

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT JESUS COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE
1992**

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INTRODUCTION

Anticipating the construction of a Library and Computing Centre, in July, 1992, the C.A.U. was commissioned by Jesus College to undertake an archaeological field assessment. Situated within the College grounds south of the Chapel, the site is set back from Jesus Lane by c. 5 - 12m (TL 5425/5882). It presently falls within the area of a temporary builder's yard and extends west for 3 - 11m into the Master's Garden. On its eastern side the builder's yard is bounded by a listed brick wall. Thought in part to be of 16/17th century date, it will be demolished should the proposed development proceed. The new building will encroach west into the paved passageway on the other side of the wall, where unfortunately it was impractical to excavate at this time (fig. 1).

In response to the development proposals the field assessment was undertaken with three major aims. Firstly, to investigate the presence/absence, 'character', degree of preservation and chronological range of archaeological deposits. Secondly, in relationship to Richmond's recent proposal that the nuns' cemetery might lie adjacent to the southern side of the Chapel axial opposite the cloister (instead of as usually thought its north side; 1992: 3 - 4), the issue of whether graves extend into this area was also a priority. Finally, the listed brick wall was investigated in order to more firmly establish its date and determine the construction of its foundation (e.g. the potential re-use of Medieval moulded building stone in its fabric).

As the fieldwork progressed a more general research objective arose. That is, the fact that this site has witnessed the succession of a nunnery by a (Medieval) college, each circumscribed and largely gender-exclusive communities. Given the pressures of time and budgetary restraints, we were unable to re-direct the excavations in such a way so as to satisfactorily address this issue - that must await future investigations. Nevertheless, awareness of it influenced how the site was conceptualised and eventually interpreted (see concluding *Discussion*).

Archaeological Background and Previous Researches

Apart from architecturally-directed trenching (wall exposing) at the end of the last century, no formal excavations have occurred within the College grounds. A broad array of finds have, nevertheless, been recovered through various groundworks. Roman pottery has been found in Jesus Close north of North Court and Jesus Lane (opposite no. 32); Roman glass has been reported from the College itself (Browne 1974: Map 4; Gazetteer # 1, 3, 16; page 22-3). During the course of drain digging at the turn of the century, just east of the College, Roman pottery, Saxon metalwork and possibly an inhumation and bone-handle knife of that date were recovered (*Ibid*: # 15).

Medieval building debris has been recovered from the Lane in front of the College and a brooch of that time has been found in Chapel Court (*Ibid*: # 5, 18). Though it must have derived from a personal collection or museum, interestingly enough, Italo-Greek prehistoric pottery has been reported from one of the College's gardens (*Ibid*: # 17).

In 1893/4 excavations were undertaken north of the Chapel to trace the Chapter House of the Nunnery (*Ibid*: # 2; Gray 1898: 64). The present whereabouts of the recovered (non-masonry) artefacts is unfortunately not known. Gray, however, mentions that they included fragments of painted glass and two complete pots, one a black Cologne ware of possible 13th century date (1894: 121). Human remains, probably those of nuns, were discovered northeast of the Chapel in 1848-50; skeletons believed to be associated with the parish Church were encountered in the Master's Garden, at the southeastern end of the Chapel, in 1884 (Gray 1898: 64).

Historical Summary

Jesus College was founded in 1500 occupying the buildings of the Benedictine nunnery of St Radegund (established c. 1133-8) following its suppression in 1496. Given that the documentary and architectural history of the Nunnery has been as thoroughly researched as the present sources allow (Gray 1898; RCHME 1959; Haigh 1988), it need not be discussed here except inasmuch as it reflects upon the site proper.

The site falls within the area of the *Church-/Fairyard*, where the Nunnery had been granted the right to hold an annual fair (August 14th & 15th, plus latter the 16th) by King Stephen, later known as Garlick Fair. The fairground was apparently bounded by a 'mud wall' and entered by a gate opening onto Jesus Lane. Upon the site's inclusion within the Master's Garden the fair was moved to the western side of the College, the area of Garlic Fair Lane (now Park Street) where it continued until the early 19th century (Gray 1898: 49 - 50, fig. III).

It is difficult to tie down the date at which the fairyard was superseded by the Master's Garden, if indeed this was the case. The garden was assigned to the Master 'from early times'; the brick wall surrounding was built, in part, in 1681-2 (Willis & Clark 1886 [II]: 179). This must be the wall depicted on Loggan's map and College print of 1688. The garden is also shown walled on the Lyne map of 1574, this presumably is an earlier build (fig. 3 & 4; NB: Richmond has argued that the right angle alignment of the standing eastern wall with the Chapel, rather than Jesus Lane, could indicate that this boundary dates from the 13th century when the Choir reached its present size and he, in fact, suggests that it could have bounded the nuns' cemetery; 1992: 3 - 4).

The earlier Lyne map actually shows two eastern walls, one projecting south from the end of the Chapel, the other lying east beyond it.

The westernmost clearly bounds what is the 'X'-pattern of a formal bed in the Master's Garden south of the Chapel choir (according to the Loggan map by 1688 this garden design had been replaced by a path-delineated rectilinear grid). This, however, is peculiar inasmuch as there are records in both the later 15th and mid 16th centuries that still mention Garlick Fayre close and gate at this spot (Willis & Clark [II]: 115, note 2). It could be that the Lyne map is correct and that the fairyard was then commemorated there in name only. Yet on this map there is no indication of the fairground's later site at Garlic Fair Lane/Park St built over the King's Ditch, which is shown still in-flow (NB: nor is this western site of the fair indicated on later maps).

Alternatively, the Lyne map may be accurate inasmuch as the site of the original fair lay not due south of the Chapel, but in the walled enclosure (the 'Master's close' or 'pond yard') immediately to the east of the site. While this easterly walled enclosure is not shown on the later maps (e.g. Loggan), the eastern side of Jesus Close appears to continue its line and its southern return (running west to the northern third of the listed brick wall) suggests that the Close may not have extended to the Lane-frontage because it was laid-out in relationship to a pre-existing (fair) yard. In 1898 there apparently was, moreover, a wooden door in the Lane-side wall on the western side of the iron gates where the approach to Chapel Court was entered, still called Garlic Fair Gate (Gray 1898: 50). The iron gate in question must be that shown on the 1888 OS map. There is no such wooden door indicated west of the listed wall that bounds the site, but two candidates east of it (i.e. between the wall and iron gate). This evidence would support Lyne's depiction and suggest that the fairground lay immediately east of the site/listed wall.

Some records seem quite explicit in their situation of the fairyard south of the Chapel (e.g. "Item for ledging ij paynes in the south wyndowe there [in the Chapel] next to the garlike fayre crosse"; *ibid* - there is, of course, some ambiguity in the term, 'next to'). If, moreover, the Loggan map is studied in detail then a slight break can be seen in the line of the E-W paths shown crossing the Master's Garden. Those in the eastern third are slightly off-set to the south in relationship to the central and western beds. This could indicate that the eastern third was taken into the garden at a different/later date than the rest (NB: this cannot be made out on the Constance map of 1798). Lyne in 1574 may therefore have entirely overlooked the fairground, certainly no gate is shown on the map leading into either yards from the Lane west of the main entrance/chimney.

There is yet another twist to the puzzle of the location of the fairyard. Freda Jones (former College Archivist) argued that Gray misinterpreted the documentary evidence and proposed that from the beginning the fair was held on the western site, which later became the College Close behind the houses on Jesus Lane (now the hockey ground). She claimed support for her argument in the fact that a Roger Garleck, a neighbour of the nuns lived somewhere in this area between c. 1228 - 1258,

hence the source of the fair's later name (Jones nd.) Without more extensive documentary research it seems impossible to resolve this issue at this time from historical sources alone.

Methods and Conditions of Work

The investigations were constrained by standing buildings (greenhouse and sheds) and stacks of construction materials (scaffolding, bricks, and sand heaps). As a result of which the layout of our trenches was somewhat compromised. Previous to machine-stripping, seven 1m² test pits were hand-dug through the top- and buried soils. Five of these (1 - 5) were excavated along the line of later machined trial trenches: two along the eastern side of the Master's Garden and three more in the builder's yard. The two other test pits (6 & 7) were respectively located at the south and northern ends of the listed brick wall to enable the investigation of its footing (fig. 2).

Upon the excavation of these test pits two 1.50m wide trial trenches were machine excavated, by JCB, down to the top of the sub-soil. The main trench (I) ran N/S for 22m along the western side of the builder's yard, conjoining at its southern end an E/W return (Trench II) that extended east for 10m. Together these two trenches were of 'L'-shaped plan; Test Pits 3 - 5 were located along their axes.

Following the excavation of features in Trench I and another in Test Pit 2, the decision was made to bring in a mini-digger to cut a trench (0.75m wide) linking the two test pits in the Master's Garden, a length of 9m. Staggered along its N/S axis, in relationship to the southern test pit (2) this trench extended for 7.50m to the south. In order to further investigate an E/W oriented linear feature in Test Pit 2, a 1m² extension had already been (hand-dug) off of its western side. During the course of machining of the southern length of the trench (south of Test Pit 2) another 1m² extension was opened on the eastern side of its north end so as to further trace this feature. As a result of these factors, the trench (III) in the Master's Garden took the configuration of two staggered and mirroring 'L's'.

In total these trial trenches and (extra-trench) test pits covered c. 66 sq m and represent a 7% sample of the 928 sq m development site.

Recording Techniques and the organisation of the report

The Unit-modified version of the Museum of London recording system was employed in these investigations. The basic unit, the *Context* ([1 - 37]), denotes an individual stratigraphic event (e.g. a layer or cut). Interrelated stratigraphic entities (e.g. a ditch *and* its fill) are assigned *Feature* numbers (F. 1 - 16); these are bolded upon their introduction within the text. The archival records, consisting of the context sheets, graphics (14 plans &

sections), photographs, finds and artefact catalogue, are currently held by the C.A.U. awaiting eventual deposition in a County Store.

For the sake of clarity the organisation of this archaeological report differs from most. On the one hand, instead of trying to impose a tight phasing structure on what are often the ambiguous results of limited trial investigations, such divisions have been kept to a minimum and broadly handled. There are very few stratigraphic interrelationships and the phasing is essentially based on artefact chronology - Medieval/post-Medieval. On the other hand, instead of burgeoning the text with appended specialist reports (where the size of the assemblage/data at hand is really too small to realistically warrant such formal treatment) in this case such information has been incorporated within the report: C. Going and D. Hall spot-dated the pottery; R. Luff viewed the faunal assemblage; H. Richmond considered, and J. Miller recorded, the architectural remains; Dr C.A.I. French examined the soils; and the Unit's environmentalist, E. Guttman, assessed the site's potential for further environmental study.

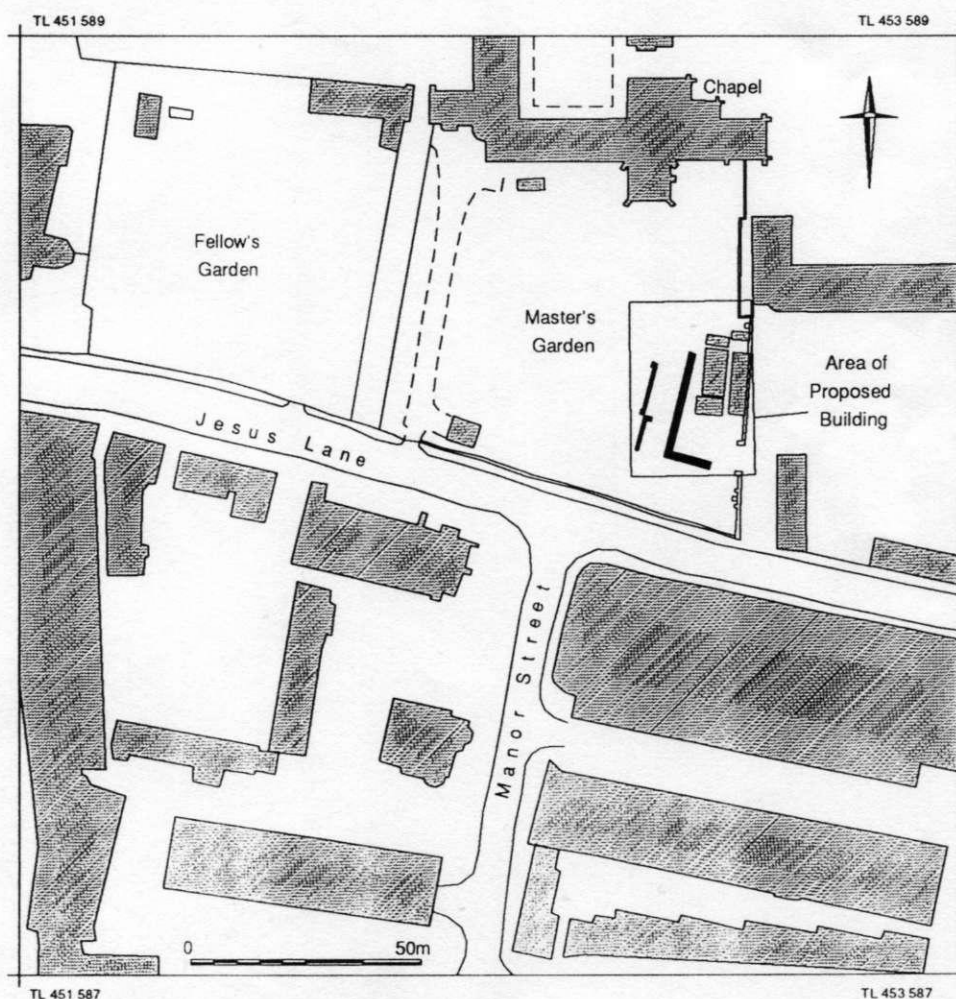


Figure 1 Site Location

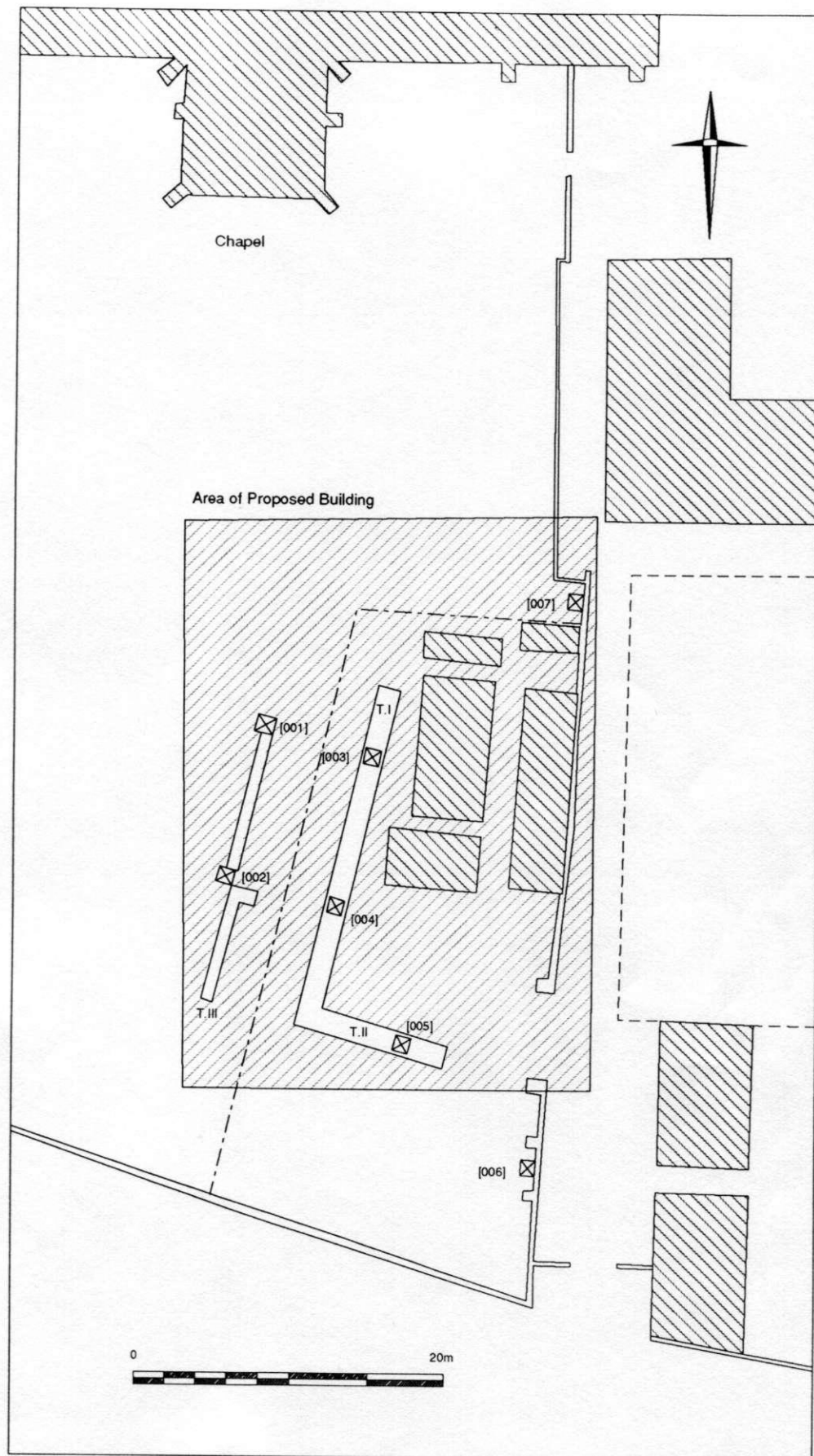


Figure 2 Trench and Test Pit Location

Jesus College - Whither the fair?

Figure 3 (top) - The Lyne map of 1574.

Figure 4 (right) - Ground-plan of the College transcribed from the Loggan map of 1688 (Willis & Clark 1888 II: 116).

EXCAVATION RESULTS

The Soil Sequence

The site is located at the interface of the First and Second Terrace where the natural sands & gravel lie at c. 6.05 - .40 m OD. This is overlain by a 0.20 - .30m thick layer of mid grey/brown slightly clayish sandy silt. Although a buried soil ('B' horizon), no 'horizonation' was evident suggesting that the uppermost c. 0.10m of its profile had been truncated (i.e. the 'A' horizon). There was no clear distinction between this horizon and the underlying sub-soil. Gravel had been mixed into the lower buried soil where pebbles lay in a non-uniform orientation, thus indicating that it had been subject to mechanical mixing (i.e. arable/horticultural practice; Dr. C. French *pers comm*). Note that a single worked prehistoric flint was recovered from the buried soil in Test Pit 3.

This horizon was sealed by a 0.50 - .80m thick dump horizon rich in cinders/coal and post-Medieval artefacts (bottle glass, china, tobacco pipe, bricks, *etc.*), apparently dating to the 18th century. (NB: Based on the height of the garden relative to the Chapel shown in the Loggan print of the south front of the College, the deposition of this horizon evidently occurred post-1688).

Within the area of the site ground/lawn level presently lies between 7.10 - .55m OD.

Medieval Features

Running E-W across the middle of Trench I was a c. 2.10m wide and 0.45m deep, concave-profiled ditch (F. 7; cut [016]; fig. 5). This had evidently been backfilled with a mid brown slightly clayish sandy gravel ([015]). Among the few finds recovered from this feature (an oyster shell and bone), were two sherds from the same pot of c. 13th century date (developed St Neot's tradition; D. Hall *pers comm*.).

Just north of this ditch was a broad (c. 3.60m wide) c. 0.80m deep, slightly concave-profiled, N-S oriented feature (F. 8; [031]). While its north side dropped gradually in a concave edge, its southern side was near-vertical. Towards the west this feature narrowed and along its northern side curved inwards, suggesting a re-cut terminal. Its upper profile was filled with an orange/brown slightly clayish sandy gravel, below which the gravel fraction reduced markedly; its basal fill included green staining ([030]). This seems to be a backfilled quarry, but one cannot be certain of this interpretation given the limited area of excavation. What artefacts were recovered would not firmly date it (oyster shell, limestone & clunch fragments); two flecks of red brick/tile in its upper fill are probably unassociated with its use.

Both of these features were truncated by a c. 1.40m deep and 2.00m wide semi-circular cut that extended into the trench by 0.70m (F. 6; [018]; fig. 6)). Probably a well, the sides of this feature were steep and locally undercut through collapse; the base was slightly concave. Its lower profile was filled with extensively green-stained, mid greyish brown slightly clayish sand ([027]) which graded into a mid grey/brown slightly clayish sand with pea-grits ([018]). Since it appeared to have environmental potential, a c. 15 litre soil sample was processed from its primary fill. While, unfortunately, this proved to be fairly inorganic, small bones were present which would support the interpretation that this was a well (i.e. from animals which had fallen in; E. Guttman *pers comm.*). Of the dating of this feature there can be little doubt, ten sherds of 13/14th century pottery were recovered (+ one early Roman sherd - a 1st century 'Ring & Dot' beaker; C. Going *pers comm.*). Apart from large quantities of animal bone, both meat and butchery waste (predominantly horse but also cattle, pig, sheep/goat and bird), one/two fragments of human bone were found in its lower fill.

In Trench III lying on the western projected alignment of the above-described cluster of features was an area of feature (back-)fill (F. 17). Unfortunately time did not permit, nor did the aims of the evaluation require, its excavation; it is presumed to be of Medieval date.

South of this area was recorded a large pit of semi-ovoid/sub-rectangular plan (F. 9; [035]). The feature was 0.90m deep and 2.40m across. The later figure is, however, not a true indication of its width inasmuch as it entered the section obliquely - a width of c. 1.50m would probably be closer to its true size (estimated length c. 2.50m). The sides of this feature dropped near-vertically (locally undercutting) to a flatish, slightly concave, base. It was filled with a slightly clayish light brown silty sandy with frequent gravel, mortar and clunch fragments; with depth it became much more gravelly and lacked the mortar/clunch inclusions ([034]). A piece of window glass and two sherds of 13/14th century pottery (including a decorated strap handle) were recovered from it. It is difficult to be certain of the function of this feature. Too shallow to have been a well and lacking sufficient finds to qualify as a rubbish pit, it was probably a small quarry.

Mention should be made that while the presence of human bone in F. 6 is probably incidental (i.e. possibly derived from pitting/quarrying in the nuns' cemetery wherever it may lie), the occurrence of horse, in this case a complete neck, is interesting. Horse bone was also recovered from the ditch (F. 7), a demolition layer which sealed F. 9 and re-deposited within the backfill of a later quarry (F. 1 - see below). While no obvious butchery cuts were seen, their relative frequency in Medieval (or derived therefrom) deposits would suggest that they were being eaten despite religious constraints to the contrary (R. Luff *per comm.*). It is equally noteworthy that the occurrence of sheep/goat atlas' and metatarsals

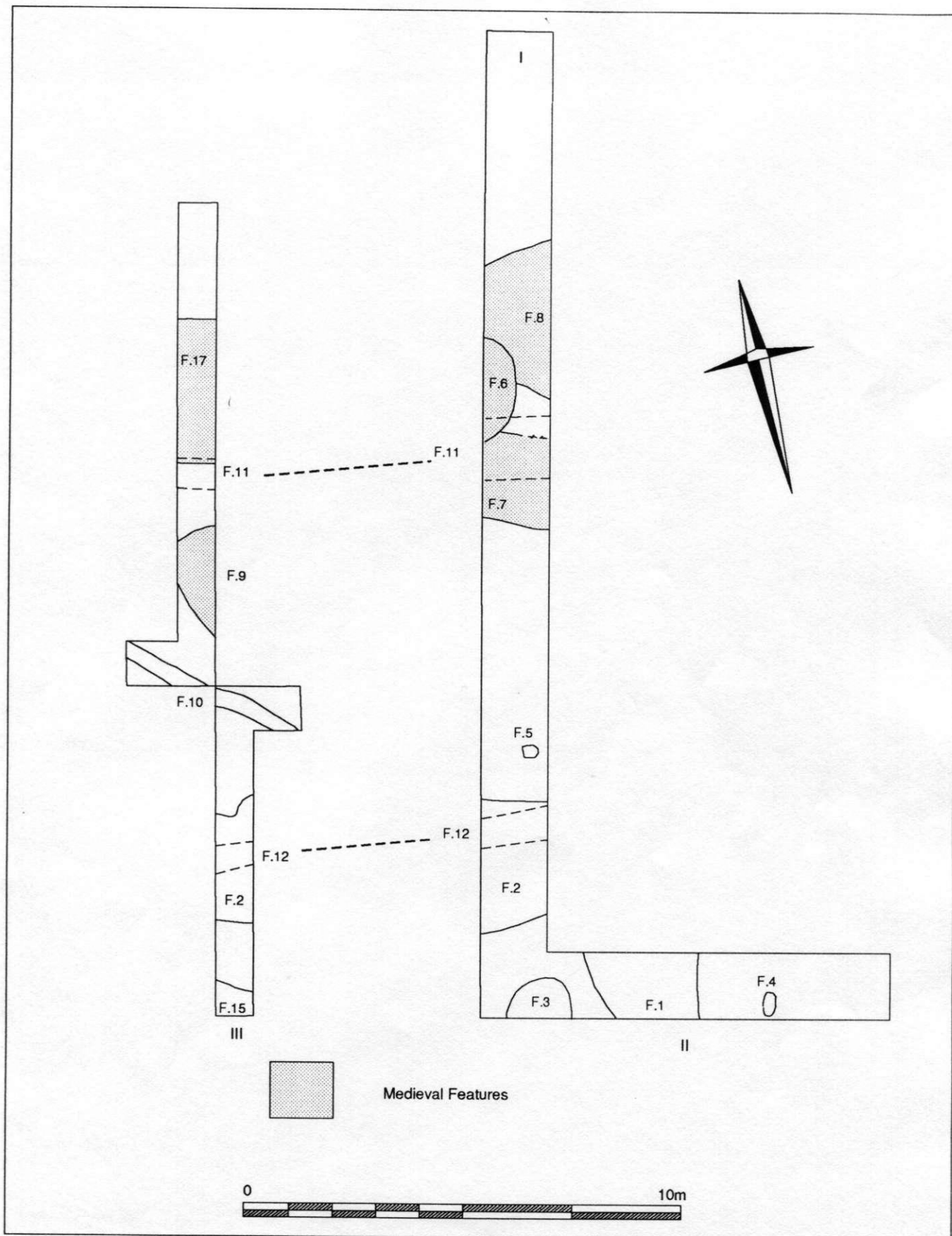


Figure 5 Excavated Features

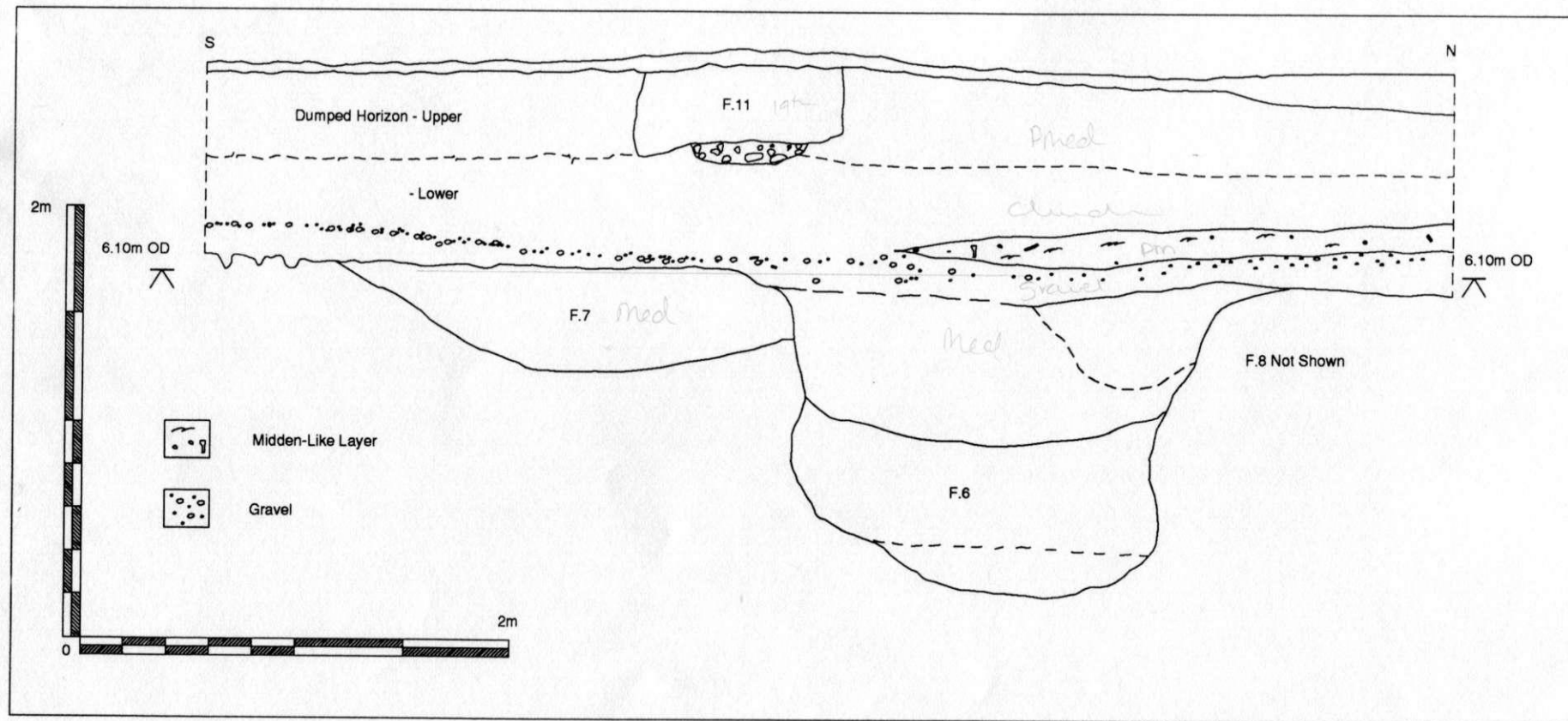


Figure 6 Trench I East Facing Section

amongst the Medieval faunal assemblage would, if the bone directly reflects on-site usage, indicate that the animals were being brought in whole to (or raised at) the Nunnery and slaughtered there. In other words, the assemblage does not just consist of meat joints and cuts, but also *primary* waste.

Post-Medieval Features

In the northern end of Trench I a distinct layer of oyster shell and charcoal with fragments of red brick, roof tile (some burnt, others with mortar adhering), pockets of iron residue, occasional large clunch fragments and quantities of pot and bone, was observed to seal Features 6 - 8 (fig. 6; this deposit was only excavated in Test Pit 3). The pottery, predominantly Babylon and stonewares, is of 17th century date. This 50mm to 0.25m thick midden-like layer was sandwiched below a deposit of sandy mortar & crushed clunch (50 - 100mm thick - possibly a surface) and above a thin horizon of gravel. While this lower deposit may just represent weathered upcast from the earlier features, it could have been a localised metalling.

What is to be made of this series of deposits? Elsewhere in the trench the boundary between the buried soil and the later dump levels was largely picked out only by a thin scatter of chalk/clunch flecks and fragments. It could be that these layers simply represent successive dumping within the slight hollow above the earlier cut features. Alternatively the gravel may represent a patchy surface, the oyster & charcoal horizon a midden or make-up layer derived therefrom, and the clunch another surface. Given the lack of associated structural features it seems unlikely that they directly relate to (i.e. lie within) a building, but are rather yard deposits.

What appeared to be the NE corner/return of a rectilinear enclosure was exposed at the junction of Trenches I and II: F. 2 running E-W in the southern end of Trench I and, F. 1, oriented N-S, in the western quarter of Trench II. However, upon excavation this was not the case and, instead of ditches *per se*, these 2 - 3m wide features proved to be linearly oriented, interconnecting quarrying hollows.

F. 1 was c. 1.00m deep. Its eastern side was vertical for a depth of c. 0.50m; its western, for 0.40m. While the eastern half of its base sloped down in a steep/sharply concave profile, its western side shelved horizontally suggesting that it had been recut ([019]). The profile of F. 2 ([024]) was similar inasmuch as its was, in part, vertical; its base was asymmetrically concave.

The (back-)fill of these features (respectively [013] & [014]) consisted of mid to dark grey sandy clay silt with flecks and small fragments of charcoal/cinders interlensing with bands of pure sands & gravel (in F. 2 there was also a substantial lens of crushed clunch). In both instances the

upper profile was filled with more homogeneous dark grey/brown sandy clay silt. Red brick fragments were present throughout, and fragments of tobacco pipe, bottle glass and 17/18th pottery were recovered from it. This (late) dating evidence contributes to the determination that these features were, indeed, quarries, as does also their irregular lobate form, vertical sides and the evidence of immediate backfilling (i.e. they were clearly not left open for any length of time as otherwise their sides would have collapsed/weathered).

These quarries were observed to run west into Trench III: the line of F. 2 continued directly, and immediately south of it lay another, F. 15, with brick and china fragments in its fill (not excavated).

In the corner between F. 1/2, at the junction of the two trenches in the builder's yard, was excavated what seemed to be the northern end of a shallow circular pit, cut c. 0.20m deep into the natural (F. 3; [021]). Its fill was a dark grey/brown very sandy silt with gravel pebbles ([020]). While no pottery was recovered from it, bone, glass, tobacco pipe, and brick fragments (red & yellow) were, indicating its c. 18th century date. Its function, however, was not determined - it may have been no more than a tree-bowl (planting pit?).

Just east (1.50m) of F.1 in Trench II was an ovoid posthole, 0.22m deep (F. 4; [023]). It was largely filled with red brick fragments in decayed clunch ([022]). This appears to have been a packing fill, for in the northern half (the post-pipe) the fill consisted of a looser mid brown sandy clay.

Falling at roughly the same distance north of F. 2 in Trench II was another posthole (F. 5). Sub-rectangular in plan and some 0.35m deep with slightly undercut sides ([029]), its fill was a slightly silty sandy brownish grey clay with gravel ([028]).

It is difficult to understand the interrelationship of these two postholes and the quarries, if in fact there is one. They were substantial enough to have had a structural function but, given the limited scale of these investigations and their roughly symmetrical situation in relationship to the quarrying hollows, one can only conclude that they somehow served to demarcate the area of quarrying.

Immediately to the south of the medieval quarry pit in Trench III was found a small straight gully/minor ditch (F. 10; [010]; fig. 5). This was 0.35 - .40m wide and 0.30m deep (it has a slight kink in its alignment east of which it became shallower - 0.12m deep); it was steep sided with a flatish base c. 0.20m across. Filled with a mid brown fine clayish sand with gravel ([009]), no finds were recovered from it apart from an iron nail.

It is difficult to understand or phase this gully. It crossed the trench at an oblique angle and 1m² extensions were taken off each side of the trench at this point to trace it further. Its alignment does not follow any

structure (road or building) in the area and its extent is unknown. If projected east it would run to (be truncated by?) both F. 2 and 1, the quarry pits in Trenches I/II. It was not, however, visible east of the latter feature and, though it roughly aligns on a late posthole (F. 4), this relationship seems co-incidental.

The gully may have functioned as a (garden?) drain, but if so, further traces of weathering should have been present. Alternatively, despite the fact that no mortar fragments were recorded from its fill, it may possibly have been a wall bedding trench/foundation. This interpretation could be supported by the fact that a spread of very dirty charcoal-flecked clayish silt with frequent large/medium fragments of cob-/daub-like mortar with moulded faces extended north from the gully. Yet the most remarkable aspect of this feature is its alignment. This could suggest it to be of very early date (which the nail found within it would discount) or that it relates to garden design (e.g. the 'X'-pattern bed shown on the Lyne map of 1574). If this was the case then the gully could have functioned as a plant bedding trench. The latter interpretation seems the more plausible.

Two E-W oriented and roughly parallel gravel-on-brick-rubble footings (7.5 - 8.00m apart) were observed to run between Trenches I & III. They lay immediately below the turf line and cut down into the topsoil. The northernmost, F. 11 ([033], whose line can be traced as a slight earthwork hump across the eastern lawn in the Master's Garden) was c. 0.90m wide and 0.40m deep. The southern footing (F. 12; [032]) was slightly less substantial being only 0.75m wide and 0.20 - .35m deep. In neither instance was the gravel so compact as to indicate great load-bearing capacity. This, and the absence of any floors or associated services, would suggest that they did not carry a building. These pad-like footings, instead, probably mark the lines of 19th garden paths (as shown on the OS map of 1888).

The Test Pits

Features were also found in the wall-side test pits. In the northernmost (7) a c. 0.70m dia. circular pit, 0.35 m deep (F. 13; [026]), was found cut into the top of natural at the foot of the eastern standing wall (see below). Filled with pale to mid grey/brown slightly clayish fine sandy silt ([025]), one piece of glazed pottery, fragments of brick, tile and clunch were recovered from it. Both the range of finds and the pit's relationship to the wall would definitely indicate that it post-dates its construction.

Within Test Pit 6, while the top of the buried soil lay at the same approximate level as it did in Trench II, it was almost 0.50m deep (as opposed to 0.15 - .20m). Though this may just reflect local variation in the top of the natural, it could suggest the existence of a much larger (unseen) feature. Two features were excavated in the base of this pit:

F. 16 - The southern half of a sub-circular pit, c. 0.60m wide and 0.17m deep. It was filled with loose mid brown sandy silt with gravel. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature which was only revealed with the removal of the buried soil.

F.14 - This was a much more substantial sub-rectangular feature cutting down to the northeast from the top of the buried soil (where it was sealed by the foundation of the wall) to a total depth of 0.70m. The fill consisted of light brownish grey clay silts mixed with light greyish white crushed clunch. The upper fill, in fact, consisted almost entirely of pure clunch, probably backfill anticipating the construction of the wall. Occasional fragments of yellow tile and bone were the only artefacts recovered.

While F. 14 definitely pre-dates the wall, the finds suggest that it is unlikely to have been an early (Medieval) feature. This attribution is, however, far from certain.

The only way by which to analyse the composition and character of the feature-sealing dump layer is through the artefacts recovered from the hand-dug test pits. Its matrix was quite uniform, very dirty garden soil with a high frequency of inclusions. The top c. 0.35 - 50m was generally much more loamy, below which it became paler with a reduced clay and increased sand content. As far as possible the finds were kept separate from these two deposits (fig. 6 & 7; NB: Within the confines of a 1m² there was some difficulty in distinguishing the lower of these deposits from the buried soil. This, however, has little impact for these purposes as almost no finds were found therein).

Quantities of building material (brick/tile; fewer mortar and stone fragments) and charcoal/cinders/coal were present in this horizon. These are not included in the following analysis due to the fact that these artefact categories were only sample collected. On average 69 artefacts were recovered from each 1m². However, this figure is inflated due to the inclusion of Test Pit 3, producing 167 finds, because it cut through the above-described midden-like layer. Without the inclusion of this material, the average density would be c. 40 finds per 1m².

Though there are exceptions (Test Pits 3 & 7), generally more material (3 - 5 times the amount) was found in the upper dumped layer than the lower. This would be consistent with long-term ('mechanical') re-working of the soil through gardening. This action is also demonstrated through the vertical distribution of pottery throughout the horizon. For example, in the upper soil zone in Test Pit 7, twelve pieces of pottery were recovered: 11 of later 19/20th century date (transfer china & flower pot) and one sherd of c. 17th century Babylon ware. In the lower horizon, only three 19/20th century pieces were present as opposed to four 17/18th century sherds (salt-glaze, Babylon, Delft and Westerwald stoneware). Similarly in Test Pit 3, 21 sherds, two of 17th, four of 18th and 15 of 19th century date were recovered from the upper zone. Whereas in the lower

horizon (including the midden layer and part of the upper fill of F. 6) 52 pieces were present: one 19th century transfer china, 27 of 17th century and 25 of 14/15th century date (including Cambridge Sgraffito).

When taken as a whole, and if the glass and tobacco pipe evidence is considered, these distributions would suggest that while this horizon was dumped in the later 17/18th century, it was subject to extensive re-working/turning - occasional early pieces being brought up, and a few late pieces, down.

The Listed Wall

The fabric of the standing yellow/brown brick wall had recently been assessed by D.A.H. Richmond who concluded that approximately half of its present length appears to date from the 16/17th century (1992: fig. 2, parts D & F). The results of the two test pits excavated at its foot would, however, argue against this attribution. In both instances the wall was found to be carried on a clunch block footing only one course high which lay at roughly the same depth (base at 6.5 - 6.60m OD). The most telling evidence concerning its date came from the northern test pit (7; [012]), where a *red brick* and dressed Barnack stone *wall* stood for 0.75m above the foundation (fig. 7). The foundation was distinguished from the wall proper both by its distinctive building materials and a greater quantity of mortar which oozed from its joints. The wall was, moreover, roughly plumb; the footing was cut into the top of the buried soil. On top of the red brick wall, at the height of present ground level and the plinth course, lies the yellow brick wall. A hole/service trench had been punched through the lower wall for the insertion of an iron pipe, probably holding electrical cables. Set into it, above the pipe, was an inverted block of coursed red bricks. Though this evidence is not conclusive, it would suggest that the upper brick wall post-dates the laying of this pipe, for otherwise it would have been yellow bricks placed into this gap (i.e. a red brick wall must have been upstanding when the pipe was laid). This indicates that as the wall (free-) stands, and while one accepts that it may have been built of earlier (re-used) bricks, its construction cannot be earlier than the later 19th/early 20th century.

These findings would, in part, be corroborated by the fact that the above-described dumped soil that made-up the ground level above the foundation level (c. 0.80m) obviously post-dated the red brick and limestone wall. The standing yellow brick wall must post-date these deposits. It cannot, therefore, have been constructed earlier than the last, and was probably built in this, century.

The structural sequence in the southernmost wall-side pit (6) is somewhat more complicated. Only in its exposed northern quarter did, what appeared to be, the original red brick & limestone/clunch block wall

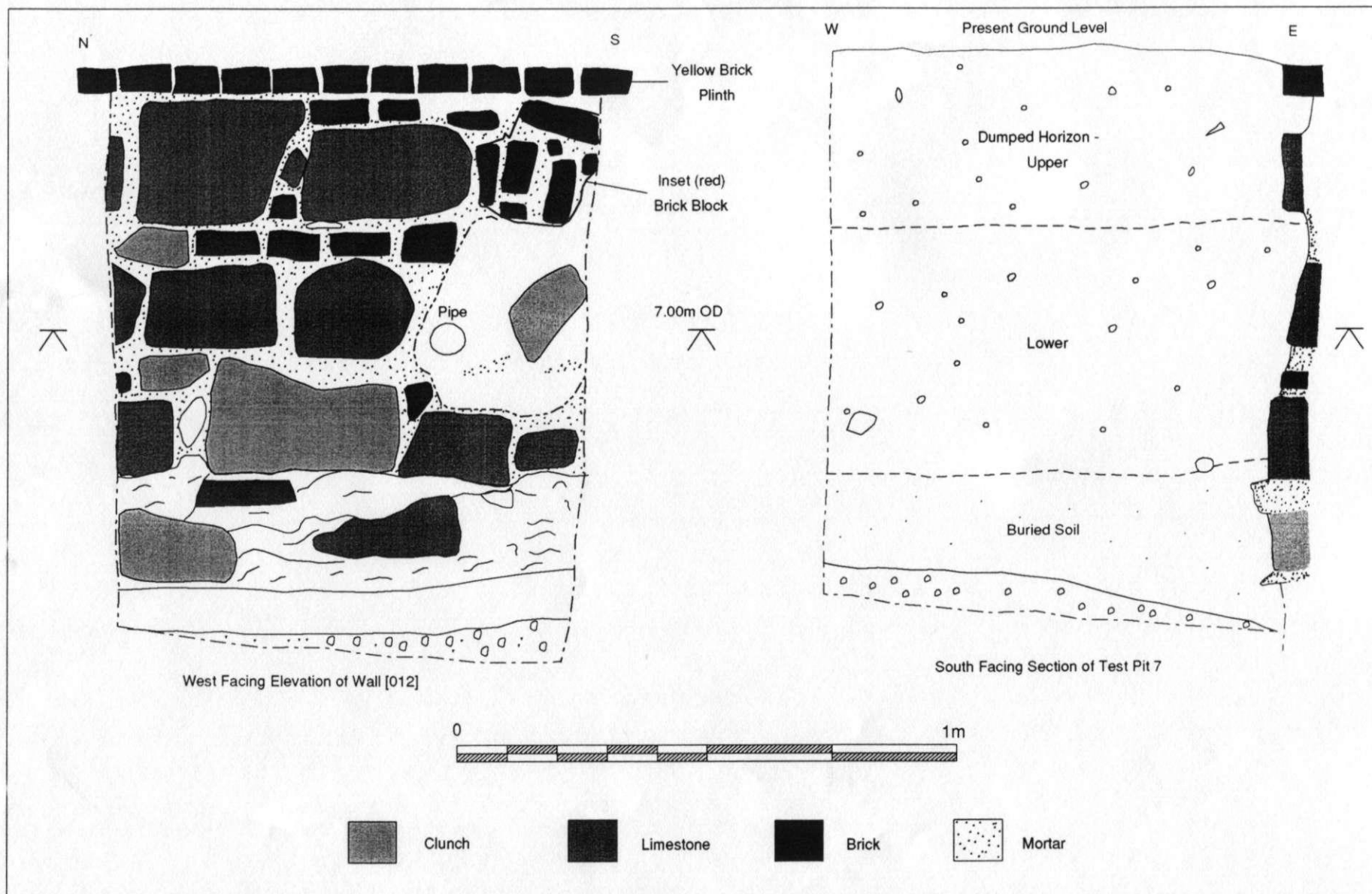


Figure 7 Elevation of Wall [012] and Test Pit 7

survive, although it is possible that even this is an area of repair. South of this point the wall had certainly been completely re-built from above the level of the footing in bricks very similar to the standing wall. The face was plumb, indicating that it had been exposed/free-standing. The pattern of its bonding (stretcher only) differed, however, from the above ground level/plinth wall which is laid in English Bond. This suggests that the original (red brick) wall had been re-built at least once before the standing wall was constructed.

Summary

From the out-set it should be noted that although a worked prehistoric flint and sherd of Roman pottery were recovered, no demonstrably pre-Medieval features were. Similarly, despite the presence of small human bone fragments in the lower fill of F. 6, the Medieval well, no trace was found of a (nuns') cemetery. However, the following was discovered:

- 1) Medieval (13/14th century) quarries, and a ditch and well (F. 6 - 9, 17). A spread of moulded cob-/daub-like mortar fragments in Trench III may reflect the demolition of a wall.
- 2) Post-Medieval quarries, minor pits and postholes (F. 1 - 5, 13 - 16). An obliquely-oriented gully in Trench III (F. 10) may have been a plant bedding trench in the Master's Garden. Within Trench I, a succession of yard-type deposits, one of which was midden-like, survived locally.
- 3) While carried on a 16/17th century foundation and, locally, its original red brick and clunch/limestone block wall, as it stands the (listed) brick wall that borders the builder's yard is of late 19/20th century date.
- 4) All of the above were sealed by a massive 18th century make-up horizon. Two gravel-packed footings (F. 11 & 12), probably carrying 19th century garden paths, were found cut into the topsoil.

DISCUSSION

The fragments of cob-like mortar recovered from the surface of the buried soil in Trench III may well derive from the demolition of the mud wall known to have surrounded the nuns' fairyard. The fact that the fairground was so enclosed and entered by a gate off of Jesus Lane has important ramifications concerning the early use of the site, if indeed it lay there. If the fair was only held annually for three days it does not necessarily imply that the yard stood unused for 362 days a year. It is reasonable to presume that it would have hosted other (outdoor) functions, as suggested by the existence of the well and other features (e.g. laundering) when not a fairground. In relationship to the issue of whether such secondary usage was extra-site or nunnery-related, the key issue is whether it had other (back) entranceways and was accessible from the nunnery or could just be entered from Jesus Lane. The former situation seems the more likely inasmuch as in 1654-55 there is a reference concerning a 'high way' leading from the fair gate to the College (Willis & Clark 1886 [II]: 115, note 2)..

The potential occurrence of the fair on-site could account for the apparent truncation of the upper buried soil horizon. While it may just have been incidentally obliterated through the trampling of assembled throngs, the fact that so few artefacts were recovered from the buried soil could suggest intentional removal, perhaps for the addition of its humic soil into gardens elsewhere in the nunnery. These arguments would, however, presume that there was negligible artefact loss afterwards - one would expect more material to have been dropped and trampled into this horizon during the fair. If, moreover, the 'A'-horizon had been trampled away one should be able to detect this action in what remains of the buried soil (intermixed lensing) and this is not the case. Therefore, it may be more likely that this horizon was truncated immediately in advance of the site/yard being taken into the Master's Garden. Yet recourse to this argument would not explain why, what seems to have been a succession of 16th(?)/17th century surfaces survive above the pocket of Medieval features in the north half of Trench I unless this truncation is a localised (discontinuous) phenomenon. The information is not at hand at this time to resolve these questions and should further work take place the interface(s) of the soil sequence and the mechanism of its deposition/truncation warrants detailed investigation.

In many respects it is difficult to discuss the pre-College features without being certain whether this was, indeed, the site of the Garlic Fair or if it either lay immediately to the east or at the western end of the Nunnery/College grounds. Unfortunately, the documentary evidence is inconclusive (see *Historical Summary* above). If further archaeological works should take place in the immediate vicinity then its determination should be a priority. This being said, the archaeological identification of a fairground (or marketplace) is notoriously difficult without large-scale excavation, for the evidence being sought is essentially negative (i.e. a

large area lacking buildings and features). This situation is not made any easier if the fair was only of a short annual duration inasmuch as secondary activities may further interfere with the recognition of 'blank/empty' space. In this instance the most likely way of 'seeing' the fair would be the discovery of the line of its surrounding mud wall (see below). Apart from the 'mud wall' fragments, the only evidence recovered relating to the issue of the site/existence of the fair are the discreet early post-Medieval *layers* in Trench I (the midden-type and clunch horizons). Yet while their presence could argue against a garden usage at the time, it is just possible that collectively these deposits represent a clunch-sealed midden within a garden.

In relation to these arguments it is noteworthy that the distribution of Medieval features is confined to the northern half of Trenches I & II. There is no necessary reason why the fairground would have extended north over all the site. Could this apparent N-S divide represent a 'blank' (fair) space as outlined above? In which case the series of layers found to overlie F. 6 - 8 in the northern half of Trench I could have been a sealed midden in the back corner of the Master's Garden dumped immediately behind the fairyard wall. (NB: no yard-enclosing 'mud wall' footing trench was distinguished at this point).

There are two points to bear in mind in relationship to the later deposition of the massive feature-sealing dump:

- 1) It post-dates both the original construction of the east-of-site (listed) wall and also apparently its first 18th century re-build in brick (e.g. in Test Pit 6; it is the brick from this rebuild that may have been re-used in its much later, late 19th/20th century, standing form).
- 2) It may not be an entirely localised phenomenon. As H. Richmond has argued in relationship to the lower level of the Chapter House entranceway floor, the entire area of the College seems to have been made-up by c. 1.00m - only dumping on an enormous scale could have created grounds that are as a flat as a billiard table.

One cannot be certain that this make-up dumping took place across the College at the same time (it may after all be deposited across the site at a later date). Nevertheless, in the light of the information at hand it is reasonable to presume so. Given these caveats, the sheer scale of its deposition is extraordinary. Yet it is not dissimilar to evidence of large-scale post-Medieval make-up deposition in other towns (e.g. Ely or Leicester): essentially the incorporation of widespread 'night-soil' and refuse for agricultural/horticultural activity on town fringes. What, however, is unusual is that a College would open its doors to such 'distasteful' deposits. On the one hand, it could relate to the evidence of 17/18th century quarrying found on the site, for this itself is a surprising activity to have taken place within College grounds. It may have been for immediate College use or, alternatively, given the fact that the College

grounds extend over a vast area of the gravel terrace in close proximity to the town, reflect the College's financial state (i.e. exploited as a commercial enterprise). In the case of the latter scenario this quarrying may have been widespread across the grounds and, if so, the College could have invited such dumping as a means of corresponding make-up. On the other hand, the deposition of this horizon could pertain to specific College circumstances. Given the nearness of the Cam its deposition might relate to flood protection (i.e. the creation of an artificial terrace scarp). Alternatively, it could simply reflect the College putting on 'public face' in the 18th century: the grooming of its grounds so as to mask local (*ad hoc*) irregularities in ground level.

Research and Excavation Directives

The archeological identification of whether the site is, in fact, the fairground could be achieved by excavating (E/W oriented) trenches west from Trench I extending beyond the area of Trench III and across the area where the spread of cob-like wall fragments were found. If/once the wall footing trench is found, then it should be traced towards the Chapel to find its northern E/W return where College/Nunnery gate might lie. Similarly trenches along the foot of the standing Lane-side wall might also yield results inasmuch as the Fair Gate might be located and/or associated features identified; a high density of artefacts could also be anticipated in this 'corridor loss/loss zone'.

The archaeological potential of this site should not be underestimated. Leaving aside complications as to where exactly the fairyard lay, what it documents is a nunnery superseded by a college. In other words, a succession of gender circumscribed institutions. Further work in this area should, in part, focus upon the retrieval of the archaeological correlates of these two communities through the recovery of large, closed-group artefact assemblages from both before and after 1500. While gender differences *per se* may well escape detection, the specific character of the institutions should be recoverable. Even given the restricted scale of the evaluation fieldwork, the artefacts hint at such institutional distinctions. For example, while the pre-1500 pottery is largely related to cooking, the College-derived pottery is a service assemblage (and gardening - the 19th century flower pots). The detailed study of well-contexted bone groups from more large-scale excavations might, moreover, reveal that there was more butchery directly associated with the Nunnery than the College phases. Alternatively, poverty might have driven the nuns to stew-up what would usually be classed as butchery waste (R. Luff *per comm.*). Among the other questions faunal analysis could address is the relative importance of fish, and meat in general, in the diets of these respective institutions. Preserved plant remains will also yield information concerning the eating habits of these two groups (although great stress must be given to their depositional context as otherwise Dons could be envisaged consuming flowers from the

Master's Garden). There is, of course, considerable scope for confusing site-specific changes with broad chronological developments in material culture and patterns of discard (e.g. the greater frequency of metal cooking vessels in late/post-Medieval times or the possibility that primary butchery generally became an increasingly extra-institutional activity). Nevertheless, this site offers the almost unique opportunity to investigate a succession of gender-contrastive communities.

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