the 1984 running sections were not re-established, and no sections across the building were drawn of the deposits removed at this time. Only the west wall and a little of the interior of the gatehouse lay within the 1984 trench (Figs 2.23 and 2.29). The 1989 excavation was planned to include a further trench within the gatehouse, but the landowner would not give permission for this, though the eastern baulk of the main excavation was cut back to expose the full length of the west wall found in 1984.

At the north-west corner of the manor a concentration of walls was uncovered in 1984, which proved to overlie a deep stone-filled feature. Due to the shortage of time no walls were removed, and investigation of this area was therefore very limited. In 1989 the south edge of the earlier excavation was cut back to expose more of these walls, confirming the presence of a West Range, and limited further excavation was undertaken in a garderobe pit (Fig. 2.39). Further clearing was carried out immediately outside the north-west corner of the curtain wall, but this only exposed post-medieval deposits.

Period 3 – Early medieval, c 1100–1140

Boundary ditch 588 on the north-west (Fig. 2.23)

Cut into the natural clay and running east-west across the north-west excavation area was ditch 588. The ditch was 1 m deep and had sloping sides and a flat bottom; the north edge was cut away by the later moat (see Fig. 2.25, Pl. 2.29 and Period 4 below), but the original width is estimated as 2.4 m. The primary fill of the ditch was a sterile blue-grey clay. Ditch 588 terminated on the east within the excavation, presumably where there was an entrance into the enclosure. This ditch is dated to this period on stratigraphic grounds (see below for the date of the moat).

₹_A

ź

いたいかっている

.

Verning 2

3

2,

;

÷

Period 4b - 1160-1180

Digging the moat (Fig. 2.24)

The early medieval buildings were surrounded by a moat that was investigated by limited trenching on the north, east and south-east sides of the site. On the north the existing access road and a tree made it impossible to dig a trench right across the moat; instead two trenches were dug, one an extension to the north-west area north of the curtain wall, the other a narrower trench further east on the north side of the modern access road (Fig. 2.1). The extension of the north-west area was the only trench to reach the bottom of the moat, which at this point was a rock-cut ditch 2.6 m deep from the surface of the natural clay, with a flat bottom and sides which sloped steeply at the bottom, but more gently towards the top (Pls 2.29 and 2.30). The south side of the moat was 4 m wide and the bottom at least 2.3 m wide (Fig. 2.25). The deposits within the moat were beginning to slope up to the north just beyond the limit of the fully-excavated trench, suggesting that the bottom was not much wider. Trench 5 cut obliquely across the north half of the moat, exposing the top of the north side, but was not dug to the bottom. Projecting the line of the north and south edges, the width of the ditch on the north side of the Mount House is estimated to have been approaching 10 m.

The moat lay just north of ditch 588, and cut away the north side of the ditch. Overlying the primary fill of the ditch (588/4) on the southern side was a thick layer of mixed clean clay 588/2 very similar to the undisturbed natural, suggesting deliberate infilling. This was probably dumped during the digging of the moat. The result of this infilling was to narrow the ditch, but leave the northern side open almost to the bottom. A channel 589 had been cut from the bottom of 588 through the north side into the moat, presumably to allow the ditch to drain, and this shows that the ditch and the moat were open together for some time (Fig. 2.23 and Pl. 2.30). Overlying both 588/4 and /2 on the north side of the ditch was a layer of limestone and gravel (588/3), possibly also derived from the moat digging, which



Figure 2.23 Plan of north-west area

Chapter Two



Plate 2.29 Ditch 588, moat 558 and curtain wall 574 from the west.

also included pottery of 12th- century date. Above this the ditch had been backfilled with clay containing occasional limestone, 588/1.

The bottom 1 m or so of the moat was wet, and the lowest fill 558/14 contained waterlogged material including two small oak pegs. There are no further details about these objects, which no longer survive. A sample from this layer was taken for environmental remains, and is reported upon in Chapter 4. In layer 558/13 immediately above this, ashlar blocks and large triangular dressed blocks were found (Fig. 2.25), which are interpreted as coping stones from the curtain wall pushed off the top into the moat (Durham 1984, 8). The earliest pottery from the moat, from layers 588/14 and /13, included a sherd of later 12th-century or later date (Fabric 7), and this may also date this 'slighting of the defences'. Since the stones were heavy, however, and the bottom fills of the ditch wet, it is alternatively possible that the stones fell into the ditch at a later date, and sank.

The moat in Mount Mills: 1984 Trenches I and V and 1990 Trenches 2 and 6

Trenches dug in 1984 and 1990 in the Mount Mills site east of the Mount House located the moat on the east and at the south-east corner (Fig. 2.1). Trench V dug due east of the Mount House in 1984 comprised four machine excavated slots separated by gaps of 1 m. The east edge of the ditch (51) was found 14 m from the curtain wall of the present Mount House. The east edge of the moat sloped steeply at an angle of 70 degrees, and the moat was only 1.1 m deep with a flat bottom. The lowest fill (51/4) was a yellow-brown clayey sand, in turn sealed by a deposit of olive brown silty-'alluvial' clay (51/3). Fill 51/3 was sealed by the uppermost fill of the ditch, 51/2, a thick layer of brown clay silt loam with stone inclusions. Modern topsoil 51/1 sealed 51/2. An iron socketed and barbed arrowhead was recovered from one of the moat fills, as were rooftiles of late 12th- or 13th-century date. The 'arrowhead' has not subsequently been located, and may in fact be a javelin head (SF 619; Chapter 3, Ironwork: armour and weapons and Fig. 3.15). Undiagnostic sherds of medieval pottery were also recovered from the excavated ditch. The finds were recorded as being from 51, rather than from the fill subdivisions. The fills of the moat were also found in the machine slot to the west, but this was backfilled without further investigation or recording.

Part of Trench V was re-excavated in 1990 in Trench 6, and a complete section of the moat obtained just to the south (Fig. 2.1 section). This proved to be some 5.5 m wide, and was cut through two layers of natural clay overlying the bedrock, yellowish-brown silty clay (6/3) sealed by dark-grey sticky clay (6/2). The trench did not expose the uppermost edge of the ditch either on the east or on the west, so the exact width is uncertain. The trench was excavated by



Figure 2.24 Period 4 plan.

80



Figure 2.25 Section across moat.


Plate 2.30 Moat and North Range from the north-north-west.

machine to a depth of 1.6 m exposing the limestone bedrock all along the base of the ditch. Although shallow, the size of this feature strongly suggests that it is part of the moat.

The lowest fills were all clays with varying quantities of limestone, and layer 6/5 in the middle also contained charcoal flecks. Above this on the west (or inner) side were layers 6/7 and 6/9 containing much sandy gravel, imported material possibly left over from work to the manorial buildings adjacent. Above this were further layers of clay and limestone, then a layer of sand and gravel on the outer east side, followed by a very thick layer of loamy clay and limestone 6/1 (= V/51/2), which completely infilled and levelled the feature. A single sherd of pottery of 12th-/13th-century date was recovered from the fills during machining.

Trench I was excavated within the confines of an extant shed outside the south-east corner of the Mount House curtain wall. The clay subsoil (layer 1) was cut away by the west edge of a steep-sided feature sloping down at an angle of 75 degrees. Excavation stopped at the level of the water table at a depth of 0.64 m, and the fill at this depth (2/1) contained tiles and pottery of 13th- to 14th-century date. This feature was interpreted as the edge of the medieval moat, and its line suggests that the moat was turning westwards just south of the existing boundary wall. Evaluation trenches dug further south (Fig. 2.1: 1990 Trench 1 and 1992 Trench 4) contained no trace of the moat, supporting this view.

Further evaluation trenches east of the Mount House provide negative evidence of the course of the moat. A staggered trench (Fig. 2.1: 1990 Trench 2) was dug outside the north-east corner of the site, but this trench contained no archaeological features below the post-medieval foundations, coming down onto sterile limestone bedrock. Assuming that the moat was continuous, its course must therefore lie between this and the medieval remains found in the north-east area (see Fig. 2.1 and Fig. 2.42).

The construction of the moat is not well-dated, but this was clearly a secondary feature, and on the east may have respected the chapel, dated to Period 4a. A sherd of Fabric 7 from the lowest moat fill on the north also suggests a date in Period 4, though construction may have been later.

Pre-building activity in the north-west area

South of ditch 588 and moat 558 in the north-west part of the site the natural clay was cut by a series of circular or oval soilmarks visible in the natural clay, most of which were only partly excavated (Fig. 2.26). Feature 697 measured 1.2 m east-west and perhaps 0.8 m north-south but was only 0.1 m deep, with a single fill. Similar was 702, 0.18 m deep and slightly oval in plan with a diameter of c 0.9 m. The sides were steep and the base was slightly concave. The fill of 702 consisted of light brownish-yellow sandy loam incorporating some natural clay. East of 702

Chapter Two



Figure 2.26 Early features in north-west area.

was 709, circular and flat-bottomed, which was 0.7 m in diameter but only 0.05 m deep. The fill was green-brown clay loam with charcoal flecks.

More substantial than these was pit 698, which had steep sloping sides and a flat base. This was subrectangular, measured 0.6 m by approximately 0.5 m and was 0.41 m deep. The fill (698/1) of 698 consisted of a mixture of greenish-yellow clay, mortar, charcoal and some small limestone. East of 698 was 699, the excavated part of which was 1.1 m wide and was 0.5 m deep. At the bottom was a layer of limestone, some burnt, and above this the feature was mainly filled with a light reddish-grey brown clay containing fragments of mortar. This deposit, which was numbered both 699/4 and /5, was 0.44 m deep. Above 699/4 in the section was a layer of mortar 699/2, which was cut by 699/3, a shallow U-shape in the centre of the feature, whose fill was similar to 699/4 but included gravel and mortar fragments and a vertical packing stone. This may represent the remains of the fill of a post-pipe in the unexcavated part of the feature. Fills 699/3 and 699/2 were overlain by a thin grey-brown clay 699/1 in the top.

Features 702, 709, 698, and 699 were approximately in line, but are unlikely to have shared a common function. Feature 699 may have been a large post-pit and posthole, or may have been a pit cut by a posthole; feature 698 was largely obliterated by later posthole 641. Features 709, 702 (and indeed 697) were too wide and shallow to be convincing as pits or postholes, and 697 and 709 may simply have been hollows in the natural clay. A few sherds of pottery were recovered from features 697, 699 and 709, including types introduced in the second half of the 12th century, and 699/3 contained a single sherd of Fabric 3, usually dated to the late 12th century or later. East of these features a layer of grey clay 705 was recorded, from which sherds of Fabric 3 were also recovered.

All of these features were recorded as overlain by layer 691, a patchy layer of thin small limestone in the top of the natural clay numbered variously as 691 and 543. The part numbered 691 was confined to the northern part of the excavation area, within the later walls of the North Range (see Period 5a), while 543 was the number given to spreads of stone east and south of this, where there was at least one area of more closely-set stones. In general the limestone did not appear to have been deliberately laid, and was probably the remains of stone heaps dumped on the site prior to building. Orange-brown or rusty staining occurred all over the area in association with these stony layers, the result of chemical leaching down through the soil profile. Outside the areas covered by 543 the surface of the natural clay was darkened in places by charcoal flecks, and a thin layer of fine silt and charcoal developed over the stones in places (see *Deposits south of the curtain wall* below).

The 1984 excavations did not remove the mortar floor of the North Range (Period 5); this was left to a second season of excavation in 1989. The deposits around and below this floor were not fully investigated or recorded in 1984, and this appears to have led to some confusion as to the extent and identity of layer 691 during the 1989 excavation, as it was described as having a limited extent (3 m x 0.5 m), but was planned covering a much larger area. The layer certainly included a band of burnt and scorched clay, with blackening in the east, implying burning in situ. The plans for this season do not show the full extent of all of the early layers recorded on context sheets, other drawn layers are not numbered, and numbers allocated in 1984 appear to have been reused in 1989 without clear reference to the relationships established in 1984. The plans and context records are sometimes contradictory, and the stratigraphy excavated in 1989 was not recorded in section except in very limited areas. For these reasons the stratigraphic relationships recorded in 1989 need to be treated with caution.

The plans do not show layer 691 over feature 699, and the section appears to indicate a more complex history. There is no explanation for a mortar layer (699/2) in the top of the feature prior to the building of the curtain wall and North Range, and this layer is more likely associated either with the curtain wall or with the use of the North Range (see Period 5 below). The sherd of late-12th-century or later date from 699/3, the infilling of the posthole cutting this mortar layer, is consistent with the other dating evidence for the North Range (see Period 5 below). Mortar recorded within the fill of pit 698 may also indicate that this feature belongs after the construction either of the curtain wall or the North Range (see also Period 6: posthole 641).

Layer 691 is also recorded as sealing a posthole 706, which lay 3 m south of 697, but layer 691 was described as 'difficult to distinguish from the natural in this area'. Posthole 706 appears to be part of a line of much later postholes, and is described in Period 6 (see also Deposits south of the curtain wall below and Period 6: Repairs within the North Range). Like the features sealed below it, layer 691 contained a few sherds of pottery of types current in the 12th century.

In the northern part of the excavation area a burnt spread (part of 691) was cut by feature 700, a hollow 0.9 m in diameter but only 0.05 m deep, which was filled with brown loam mixed with yellow mortar and some flat limestone (Fig. 2.26). A further shallow feature 712 was cut into the same burnt clay northeast of 700. This was at least 1.65 m east-west and 0.9 m north-south, and consisted of a flat-bottomed hollow with sloping sides less than 0.2 m deep, with a deeper posthole c 0.5 m across within it. A postpipe 0.2 m across was visible within the posthole, and the packing around the post-pipe was the same clay with charcoal flecks which filled the main body of the feature. There were no finds.

Approximately 5 m further south-east another part of 691 was cut by a small pit or posthole numbered 701, which was 0.14 m deep with a diameter of 0.4 m, near-vertical sides and a flat bottom. The fill of 701 was a loose dark-grey silt loam with 50% burnt limestone. Further south a patch of clay 661 showing in the surface of the limestone spreads may represent another shallow feature, though this probably postdates the construction of the North Range (see Period 5 below).

North of 701 four shallow features, 693, 694, 696 and an unnumbered smaller feature adjacent, were all described as sealed by or cut into 691, and as sealed by the mortar floor of the overlying North Range (see Period 5). Feature 693 contained a fragment of glazed roof-tile dating to after 1225.

All of the early features so far described (with the exception of posthole 701 and possibly feature 699) lie in areas where one or both of the mortar floors of the North Range of the late 12th and early 13th century were absent (see Fig. 2.23 and Period 6 below). Indeed the limits of many of them (694, 696, 698, 699, 700, 712 and probably 693) correspond closely to the edges of the surviving floors (Fig. 2.26). It is, therefore, possible that these 'early' features in fact represent activity later than the construction of this building, which resulted in the localised removal of its floors (see Period 6). These features were too shallow for their fills to have slumped (thus explaining their apparent presence in later phases) and in one case a later posthole that clearly cut the range floor 602 is shown overlain by floor 690 below this! One of the few features partly overlain by the floors in plan, feature 693, contained a tile fragment whose date is more appropriate to a feature cutting 602 (see Fig. 2.23).

Unequivocal evidence for activity of this period in this area is, therefore, limited to a single posthole (701), and to several large and very shallow hollows on the west (697, 709 and 702) which may be of natural origin (Fig. 2.26). There was, however, clearly widespread burning on the surface of the natural clay.

Construction of curtain wall 530 on the north

The natural clay was cut by the construction trench for a large east-west wall 530. Only 3.6 m of the wall survived. This was nearly 2 m wide and survived 0.5 m high, and was constructed of roughly-squared slabs of tabular limestone bonded with an orange sandy gravel mortar (Fig. 2.23; Pl. 2.31). West of the surviving masonry the wall had been robbed (Period 9 feature 562), but a skim of construction mortar 530/1 survived at the bottom of the robber trench, marking and filling the impressions of pitched stones preserved in the underlying natural clay. The wall



Plate 2.31 North Range and curtain wall looking west.

had clearly been constructed in a shallow foundation trench cut 0.1 m into the natural clay and filled with pitched small limestone (Fig. 2.23). The south edge of the pitched stones corresponded to the south edge of surviving wall 530, but the northern limit of the construction trench was 0.5 m south of the surviving masonry, and was only 1.5 m wide. This wall is interpreted as the curtain wall of the medieval manor.

At the east end of the excavation another wall of contemporary build, wall 531, ran south from 530. The full width of this wall was not recovered in the excavation, but 531 survived 0.6 m high and was 4.3 m long, ending in a chamfered block at the base of the wall (Pl. 2.32).

The angle between walls 530 and 531 was first located by the initial evaluation trenching, and much of the stratigraphy was machined down almost to natural clay. Consequently the description of this area is largely reliant upon the east section (Fig. 2.29), though a small area in the angle between 530 and 531 partly survived, and cutting back the section produced some dating evidence.

Wall 531 was apparently built directly upon the surface of layer 543, and a mortar spread 680, indistinguishable from the mortar bonding the lower courses of the wall, directly overlay surface 543 west of the wall. Up against the corner formed by walls 530 and 531 the natural clay was overlain by a thin layer of clean mortar (probably equivalent to 680)

sealed by a loose mortar spill. This was overlain by burnt soil, fine silty loam, charcoal and ash 535/3, an occupation deposit, which is probably equivalent to layer 685, also fine silty loam and charcoal, which overlay stones 543 a little further south.

Wall 531 lies just east of the terminus of boundary ditch 588 outside the curtain wall, and is interpreted as a flanking wall on one side of a gateway. Strengthening at the gate is also probably the reason for the additional thickness of the surviving part of the curtain wall 530 at this point (see also Period 5b: The bridge abutment at the north gate, below).

The subsequent widening of the curtain wall on the south (Period 7) and its robbing means that there are no direct stratigraphic relationships between the curtain wall and the layers to the south except at the east end of the excavation. Indirect evidence may be provided by mortar in the upper fills of feature 699 (see above), which may have derived from construction of the curtain wall. If so, the presence of a sherd of pottery dating to the second half of the 12th century in the bottom of the posthole would also provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the curtain wall. This is, however, conjecture.

At the north-west corner of the site robber trench 562, which had removed wall 530, curved south-westwards and continued south along the west side of the site, but this continuation was only traced for 2 m (Fig. 2.23). Here coursed stonework survived



Plate 2.32 Wall 531 and steps 686 looking north.

on the inner and outer edges of the wall to a height of 0.3 m, but no pitched stones were seen in the clay bottom of the robbed west curtain wall. The surviving stonework was bonded into a garderobe pit built across the line of the wall, which is believed to be a secondary addition (see Period 6 below), and nothing of the primary wall may have survived here.

Period 5a – 1175–1225

Summary (Fig. 2.27)

Up against the inside of the curtain wall on the north a long building with a high quality mortar floor and semicircular wall-fireplace was built. Outside the west end of this a large garderobe pit was dug.

Construction of the North Range

Immediately south of the curtain wall the natural clay was cut by the construction trenches of a rectangular building west of wall 531, which was built up against wall 530 (Figs 2.23 and 2.28). The walls were 0.7 m-0.75 m wide, and the building measured 15.2 m long by 4 m wide internally. The south and west walls (533 and 717) had a shallow foundation trench cut up to 0.25 m into the natural clay (see Fig. 2.25); the east wall of the building 532, which abutted the surviving curtain wall 530, was built over occupation 685 upon surface 543. The

foundations consisted of pitched limestone bonded with orange-yellow mortar. The east wall and some of the east part of the south wall survived above foundation level up to a height of 0.5 m, but the west half of the south wall 533 had been robbed almost to the bottom of the foundations (robber trench 578 = 557 = 583), as had the west wall 717 (robber trench 629) (Pl. 2.33). The construction trench of the south wall was only seen close to the west end, where it was filled with a mixture of brown clay, stones and mortar 707, and contained a single sherd of pottery of a type current in the 12th and early 13th centuries. The records of the 1989 excavation state that 707, and an adjacent posthole 706, were overlain by Period 4 layer 691, but the recorded dimensions of 691 do not correspond. It has already been noted that 691 appears to have been allocated to more than one deposit (see also below).

Midway along the south wall of the range there was a rectangular projection 606 on the south side measuring 2.2 m east-west and 1.8 m north-south and containing pitched limestone foundations. This had been heavily robbed except on the south edge (Period 8: feature 585). On the north side of the wall at this point was a projecting semicircular fireplace 576, constructed of large well-dressed segmented blocks of limestone, and this was flanked on the east side by a roll-moulding (Stone 243) surviving *in situ* at the end of the upstanding stretch of wall 533



Figure 2.27 Period 5 plan.

87

Mount House, Witney



Figure 2.28 Plan of north-west area in Period 5.

(Pl. 2.34; Fig. 3.22 No. 12). The rectangular projection 606 is interpreted as a chimney stack. West of the fireplace the wall had been robbed to below contemporary ground level.

Close to the south-east corner of the building, wall 533 was robbed down to floor level. At the corner the outer south side of the wall was faced with finely dressed ashlar blocks, an indication of the quality of the building. The westernmost surviving block projected slightly from the wall line and had a chamfered edge (Fig. 2.23). The west edge of this block, which was at right angles to the line of the wall, was in line with the edge of a large block on the inner edge of the wall, and this may have marked a doorway. The chamfered block was abutted on the south by a series of flat slabs 652 interpreted as a threshold (Pl. 2.35; Fig. 2.28 and see courtyard below).

Stony layer 691 is described as overlain by a series of mortar spreads collectively called 690 within the building. The main (and latest) deposit, 690/1, was an orange-yellow gravel mortar which is recorded as sealing features 696, 700 and 701 (but see Period 4 above and Period 6 below). The mortar spread was discontinuous, but covered an area about 11 m by 3.5 m.; it was 0.15 m thick and stony on the east, becoming progressively thinner with fewer stones towards the west. Towards the east end of the building, where the mortar was up to 0.15 m thick, several successive mortar spreads were noted within it, one of which had a very hard surface. A few sherds of pottery were recovered from mortar spread 690, including one late 12th-century sherd (Fabric 3).

The surface of the main mortar spread 690/1varied; it was hard and compact in places, crumbly in others, and was reddened by burning in others. 690 apparently abutted the south wall of the range, since the foundation trench of wall 533 was not seen through it, but is recorded as underlying the semicircular fireplace 576, so was clearly laid down during the fitting out of the building; it was, however, very reddened around wall fireplace 576 (which stood a little proud of this layer), suggesting that it remained in use as a floor. At the east end of the building 690/1 is recorded as underlying 532, the east wall of the range, but the surviving stonework strongly suggested that walls 532 and 533 were contemporary. Alternatively, it is possible that wall 531 formed the original east wall of the range, and that the original entrance to the range was between walls 533 and 531. As original evaluation Trench 7, however, had been excavated to natural just east of wall 532 leaving only isolated pockets of stratigraphy, it was not possible to tie together the stratigraphic sequence with confidence, and wall 532 ran on a line slightly south of the end of wall 531, not exactly in line with it. Whatever the truth of this, the range was soon shortened, as wall 532 was abutted by floor 602 (see Period 5b



Plate 2.33 The North Range from south-west.



Plate 2.34 Wall fireplace 576 and chimney stack 606 from north or north-east.

Mount House, Witney



Plate 2.35 *Stones* 652 *forming a threshold at the SE corner of the North Range.*

below). Along the south side at the east end layer 690 was more stony, and this may have been deliberate for the area just inside the entrance to the building.

There was intense burning and charcoal both around the semicircular fireplace and extending for 3 m east of this along the south side of the interior. Some of the stones of the north face of wall 533 up to 2 m east of the fireplace were reddened, and this may have been the result of a fire in this period, although a very similar area of later floor 602 was also burnt (see Period 5b).

In the north-east corner of the range feature 692 was found. This was described as sealed by 690/1, but is drawn cut through a mortar floor. The latter is not numbered, but may be one of the lower spreads within 690. The features is only as deep as the mortar it cuts, and may be either a worn patch or simply a gap in the spread.

Towards the east end of the building there were a number of stakeholes (not illustrated) driven into 690. These were largely confined in a band 0.4 m–0.7 m south of the curtain wall, and to a lesser extent alongside wall 532. In the 0.4 m closest to the curtain wall the stratigraphy had been removed by the later widening of the curtain wall (see Period 7 below), but a series of shallow marks were seen in the natural clay beneath this just north of the stakeholes in 690, which may represent further stakeholes. These marks were not observed west of the limit of the recorded

stakeholes in layer 690. No clear pattern was evident in the stakeholes, but they perhaps suggest cupboards or screens along the walls.

Floor 690 ran out before the west end of the building, although thin patches of gravel in the surface of layer 691 probably represent a continuation of this deposit. West of this surface 691 was overlain by a clay layer 662 adjacent to the curtain wall, and this was apparently partly overlain by a spread of gravel 688, which extended west in a narrow band almost to the west end of the building (Fig. 2.28). One later 12th-century sherd came from gravel 688. The context records appear to indicate two successive pebble gravel floors here (691 and 688) separated by 662, and since floor 690 varied in composition further east, layer 688 may have been another part of the original floor of the building.

Projecting south-west from the south-west corner of the range was wall 517, whose foundations were continuous with those of walls 717 and 533 of the range (Figs 2.23 and 2.30). This wall was removed only 0.4 m from the range by a later wall 518 (see period 6a below), and it is not clear whether it was a corner buttress or part of a longer wall.

The area between the North Range and the Gatehouse

The construction of the North Range created a long narrow area 4.7 m long but only 1.5 m wide between

parallel walls 531 and 532. On the east side of wall 532 occupation layer 685 was sealed by a succession of mortar layers 684, 683 and 682 (see Fig. 2.29). All of these were thickest adjacent to the wall, and may have been construction spills from it. Alternatively this area may originally have been within the North Range, so that 684 to 682 corresponded to the successive mortar layers within 690 (see above). No certain correlation can, however, be established. These mortar deposits were sealed by a yellow mortar 549 that extended right across the area between walls 531 and 532. This was in turn overlain by another cream mortar layer 548, which was level and probably formed a floor. No finds were recovered from these deposits.

The use of this area is uncertain. It might have been roofed and used as a storeroom, though the gatehouse wall 531 and the range wall 533 were of slightly different lengths, and no sign of a door jamb or threshold was seen. Alternatively it may have been a stairwell for a wooden stair giving access to the first floor of the North Range; no other stair was identified in this period, and this was certainly the function of this area at a later date (see Period 6 below).

The north-west corner of the manor, west of the North Range

Just west of wall 717 the natural clay was cut away by a large feature 720, whose east side sloped down steeply parallel to the line of the wall (Figs 2.37 and 2.38). Only a small part of this feature was investigated, so its extent is unknown, but it is confined north-east of wall 517, which projected south-west from the range, and south and east of the curtain wall, which bottomed upon undisturbed natural clay (Fig. 2.23). On the south-west the approximate limit may be indicated by the slumping of later wall 520 (see Period 7: The West Range and Pl. 2.40 below), giving probable dimensions of 4.5 m east-west by 3 m north-south. The feature was only excavated to a depth of 0.8 m, but the steeply sloping east side suggests that it was considerably deeper than this, and all the deposits within it sloped down to the west (Fig. 2.37). This is interpreted as a large garderobe pit attached to the North Range, bounded by wall 517 on the south-east side.

The courtyard on the north-west

Immediately south of the building and overlying 543 a cream mortar layer 671 ran parallel to the line of wall 533, and contiguous was a compact orange sandy mortar 534. These were probably construction spreads from the building of the range, and were overlain by a layer of small thin limestone in an intermittent matrix of orange sandy loam, layer 545, which covered most of the excavation area (Fig. 2.30). This was the first external courtyard surface. In some places a very thin layer of soil had accumulated over the earlier stone spreads 543, etc. before 545 was laid (see The room next to the gatehouse above, 685 and 535/3), indicating some lapse of time between the construction of the curtain wall and the North Range.

The construction trench of wall 533 and of chimney 606 was overlain in the angle between 606 and the surviving length of wall 533 by a gravelly mortar 657 and by another mortar layer 645. This latter mortar is probably the same as 538 seen in Trench 7. 538 included within it a roll-moulding, which must have been reused from a building elsewhere. Another patch of gravelly mortar, layer 670, infilled a small circular hollow. Mortar 645 was overlain by a layer of stones 649 up against the chimney stack. These layers are interpreted as construction debris from the range. Pottery from these levels was scarce, but all was of types introduced in the 12th century.

Against the south-east (courtyard) side, wall 517 was abutted by loose pinkish-orange mortar 528, which is interpreted as construction debris (Fig. 2.30). This was overlain by 523, a compact pile of stones that tailed off a couple of metres from 517, overlying a thin orange sand, part of layer 545. These layers were overlain by a thick grey clay layer numbered 544 on the east and 555 on the west. This covered the whole courtyard area except close to 533 on the east. In the surface of 544 was a thin patch of clay 551.

A group of large flat stones 652 was laid over construction layer 538 just outside the south-east corner of the range (see Pl. 2.35). The stones making up 652 included a threshold slab proper, and part of a voussoir with roll-moulding, stone 446. This is unlikely to have come from the range; similar fragments were found in the area of the Solar Tower (Chapter 3, The Worked Stone) and 446 probably also derived from there. These stones probably formed the threshold of a doorway. Contiguous with the threshold was an extensive white mortar layer 512, which overlay clay 544 and ran all along the south side of the range, and extended southwards right across the courtyard on the east (Figs 2.29, 2.30 and 2.36). This contained 12th-century pottery. Away from the wall it became stonier and more lumpy, and on the east was patched with stones 644. 512 was generally thick with a level hard surface, and overlay the foundations of the south wall of the range 533. To the west layer 512 faded out, and was represented by intermittent patches of hard mortar interspersed with a mixture of limestone and mortar, numbered 541. This overlay clay layers 544 and 551. 512 faded out before the east end of trial trench 4, but at the same level was a band of worn flat stones 529 running north-south across the trench (Fig. 2.30). It slightly overlapped the edge of 512, but was clearly intended to be part of a contemporary courtyard surface. Stones 529 lay directly south of the proposed gatehouse, and the wear upon the stones may indicate that this was the edge of the main route across the courtyard (see also Period 5b, The North Gatehouse, below).





92



Figure 2.30 East-west section through courtyard.

Chapter Two

93

Period 5b – Early 13th century

Summary (Figs 2.27 and 2.28)

In the North Range the floor was replaced, and subsequently a partition wall was built across the east end of the range, creating a separate room at this end.

Reflooring of the North Range

The first floor 690 was directly overlain by a thicker mortar floor 602 (Figs 2.28 and 2.31), which also overlay the edge of layer 688 on the west, strengthening the possibility that 690 and 688 were parts of a single floor. 602 was a flat, solid mortar floor, generally pink due to intense burning upon it, in which much pottery of late-12th- or early-13thcentury date was incorporated. It was continuous over almost the whole of the east end of the range (Pl. 2.36), abutting walls 532 and 533 and fireplace 576, which stood several centimetres proud of the floor surface (Pl. 2.34). All the stones of this hearth were burnt red from intense use and were beginning to crumble, and on the floor around the hearth, was a thin skin of charcoal. Charcoal with some dark silty loam was also the fill of a scatter of stakeholes, numbered 623a, b, c etc., in the north-eastern part of the floor (Fig. 2.28). This group of stakeholes in part covered the same area as those in layer 690 below, but extended as much as 1.2 m from the walls, and was not concentrated parallel to them, so may not have performed the same function.

West of wall fireplace 576 floor 602 was missing in places and damaged in others, and did not survive as far south as the line of the wall. On the north it was also missing or damaged close to the curtain wall except towards the east end; tongues of surviving floor protruded northwards, indicating that the floor was originally more extensive, and that its surviving condition was probably due to subsequent damage. No relationship with the curtain wall survived because of the later robbing of this wall (see Period 9 below). In the 1984 excavation layer 677 was exposed where floor 602 was absent (Fig. 2.23), and was recorded as underlying the floor. Layer 677 appears, however, to have been confined to the north edge of the building, and was not further recorded in 1989 when floor 602 was removed, 602 directly overlying floor 690 or burnt clay 691 beneath that. This relationship is therefore uncertain (see also Period 6a below). On the west 602 also ended some 3.5 m short of the end of the range, probably again due to later destruction, as the original floor 690 (= 688) continued further in patches.

The creation of an east room within the North Range

Built upon floor 602 towards the east end of the range was north-south wall 601 (Fig. 2.23; see also Pl. 2.30). Towards the north end the wall overlay a patch of charcoal upon 602, showing that the floor

had been in use before 601 was built. The wall was just over 0.4 m wide and survived 2.9 m long, but was truncated at the north end by later robbing of the curtain wall (Period 9), and at the south end 601 ended raggedly, suggesting that it had been cut away (see Period 6 below). Only two courses of the wall survived (Fig. 2.31). Wall 601 created a room just under 3.2 m by 3.8 m. The gap between the surviving wall 601 and the south wall of the range 533 was 0.75 m, and it is therefore possible that access was maintained between the main room and this east room (see also Period 6 below).

The possible stairwell next to the north gatehouse

Cut through floors 548 and 549 between walls 532 and 531 was a posthole 681, filled with loose gravelly loam and mortar (Fig. 2.29). This was partly overlain by another cream mortar floor 547, which did not extend up to either wall, and was clearly a partial resurfacing of 548. 547 had charcoal upon it in places, and this was sealed by a thin layer of clay and charcoal 550, patchy with areas of gravelly loam. This also appears to have been a deliberate surface of sorts. Layer 550 was cut in the angle between 530 and 532 by a shallow feature 542, bottoming on 549 and filled with stones, gravelly loam, clay lumps and charcoal, the last derived from layer 550. Dating evidence for this sequence is slight, but both 542 and 550 contained pottery of the late 12th or early 13th century, and feature 542 a 12th- or 13th-century horseshoe.

In the angle between walls 530 and 531 occupation deposit 535/3 (= 685) was sealed by another layer of loose mortar 535/2, which was in turn overlain by a sub-rectangular burnt clay patch 535/1. These layers, which included a few sherds of 12th-century pottery, were stratigraphically isolated from the sequence further south, but 535/2 may correspond to one of mortar floors 549–7, and clay patch 535/1 to clay floor 550.

The deposits of this phase can be interpreted as supporting either of the interpretations offered in Period 5a, a storeroom or a stairwell. If it was a storeroom then internal posts would have inhibited movement, though this could have been part of a bench or cupboard. If a stairwell, the postholes could have held posts supporting the wooden stair, but the stair must have been dismantled and replaced several times during Period 5 to explain the successive re-floorings. In either case, this area is likely to have been roofed because of the use of clay or mortar for the floors.

The courtyard south of the North Range

On the west 512 was cut by a broad shallow gully 539 (Figs 2.28 and 2.36). Gully 539 ran south-west from threshold 652, past the chimney-stack 606 and then turned westwards, where it divided, gully 632 running off from 539 in a southerly direction (Pls 2.32 and 2.35). This was most likely for draining off



Figure 2.31 East-west section through North Range.

95



Plate 2.36 North Range and walls in the north-west corner from south-west.

surface water. The gully was filled with a succession of layers of grey loamy clay and stones, 539/2-/4, which contained pottery including types first introduced in the late 12th or early 13th century (Fabric 25).

In trial trench 7 mortar 512 was cut by a posthole; there were other postholes, 556 just south of gully 539 and 633 just north of it, but these did not form a recognisable structure or pattern. 556 contained pottery of a type first introduced in the later 12th century.

The bridge abutment at the north gate

Abutting the curtain wall 530 and running north from it was wall 575, which was 1 m wide and survived c 3.2 m long (Fig. 2.23). This was constructed of thin flat limestone and pinkish-orange mortar and had pitched-stone foundations that bottomed upon natural clay. Its foundations deepened as it approached the moat, at whose edge it stopped at a ragged face. Up against the foundations on the west was a layer of orange-brown loam clay, 674; this lay directly upon natural clay, and appeared to dip northwards into the moat. This implies that the wall was either contemporary with the moat or was built during its use. The outline of 588 was visible through this layer, but this terminal of 588 was not excavated, so it is possible that 674 continued across 588 but had slumped, or had accumulated on the old ground surface around the open ditch.

Wall 575 is interpreted as one side of a bridge abutment linked to the crossing of the moat. The ragged face of the wall end on the north probably indicates that the end of the 575 fell into the moat (which was not excavated north of this wall) at a much later date. The construction of the bridge abutment is not well-dated. It was clearly secondary to the construction of the curtain wall and gatehouse, but predated the thickening of the curtain in the 14th century (see Period 7 below).

The north gatehouse

East of 575 the lowest deposit exposed was a cobbled surface 628 with a narrow stone-lined slot between it and 530; abutting 575 this surface was more stony and less compact (Figs 2.23 and 2.29). This is interpreted as a cobbled gateway, and the slot may have been to take a portcullis, although there was no corresponding groove in the face of wall 575 adjacent.

Period 6 – 13th-century developments 1225–1300

Summary (Figs 2.32 and 2.33)

The upper floor of the North Range began to collapse, and was shored up west of the partition with timbers in postholes. This repair did not last, and the upper floor was dispensed with, open hearths being constructed within the building. Part of the garderobe pit west of the North



Figure 2.32 Period 6 plan.

97

Chapter Two



Figure 2.33 Plan of North Range in Period 6.

Range was infilled, and the West Range constructed over its south edge, possibly as a replacement for the North Range. Probably at this time a stair to the wall-walk was built adjacent to the north gatehouse. In the courtyard to the south turf developed over part of the area. At some point the coping stones on top of the wall-walk were thrown down into the moat.

Later in the 13th century the North Range fell into disuse and was used for dumping, except for the room at the east end. A porch or stair was added to the north end of the West Range, and the West Range had a small garderobe chamber added at its north-west corner, built within the width of the curtain wall. The moat was partly cleaned out, and the grass in the courtyard was replaced with a stone yard surface.

Repairs within the North Range and the east room in Period 6 a, the early 13th century

Whether wall 601 originally ran right to wall 533, creating a completely separate room, or whether there was a doorway between 601 and 533 is unclear. In the gap at the south end of 601, however, and slightly offset from it, was a short length of stonework 612, of similar width and construction to 601 (Fig. 2.23). It was in a slight hollow cut (or worn) into 602, abutted the range wall 533 and ended on the north just short of wall 601. Only one course of stonework survived (Fig. 2.34). It is possible that 612 was a stone threshold

inserted into the hollow worn at the entrance between 601 and 533. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that when the floor of the east room was partially replaced, the mortar layer ran up to and overlay the east side of 612, but did not extend further west, as if stopping at a door (see Period 6b below). It is also possible, however, that 612 was a temporary blocking wall related to the repairs and alterations described below, which was subsequently removed.

Floor 602 was missing at the west end of the range, and also along much of the north and south sides west of wall 601. This seems likely to have been the result of damage or destruction during the life of the building, resulting in the exposure of layers 688 on the west and possibly 677 on the north. It has been suggested above that the destruction of the floor resulted from the digging of a number of large shallow features through it (see Period 4 and Fig. 2.26). These features include 712, which had a group of limestone slates laid flat on the top of the feature, and was overlain by a layer of mortar 675 extending north as far as the edge of the foundation trench of the curtain wall containing pitched stone impressions (Fig. 2.38). A sherd of Brill/Boarstall ware was recovered from 675, supporting their interpretation as later disturbances. Layer 675 was overlain by a layer of clay loam and mortar patches 677, which extended beyond the limits of the feature and abutted floor 602 along most of the north side of



Figure 2.34 Section of threshold 612 and mortar floor 611).

the building, so that these features were not visible at the surface of 602.

Cut into floor 602 along the south side of the range was a line of postholes: 634, 636, 637, 638 and 647. A line of similar postholes ran along the north side of the interior of the range, nos 641, 642, 668, 669 and 672 (Fig. 2.33; Pls 2.36 and 2.33). Posthole 706 probably also belongs to the southern line (see below). All of the postholes along the north side were partly cut away by the robbing of the curtain wall (Period 9: robber trench 562). None of the northern postholes had a direct relationship with floor 602, but 641 ran close to the edge of the surviving floor. Posthole 669, however, cut layer 675, from which pottery postdating 1225 was recovered, and the manner of infilling of the postholes on both north and south was so similar that there is little doubt that both lines were infilled (and probably dug) at the same time. This also indicates that the destruction of the floor occurred before the digging of the posthole lines.

The relationship of the northern postholes to layer 677 which overlay mortar 675 is equivocal. Postholes 668 and 669 did not apparently show through this layer, though posthole 641 was planned as if it did, and there is a shadow around 668 within 677, which may indicate that a cut was missed. The western postholes 642 and 672 cut layer 662, while on the south 706 probably cut 691 and was infilled by layer 667 (see below).

The larger postholes, 636-8, 641-2 and 668-9, were filled with clay and limestone slabs set on end (Fig. 2.35 and Pl. 2.37). There were no post-pipes, the slabs ran right across the postholes and had been hammered down into the natural clay until they were flush with the surface of 602. In 636 this deliberate backfilling was overlain by charcoal 640 raked out from hearth 576, and postholes 647 and 634 were overlain by thin skims of cream gravelly mortar, showing that an attempt was made to reinstate a mortar floor overall, and that hearth 576 was in use at this time. Posthole 706 had a diameter of 0.35 m and was 0.4 m deep, and was filled with clay containing pea-grit and fragments of mortar, but there were no limestone slabs. Posthole 706 is, however, in line with the other large postholes along the south side of the North Range, and is of similar dimensions, so may have been associated (but see also Period 4 Pre-building Activity above).

The lines of postholes continued to within 1.5 m of wall 717. On the east there were no postholes beyond wall 601, a strong indication that this wall was already in existence. The centre of the northern line of postholes lay only 0.4 m from the edge of the curtain wall trench, though the line of the wall itself may have been further away. The southern line lay between 0.5 m and 0.6 m from wall 533. The two lines of postholes were staggered, not opposite one another; the larger postholes, usually sub-rectangular, were generally 2.1 m-2.3 m apart, but there were others closer together than this. One possibility is that the intense and widespread burning upon 602 and the bottom courses of wall 533 east of the fireplace indicates that the range caught fire at some stage, and these postholes could then represent internal scaffolding for repairs. Another possibility is benches along both long sides of the building. More plausible, however, is the suggestion that the lines of posts supported east-west timbers holding up an upper floor whose joists had rotted at the ends (I am grateful to J Munby for this suggestion).

Also cut into 602 were 648 and 663, two groups of stakeholes within shallow circular depressions in 602 which lay opposite one another on the south and north sides of the range respectively (Fig. 2.33). 648 cut burning on top of floor 602; the fill of 663 included pottery of early-13th-century date rammed into the holes, and was sealed by cream gravelly mortar 625. A tentative link with the lines of larger posthole is suggested by the cream mortar used to cover over both types of feature, and they may have had a common use. Adjacent to feature 663 and just west of posthole 668 was a small posthole 676, the northern half of which had been cut away by the robbing of the curtain wall 562 (see Period 9). The posthole was only 0.12 m deep, and had been packed with limestone. The posthole was visible in the surface of layer 677, and may, therefore, have been later than adjacent posthole 668, though its relationship to stakeholes 663 is uncertain, and these features may have been associated.



Figure 2.35 Section of postholes in North Range.

Adjacent to postholes 637, 638 and 668 respectively were shallow features 665, 666 and 676. Feature 665 was only as deep as the mortar floor 602, and was probably a clay and limestone patching of a damaged area of floor. Feature 676 was also only as deep as floor 602, and its relationship with 668 adjacent is not recorded. Feature 666 was deeper, filled with loam and limestone, but its fill was not packed like that of the posthole lines. None of these features contained any finds.

Four further shallow features, 693 and 694 adjacent to one another in the centre of the range, 696 and an unnumbered smaller feature adjacent towards the east end, were visible as gaps in floor 602, but were recorded in 1989 as sealed by earlier layers 691 or 690. These features were respectively

0.6 m by 0.5 m, 0.65 m by 0.75 m, 0.4 m by 0.36 m and 0.24 m by 0.22 m across. These features were sectioned after the removal of floors 602 and 690, and were all cut only 0.05 m into the clay beneath. Since they were too shallow to have caused the mortar floors to slump, and since (contrary to the context records) some appear on plan as visible in layer 690, it appears likely that these features were in fact cut through floor 602. A fragment of greenglazed roof-tile dating from the second quarter of the 13th century or later was recovered from the fill of 693, supporting this suggestion.

In the south-west corner of the building, surface 691 was overlain by 667, a clay layer with some gravel, which also overlay the construction trench 707 for the south wall of the range and posthole 706



Plate 2.37 Posthole 638 packed with stones, from north.

(Fig. 2.23). This was covered with numerous burnt patches representing temporary fires. Two sherds of Brill/Boarstall pottery were recovered from layer 667, indicating a date in the mid 13th century or later for this layer, and it appears likely that layer 667 was laid down after the destruction and removal of floor 602 at the west end of the building. Layer 667 was very similar to layer 677 north of the surviving floor, which also had burning upon it, and the dating evidence strongly suggests that they may have been laid down as part of a single levelling operation. A thin layer of charcoal 640/2 extended from the surface of 602 onto 667, showing that these deposits were at some stage contemporary.

Overlying 667 and 640/2 a circular hearth 664 made of large limestone blocks had been laid unevenly in a wide saucer-shaped hollow. All of the limestone blocks were burnt. Half of this feature was removed before it had been planned, hence the incomplete drawing (Fig. 2.33). Extending a little further west from floor 602, and overlying its edge, was a creamyyellow mortar 625, which overlay 640/2 and partly overlay hearth 664. This contained pottery of late-12th- or early-13th-century date. The edges of 625 next to 664 were burnt pink, showing that the hearth was still used, despite being partly covered by mortar 625. This mortar layer was very similar to that sealing the top of postholes 634, 647 and 648, and stakeholes 648, and it is believed that all of these belong to one refurbishment of the range floor.

At the west end of the building, mortar 625 was later partly resurfaced as a very thin layer of clayey occupation material on the surface of the cream mortar floor and was covered with a brighter more yellow mortar. Contiguous with 625 on the west was 631, a layer of bright yellow clay lumps incorporating 12th-century sherds (Fig. 2.33). This overlapped dark clay layers 662 and 667 to the north and south, and apparently formed a contemporary surface with them.

Sitting in a slight depression in the middle of 602 was a circular hearth of limestone 635, whose surface stood slightly proud of the floor (Figs 2.23, 2.31 and 2.33). This open hearth had a thin skin of charcoal over it, and the stones and the floor around it were burnt pink. Either side of this hearth, and between 0.2 m and 0.6 m from it on the east and west respectively were postholes 643 and 639, which may have held timbers supporting a spit over the hearth. These were cut into floor 602. This open hearth can only have come into use after the first floor (which it has been suggested had been propped up with posts 634 etc.) was demolished, probably in the mid 13th century.

The courtyard outside the North Range in Period 6a, the early 13th century

The fills of gully 539 were overlain by a stony layer 527 in a matrix of fine silty loam with a slightly greasy organic feel, suggesting a turf layer (Fig. 2.30). Along the top of the gully the limestones were closer-set. Surrounding 527 was a similar soil but with less

stones, 539/1, part of which was numbered 615. Both of these stone surfaces contained a wide variety of pottery including Brill/Boarstall ware dating to the mid 13th century. Layer 527 and layer 529 east of it were partly overlain by 620, a stone yard surface, adjacent to an orange mortar spread (numbered both 526 and 619). Part of 529 remained exposed east of 620 and was later overlain by layer 607 (see Period 6b below). Other patches of orange mortar numbered 540, which overlay layer 541, were probably also part of 619 (= 620). Layer 620 contained pottery of mid-13th-century date. This stone surface had one or two slight hollows in it filled with loam, but none were convincing features.

Layer 620 was overlain by a thin layer of greasy loam suggesting a decayed turf line. Overlying this and layer 620 were loam layers 618 and 617, the latter mixed with pebbles. Layer 617 also contained late-12th- or 13th-century sherds. Layer 618 lay west of 617, and was covered by 614, part of an extensive soil layer labelled 507 overall (Figs 2.30 and 2.36). Layer 507 was a fine silty loam with a slightly greasy organic feel, suggesting a decayed turf line. The turfy soil was a thick deposit. The western part of this was dug as one, but further east mortar spreads 613 and 616 and gravel patches within it enabled several successive accumulations to be distinguished. Adjacent to the chimney on the east the lowest deposit of this turf-like soil is called 615, and this was overlain by a mortar spread 616, which was sealed by further turf-like soil 614 below 507 itself. Excavation suggested that not all of the yard developed a turf covering at the same time, and that mortar 616 within 507 may have been contemporary with layer 617.

Further west brown turf-like soil 507/3 was overlain by another small area of mortar 613, and this was covered by a charcoal spread 507/2, probably the site of a temporary fire against the chimney stack. The charcoal was overlain by further turf-like soil numbered simply 507. At the west end layer 507 abutted and was intermingled with 522, a pile of stones against wall 517, which continued south-west from the corner of the range (Fig. 2.30). Stones 522 were presumably tumble. Layer 507 did not extend up to the south wall of the range except next to the chimney stack 606, mortar 512 showing through from beneath here (Fig. 2.33). Along the east edge of 507 was another patchy mortar spread 511. This hardly touched 507, but appeared to overlie it. A considerable quantity of pottery was recovered from the various deposits making up the turf layer, which included both late-12th-/13th-century wares and Brill/Boarstall wares of mid- to late-13thcentury date.

The infilling of the north-west garderobe pit and the construction of the West Range (Period 6a, the early 13th century)

Within the large garderobe pit west of the North Range neither the bottom nor the fills relating to its use were reached. The earliest fill investigated was



Figure 2.36 Section of layers abutting wall 533 in North Range.

wall 518. Wall 518 ran east-west approximately parallel to the line of the curtain wall and at the east end it returned southwards (Fig. 2.23 and Pls 2.36 and 2.38). Wall 518 was 0.8 m wide, the return about 1.0 m wide. At the north-east corner the outside edge of the wall was rounded, but the inside edges were straight, forming an angle slightly less than 90 degrees. This wall appears to represent the north end of a building belonging to the West Range. The revealed dimensions were at least 2.4 m wide internally and 4 m wide externally, but assuming

that the building was added to the back of the curtain wall the internal width will have been at least 3.4 m.

The northern stretch of wall 518 was constructed using relieving arches; a springer was seen about 2 m from the north-east corner, and was traced down for about 1 m, but was not bottomed (Pl. 2.38). This springer is approximately midway between the north-east corner and the line of the curtain wall, suggesting that there were two relieving arches. Only the western half of the eastern arch was seen,



Plate 2.38 Relieving arch of 518 and slumping of wall 520.

below the centre of which the garderobe pit was infilled with pitched slabs which were not bottomed. Above the arch the surviving wall 518 consisted of three of four courses of limestone bonded with mortar. West of this much of the springer was removed when a later wall 520 was cut through wall 518 (see Period 8 below).

A small area of the interior in the north-east corner was excavated in 1989. Photographs indicate that the interior was cleared to the level of the bottom of wall 518, as projecting stones were visible at a corresponding level to the springer arch in the north face of the wall. No certain floor deposits were recorded, the trench bottoming on a layer of buff sandy loam and roof slates 708. This layer was also recorded north of wall 518 further west, and so probably represents either a layer predating the construction of wall 518, or infilling contemporary with it. The roof slates, which probably derive from the North Range, imply the reroofing (or possibly the disuse) of this building at this time.

Wall 518 had an uncertain relationship with wall 517, either a corner buttress or a continuation of wall 533 at the south-west corner of the North Range (Pl. 2.38). The gap between the two walls was very small, and neither wall was investigated to any depth at this point. Since, however, the large pit immediately west of wall 717 probably respected the North Range, it seems most likely that wall 518 constructed within it was later, and that wall 518 truncated wall 517. Within the pit wall 518 was abutted by 656, a loose mortar layer with some stones, which lay upon the natural clay side of the large feature close to 629, but overlay other fills (not investigated) towards the deepest part of the feature (Fig. 2.37). Layer 656 may be equivalent to layer 708 seen in the 1989 excavations. Layer 656 is undated; it contained only three sherds of pottery, one of which was post-medieval and so intrusive. Supporting evidence for dating the disuse and infilling of the garderobe to this period is provided by the tumble layer 522 against wall 517.

The garderobe in the West Range

Just north of the West Range a walled chamber was found across the line of the curtain wall. This was

square, and was approximately 1.5 m across. The east and south walls were numbered 546 and 654, the north wall was numbered 655 and the west wall 679 (Fig. 2.23). All these walls were bonded together except at the north-east corner, where the east end of the north wall and the north end of the east wall were missing, possibly due to collapse (but see also Period 8 wall 520 below). The walls had been robbed almost to the bottom of the curtain wall (Period 9, robber trench 562), but continued to line the edges of the garderobe chamber below the level of the natural clay for a depth of about 0.4 m. South of the chamber the curtain wall had not been completely robbed out, lines of stones surviving along both edges, and these were apparently of one build with 546 and 679, the east and west walls of the chamber. The garderobe chamber, therefore, appears to have been contemporary with the wall, presumably the curtain wall, immediately south of it.

The garderobe was not bottomed in 1984, but in 1989 it was completely excavated to a layer of large limestone slabs at a depth of 1.2 m, which appeared to form the floor (Fig. 2.38; Pl. 2.39). Recording of the lower part of the garderobe was extremely brief, but the drawn profile of the garderobe shows that on the west wall 679 bottomed 0.3 m above the floor, overlying soil described as 'backfill'. On the east side intermittent horizontal stones were seen, in a matrix described as 'very hard clay', but photographs suggest that on both the east and the south the walls ended at much the same level as on the west. No records or photographs of the north wall exist.

The 'very hard clay' may have resulted from chemical deposition upon the wall of the chamber, as concretions often form in cesspits. It is not clear whether the pit sides were reached; comparison with the level of the natural limestone in the moat suggests that this corresponded to the bottom of the stone walling of the garderobe chamber, and below this the chamber may have been rock-cut and so without any lining at the sides. The slabs on the floor were not regular, and may simply have been the natural fissured limestone. If the walls of the chamber were built by pushing the stones into the clay natural, the walls may have projected beyond the rock-cut sides, so explaining the soil found below the walls at the sides of the chamber.



Figure 2.37 Section of layers tipping into garderobe pit.



Figure 2.38 Section of garderobe in north-west corner of manor house.

An alternative possibility is that the soil described as 'backfill' on the west may have been the fill of a channel leading from the earlier garderobe pit below the curtain wall into the moat, which was later widened to form a self-contained pit within the curtain wall. The depth of the garderobe would not however seem to have been great enough to have drained the pit effectively. The garderobe was clearly designed for use from a higher level, and probably from the first floor of the West Range adjacent via a passage within the curtain wall. As it lay across the curtain wall the garderobe shaft presumably did not continue to the full height of the wall, as this would have impeded access along the wall, and created a significant weakness at this corner.

The date of construction of this garderobe is uncertain. The earliest fill contained an almost complete 14th-century Brill jug (Fig. 3.10, no. 1), but this was clearly lost at the end of the life of the garderobe (see Period 7 below). The garderobe walls were bonded into the curtain wall on the south side, though as only the edges of this survived, and only



Plate 2.39 Garderobe 687 from the north-west.

0.7 m of this was exposed, this is not proof that the garderobe was primary. On the north, robbing had removed any relationship with the curtain wall. It is plausible that this garderobe was built together with the West Range, replacing the garderobe pit infilled at this time, but since insufficient of the West Range was excavated to establish its use, this must remain speculation, and it may not have been constructed until Period 7.

Reflooring of the east room of the North Range

In the small room at the east end of the range floor 602 was covered by an orange mortar layer 622, which covered most of the southern half of the room east of wall 601, overlying charcoal upon 602 and sealing stakeholes 623 (Fig. 2.31). On the west the floor abutted wall 601 and ended at a straight edge overlying the east half of stonework 612 roughly in line with the west edge of wall 601 (Fig. 2.33). This suggests that 612 was by this stage functioning as a threshold, and that the floor stopped at the line of the door. Layer 622 contained residual 12th-century sherds.

Disuse of the North Range in Period 6b, the later 13th century

At the west end of the range layers 662, 667 and 631, as well as infilled posthole 642, were all overlain by layer 624. This was a deposit of yellow clay lumps and brown clay loam overlying 631, and incorporated pottery of 13th-century date. This covered almost all of the area beyond 602 and 625, and became gradually more burnt towards the bottom, but there were no distinguishable horizons within it to suggest successive floorings or any collapsed structures. The burning could have derived from use of hearth 664, particularly if the layer resulted from the collapse of an oven, but the burnt material may have been brought from elsewhere. Layer 624, however, also incorporated pieces of pink mortar identical to those in dumped layer 596/2 further east, perhaps indicating that this was a dumped layer postdating the active life of the building (see below).

Overlying the infilled postholes and the burning upon floors 602 and 625 were spreads of dumped soil (Figs 2.29 and 2.34). Up against the face of wall 533 was a dark gravelly loam and limestone 595, and this was overlain by 596/2, a stony soil with distinctive greenish-grey clay lumps. Layer 596/2 was patchy, and concentrated in small dumps. Further west 596/2 petered out, but appeared to overlap a layer of burnt soil and stones (598), which contained early-13th-century pottery. Where 596/2 was absent layer 598 was overlain by a layer of yellow clay, stones and charcoal (599). Adjacent to 596/2 was layer 597, a darker gravelly loam containing flecks and patches of burnt soil, which merged into 596/2 in some places, and underlay it in others; the two layers were probably deposited within a short time of one another. Both 597 and 599 contained Brill/Boarstall pottery dating from the mid to late 13th century.

In the western part of the range, west of the central baulk left during excavation, 596/2 was overlain by 596, soil which was more or less clayey in different areas and contained both small and large limestone pieces (Fig. 2.25). Layer 596 thinned out eastwards, and east of the baulk 596/2 was overlain by 571, a thick and generally homogeneous stony layer that also overlay 596 further west. This thinned out on the east towards wall 601 where it was overlain by a fine silty loam 570. A localised patch of silty loam and charcoal similar to 570, layer 572, lay over 571 further south, and another patch of dark silty clay and charcoal 590 overlay 571 close to the south wall of the range.

None of these layers were floors or occupation build-up. The stones within them lay unevenly at different levels throughout. The clay in these layers was in lumps; some was similar to the underlying clay subsoil, but the yellow clay had clearly been brought in from elsewhere. The lumps of pink mortar in several of the lower deposits may have derived from the breaking up of floor 602 itself, or have come from floors elsewhere, as may the yellow clay common to 624 and 599. These soils are interpreted as dump layers within the building. Fragments of painted window glass were found in layers 596/2 and in 571 (Chapter 3, The Glass), but whether dumped from elsewhere or derived from the windows of the range is unclear. Broken rooftiles were common in layers 596 and 571, suggesting either dumping from re-roofing somewhere or, in the case of layer 596, possibly collapse of the roof of the range at this stage. In either case the range does not appear to have been in use during this period, but its walls were still partly standing while these layers accumulated inside, as robber trenches 578 and 629 cut them (see Period 7 below). These layers did not extend into the east room, in fact most of them tailed off towards the south-east corner of the main room, though layer 596/2 reached almost to wall 612.

Layers 596 and 571 contained largely residual pottery of the late 12th or 13th century; 571 also contained a folding knife of 13th-/14th-century type and a mount of 14th-century or later date, showing that the accumulation of dumped material continued into Period 7.

The addition of a porch or stair to the West Range in period 6b, the later 13th century

Layer 656 was overlain by 653, a dark silty loam with sand and much charcoal which contained late-13th- or 14th-century pottery (Figs 2.37 and 2.38). This is probably equivalent to layer 704 seen in the 1989 excavations. Constructed upon layer 653 was wall 630. This ran west from 717, the west wall of the North Range, and was 0.5 m wide constructed of courses of flat limestone (Fig. 2.23). It ended at a cornerstone hollowed out to take a square post (Chapter 3, Worked Stone; Fig. 3.23 no.22), and returned south as wall 519 (Pl. 2.36). Wall 630 was abutted by layer 554/2 overlying 653, and wall 519 was in turn built upon layer 554/2 and abutted by 554/1 (= 627), which also abutted walls 518, 520 and 630. (Layer 554 is probably equivalent to layer 703 recorded in the 1989 excavations, which overlay 704). Layer 554 also contained sherds of Brill/Boarstall ware of late-13thor 14th-century date. At the south end wall 519 abutted wall 518. The foundations of 630 were only seen at its junction with 519, where those of 630 were several courses deeper; it is not known whether this was a strengthening at the corner or whether 630 was of similar depth all the way along. It is presumed that 630 originally abutted wall 717, though any relationship was destroyed by the robbing 629 (see Period 7). The layers within the angle formed by 630 and 519 were not excavated to this level, but it is likely that 554/2 and 653 continued in this area.

Walls 630 and 519 may have formed a porch between the North Range and West Range, or possibly have supported a stair to a first floor in the West Range. There is room for a doorway 0.8 m wide in the north-east corner of the West Range, and 1.2 m available in the west wall of the North Range. Alternatively, the post at the junction of walls 630 and 519 could have supported a wooden platform at first floor level, giving access to the West Range by a door in the north-east corner. The stairs themselves could have lain against the north wall of the West Range, leading down to a door next to the curtain wall in the north-west corner.

The courtyard on the north-west in Period 6b, the later 13th century

Outside the West Range and the disused North Range turf layer 507 was overlapped by the edge of a stone layer 607, which covered layer 617 (Fig. 2.33). (In trial trench 4 stone spread 607 was removed together with underlying stone layer 620 as one surface, numbered 508.) Overlying stones 529 at the very east end of trial Trench 4 the section indicates a thicker layer of stones that may represent a remaking of the path across the courtyard from the north gate (see Fig. 2.30 and Period 5a above).

Partial cleaning out of the moat (Fig. 2.25)

Above 558/13 on the north side was a compact layer of gravel 558/15, which was overlain by mixed gravel and clay 558/12. Layer 558/12 was overlain by 558/10, limestone rubble in a matrix of sandy gravel. This layer was also confined to the north side of the moat. Layer 558/10 contained sherds of Brill/Boarstall pottery dating to the mid to late 13th century. No finds were recovered from the layers below, which presumably represent silting during the first half of the 13th century. All three layers appear to have been cut away on the south side down to the top of layer 558/13, possibly indicating a partial cleaning out of the moat (Fig. 2.25). The recutting probably dates to the late 13th century, as 558/11, which infilled the recut, contained regional imports of mid to late 13th-century date

Period 7 - 14th century, 1300-1400

Summary (Fig. 2.39)

At this time the North Range was demolished apart from a small room at the east end, which was provided with a pitched floor and hearth. The curtain wall was widened by adding a batter to the outer face and was also thickened by about a foot on the inside.

Demolition of the North Range and rebuilding of the curtain wall adjacent

Layer 571 was cut on the south by 578, the robber trench of the south wall of the North Range 533, also called 577 adjacent to wall fireplace 576 (Fig. 2.25). The robbing also removed the chimney stack 606, but stopped at the east edge of the wall fireplace. At the west end of 578 another robber trench, feature 629, removed the west wall of the range 717 (Fig. 2.31). The robbing removed the walls almost to the bottom of their foundations. Robber trench 629 contained sherds of 14th-century pottery. The fill of 578 was yellow mortar lumps with loose gravel mortar.

The square chimney base 606 was also robbed almost to the bottom, and a sheep burial 586 was found at the bottom. (Chapter 4). Above this the robbing hole was filled with layers 585/2 and 585/1, the latter very similar to layer 565/1 (= 573). This was overlapped by robber trench fill 577, and the top with layer 559, an oval of clean brown loam. The robber fill contained residual pottery of late-12th- or early-13th-century date, but layer 577 was overlain by a patch of dark silt and charcoal 584 containing a sherd of Coarse Border Ware, dating to the mid-14th century or later. Layer 559 may have been part of a garden soil 502 which accumulated over the building at a later date (see Period 8 below), but this garden soil was machined away over this feature, so the relationship is uncertain.

South of the robbing of the curtain wall 562 on the north-west a trench running parallel to the curtain wall was cut through fine silty loam 570 east of the baulk, and a more stony yellow-brown silty loam 571 west of it (Fig. 2.40). This was filled with a mixture of mortar and brown loam. This trench ran the full length of the range except on the line of wall 601, where the natural clay and floor 602 survived up to the edge of the robbing of the Period 4 curtain wall, implying that this wall was still standing (Fig. 2.23). The south edge of this trench lay some 0.3 m–0.4 m beyond the edge of existing wall 530. The bottom of this trench was very flat and, on the east, several centimetres higher than the original trench bottom, creating a distinct shelf. This trench



Figure 2.39 Period 7 plan.

107



Figure 2.40 Sections showing widening of trench S of curtain wall on north-west and stones overlying 675.

implies that alterations were also made to the curtain wall at this time.

The widening of the curtain wall on the north-west

On the north-west of the manor the original curtain wall was completely robbed out for most of its length (Period 9 trench 562; Pl. 2.30). North of this, however, was a surviving wall (numbered 574 on the east and 689 on the west), which was constructed upon the natural clay ground surface of narrow courses of thin flat limestone. The wall had a vertical south face and a battered north face, being 1.15 m wide at the bottom narrowing to 0.95 m at the top, and survived up to 0.5 m high (Pls 2.29 and 2.31). If the wall continued to taper upwards the angle would suggest that it may originally have been some 3 m high. Wall 574 abutted the north face of the surviving curtain wall 530, and further west its south (inner) face was generally smooth and covered with mortar, suggesting that it had abutted the curtain wall, which in contrast had a shallow foundation trench, all along the north-west perimeter (Fig. 2.25). The southern face of 574 was vertical in places, but sloped slightly southwards as it rose in others, perhaps implying that the original curtain wall had also had a slightly sloping external face. At its east end 574 also abutted wall 575 running north from 530 (Fig. 2.25). Wall 574 is interpreted as a refacing and strengthening of the curtain wall.

At the west end of the trench wall 574 = 689curved south-westwards, but diverged from the line of the curtain wall around the rounded north-west corner of the enclosed area. Here the recording carried out in 1989 was scant, but it is clear that the wall was poorly preserved; the levels suggest that the wall survived less than 0.15 m high, and only two courses of limestone are visible in the photographs. Photographs also indicate that the stones were not laid in neat courses behind the facing, but were lying at all angles, and many of the stones were burnt red. Towards this corner the width of the refacing is uncertain; the plan only shows 0.6 m of stones in pebbly mortar, but behind this (to the south) there was a gap up to 0.8 m wide between the stones of 689 and the curtain wall trench, which was filled by a spread of mortar and soil (714). This was clearly distinct from the loose mortar and rubble infill of the later robbing of the curtain wall 562 (Figs 2.23, 2.41; and Period 9), and was probably part of the thickening of the wall, a soil and mortar core dumped up against 530 behind the stone facing of 574. This indicates that the refacing thickened at the north-west corner to 1.4 m or more, forming a sharper corner than the original curtain wall behind it.

At the corner itself the stone facing ended, but mortar and soil 714 apparently continued westwards from the end of the stones to the edge of the excavation (Fig. 2.23). There was a clear layer distinction continuing the line of the stone facing, probably formed by layers to the north abutting the former wall. A small sondage dug through the mortar and soil 714 just where the stone facing ended showed a feature beneath it filled with dark brownish-grey clay loam 718. Only the west edge, which ran approximately north-south, was seen, and the feature was not excavated; the feature did not extend into the bottom of the robbed curtain wall trench to the east and south, but its date and purpose are unknown.

The moat

Outside wall 574 = 689 at the north-west corner excavation was not carried down to natural, but all of the exposed layers sloped down away from the wall, and at the north-west corner of the excavation these layers were lower than the level of natural clay in the bottom of the robbed curtain wall adjacent, strongly suggesting that the moat 558 continued around the north-west corner.

Within the moat in the section adjacent to the North Range both layer 558/10 and layer /11 were sealed by 558/9, a thin but very stony horizon with an even surface, contemporary with which was a mortar layer 558/8 spilling down the inner side of the moat (Fig. 2.25). Brill/Boarstall ware dating to the mid to late 13th century was recovered from 558/9, and later Brill pottery of 14th- or 15th-century date from 558/8. Layer 558/8 was contiguous with 581, a layer of thin limestone and tiles upon the natural clay. Stones 581 may have provided a rough and intermittent paving on the berm, but were more likely part of the debris created at the same time as stony layers 558/8 and /9. Since 581 was immediately overlain by 580, the construction mortar at the base of 574, 558/8 and /9 probably represents debris from altering the curtain wall when 574 was added,



Figure 2.41 Plan of north-west area in Period 8.

and the thickening of the curtain wall can be dated to the 14th century or later. A thin layer of clay 579 overlay 580.

Disuse of the garderobe north-west of the West Range

The lowest deposit recorded within the garderobe was a dark sandy silt and charcoal fill 678. Although the section drawing (Fig. 2.38) shows another deposit beneath, subsequent excavation in 1989 apparently showed that layer 678 extended right to the bottom of the pit. This deposit contained an almost complete 14th-century Brill jug (Fig. 3.10, no.1). This was clearly lost during the use of the garderobe, but after the last time that it was emptied. Layer 678 was overlain by a dark silty loam with charcoal and stones 658. This layer did not contain any finds, but had a high organic content, and was sampled for environmental remains (Chapter 4, Plant and Invertebrate Remains). This was the uppermost fill from the use of the garderobe.

A possible structure at the north-west corner of the curtain wall

Just north of the garderobe chamber a small area of stones bonded with mortar had survived on the outer edge of robber trench 562 (Fig. 2.23). These stones were contiguous with the stones of the north wall of the garderobe 655, suggesting that they were contemporary with it. The stones ran west beyond the excavated robbing, and a small sondage revealed a hollow or gully (numbered 711) continuing westwards from them, whose line was continued by a soilmark 0.5 m wide running west up to the edge of the excavation (layer 712). This feature was at least 2.6 m long from the edge of the robbed curtain wall. At the west end this feature met the line marking the edge of the thickening of the curtain wall 574, and turned south-westwards alongside it. A band of pebbles and mortar 0.6 m–0.8 m wide, similar to layer 714 behind wall 574, ran alongside the linear soilmark on the south side (layer 719).

These layers are difficult to interpret. The soil change continuing west-south-west from the edge of wall 574 could simply mark the edge of an upper fill within the moat, but the east-west alignment of the other parallel soilmarks is not consistent with this. It might possibly indicate the robber trench of a wall running west from the curtain wall, or possibly even a projecting tower at this corner, for which the hollow or gully could represent the beginning of a construction trench. No finds were recovered from any of these layers or from the hollow or gully, and this suggestion was not tested by excavation. South of this a layer distinction was planned running 0.8 m outside the robbed curtain wall and approximately parallel to it, but this was not excavated.

North of 574 at its west end a short stretch of wall 0.6 m wide was revealed running north into the moat, and this was numbered 695 (see Figs 2.39 and 2.41 below). Interpretation as a wall rests upon the presence of a few facing stones, in places two courses high. The wall contained burnt stones similar to those within 574 = 689 at this point; the stones were similarly jumbled and were bonded with a very similar pebble and mortar matrix. The junction of the two walls was not however excavated, neither wall was apparently bottomed, and their relationship was not clearly established. The stone facing of 574 was not clear crossing the line of 695, but the photographs suggest that the mortar bonding of 695 stopped short of the junction with 574, and that darker soil filled the gap. The west edge of feature 718 below 714, the mortar and soil core of wall 574, was in line with 695, and in 1989 this was interpreted as a construction trench continuing from it. A band of large stones that overlay 574 was, however, also planned in 1984 following the line of 695, suggesting that the wall was later.

The association of 695 with feature 718 underlying 574 = 689 remains unproven, and the character of layer 718 makes it unlikely that this is either a construction trench or a robber trench. The similarity in construction of 574 = 689 and 695 suggests that this may have been contemporary with the wall strengthening in the later 14th century. Wall 695 is only narrow, but may have been a short buttress projecting a little way out into the moat.

Deposits overlying the North Range

Overlying the robbing of the North Range was an orange/yellow mortar layer, numbered 566 and 569, west and east. This layer began at the edge of 562, overlying the trench dug parallel to the curtain wall, and was continuous with a level surface over the centre of the trench, but became patchy and uneven to the east and west. On the south it overlay 578, beyond which it did not continue (Figs 2.25, 2.40 and 2.41 below). It sloped down eastwards and faded out short of wall 601, where it was replaced by a smooth mortar layer 611 between 601 and 533. Pottery recovered from this layer was of 14th-century date.

Reflooring of the room adjacent to the north gate (the east room of the North Range)

East of fireplace 576 the walls of the range survived (Fig. 2.33). This was because the room at the east end remained in use. Mortar floor 622 was overlain by a loose layer of orangey-yellow mortar 621, and this was overlain by a floor of pitched limestone 605 (Fig. 2.31, Fig. 2.41). Patches of an orange sandy mortar survived over the stones, and the same mortar infilled gaps between them. Over much of the floor, however, the mortar surfacing had worn away and the stones stood proud, but they were not heavily worn. In the north-west corner was a hearth 591, built together with the floor and constructed of

thin flat stones edged with a stone kerb. Both the floor and hearth overlay the trench dug along the south side of the curtain wall up to the edge of the post-medieval robbing 562, and approximately in line with the edge of the original curtain wall trench. Finds upon the stone floor included both Brill/ Boarstall wares and early post-medieval pottery.

Layers 566 = 569 west of wall 601 and layer 621 east of it were very similar and stratigraphically equivalent. Both are seen as part of one mortar deposit. The evidence of the long trench dug almost to the bottom of the curtain wall, which was then backfilled and overlain by a mortar spread, suggests that the curtain wall was partly dismantled and rebuilt at this time, following which the east room was given a new floor.

The pitched stones of cobbled floor 605 were absent in the south-west and south-east corners of the room. On the south-west a layer of mortar 611, described above as contemporary with 569, extended over mortar 622 through the doorway and overlay dump layer 596/2. Layer 611 may have been a repair to 605, or have been trampled mortar in the doorway from the rebuilding, exposed where 605 had been removed.

Construction of a stone staircase to the wall-walk

In the narrow area east of the North Range and west of wall 530 layers 542 and 550 were sealed by a thick build-up of loose mortar, limestone and brown loam (layers 536/4-/1) abutting 531 and 532 (Fig. 2.29). This contained sherds of 12th-century pottery, and was overlain by 715 (formerly 685), a layer of stone rubble in a matrix of yellow gravelly mortar. At the south end this abutted 686, a series of three flat stones approximately 0.3 m by 0.2 m and 0.05 m deep, forming risers between the ends of walls 531 and 532. These are interpreted as all that remains of a staircase 0.6 m wide leading up northwards, presumably to the top of the curtain wall 530 (see also Pl. 2.32). Excavation of the staircase did not continue below this level, and it was not established upon what layer the staircase was constructed, but south of the stairs and abutting them was a silty gravel 687, which is probably equivalent to courtyard layer 504 (see Period 8). The date of construction of this staircase lies between this and the date of the latest pottery sealed by the infilling for the stair, which was late 12th or early 13th century. The construction of a stone staircase could, therefore, have been carried out in Period 6, but is placed in Period 7 because of the other major alterations to the curtain wall in this phase, with which its construction may well have been associated.

The courtyard on the north-west (Figs 2.29 and 2.30)

Layer 503, which sealed 607, was a compact layer of stones, uneven but slightly worn, which abutted wall 533. It contained more sandy gravelly loam than the stones to the east, and in its surface were several patches of dark loam infilling slight hollows, for example 592 and 594; there were stones lying on edge around parts of the sides of these, and they could conceivably have been post-positions, but were very shallow and irregular. Layer 503 was overlain on its west side by 509, an orange mortar layer, and this was in turn overlain on the west by 506 = 593, sandy make-up for a stone surface 505. Surface 505 formed a continuous, if uneven, layer over the west part of the courtyard (see Fig. 2.41 below), but petered out to the east, and 505, 509 and 503 clearly formed one contemporary courtyard stone surface. Layers 503, 509, 506 and 505 cover the whole yard with a stone surface; before this only the east part was surfaced, the rest being soil, probably under grass. At the end of the trial trench 503 was cut by a small pit 513 filled with silty loam and capped with rubble. Layers 505 and 607 contained early-13th-century pottery; layer 505 also contained a medieval buckle frame.

The North Gatehouse

Overlying cobbled surface 628 was a compact stone and gravel layer that may have been a trodden surface (Fig. 2.29). This had largely been removed by machine during the trial-trenching, and is not securely dated. This was in turn overlain by several further thin layers seen in section, possibly representing further resurfacings of the gateway.

Period 8-late medieval and early post-medieval, 1400-1600

Summary (Fig. 2.41)

In the north-west part of the site the courtyard was used as a garden. The small room adjacent to the gateway continued to be used, and the moat silted up gradually.

The east room next to the north gatehouse

Within the east room of the former North Range the pitched stone floor 605 was absent in the south-east corner, and here mortar floor 622 was overlain by a silty loam 603 with patches both of clay and of ash with charcoal 604 upon it. One patch of 604 abutted pitched stones of 605, but did not extend beneath them, suggesting that 604 was later; other patches of similar grey ash lay in between and over the pitched stone floor further north. The inner face of wall 532 was apparently robbed down to ground level at this time, as layer 603 extended halfway across the width of the wall. South of 603 the corner of this recess was filled with a pile of large flat slabs, probably later rubble tumble from the walls. Floor 605, hearth 591 and layers 611 and 604 were overlain in part by 582, a thin layer of sandy loam and thin stones which contained late 13th- to 14th-century pottery. This was the latest occupation deposit identified within this room.

Pottery elsewhere on floor 605 was a mixture of 13th-century and post-medieval types of 17th- and 18th-century date, together with a post-medieval

lace tag. It is possible that all of the post-medieval material is intrusive, derived from the destruction of the range which directly overlay the floor, but this in itself suggests that the room remained in use until the 18th century, and the post-medieval finds may indicate the latest occupation upon it.

The demolition of the West Range and building of wall 520

Cut into layers 554/1 and /2 and across wall 518 (the north wall of the West Range) was 553 = 626, the construction trench for a large north-south wall 520 (= 710) (Fig. 2.38). The trench had two fills within a shallow slot, and pottery from it dates to the 14th to 15th century. Wall 520 was built of coursed limestone and ran north-south approximately parallel to the west wall of the North Range 629 at a distance of 2.3 m (Fig. 2.41). It began at the edge of the curtain wall trench, and was traced southwards for 5.2 m, cutting through wall 518 (see Pl. 2.36). The wall was 0.9 m-1.0 m wide, and had slumped into the fills of the large pit dug in Period 5a, within which four to five courses survived, 0.45 m high (Pls 2.38 and 2.40). Constructed across the wall was an opening approximately 0.6 m wide and surviving about 0.4 m deep. This was faced with well-dressed squared blocks, and apparently had a level bottom (Pl. 2.40); it was presumably the base of an arch, probably for drainage. The opening was later infilled with a layer of loose stones (659), which also overlay the construction trench 553 both west and east of the wall. Between wall 520 and the curtain wall on the west, excavation did not proceed below layer 659.

The fills of the garderobe chamber across the curtain wall at the north-west corner were also overlain by layer 659, which extended into the chamber through the gap in the walls at the northeast corner (Fig. 2.39). The opening in wall 520 and the gap in the north-east corner of the garderobe walling may have been connected, acting as a form of drain to channel water from the east side of 520 into the partly open garderobe chamber in the curtain wall. The gap in the north-east corner of the garderobe, therefore, would have been deliberate, but secondary to its original function. Although there were stones within layer 659 in the garderobe, there was no concentration to suggest that the chamber walls had collapsed at the bottom of layer 659, perhaps suggesting that the stones were removed, and that the gap was not the result of accidental collapse. The fact that the gap was completely filled with 659 would support this suggestion.

The pottery within the construction trench could indicate that the West Range was superseded by wall 520 during the mid to late 14th century (Period 7), at the same time as the garderobe went out of use and perhaps contemporary with the substantial rebuilding of the curtain wall west of the north gatehouse. It is, however, unlikely that the garderobe pit would have been used as a sump for rainwater during its life as a garderobe, and the construction of



Plate 2.40 Wall 520 from east slumping into garderobe pit.

wall 520 is therefore seen as following its abandonment, and that of the West Range, which could have continued in use for some time after the garderobe went out of use.

Layer 659 was a composite deposit. The lower 0.3 m of fill, which was mainly soil including some stone roof-slates, probably accumulated over some period of time. This was followed by the construction of a north-south aligned rough stone wall numbered 521, running obliquely across the middle of the garderobe over the lower part of layer 659. Two layers of large slabs were found, in one case accompanied by a deposit of mortar, and these extended across the full width of the garderobe, abutting the upstanding courses of wall 655 on the north. This wall may have been built as a strengthening of the curtain wall at the corner once the garderobe, later a sump, had ceased to function. More soil accumulated within the garderobe against this.

Deposits in the north-west of the courtyard

Layers 503, 505, 506 and 509 were all overlain by gravel and mortar layer 504. This was of mixed composition, being patchy on the east, where 505 showed through from beneath (Fig. 2.41). A number of large thin limestones were incorporated, but almost all of these had shattered *in situ*, presumably indicating the long use of this surface. On the east

504 consisted of not one, but two mortar surfaces. Layer 504 contained residual 13th-century pottery and a horseshoe, possibly of 13th-/14th-century date. There were also post-medieval sherds and a lace tag from these deposits.

Layer 504 only extended intermittently up to the line of wall 533. At one point, layer 504 was overlain some 0.3 m from wall 533 by a line of large limestone pieces overlying 504, which appeared to form an edge parallel to the wall. These are numbered 567 (Fig. 2.36) and may have been a garden kerb or simply tumble. They were only one course deep, and extended for only 2 m. Further large limestone pieces were observed further west, apparently continuing this line south of layer 578 (Fig. 2.41), but these proved to be part of earlier courtyard layer 505.

In the area south of the former range layer 504 was cut on the west by an oval pit 515, filled with sandy loam, rubble and gravel. The backfill of 578, the robber trench of the south wall of the North Range, was cut by a shallow pit 568 that also cut 505 and probably 504 south of 578 (Fig. 2.25). Over the demolition spreads of the former range was a mixed layer of loam and thin stones 565/1, with patches of more clayey loam containing smaller stones and mortar lumps, 565/2. Layer 565 is interpreted as a garden soil. It ended approximately along the line of wall 533, except on the west where it extended south of this. Here 565 was contiguous with layer 505. Although much of their junction was cut away by a shallow irregular hollow 587, in places 565 appeared to overlie the stones of 505. No relationship was established between 565 and 504. Layer 565 included residual 13th-century sherds and a copper alloy pin dating to the 15th century or later. At its west limit layer 565 gave way to a similar, but sandier layer 646. This layer extended west up to narrow walls 630 and 519, which abutted the face of demolished wall 518.

Walls 520, 521 and 546 were overlain by a series of destruction layers: a layer of loose mortar 552 may have been contemporary with 646, a sandy layer of loam, stones and mortar lumps which ran west from layer 565 up to narrow walls 630, 519 and 518. Within 646 was part of the base of a large column (Chapter 3, The Worked Stone, Fig. 3.22, no. 8). Overlying walls 519, 518 and 517 was a similar mortar layer 525, which may have been part of the same deposit. Layer 646 was thought to be another part of 565, but may have been stratigraphically separate. Layer 552 was overlain by a dark sandy loam with much charcoal (516), as were walls 520 and layer 646. West of wall 601 the Period 7 mortar layer 569 was cut away adjacent to the wall by a large rectangular pit 608. Pit 608 was steep-sided and flat-bottomed, and both the profile and fills suggest that it was not open for very long (Fig. 2.41 and 2.31). It contained 13th-century sherds, but neither the fills nor the few finds give any clue as to its function. Pit 608 was overlain by a soft brown silty clay loam (with stones and gravel) 600, which abutted wall 601. Layer 600 also overlay the edge of the construction trench for the curtain wall. No relationship was recovered between 565/1 and 600, as 565/1had been machined away in error in this area. Layer 565/2, however, was clearly cut by 600 and a sandy layer adjacent, which also overlay 608 and a slight hollow 609 to the west of it.

The moat

Above the level of the refurbishment of the curtain wall in the 14th century there was little dating material or sign of much activity until 558/6, the intervening clean clay, layer 558/7, suggesting a long period of slow silting in the 15th and 16th centuries. Layer 558/6 contained a bullet-shaped arrowhead dating to the 16th century or later, associated with pottery of 17th-century date.

In Trench 5 over the north part of the moat excavation stopped at a depth of about 2 m, and only a very narrow slot was dug below the top of the moat to follow the north edge down for 0.4 m (section not illustrated). This slot revealed a layer of sandy silt (558/29) overlain by a layer of fragmented limestone in a similar soil matrix (558/28). Neither layer contained any finds. Above this thick layers of mottled clay with bands of limestone ran in from the south, apparently representing dumping over the largely infilled moat. The lowest of these, 558/21, contained late-13th-/14th-century sherds, but was directly overlain by 558/27, which contained both 12th-century and 16th-century pottery.

On the north edge of the moat the natural limestone was sealed by natural yellow clay, and this was overlain by a deposit of similar clay capped by small limestone pieces, probably representing upcast dumped on the outer edge of the moat. A similar clay continued south over layer 558/28, so the upcast may derive from a late attempt to clean out the southern part of the moat. Alternatively the stony clay may have been a separate deposit, original upcast from digging the moat, which later spread and covered the moat fills. Above these upcast layers was a pale clay 558/26 containing gravel and minute shell fragments too small to identify. Further fills coming in from the south (558/ 21 and 558/27) overlay the edge of layer 558/26, and were overlapped by another mixed layer of loam, limestone and gravel 558/25 sealing layer 558/26 throughout the north part of the trench

Period 9 – 1600–1800

The courtyard in the north-west

In the north-west area south of the curtain wall the destruction spreads of the West Range and the spreads overlying the North Range were sealed by garden soils. West of wall 519 layer 516 was overlain by layer 514, loam mixed with stones and mortar. Between 520 and 519 layer 646 was intermittent, and 514 also overlay layers 553 and 554 beneath. Layer 514 merged into 502, a similarly stony soil, but lacking the mortar, which covered most of the excavation trench, overlying layers 565, 646, 505, 504 and 600 (Fig. 2.29). Both layers probably represent the gradual build-up of garden soil mixed by cultivation in the post-medieval period, the mortar in 514 derived from the destruction of the buildings directly below. Pottery from 502 suggests an accumulation between the 16th century and late 18th century.

The moat

As mentioned in Period 8, layer 558/6 contained lenses of mortar and limestone pieces, and a bullet-shaped arrowhead dating to 16th century or later, associated with pottery of 17th-century date. This was followed by clay layers with varying amounts of stone interspersed with mortar layers, the latter (558/3) presumably representing repairs or alterations to the walls and gatehouse. The last of these deposits was 558/1, a layer of yellow-brown clay up to 0.4 m deep, containing up to 25% limestone. This contained a halfpenny of William and Mary minted in 1694 (SF 511; Chapter 3, The Coins) and a residual 14th-century jetton (SF 510; Chapter 3, The Coins).

In Trench 5 layer 558/25 was overlain by localised dumps of clay and stone (558/24), orange silt (558/22) and of mortar and gravel (558/23), which are probably equivalent to layer 558/6 or the layers overlying it.

At the north-west corner of the site a series of postmedieval layers was exposed outside the battered refacing of the curtain wall 574. The lowest of these was a mid brownish- yellow clay 713, which abutted the wall all along the north edge. No levels were given on this layer, but the overlying layers 717, 651 and 650 (see Period 9 below) both sloped down to the north-west away from the wall, and at the northwest corner of the excavation were below the level of clay natural at the bottom of the curtain wall adjacent, suggesting that the moat continued around this corner. The brownish-yellow clay was not excavated and is undated, but may be equivalent to 558/1, the latest moat fill further east below the destruction layers accompanying the robbing of the curtain wall, whose description is very similar. This clay abutted wall 695, and was overlain by a layer of mortar 717, possibly part of the general destruction of the manor (see Period 9c below).

The robbing of the curtain wall and the north gatehouse, and the final infilling of the moat - Period 9c

Garden soils 514 and 502 were cut on the north by the robbing of the curtain wall 562, which was filled with loose mortar (Fig. 2.25). A halfpenny of George II was found within this layer, dating the destruction to 1745 or later (SF 544; Chapter 3, The Coins). East of the gatehouse the curtain wall was also robbed; the robber trench 902, which was of similar width to 562, was not bottomed, but was filled with similar gravelly mortar with patches of stony clay. North of and overlying wall 574 was a thick destruction build-up (layers 563, 560 and 564) which also overlay the infilled moat 558 (Fig. 2.25). Finds date this destruction to the late 18th century. At the north-west corner there is less evidence of destruction, but the demolition may be indicated by mortar spread 717 north of 574 = 689.

Immediately south of the surviving wall of the gatehouse 530, the area between this wall and walls 531 and 532 was filled with a thick build up of destruction material that was removed completely by machine in trial trenching (Fig. 2.29). This was a considerable depth of mixed rubble and pinkishorange mortar 510, which also overlay the latest occupation deposit 582 in the small room at the east end of the North Range formed by walls 532, 533 and 601. Layer 510 lay up against layer 502 to the west. In this area both the destruction mortar and 502 were removed by machine, and thus do not appear on section, but the edge of the destruction material was a distinct north-south line corresponding to the line of the west edge of wall 601, whose robbing it infilled. Layer 502 had presumably abutted the wall.

At the north-west corner of the site the robbing of the curtain wall may have ended at the garderobe pit. The stones of the north wall 655 survive several courses above the clay bottom of the curtain wall, as do groups of stones along the west outer edge of the wall. South of this corner the robbing of the curtain wall is less complete; the robber trench is much narrower and courses of stones are left *in situ* on both sides. The survival of the wall thickening 574 is much poorer at this corner than further east, and soilmarks also suggest that further structures existed outside the line of the curtain wall. As these were not apparently removed as part of the robbing of the curtain wall, it would appear that this corner must have collapsed or been removed at an earlier date.

In the middle of the courtyard wall 838, on a north-east to south-west alignment, was also probably demolished at this time. It was overlain by layer 33, which contained mostly 18th-century and earlier finds (see below).

Period 10 - 1800 and later

The north-west area of the site

The destruction layers of the manor were sealed by a layer of clay and stones 561, and this was sealed by garden turf, which covered the whole area. Within the turf on the south-east there was a horizon of mortar and rubble 500, probably relating to the demolition of the previous Mount House and construction of the present building in the 1920s. The turf layer below this horizon is numbered 501.

The north-west corner outside the curtain wall

The clay north and west of the curtain wall thickening 574 = 689 was overlain by a compact stone layer set in clay loam, 651. Overlying the edge of this along the west edge of the trench was a silty loam 660. Sealing both of these was a layer of rubble (650) in a matrix of silty loam with occasional patches of loose mortar. Layer 650 masked the west wall of the garderobe chamber 679 and north-south wall 695.

West of the curtain wall robbing layer 651 was overlain by a layer of light brown loam, and this in turn was sealed by a layer of blue clay. Both these layers contained 19th-century pottery. Overlying the blue clay was 514, which was removed together with the overlying topsoil by machine.

MOUNT HOUSE: THE NORTH-EAST AREA

Summary (Fig. 2.42)

Limited excavations during the digging of new services to the modern building revealed a continuation of the added facing to the curtain wall, and traces of at least one rectangular stone structure. The areas excavated are known collectively as Trench 12 (Fig. 2.1)

Period 7 - 1300-1400

The widened curtain wall in the north-east of the site

The widening of the curtain wall was observed in two further areas, where it lay immediately below the modern ground surface. East of the northern area



Figure 2.42 Plan of north-east area

excavation and north-west of the present Mount House, a 6 m length (918) was recorded. The wall was faced with large flat limestone blocks on the north with the core built of smaller stones, bonded with a reddish yellow mortar. Due to robbing the wall was of variable width, but was up to 0.9 m wide. The western 2 m ran on an ENE alignment in line with the wall west of the gatehouse, but then turned to run slightly ESE. Only the top of the wall was exposed, but just east of this a contractor's pipe trench revealed the battered north face of the wall, here numbered 901. The surviving height of the wall in this trench was not recorded. Some 13 m further east another short length of this wall (919) was seen in a north-south trench excavated by hand. The construction was the same as further west, the wall again surviving up to 0.9 m wide, but within the 2.5 m exposed another change of alignment was found, the wall turning further towards the southeast.

In the contractor's pipe trench the inner face of wall 901 was apparently also seen with a smooth mortared face, similar to that of wall 574 further west (though only tentatively marked on plan). At the bottom of the wall, however, it sat upon friable and loose material, presumably debris which had accumulated against the bottom of the original curtain wall which was not cleared away before the thickening was added. Elsewhere the inner edge of 918 and 919 had been removed during the robbing of the curtain wall (see robber trench 902).

As part of the 1988 programme, further minor work was undertaken in the area of the Mount Mills, to the east of the Mount House complex. The principal discovery was a short section of an east-west aligned wall (917) which survived beneath the modern northsouth boundary wall of the Mount House complex. Structure 917 was 0.4 m wide and comprised large limestone blocks which were faced on the north and south sides. The masonry maintained the approximate line of the curtain wall (918, 919), but was much narrower, and is not thought to be part of the curtain wall. Wall (917) is undated; it was abutted by a deep layer of dark brown loam (910/4), which was in turn sealed by modern make-up layers (910/6) for the tarmac surface in Mount Mills.

Buildings in the north-east of the courtyard

The excavation north-east of the Mount House in 1988 (Fig. 2.42) also revealed a stone structure or building of uncertain date, though it was probably medieval, and part of the north-east courtyard. The building was observed about 2 m north of the Mount House. Although cut through by a large Victorian pipe trench and other service trenches, three walls (911, 912 and 913) appeared to be the north, east and west walls of a small square building aligned parallel to the curtain wall and only 2 m behind it. The walls were massive; the east wall (and probably the north wall) was 1.25 m wide, the west wall up to 1.4 m wide. All three walls were constructed of large flat limestone pieces bonded with a similar mortar, and wall 912 survived at least 0.8 m high. The structure was 4.7 m east-west and at least 3 m north-south externally, the interior being 2 m east-west and at least 1.75 m north-south.

The interior of the structure was partly destroyed by a modern machine-dug trench 922 and by other services, but the stratigraphy survived in part, and was excavated to a depth of 83 m OD, the fills being numbered 924/1-/9. The lowest of these were a layer of crumbly mortar and gravel 924/5 overlain by a peaty loam with mortar and charcoal patches 924/4, and above this another layer of crumbly mortar 924/3. Layer 924/5 was not bottomed, but augering showed that this overlay at least 1 m of clay.

The interpretation of this structure is uncertain. The size of the interior is closely comparable to the garderobe chamber in the West Block further south. The fills in the interior were clearly not *in situ* floors, but either destruction debris or deliberate infilling. The excavated depth of the interior is close to the recorded level of natural clay further south, and to the west the natural limestone occurs no more than 0.4 m below this. The augered depth of clay, therefore, might represent the clay lining of a garderobe chamber. Against this interpretation, the width of the walls seems massive for such a structure, though the walls of the West Block garderobe were more than 1 m wide at the base. In an interim report Brian Durham suggested that this structure was either a defensive tower or a garderobe (Durham 1989, 57).

To the east of the 'tower' was a circular arrangement of limestone blocks (903), which were thought during excavation to be the upper part of a well. The full depth of the well was not excavated so its construction date is unknown. Pottery of 18th- and 19th-century date was recovered from the upper fills of the feature, but these only date the infilling, not the use of the well. The well had a diameter of about 1 m.

To the south of 903, an extensive layer of limestone blocks (904) may have been associated with the well or the 'tower'. West of 912, and at a depth of 1.5 m, was a 0.1 m thick layer of crumbly mortar and gravel (924/5), perhaps associated with the construction of the wall. It was uncertain at the time of excavation, but seems possible that wall 912 was built from the level of this deposit, with subsequent material abutting the west face of the wall. Layer 924/5 was overlain by 924/4, a 0.2 m thick layer of reddishbrown peaty loam with mortar and charcoal patches and some animal bone, which was the first layer to abut the west face of wall 912. A layer of crumbly orange mortar (924/3) overlay 924/4. The later deposits in the sequence here were of post-medieval date, and are described in Period 9.

Period 9 – 1600–1800

The courtyard in the north-east

The north facing section of the east-west part of Trench 12 revealed a sequence of late yard deposits.

The trench was 15 m long and was dug to an average depth of 1.2 m. The east end of the trench was severely disturbed by a series of modern service pipe trenches (group context number 921 – period 10). At the base of the trench was a 0.1 m thick layer of grey clay loam with charcoal and mortar fragments, with a number of flat stones incorporated in the deposit perhaps forming a surface (916). This layer was sealed by a thicker layer of brown-grey clay loam with lenses of mortar rubble (910/1), which was 0.42 m deep. Pottery of 17th- to 19th-century date was recovered from this layer. This was sealed by modern layers of clinker and then clay (layer 920).

Against the west face of 'tower' wall '912, layer 924/3 adjacent to the wall was overlain by layer 924/2, a layer of grey-brown loam which contained glass and post-medieval clay pipe fragments. Layer 924/1 sealed 924/2, and consisted of a layer of large limestone blocks, possibly from the demolition of the 'tower', and perhaps contemporary with layer 915 to the north of the structure. West of the sewer pipe layer 924/3 was overlain by 924/9, a 0.03 m thick deposit of dark-brown silty loam, which was in turn sealed by a 0.08 m thick layer of dark grey-brown loam (924/8). This layer contained pottery of 17thcentury date, suggesting that it was quite a late courtyard/farmyard soil. No relationship survived between this soil and 924/1, the possible demolition layer. Layer 924/7 above was a 0.2 m thick deposit of clay loam and mortar, which was in turn covered by 924/6, a layer of grey-brown loam. These latter soils were certainly at a higher level than 924/1, and probably post-dated it.

probably post-dated it. East of 'tower' wall 912, and overlying the demolition level of the structure, was a 0.44 m thick layer of mixed clay and rubble, mortar and plaster - probably equivalent to layer 910/1 to the east end of the trench. Layers 910/5 and 924/6 were cut by a wide modern sewer trench, and the infill of the trench was sealed by clay layer 920. Another modern feature (922) was cut from the top of 920. The modern concrete surface sealed the fills of the sewer trenches and overlay clay layer 920. A possible stone surface (926) was observed just below the modern tarmac in a shallow trench east of well 903. This was not dated but is likely to have been of fairly recent date.