

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT WHERWELL PRIORY, 1996–99

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ABSTRACT

Several phases of archaeological investigation were undertaken in the vicinity of the house known as The Priory at Wherwell, near Andover, in connection with the groundworks required for a new swimming pool and pool house. The Priory is located within the precinct of Wherwell Abbey, founded c. AD 968 as a Benedictine nunnery. To the north of the present house the investigations recorded evidence for a cemetery and also for substantial buildings. These are now known to be associated with the claustral range of the abbey church. To the south of the house a more detailed excavation established the presence of a previously unrecorded stream course with adjacent medieval yard surfaces. This area is close to a recently identified medieval building, and geophysical survey has located the remains of other structures in the vicinity. Both the yard deposits and the nearby buildings are likely to date to a period of major renovation and expansion of the Abbey complex during the mid to late 13th century AD.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A phased programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken adjacent to a private residence known as The Priory, Wherwell, near Andover, Hampshire, centred on NGR 43919 14072 (Fig. 1). This work was carried out in connection with the proposed construction of a swimming pool and associated pool house.

The Priory lies on the southern edge of the village of Wherwell and on the level floodplain of the River Test at 46–47m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). It is a Listed (Grade II*) building probably dating from the early 18th century, although it may incorporate part of an earlier medieval wall. The

basal geology of the area comprises Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period, although in the vicinity of Wherwell the valley floor is covered by a deposit of tufa.

The house is located within the former precinct of Wherwell Abbey, founded c. AD 968 as a Benedictine nunnery. The abbey was greatly expanded in the mid 13th century under abbess Euphemia (c. 1219–1257), who doubled the complement of sisters from forty to eighty and undertook an extensive building and repair programme. Details of these works are included in a collection of over four hundred medieval documents that comprise the Wherwell cartulary (VCH Hants, vol. ii, 132–3). These mention the construction of a new infirmary complex with an underlying water channel, lodging hall and new precinct wall, together with the rebuilding of the then recently collapsed presbytery (*cf.* Clark 1999, 9–11).

The abbey was surrendered to the crown in November 1539 and within a decade the abbey church and many of the associated ecclesiastical buildings appear to have been demolished (Hare 1999). A small number of buildings was retained, including the abbess's lodging together with the houses within the quadrant, farmery and mill. Until recently, no substantial surface remains of the former abbey buildings were thought to have survived into the present day, although recent work has now identified a number of potential elements of the ecclesiastical complex. Examination of the unusually thick south-facing wall of the Priory, which overlies a water channel, has indicated a possible medieval date for this part of the structure (Roberts 1998). Just to the south of The Priory, the building known as 'The Stables' (Fig. 1) has now been shown to be the remains of a sub-

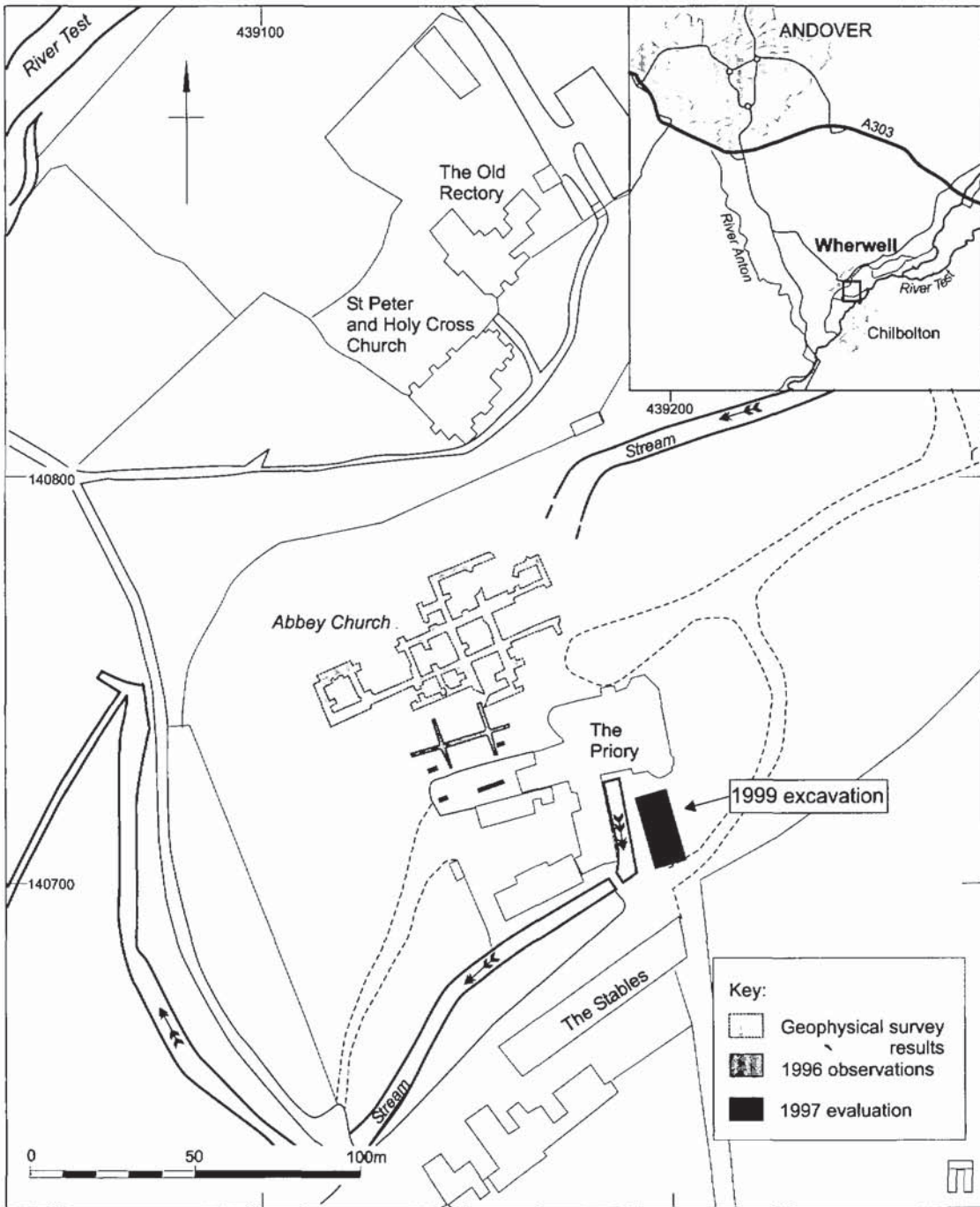


Fig. 1 Site location plan

stantial medieval monastic building (Roberts 1998).

A much more detailed understanding of the layout of the abbey site was provided by two resistivity surveys undertaken by Dr Kate Clark of Southampton University in 1997 and 1998. The first of these surveys clearly identified the location, size and extent of the abbey church immediately to the north-west of The Priory (Fig. 1) and part of the precinct wall to the north-east (Clark 1998, fig. 1). The second survey covered an area to the east of The Priory and identified a cluster of probable medieval buildings and further traces of the precinct wall (Clark & Roberts 2000, fig. 1).

The original function of these recently discovered elements of the medieval abbey complex has been the subject of debate (Roberts 1998, 147–8; Clark 1999, 13–4; Clark & Roberts 2000, 23–4). The identification of the abbey church is not in doubt and that of the precinct walls seems fairly secure. The discussion has therefore focused on the possibility that some or all of the other elements (the south wall of The Priory, 'The Stables' and the cluster of buildings to the east of The Priory) may represent some of the documented buildings constructed in the mid 13th century within the abbey complex. Unfortunately, in the absence of detailed archaeological evidence, the confident identification of any of these elements has proved impossible so far and the debate remains unresolved.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

The initial phase of archaeological work at The Priory comprised a short visit in December 1996 to record a number of features and deposits which had been revealed following the machine-excavation of three trenches to the north-west of the house (Fig. 1). This had been identified as the preferred location for the new swimming pool and the trenches were opened up for ground investigation purposes.

Although the trenches had been open for at least a year and no access into them was possible for health and safety reasons, it was clear that a number of east-west aligned adult inhumations was present along with several substantial wall

footings (Wessex Archaeology 1997). It was postulated that the trenches lay within the claustral range of the abbey, with the inhumations representing part of a cemetery for occupants of the nunnery.

As reported above, a first phase of resistivity survey was undertaken in the spring of 1997 as part of a research project. The clear identification of the abbey church confirmed that the preferred location of the new swimming pool lay close to or within the claustral range. Following consultations with Test Valley Borough Council (the local planning authority) and English Heritage, it was arranged that an area to the west of the house and immediately to the south of the ground investigation trenches should be subject to further archaeological evaluation.

This evaluation was undertaken in December 1997 and comprised four hand-excavated trial trenches (Fig. 1). Additionally, the three ground investigation trenches previously examined were made safe, cleaned and recorded in detail. At least eight adult inhumations were present within the evaluation area (including the ground investigation trenches), all were supine, extended and aligned east-west (Wessex Archaeology 1998a). Several graves were intercutting and some contained redeposited human bone, indicating reuse of this cemetery area over a considerable period of time. None of the human bone was recovered, but examination on site showed that all except one of the inhumations were adult (the exception being a subadult) and that in two cases the skeletons could be identified as female.

A number of large pits predated the cemetery and had been deliberately backfilled; no clear indication of date was recovered from these features. A number of substantial wall footings was also recorded, mostly aligned approximately north-south. These walls appeared to post-date the cemetery and are likely to represent structures associated with the abbey church.

As a consequence of the archaeological evaluations and geophysical surveys, an alternative location for the pool and pool house was proposed, this time immediately to the south-east of The Priory. In November 1998, an archaeological evaluation of this newly proposed site demonstrated the presence of a well-stratified sequence of archae-

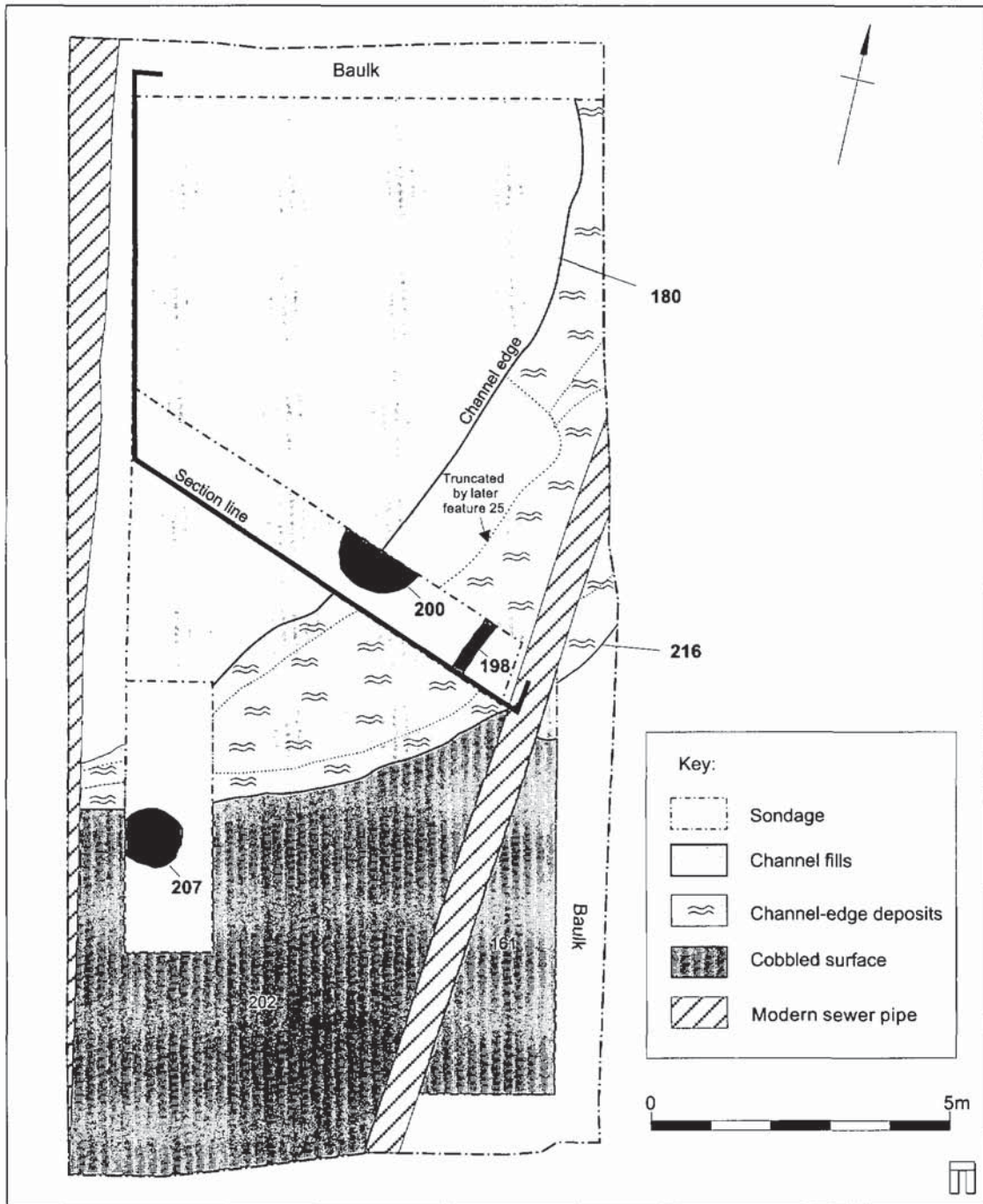


Fig. 2 Medieval yard and former water channel

ological deposits up to 1.6m in depth (Wessex Archaeology 1998b). These deposits included deliberate levelling material and associated surfaces laid down in the late 12th or early 13th century AD, along with the shallow footings of later walls. Some residual material of Roman and early/middle Saxon date was also recovered.

It was concluded that the archaeological deposits to the south-east of The Priory were of less archaeological significance than those identified to the immediate west and north-west, and that development could proceed once a detailed archaeological excavation of the site had been completed. This excavation was carried out in September and October 1999.

THE EXCAVATION

The entire footprint of the proposed pool house and associated infrastructure was subject to detailed investigation by way of a single trench measuring approximately 18.5m × 9m (Fig. 1). Prior to excavation this area was occupied by flowerbeds and lawns divided by a north/south aligned garden wall of probable 17th/18th century date. This wall was recorded and then demolished prior to the commencement of the excavation. Immediately to the west of the trench was a canalised watercourse which runs beneath The Priory.

The earliest artefactual evidence found at the site was a very small assemblage of Iron Age, Roman and Late Saxon/Early medieval objects. This residual material was recovered from medieval riverine deposits. No features or deposits of these periods were identified, although the presence of the material is consistent with evidence from elsewhere in the Test Valley for the exploitation of the river valley environment from prehistoric times, and for occupation within the general vicinity of the site.

Three principal phases of activity were identified, consisting of:

- medieval yard surfaces, riverine deposits and a water course
- later medieval/early post-medieval garden and yard
- post-medieval and modern gardens

Phase 1: Medieval yard surfaces and water course (12th–14th century)

The earliest identified deposits were within the southern third of the trench (Figs. 2, 3). Two fairly level surfaces of worn flint cobbles and very compacted clay and chalk (**202/161; 204**) were separated in places by thin dump deposits of river-derived material (*cf.* **203**) and mixed mortar and rubble. This stratified sequence of surfaces and dump deposits was up to 0.54m thick and consistently produced material of 12th/13th century date. The lowest of the surfaces lay directly over a layer of alluvial clay (**205**) which sealed the calcareous tufa that represents the natural basal geology of the site. A shallow circular feature (**207**) within the alluvial clay is likely to have been a small pit, and a small quantity of medieval pottery was recovered from the upper part of the alluvial clay **205**. Another small pit (**168**) was sealed by surface **161** and also contained material of a similar date.

Immediately to the north of these surfaces was a series of silty clay riverine deposits (Fig. 3, **108; 186; 187; 190**, also **212–5**); the northern edge of these deposits was defined by a distinct stream channel (**180**) along with associated sand and gravel banks which occupied the whole of the northern half of the excavated area. A more detailed examination of the fluvial sequence was undertaken in order to clarify the nature of the depositional events here (see Allen below). This showed that the riverine clays at the northern edge of the cobbled surface represented deliberately dumped material. These channel-edge deposits again produced pottery of 13th century date.

Channel **180** was up to 1.10m deep and at least 8m wide; at the northern edge of the excavation area it was aligned north–south but then turned westwards within the site (Fig. 2). It was infilled by a combination of natural fluvial deposits and cleaning/dump deposits, although a number of ephemeral interfaces may suggest the development of a continuing sequence of successively narrower channels.

A further irregular but compact flint cobbled yard surface (Fig. 3, **185**) then sealed the earlier surfaces, the channel-edge dump deposits and the southern edge of channel **180**. There was some faint evidence for a north-east–south-west aligned

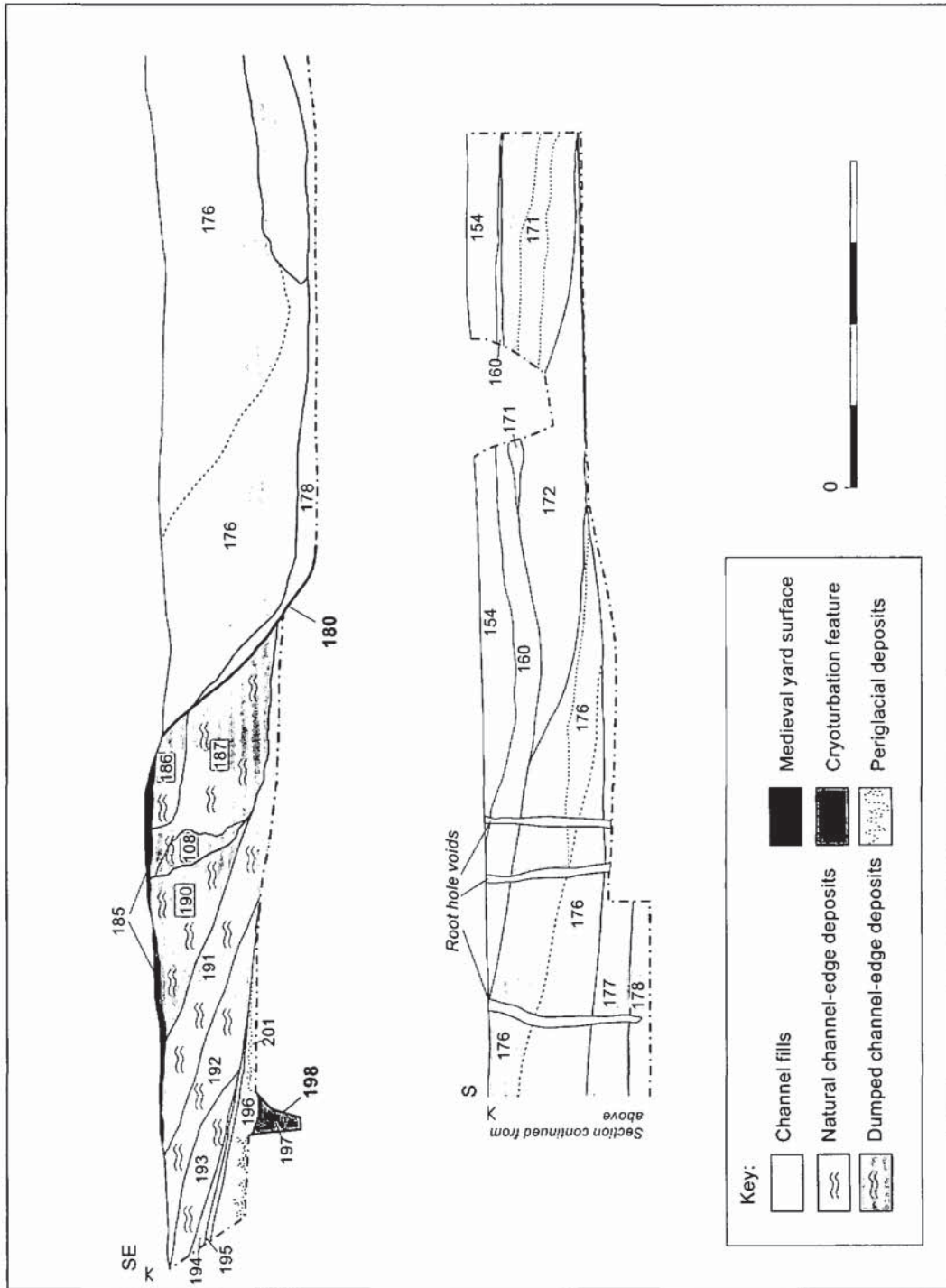


Fig. 3 Section through yard, made-ground deposits and water channel

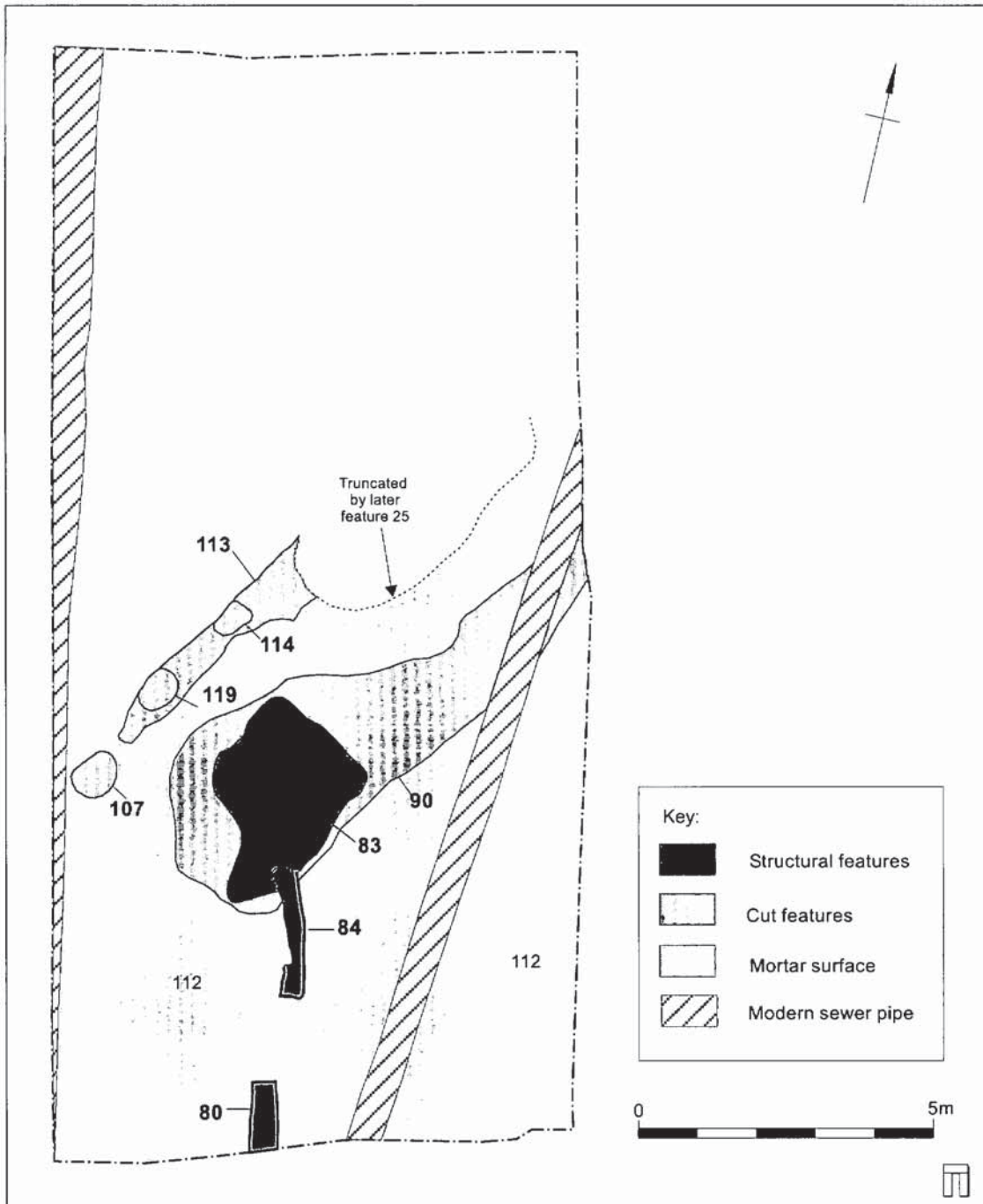


Fig. 4 Tudor garden features

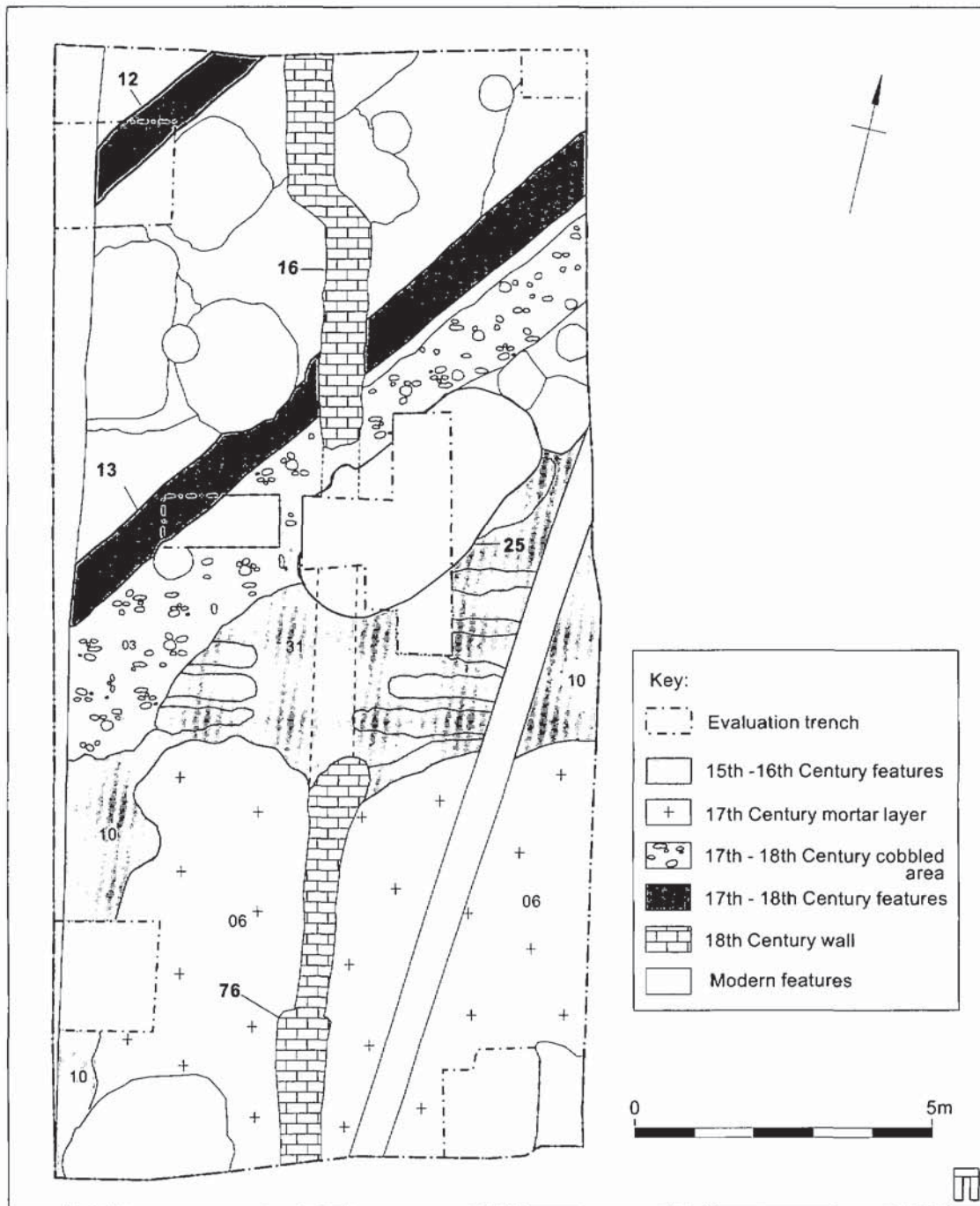


Fig. 5 Pre-excitation plan: all periods

Table 1 Channel deposits in stratigraphic order

Context	Description	Interpretation
178	Mixed medium to coarse flint gravels, largely brecciated, but water-worn flints. Contained Roman and medieval artefacts.	Stream bed gravel. Deposited on the base of a stream from which all the fine material has been sorted. Not necessarily indicating high-energy deposition. Possibly seasonal deposition (winter/autumn) with localised flushes of water and erosion from upstream.
177	Finely-banded and laminated and calcareous tufaceous brash comprised of phytoclast tufa (plant pseudo-morphs and cement-encrusted plant fragments) and mainly sub-spherical 'oncoidal' tufa clasts, with bands and lenses of fine very chalk and coarse sand-sized tufa (intraclast and detrital tufa) and small chalk pieces and little if no matrix. Localised evidence of iron mobilisation can be seen along the depositional boundaries between clast sizes. Some calcareous pellets, but no calcareous pseudomorphs, were noted. Similar deposits (of Bronze Age date) have been described elsewhere in the Test Valley at La Sagesse, Romsey (Allen 1991; Green 1994).	A typical chalk stream deposit; often accumulating as a low bank on a wide stream bed, or against stream edges. These are low energy deposits, which are continually re-worked down the stream system. Typical of clean chalk streams with good flow and little net silty sedimentation.
176	Main deposit, as above but with common to frequent very small to medium rounded chalk and tufaceous clasts (typically sub-spherical cyanolith 'oncoidal' tufa clasts, with some oblate clasts), occasional large chalk 'blocks' and rare medium flints. The matrix is obviously more calcareous and patches (but not lenses) of very fine chalky stones derived from the calcareous brash were present.	This is a mixed deposit, representing alluvial accretion in a slow-water soil-filled relict channel. Whether the deposits seen here are primary (<i>i.e.</i> deposited under fluvial action) or secondary (<i>i.e.</i> deposited in a stream, and removed by human action and redeposited) was undetermined.
176a	Generally a silty clay, possibly humic with some small and very small chalk stones, very rare flints and a weak, massive, blocky structure.	
172	Coarse and fine flint gravel in a dark humic loam with some very small chalk and tufaceous clasts (intraclast tufa). No structure or orientation could be detected within the gravel clasts. Shells of <i>Trichia</i> spp. (land snail) and Planorbids (aquatic species) were noted.	?Dumped gravel, possibly derived from cleaning of the watercourse.
171	The majority of the sediments were allocated a single context number although distinct layers were obvious. The sequence includes layers about 50-100mm+ thick of virtually stone-free silty clays with weak, massive structure (no laminations or flood couplets obvious) separated by silty clays with common fine chalky pieces and rare medium flints. Inclusion of dark very humic material may represent eroded bankside peaty topsoil.	Slackwater and edge of channel ponding (but not a pond).

cob wall (134, not shown on figure) *c.* 0.4m wide at the junction of this surface and the stream channel.

The earliest phase of archaeological activity thus appears to comprise a series of compact and worn surfaces, probably external yards rather

than interior floors. These are bounded to the north by the outer edge of an active stream channel which required constant revetment of the bank; this was achieved through the dumping of clays which were almost certainly recovered from the base of the channel. As the deposition of this

material gradually constrained and formalised the route of the channel, the yard surface was extended over this reclaimed area. All of this activity was taking place in the 12th/13th centuries, but the paucity of the ceramic evidence and the obvious problem of residuality within the dumped channel-edge deposits make any tighter chronology difficult to achieve.

Phase 2: Later medieval/early post-medieval (15th/16th century)

This phase was present only within the southern part of the site and was characterised by the deliberate raising of the ground level over the most recent cobbled yard surface. This was achieved with the use of a considerable quantity of roof tiles, both ceramic and slate, mixed with mortar to form a fairly solid surface (Fig. 4, 112).

This surface was then cut by a number of features including a possible bedding trench or flowerbed (90) and a planting border (113). This latter feature contained a number of regularly-spaced planting pits (114; 119) and it was parallel with (although *c.* 2m south of) the cob wall referred to in Phase 1 above (134). The bedding trench (90) was partially sealed by a rubble-built plinth (83); this was abutted by traces of an interrupted narrow north-south aligned wall (80; 84) which continued beyond the southern edge of the excavation area.

The planting border, plinth and bedding trench were then sealed by dump deposits of rubble containing silty clay along with quantities of ceramic building material and animal bone. These deposits formed the make-up for a surface of rammed chalk (31; 10) which had been cut by a number of narrow bedding trenches (Fig. 5). The chalk surface had been substantially truncated to the north and south by later activities.

Use of the southern part of the site in this phase appears to have changed from external yard to formal or semi-formal garden with planting pits cut through a solid and potentially well-drained surface. A plinth and associated wall represented features added to this garden. A later redevelopment of the garden utilised rammed chalk for the main surface with a series of narrow and closely-spaced planting trenches. This latter stage may well represent a vegetable or kitchen produce garden. The edge of the

stream during this phase was not clear but the channel is likely to have still been extant.

Phase 3: Post-medieval – present (17th century onwards)

The southern part of the excavation area was again raised in height, this time by way of a levelled dump of silty clay riverine material topped with a mortar surface (06). The pottery suggests that this occurred in the 17th century. A large irregular feature of unknown function (25) lay within the centre of the excavation area, sealed by a sequence of mortar-based surfaces associated to the north with a wall of 17th/18th century date (13). This wall lay directly over the earlier cob wall (134) and shared the same north-east-south-west alignment. To the south of the wall was a deposit of gravel (03) which appears to have been used for levelling this area and possibly for drainage.

A second wall (12) shared the same alignment as wall 13 and a bedding trench ran along the southern edge of wall 12. This was located in the north-western corner of the excavation area; although separated from wall 13 by dumps of riverine clay and gravel it is likely that these two features are contemporary. The dumped material infilled the former channel (180) indicating that the stream had been diverted and/or canalised and no longer flowed through the site, although walls 12 and 13 reflected the location and alignment of this former feature. This dumped material contained ashlar building stone, some of which was burnt, and also pieces of roofing slates.

The site was reorganised again sometime in the 18th century, possibly during the construction of the current house. A north-south aligned wall (76) divided the excavation area into two halves, with planting pits evident on both sides. This situation remained unchanged until the wall was demolished immediately prior to the archaeological excavation.

THE NATURE OF THE STREAM: FLUVIAL SEDIMENTOLOGY *by Michael J Allen*

The Test is a shallow (less than 1m deep) classic chalk river meandering in a wide floodplain and flowing over clean flint and chalk gravel. The

broad flat floodplain contains some shallow (less than 2m deep) alluvial deposits, in contrast to other major rivers in southern England in which up to 10m (Rother Valley) of post-glacial alluvium has been recorded (Scaife & Burrin 1983; 1987).

The floodplain sequence at Wherwell is more readily allied with deposits from River Anton at Fullerton (Evans *et al.* 1992; Williams & Evans 2000) and Bossington (Davies *et al.* 1996), both in the Test Valley, and the Wylye at Kingsmead (Evans *et al.* 1992; Davies 1998) and Codford (Allen *pers. obs.*; J G Evans *pers. comm.*), both Wiltshire.

Tufaceous gravels and marls are mapped along the floodplain in the Upper Test Valley and have been recorded at several locations, often stratified with archaeological material. At the convent of La Sagesse (Romsey), tufaceous gravels and marls were inter-stratified with artefacts of Late Iron Age (Green 1994), whereas higher up the Test to the south of Andover, tufaceous deposition seems to be associated with medieval activity (Allen *pers. obs.*).

Stratified fluvial deposits were encountered during the excavations at Wherwell Priory. These have been described in detail in order to provide some indication of the nature of deposition and formation and thus of the fluvial history of the site. The alluvial deposits ranged from fine-grained silty clay calcareous marls to fine and medium tufaceous 'gravels'. Excavation revealed that these can be divided into a series of channel-edge deposits cut by a former stream channel (Figs. 2, 3). Fluvial sequences exposed in the sections were described following terminology outlined by Hodgson (1976), and classification of freshwater tufa by Pedley (1990).

Basal deposits

Excavation through the floodplain material and overlying archaeological deposits exposed a number of small cryoturbation features (e.g. Fig. 3, 198). A cryoturbated dark grey silty clay (196) was present at a depth of c. 1.40m below current ground level (43.49m aOD). This contained fine calcareous tufa; typically phytoclast comprising allochthonous, cement-encrusted plant fragments and micro-detrital tufa (typical of marsh deposits cf. 'spring chalk', Kerney *et al.* 1980); it is a

periglacial deposit, probably of Late Devensian date (pre 10,000 BP).

Channel-edge deposits

Overlying the obviously periglacial material was a series of bedded stream- or channel-edge deposits (Fig. 3, 191-5). These comprised soft greyish-brown silts and pale yellowish-brown tufaceous silts with common fine and medium clastic tufa deposits. The deposits contained fine phytoclasts (plant pseudomorphs) and also sub-spherical cynothic 'oncoidal' tufa (sub-spherical cemented nodules) typical of rivers rather than oblate forms more typical of sluggish streams. Well-defined lenses of both tufaceous clasts and intraclast tufa (silt and sand grade detrital tufa) give a strongly dipping and bedded form to these deposits indicating channel-edge deposition. The clearly defined nature of these bands gives an illusion of anthropogenically dumped horizons, but it is likely they represent distinct and limited deposits of well-sorted fluvial material. The consistent nature of the matrix within each band is inconsistent with artificial make-up.

However, overlying these channel-edge fluvial deposits were compacted and mottled silts, with no depositional structures, laminations or banding (108; 186; 187; 190). They were largely pale grey to pale yellowish-brown and suggest redeposited and dumped channel-edge deposits, i.e. deliberate make-up.

Channel 180

The base of the channel comprised a largely brecciated but water-worn surface consisting of medium to coarse flint gravels (178), along with a compacted, structureless chalky marl with a smooth water-worn surface (weathered/eroded watercourse base) in which a series of flint-filled hollows occurred. These are likely to have been gravel-filled riffle pools created by localised scouring events. This basal horizon represents a former base of a wide stream bed, possibly of early post-glacial date.

The channel deposits were described in detail to provide information of the nature of the watercourse. They are presented below in correct stratigraphic order (Table 1).

The channel fills are typical of clean, calcareous, chalk streams with moderate flow, which may have edge vegetation (reeds) but have relatively clear, shallow, mid-channel flow. The form suggests that the channel is migrating northwards across the floodplain. The channel infill deposits indicate a wide, clean, chalk stream with slightly more sluggish, slack water along its margins. The accumulation of the low-density tuffaceous clasts may be due to flow velocity being decreased by weedy vegetation (as at La Sagesse, Romsey). The channel-edge deposits (176) are more mixed as a result of erosion or infill deposits at this point.

Dumping of material on this edge, or on former edges, probably represents the cleaning out of a channel to ensure good water flow and the maintenance of a clear boundary between dry and wet land. However, some dumping may have facilitated the establishment of yard surfaces (Fig. 3).

THE FINDS

The reported finds assemblages are those from the evaluation and subsequent excavation of the site to the south of The Priory; material from the evaluation and observations to the north of the house is not discussed here.

Pottery by Lorraine Mephram

The total pottery assemblage amounts to 881 sherds (10,275 g), most of which is of medieval or later date but there is also a small quantity of earlier material, all occurring as residual sherds in later contexts. This material includes two later prehistoric sherds (sandy fabric, probably Iron Age); six Romano-British sherds (one Oxfordshire white-slipped mortarium, two coarse greywares, one coarse grog-tempered sherd and two sherds from a north African amphora); and two Saxon (one organic-tempered and one wheel-thrown greyware).

Only the medieval assemblage will be discussed in detail here, but some of the earlier sherds merit further comment. The presence of two sherds of North African amphora (almost

certainly from the same vessel) is noteworthy since this is not an amphora type found commonly in Britain and there is only a handful of other Roman pottery from the site. The fabric of these two sherds is the lime-rich variant generally associated with the earlier vessel types (2nd/3rd century AD) in the North African series (Tomber & Dore 1998, 101; Peacock & Williams 1986, class 33). Also of interest is the single sherd of wheelthrown Late Saxon Sandy Ware, which has been identified in small quantities at Winchester, where it is dated c. AD 850 – pre-950 (Biddle & Collis 1978; Matthews forthcoming).

Methods

The complete assemblage has been subject to detailed fabric and form analysis, following the standard Wessex Archaeology pottery recording system (Morris 1994); details of surface treatment and decoration have also been recorded. Fabric codes within the Wessex Archaeology type series (Group E wares) have been used for wares of known type or source (and correlated with national type series where appropriate); others have been defined on the basis of dominant inclusion type (Group F, flint-tempered; Group Q, sandy). Full details of fabrics and other variables can be found in the archive, while abbreviated fabric descriptions are given in Table 2 with the total quantifications by fabric type.

Medieval fabrics and forms

The medieval assemblage contains the expected range of largely locally produced coarsewares supplemented by finer glazed wares from a wider range of sources. Overall the range of types represented here is closely comparable to that observed at the medieval rural settlement at Foxcotte, approximately 10km to the north (Matthews 1985). Coarsewares are dominated by flint-tempered and chalk/flint-tempered 'Kennet Valley' wares, types which are widely distributed across west Berkshire, north Hampshire and north-east Wiltshire from the 11th to the late 14th century. One later 13th century source is known south of Newbury (Mephram 2000) and another (undated) is suspected in the Savernake Forest (Vince 1997, 65). The vessel forms present here

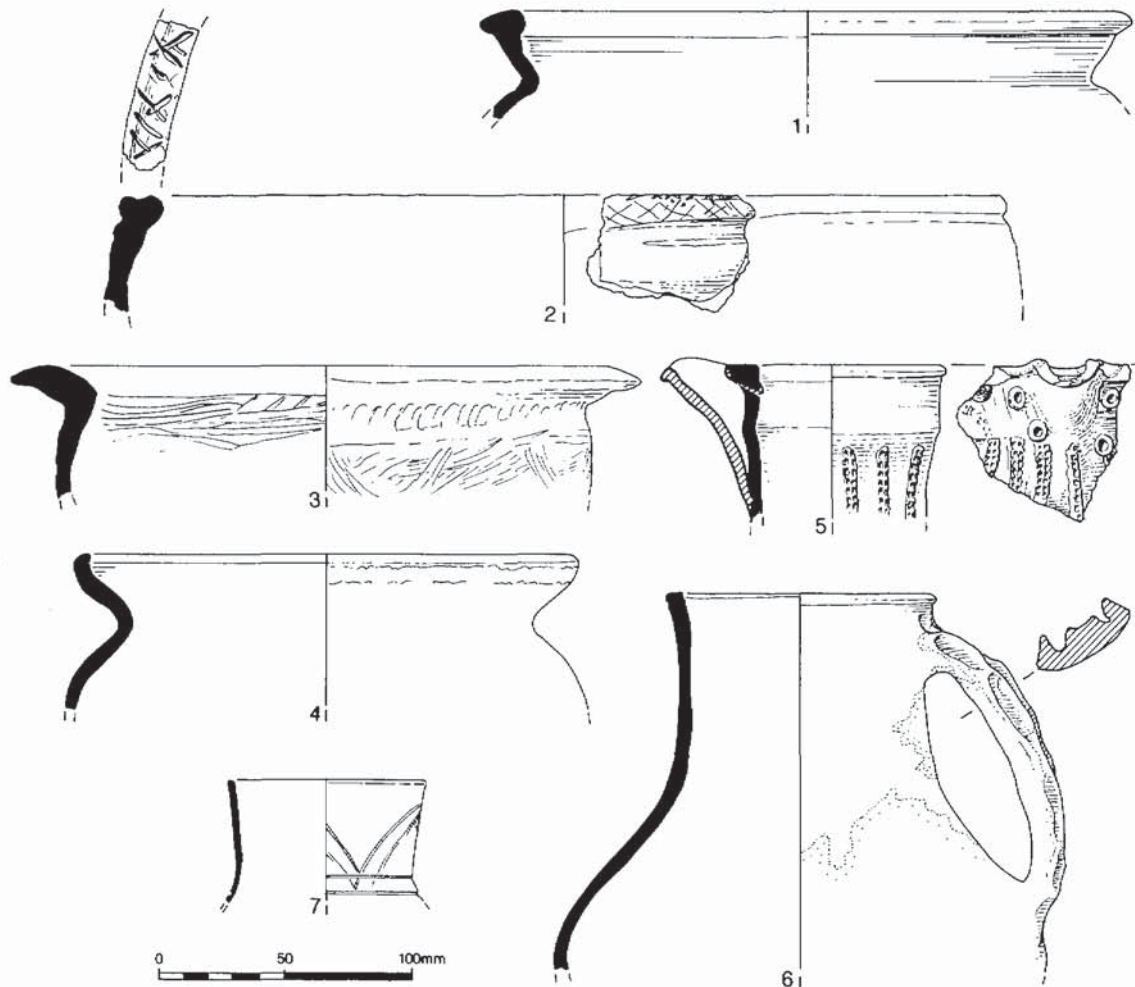


Fig. 6 Selected medieval and Post-medieval pottery

1. Jar rim, Kennet Valley chalk-/flint-tempered ware (E442). PRN 350, context 187, channel-edge deposit.
2. Bowl rim, Kennet Valley flint-tempered ware (E441); incised rim. PRN 261, context 161, yard surface.
3. Jar rim, Laverstock-type coarseware (E422); scratch-marked exterior. PRN 227, feature 134, collapsed cob wall.
4. Jar rim, coarse sandy ware (Q403). PRN 284, context 172, watercourse 180.
5. Jug rim with bridge spout, Laverstock-type fineware (E421); applied rouletted strips and stamped ring-and-dot motifs; overall green glaze. PRN 324, context 178, watercourse 180.
6. Jug rim with strap handle, coarse sandy ware (Q403); finger-impressed handle; patchy, mottled green glaze. PRN 316, context 176, watercourse 180.
7. Mug or small jug rim, early post-medieval redware (E600); clear lead glaze. PRN 35, from subsoil in evaluation trench 3.

Table 2 Pottery totals by fabric type

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt.</i>
PREHISTORIC		
Q1: Iron Age sandy	2	19
ROMANO-BRITISH		
E210: Oxon. mortarium (OXF WS: see Tomber and Dore 1998, 176 for description)	1	30
E260: N African Amphora (NAF AM 1: <i>ibid.</i> , 101 for description)	2	95
G100: Coarse grog-tempered	1	12
Q100: Coarse greyware	2	30
<i>sub-total Romano-British</i>	6	167
SAXON		
V400: Organic-tempered	1	8
Q410: Late Saxon sandy ware	1	4
<i>sub-total Saxon</i>	2	12
MEDIEVAL		
E426: ?N French monochrome	1	1
E420: Laverstock-type fineware I	28	319
E421: Laverstock-type fineware II	113	1412
E422: Laverstock-type coarseware	39	554
E441: Kennet Valley flint-tempered wares	151	2228
E442: Kennet Valley chalk-/flint-tempered wares	112	1821
F400: coarse, flint-tempered fabric (early Kennet Valley ware?)	3	37
Q400: coarse-grained, oxidised, micaceous sandy fabric	156	292
Q401: coarse-grained, oxidised sandy fabric, glazed	4	26
Q402: medium-grained, dense sandy fabric, glazed	6	82
Q403: medium-grained, oxidised sandy fabric	30	664
Q404: fine-grained, oxidised sandy fabric, glazed	4	47
Q405: medium-grained, oxidised sandy fabric with rare flint, glazed	12	134
Q406: very fine, oxidised sandy fabric, glazed	5	39
Q407: fine-grained, oxidised sandy fabric (South Hampshire redware)	10	133
Q408: coarse-grained, unoxidised sandy fabric	1	6
Q409: Andover sandy/flint-gritted (MJFS: see Matthews 1997 for description)	19	382

Table 2 (cont.)

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt.</i>
E451: Coarse Border Ware (CBW: see Pearce and Vince 1988, 9 for description)	3	43
E454: 'Tudor Green' ware (TUDG: <i>ibid.</i> , 10-11 for description)	40	109
	<i>sub-total medieval</i>	737 8329
POST-MEDIEVAL		
E600: Coarse redwares (various sources)	50	901
E606: Staffordshire-type mottled ware	1	13
E611: Border Ware	6	61
E640: Verwood-type earthenware	12	235
E730: Tin-glazed earthenwares (various sources)	6	34
E770/E780/E790: Stonewares (various sources)	13	133
E740/E750/E751: Industrial wares	38	140
	<i>Sub-total post-medieval</i>	126 1517
OTHER		
Unidentified	2	11
not found	6	220
OVERALL TOTAL	881	10,275

consist mainly of jars with characteristic expanded rims (Fig. 6, 1), along with a few dishes and bowls (Fig. 6, 2). A fabric defined here as Q409 may be related to the Kennet Valley flint-tempered wares; although generally sandier and including glazed wares, it has also been identified in very small quantities in Andover (Matthews 1997, fabric MJFS).

Other coarsewares include a small quantity of Laverstock types and other sandy wares of uncertain, probably fairly local source(s) (Fig 6, 4). One possible source is the late 12th/early 13th century production centre at Ashampstead in west Berkshire (Mephram & Heaton 1995). The Laverstock types include some identifiable early forms (heavily scratch-marked jars of late 12th/early 13th century type: Fig. 6, 3), while some tripod pitcher sherds (comb-decorated and glazed, with tubular spouts) fall into a group of 'South-East

Wiltshire pitchers' (Vince 1981) which predate the known 13th century kilns (Musty *et al.* 1969) but which were almost certainly made in the same area from the late 11th into the 12th century.

A large proportion of the finer glazed wares were also supplied by the Laverstock kilns, mainly in the form of jugs, some decorated with a variety of slipped, applied and stamped motifs (Fig. 6, 5). However, the generally low incidence of decoration (less than 15% of sherds by number are decorated) suggests a high proportion of plain glazed wares. One costrel lug, a tripod foot (possibly from a pipkin) and part of a possible lamp were also recognised.

Other glazed wares (again probably mainly jug forms: Fig 6, 6) include a small quantity of 'South Hampshire redwares', which are found from the mid 13th well into the 14th century in Portsmouth and Winchester, although of unknown source

(Fox & Barton 1986, 80). The visual distinction between these wares and the Laverstock-type finewares is not always clear-cut, although the decorative motifs of the former are limited to iron-rich slip bands. Some of the unidentified sandy wares may derive from a related source. The evaluation produced one possible import, a body sherd in a fine whiteware with mottled green glaze, comparable to northern French wares of the 13th century.

The medieval ceramic sequence

Together these wares have a potential date range from 12th–14th century, with an emphasis on the 13th/early 14th century. Close dating of the stratigraphic sequence is hampered by the small size of most context groups (only four contexts produced more than 25 sherds), and the likelihood of residuality – the larger context groups recovered from the upper fills of the stream channel, for example, show a high degree of abrasion.

Material which can be relatively confidently dated to the 12th century (i.e. the tripod pitchers) all occurs residually in later contexts. The stratigraphically earliest contexts containing pottery (alluvial clay 205, pit 168, yard surface 161) contained no diagnostically 13th century wares (e.g. Laverstock-type finewares), but produced coarsewares (Laverstock-type and Kennet Valley wares) which cannot be more closely dated within a date range of 12th/13th century.

At the latter end of the medieval sequence there is little which can be seen to extend the date range beyond the 14th century, although there are three sherds of later 14th/early 15th century Coarse Border Ware from the Surrey/Hampshire border industry (Pearce & Vince 1988), and 15th/16th century wares are present in the form of 'Tudor Green' (from the same industry) and early glazed redwares, including a necked cup from an evaluation subsoil context (Fig. 6, 7). These 15th/16th century wares serve to date the possible garden features in the southern part of the site (Phase 2), in which they were concentrated.

Post-medieval

Later post-medieval wares are less common (see Table 2); these include Verwood-type earthenwares

from east Dorset; Border Ware from the Surrey/Hampshire border; coarse redwares, probably from a variety of sources; stonewares, both English and German; tin-glazed earthenware, including one possibly imported sherd; and later industrial wares. Most of these sherds derived from topsoil and subsoil contexts during the evaluation.

Other Finds by Emma Loader

Iron Objects

A total of 200 iron objects was recovered from the excavation. The majority (167) are of structural origin, comprising 160 nails, three window fittings (two hinge pivots and one latch rest), two strips, one staple and a key. Of these only the key (residual in a modern context) is datable, and is a post-medieval type with kidney-shaped bow and projecting stem (cf. Margeson 1993, fig. 119, 1290–1296). A further 21 unidentifiable objects, including flat strips and miscellaneous lumps, may include other structural objects such as binding fragments.

Dress/personal items comprise a purse mount and a small casket key. The purse mount (Fig. 7, 1), for a leather or cloth purse, is a late 15th/early 16th century type (LMMC 1940, fig. 52, type B) and was found in the fill of feature 25 (i.e. a post-medieval context). The casket key, with a simple round bow and solid stem (Fig. 7, 2), is not a closely datable type but would fit with the 13th/early 14th century date suggested by the associated pottery (upper fill 172 of watercourse 180).

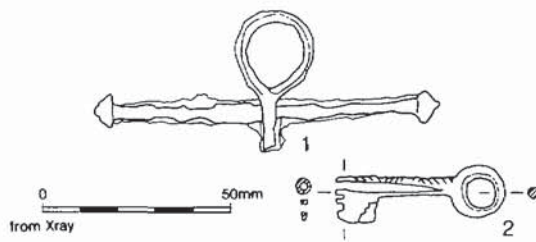


Fig. 7 Medieval purse mount and casket key

1. Iron purse mount. Object no 29, fill of feature 25.
2. Iron casket key. Object No 86, context 172, watercourse 180.

Four knives were recovered from post-medieval contexts; two scale tang knives and two tang/handle fragments. One of the scale tang knives has a decorated copper alloy sheet-metal handle. Other tools comprise two possible chisels and a small ferrule, again all from post-medieval contexts.

Three horseshoes were found, all in medieval contexts. The earliest of these was of late 11th–13th century type (Clark 1995, type 2a) and came from yard surface 161; the other two were of 13th–15th century type (*ibid.*, type 4 and type 3/4).

Copper Alloy Objects

Twelve copper alloy objects were recovered; recognisable items include five lace ends, two small wire pins, one pin or needle, a small, sub-rectangular fitting, a small stud and a spoon bowl. Only the sub-rectangular fitting, possibly a dress fitting (*cf.* Crummy 1988, fig. 102:3612), came from a medieval context during the evaluation.

Lead Objects

The lead objects comprise fragments of window came from a Phase 1 levelling deposit and two waste fragments from post-medieval contexts.

Ceramic Building Material

The total assemblage of ceramic building material recovered consists of 2112 fragments (173,001 g). Of this total, 1569 fragments (114,079 g), comprising all of the excavation and part of the evaluation assemblage, have been recorded by type within each context, with (for roof tiles), details of fabric, glaze and peg holes; all details are held in archive. Quantities by type are presented in Table 3. Much of this ceramic building material occurred within deliberate dumps of demolition rubble.

Roman – Thirty-six fragments (6241 g) of Roman tile include two of box flue tile (combed), four of *tegula*, and two of *imbrex*. All of the Roman tile is residual, and was recovered from medieval or later contexts. The largest group derived from the upper fills of watercourse 180. Given the very small quantity of other Romano-British artefacts from the site, it seems most likely that this material was imported to the site for use in medieval or post-medieval structures. It may well have derived from the Roman villa and associated

Table 3 Ceramic building material types

Type	No	Wt (g)
Romano-British	36	6241
flat roof	1375	82807
curved	12	1866
ridge	31	1766
?roof furniture	2	87
floor	20	3477
decorated floor	11	1521
brick	60	15397
drainpipe	1	47
indeterminate	21	870
not scanned	543	58922
Total	2112	173001

water mills at Fullerton, less than 2km to the south-west.

Roof tiles and roof furniture – Roof tiles were the commonest forms found (1375 fragments; 82,807 g). Many of these have surviving peg holes, and a small proportion (133 fragments) are glazed. Twelve different fabric types have been identified amongst the roof tile, based on variations in colour and inclusions visible by eye; some may be merely variants of a single fabric.

Most of these fabrics can be identified as medieval, and a comparable range has been found, for example, in medieval contexts in Salisbury, particularly the distinctive pale-firing fabrics. A number of possible local sources in south-east Wiltshire and west Hampshire are documented from the early 14th century, including Alderbury, Mottisfont, Michelmersh and Tytherley (Hare 1991, table 1). To the north, 13th century tile production is documented in the Highclere area (Dunlop 1940, 71).

A few fragments in eight of these fabrics derive from identifiable ridge tiles, or are indefinite curved fragments. Ridge tile fragments also occur in fabrics comparable to the products of the Laverstock pottery kilns (Table 2, fabrics E421 and E422), which also produced roof furniture (but not, apparently, flat roof tiles; *Musty et al.* 1969), and in a fabric comparable to pottery fabric Q400 (probably a local sandy ware; see above). Further ridge tile fragments may remain unidentified amongst the smaller glazed flat tile fragments.

There are also two possible fragments of more elaborate, glazed roof furniture, one from the evaluation and a second, with an applied thumbed strip, from a post-medieval dump deposit. Both are in Laverstock-type fineware fabrics (equivalent to pottery fabric E421: see above) and could derive from louvers or finials.

Floor tiles – Floor tiles, both plain and decorated, are also present. Four motifs are identifiable on the decorated tiles, one of which is a border design (five examples); a fifth design is unrecognisable. All four identified designs are common and can be matched at both Clarendon Palace and the Nash Hill kiln, Lacock, in groups dated to c. 1240–1260 (Eames 1988, groups I and II; Eames 1974, groups IV, V and VIII); only one example (a border tile) occurred in a medieval context.

Other types – Other types present comprise bricks (all handmade, unfroged examples) and three wall tiles, of which two are tin-glazed (one polychrome, possibly a Dutch import) whilst the third is a glazed, moulded plaster tile bearing a date stamp of 1561. This latter item was found during the evaluation.

Stone

The assemblage of stone consists of 214 pieces (85,791g), most of which are fragments of building material, although there is also a small group of rotary quern fragments in quartz conglomerate and tufa. The quern fragments are likely to be Romano-British in date, but may have been reused as building material during the medieval period; the quartz conglomerate fragments were associated with the later medieval/early post-medieval garden features, including the rubble-built plinth (83), and

ceramic building material of the same date was also found in these features. The tufa quern fragments came from the upper fills of watercourse 180, again alongside ceramic building material of the same date.

The building material includes fragments of ashlar (one almost complete block of 190 × 180 mm came from a late medieval/early post-medieval garden feature), mouldings and roof tiles. Many pieces are of indeterminate origin, and several pieces appear to have been reused, as shown by the presence of mortar on broken surfaces.

A range of different stone types is represented, although the assemblage is dominated by limestones, including oolitic, shelly and sandy varieties; these stone types are found throughout the medieval deposits, although one of the earliest stratified pieces is a fragment from a chamfered greensand block from yard surface 204. This is the only occurrence of greensand on the site.

The finer-grained limestones, which include probable examples of Chilmark stone from the Tisbury area of Wiltshire, appear to have been used for mouldings as well as ashlar. Several of these fine-grained fragments show signs of burning on original and broken surfaces, and may relate to a single destruction/demolition episode; these were found in upper fills of watercourse 180 and from the later medieval/early post-medieval garden features. The oolitic limestones, represented here by just three small indeterminate fragments, could also derive from the limited outcrops around Tisbury, or could come from further afield in west Wiltshire or Dorset.

Two types of shelly limestone are present, one of which can be identified as Quarr stone from the Isle of Wight. This material was probably used here for ashlar blocks, although none of the fragments are diagnostic. Quarr stone was worked out around the 14th century; its earliest occurrence here is in the upper fills of watercourse 180. Other shelly limestones, more probably from north Wiltshire, were apparently used for roof tiles; their occurrence in an area well supplied in the medieval period by ceramic tile production centres is interesting, but paralleled at other high status sites within the county before the late 14th century (Hare 1991, 90–2).

They do not, however, occur here in medieval contexts, but only in later deposits, and there is always the possibility that they could be of Romano-British date.

Slate from the south-west peninsula was also used extensively in Hampshire for roof tiles in Hampshire during the early medieval period (*ibid.*, 90); it is found here in small quantities, the earliest occurrence being once again in the upper fills of watercourse 180.

Other Finds

Both vessel and window glass were recovered. All the vessel glass is of post-medieval date, and includes green wine bottles as well as other bottles and jars, none dating prior to the 17th century. Amongst the clay pipes are two marked fragments: a mid-17th century bowl heel-stamped 'FT' within a decorative border (unidentified maker); and one stem stamp of William Lawrence of Winchester (*c.* 1700–1715; Atkinson 1980, fig. 1v).

Other finds comprise small quantities of fired clay fragments, including a fragment of cob walling, some fresh-looking worked flint (most of which probably derives from recent flint walling), plain wall plaster and a single worked bone bobbin. A small quantity of slag (8.3 kg) suggests ironworking (probably smithing) in the near vicinity, but cannot be definitively ascribed to any particular phase; fragments of slag came from several contexts, mainly within the medieval sequence, with the largest group (11 fragments) deriving from the channel-edge deposits (176) within channel 180. The overall quantity is too small to allow full characterisation of the nature and scale of any ironworking activity on the site.

DISCUSSION

The archaeological investigations at the site of the proposed new pool house at the Priory have established the presence of stratified medieval yard surfaces and part of a previously unknown stream course. Until the 13th century, the excavation area and the surrounding area was occupied by wet and marshy ground, bordering the edge of a natural stream course, which is likely to have precluded any initial development within the excavation area. No

pre-medieval features were identified, although a small range of residual material was identified within the channel fills, including Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon material.

Sometime in the 13th century, the southern third of the excavation area was reclaimed, gradually raising the ground level by an alternating series of horizontal yard surfaces, mortar and rubble and riverine-derived material. The reclamation is likely to have effectively narrowed the natural stream course, bringing it under control. Although the datable material does not allow for a more precise date, this activity is likely to be linked with the major phase of renovation and expansion initiated by abbess Euphemia in the mid 1250s. The observed riverine-derived deposits do suggest regular cleaning out of the channel to ensure a good water flow and a well-defined channel, which within the excavation area was active into the 14th century, if not longer.

It is possible that a rubble-filled continuation of this newly identified stream course may account for a broad feature, between 14–17m in width, which was located to the north of the Priory in the resistivity survey of 1998 (Fig. 8), and which may be associated with an adjacent structure. Although the feature was initially interpreted as a possible inner precinct wall, it does appear to merge with the present watercourse at the northern edge of the Wherwell Priory grounds (Roberts 1998, 152). It lies slightly to the east of the stream course as recorded on a map of 1744 (Fig. 8) and could well be a precursor of that course.

Certainly, the presence of marshy ground in this area to the north of The Priory would have been a major factor in the recorded near collapse of the presbytery (at the eastern end of the abbey church) in the 1250s. The unstable nature of the ground is illustrated by the extreme measures taken in the rebuilding, with the new foundations being sunk up to 12 feet in depth (*ibid.*, 11).

The nature and possible associations of the stream course identified in the excavation is especially relevant in the unresolved debate on the original function of 'The Stables', the possible medieval portion of the present Priory and the suite of probable medieval buildings immediately to the east of The Priory. The recent work has

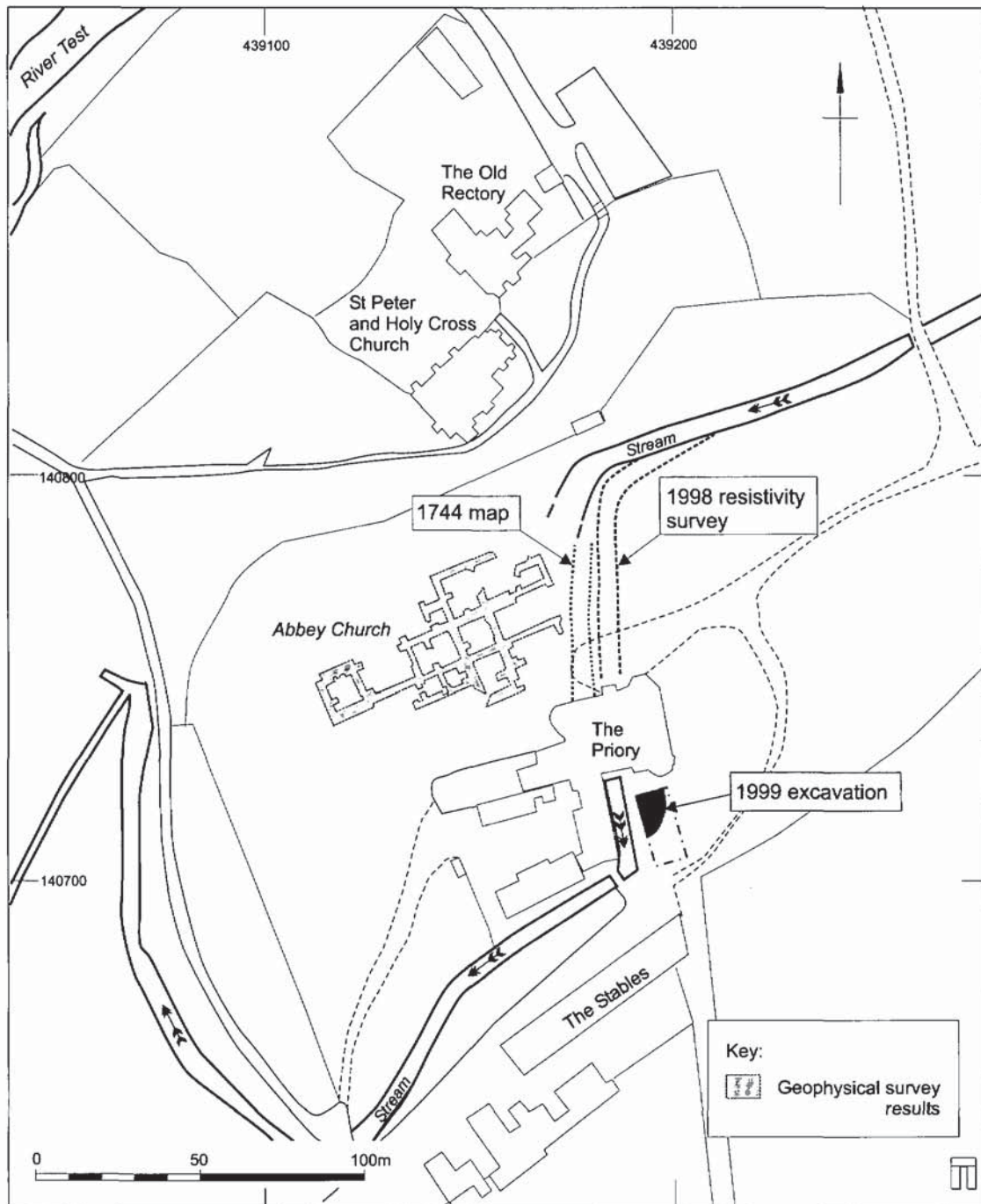


Fig. 8 Resistivity survey 1997-1998

placed great significance on the course of the present canalised watercourse, known as the 'trout stream' and it is unfortunate that within the excavation area no direct relationship could be found between the 'controlled' natural stream course and the canalised watercourse. However, a 'drift' in the position of the watercourse was noted, gradually moving further to the north-west, i.e. towards the canalised channel. It may be that the 'trout stream' is simply a surviving part of the former natural watercourse, although there is no firm evidence to support this.

The route of the newly discovered stream course is likely to take it close to the suite of probable medieval buildings to the east of The Priory. It is interesting that the Wherwell cartulary, when describing the arrangement of the offices attached to the infirmary, makes a clear reference to these being 'by a river bank' (Clark 1999, 14). This description is more in keeping with the stream course observed within the excavation area and would have existed along the possible route of a watercourse to the north of the Priory, rather than the surviving canalised channel.

The 1997 evaluation to the north of The Priory identified the location of an inhumation cemetery almost certainly associated with the Benedictine nunnery of Wherwell Abbey. A pre-cemetery

phase of activity comprised the excavation of several large pits, possibly for the extraction of tufaceous gravel to use in construction. The intercutting nature of the subsequent graves suggest use of the cemetery over a reasonable length of time, and the limited examination of the skeletons showed a predominantly female adult population. Cemetery activity must then have moved elsewhere within the abbey complex, as this area was then subject to the construction of a number of substantial buildings associated with the claustral range attached to the abbey church. This sequence is poorly dated; pottery of 12th–14th century date was recovered from one of the pre-cemetery pits, and a sherd of late medieval Tudor Green pottery was found in the foundation trench for one of the post-cemetery walls.

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