CHAPTER 3

RECENT SURVEY AND EXCAVATION

INTRODUCTION

A number of country houses and sites of houses and their associated structures have been excavated or surveyed in the county. Some reports, such as Ordsall Hall, have already been published elsewhere.

Broadoak (1976) was dug by students of the University of Manchester Extra Mural Department. The archive and finds were located by Mrs C Yendley and deposited with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit.

Denton Hall (1980) was dug by amateurs from the Denton Local History Society under Ms V Bryant. The finds were deposited with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit.

Dukinfield Hall (1982) and Peel Hall, Wythenshawe (1981), were dug by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit under Mr Philip Holdsworth, using workers employed on Manpower Services Commission Projects. The archive and finds are held by the Unit.

Peel Hall, Ince (1983) was surveyed by the Wigan Sites and Monuments Team, a Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit Manpower Services Commission Project.

Radcliffe Tower (1979/80) was dug by amateurs from the Bury Archaeological Group under Mr Norman Tyson. The finds were deposited with Bury Museum.

Urmston Hall (1983) was dug by amateurs from the South Trafford Archaeological Group under Ms P Faulkner. The finds are held by the group. It is intended that this site will be reported on fully in the following Annual Report of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit.

In most of the cases, excavation had been necessitated by development or restoration; only Broadoak Hall was a 'research' excavation. It is important to take this into account in any analysis of the chronology since the sites excavated do not form a random sample, and were not chosen to fulfil a particular set of research criteria. In addition, due to pressure of time, the standard of excavation and recording, and consequently the level of recovery, has varied from site to site.

This chapter has drawn on the available sources of information and only presents interim analyses of the excavations. It is hoped that, in some cases, such as Denton Hall, full reports of the excavations will appear in forthcoming issues of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit Annual Report.

BROADOAK MOAT, TORKINGTON

Location and History

Broadoak Moat, Torkington (SJ 940875) is set in an area of open fields to the east of Hazel Grove. A Torkington is first mentioned about the year 1200 when John, the heir of Richard de Torkington, witnessed a charter of Sir Robert de Stokeport. The Torkington family continued to appear relatively frequently in documents until about 1621, after which time the name appears only very occasionally.

The first reference to Torkington in its own right was in 1335, in the Inquisitions Post Mortem of John de Legh of the Booths of Knutsford. In 1350, however, a manor house in Torkington is mentioned. Thomas le Warde, son of Richard de Torkington, released to John de Legh all his rights in Torkington within certain boundaries. One such limit described was 'the corner of the ditch at Le Legh House'.

A record of a manor house at Torkington may be found in the Chester Forestry Proceedings of 1363. This states that in 1354 John de Legh cleared sixty acres of woodland, known as 'the Graverslend' - 'the diggers land' - and, having 'assarted' it, built a manor house there. This Hall is reported to have consisted of two chambers and a kitchen, surrounded by a moat, outside of which was built a barn, stables, and wards.

The latest reference to a site with a moat at Torkington, is in a demise by John Legh on 2nd April, 1465. In this, the surrounding lands were referred to by name as 'Le Fament, Le Orchard Flatte, the Shepon Flatte, the kerre medowe, the Nether Rydynges, the Chippefield, Darne Isakell Arce, and Le Long Lee'. This demise makes it clear that the moated site of Broadoak is the same as the site to which it refers, as present field names correlate with these mentioned by John Legh. For example, Orchard Field would be the 'Orchard Flatte', whilst Chipfield is the 'Chippefield' and Big Long Lee and Little Long Lee are 'Le Long Lee'.

The original moated manor house at Torkington was possibly abandoned around the beginning of the 16th century. The demesne farm, built around the moat and described in the 1363 Chester Forestry Proceedings, was known until 1808 as Cheethams Farm. In 1819 it was described by Ormerod as Hopwoods Farm, and it finally came to be known by its present name of Broadoak Farm.

It is important to distinguish between Torkington Manor House and Torkington Hall, a later construction on the site. This latter was apparently an early 17th century building, half-timbered, and built by one of the Torkington family. The Hall is mentioned in an early 17th century record of the marriage of 'Henry, son of William Torkington of Torkington Hall, to Katherine'.

In 1780, the Leghs of Booths built Torkington Lodge, which was described as 'an elegant small house...placed on rising ground and surrounded with pleasure grounds laid out with taste'. The Legh family built it to be used as a jointure house. The Lodge is marked on maps of 1794 and 1818. In 1933 its owner, Sir John Emmot Barlow, sold it to the District Council. The township of Torkington no longer exists, having become Hazel Grove and Bramhall Urban District, which is now a part of the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport.

The Excavation (fig 8.1)

The trenches were sited in what was thought to be the area of least modern disturbance.

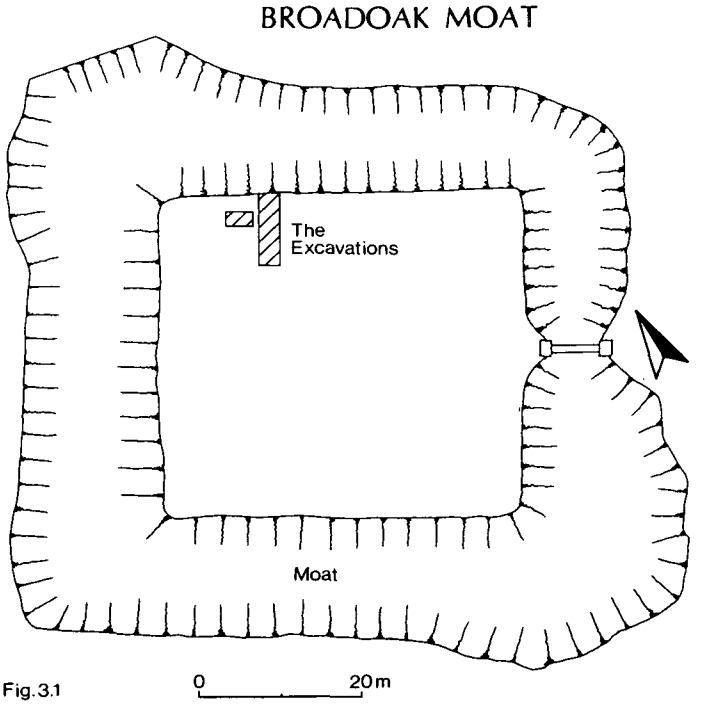


Fig.3.1

A trench 2m by 8m was dug, extending from the top of the slope of the inner edge of the moat into the platform. After the removal of topsoil a number of stone-lined post holes were found. Further down, part of a wall foundation, probably for a sill beam with stone footings was uncovered, along with fragments of glazed ceramic roof tiles.

The trench was later extended towards the edge of the moat, and a clay bank was exposed which rose sharply from the water's edge and appeared to be revetted with large stones. Below a clay layer which extended over the whole trench, more postholes and stake holes were found. At the top of the bank a possible clay hearth, rectangular in shape was uncovered.

A second trench 2m by 3m was dug at right angles to the first. Under a considerable destruction deposit of charcoal and burnt clay

the continuation of the hearth from the first trench was uncovered.

The Finds

The mixture of finds from medieval to modern date indicated much disturbance. They included clay pipes of late 17th and early 18th century origin, roof tiles of 14th or 15th century date, medieval green glazed pot, post-medieval black and brown glazed pot, iron nails and coal slag.

Conclusion

Three phases of activity could be identified, all involving wooden structures, one of which appears to have burnt down. The first phase predated a more substantial wooden structure, with a tiled roof and of the 14th or 15th century, which was itself later replaced by another wooden structure. The presence of slag may indicate either an outbuilding where domestic activities of an industrial nature were carried out, or the use of poor quality coal, traces of which were found on the site.

DENTON HALL FARM

Location

Denton Hall (fig 5) was an early 16th century half-timbered manor house which stood at Windmill Land, Denton until 1930, when it was largely destroyed by fire.

Standing Structure

The only surviving remains of the original structural complex was the detached east wing which served as a barn for Denton Hall Farm until November 1979, when it was dismantled and re-erected at Hough Lane, Wilmslow. The farm was vacated because neighbouring clayworking had rendered it uneconomic.

This outbuilding has been used in recent times as a shippon, and then a barn, although it is unlikely that either was its original use. A plan and drawing from the late 19th century shows the building situated about twenty feet to the north of the former east wing of Denton Hall, although it has been referred to as the detached east wing of the Hall. There is nothing to suggest that this building was originally any larger than it is now.

It is a three-bayed structure of two storeys, orginally built in timber, but clad during the 19th century in brick. However one gable with its timber framework has survived, although it appears to be of a later date than the main timbers, possibly about 1600. The quatrefoil panelling which decorated this gable is similar to that found at Ordsall Hall, Salford. The roof timbers were possibly renewed some time during the 17th century, but even so it is remarkably well preserved and covered by slates. No staircase is to be found inside this building, so presumably there was access via an interior stair.

The original arrangement of rooms on both floors was concealed when the building was converted into a shippon, and it is difficult to reconstruct a conventional house plan. However, there is evidence to suggest that on the ground floor the south and central bays formed one room, with the north bay providing a separate service area with little or no decoration, while on the first floor the north and central bays formed the main room.

The floors were built at a lower level than the original ones had been, but it is not certain as to whether the first storey rooms had a ceiling or not. This would seem unlikely, as it would obscure the appearance of the carved tie beams, and the building is too early to have had a ceiling. Ledges are to be found along the top of the ties which seem to be grooves for ceiling planks, and these may represent the later insertion of ceiling panels.

The only evidence for dating this building is provided by its decoration and mouldings, but there is some disparity between the carvings which seem to date to about 1500, and the quatrefoiled gable, which is more typical of about 1600. Although the building was not attached to the main body of Denton Hall, its elaborate character would suggest a function other than that of a barn; however, this is purely speculative. It is unlikely that the building could have been used as a dwelling place, since it lacks every feature necessary for this, such as heating and service arrangements. There is no evidence to suggest that a connecting gallery provided access to the main building.

It is unlikely that the building was a chapel for Denton Hall, despite the force of local tradition that this was so, as both its storeys seem to be of similar importance, although it may have been used as court rooms for the manor. It was obviously intended as a meeting place for large gatherings, and the extent of the interior decoration would seem to indicate that the building was of some importance.

The Excavation

The owners, Kethcombe Property Ltd, granted permission for excavation and this commenced in April 1980, under the direction of Ms V Bryant.

The excavation (fig 3.2) depended entirely on unpaid volunteer labour, and the work was therefore carried out during weekends and school holidays. The area examined was fairly restricted because of financial constraints. Subsequently, however, some financial support was provided by the Greater Manchester Archaeology Group.

Excavation revealed the foundations of the east wing, as well as the largely disturbed remains of the original clay floor. Beneath this was a ditch or moat, containing wooden pegs, wattle staves, daub, straw, animal bone, metalwork, and late medieval pottery. The southern edge of the moat was revetted by stone and jointed timbers.

The moat was not fully excavated, the upper 1.5m only being removed before the excavation was abandoned because of vandalism, and problems in excavation caused by extreme waterlogging. A 2 sq m area in the southern half was de-turfed, but no features were detected in the underlying clay subsoil.

As a result of intervention by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, small-scale trial excavations of the platform area of this moated site were conducted on 11th October 1980, by GMAU staff and by members of Denton Local History Society.

Four trenches (fig 3.2) were excavated. Trench A measured 2m by 1m, and was aligned east-west. It was sited in a grassed area approximately

10m south of the eastern outbuildings of the farm. Trench B was 1m square and sited in an area of dense nettle growth about 10m north-east of Trench A. Trench C was 1m square and was sited in a grassed area approximately 5m east of the farmhouse. Trench D was 1m square and was sited about 17m south-west of the farmhouse in a grassed area inside the presumed course of the moat.

Whilst this does not preclude the possibility of medieval levels surviving in some parts of the platform area, it was felt that the time and expenditure involved in large-scale excavation of the site would not be justified.

Conclusion

Although the excavations had not established the exact course of the moat, two partially back-filled ponds to the south and west may mark its original course. At no point is it visible on the ground, although a swathe of taller vegetation to the south west may have indicated its course. To the east, the course of the moat is largely conjectural, since it is here overlain by a fenced waste-disposal plant.

The platform thus enclosed would have been roughly triangular in shape, measuring approximately 100m east-west by 60m north-south. The centre of the platform is occupied by the standing building of Denton Hall Farm, 30m to the north and north-west. The intervening area, comprising the northern

DENTON HALL

The main building

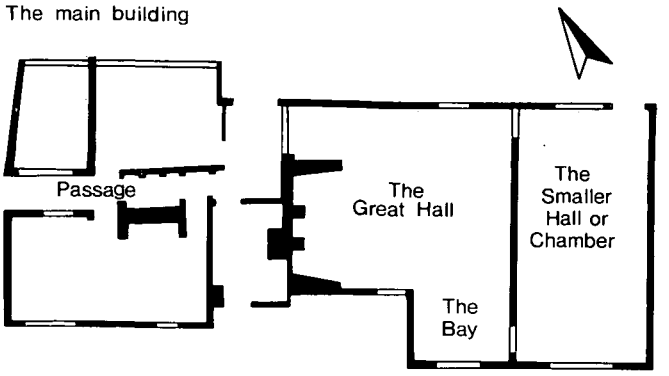
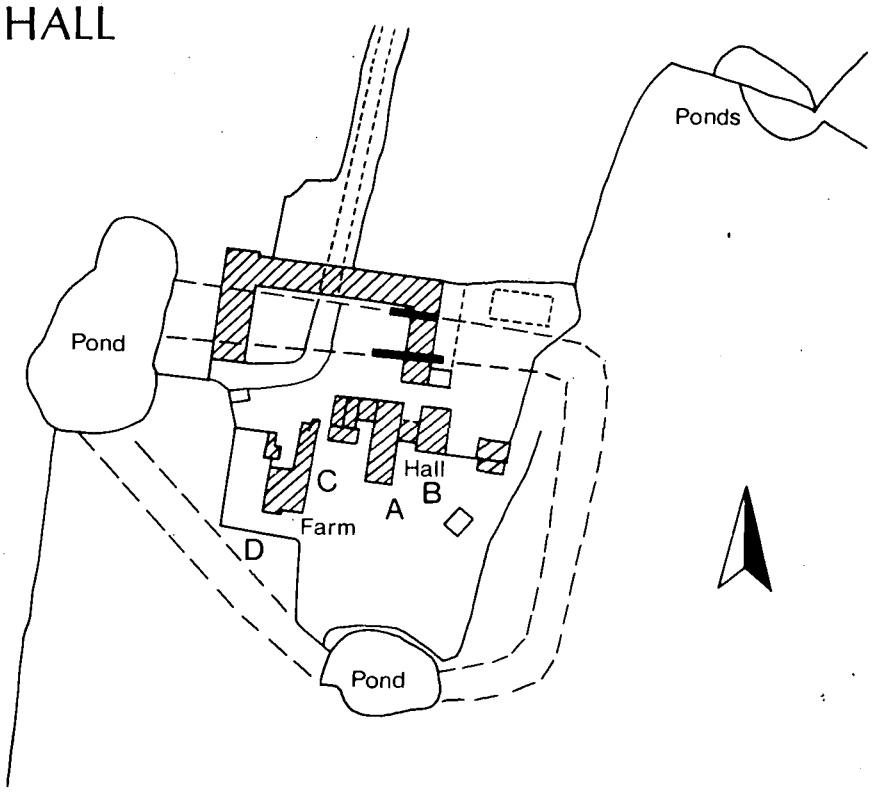


Fig 3.3 0 5m

half of the platform, was occupied by the back-filled excavation area, building debris and an area of cobbled yard. A roadway ran north-south across this area, to the west of which the ground level had been considerably lowered to accommodate the farm outbuildings. The extreme north-western corner of the platform also appeared to be considerably disturbed. The southern half of the platform was under grass, although the presence of nettle-beds suggested that this area too had been disturbed.

Although the moat was clearly open in the late medieval period, it cannot be considered likely

DENTON HALL



— — — Postulated course of moat
——— Known edge of moat

0 50m

Fig.3.2

that it still served its original purpose at so late a date. The excavations, however, produced little evidence of this primary occupation - partly because the moat was not excavated to a great depth and partly because there was virtually no investigation of the platform itself.

None of the excavation in the platform area of the site produced any evidence of occupation earlier than the post-medieval period, and it is clear that the area south of the existing farm building has been extensively disturbed at this period.

Although the outbuilding is preserved in its entirety, excavation revealed little of the main Hall (fig 3.3), and it was not possible to completely understand the outline of the moat, due to the limited scope of the excavation.

DUKINFIELD OLD HALL

Location and History

There is no record of Dukinfield by name in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The entry for the area states:

> 'eight free men held these lands as eight manors. In all there is land enough for 16 ploughs. The whole was and is waste.'

It has been suggested that this omission is attributable to the post-Conquest deforestation which took place throughout the North, although Wilkin Jones (1978, 7) suggests that by 1086, seventeen years after the devastation, rural communities in the area would have recovered, and that 'waste' here could simply mean 'arable land that has fallen out of cultivation, perhaps from lack of tenants'.

William I bestowed the confiscated estates of the English nobility on his Norman followers. Cheshire became a County Palatine, that is, it was not under direct control of the Crown and the area remained under the jurisdiction of a family of Hugh Lupus until the 15th century.

At the time of William I, Dukinfield was part of the 'fee' of Dunham, under Hamo de Massey, Baron of Dunham.

Early History

The earliest documentary reference to the manor of Dukinfield occurs in the latter half of the twelfth century, during the reign of Henry II; Hamo de Massey, second baron of Dunham Massey, granted to Matthew de Bromale the manors of Bramhall and Dukinfield (Earwaker 1880, I, 423).

According to local historians (Hickey 1940, 25), it is at about this time that a hall was constructed on the site, lying in the lower and more level part of the township. At this period the area was thickly wooded, though it also provided good pasture and meadowland.

The manor was held under the Lords of Bramhall by a family who bore the local name 'Dokenfield', one of the earliest known names being that of Hamo de Dokenfield, mentioned in the Bramhall deeds of this family before 1300, and in the Cheshire plea rolls in the Record Office (24 Edward I 1296). In 1327 the manors of Dokenfield and Brinnington were settled upon Robert de Dokenfield for life, with the remainder to his heirs.

Dukinfield remained the residence of the Lords of the manor of Dukinfield until the late 18th century. A number of post-mortem inquisitions survive from the 17th century, and one of these tells us that in 1622 the manor consisted of 39 messuages and comprised 200 acres of arable land, 40 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood and underwood, and 200 acres of moor and marsh. During the civil war Sir William Dukinfield was an active Parliamentarian, being several times authorised to raise troops, serving in the garrison at Chester, and eventually taking part in the conquest of the Isle of Man. In 1770 the Astleys, successors of the Dukinfields, built a new house, Dukinfield Lodge, and the Hall was tenanted. In 1877, after lying empty for several years, the Hall was converted into several cottages. It was finally demolished in 1950.

Standing Structure

The surviving portion of the Old Hall Chapel (pl 3.1) dates from the early decades of the 17th century. During excavation, the vandalised Congregational extension of 1872, was demolished.

A general description of the Old Chapel is to be found in Earwaker (1880, East Cheshire vol 2, 26). He states:

> "The Chapel belonging to the Hall, stands at right angles to it, projecting from the north end on the north eastern side. It has recently been altered and a large addition built on to it so as to adapt it to the purposes of a non-Conformist chapel...the old nave forms a sort of transept to the new chapel which projects at right angles to it and has been built in a similar style of architecture".

A further description of the chapel in 1906 states:

> "The Congregational chapel, Dukinfield Hall, incorporates the chancel and nave of the old domestic chapel to which, in 1872, a considerable addition was made to the north side of the nave at right angles to the ancient fabric, chiefly at the expense of Able Buckley, Esq., of Dukinfield, and the late Mr. Hugh Mason. The new building which is in the Gothic style now forms the body of the chapel, the old nave being at the south end and the chapel continued from what is now a kind of south east transept. A north east porch was added in 1873 at the sole expense of Robert Platt, Esq., of Stalybridge".
>
> (Kelly's Directory 1906, 306)

The domestic chapel consists of a small nave and chancel separated by a tiny semi-circular arch. The windows are round-headed and have three lights. The walls are of finely dressed sandstone blocks of roughly equal dimensions, typically 70cm by 30cm by 50cm. The mortar joints are thin and the stone is well laid. On the blocks themselves are a large number of mason's marks, the most frequently occurring being a reversed 's', an hour glass shape, and a triangle.

DUKINFIELD OLD HALL

The excavated remains

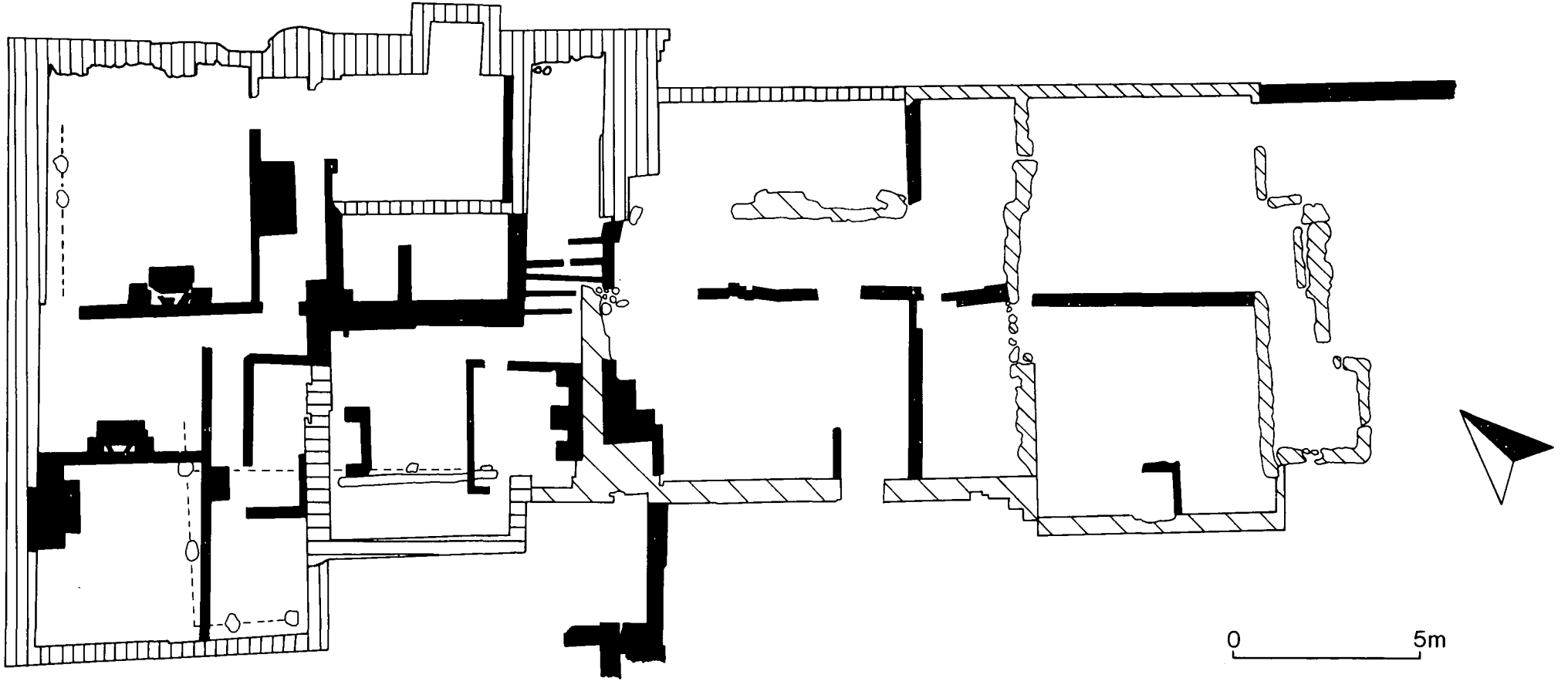


Fig.3.4

The interior of the chapel shows evidence of having been refurbished a number of times and in some places, especially over the chancel windows, brick has been substituted for the original stones. The interior of the chapel would have been plastered, but very little of

3.1 **Dukinfield Chapel**

this now remains.

The remaining wooden hammer beams were severely damaged by fire in 1980. They are of typically late 19th century construction and decoration and date from the building of the large extension in 1872.

The Excavation (fig 3.4)

Two large trenches were excavated. The main trench contained the demolished remains of Dukinfield Old Hall (pl 3.2); A further trench was opened 2.5m to the south, and in addition several trial trenches were dug in an attempt to locate a presumed moat.

Natural was discovered at 115m below ground level in the main trench and consisted of a yellow/orange sand. The earliest features were a number of postholes cut into natural in the western end of this trench. These fell into two distinct groups by reason of size and fill. In two of the postholes the remains of the wooden posts were found.

The postholes were sealed by a brown silt containing charcoal flecks, which covered the entire interior of the Hall and extended for two metres outside the Hall to the south.

Above, and cutting into the silt were the footings of a sandstone wall which remained to a height 80cm. The wall was constructed of dressed sandstone blocks, one course thick, backed by a rubble fill of irregularly shaped sandstone fragments. The dressed blocks appeared to the excavators to have been re-used and to have formed a plinth on which brick courses were supported. The bricks used

3.2 **Dukinfield Old Hall**

exhibited various features of hand manufacture rather than mass production.

Associated with the brick and sandstone footings were the remains of two inglenook fireplaces, typical of those which became popular from the 16th century onwards. The footings of these were sandstone, whilst their interiors were cobbled.

A later phase of construction could be distinguished, with predominantly brick built walls incorporating small sandstone fragments. These walls were associated with the earliest recovered occupation layers. The excavators noted that a great many finds were recovered from these layers.

The final phase of construction, which included the majority of the external walls, was characterised by large, fine textured bricks, laid with Flemish bond on a footing of large, well dressed, rectangular blocks of sandstone. The sandstone rests on deep footings of tightly packed brick rubble in mortar.

Two substantial cellars were also constructed in this phase. They were of similar construction to the external walls and pared with sandstone flags.

A subsequent phase of alteration appears to have resulted in the destruction of many of the internal surfaces. They were replaced with a tightly packed layer of brick bats, on top of which was a thin plaster floor. This supported comparatively insubstantial brick partitions, and, subsequently, floors of concrete or sandstone flags were inserted.

Outside the Hall the subsidiary trench revealed a gradual slope in the natural stratigraphy, away from the building. Cut into this were a number of large rubbish pits containing considerable amounts of Georgian pottery.

Five smaller trenches were cut by machine in an attempt to determine the original position of the moat which was pesumed to have surrounded the Hall. In fact no evidence was discovered in any of the trenches to support the theory of the moat's existence, and it therefore seems unlikely that there was one.

The interior of the chapel was not excavated but a large accumulation of rubbish from the chancel was removed. The gravestone of Sir Robert Dukinfield (d 1722) and two gravestones of his daughters, Suzanna and Martha, were removed. They are at present at Stalybridge Museum.

A shallow trench was excavated on the western side of the chancel; foundations were discovered to reach a depth of 70cm and consisted of large blocks of undressed sandstone. The exterior of the chapel was cleaned revealing at its southern end on the western side, the blocked-in original nave door. The chancel window is substantially larger than the side windows, a characteristic of chapels of early 17th century date. Parallels for this sort of chapel may be found in Harris, Old Parish Churches and Chapels of Cheshire, 1957.

Conclusion

There is evidence for a wooden hall predating the first substantial building which itself appears to be of no earlier than 16th century date (pl 3.2). This first substantial phase was succeeded by two more phases of expansion, the last of which may be related to the end of occupation by the Astleys in the 1770's. The final phase of flimsy brick partitions and concrete and flag floors can probably be related to the conversion to cottages in 1877.

Unfortunately no solid dating evidence was recovered for either the early wooden structure or the intermediate stone phases.

It is interesting to note that the only rubbish pits located date from the final years of occupation by the landowners, and that nothing predating this has been found.

PEEL HALL, INCE

Location

Peel Hall was recorded in the Provisional List, BAHI, in 1962, and was described thus:

> 'Now a farmhouse; Fourteenth Century cruck timbers remain at first floor and encased at ground floor. The crucks are joined by a massive obtuse angled tie at high level, stiffened by chamfered arch braces. (Part cut away after formation of first floor.)'

A Sites and Monuments team, acting for the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit in Wigan Metropolitan Borough, visited the house in Spring 1983. The new owner outlined his proposals for restoration of the building, and it became clear that his work would facilitate the detailed indepth survey of the timber structure which had been so long concealed beneath the plain brown brick exterior and multiple layers of internal plaster and paper.

Standing Structure

Peel Hall (fig 3.5) was originally timber framed, comprising five pairs of massive cruck blades, giving a house divided into three main areas:

The south end - a service bay containing a pantry and buttery. This may have been floored to provide additional living space.

Centre - a hall of two bays, with an integral through passage to the south, running east-west, and giving access to the service rooms and, north, by a doorway through a timber screen, to the main body of the hall. The hall was open to the roof, evidence for this being the carefully worked arched and braced tie beam now visible at first floor level. When the hall was floored, in the 16th or 17th century, this tie beam was casually sawn away in the centre for ease of access from one new room to another. The bulge in the external brick walling is the result, the weight of the roof having forced the crucks to spread slightly.

From the north end of the Hall, the dais end occupied by the high table, one door led to a private chamber at ground level, the other onto a stairway rising to the first floor and another private room.

Conclusion

The type of cruck used, and its style of timbering, size and scantling, is a clue to the age of the building. It is generally accepted that the 'base crucks' were erected by families of gentry status from c AD 1300 onwards. Heavy and finely crafted, these crucks were obsolescent by the mid 15th century, and none had been recorded north of Lincolnshire in the east or Cheshire in the west.

During these centuries the full cruck, like that at Peel Hall, became increasingly common throughout the country.

At present most of the timber at Peel Hall is clad by later brickwork or plaster. Only 'B' and 'C'(fig 3.5) are clearly visible to any extent, and 'C' incorporates the arched tie beam referred to above.

The house was remodelled and brick clad in the later 17th century - the E shaped west front and large eastern addition, with its low pitched front, date from this time. This would reflect a decline in the status of the building, which externally resembles many other reasonably well-to-do farmhouses of the district.

PEEL HALL, INCE

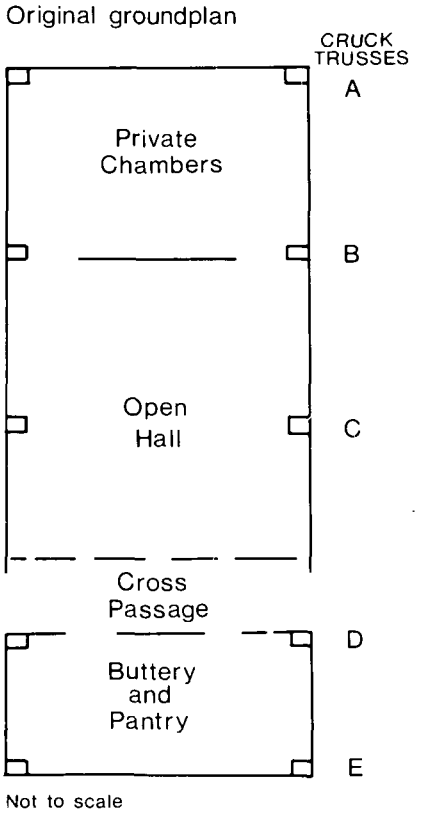


Fig 3.5

PEEL HALL, WYTHENSHAWE

Location and History

Peel Hall (SJ 837868) lies within Wythenshawe Park, belonging to Manchester City Council. The Domesday Survey of 1086 refers to Bigot de Loges, whose manor in the Hundred of Bucklow was later to be known as Etchells. As a result of the growth in population during the 12th and 13th centuries, there was an increase in settlement in eastern Cheshire, and it is likely that Etchells was one of these new developments.

By 1349 Etchells was in the possession of the Arderne family, and it is thought to have been Sir John de Arderne who built Peel Hall, or 'The Peele' as it is referred to in earlier documents. The word 'peel' is of Celtic origin and means a small defensive building or castle. The manor house was built near to the area where the tenants lived, and probably had a demesne area and parkland around it, as 'Peele Park' is mentioned in the late 16th century.

By the marriage of Sir John's daughter and heiress, the house passed to the Stanley family in 1408, and remained in their hands for one hundred years. After 1508 the manor passed through many different owners, and was held at one time directly by the Crown when one owner was convicted of high treason. In 1556-1557 Philip and Mary granted the manors of Elford, Arderley and Etchells to Sir Edward Fitton of Gawsworth and William Tatton of Wythenshawe. William took Etchells because it was near to his manor of Northenden, but the two manors were separately administered under the one lordship.

From 1556 the history of Peel Hall follows that of the Tattons. The Peele was never used as the principal seat of the family, since the Ardernes had main seats at Elford and Alderley, and the Tattons at Wythenshawe, but repairs had to be made to the Peele to make it habitable. These were begun in 1560 with the intention of using Peel Hall as a dowerhouse, a residence for the heir apparent, or for his widowed mother. The Peele had greatly decreased in value in the hundred years following the inquisition post mortem of Thomas de Stanley in 1463, when it was valued at £50, for at the inquisition post mortem of Robert Tatton, the manor of Etchells was valued at only £15.

During the 16th century, the gradual replacement of the old feudal tenure system occurred, with the leasing of land for money payments. The Etchells Court Survey of the late 16th century refers to one of Peel Hall's tenants as paying £1 6s 8d in rent for eight acres. The document reveals that some 400 people lived on the manor at this time, and that the extent of all yearly profits and rents was £224 17s 8d. The estate was supervised by a steward who gave daily instructions through the farm bailiff, with four meetings of the court baron per year.

Throughout the 17th century and most of the 18th century, Peel Hall continued to be used as the residence of widows or heirs apparent, but in 1780 William Tatton married into the Egerton family of Tatton Park, and inherited Wythenshawe, Northernden and Etchells properties, and the Tatton Park estates. During the 19th century the Tattons lived as country squires, continually extending their estates and adding to the family seat. This expansion frequently led to the lesser manor houses, such as Peel Hall, being tenanted by farmers and so assuming farmhouse status.

A map of 1830 shows Peel Hall and its surrounding lands to be owned by Thomas William Tatton, and the majority of fields occupied by Jefry Bray. In the Census returns of 1851, Wythenshawe is shown as a mainly agricultural area and reference is made to Peel Hall as having 217 acres of land attributed to it. In the early 1920's Manchester Corporation reviewed the area for potential house building, and subsequently bought the Tatton Estates in Wythenshawe in 1926.

Standing Structure

However, in the case of Peel Hall, the building was ordered to be destroyed by one of Mr Tatton's stewards during his absence in 1809, and it was replaced a year later by a two storey farmhouse. The only remnant of the original Peel Hall is the stone bridge, built in medieval times over the moat around the fortified house, and it is thought that the bridge is probably the oldest stone structure in Wythenshawe.

3.3 **Peel Hall** Wythenshawe

The Excavation (fig 3.6)

At Peel Hall an area of around 150 square metres was exposed.The only significant features on the site were the remains of the farmhouse (fig 3.7) which was known to have

replaced the Hall in 1809. Large areas of the site revealed nothing but clay, suggesting that at some time material had been planed off the moated enclosure. This probably occurred at the same time as the 19th century building. It was not possible to excavate beneath the floors and foundations of the farmhouse (pl 3.3) and so the earlier structure was not exposed there. No excavation was carried out in the area to the north-northwest of the later building where the original and presumed larger building might have extended. Traces of cobbling were detected in a location suitable for the entrance to such a structure, although this could equally have been related to the later rebuild.

The Finds

The number of finds recovered was minimal and consistent with the possible large-scale removal of material during the early 19th century. The earliest artefacts recovered from the site were fragments of green-glazed roof ridge tiles of a grey, gritty fabric. These are typically medieval, although there is insufficient knowledge of ceramic production in the medieval north-west to allocate a more precise date. The majority of the rest of the finds were Victorian and included an 1860 penny and a large number of claypipes.

Conclusion

The history of the development and use of Peel Hall, Wythenshawe, is typical of that of many of the minor country houses of Greater Manchester. Throughout its life, it is clear that the relative status and importance of the site changed dramatically, from, for instance, its use as a major family home in 1463, to its becoming a minor farm of a large estate in 1809.

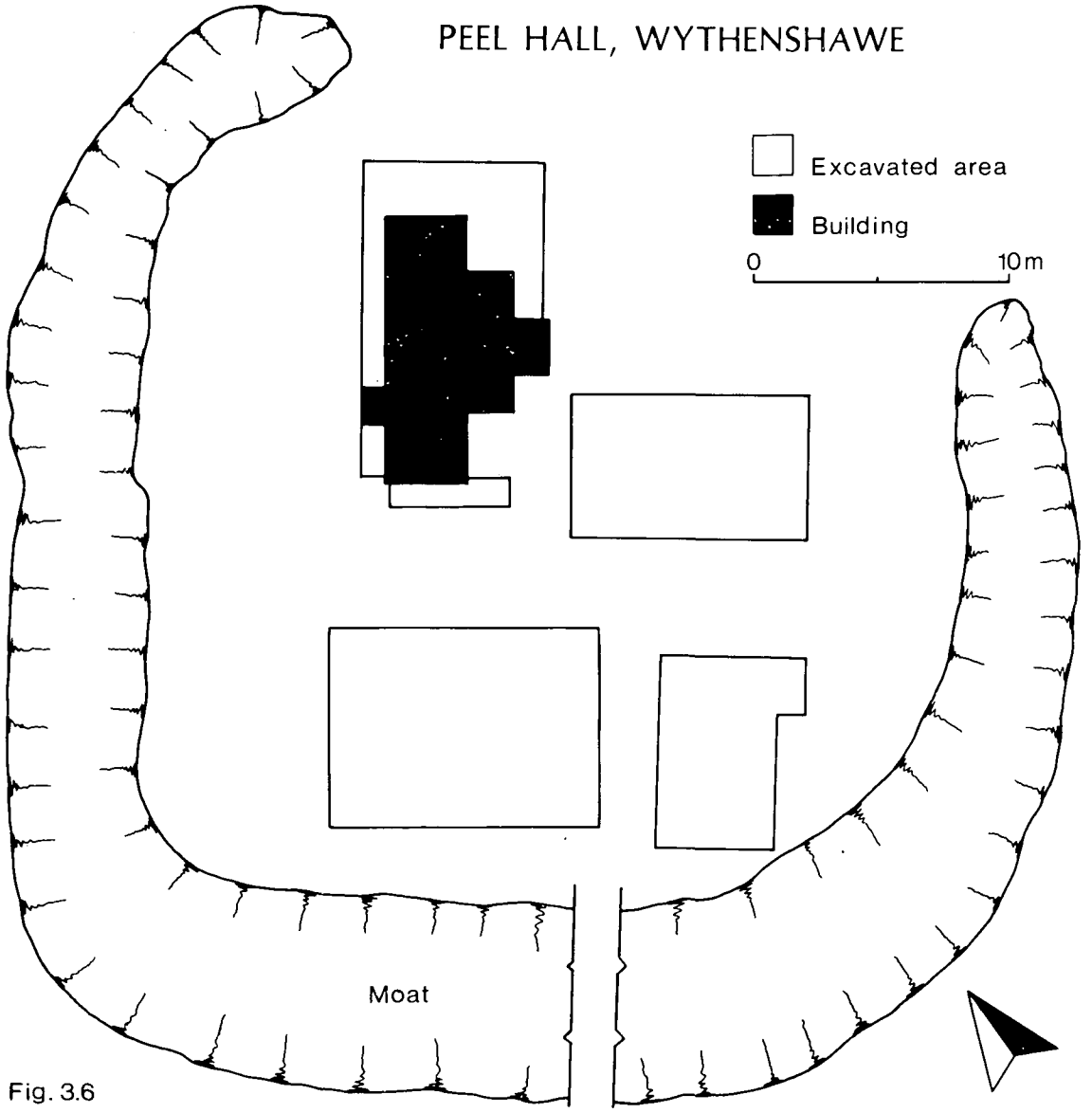


Fig. 3.6

PEEL HALL, WYTHENSHAWE

The excavated remains

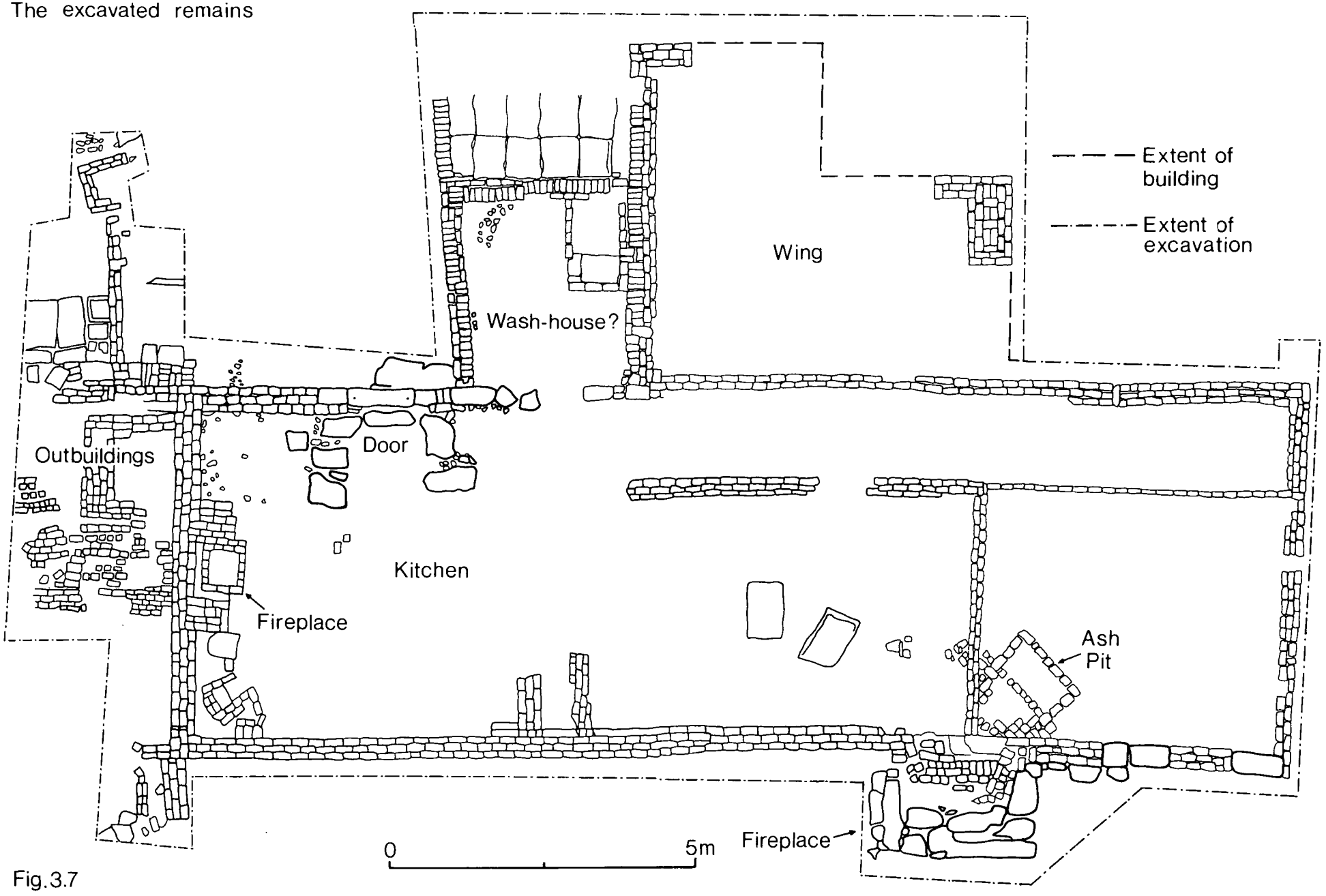


Fig.3.7

RADCLIFFE TOWER

Location and History

This site was excavated by the Bury Archaeological Group and the following report was supplied by Mr Norman Tyson.

The site lies 140m west-southwest of Radcliffe Parish Church, about three quarters of a mile east of the modern town centre, and at a height of 68m OD on the first terrace above the floodplain, in a large loop of the River Irwell below its confluence with the River Roch. This loop takes the Irwell from a general southerly course, which it follows from the Rossendale uplands up to this point, westwards through a deep post-glacial gorge to Nob End.

Alluvial sand and gravel underlying the site probably supported a ground-water gley soil on the floodplain, but the more freely drained terrace upon which the Tower was built is a brown earth of the Downholland association. Middle coal measure Trencherbone or Cannel Rock sandstone used in construction would have been available locally. There are numerous coal seams in the locality, the nearest being the Top Five Quarters mine which runs south west about 50m south of the Tower.

During the medieval period a park and fishponds could have been accomodated in fairly close proximity to the manor house, as implied by an indenture of exchange dated 1338 bewteen Richard de Radcliffe and William del Grenehurst, of tenements in Radcliffe called Gorill and le Lightbirches within the 'New Park' (Irvine MSS N 49). Whilst some reclamation has been carried out and more is planned, the valley at this point still bears the scars of industrial exploitation, although some relict woodland survives on the high south bank overlooking the floodplain.

In 1950, enigmatic timber structures were revealed by gravel digging near the confluence of the Roch and the Irwell, and mesolithic flints were reputedly also found. Stone axes of Neolithic and Bronze Age date have been discovered, and a fine cast-flanged bronze axe was found in 1949 (Spencer 1950). More timber structures were excavated lower downstream in 1961 (Hallam 1961). During the Roman period, local gravel was probably quarried for the construction and maintenance of the Manchester-Ribchester road which runs nearby.

The Domesday Survey records Radcliffe as being held by King Edward as part of the Royal Manor of Salford. After the Norman Conquest the Baron de Massey gave Radcliffe Manor to Nicholas Fitz-Gilbert de Talbois, who adopted the placename as his surname and thus founded the Radcliffe family. The family prospered during the medieval period, with branches in possession of Ordsall Hall in Salford, Smithills Hall in Bolton, and Baguley Hall in Wythenshawe.

In August 1403 James de Radcliffe was granted a licence to rebuild his manor house '....with walls of stone and lime, to enclose anew and within those walls erect a hall and towers...'.

By 1518 the main line of succession ceased with the death of John Radcliffe, when the manor passed to Robert Radcliffe, subsequently first earl of Sussex of the Radcliffe family. In 1561 Thomas Radcliffe, third earl of Sussex, sold the manor to Richard Ashton of Middleton for 2000 marks.

An illustration showing the Hall with a ruined tower attached was drawn for Dr. Whitaker in 1781, by which time its status had been reduced from manor house to farm. By the mid 19th century the Hall had been demolished, leaving only the ruined tower, which remained in use as a farmbuilding until at least 1950.

Standing Structure

The surviving tower at Radcliffe is a fairly typical funnel vaulted pele tower of the type commonly found in north Lancashire and Cumbria (fig 3.8). Its distinguishing features are three large ground floor fireplaces built into the walls, with both internal and external arches, two of which (east and south) were unblocked sometime during the post-medieval period. A narrow doorway with a two-centred arch gave access to the ground floor from the hall. Access from the hall to the first and second floors was by a spiral stair in the wall thickness 2.4m from ground level, presumably approached by a portable ladder.

Excavation and Finds

Excavation consisted of six trenches which effectively sectioned the northwest corner of the site from the hall area to the modern north and west boundaries (fig 3.9).

Work was carried out in September 1979 and April 1980 by volunteers under the direction of Bury Archaeological Group. The site has since been back filled, levelled and grassed over.

A sandstone rubble foundation 2.30 m wide protruded 1.30 m from the south section of trench F. Associated with this was a flat-bottomed ditch 7 m wide and 1.50 m deep running across the northside of the Tower through trench C. Three metres beyond the ditch a rubble wall foundation 1.44 m wide ran across the south end of trench A and was fronted by a ditch 7 m wide and 1 m deep. The area inside the wall foundation was consolidated with sandstone pitching which sealed the rubble foundation in trench F but supported the remains of two parallel ground walls lain 6 m apart at 80 degrees to the hall site. Foundations of farm buildings or cottages were evident in all trenches, and trench E contained a robbed out cellar 1.85 m deep.

RADCLIFFE TOWER, GREATER MANCHESTER

SOUTH INTERNAL ELEVATION

SURVEYED & DRAWN: M. FLETCHER & BURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP, 1980

0 1 2 3 4 5 METRES

FEATURE INDEX

7. Chimney over hearth
15. Areas of rubble facing
26. Internal splay of window
29. Projected arch of barrel vault
30. Recess in west internal wall
31. Original floor level

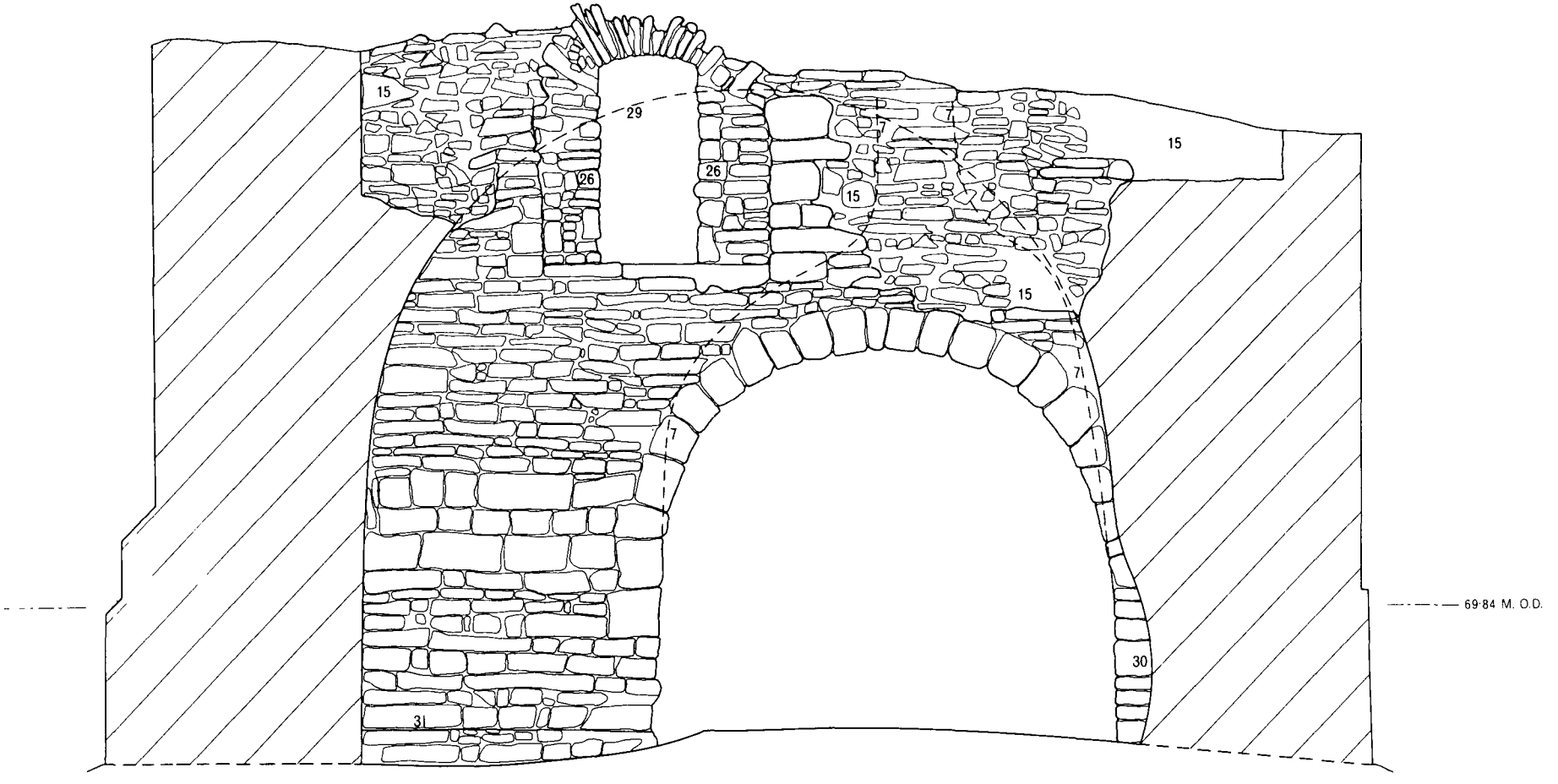
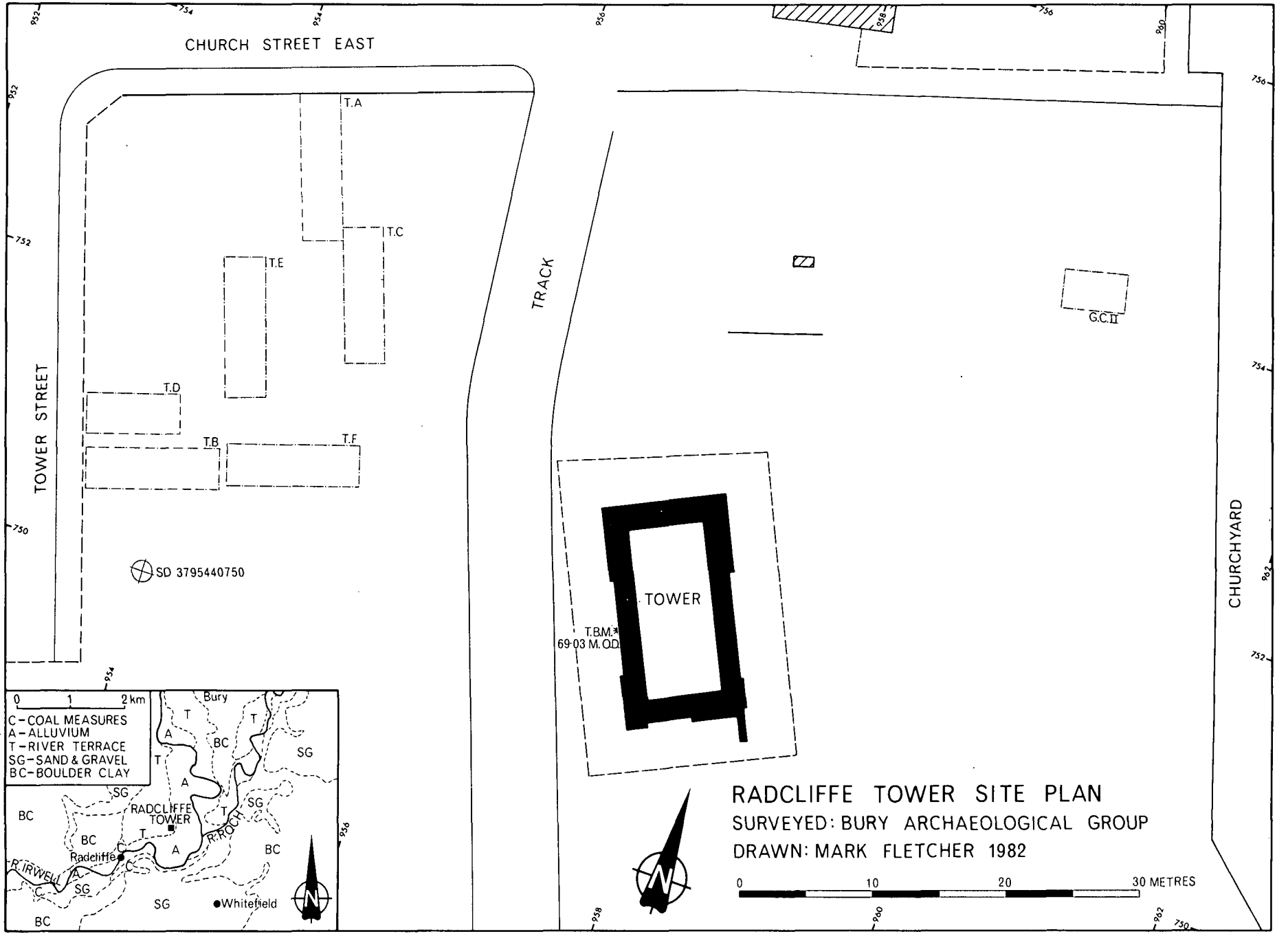


Fig.3.8

Fig.3.9


CHURCH STREET EAST
TOWER STREET
TRACK
CHURCHYARD
T.A
T.B
T.C
T.D
T.E
T.F
G.C.II
SD 3795440750
TOWER
T.B.M.*
69·03 M. O.D.
0 1 2 km
C - COAL MEASURES
A - ALLUVIUM
T - RIVER TERRACE
SG - SAND & GRAVEL
BC - BOULDER CLAY
Bury
RADCLIFFE TOWER
R. ROCH
R. IRWELL
Radcliffe
Whitefield
RADCLIFFE TOWER SITE PLAN
SURVEYED: BURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP
DRAWN: MARK FLETCHER 1982
0 10 20 30 METRES

The following is a tentative sequence of construction on the site:

Phase Ia (medieval)

Rubble foundation and ditch or pit associated with earlier structure.

Phase Ib (c1430)

Manor rebuilding, extension of courtyard and construction of enclosing wall.

Phase IIa (c1500-1730)

Construction of west wing. Modification of enclosing wall and later ditch filling.

Phase IIb (1730-1840)

Construction of farm buildings, demolition of hall. Construction of cottages.

Analysis of the pottery shows that only five medieval sherds representing a minimum of five vessels were recovered. Most interesting among these was part of a ceramic aludel identified by Stephen Moorhouse.

Although the number of early post medieval sherds is greater, only four vessels are represented, in all a disappointing result.

Practically all the remaining pottery came from the ditch fill in trench A, and includes a number of familiar 17th century wares from South Lancashire and the Midlands. Five sherds of tin-glazed earthenware from either Bristol or London, and fourteen pieces of Rhenish stoneware bring the total sherds recovered to 298.

A piece of pottery industrial apparatus.

by Stephen Moorhouse

The find comprises two joining sherds, forming about a third of the circumference, in a coarse-grained sandy fabric with buff core and salmon pink surfaces, which are smoothed externally. The thick body and striation marks internally, suggest a narrow neck and top, hence the form as reconstructed. The lower part has been knife-trimmed internally and under the base, suggesting that the body had been thrown as a conical form with a base on the wheel and subsequently cut above the base to the present shape.

The surviving profile suggests that the sherds could come from a number of medieval ceramic forms. In various positions they could form the mouth of a trumpet,the base of a chimney pot, or the base of a pedestal supporting a chafing dish. For different reasons each of these suggestions is unsatisfactory.

The coarse character of the fabric, the technique of manufacture, and the sooting, suggests that the sherds come from a particular form of industrial vessel, that is, an aludel. These were usually conical in profile with a wide base and a narrow neck of varying shape, but always with an opening or hole in the top. Manuscript illustrations show that in a metal, medieval aludels appear to be consistent in form, usually a straight sided cone leading to a narrow top. However, a number of pottery versions in different shapes are known. A near complete tall conical aludel (Brit Mus Acc No 1915:12:8:202) in the British Museum, unfortunately came from an unprovenanced location in London. Probably five different types of aludel were found amongst 150 near-complete pottery alchemical vessels from Sandal Castle, West Yorkshire. The ceramic vessels formed part of a laboratory whose contents had been disposed of during the early 15th century (Mayes and Butler 1983). Medieval craft and medical recipes show that pottery was used extensively in a wide variety of different processes, often in conjunction with vessels in other materials (Moorhouse in Crossley ed 1981). Those involved in the secret sciences, such as alchemy, often devised their own processes to achieve a particular result, together with using certain vessels in combination, each of which had to be of a certain material. The variety of forms used by a late medieval English experimenter are shown in a 15th century manuscript describing the alchemical processes (British Library, Harleian MS 2407, fos 106v-111). The very many scientific and industrial processes using pottery, and the particular requirements of each practitioner is reflected by the growing number of industrial groups of pottery (Moorhouse 1972). Each has a unique range of pottery forms, some of which are unique to the assemblage, and they are used in differing combinations with vessels in other materials. It is therefore not surprising that the piece from Radcliffe Tower cannot be paralleled exactly by known industrial pottery.

Conclusion

Some time before 1400, the existing manor house had been at least partly enclosed on its north side by a ditch approximately 7m wide by 1.50m deep. Wet conditions encouraged the development of a primary organic silt, which later became submerged below a more general secondary silting, almost filling the ditch. Around 1403 when James de Radcliffe was granted a rebuilding license, quantities of unworked local sandstone were brought to the site for building. Unused blocks of this stone, along with scappling from the production of ashlars, were dumped into the ditch alignment and other surface depressions. The fill was levelled up as courtyard consolidation with a mixture of stiff clay, probably derived from the quarry site. Three metres beyond the old ditch a parallel rubble wall with a foundation 1.44m wide was built, fronted by a shallow ditch approximately 7m wide by 1m deep.

These developments were followed at an indeterminate date, perhaps in the early post medieval period, by the construction of a timber-framed wing, under-pinned with low sandstone walls at virtual right angles to the main hall at its west end, over the site of an earlier stone structure. Although by the 18th

century the west wing had two floors, the discovery of a hearth in trench F would suggest it was originally open to the rafters. The internal width of 6m between the walls is a little more than the 18' 5" recorded by Whitaker (1876).

Perhaps during the early post medieval period the enclosing wall was reduced in width, the second phase ditch cleaned out and the scarp consolidated with reinforced clay. Soon after c1660 the counterscarp had collapsed and the ditch was partly backfilled. Further filling took place around 1680, the site eventually levelled up in the late 18th century to accommodate a brick built barn, incorporating remains of the modified wall in its foundations.

Around 1833 the medieval hall, west wing, and cellared building north of it were demolished. Much material, including cellar walls was salvaged, and cottages and additional farm buildings were subsequently erected.

Whilst the position of Radcliffe Tower is eminently suited to a moated site, the failure to recover evidence additional to that in trench C raised a number of problems, which can only be resolved by further excavation. The nature of the evidence from manorial sites like Radcliffe and Bury Castle, suggests that some moats or ditches were neglected during the late 14th century, and were replaced or improved in the 15th century.

Whether the manor house ever possessed twin towers, as the licence might imply, probably also awaits an archaeological solution. A sketch drawn by John Albinson in the 18th century (Albinson 1770) disagrees in detail with the surviving tower, but since a number of pages are now missing from his sketch book its evidence must be used with caution. A good example of twin towers survives at Preston Patrick Hall in Cumbria, which also possesses a king post roof similar to that which existed at Radcliffe (Smith 1964). The plank technique of the hall at Radcliffe, also in evidence at Baguley Hall and Smithills Hall, is discussed elsewhere (Smith and Stell, 1960).

The western boundary of the site may never be found, since it probably lies beneath the modern road. Similarly, evidence for the eastern boundary either runs inaccessibly through the parish graveyard, or has disappeared with disturbances in ground level. The northern limit is now known, leaving only the southern boundary to be determined.

Following the death of John Radcliffe in 1518 and the subsequent sale of the manor of Thomas Radcliffe, third Earl of Sussex, to Richard Ashton of Middleton in 1561, the house appears to have served as a gentleman's residence. In 1672 the Tower was leased to Richard Walker of the Cross, yeoman, and Richard Walker of Radcliffe Bridge, husbandman, for a term of seven years (Irvine MSS no 99). The lease was evidently renewed as Richard Walker, who died in 1682 was styled 'de Tower'. Probably during this time the north ditch, having been maintained until now, was backfilled and the status of manor house reduced to farm.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DATA FROM EXCAVATIONS

Introduction

The historical information concerning the country houses of Greater Manchester usually points to fairly straightforward historical conclusions. Archaeological information is often forced to fit known historical 'facts', and in the case of the country houses of Greater Manchester, where the material is limited and of varying quality, this would be a tempting course to follow. If however the material is approached with the aim of examining spatial and temporal relationships, then the conclusions reached can be compared with the historians' conclusions, and may either reinforce them, or modify them.

There are three main areas of analysis possible:

1. The spatial relationships of the houses to each other and to topography, and, where appropriate, to political and administrative boundaries.

2. The spatial organisation of the houses, both internally through time, and externally with relation to associated outbuildings.

3. The nature of the recovered artefacts.

Conclusions reached in any of these areas must, of course, be treated with caution, since the quality of the archaeological record varies enormously across the country.

The Spatial Relationships of the Houses

Because the information on country houses, as distinct parts of wider communities, is but a small fraction of the archaeological and historical record, it is impossible to say anything that is sociologically convincing concerning their contemporary societies, without making great use of sources which lie beyond the scope of this study. When observing the spatial relationship of the houses to each other, it is important to realise that the assumption that social groupings are directly reflected in landholding patterns and buildings and that, conversely, people living in one territory are a social group, is an enormous one (Leach 1979, 123).

Taking a sample area, in this case the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale (fig 6.5), the houses initially appear to be concentrated along a line roughly west-southwest to east-northeast, with a separate concentration in the south-southeast. The primary reason for this is that in general, houses are built along the valley of the River Roch and its tributaries. Thus it can be seen that the concentration of houses in a particular place is due in this case to a distortion of the distribution surface as a result of the topography. If the houses are plotted on the same map as the hamlets, it becomes apparent that population concentration has also distorted the distribution surface as, despite apparent concentrations, no hamlet except Middleton contains more than three houses. Any attempted analysis of spatial distribution with time runs into the problem of accuracy of information. Many houses are known only from the date at which they were substantially rebuilt, often in the 16th and 17th centuries, and existing records refer to them only as being built 'on the site of the previous house'.

Taking a contrasting area, the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan (fig 6.10), the picture is slightly different. The houses appear more evenly distributed. In this case the gentler relief of Wigan allows a more regular distribution, since there are no large areas of high exposed ground, unfavourable to settlement, within the Borough. The density of houses appears slightly greater than in Rochdale, some hamlets containing four or five houses. A significant feature of the Wigan area is the number of moated houses. In Rochdale only three houses out of thirty eight are believed to have been moated, whereas in Wigan there are twenty six out of fifty five which are known to have had moats.

Both Rochdale and Wigan have been the subjects of recent Sites and Monuments surveys by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, and so a reasonably accurate picture of the distribution is possible, whereas in other Boroughs the records are less complete. Nevertheless, throughout this study, comparisons were made based on original Sites and Monuments data; however, as work on this volume progressed, new sites were constantly added. However, it is inevitable that we only ever have a partial set of data to work from and it is hoped that this analysis may form the basis for more detailed work on the individual boroughs or districts in the area.

Of the houses in the county whose sites are known or can be accurately plotted, two thirds lie less than 100m above sea level, a further fifth between 100m and 150m above sea level, and another seventh between 150m and 200m above sea level. Only four houses are built more than 200m above sea level. This is not surprising, since even if the houses are distributed evenly throughout the county, the topography is such that most would lie below 100m, and above 200m the environment starts to become too hostile for comfortable settlement.

The four sites above 200m show little similarity: Healey Hall, Rochdale, at 214m, is in the steep sided and sheltered valley of the River Spodden, and dates from around the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Horsedge Hall, Oldham, at 229m, of 12th century date, was originally held by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and lies on the south slope of Oldham Edge, at that time probably a dry settlement point amidst surrounding wet-lands.

Wicken Hall House, Rochdale, at 268m, is a house of mid 17th century date. It stands on the steep slope of Ogden Edge, facing east.

Wolstenholme Hall, Rochdale, at 229m, where occupation dates from the 12th century, is in a relatively exposed position, although in the valley of Red Lumb Brook.

As might be expected, therefore, it appears that the chief factor affecting location or distribution of country houses in Greater Manchester is relief, and that in the county as a whole, most houses are to be found on low lying ground.

The Spatial Organisation of Houses

Human behaviour is an expression of a multiplicity of subconscious and conscious attitudes and concepts (Hazelgrove 1978, 6). Observation of the spatial organisation, both internal and external, of the country house, may lead to a greater understanding of the attitudes and concepts favoured by their occupants.

However, care must be taken, since at each stage of development the previous structure may dominate the inhabitants' behaviour, rather than their behaviour determining the structure, particularly if there are financial or physical constraints present. For example, a moat may have been initially constructed as a physical barrier, but eventually retained as a decorative feature. In addition, it is dangerous to define archaeological taxa, and then attempt to give them reality by indentifying them with particular known economic or social movements: for example the 'moated site' as a group is well known, and it has been suggested that there is a link between 'moated sites' and the assorting, or taking under cultivation of waste land in the early middle ages (Roberts 1962, 37); however, as discussed elsewhere in this volume, there appears to be more correlation between moats and topography or geology than with the areas of wasteland being reclaimed for cultivation in this country.

In terms of size, Brunskill (1971, 22) accepts four categories of domestic architecture: the Great House, the Large House, the Small House, and the Cottage. The Great Houses are defined as 'the homes of royalty, the nobility of Church and State... people of national importance through high social status or great wealth... such houses are normally excluded from the ranks of vernacular architecture, whereas large Houses are homes of 'people of some local importance'. By far the majority of the country houses discussed in this volume fall into Brunskill's 'Large House' category. There are one or two exceptions, notably Dunham Massey and Heaton Hall, which follow more 'international' styles of architecture. For the most part, however, the structure and layout of the houses is more the result of the living and working requirements of the inhabitants than of any idea of style or architectural design. Traditional design elements are used but these elements derive more often from practical considerations rather than from aesthetic ones.

Internal Organisation

Comparison of house plans show that all have some form of barrier between the living quarters and the various working sections. This physical barrier or division is indicative of social barriers, and only develops fully with time. In the early medieval period, in both the Germanic hall and the Celtic longhouse, the boundary between the owners' living quarters and the body of the house is slight, initially no more than a screen or curtain, developing into a structural partition. The longhouse and open hall typical of Britain may reflect a Romano-British tradition of construction (Dixon 1976, 60), as opposed to the continental aisled hall, or the pre-Roman Celtic round hut.

Both forms continued into the early medieval period, when they started to develop more sophisticated spatial organisations or layouts. In the longhouse the occupants were the peasant family and their livestock, whereas in the hall lived a feudal aristocratic family, their servants and their retainers. With time, the boundaries between the groups of occupants grew more substantial. The early medieval hall developed an upper chamber at one end of the hall for the family, over the pantry and storerooms, while the single share accommodation in the longhouse developed into separate rooms for family and livestock. During and after the medieval period the boundary became even more distinct, with separate buildings often being built in the case of the farmhouse or separate wings in the case of the hall or country house. Whereas in the farm the division was still simply between living accommodation and livestock, the country house was becoming more sophisticated, being divided between living accommodation for the family, living accommodation for the servants and retainers, administrative accommodation and working accommodation.

The earliest forms taken by country houses in the county can only be revealed by close observation of those standing structures which exhibit a number of contructional phases, or by revealing the traces of these forms through archaeological excavation.

At Peel Hall, Ince in Makerfield, a later brick structure contains a 14th century cruck framed wall. Removal of internal plaster during 1983 revealed the structure, which consisted of a hall with private rooms at one end and service accommodation at the other. Similar arrangements of space can be detected at Smithills Hall, where the family accommodation was above the service accommodation, at Ordsall Hall, where a number of subsequent phases of construction are evident, and at Stayley Hall, where the original timber framed structure was of 16th century date. Surviving plans of Denton Hall show an unaltered early layout, while traces of such a structure in wood, predating

the first stone footings of circa 16th century date, were detected during excavations at Dukinfield Hall.

Although the accommodation, hall, and service area were separated, with direct access from the outside to only the hall and service areas, the presence of all three areas together in a more or less undifferentiated unit suggests that, although there were obvious social differences between the owning family and the servants, they would likely view themselves, and be viewed by others, as a single unit. In such a situation the high ranking members of the household would probably work closely with the low ranking members on the majority of tasks.

By the end of the 16th century the two elements of living and service accommodation had usually grown larger and therefore more specialised and separate. For example, at Dukinfield Hall and Smithills Hall, a separate accommodation wing was built for the family and the house became roughly H shaped. The fact that access to the living accommodation was now through the hall and thence into a separate wing, served to reinforce the status of the occupants. By the end of the 17th century the new wing had developed into a complex of buildings including a private chapel. There is no doubt that the range of services available in the country houses gave them the appearance of independant hamlets, and must have served to emphasise the separation of the occupants from the rest of the local population. After the middle of the 17th century this separation was further enhanced as their occupants began to move away from vernacular styles of architecture.

External Organisation

Separation of the country house from its surroundings has occurred in different ways and for different reasons through time. In the early medieval period there were sound reasons for separating a house from its surrounding environment; it was necessary to protect the occupants and their livestock, in winter from predators which still infested such wild places as Lancashire, and in summer, from the more than occasional banditry which was a substitute for political debate in such isolated territory. Few if any physical barriers surrounding country houses remain from this period, with the exception of moats. Moated houses occurred throughout the county, although more frequently in some areas than in others.

In areas where the terrain was more rugged, the natural defendability of the landscape meant less effort needed to be expended on such works. By the 16th century, however, when the use of firearms and artillery became widespread, the value of a moat as a defensive work, except against occasional thieves, was greatly reduced, and in any case life, even in Lancashire, had settled down to a more peaceful level. Despite this, the moats were often retained, probably retained as a physical barrier which reinforced a social barrier.

As stated above, the 17th century saw the development of the country house as a separate entity, distanced from the surrounding community, yet even within the structure of the country house this separation and distancing occurred between its own elements. Whereas in the early medieval house the farming functions would be incorporated within the barrier of the wall or moat for the safety of the harvested crops and livestock, by the 18th century, at houses which retained their moat such as Ordsall Hall or Clayton Hall, the structures used by the agricultural staff of the houses had been removed beyond the moat. Not only was there a barrier between the inhabitants of the house and the surrounding community, but within the country house a barrier had developed between those staff concerned with maintaining the economic functions of the estate, and those concerned with the daily servicing of the owning family. As a result, instead of the household operating as an homogenous interdependent unit, those concerned with maintaining the income and wealth of the country house were now outside the household, whilst the household was composed only of two groups, the owners and the servants, whose daily activities had now become obviously separate.

Conclusion

In the early medieval period the difference between a hall and a farm in terms of spatial organisation would have been negligible, the only apparent difference being the relative size of the structures, which could be directly related to the wealth of the occupants. By the later middle ages specialisation of space within the country house had occurred to such an extent that it was immediately obvious to the visitor which space served which function. In the same way that, in the organisation of space within a church, the relative positions of the sacred and public areas leave the visitor in no doubt as to the hierarchy involved, so the organisation of space within the country house, with its outer farm buildings, its administrative areas, its working areas and its inner private living space, leave the visitor equally sure as to the the hierarchical positions of the inhabitants.

This specialisation of space would appear to be linked to an increasing specialisation in occupation. As stated above, in an early medieval hall, all members of the household would be equally involved in most tasks; however, by the 17th century the country house would contain a number and variety of specialised, and probably waged, staff.

The Recovered Artefacts

Finds from the excavation of country houses in Greater Manchester have been generally low in numbers. The Broadoak, Denton, Dukinfield, and Peel Hall, Wythenshawe excavations did not produce any significant medieval or early post-medieval pottery assemblages. Radcliffe Hall produced sherds representing a minimum of five medieval and four early post medieval vessels, although a reasonable assemblage of 17th century pottery was recovered. At Denton, waterlogged moat deposits were discovered,

although few artefacts were retrieved, whilst non-ceramic finds of any interest or value were absent from all the other sites. This low level of finds retrieval was the result of a number of factors, including the fact that excavators concerned saw their prime objective to be to explore the structural sequence and location of the buildings.

It is apparent that information on the social and economic activity within a house is not likely to be produced by excavation carried out solely within the confines of its structure, since there is generally little sustained artefact loss within a structure. Constructional dumping and destruction debris used for levelling, (unless in its primary location), will tend to produce only finds of a fragmentary nature, and even those in a generally abraded condition.

To gain a picture of social and economic activity through observation of finds, excavation on this type of site would have to concentrate on areas likely to have been used for daily rubbish disposal, or where occasional loss, without the chance of retrieval, might occur. Exploration of 'back yards' rather than the structures themselves should reveal rubbish pits and cess pits, and excavation of moats should produce items either lost when the moat was in use, or deliberately dumped as rubbish after the moat had fallen out of use. The chief group of finds from Radcliffe Hall was retrieved in such a location from layers representing the infilling, by rubbish dumping, of the disused ditch or moat, and the area at Denton Hall which showed most promise, and from which several items were retrieved, was the infilled moat.

The only body of material from which tentative conclusions might be drawn is the post medieval assemblage from Radcliffe Hall. In this assemblage the pottery type represented by most examples was the iron glazed type. Both fine and coarse wares were present, with fabrics ranging from oxidized red to reddish brown, and with glazes varying from dark reddish brown to a purple black. The minimum number of vessels in this category was: fineware 20 vessels, coarseware 19 vessels.

The next largest groups were lead glazed wares, with yellow glaze on a smooth light brown or pink fabric, and slipwares, with two major fabric types, a light red and a reddish yellow. A minimum of seven lead glazed vessels and six slipware vessels was represented.

Tin glazes and mottled glazed wares accounted for four vessels each. Two unglazed and one stoneware vessel were also identified.

Dark iron glazed pottery is widespread in South Lancashire and can be assumed to have been locally produced, although no kiln sites have yet been excavated to prove this assumption. The coarseware forms all appear to be varieties of kitchen equipment, whereas only one form is present in the fineware; a straight sided cup, probably multi-handled. Since this division of forms has been observed at excavations in Wigan and other sites in the region, it might be considered typical. The presence here of 120 sherds, representing a minimum of 20 similar cups strongly suggests a deliberately matched set of tableware. It is not surprising that the kitchen pottery should be of local manufacture, but the presence of a large amount of locally produced table fineware is interesting as the fashion at the time in the south was for Delft, or imitation Delft ware.

The forms of cups in the darker wares appear to copy those of 'Cistercian' ware, although that term has become too widespread, temporally and spatially, to be of particular relevance. The yellow glazed pottery, of the type known as Midland Yellow ware, probably originates outside the area. It was manufactured throughout the Midlands, with clay which produced a pale coloured fabric being particularly favoured. The presence of iron, giving a red cast to the fabric, suggests an origin outside the centres in the South Midlands where white fabric pottery was produced. The slipwares, where a slip of differently coloured clay is trailed or painted onto the surface of the pot before glazing, was manufactured at a variety of locations and in a variety of styles. Those from Radcliffe Hall are presumed by the excavators to have originated in Staffordshire.

The assemblages suggest that trade in pottery, whilst occurring, was not yet carried out on a large scale in southeast Lancashire in the 17th century. Most of the pottery was obtained locally, with only a small amount being brought from the North Midlands, and, occasionally, particular items brought from the south or imported from abroad.

A study of the forms present shows mostly cooking pots (principally baking dishes) and drinking cups, with a small number of dishes and even fewer bowls, none of which latter were of local manufacture. There was a complete absence of jugs or plates. At Denton Hall, amongst the items recovered from the moat was a wooden bowl, and it seems likely that much of the tableware in daily use was either wooden or metal, while jugs made of tarred leather were in common use in the medieval period. Survival of wooden and leather items requires particular soil conditions, and metal utensils in daily use are more likely to have been repaired or recycled when damaged than they are to have been discarded. As a result it is difficult to differentiate between assemblages from well-off households, where metal utensils would have been used, and the less well-off where wood might have been more common. Apart from this, insufficient domestic post-medieval sites have been excavated and published from the northwest to attempt to distinguish any differentiation of households by wealth, based only on the pottery recovered.

Excavations and Surveys of Domestic Sites in the North-West - Possible Future Priorities

Whilst excavation of the structural sequence is productive in some instances, and a structural sequence can often be tied to known historical records and events, there was in fact little retrieval of information concerning the most

interesting structural aspect of these sites, that is the earliest structure.

A more useful approach to this problem might be to concentrate on surveying surviving structures. The information produced by survey at Denton, and at Peel Hall, Ince, is obviously far superior to any that might be produced by excavation, since the earliest features on a site where there has been any degree of continuity of occupation must of necessity be fragmentary, and evidence of the nature of the building's superstructure non-existent.

Concerning artefacts, no single systematic study of medieval and post-medieval pottery has been made in the north-west. A first priority must be to sort out the various black glazed wares which are often lumped together under the title of Cistercian, or Cistercian derived, wares, and which continue as a northern pottery type until almost the 20th century.

Only if each project is approached with clearly formulated questions of relevance to the topic of country houses as a whole, will it become easier to fully evaluate and utilise the findings.