The Old in the New: Urban Castle Imposition in Anglo-Norman England, AD1050-1150

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Norman Conquest of the kingdom of England in the late eleventh century a series of castle structures were imposed on the fabric of a large number of Late Saxon towns. In the late 1980s this specific group of castles were archaeologically termed 'urban castles', being perceived as distinct from other forms of such structures encountered in the UK. The interpretation of these castles, whose design is widely accepted as being imported in this period from northern France, is closely entwined with culturally and nationalistically-loaded historical narrative of the Norman Conquest. This interpretive position has had a dominant role in how the urban castle is studied in historical and archaeological discourse, which in turn reinforces the validity and legitimacy of this approach.

The present study will seek to question the rationale and evidence behind the present interpretive framework. This will include a historiographical analysis of the development of the study of Late Saxon and Norman England over the last century and how the conditions of research in this period has influenced and often proved divisive in how the urban castle is understood and encapsulated within perceptions of radical change in English history. In turn it will offer an alternative, interdisciplinary approach to the encounter and interpretation of the urban castle. Detailed examinations of the urban castles and settlements of Wallingford (Oxon.) and Huntingdon (Cambs.) will be followed by broader, regional studies of Sussex and the Severn Vale. The castles in these examples will be studied in the wider context of urban development across the period c.AD900-1150 which will allow them to be considered as one element amongst a hetregenous, fluid process of settlement evolution. This original methodology will be utilised to demonstrate how these sites can be used as a subject for understanding the wider phenomenon of Saxo-Norman urbanism, and that the castle is an integral, if physically distinct, element in this process.

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CHER: Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, Cambridge

NMR: National Monument Record, Swindon

OHER: Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, Oxford

SHER: Shropshire Historic Environment Record, Shrewsbury

Acknowledgements

1 Introduction

The late eleventh century saw the initial proliferation of fortified elite enclosures, termed castles, across England and areas of Wales in the aftermath of the succession of Duke William of Normandy to the English crown, and a wider collection of the northern French elite to the upper social echelons of the kingdom. This process of unprecedented castle construction included a small but significant number built within or in close correspondence to established towns. In the 1980s these were classified archaeologically as 'urban castles', denoting a specific group of castles built principally in the period AD1066-1100 under royal command or immediate delegation, which were positioned in a direct physical relationship to an existing urban settlement. Analysis and research into this classificatory group beyond its immediate characterisation has been limited to studies of individual sites, while overall interpretation is heavily influenced by the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest. As a result there has been no attempt to explore the potential of these sites as indicators of urban and wider social structures within Saxo-Norman (*c.*AD850-1150) society, particularly from an archaeological perspective.

The broad aim of the present thesis is to develop an interpretive archaeological narrative of the urban castle group across the period *c.*AD1050-1150 in the context of urban development *c.*AD900-1150. An important condition of this approach is to detach the urban castle from the strong cultural influence of the historical narrative stemming from Norman Conquest of England and understand the archaeological phenomenon in the terms of the broader material conditions of urbanism and societal change. It is the contention of this thesis that these sites represent an important settlement development far beyond its narrow role enveloped within the linear history

of conflict in this period. Archaeologically it provides at a broader level an opportunity to explore and redefine the character of urbanism in the eleventh century through a consideration of the relationship between the specific castle unit and the wider settlement evolution.

A key objective will be to catalogue and characterise the spatial deposition of the post-Conquest urban castle in direct relation to the form and composition of the pre-Conquest urban settlement. Did a consistent position and layout exist amongst the *corpus* of urban castles? To what extent did local and idiosyncratic topographical factors influence the character of these fortifications? Importantly the emphasis of the interpretive framework will be connected specifically to archaeological data, although an interdisciplinary perspective will be maintained. The historical narrative which derives from contemporary and near-contemporary documentary material will be utilised to provide context where necessary, but will be actively prevented from structuring the interpretive framework.

The intended result of this research programme is a recursive study in which understanding and insight is garnered into both the castle and its urban setting, and the examination of the two elements benefits symbiotically from this juxtaposition. Town and castle are fundamentally entwined, and to deny the urban context a prominent role within this analysis would consequently narrow the thesis scope to that of an ill-defined castle type. This thesis will not be a discussion of a specific castle form, but a broader contribution to the study of the medieval urban townscape. The wider hinterland on which both urban settlement and castle were in some sense dependent will be considered, but the detailed study of this wider relationship stands beyond the remit and practical resources of the present work.

2 Archaeology, history and the urban castle

Politically, the construction of the urban castle was an act of conquest

(Drage 1987, 117)

It is as though the town is an organism, healing and gradually obscuring the scar of the new intrusions

(Schofield and Vince 2003, 56)

In 1987 Christopher Drage published an analysis of the relationship between castles and urban settlement in the medieval period in which he indentified a distinct group of fortifications that he termed 'urban castles' (Drage 1987). The principal values attributed to this group were that they were constructed in the decades immediately following the Norman Conquest of England in AD1066 either by or on behalf of the royal executive, and the construction of which frequently required the clearance of existing urban fabric. Additional characteristics could be identified, including a common re-use of pre-existing urban defences, a direct relationship with the primary watercourse associated with the settlement and the fact that they were amongst the largest castles constructed in England in the eleventh century. This definition was composed in a contrasting relationship with both castles founded in a rural environment and castle-boroughs, where a new urban settlement developed adjacent to a post-Conquest castle foundation.

The impact of this original classification has been limited, and arguably it simply formalised an understanding of the distinct characteristics identified amongst the *corpus* of castles by earlier studies on individual sites or regions. Reiterated and augmented by Creighton in his landscape-orientated synthesis on the British medieval castle (2002), it is a term adopted where relevant and has not been recipient of significant critique. In some cases it is not assessed as a distinct classification, highlighting the peripheral relevance attributed to this research term by the wider professional field (Kenyon 1990; Pounds 1990; Thompson 1991). The present study therefore sets out to redress this situation through a detailed analysis of both the classificatory term and the subject matter itself. In undertaking this task the overarching aim of the study will be to provide a re-conceptualisation of the eleventh-century landscape through the study of this particular component.

The medieval castle in England

The introduction of elite castle enclosures in England by members of the northern French elite following the Norman Conquest of the kingdom in AD1066 is a well-attested historical episode (Brown 1976). The builders of these structures adopted one of two basic models of enclosure, although within these two forms there could be significant variation in design. The first type known as a 'ringwork' consisted simply of an enclosing bank and possible ditch with one or more entrances, with the rampart often crested by a timber palisade or, less frequently, a masonry wall. In some instances one or more adjoining enclosures were raised, and these are sometimes termed 'ringwork-and-bailey' castles. The second, more common type of castle was known as the 'motte-and-bailey' which was formed of a large earth mound or 'motte' (Fig. 2.3), in many cases crested by some form of structure or tower, to which was

attached one or more enclosures defined again by a rampart and ditch (see Fig. 2.1). In the immediate post-Norman Conquest period the majority of castle-builders in England utilised timber to create an enclosure palisade and raise internal structures.

Castle-studies in the UK, arguably a sub-discipline of both medieval archaeology and history, has witnessed a period of significant development over the past three decades. At its core this has seen a conceptual movement from the perception of the castle as a primarily military unit to a much greater appreciation of additional roles they were utilised for by the medieval elite and their connection to wider settlement development. It would be incorrect to consider this academic development as complete, and debate over the 'military' issue continues (Platt 2007; Creighton and Liddiard 2008). In principle this is evidence of a healthy academic situation, although the arguments sometimes exhibit circularity and repetitiveness; in reality the intellectual framework of the discipline has never been truly static.

The evolution of castles studies in its modern recognisable situation began to take form in the late nineteenth century with scholarly investigations of medieval military architecture in the published works of individuals such as G. T. Clark and J. H Round (Clark 1884; Round 1902). A significant landmark was the work of Ella Armitage in the early twentieth century, developing the earlier work of Round, to demonstrate that the castle in its documented form was a Norman introduction of the period after AD1066 and connect these to the physical remains of extant castle sites across England (Armitage 1912). A contemporary thesis set out by A. H. Thompson was equally influential in setting out the theoretical interpretation of castle form development across the medieval period as being motivated by a technical and tactical competition between attack and defence (Thompson 1912, 58-82).

The concept of the castle as a primarily martial form of structure would endure throughout much of the twentieth century. The 'military' thesis delivered by Post-War scholars such as R. A. Brown, and built on the earlier narratives of Armitage and Thompson, was routinely accepted in archaeological circles. Interpretation would be guided by the mainstream military narrative, in turn reinforcing the validity of that discourse. An important exception to this situation was the thesis developed by Davison during the 1960s, which argued that the Norman castle did not differ fundamentally from many pre-Conquest private elite enclosures, and that the motte as a feature of castle design may have originally developed in the immediate post-Conquest period in England. Retrospectively, this assertion does not appear especially controversial or conceptually groundbreaking, but at the time its questioning of the Norman orthodoxy of castle studies in England was provocative. Following a period of tense, occasionally aggressive debate between those working in the field of history and archaeology, as well as with other European scholars (Brown 1969; Davison 1969a), the Royal Archaeological Institute initiated a research project to further investigate this controversial hypothesis. The results of the excavations stemming from the project, including sites relevant to the present study of urban castles at York, Hastings and Bramber, did not successfully resolve the principal issues at stake (Barton and Holden 1977; Barker and Barton 1977; Addyman 1977). This episode is relevant, however, in indicating both a growing confidence of medieval archaeology as a discipline in the UK, as well as demonstrating that the validity of the traditional castle narrative could be questioned.

A fundamental development in the character of castle studies began in the late 1970s that would openly dismantle the hegemony of the traditionally military narrative of

castle development, although it would only achieve mainstream fruition in the 1990s. The work of the historian Charles Coulson, ironically a former student of R. A. Brown, and the separate investigations of Royal Commission for Historical Monuments in England (RCHME) officers including Paul Everson and Christopher Taylor began to highlight the defensive irregularities of 'military' aspects of castle construction, instead indicating how the castle was physically and culturally embedded within the elite consciousness of medieval England (Coulson 1979; Liddiard 2005). This process of 'revisionism' was therefore the result of a combination of studies and methodological approaches, and has not induced a straightforward shift of paradigm. It is important to surmise that these new perspectives on castle design did not claim that the castle was not a military structure, the very monumentality of the enclosures were defensible in some sense, but that the factors and social context that influenced castle locations and design were far broader and more complex than the traditional military school acknowledged. A key publication that is often cited as turning point in wider perceptions of castle studies is a review article by David Stocker which bemoaned the dominance of interpretation of the castle by individuals with a military background and a failure to understand these structures in a non-martial capacity (Stocker 1992). By the early 21st century this 'revisionist' consideration was widely accepted in the UK and acknowledged in Europe, and is encapsulated academically in the work of Creighton (2002), Liddiard (2005) and Johnson (2002).

This synopsis provides a highly simplistic account of the development of academic castle studies in the UK, in part due to its limited immediate relevance to the study of urban castles. In reality the division between any traditional or revisionist school of thought is far more diffuse and cannot be compartmentalised so neatly. For instance, the work of many scholars who ascribe to the traditional narrative of military

imperative have still explored aspects of castles and their landscapes that has contributed to or fits in with the wider interests of the 'revisionist' school (e.g. Kenyon 1990; Thompson 1991). The broad relevance is that this highlights the general movement away from a primary focus on the martial element of castle design, although there are scholarly groups in the UK who continue to adhere to a predominately military perspective (Platt 2007; Prior 2007). From a European viewpoint, while methods and interpretive positions pioneered in the UK have been explored, there remains a perception of the English experience as being somewhat distinct from much of continental Europe, and thus the traditional military orthodoxy is often retained (Schofield and Steur 2007, 325).

The impact of this developing research context on urban castle studies has been relatively limited. In part this is due to the recent date at which the concept of the urban castle was coined, but more significant is the impact of narrative of the Norman Conquest to which these structures are often explicitly entwined. The context of the construction of the urban castle is, therefore, one heavily influenced by the concept of an invading, culturally alien minority taking control of the English kingdom through military action and violent repression of rebellion. The association between the urban castle and the primarily military conditions of the period has therefore remained indelibly strong; while Drage was able to divide his analysis of urban castles into military, residential and administrative functions, there is a constant assumption that they were conceived as essentially military at their foundation in the immediate post-Conquest years (Drage 1987).
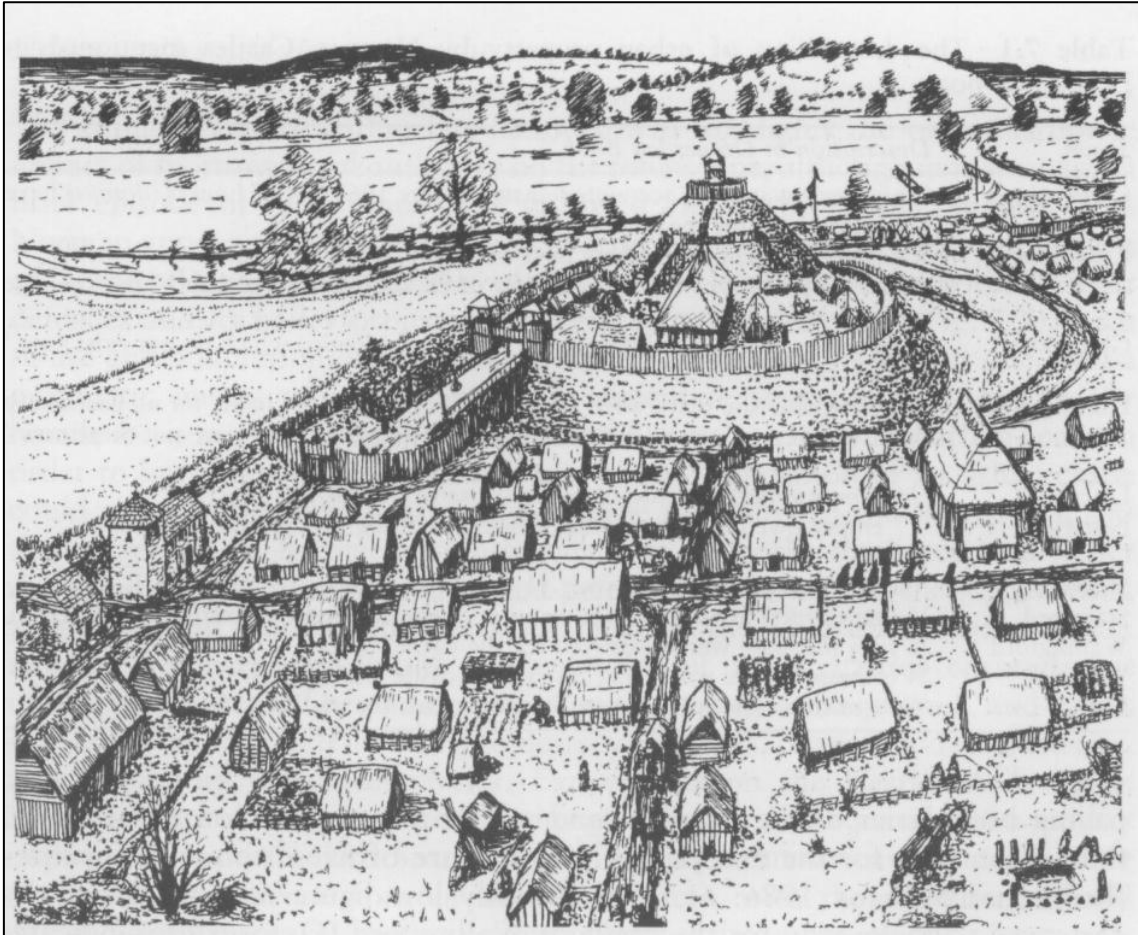
Figure 2.1 Artists impression of the first castle built at Gloucester *c.*AD1067. Subsequent archaeological investigation would indicate that the castle motte was significantly smaller than presented in this illustration (Source: Darvill 1988)

Defining the medieval urban castle in England

In advance of an exploration of the role the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest has played in shaping historical and archaeological perceptions of the urban castle, it is necessary to explore the definition of the urban castle in order to precisely delineate the type of monument under discussion. The 'castle' element of the term is relatively unproblematic; the short description used in the present study will be 'fortified elite centres' (see Fig 2.1). This is utilised in preference to the commonly accepted 'fortified residence of a lord' whose emphasis on the elite individual and their

habitation is difficult to sustain historically or archaeologically, particularly so in the case of the urban castle where an elite household may rarely have been resident.

Castles were built by members of the medieval elite to achieve a range of social, political and economic objectives. Residential provisions could be created internally for the household of their elite owner, as well as guests and captives. A wide range of structures could be built within the castle enclosure to cater for the diverse needs of the elite, the most common element of which was a hall and ancillary structures. The permanence and regularity with which these enclosures were occupied by elite groups could vary markedly, and a castle could be inhabited by only a skeleton staff for extended periods of time. The monumental form of these enclosures provided a defensive or military capacity, enabling a castle to be physically closed off to an enemy. The built form of the castle became embedded within the elite discourse of the medieval period; they provided a regulated point of social contact, communication, administration and economic activity. They were also frequently linked to elite ownership of territory, either as central points within a wider estate, or as positions of control over outlying or contested elements of that estate.

Although castles were evident in small numbers amongst the upper echelons of the elite in northern France and the Netherlands from at least the tenth century, increasing numerically and lower down the elite social scale in the eleventh century, they are largely unknown during this period in the British Isles and Scandinavia. Members of the pre-Conquest elite are known to have enclosed their halls with banks and ditches, but on a broad level these are of a smaller scale than post-Conquest castles. They were also considered distinct by contemporary chroniclers of both French and English backgrounds, perhaps due more to difference in function than form.
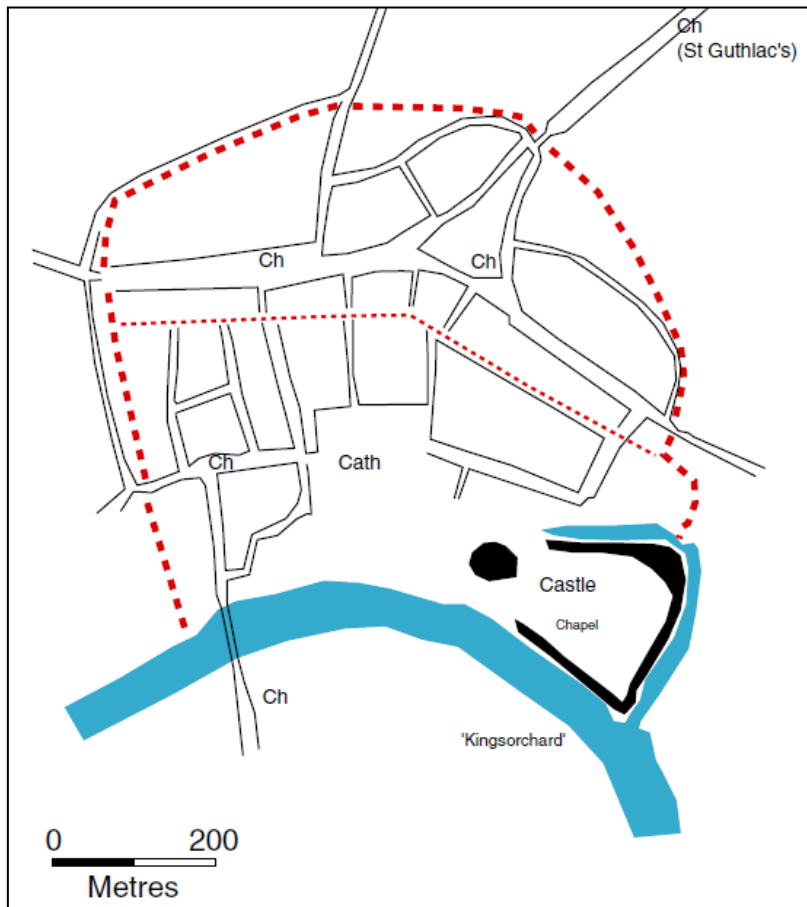
Figure 2.2 Plan of town and castle at Hereford. The shorter stippled line indicates the possible alignment of the pre-Conquest *burh* defences (Source: adapted from Gelling 1992).

A small number of individuals from the Norman social elite who had been provided with areas of land in the pre-AD1066 period by the English crown built castles, including a relevant example in the present context at Hereford (Fig 2.2), but these do not appear to have inspired comparable castle-building amongst the non-French elite in England. The castle at Hereford is thought to have been raised *c.*AD1046 and abandoned by its Norman lords in AD1055 after it was attacked (Shoesmith 1980, 56-7; Gelling 1992, 164). It is not known conclusively whether the post-Conquest urban castle at Hereford reused the site of the documented pre-Conquest fortification. It has been postulated that a rise in the north-eastern corner of the earthworks of the later medieval castle known as Hogg's Mount may incorporate the motte of an earlier

fortification, but in reality there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate this continuity, nor is it likely to be achieved archaeologically given the broad chronological span of the datable material culturein this region (Shoesmith 1980, 56). It remains a relevant issue because if this earlier castle utilised the same location in a pre-Conquest context, then it begins to invalidate the proposition that the imposition of the urban castle post-AD1066 related directly to the violent conditions of conquest and rebellion.

Archaeologically the 'urban' element presents the more burdensome and ambiguous term. The archaeological signature of urban settlement in England for the period *c.*AD900-1150 is not distinct, particularly away from the largest towns, and apparently subject to regional and inter-site variability. This ambiguity in defining urbanism archaeologically is not a problem confined to this period, and complex issues also exist in the interpretation of smaller towns in the later medieval period (Dyer 2003). The most acceptable common definition of an urban settlement is as a large nucleated form, distinct from the surrounding rural settlement, with a majority of the populace engaged in non-agricultural activity that formed the basis of a town's economy (Reynolds 1977, ix). Although this definition is not without criticism, it does hold a distinct advantage in its broad, cross-cultural applicability, providing a remit that is open to investigation archaeologically.

How can eleventh-century urban settlements be characterised using documentary or archaeological evidence? Is it possible to systematically identify which settlements were 'urban' in the eleventh century, or is it even effective to classify a distinction between rural and urban occupation in this period? Domesday Book, compiled in AD1086, is a major documentary source in this respect as urban centres are singled out, partly

because they proved so conceptually difficult for the creators of the document to record. Nethertheless Domesday Book cannot be utilised systematically on its own, as it gives a poor representation of major centres such as London, Winchester and Hastings, as well as emergent settlements including Bristol and Coventry (Roffe 2007, 109-16). Equally the available archaeological record provides only an imperfect dataset due to the differential extent of intervention in individual settlements, variable scales of preservation and both regional and local disparity in the material character of towns. The issue remains pertinent, and the approach utilised by the present study will be outlined in the following chapter.

Returning to the subject of the urban as a distint term and subject, and as outlined above, the publication of Drage's analysis of castles associated with urban settlements marks the formal recognition of 'urban castle' as a monument classification (Drage 1987). The imposition of castles on the fabric of pre-existing urban settlements had been noted as a distinct phenomenon previously, Thompson stating in 1912 as a lead into discussions of the development of the castle following the Norman Conquest:

The castle rose within or as an addition to the burh*, the independent stronghold of one person within the walled or stockaded town of the many* (Thompson 1912).

The interpretation set out by Drage differed, however, in its assertion that the urban castle was ultimately a fundamentally distinct sub-type of castle that could be actively differentiated from those observed in rural contexts and those examples where an urban settlement developed subsequent to the foundation of a castle.

Figure 2.3 Oxford Castle Mound. An example of an upstanding earthwork motte, which in the late eleventh century would have been crowned with some form of timber structure

The defining characteristics utilised in the characterisation of the urban castle can be broken down into three key elements; spatial location, chronology and social context. The first area is the most clearly defined in referring to a castle that is built in a direct association with a pre-existing, specifically pre-Conquest, urban settlement. In many cases it can be conclusively demonstrated that a castle was erected within the perimeter of the existing settlement's defensive perimeter or *burh*. In others, such as Nottingham, the castle was erected on a detached, elevated site, although the area between the two settlement areas was immediately developed as an extension of the town, indicating a clear physical link between castle and pre-Conquest settlement.

Chronologically, urban castles were erected in the late eleventh century, i.e. in the period from AD1066-1100. A large proportion can actually be placed with confidence

into the first decade after AD1066 on the basis of documentary references to various sites. Orderic Vitalis retrospectively recorded the construction of castles specifically at Nottingham, Warwick, York, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Lincoln in AD1068, while Domesday Book (complied in AD1086) also records some examples where the foundation of a castle entailed the destruction of property that previously existed on its site (Chibnall 1969, 218). A negative issue in utilising documentary references to identify when a castle was founded is that some examples are not recorded until the twelfth century, which has led to an acceptance of a much later foundation date. Northampton Castle is an example where, despite being topographically identical to the majority of urban castles, it is generally considered to have been founded in the early twelfth century because that is the point at which it enters the documentary record (RCHME 1985, 333).

The social element of the urban castle definition, that is that they were founded on the express wishes of the crown, is the least effective component. It is a fact that in many cases where the foundation of a castle is documented historically the involvement of the royal elite is attested. However, there is a proportion of sites whose foundation history is undocumented or the involvement of the king is absent or not recorded. For instance, semi-independent territories or earldoms were established at Herefordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire in the immdediate post-Conquest period, and in these circumstances there is little indication in the involvement of the crown in the foundation of castles at Hereford or Chester. As a result, while the social context of the foundation of urban castles remains a relevant research avenue, it is a questionable area to be utilised in the definition of the term. It is also an aspect that cannot be explored or refined further archaeologically, in contrast to the previous areas of definition.

It is important to highlight a second phase of castle construction in relation to existing urban settlement during the civil wars, often referred to as the Anarchy, during the reign of King Stephen (AD1135-54). This group will be omitted from the present study as they were raised outside of the chronological definition of the post-Conquest urban castle (i.e. AD1066-1100). These foundations differ in that they were built on a smaller scale than the urban castles of the later eleventh century, were developed by members of the sub-royal elite in towns that did not previously include a castle and rarely survived in use into the later twelfth century. They differ from temporary siege castles that were erected directly in response to a period of conflict where a major castle already existed as at Exeter, Bridgnorth and Wallingford. In some instances these 'Anarchy' castles encroached on urban religious precincts, as recorded at Cirencester and Malmesbury (Creighton 2005, 280). At Thetford a small fortification called Redcastle was constructed over the site of a church at the western periphery of the settlement on the south side of the river (Knocker 1969). The imposition of these small castles appears to stem from attempts to subvert existing urban power structures, hence in some instances the encroachment on monastic establishments (Coulson 1994, 92). The lack of a recognisable impact for the majority of these structures is convincingly indicative of the failure of this policy of castle building to establish new centres of elite power.

The urban castle is therefore defined most concisely through its spatial context, which can be summarised as a castle founded in association with a pre-existing urban settlement. Chronologically these castles were raised in the period AD1066-1100, although there are clear methodological issues with conclusively demonstrating archaeologically or historically the date of construction at many sites. On the grounds

of definition the social context of the urban castle is too ambiguous, and is therefore incompatible with a consistent definition. While the majority of examples were founded in the later eleventh century, often in connection with the documented orders of the royal elite, these are areas of commonality requiring explanation rather than providing a defining line between the two groups. The issue of definition and inclusion within the present thesis will be discussed further in Chapter Three.
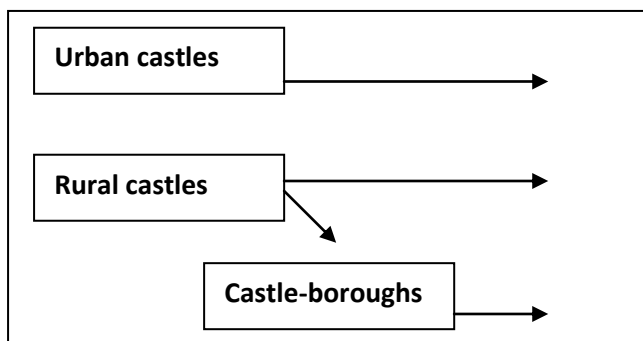
Figure 2.4 Divisions of castle type and the context of their foundation (Source: Michael Fradley).

Rural castles and castle-boroughs

It is also necessary to elaborate on those castle sub-types from which the urban castle is differentiated through its specific terminology, the rural castle and castle-borough (Fig 2.4). To give an indication of the proportional figures of these various castle types, of 1125 sites tentatively identified in England and Wales 82% are defined as rural castles, 13% castle-boroughs and only 5% urban castles (Creighton 2007, 281). The rural castle can be relatively clearly defined as those post-Conquest elite enclosures erected in the countryside. As a monumental imposition on an extant settlement pattern they may frequently instigate some form of disruption; at Hen Domen structures and elements of a ridge-and-furrow field system were recorded beneath the early post-Conquest castle (Higham and Barker 2000, 28-9). However, the lower

density of settlement in the rural landscape in comparison to the urban environment would entail that the scale of disruption would always be significantly lower in the former context.

The relationship between urban castle and castle-borough is more complex. The castle-borough, where an urban settlement was established contemporaneously with or subsequent to the foundation of a castle, is a recurrent element in the development of towns from the later eleventh to the thirteenth century in England, Wales and Scotland. Well-researched examples include Ludlow (Shropshire), Pleshey (Essex), Richmond (North Yorkshire) and Plympton (Devon). The processes through which they developed and the characteristics of their morphological form has a more extensive history of research than the urban castle (Beresford 1967; Conzen 1969). The concept, therefore, significantly pre-dates the development of the idea of the urban castle as a particular 'type', and refers specifically to the process of associated urban development. A castle-borough may, therefore, have been founded as a rural castle, with its associated settlement only developing some form of urban status subsequently, or castle and town may have been established simultaneously. Equally, an associated urban unit may have failed to develop, or struggled to sustain its economic base and reduced to a rural status. In all these conditions the castle and associated settlement may be defined as castle-borough, so that classification is based upon a process attempted or experienced, rather than the topographical context of foundation as in the case of rural and urban castle examples.

Illustrating this process of castle foundation within an exact chronology of castle types is hampered by the inherent difficulties in conclusively demonstrating the date and social context of a castle foundation. Liddiard presents a broad phasing beginning with

royal, frequently urban, foundations, followed by a growth in castle construction by members of the upper, baronial elite and finally a movement down the social scale to individuals of lower, knightly rank amongst the elite (Liddiard 2005, 17-8). In reality the process would have been far more blurred than implied by this phasing, with its emphasis on a linear movement of castle building down the social scale indicates. Eales presents a less restrictive model in which the foundation of castles of all types occurred at its highest level during the late eleventh century, with the number of occupied sites peaking *c.*AD1100, followed by a decline in construction levels and increase in abandonment (Eales 1990, 56-60). Again this interpretive scheme suffers from an inability to validate its chronology due to difficulties in establishing the foundation date of castles, as well as the issue of characterising and dating the process of abandonment on site. In Liddiard's model the urban castle group clearly rate amongst the earliest of those established in England, due in no small part to their predominance in the various documentary sources of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries that record the existence of these sites in the years after AD1066. This source material is at the heart of the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest, a period whose understanding is essential to the interpretation of the urban castle in England.

The Norman Conquest and the urban castle

The Norman Conquest of the kingdom of England in AD1066 is widely perceived as a major historical event in the development of the modern geo-political unit of England and the United Kingdom. As has been repeatedly alluded to above, it is in this historical context that the majority of urban castles are documented to have been founded. It is asserted that this context has been allowed to overtly influence the

archaeological and historical interpretation of the urban castle. A brief history of the period will be outlined below, followed by a detailed consideration of its impact on the understanding of the urban castle.

A theoretically unified kingdom of England had developed during the late ninth and tenth centuries. This period saw the early medieval kingdom of Wessex expand its boundaries through success in conflict over various Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian peoples across central and northern England. In time the territories of the formerly independent kingdoms of England, the largest of which included Mercia and Northumbria, were brought under the hegemony of the house of Wessex to create a single English kingdom, although the influence of these kings amongst the Anglo-Scandinavian populace of northern and eastern England is disputable. This period of expansion also saw the royal foundation of a series of fortified *burhs* across southern and central England, and by the eleventh century these had frequently taken on urban characteristics. Royal *burhs* were large enclosures defined by ramparts and ditches which were used as forts, but could also act in additional roles such as settlement centres.

The solidity of the English kingdom was tested in the early eleventh century when the Crown was taken by the Danish royal house, followed by a period of stability under King Canute. Following the death of the latter and his heirs the crown returned to the direct descent of the house of Wessex in the form of King Edward, latterly the Confessor, who had spent the period of rule under the Danish crown in exile in northern France. The subsequent death of King Edward without issue led to the crown being disputed by various factions with rival claims. Harold Godwinson, a leading nobleman in England, was initially crowned king, defeating his rival Norwegian claimant

at Stamford Bridge (North Yorkshire) immediately before his own death at the Battle of Hastings against Duke William of Normandy, who also disputed the crown. William and his northern French allies conducted a short military campaign before the Norman duke was crowned King William I at the close of AD1066.

The question of the legitimacy of the succession of Duke William to the English crown is not relevant in the present context. Additionally Norman, French and Flemish members of the victorious army received lands forfeited by English landowners. A series of rebellions by various groups over the following decade entailed the removal of the majority of premier English landowners, as expressed so completely by the records of Domesday Book, although English losses below this upper echelon of the elite was far less extensive. Similarly, principal ecclesiastical posts were rapidly passed over to individuals of French or continental origin. The crown had been the principal landowner in the majority of urban settlements prior AD1066, and this situation largely continued following the Norman succession, although this period also witnessed the growth of new urban foundations established by members of the sub-royal elite. The crown and wider elite also began constructing distinct fortifications known as castles whose dissimilarity with pre-Conquest elite enclosures in England was noted by contemporary sources and is widely accepted by academics in the present.

As in the case of any historical event, the interpretation of this period is open to multiple and varied readings, while the available material is dominated by post-Conquest sources created under Norman patronage. This event also has a very prominent cultural resonance in the narrative of the development of the English Kingdom, and is frequently identified as the last point at which England was successfully

invaded by a foreign army. Whether the resulting impact of the Norman Conquest is portrayed in a positive or negative sense by writers in the present, it is accepted by all that the succession was achieved through a military campaign in late AD1066. A series of regional rebellions centred on English opposition to the rule of William I occurred during the subsequent decade, which were put down by military campaigns. It is in the context of this repeated military activity that the majority of urban castles with a documented date of foundation appear to have been raised. As a result there has been a reluctance to perceive their construction in any other context than one of oppression, domination and as a symbol of conquest.

The Norman Conquest narrative and the interpretation of the urban castle

The most consistent element proposed in more general studies on urban castles is their role in dominating and over-awing the urban population, derived from the historical context of an invading group situated within nucleated settlement of a conquered populace (Ottaway 1992, 166). An additional viewpoint is that their construction entailed the development of towns as military strong points which could react to regional uprisings (Oman 1926, 12; Renn 1968, 12; Rowley 1983, 36; Thompson 1991, 147). Even radical commentators on the subject imply that the image of alien domination is perhaps more appropriate to the urban castle that the majority of rural example (Coulson 2001, 90-1; Hinton 1990, 115). The role of the castle in conveying the implications of the Norman Conquest has also been highlighted, envisaging it as both the tool and symbol of conquest (Higham and Barker 1992, 200; Schofield and Steur 2007, 123). The decision to construct major castles in pre-Conquest urban settlements is also used to argue that towns were the key to political and economic power, the implication being that the castle was being utilised to control

this capacity, although this correlation is disputed (Griffiths 2003, 104; Hinton 1990, 116). More recent research has attempted to broaden this point, with the urban castle primarily seizing control of regional power bases and key nodes of communication, in addition to overseeing population centres and functioning as instruments and symbols of Norman royal power (Creighton 2005, 280).

This overall perception has generally been transferred into the interpretive framework of specific sites, in particular in the choice of position within the townscape selected by the individuals who founded these castles. In general it has been expressed that the peripheral location in part reflects the level of conflict and mistrust between castle and town, continuing theoretically along the grounds that the castle was not envisaged to provide a defensive capacity for the urban populace (Armitage 1912, 95-6; Pounds 1990, 207; Platt 1982, 1). In the same vein the peripheral location of the castle within the existing town defences has also been linked to a need for access to open countryside, presumably as a means of access independent of the town gates whether to enable the escape of the castle residents or otherwise (Drage 1987, 119; Hill 2000, 183; Palliser *et al.* 2000, 173). At Bedford, the castle was argued to have been strategically sited within the pre-existing town alongside the Great River Ouse and with access to open country to the east to facilitate escape or reinforcement (Barker 1973, 15) Original posterns leading out into this 'open country' are rare and only Warwick and Winchester had principal gates opening outside the urban area; this limited relationship has led to exaggerated speculation that easy access was required from urban castles into the towns to suppress incipient revolt (Pounds 1990, 213-4).

In the few discussions of castles that discuss the urban castle as a distinct phenomenon the role of Conquest is given primacy as it is in Drage's original account. This

supposedly explicit rationale of this phase of urban castle building enables the assertion that 'the rapidity and coherency of this castle-building programme points towards a unified programme of Norman repression' (Creighton 2002, 137). The importance of utilising the existing administrative networks associated with urban settlements is highlighted, but again is not explored in depth and subsumed within a narrative of forcible seizure of power (Drage 1987, 127-8; Creighton 2002, 134-6; Liddiard 2005, 18-19). A central paradox is also identified in which: 'this unique generation of early urban castles, constructed under the express orders of William [I] as tools of military conquest and in a sense the most 'Norman' castles of all, sometimes resemble earlier traditions of Anglo-Saxon fortification in terms of their social and landscape contexts' (Creighton 2002, 137). This refers specifically to the process of tenth century *burh*-building utilised as offensive garrisoned units that would dominate major settlements and communication networks in northern and eastern England, which is likened to the role of the post-Conquest castle. However, as the role of the latter was a central component in the military expansion of the Wessex kingdom at the expense of a 'foreign' invader and, ultimately, the perceived unification of England as a single politically entity from which the modern polity is directly descended, their foundation are portrayed in a universally positive light. An advance is offered by Liddiard who, although reluctant to question the military rationale of the immediate post-Conquest period, highlights issues with the acceptance of the exact role of the castle within those conditions (Liddiard 2005, 12-15).

One of the few pieces of research to explore the idea of the urban castle in any specific detail has been a small regional study by Marshall in the north-east Midlands. Exploring the context of castle construction at Nottingham, Newark and Lincoln the Conquest narrative structure is again given prominence over interpretation (Marshall

2006). All three of the castle sites have been investigated archaeologically, with the example at Newark revealing a hitherto unknown late eleventh-century castle beneath the ruins of a later twelfth-century enclosure (Marshalls and Samuels 1994). The approach taken is embedded within the traditional narrative of violent conquest, relating the construction of castles by the Norman crown directly to a need to suppress rebellion and highlighting how this strategy has been 'long recognised by historians' (Marshall 2006, 259).

In the case of the urban castle, previous studies have proved unable to develop any form of interpretive framework outside the constraints of the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest. Archaeological or historical investigation of an individual site may provide interesting details about the specific context of an urban castle imposition, but the orthodoxy of that narrative remains unchallenged.

Archaeological investigation on urban castle sites

Can an alternative perspective of the urban castle be developed on the basis of an archaeological research framework? In advance of developing such a position in Chapter Three it is necessary to outline the forms of archaeological investigation that have been deployed on urban castle sites in England. Given the recent date at which the term 'urban castle' was coined, there has been relatively limited investigation of this form of castle as a specific monument type. As implied above, archaeological research has demonstrated a repeated tendency to accept the interpretation of the urban castle as an oppressive tool of conquest on the basis of the historical context in which they were founded.

The urban castle's image as a centre of oppression held little attraction to early archaeological and historical scholars in the nineteenth century. The reformulation of popular and academic views from the mid-nineteenth century, which saw a renaissance in appreciation of Anglo-Saxon culture that was oppressed, but not extinguished, by Norman rule simply reinforced the unpopularity of the post-Conquest castle (Chibnall 1999, 54-5, 146). In stark contrast to the cathedrals and churches on which the attention of the Gothic revivalists fell, these castles were often left peripheral and abandoned within rapidly expanding urban landscapes. The historical trajectory of a large number of urban castles had seen them develop solely into the site of courts and jails, as at Cambridge and the two examples at York, and in this context the devolution of the medieval term 'donjon' to the later English usage of dungeon is unsurprising (RCHME 1959, 304; RCHME 1972, 59, 87; Brown 1976, 17). It is notable that the few urban castles that did receive attention during this period were those with significant standing fabric like Norwich Castle with which the medievalist tastes of the period could be indulged, and reflect the interests of the nineteenth century toward medieval architecture and its preservation (Gerrard 2003, 36, 53-5).

The assessment of a number of the urban castles was undertaken by the relevant county volumes of the Victoria County History (VCH) series, while more detailed analysis was produced for the small number of sites which fell within the scope of the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments in England (RCHME) inventory series such as Essex (RCHME 1922, 50-1). Basic earthwork and structural surveys of most upstanding urban castles have been provided by various Ordnance Survey editions from the late nineteenth century onwards, which give an indication of the evolution and encroachment upon these sites within the urban landscape over the last 150 years.

The extent of topographical survey at urban castle sites has reduced over time as the VCH series rapidly abandoned its primary production of archaeological survey data, while the merger successively of the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division into the RCHME, and subsequently the latter with English Heritage, has reduced the scale and remit of these groups. Improvements in topographical mapping of urban castle sites by the RCHME has been undertaken at Huntingdon (Cambs.) and Thetford (Norf.), with a more detailed investigation undertaken at Lydford (Devon) by English Heritage, but these are the only sites to be subject to detailed earthwork survey since c.1980 (NMR: AF0622096, AF0622089; Taylor 1974, 64; Newman 2000; Everson and Jecock 1999, 104). This situation is not surprising given the overall decrease in attention given to earthwork survey methodologies in professional and academic archaeological projects, while fieldwork potential is frequently restricted by the fact that many urban castle sites are hemmed in by modern development. It reflects the rural focus of landscape archaeology, with which analytical earthwork survey is commonly linked, whose disdain for urban settlement can be traced to its origins in the Romantic tradition (Johnson 2006).

Archaeological excavation

The majority of professional excavations that have taken place on urban castle sites, principally in the period following the Second World War, were conducted ahead of redevelopment. Prior to the Second World War reported interventions at urban castle sites were relatively rare, although excavations were undertaken at castle sites such as Barnstable and Colchester (Gerrard 2003, 70; Drury 1982, 302; Miles 1984, 59). The scale of professional investigation subsequently has been incredibly varied,

while the degree of preservation of the early castle and pre-castle phases of occupation has been dependent on the idiosyncrasies of their subsequent history.

The introduction of modern excavation techniques in the post-war period had a wide ranging impact on the study of the urban castle. Early work by Martin Jope in 1952 at Oxford Castle focused on a small area on the south side of the castle motte (Fig. 2.3) which had been cut back during the nineteenth century, predicting correctly that it may still seal pre-Conquest deposits which at that time were little-known in Oxford (Jope 1952, 77-9). A further campaign of excavations from 1965-73 ahead of a number of redevelopment phases in and around the castle site allowed further observations in the aftermath of Jope's pioneering fieldwork (Hassall 1976). The inference that can be made from this research is that the site was inhabited prior to the construction of the castle, despite this settlement destruction not being recorded in Domesday Book as it had been at a number of other towns such as Warwick and Gloucester (Jope 1952, 79; Creighton 2002, 140).

The research agenda was therefore focused on the castle principally as a facilitator within the urban context of preserved early deposits, and this remains a key element in the archaeological potential of castles located in urban contexts (Schofield and Vince 2003, 56). This reflects a wider attitude towards the potential of castle sites; in Shropshire, Barker's work at Hen Domen began as an attempt to retrieve a post-Conquest ceramic sequence from a site within a region that had otherwise proved virtually aceramic within the medieval period, but would become a seminal excavation of a motte and bailey castle (Barker 1970, 19; Higham and Barker 2000). The implication within this early body of work is that the established castle narrative, developed principally by non-archaeologists, was not the subject of research. While

archaeology could inform on the idiosyncrasies of individual sites its primary use in archaeological research was in developing understanding of wider aspects of medieval archaeology. One leading researcher, who would be commended as a historian taking an active interest in archaeological evidence, felt able to comment that despite an upsurge in interest on the subject between 1954 and 1976, the narrative of early castle development remained unchanged (Brown 1976, 11; Biddle 1971).

As discussed above, during the 1960s heightened debate between a number of archaeologists and historians had focused on the origins of the castle in England. Specifically this centred on whether the motte and bailey castle was imported as a fully-developed form from Normandy from AD1066, or if it was actually an Anglo-Norman design which evolved in the context of the early post-Conquest years (Davison 1967, 202-208). A key focus of fieldwork was centred on whether excavation could demonstrate if the motte was a primary element of the castle complex, or if it was a secondary addition developed within an Anglo-Norman context. In the view of some historians the debate reflected historical revisionism favouring Anglo-Saxon over Norman England, and that the historical record should not be neglected by the majority of archaeologists (Brown 1969, 1-3). Given the primacy of urban castles amongst those documented by 1086, of the five castles investigated archaeologically by the Royal Archaeological Institute's subsequent research project Baille Hill in York and Hastings Castle (Sussex) fall within the category of urban castles, while Bramber (Sussex) was built in close association with the pre-Conquest settlement of Steyning (Addyman and Priestley 1977; Barker and Barton 1977). The final results of the former research project were limited; in part reflecting the narrow morphological questions laid out at its inception and the methodological issue of testing historical theories with archaeological techniques (Eales 1990, 51).

A significant proportion of urban castles have been explored archaeologically in the context of Post-War urban redevelopment, although rarely within a research-driven framework. By 1981 a survey revealed that 37 castles had been subject to excavation up to that point, including both urban castles and primary castles erected alongside or prior to the foundation of post-Conquest new towns (Schofield and Vince 2003, 10). The scale of these investigations varied as did the value of their results, and this process has continued in the post-PPG16 developer-funded environment since 1991. To a certain degree the perception of urban castles as an area of high potential for the survival of archaeological deposits apparent in the work of early pioneers such as Jope remains active today (Creighton 2007, 289). At one extreme are the relatively small numbers of large-scale investigations at sites such as the southern bailey of Norwich Castle and the Oxford Castle site (Popescu 2004; Popescu 2009a; Poore and Norton 2009). At the other end of the spectrum are castles such as Shrewsbury, Hereford and Worcester which have either never been meaningfully investigated archaeologically or produced results stemming from the early phases of castle occupation or pre-Conquest settlement (e.g. Leach 1971; Shoesmith 1980). The result of this imbalance is that these sites are often left out of the urban castle 'narrative' (Brown 1976, 9).

Archaeological evidence of the urban castle form

One of the key areas where archaeological investigation has proved enlightening is in the identification of pre-castle settlement deposits. In many cases urban castles were erected on the site of existing pre-Conquest occupation, and the monumental form of the fortification has allowed these deposits to be sealed and often protected from subsequent development. It had been realised previously that settlement had been

cleared to allow the construction of castles, as losses of property were recorded in Domesday Book in relation to the loss of revenue that they caused. However, archaeological excavation has revealed that pre-Conquest properties were encroached upon by castle building at a much larger number of sites than those listed in Domesday Book, as recorded at excavations at Oxford, Northampton and Winchester (Jope 1952; Biddle 1970; Chapman 1985). In addition to the demolition of properties, the insertion of a castle could also destroy road systems, in some cases causing the re-routing of streets that were fossilised in the urban plan and can still be identified topographically in modern street layouts.

Urban castle imposition could also have a significant impact on the urban ecclesiastical topography. At Norwich Castle a church structure was revealed beneath the north-eastern bailey of the complex, while cemeteries have been observed beneath the castle sites at Barnstaple, Hereford, Cambridge and Newark (Ayers 1985, 18-25; Drage 1987, 326, 350; 119; Drury 1982; Liddiard 2005, 19; Miles 1986, 62-71; Marshall and Samuels 1994, 53-4; Pounds 1990, 207; Rowley 1983, RCHME 1959, 306-7). Reflecting on the density of church building in many eleventh-century urban settlements, this loss of ecclesiastical sites was potentially inevitable as part of any encroachment on the built environment of the settlement. However, the general interpretation taken from these circumstances is that not even church property was safe from the encroachment of these early castles and their chosen position within or alongside the urban environment (Drage 1987, 119).

One final area of the pre-Conquest environment that has garnered attention is the re-use of elite settlement sites in the construction of post-Conquest urban castles. Excavated evidence of possible high-status halls and residences beneath castle sites has

been recorded at Southampton, Colchester and Oxford (Holdsworth 1984, 340; Oxley 1986, 47; Drury 1982, 389-90; Poore and Norton 2009). Chronologically ambiguous evidence has been recovered at Stamford, where a ditched enclosure beneath the post-Conquest castle may have been abandoned as early as the late ninth or early tenth century (Mahany and Roffe 1983, 201-4; Mahany et al. 1982). Potentially the most interesting evidence has come from the relatively short-lived castle at Stafford, where the small area investigated demonstrates that the castle ditch follows the alignment of a pre-Conquest enclosure closely, suggesting a hitherto unrecognised level of continuity between pre- and post-Conquest elite enclosures (Cuttler et al. 2008).

In contrast to the level of interest and quality of evidence produced in relation to pre-Conquest deposits, the archaeological examination of early urban castle phases of the later eleventh and twelfth centuries has been relatively limited. In part this is a consequence of the conditions of preservation; the monumental construction of a castle often incurs substantial earth movement in the creation of its enclosure, which seals and protects early deposits from the impact of subsequent development and encroachment. The digging of surrounding castle ditches is destructive of earlier archaeological layers, but the interior of a castle enclosure offers an island of preservation for pre-castle material. Conversely the early phases of castle occupation on the surface of the castle landform, frequently consisting of timber rather than masonry structures, are highly vulnerable to the impact of subsequent redevelopment where the castle is reconstructed in masonry or else abandoned and redeveloped.

In some instances the historical trajectory of a castle has created conditions in which early occupation phases have survived. At Winchester Castle an extensive phase of

earth movement to raise the surface of the castle interior produced similar conditions of preservation to those experienced by pre-Conquest occupation layers below many urban castles. As a result a whole sequence of early development could be recorded, including the early construction of a masonry chapel which may relate to that documented in AD1072. At Gloucester an early urban castle was abandoned *c.*AD1100 in favour of an adjacent site to the north-west, and the site remained largely unoccupied for much of the medieval period so that early castle deposits survived (Darvill 1988). In some cases major intrusive features such early castle ditch alignments have survived archaeologically as the overall castle complex has expanded as at Dover Castle and the Tower of London (Parnell 1983). Castle mottes also offer some potential for preservation, dependent on the character of their re-use in subsequent periods. Sequences of buildings erected before the thirteenth century have been recorded on the western motte of Lewes Castle, while the raising of the castle mound at Baille Hill in York as part of post-medieval landscaping ensured the continued preservation of early activity (Drewett 1992; Addyman and Priestley 1977).

The latter cases currently offer some of the best examples of early urban castles based upon the range of archaeological evidence recorded. A more common phenomenon is an absence of early phases due to the scale of remodelling during later periods of occupation. For instance, excavation at Hereford Castle, a site of increased importance as it may have been originally raised as documented *c.*AD1050 and therefore the only example of a pre-Conquest urban castle in England (Fig. 2.2), no deposits prior to the thirteenth century reconstruction of the site have been recorded (Shoesmith 1980). Similarly, investigations at Dorchester (Dorset), Chester, Southampton and Oxford have produced very limited evidence of occupation or activity at their respective urban castle sites for the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries (Oxley 1986, 47; Poore and

Norton 2009; Draper and Chaplin 1982; Ellis 1996). In part this may actually reflect the situation that there could be a relative absence of activity within castle baileys; the north-eastern bailey of Norwich Castle appears to have been maintained as an enclosed open space prior to its abandonment in the fourteenth century (Ayers 1985). If this was the case then it was not consistent across all urban castles, as demonstrated by the density of early occupation recorded at Winchester Castle (Biddle 1970), so that the enclosed space of the urban castle appears to have been open to a range of different functions.

The overall form and extent of the majority of urban castle sites can be reconstructed utilising a combination of evidence stemming from historical maps, the survey of upstanding features and the evidence of major boundaries such as walls, banks and ditches identified through archaeological investigation. Despite this apparent level of survival it is clear that the early phases of castle occupation are frequently not available to investigation through the standard methodology of archaeological excavation. A clear limitation is therefore set on the potential of archaeological research to investigate the nature and function of the urban castle as a settlement form.

The built fabric of the urban castle

Architectural analysis of standing buildings at urban castle sites is one avenue where research-led analysis has enabled the construction of innovative interpretations. A small number of urban castles retain early architectural elements of late eleventh century date; the earliest examples of masonry towers at Colchester Castle and the Tower of London may have been initiated in the AD1070s, although they may not have been completed until *c.*AD1100. The masonry gatehouse at Exeter Castle may have

been initiated as early as AD1068. The architectural study of this evidence has made an important contribution towards understanding the functions and facilities of urban castle sites (Marshall 2002a, 27). In part this has involved dismissing many 'martial' interpretations by highlighting the ineffectuality of otherwise highly visible military components, for instance in the provision of raised entrances and defended fore-buildings on castle 'keeps' while less prominent utilitarian entrances were often easily accessible away from the castles principal façade (Coulson 1996, 182-3).

Figure 2.5 The White Tower, London. The construction of the great tower was initiated in the AD1070s but would not be completed until _c._AD1100 (Source: Michael Fradley).

A focus on the ceremonial function of the castle keep has been prominent in recent literature, demonstrating that in both England and Normandy architectural analysis has highlighted increasing restrictions of access to more 'private' halls and social spaces, available only to the upper echelons of society and their servants (Marshall 2002; Dixon and Marshall 2002, 238). Interestingly in the context of the present study, no

identifiable private domestic space was recorded at the Tower of London (Fig 2.5) in the form of smaller, heated rooms, allowing speculation as to whether the tower functioned as specialist social arenas rather than as practical residential units (Drury 2002, 219; Marshall 2002a). Caution must be applied here as Dixon notes when he questions what is really known about the lifestyle and domestic arrangements of the tenth and eleventh centuries, even for the elite (Dixon 2002, 10). These interpretations are also heavily imbedded in understandings of the evidence from an 'elite' perspective, in that these architectural designs were idealised forms created by the elite to be 'read' by their peers.

The scale and prominence of the larger surviving masonry towers has led to them being understood in a more 'symbolic' capacity than contemporary earthwork castles and those to which masonry elements were only added at a later date. At Colchester Castle the keep was built conspicuously overlying the preceding Roman Temple of Claudius, leading to interpretations of the re-use of the past through which the Norman monarchy asserted their imperial intentions (Drury 1982). This concept of the re-use of Roman fabric and design as representing an assertion of imperial intention occurs elsewhere in castle studies, as at Caernarfon Castle in northern Wales, although nothing specifically indicates a statement of a medieval perception of Roman imperialism rather than a more general connection to a mythological connection to the past, Roman or otherwise (Fradley 2006a). Links have also been made between the development of design in Normandy and England, for instance in the similarity of the structures at Ivry-la-Bataille which is conjectured to have been begun around AD1000, and the keep of the Tower of London which may represent an anachronistic revival of the architectural form in an original English context (Impey 2002, 189, 199). In contrast, examination of the gatehouse at Exeter Castle has implied

that the use of typically pre-Conquest architectural motif would suggest that this castle was created through a medium of pre-Norman construction and display which has been identified at other castles such as Lincoln (Coulson 2001, 72).

The European experience of the urban castle construction

As part of an assessment of the relevance of the historical narrative, in which the urban castles in England was introduced within a specific political context, it is also necessary to consider the experience of urban castle building in the wider European theatre within which the English kingdom was intricately bound. The urban castle in England, in which a large number of castles were constructed in a direct physical association with an existing urban context within a narrow timeframe, is a relatively unique phenomenon in its immediate north-west European context. While the English experience was distinct from that witnessed on the continent, it is also important to assert that the situation in Europe was not itself homogenous temporally or geographically. For instance, the development of castle structures along parts of the kingdom of Aragon's border with Islamic territories in Spain, another zone of apparent cultural contrast, is equally argued to be distinct from the wider experience of medieval Europe (Stalls 1995, 152).

The development of urbanism and associated castle construction in the European theatre needs to be considered in order to balance the idea that the situation in England was in some senses special or unique. In north-western Europe castles were constructed in a small number of instances in association with some of the earliest early medieval urban settlement developments. From *c.*AD800 towns in northern France and Flanders had urban strongholds, often linked to the larger town

fortifications or supporting weak points (Schofield and Steur 2007, 117). From the late ninth century a more localised pattern in the same region saw the secular nobility constructing new citadels on sites previously associated with the royal regime; in cities like Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges these become the focus of significant urban development (Nicholas 1992; 1997, 56; Schofield and Steur 2007, 121). Numbers of castles in rural and urban contexts increased during the tenth century, but only began to proliferate in the eleventh century in north-west Europe, with the exception of the British Isles prior to AD1066 and Scandinavia (Aurell 2006, 32-3). In Norway castles were rarely constructed prior to the later twelfth century, and in an urban context these were constructed on the town outskirts, as at Olso and Bergen (Ekroll 1998, 66-9).
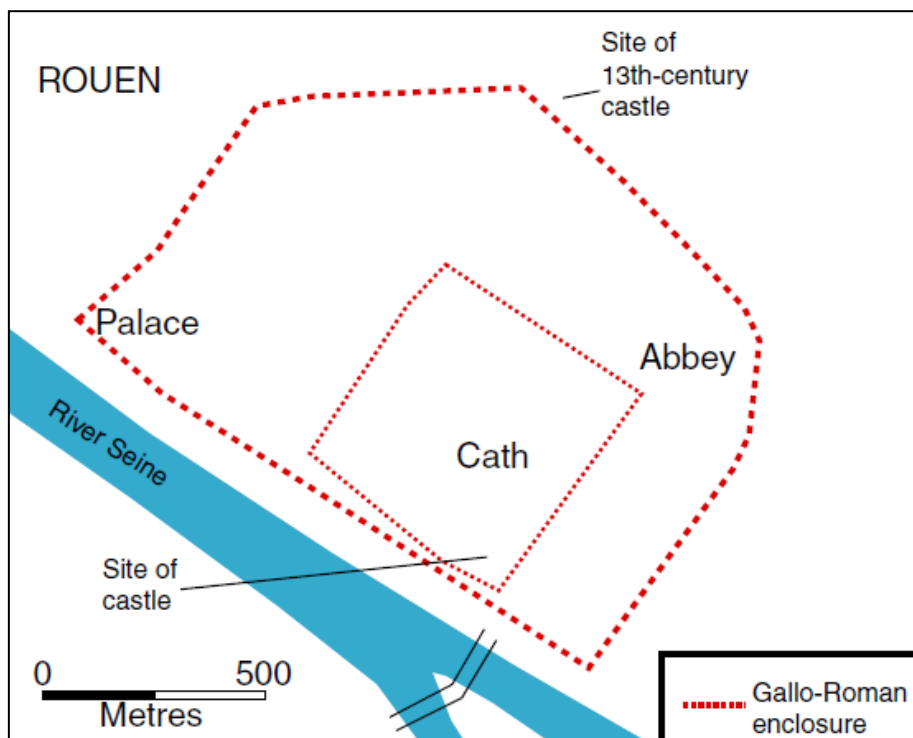
Figure 2.6 Plan of medieval Rouen (Source: adapted from Guillot _et al._ 2006, 196-7)

Insertion of castles into an existing urban fabric is not a phenomenon unique to England; in the late fourteenth century two new royal castle structures were built in

the 'old' and 'new' town areas of Prague (Durdik 1997, 134). Although this event occurred at a later date and on a far smaller geographical scale than in England, it can perhaps be considered as comparable in the sense of renegotiating elite power in relation to an urban centre. In Italy some of the first structures which could be identified as early castle structures were, from the sixth and seventh centuries, established on ancient acropolis sites adjacent to reduced urban centres as at Assizi in Umbria, as well as Chiusi and Fresole in Tuscany, while others were established in former suburban areas (Gonella 2008, 18). At Naples in the eleventh century the Norman rulers of the Kingdom of Sicily constructed the Castel dell'Ovo and Castelcapuana in the east part of the city (Santaro 1997, 93). In Normandy itself a castle complex was inserted into a riverside location adjacent to the eastern defensive perimeter at Rouen in the tenth century (Fig. 2.6), despite the presence of an earlier Carolingian palace at the western limit of the intramural zone (Bates 1993, 2-4). In Ireland only four of the 36 towns were associated with castles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including new town foundations, were constructed inside the town defences; at Wexford, for example, the castle was located on a natural mound immediately south of the Norse and Anglo-Norman settlement perimeter (Colfer 2008, 76). There is a distinct similarity in these Irish urban castles with the English examples in being frequently being recorded in positions overlooking major water and river systems (Bradley 1990, 54).

One reason why the phenomenon of castle insertion into an existing urban fabric is not more widespread in north-western Europe is almost certainly due to the fact that the development and proliferation of castle sites from the ninth century onwards occurred contemporaneously with the expansion of urban settlement sites across western Europe. As a result where castles and towns do occur in association across

this region the two settlement components have matured in parallel, and thus resemble what would be termed a castle-borough within the English theatre. In contrast, the situation in England saw a similar growth in urban centres from the late ninth century onwards, but only saw a sudden and widespread foundation of castle sites from AD1066 in the wake of the Norman Conquest.

The European Context of Private Urban Fortifications

Following an analysis of the European experience of castle-building in association with urban settlements, it is also pertinent to introduce the concept of private fortified residence, primarily in the form of a defended tower or enclosed complex, across the same region. This is a relevant area as in the English context the introduction of the post-Conquest castle is generally taken to signal a new social phenomenon with the proliferation of private fortified units. In the pre-Conquest period urban fortified defences are perceived as a public device, maintained on behalf of the crown by the wider populace for the protection of the latter. The defensive *burh* enclosures that were created in this environment in the late ninth and tenth centuries frequently developed as urban centres. The insertion of urban castles into this context in the post-Conquest period is therefore taken to represent a transfer of investment from the larger public *burh* enclosures to the private fortifications of the incoming northern French elite (Reynolds 1999). This model is clearly simplistic and flawed; not only did private defended enclosures exist in pre-Conquest towns as has been revealed beneath the castle sites at Southampton and Stafford, but in instances such as Northampton urban defences continued to be maintained into the post-Conquest period (Oxley 1986, 47; Morris 1989, 204; Cuttler *et al.* 2008; Creighton and Higham 2005, 67).

Fig 2.7 A late medieval tower house in Arezzo (Tuscany, Italy), one of several which are still standing in the core of the historic town (Source: Michael Fradley).

A starker pattern in the post-Conquest period in England is that, apart from the urban castles, there is little evidence of private fortified residences within towns as earlier pre-Conquest enclosed residences were apparently abandoned, in contrast to the situation encountered in many other parts of Europe where private urban fortifications proliferated. Why was this particular form of urban settlement absent in England, even though it is a notable phenomenon in later medieval and post-medieval Ireland? The accepted explanation for this lack of widespread private fortification is the existence of a strong institutional monarchy with a strong influence over major urban centres, as witnessed in other regions such as Castile and Scandinavia (Aurell 2006, 34). It will be

productive to explore the wider European experience at this stage, before returning to this subject in Chapter Nine.

Analysis by English of urban fortifications in medieval Siena has provided one of the most detailed accounts of the machinations of the tower house and its community, and its association with town development and inter-elite conflict in an Italian context (English 1984). Proliferating in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, these urban towers could form the centre of semi-independent communities and whose fortunes were irrevocably linked to the fortunes of elite grouping and the urban commune (English 1984, 175). Conflict and political alliance could also take place in relation to fortified residences in the rural hinterland, and it was not unknown to find elite groups in control of both urban and rural residences (English 1984, 189-91).

In Rome and other cities in central and northern Italy fortified secular tower of the nobility came to be a characteristic element of the urban skyline from the eleventh century onwards, although with this came endemic inter-elite conflict which could harm a towns growth and development (Schofield and Steur 2007, 133; Perbellini 1997, 105). In south-west France limited study of tower-houses in urban contexts suggest that they too were constructed in some number by the elite from the twelfth century, both in grouped clusters and dispersed throughout the urban settlement (Grandchamp 2002, 69). In Castile private fortifications were built in the later medieval period with royal permission in return for contributions to the wider urban defence, but often fell into independent ownership and were utilised during periods of inter-elite conflict (Mateos 1997, 81-5). In Hungary the conspicuous fortified urban residence appeared in the later thirteenth century, with a significant proliferation of numbers during the fourteenth century, with a slightly earlier chronology demonstrable in towns such as

Cracow in neighbouring Poland (Cabello 1997, 144; Bogdanowski 1997). In the Transylvanian region of Eastern Europe the construction of tower houses in towns, apparently influenced by southern and central European examples, did not begin until the fifteenth century in parallel with a period of relative urban prosperity (Fabini 1997, 145-8). In Greece fortified urban properties were constructed by the elite during the later medieval period, although construction appears to halt after the close of the Byzantine period in the fifteenth century (Steriotou 1997).

Growth in the number of urban tower houses in northern France, the Low Countries and other areas of northern Europe however does not appear to have taken place until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although not in anything like the quantity or scale occurring in Italian cities, and in some cases with civic or ecclesiastical associations (Poncelet 1997, 116; Leistikow 1997, 132). In Scotland and Ireland tower houses were constructed by burgesses in towns, although they were principally constructed between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Higham and Saunders 1997, 125).

The multiplicity of fortified structures in urban contexts has been largely denied in England. Although archaeological indicators are lacking, there are documentary indications of fortified structures such as licenses to crenellate in locations like London, Maidstone, York and Hull (Higham and Saunder 1997, 122-6). Even in relatively minor towns such as Bridgnorth in Shropshire there exists reference to a structure including a tower in the early thirteenth century (Rees 1997, 87). Contrary to the current understanding it could be argued that private fortified or crenellated residences did occur in England, although at a much lower level than in some urban regions in Europe (Slater 2007, 26). It is also necessary to highlight the temporal

element of this contrast, which is that the contrast in levels of independent fortification in the mid-eleventh century, when the process of urban castle construction began in England, would have been much lower across northern Europe. In contrast documentary work on elite links to urban settlements in the pre-Conquest period has identified a condition very similar to that of contemporary Italy and Flanders with a conspicuously high elite presence in urban centres, although this did not develop and manifest over succeeding centuries in the form of fortified elite urban enclaves (Fleming 1993, 37). Of the growing number of potentially secular towers identified in pre-Conquest archaeological contexts, it is interesting to note that these include urban examples as at Tanner Street in Winchester and the towers of St George and St Michael-at-the-Northgate in Oxford (Renn 2003, 71-2).

The relationship between urbanism, castles and private fortifications across Europe can therefore be seen to relatively heterogeneous, both spatially and temporally, although themes and regional patterns can be identified. The scale of urban development, socio-economic condition and societal power structures all appear to have influenced this relationship. In the English example the strength of royal power is frequently highlighted as limiting the proliferation of 'private' fortification, particularly in the proliferation of fortifications within a single urban settlement (Higham and Saunders 1997, 126). The ability of the sub-royal elite to stem the construction of fortified residences in their own castle-boroughs would imply that this pattern owes as much to the broader social structure than a particular royal prerogative. The limited documentary evidence would suggest that fortified residences were constructed in at least some English urban centres, but in low numbers and with no surviving examples, suggesting that the stimulus that took hold so much more dramatically in southern Europe was a minor influence in England. The total number of such structures across

England probably numbered lower than all the examples in one of the more highly endowed examples of northern Italy.

Conclusion

The concept of the urban castle as a defined form of monument is a relatively recent one, and on the grounds of a more specific definition as a castle built in association with an extant urban settlement, is an acceptable one. However, issues have been raised with the interpretive framework in which the urban castle is understood. Specifically it has been implied that the acceptance of the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest, in which the foundation of the majority of urban castles is set, has maintained an overbearing and unrefined influence on any discourse relating to these structures. It is into a more detailed exploration of this subject area that Chapter Three will progress, exploring the historigraphical situations that have conditioned this context, but also developing a theoretical and methodological position through which many of the issues raised can be resolved.

This chapter began with two quotes which highlight the imposing influence that the Conquest narrative hold over how the foundation of the urban castle is perceived. The description offered by Schofield and Vince is the more contentious of the two, proffering that the very existence of an urban castle was at odds with the progressive development of the urban settlement. Through the present study it will be demonstrated that this is not the case, and that there is a semblance of continuity in function at some castle sites that arguably stretches from at least the late eleventh century to the present day. This study also aims to be more than just a re-analysis of the urban castle type. Contrary to the opinion of Schofield and Vince, it will be argued

that the urban castles were a functioning element of the urban environment and that through their study a distinct perspective on the process of Saxo-Norman urbanism can be constructed.

3 Theortical and methodological approaches to the urban castle

Through the analysis of research to date it has been highlighted that there is significant scope for further enquiry regarding the urban castle in England in the post-Conquest decades. The present chapter will outline the theoretical position of the current research project. A consistent need for theoretically explicit research in the sub-disciplines of both medieval and landscape archaeology has been demonstrated (Moreland 2001; Johnson 1999, 149-61; 2006), and therefore the structure and direction of the present study will be set out in the first instance. A key component, following the points raised in Chapter Two, will be the influence of the mainstream historical narrative on the interpretation of the urban castle.

The second part of this section will lay out the practical methodology of the research project. Primarily this will involve the selection of a number of case studies through which to explore the theoretical elements discussed below. Importantly these case studies will not consist of a homogenous group of individual towns in which castles were constructed in the post-Conquest period, but will set out to understand these themes at a range of different scales from the individual town up to a regional level. In order to engage with ideas of the wider context of the urban castle this variation of scale will also enable discussion regarding the wider condition of urbanism and the geo-political situation of the castle.

The current interpretive framework of the urban castle

Is there an issue with the current mainstream understanding of the urban castle that require redress? In answer to this question it is firstly asserted that structures cannot

be reduced to a single linear interpretation as they have been traditionally; these were multi-faceted units, founded and evolving within a complex medieval landscape. However, the particular area disputed in the present study is the extent to which their foundation, and by implication their *raison d'etre*, was influenced by the violent conditions of the decades following the Norman Conquest of AD1066. There is little doubt that the period saw episodes of conflict, while the scale of cultural change amongst the landowning elite was abnormal. Despite this situation the specific role of the castle within this context is never stated explicitly in contemporary sources. For instance, Orderic Vitalis records in AD1068 the construction of a number of urban castles in the Midlands en route to and from episodes of rebellion and conflict in the north centred on York (Chibnall 1969, 218). This is taken without comment by historians and archaeologists as evidence of action by the king whose primary reasoning is the repression of dissent both real and expected. Another interpretion of this episode, however, is that although William I and his army were conducting a military campaign in the north, their movement represents the first opportunity of the crown to interface directly with the Midlands region and its various urban centres. Traditionally the pre-Conquest kings of England rarely ventured north of the Thames (Barlow 1970, 169), so that this phase of castle building could be alternatively viewed as a more generic installation of royal power structures than a direct response to rebellion and the direct means of sustaining the succession of the Norman duchy.

A movement from military repression in the face of rebellion to an extension of royal power may appear delusory given the aggressive nature of medieval elite relations, but could have important consequences over how the urban castle is approached as a subject of research. In scrutiny of the writings of Orderic Vitalis it is necessary to highlight that although he may have utilised earlier sources, his comments are brief,

ambiguous and produced several decades after the events in question. Equally, it is relevant that there are many other urban castles that display compositional characteristics of those recorded in the Midlands but are not documented as having been founded in the context a military campaign or rebellion. Even within the existing historical narrative there are interesting anomalies; it is recorded that following the Battle of Hastings a contingent of Duke William's army was repulsed at the *burh* of Southwark on the south side of London Bridge, and yet this settlement was not subject to the imposition of an urban castle. The successful defence of the Thames crossing at London seems to indicate its importance from a strategic perspective, and was potentially a major factor in forcing Duke William and his army to begin an extended campaign westwards in order encircle the settlement via Wallingford (Renn 1968, 29). It could be argued that devastation within Southwark or the limited scale of the settlement negated the need to install a castle to ensure its control; it is currently difficult to characterise the eleventh-century settlement based upon archaeological or documentary evidence (Carlin 1996, 135-6). However, even in London itself a castle was not raised in relation to the river crossing despite the foundation of at least two fortifications at the eastern and western peripheries of the settlement perimeter. How exactly was the urban castle enabling its inhabitants and garrison to enact a repressive or controlling role situated within these peripheral positions? This argument could quickly be countered by a reappraisal of the castles role as a withdrawn strongpoint in case of insurrection, but this immediately raises further questions over how the builders of these structures perceived their role on an everyday basis given this less aggressive or obtrusive rationale. Ultimately it highlights the need to step back from the traditional interpretation of the subject and the explicit acceptance of the 'Conquest' context.

The Late Saxon period and the historical narrative of the English state

It is widely accepted that the Norman Conquest represents a seismic shift in the political history of England and, unlimately, the British Isles. The date of AD1066 as a division between the Anglo-Saxon and Norman historical periods retains significant weight of the interpretive framework of the medieval era in England. Since the sixteenth century histories of England have been produced that began with King William I in AD1066 (Matthew 2005, 26). There has always been academic movement either side of this date, which have been further broken down by archaeological concepts of 'Saxo-Norman' and the historical appreciation of 'Anglo-Norman', but the date itself still maintains a strong resonance in historical research.

In the present analysis emphasis will be placed on the development of the field during the twentieth century, critically from the publication of Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England* onwards (Stenton 1943). This vast, influential work arguably brought the historical relevance of the early medieval period fully into the academic mainstream, having pulled together research from a wide array of sources and scholars during the previous 25 years (Matthew 1994a, 111). A key interest of Stenton was demonstrating the process by which England would become a unified, international polity during this period, ideas that would be taken forward in subsequent decades (Keynes 1994, 84). A broad first phase in the modern academic understanding and narrative of the Late Saxon period (*c.*AD850-1050) can be suggested in the period around, and encapsulated by, the publication of Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*. At its core was the argument that the Middle and Late Saxon periods saw a definitive and long-lasting contribution to the development of the English kingdom. This phase saw the appreciation of this process as an insular development, in part a probable manifestation of the threatened position of

both Great Britain and its empire during the mid-twentieth century (Keynes 1994, 93-4). A fully-unified nation is created by the kingdom of Wessex, centred on the areas around Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset, as it repulsed its Germanic invaders, in the form of Scandinavian Vikings, and brought England together under a single, visionary government. The parallels with the conditions of the nation in 1943 are not difficult to glean, although the Second World War itself is rarely discussed openly in Stenton's surviving correspondence from this period (Matthew 1994a, 116-7).

The period would also see a growing rejection of earlier narratives that gave an historical precedence to the pride and superiority of 'Germanic' ancestry, encapsulated by developments in eastern England during the Early Anglo-Saxon period (c.AD450-650), in light of the racial policies of German National Socialism and wider fascist manifestations of the mid-twentieth century (Dennell 1996, 28). The era following the 'Migration period' of early medieval England, particularly from the seventh century onwards with the increasingly Christianised and less culturally 'Germanic' development of society, therefore provided a more palatable origin of the English kingdom. Stenton himself viewed the 'Mercian hegemony' of the eighth century as the genuine initiation of national unification, and it was work in this area that first saw him move away from his early career focus on post-Conquest studies in the period after the First World War (Matthew 1994a, 111).

The Post-War period also witnessed intensification of archaeological interest in the early medieval period. In part this was a continuation of the historical momentum evident earlier in the twentieth century of which Stenton's research was a part, but with a distinct focus on material culture. The identification of early medieval deposits as part of rescue excavations ahead of redevelopment of bomb-damaged towns

provided a particular rich and evocative window on the period (Biddle 1971, 392-3).

Academically there was a pressing need to overcome the negative connotations of the 'Dark Ages' label; this was initiated in the formation of the Society for Medieval Archaeology in 1956, supported amongst others by Stenton, which chose to eschew a Dark Age element in its title as it was deemed unnessarily defeatist in outlook (Gerrard 2009, 30-2).

A second phase of development during the Post-War period came to fruition in the 1960s and 1970s through the combined efforts of historians and archaeologists. There is a direct continuum with Stenton's earlier narrative, and in some cases the wartime rhetoric and images of Europe crumbling as England stood firm became increasingly bombastic (Campbell 1986, 170-2; Brooks 1979). These reach fever pitch as warnings are put forward that the Scandinavian threat may be underestimated by modern academics, that English politics and culture, Christianity and Latin learning, for which we may read the historic bedrock of the modern nation, all faced destruction (Brooks 2000, 48-67). However, the focus also shifted towards an emphasis on the extent to which an efficient, centralised and unparalleled state was created in the Late Saxon period: the 'Anglo-Saxon Achievement' (Hodges 1989). For Campbell, the bedrock of the modern English state could be found in the late Saxon period (Campbell 2000, ix), while Brooks looked to how societies organised themselves for defence and communication with the assertion that:

These are such fundamental needs of any state that in studying them in the early Middle Ages we are looking into the origins of the English state itself… (Brooks 2000, xiii)

Research in this area also became increasingly divisive in respects to the post-Conquest period, with an articulation of a national achievement that would remain unsurpassed until the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century (Campbell 1986, 158-9). The post-Conquest period is thus viewed as a barbarous intrusion, with the intervention and annexation by the Norman elite deflecting the positive trajectory of pre-Conquest England. In contrast, Stenton, whose early career had been focused on the post-Conquest period, portrayed the impact of William I more favourably as another teleological stage towards the political unity of the kingdom (Keynes 1994, 84).

In the background to this changing academic discourse was the changing social and political situation of Great Britain as well as the growing independence movement across its formerly extensive empire. As the former holdings of the British Empire gained independence the unity of the United Kingdom itself became increasingly strained, and expressed violently in Northern Ireland. The rise of Fascism and the Second World War had cast a shadow over the Germanic imagery of the Early Saxon period, and this was followed with the shame of the colonial and post-colonial situation which placed questions over the historical promotion of Roman imperialism or the violent, expansive actions of the Norman Conquest.

The Late Saxon period therefore offered an opportune historical moment for the development of a narrative for the birth of the English nation (Brooks 1979, 1). The kingdom is created through the rightful ejection of a foreign adversary; it does not pursue an aggressive international policy and placed an emphasis on religious renewal, efficient government and just law (Campbell 1986). The Late Saxon period was catapulted from its former position as the unknown and undervalued 'Dark Age' to

one in which the English nation came together symbiotically under the pressures of foreign adversity with its Blitz rhetoric; an efficacious period of history that could entail pride and adulation (Sawyer 1998, 262-3; Hodges 1989). The fact that the former independence of kingdoms such as Mercia and Northumberland was removed by the expansion of the Wessex is presented as of minor relevance within this teleological approach in which the bounds of the English kingdom are a 'naturalised' and inevitable conclusion. The narrative is of a non-threatening, non-imperial kingdom, and yet is subversive in promoting the development of England's administrative system which would in time be exported through the colonial and imperial movements of the post-medieval period. It is ultimately a sanitised history that promotes a positive, non-violent view of the early development of England as part of a non-imperial discourse (Dennell 1996).

The implication is not that those scholars involved engaged in some form of post-colonial, nationalistic reinvention. The links suggested between the research outputs of the researchers involved and the wider social and cultural environment of Post-War England were far more subtle. It is also necessary to highlight the exciting momentum that this aspect of history was gathering; not only was the period casting off its 'Dark Age' mantle, but was in fact open to an interpretation of major importance in the development of the English nation. Equally, this perception of the Late Saxon Kingdom was largely academic, and its avocation was not zealously pursued in popular culture, to the extent that it is unlikely that this period would be pinpointed as the origin of the nation by the modern populace of the UK. Subsequent research into the period, as in the humanities as a whole, would become more diverse and multi-faceted as postmodern perspectives developed and as the emphasis on traditional historical narrative declined (Keynes 1994). Specific areas of this earlier research period, for

instance the consideration of the Late Saxon kingdom of England as a 'state', would also be rigorously critiqued (Foot 2005). In spite of the changing research agenda, one result of this situation is that the earlier, traditional narratives have become ensconced and retain a significant bearing on academic and popular discourse into the present.

Urbanism and the Late Saxon *burh*

What bearing does the historical narrative of the Late Saxon period have on the interpretation of the post-Conquest urban castle? One particular aspect of the former has been a heightened interest in the establishment of *burh* enclosures across southern and central England. The Old English (i.e. the form of the English language that developed during the early medieval period) term *burh* is actually a relatively broad identifier utilised to label a wide range of enclosure features across the early medieval period, as well as pre-medieval sites such as hillforts (Draper 2008). In the present context it refers specifically to a group of exceptionally large enclosures defined by banks and ditches either constructed anew or developed on the site of existing Iron Age or Romano-British fortification by the crown under King Alfred and his successors. These fortified sites were utilised as military enclosures in conflict directed principally towards Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian forces in the late ninth and tenth centuries, and are asserted to have been key elements of the strategy utilised by the Wessex kings to repel the latter groups (Loyn 1971, 125-8). A significant proportion of these sites developed as urban centres, and most of the larger towns of later medieval England were first established as *burhs* in the Late Saxon period.

In 1971 Martin Biddle and David Hill published an article based on analysis of documentary material including the *Burghal Hidage*, a document of probable early

tenth-century date that lists the *burhs* of Wessex and figures relating to their maintenance, and archaeological evidence derived principally from excavations at Winchester that examined the form and development of this group of *burhs* (Biddle and Hill 1971). They argued that the network of *burh* enclosures were not simply defended sites that subsequently developed as urban settlements, but that these sites were planned as fortified, urban settlements from their foundation. A gridded street network was identified at a range of Wessex *burh* sites on the basis of basic topographical analysis, and in the case of settlements that utilised a Romano-British antecedent often ignoring the road network of the earlier phase. This model has proved highly influential, and while some have argued that the extent of urban development outside of major centres such as Winchester, London and Oxford was far slower, Hill still felt compelled to extend this hypothesis to include the *burh* foundations of the later tenth century due to the lack of critique of the original argument (Carver 1987, 47-58; Hinton 1990, 91-2; Vince 1994, 112; Astill 2006; Hill 2000; Brooks 1979, 20).

This characterisation of the *burh* complies closely with the wider narrative of Late Saxon England as a sophisticated, advanced society. The power and planning required to support such a close-knit network of sites is argued as unparalleled in Europe and a watershed in urban evolution (Biddle 1976, 125-34). Its establishment created a pragmatic and highly efficient system, a proud moment in the creation of English bureaucracy and a clear link between past and present (John 1996, 86). The existence of gridded street systems of a date purportedly contemporary with the creation of the *burh* defences equally implies the input and regulation of the Wessex elite. The position advocated by Biddle and Hill, that these sites were conceived as urban units from their foundation, is particularly relevant because the attainment of settlements of

urban status is so synonymous with the ascent to civilisation. Putting aside for the moment the issues of how urbanism is defined and that the towns of north-western Europe do not even figure within the grand histories of cities on a global scale (e.g. Hall 1999), the arguable achievement of this level of settlement development remains an important indicator of status within the historical narrative.

There is also a tendency to advocate the advanced nature of the Late Saxon 'state' in constant reference to the post-medieval and modern periods. For instance, Brooks suggests that the military mobilisation linked to the *burh* system remained unparalleled in England until the twentieth century, while Biddle hails this Wessex network as without comparison in a wider European context (Brooks 2000, 115; Biddle 1976, 125). Campbell additionally asserts the development of an economic boom in Late Saxon society, again linked to the network of *burhs* and urban settlements, on a scale that would not be seen until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Campbell 1986, 142). This is not to suggest that the idea of the 'Anglo-Saxon Achievement' is necessarily incorrect, or that major changes in governance, social structure and economic growth did not take place. But it appears clear that these notions are taken uncritically and are still current even in the more recent interpretative accounts of the period (e.g. Reynolds 1999, 86). Does it remain a potent notion in the modern fractious political discourse between the UK and Europe? In terms of the *burh* specifically, this has become such a celebrated component of the process by which the English kingdom became unified, that the imposition of the post-Conquest urban castle upon it is inevitably embedded within a host of negative connotations.

The Norman period and the historical narrative of England

It must be emphasised that this critical view of academic interpretations of Late Saxon England does not affirm that post-Conquest studies have been more theoretically explicit or free from implicit political assertions. Intonations of the importance of strong kingship and 'private enterprise' in the actions of secular lords and ecclesiastical institutions in Norman England carry similar political weight. R. A. Brown argued that the study of the Norman Conquest was in fact becoming skewed by the nationalistic exaggeration of the qualities of the pre-Conquest English state in the light of work by academics such as Stenton (Brown 1969, 2). His argument was driven more by what he saw as detraction from his favoured Norman culture than a detailed critique of the latter, the implication being that it is Norman England that should fact be the subject of national pride. In many respects the historical study of post-Conquest England has remained more conservative in comparison to the substantial intellectual shifts relating to the pre-Conquest period ushered in by the work of Stenton. It may have particularly jarred that Stenton had begun his career as an advocate of Norman England, which in turn further substantiated his later synthesis of Anglo-Saxon period, given that he had such a thorough knowledge of the post-AD1066 kingdom.

The reaction of proponents of the 'Norman' period has seen the reinforcement of traditional concepts of its contribution to the strength of the nation, referring to the 'Norman Achievement', mirroring the advocates of pre-Conquest England in insisting that the Norman 'state' of the mid-eleventh century was strong, unified and administratively advanced by contemporary standards (Brown 1984, 50-8). However, the use of references to a specific, and by implication superior, Norman 'race' give an outdated impression of its historical study in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon period where the implications of its 'Germanic' origin has been re-evaluated (Hamerow 1997; Dennell 1996; Brown 1984, *frontispiece*). Similarly, the promotion of the idea of a

Norman imperial project and its links to the subsequent experience of the British Empire seems crude, and the application of colonial and imperial models has evoked widespread criticism (La Patourel 1976, 352-4; Chibnall 1999, 121-2; West 1999).

Returning to the specific issue in hand, the historical events of AD1066 offer a difficult yet potentially rewarding experience from the perspective of a national narrative of England. It is frequently stated as being the last point at which England was conquered by a foreign army, which has a clear resonance in terms of integrity of the kingdom and has done since at least the seventeenth century (Brown 1984, 171; Matthew 1994b, 9-11; 2005, 26). In spite of this situation there is a long tradition of interpreting the violent succession of Duke William of Normandy to the English crown as an entirely positive episode. Stenton himself began his career as an advocate of Norman rule, while the hawkish Round saw it as militarily and politically necessity in the face of the weakening 'excess of liberty' of Late Saxon England (Stenton 1908; Round 1895, 394). Brown discredits the validity of the 'myth of the English', by which he refers to Late Saxon England, by insinuating that it was in some sense debased as an Anglo-Scandinavian culture and that its Germanic heritage had grown decrepit (Brown 1984, 15, 90).

This was made possible by the very concept of the 'Normans', who within these narratives are able to occupy a transient, semi-mythological position. The Norman title stems from the acquisition of a semi-independent duchy by Rollo and his 'Northmen' from the French crown *c.*AD911; this Scandinavian contingent forms the elite ancestry of the territory. By the mid-eleventh century any Scandinavian characteristics within elite and wider society in Normandy had largely disappeared, while political and economic links with the Scandinavian territories had diminished. To all appearances

Normandy was an indistinct French duchy, and yet can be characterised as atypical based upon its unusual descent. This sense of a semi-nomadic 'Viking' quality is suggested by a relatively unparalleled movement of the Norman social elite into positions of kingship in England, Sicily and Outremer, as well as seats of lordship in Wales, Ireland and Scotland. The Norman elite of the eleventh century were no longer Scandinavian Vikings, but they are somehow not fully integrated within French society; their title as Normans explicitly reinforcing their alienation. While encompassing the culture of Christian France, they could still be portrayed by both contemporary and modern observers as retaining the perceived violent and barbaric trait of the Viking peoples. The Normans hold a transient separateness from the European theatre; they cannot be directly associated with the modern state of France or the various entities of Scandinavia.

The result of this fluid position is to portray the Norman Conquest as an event disassociated with any modern European polity. It is therefore possible for observers to construct a narrative in which this event is interpreted positively, for instance, through the instillation of a new political dynamism into the English kingdom, or negatively, without creating a subservience of the modern state to any European nation. It is the 'Norman' impact that is considered, despite the fact that it is acknowledged that the invading army consisted of individuals from across northern France and the Low Countries (La Patourel 1976, 32). While the physical territory of Normandy survives into the present, this cultural and ethnic construct of the 'Norman' comes unceremoniously to an end in England in AD1154 with the death of King Stephen, while the semi-independent duchy of Normandy fell to the French crown in AD1204. Bates argues that the distinctiveness and dynamism of the Norman was largely spent by the early twelfth century, with the impetus subsequently moving to the

English crown (Bates 1994, 29-30). This notion further fuels the image of a seed being sown by a legendary, yet impermanent body. Thus the transient force of the 'Norman' is removed from the European scene, as though it was a cultural essence without permanence. In the narrative of R. A. Brown, the success of the Normans as a people was linked to their sheer adaptability, and it was this quality alongside that of being formed of a highly mobile elite that led to their social and cultural diffusion in Europe and the Middle East during the medieval period (Brown 1984, 10). The result of this successful process of integration was, ironically, the cause of the disappearance of 'the Normans' as a distinct people, despite their extensive historical legacy.

The cultural relevance of this situation within archaeological discourse is indicated by the widespread identification of Norman or Anglo-Norman culture, most clearly apparent in the monumental structural forms of castles and churches in a way that subsequent monarchical lineages such as the Angevins and Pontevins are not. This reinforces the perception that the transference from Anglo-Saxon to Norman England was culturally dramatic. But it is also an indication of the acceptance and, through their research, reinforcement of this narrative by archaeologists. The mainstream of both periods, while not as factionalised as this generalisation may be perceived (for instance Hill 1999, 178, 192-3; Sawyer 1998, 250-61), carry aspects of this narrative, resulting in very little room for manoeuvre between the polarity of the Anglo-Saxon Achievement and the Norman Yoke. The growth of archaeological evidence is frequently used to simply colour what is presumed to be a clear historical picture, and this is the certainly the case with the urban castle where an explicitly northern French structural form is erected in close association to a dense nucleus of 'English' settlement.

It is not a question of the concept of the Anglo-Saxon achievement or Norman supremacy being inherently wrong, but that there is a pressing need to provide a critical balance. The issue of ethnicity does not elicit as heavy a hand on archaeological research of this period as it has on the understanding of Germanic and Scandinavian migration into England during the early medieval period, although the influence of the historical narrative of cultural movement is comparable (Trafford 2000, 31; Hamerow 1997). The documentary evidence on which so much of our understanding of the period is based is incredibly limited in quantity, and with which comparative sources on a single subject are a rarity. The *Burghal Hidage* has had a massive influence on the interpretation of the late Saxon state, but to what extent does it represent the working practice of society rather than the ideal envisaged and calculated by the English crown? Who would now argue that Domeday Book itself can be taken at face value as simply a taxable account of William the Conquerors English realm? Is it not itself the product of a series of transformations during the data-collection process, some of which can only be tentatively inferred from the detailed study of the document itself (Latour 1999, 70-2). In the post-Conquest period how far have the ripples from the words of Orderic Vitalis on the failure of the English to build castles been felt, words which themselves may have been driven by a sense of English loyalty and demonstrate a whole retinue of associations not yet realised by modern accounts (Coulson 2001, 90)?

Not only are the narratives of Late Saxon England and Norman England omnipresent in archaeological research, but these accounts can be shown to be embedded in the fluid national and cultural consciousness of the period in which they were constructed. These issues remain relevant, as those traditional narratives are continually reinforced in spite of efforts to contest the polarising impact of the Norman Conquest (e.g.

Stafford 1989; Green 2010). It is necessary in the first instance to detach the subject, in this case the urban castle, from this intellectual apparatus in order for it to be considered on its own merits.

Constructing an interpretive framework

The default position for archaeologists whose work encompasses some element of the post-Conquest urban castle within their remit of research is to accept them as repressive, culturally alien impositions upon the pre-Conquest townscape. However, it has been highlighted above that there is a lack of a definitive evidence to substantiate this position on the basis of the documentary evidence currently available. Instead the historical context of the period, alongside the sometimes divisive and partisan distinctions of pre-and post-Conquest studies, has structured the interpretation of the urban castle. Archaeologically the material impact of the Norman Conquest on the English landscape is very limited beyond elite building campaigns, one result of which is that the extensive construction of castles and ecclesiastical structures become magnified in embodying this historically attested episode (Reynolds 1999, 181-2).

The implications of this situation weigh heavily on the subject, with the result that debate cannot move forward unless the very framework is re-assessed. Richard Bradley elegantly summarises the situation in studies of the Neolithic following the example of the two long barrows at Barkaer in Denmark where for decades during the twentieth century the common perception of the period consisted of the adoption of sedentary mixed farming which in turn facilitated the growing complexity of society and the financing of monumental constructions (Bradley 1998, 9-10). This concept of the period in turn fashioned the interpretations of excavations and other projects, in

which evidence of divergence from the model could implicitly and explicitly become dismissed and downplayed, and that complete objectivity was an impossibility (Bradley 1998, 9). A similar issue can be seen with regard to the medieval castle, and to many components of the medieval landscape which are presupposed by the often uncritical theoretical framework in which research is conducted. If at its core the medieval castle is a fortified residence of a lord then it becomes impossible for it to be anything other than that definition.

The possibility that the current orthodoxy regarding urban castles may not be completely sound has been highlighted by alternative perspectives outside of the realms of archaeological research. For instance, analysis of the use of the Tower of London in stage plays during the sixteenth century has noted that it could be utilised as a backdrop through which royal power structures could be challenged and subverted. Importantly it offers the suggestion that while investment in the castle complex under Queen Elizabeth I was intended to highlight the supremacy of the crown, such actions acknowledged that the power of the latter was threatened (Deiter 2008, 32), a duality that is equally applicable to the original foundation of the castle *c.*AD1066. So while the construction of an urban castle may have allowed the incoming Norman French elite to demonstrate their physical force, this action also acknowledged to the wider populace that power could not be enacted without it through pr-Conquest structures of governance. Thus, the imposition of an urban castle structure was not necessarily a crude tool of military supremacy, but a more complex element within the renegotiation of medieval power structures, indicating that the castle-builder may have recognised the failure of the northern French elite to continue in the mould of the social system of pre-Conquest England.

A radically insightful observation has come from the perspective of medieval studies, albeit via an archaeologically-influenced study of the iconographic and literary depictions of the medieval castle. Wheatley questions directly the contradictory interpretations of the urban castle and the castle-borough, a type of castle where an urban settlement developed adjacent to the castle following the foundation of the latter. The urban castle is thus perceived as being destructive and repressive while the castle-borough is cast as positive and economically progressive in promoting and enhancing its associated settlement (Wheatley 2004, 46). These two types of structure were developed by the same elite group, and so it is difficult to maintain such a fundamentally opposing distinction in their rationale and reasoning when engaging in castle-building. It may be that the two types of castle were in fact of greater similarity than traditional perspectives have implied, with neither type being wholly positive or negative in its impact. For instance, Lilley has suggested that one factor influencing the decision to create new castle-boroughs may have been the desire to introduce a new population of European and English settlers to a specific region in order to break up pre-existing social structures and concentrations of resentment (Lilley 2009, 146-9). This work has also been influenced by a perception of 'Norman colonialism' that lacks any substantial self-critique of the concept, but it does posit the multiplicity of means by which a castle-borough might be encountered by different groups.

Is it possible to whittle down an understanding of the urban castle in terms of its positive or negative contribution to the development of settlement and society? Almost certainly not, even if it is couched in terms of the perception of a particular social group such as the northern French elite or English urban populace. A qualitative judgement on the impact of these structures would defer this study to a linear teleological narrative of settlement development. Instead it is argued that this castle

group should be detached from the culturally-loaded historical narrative, the relevance of which has been outlined above. This narrative does not provide a verifiable base on which to interpret the motives and long-term expectations of those groups and individuals involved directly in urban castle construction, nor the perceptions of rural and urban communities who encountered these changes to these townscapes.

It is a central aim of the present study therefore to operate in a research framework that is acutely aware of this context and its influence over interpretation. It will move towards producing an outline of the foundation and development of the urban castle group in England, within the context of urban development across the pre- and post-Conquest periods. What is indicated in the relationship between castle and town about the requirements and actions of the castle-builders? Are there consistent trends and characteristics within this monument group? The material world of the urban populace was not passively constructed either, and so a rigorous analysis of how this was changing over a broader period will be critical. Could this archaeological perspective proffer any interpretations regarding the potentially fluid relationships between the castle community and wider populace? A broad time span is required as these complex relationships were not temporally static. In the relatively dense settlement of the medieval urban environment there is a vast array of evidence relating to the movement and flow of peoples who were not all uniform, spatially or temporarily, although their actions and practice took place within the bounds of a social structure which itself was constantly in a case of flux and redefinition. For the human actors embodied within the townscapes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the urban castle would have embodied a range of different emotive responses, political alignments and aesthetic judgements which would be completely nullified by the

assumption that it was simply the fortified residence of a lord and from which administrative duties were undertaken.

Research methodology

At the core of the present archaeological approach to the urban castle will be a focus on spatial relationships and the materiality of their ground plans. It is the specific positions of these castles in relation to urban settlements that inform their very definition and title. The present study will focus on relationships between specific, recognisable elements of the pre- and post-Conquest urban topography. Those building castles in urban settlements will not have made a decision of its position within the townscape passively, with preliminary analysis showing a preference for riverside locations adjacent to the existing settlement defences. The indication is that there was a common need in positioning an urban castle influencing the agency of its founder, and that by systematically working through the evidence of different case studies it will be possible to shed light upon this process.

A range of archaeological and historical sources will be utilised to ascertain the condition, complexity and diversity of eleventh-century urbanism and the evidence of interplay between settlement and intrusive castle. Primary among these will be archaeological excavations including both published material and grey literature, which in Britain is such a strong, if sometimes inaccessible, dataset. The spatial analysis of this material will be supplemented by a topographical investigation of the urban case studies and, where efficacious, the use of analytical earthwork survey. Where available, UADs (Urban Archaeological Databases) will be utilised as a means of accessing the often-sizeable dataset for individual towns and allow the project to focus on material

from the relevant time periods. Otherwise the HERs (Historic Environment Records) and SMRs (Sites and Monuments Records) of the relevant administrative authorities will be exploited, as well as material held at the NMRC (National Monuments Record Centre).

The use of analytical earthwork survey (Bowden 1999) as a means of providing data of a town's archaeo-topography will provide an atypical means of studying an urban environment. As a methodology it has been largely unused in both academic and professional spheres, in part failing to satisfy the objective aspirations of leading field archaeologists, particularly during the formative era of professional archaeological development in the UK from the 1960s through into the 1980s. Unfortunately this derision has taken place without debate, with key commentators choosing to omit rather than discuss analytical earthwork survey as a methodology even in the context of pre-excavation survey techniques (Barker 1993, 60; Roskams 2001). More recent theoretical analysis of this approach, while providing essential insights into the often atheoretical research context in which the methodology is utilised, has provided less-secure and even contradictory criticism of the practical method itself (Johnson 2006, 93-5). It is utilised in the present context as a means of identifying previously unrecognised topographical features within urban settlements. Additionally it offers a phenomenological engagement; the practical application of earthwork survey, the movement back and forth in different conditions and changing light unconciously offers novel insights into an encounter with a particular environment, first and foremost in allowing a wide variety of perspectives on sites and structures were physically encountered.

Reference will also be made to the relatively limited historical documents contemporary with the time-frame to be researched. In part due its relative scarcity this material has been open to extensive analysis and reinterpretation which will be engaged with as a secondary level. As part of the theoretical approach taken by the current research which has argued that these documentary sources have been repeatedly given prominence in the creation of a mainstream historical narrative, whilst archaeological evidence has largely been utilised to colour, rather than balance, this picture. This does not go as far as to assert the overall efficacy of one source material over the other, yet it is argued that the historiography of the subject gives emphasis on the need to construct an alternative framework based primarily on the archaeological evidence when characterising and analysing the particularity of urban space and development in this period. In contrast to the limited documentary material, the growing plethora of archaeological data relating to Saxo-Norman urbanism is relatively untapped and in many cases without synthesis, existing in limited availability as 'grey literature'. In general the terminology utilised in the present research project will be of a broader anthropological nature rather than the affection of medieval labels in order to make it accessible to a wider audience, for instance utilising terms such as 'elites' instead of 'lords' to indicate high-status social groups.

The methodological approach will be utilised in four case studies. In order to move beyond a repetitive specificity of examining a succession of urban castles and their contexts, these case studies will vary in scale in order to create a broader understanding of the development of urban castles parallel to the evolving conception of urbanism in general. This will be achieved through viewing the urban castle at three different levels; as individual castles and town, at a shire level incorporating existing and incipient urban centres with and without castles; and finally at wider regional level. In

doing so it is asserted that this study will move beyond a contextualised fetishism of urban castles and toward a more human-orientated embodiment of urbanism in which the erection of urban castles was one of many episodes of assertion of authority and association experienced by the multitude.

The urban castle group

The initial analysis by Drage identified a number of sites that may questionably fall under the umbrella of the urban castle term. For instance Tadcaster (N. Yorks.) was included, but archaeological investigations in the settlement have failed to identify evidence of a significant pre-Conquest settlement (Roberts 1996). At Doncaster the archaeological evidence suggests a castle was constructed within a large part of a multi-phased pre-Conquest enclosure, although there is little evidence of significant pre-castle occupation in this area or a larger conjectured settlement enclosure to the south (Buckland *et al.* 1989, 58-61, 84-6).

Table 3.1 Urban castles in England (adapted from Drage 1987)

	COUNTY	**Castle/urban settlement**
1	Bedfordshire	Bedford
2	Berkshire	Wallingford
3	Buckinghamshire	Buckingham
4		Aylesbury
5	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
6		Huntingdon
7	Cheshire	Chester

8	County Durham	Durham
9	Devon	Exeter
10		Barnstaple
11		Totnes
12		Lydford
13	Dorset	Dorchester
14		Wareham
15		Christchurch
16	Essex	Colchester
17	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
18		Berkeley
19		Bristol
20	Greater London	Tower of London
21		Baynards Castle/Montifichets Tower
22	Hampshire	Winchester
23		Southampton
24	Herefordshire	Hereford
25	Hertfordshire	Hertford
26	Kent	Canterbury
27		Dover
28		Rochester
29	Leicestershire	Leicester
30	Lincolnshire	Lincoln
31		Stamford
32	Norfolk	Norwich

33		Thetford
34	Northamptonshire	Northampton
35	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
36		Newark
37	Oxfordshire	Oxford
38	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
39	Staffordshire	Stafford
40		Tamworth
41	Surrey	Guildford
42	Sussex	Chichester
43		Pevensey
44		Hastings
45		Lewes
46	Warwickshire	Warwick
47		Coventry
48	Wiltshire	Salisbury/Old Sarum
49	Worcestershire	Worcester
50	Yorkshire	York Castle
51		Old Baile/York
52	Clwyd	Rhuddlan

The present study has identified a total of 52 sites that fall within the broad definition of the urban castle (Fig. 3.1), although it is accepted that the urban status of a number of these sites during the eleventh century is open to question. The sites identified as urban consist of those that have indicators of such status provided in Domesday Book,

as well as examples that have a strong archaeological or historical case for having been under-represented in the latter source. Potentially there are three further urban castle sites whose existence has not been proved archaeologically or historically, but whose existence is inferred at Derby, Ipswich and Bridport. In contrast Coventry Castle is included as organic deposits recovered from a feature presumed to be its outer moat has produced a date range from the eleventh to the twelfth century despite its incomplete excavation (Burrows and Collis 2008).
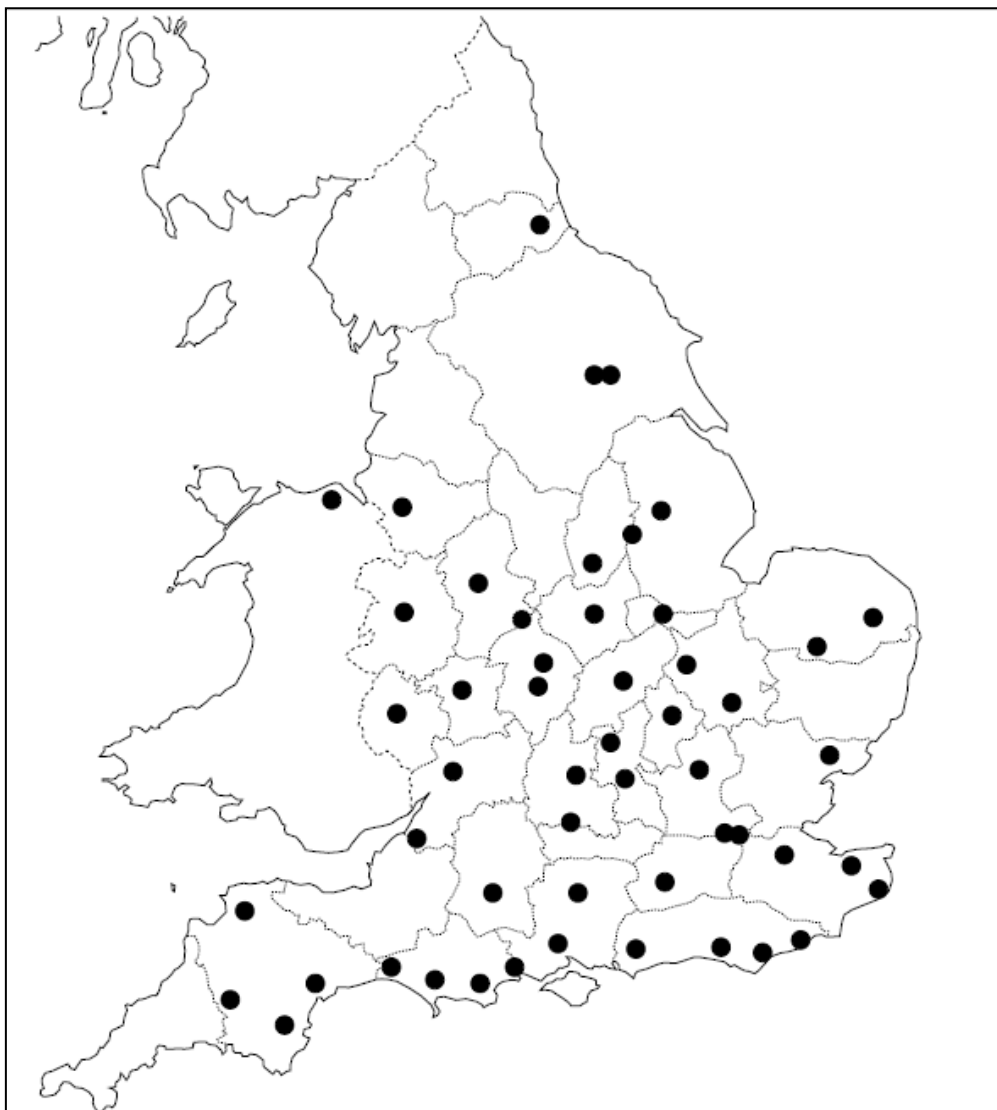
Figure 3.1 Map of urban castle locations in England and Wales (Source: Michael Fradley).

There are also a more fluid number of additional sites that could potentially fall into the category of the urban castle, but for which available archaeological evidence is currently too limited to make a valid assessment. At Taunton (Somerset) there is no evidence presently that the castle was built before the early twelfth century, and was adapted by the Bishop of Winchester on the site of an earlier bishop's hall, and therefore falls outside of the present study remit (SOMHER: 44204). There are also a number of sites where an existing centre was shifted or replaced, as at Arundel from Burpham in Sussex. The ambiguities of classification, stemming from the inappropriateness of the urban castle term as a classificatory body rather than an interpretive frame will therefore discredit any statistical analysis of the group as a whole. Statistical assessment will therefore be limited and the use of figures considered non-conclusive, with the research methodology clearly focused on qualitative rather than quantative assessment.

Outline of case studies

To some extent the sites have been chosen due to their potential for archaeological analysis, although there is significant variation within the wider, regional study areas (Fig 3.2). In the case of Wallingford, its selection was influenced by the direct funding connection between this doctoral study and the 'Wallingford *Burh* to Borough' research project. In parallel there was also a conscious decision to avoid selecting sites for detailed study that were independently the subject of significant archaeological research, such as at Norwich, Oxford or the Tower of London. As will be highlighted below, any geographical bias or notable exceptions from the primary research areas outlined will be mitigated to an extent by their incorporation into a broader analysis of urban castle sites in Chapter Eight.

The first case study site will therefore be Wallingford (Chapter Four), presently located in the county of Oxfordshire but prior to 1974 was part of Berkshire. While it has been subject to a number of smaller interventions, there been little concerted effort to bring this evidence together into a synthesis of the town's development. Due to the limited nature of later medieval and subsequent expansion of the town the original circuit of the ninth century *burh* is well-preserved, and it is the period of the town's pre-Conquest history that has been subject to a greater degree of attention. This has tended to take the form of conjectural interpretation based on the limited historical evidence, while archaeologically there has again been limited detailed investigation. Given the extensive potential for survival of archaeological evidence, Wallingford provides an exceptional opportunity for further research including an original programme of earthwork survey in combination with a synthesis of the results of a range of earlier archaeological investigations.

The study will then proceed to an examination of the town of Huntingdon (Chapter Five), now part of Cambridgeshire, but formerly the head of its own shire. This case study offers a number of interesting contrasts to Wallingford that will allow for a greater consideration of the heterogeneity of English urbanism during the period in question. Geographically it is situated in the east of England, a region with a more direct Scandinavian connection, and a lower density of larger urban settlements. Topographically it is similar in being situated at the crossing point of a navigable river system, but, unlike at Wallingford, there is no conclusive evidence of a pre-Conquest *burh* enclosure at the settlement despite documentary references to an early fortification. The castle site and the adjacent area of Mill Common provide areas of

potential survey work, while archaeologically the settlement has benefited from the results of a growing number of developer-funded investigations over the last decade.
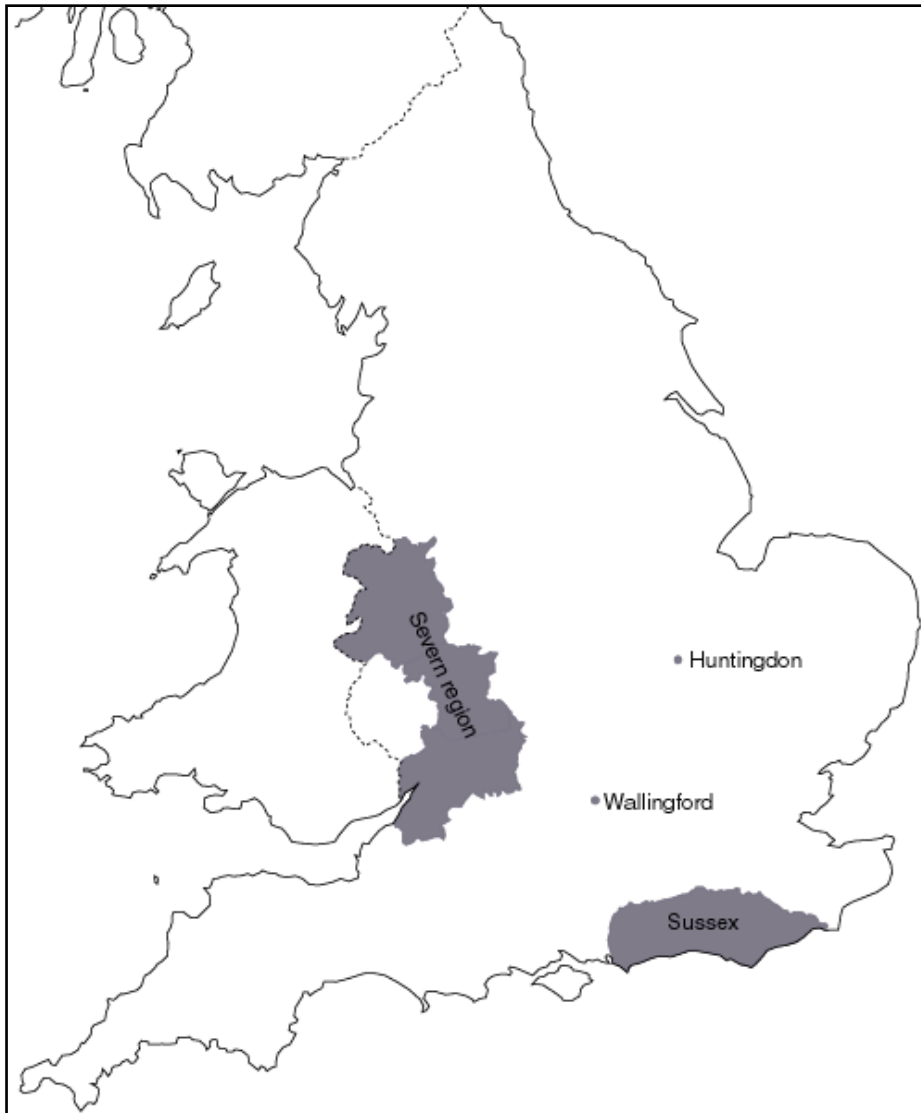
Figure 3.2 Location of case studies (Source: Michael Fradley)

The research programme will subsequently move to a completely different scale of investigation by exploring the subject through regional case studies. The first of these will be an analysis of the Severn Vale region which extends through Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (Chapter Six). This will take in relatively standard country centres such as Shrewsbury, Worcester and Gloucester, but also emergent centres such as Bristol which would become prominent as a focus of international

trade in the later medieval period, and smaller settlements such as Berkeley. Importantly it will present a spotlight over the important former shire centre of Winchcombe in which an urban castle was not apparently constructed, providing an important contrast for and reflection upon the more typical examples. It will also consider the urban foundations of the Conquest-period at the Quatford/Bridgnorth complex which was established in association with a castle, and Tewkesbury, where settlement was closely linked to a religious complex and no castle was founded.

The final case study will explore at a shire level those urban castles erected in the county of Sussex on the south coast of England (Chapter Seven). This will take in the urban castle sites at Chichester, Lewes, Pevensey and Hastings, in addition to the new foundations of Bramber and Arundel. As a study area it marks an important variation from previous examples given its complex system of lordship in which it was divided into several semi-independent, compact territorial units known as Rapes, although a connection can be made with the earldom of Shropshire. This is relevant in that this collection of castles were developed by members of the non-royal elite who administered their attendant Rapes with relative freedom. This provides the opportunity to explore the development of the urban castle in a context where the influence of the crown, which is recorded eminently in so many other examples, is much reduced.

The detailed case studies outlined above will be followed by a broader, thematic study of the wider *corpus* of urban castles based upon questions and issues raised during the analysis of the preceding chapters. This is feasible due to the relatively low number of identified urban castle sites (52), which is further reduced when the detailed case studies are removed from this number (41). It must also be highlighted that a

significant number of these sites are poorly understood, have never been subject to any detailed archaeological investigation and are poorly documented historically; the majority of the castles of Dorset fit this mould. This overall analysis has the benefit of fleshing out points developed in the earlier case studies, but also reduces any geographical bias that might be observed in the selection of examples for detailed research. For instance, the north and south-west of England are not represented by the case studies, while Huntingdon sits ambiguously on the border of East Anglia and the East Midlands. By incorporating examples from across England, and Wales in the case of Rhuddlan, into this thematic analysis chapter, it ensures that aspects of regional variation and notable exceptions are not omitted from this research programme.

Conclusion

Three general areas of concern have been highlighted that will form the focus of investigation. The first element relates to the theoretical framework in which we currently understand the castle and how this might be taken forward through the questions that are raised when we study it. Secondly is the issue of urbanism itself which for the period in question has remained the poor cousin of later medieval urban studies. It is essential that this second issue is broached as an equal companion of the first in order to counter a situation in which the urban context simply remains a backdrop rather than an integral associate of the urban castle. Thirdly is the demonstrable need to consciously break from earlier studies of this period which have been entwined in the complex historiography of the subject in order to formulate an alternative understanding of the urban castle. Although a complete break is not possible and would in fact be intellectually negative, attention will focus for the course

of the present study on the wealth of often untapped archaeological material of this period for the four case studies and wider, thematic analysis outlined above.

4 Contrasting fortunes: Wallingford castle and town

Introduction

Wallingford exemplifies many aspects of the quintessential Late Saxon royal *burh*, elements that appear amplified due to the extensive survival of the pre-Conquest fortified earthworks themselves around the core of the modern town. Located on the gravel terraces above an important ford over the river Thames in what is now Oxfordshire, but previously within the now-redundant county of Berkshire (Fig 4.1), the town and its later castle appears frequently in the political history of medieval England. The large sub-rectangular plan of the town defences without a Romano-British antecedent, and apparent rectilinear street system has allowed it to be cited as one of the iconic 'planned towns' of the Wessex kings (Biddle and Hill 1971, 81-2; Radford 1970, 85).

By the mid-eleventh century Wallingford was the most prominent settlement in Berkshire, and was chosen as the site of one of the royal castles of the post-Conquest period; Domesday Book records that eight houses were demolished during in the course of its construction (Morgan 1979). During the later medieval period available archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the town did not thrive and expand on a scale comparable to many of its contemporary urban settlements. The castle was to slowly lose its elite patronage from the fourteenth century as the maintenance of such a massive structure became unsustainable, a process which has inhibited subsequent development and provided such an effective archaeological case study. As outlined in the previous chapter, a detailed characterisation of the development of the town and castle between the tenth and the twelfth centuries will

be attempted through the integration of data retrieved from archaeological excavations, analytical earthwork survey and topographical analysis of the settlement form.
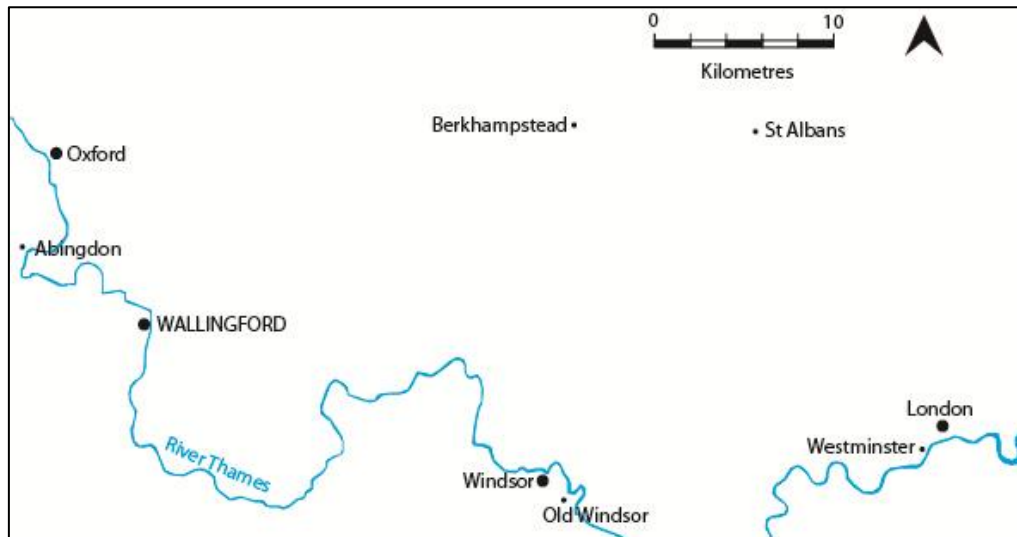
Figure 4.1 The regional settlement context of Wallingford (Source: Michael Fradley).

Settlement background

An early summary of the town's archaeological evidence suggested that a Romano-British settlement may have extended into the Kinecroft Park from the west of the town (Airs *et al.* 1975, 155). This model was based on the understanding that the greatest concentration of Romano-British material was believed to have been recovered from this area, although this conjectured occupation was not identified in recent excavations (Creighton *et al.* 2009). Romano-British activity has been identified in the modern settlement area west of the town off 60 Radnor Road, and may be associated with a large cropmark complex identified 500m further to the west, although an archaeological watching brief at the Wallingford Rugby Football Club in the intervening area proved negative (Wallis 2009; Piper 2009). A ditch at 2 Norman Way in the area between Radnor Road and the *burh* could potentially suggest the

continuation of the settlement eastwards, although the feature was not conclusively dated (Gilbert 2009).

Evidence of a post-Roman pagan cemetery of fifth to sixth-century date, including furnished burials, has been identified and partially excavated immediately outside the south-west corner of the *burh* (Leeds 1938; Hamerow and Westlake 2009). While early and middle Saxon pottery has been noted sealed in the *burh* defences, there has been no actual evidence yet recovered of a pre-*burh* settlement, although residual, tentatively-dated pottery fragments of this period have been recovered south of the *burh* at Winterbrook and to the west along the line of the Wallingford Bypass (Barclay *et al.* 1995; Anon 2009). Characterising the pre-*burh* settlement form at Wallingford and its immediate hinterland is therefore problematic. From a documentary perspective models of early settlement nuclei have been proposed, including an early estate centre suggested at Brightwell to the west of Wallingford (Dewey 2009; Roffe 2009). At the very least it is possible at this stage to argue that the large enclosed settlement of Wallingford was an original creation of the Late Saxon period, with no clear evidence of an obvious substantial preceding centre within the bounds of the later *burh*.

Wallingford urban settlement, *c.*AD900-1150: the archaeological evidence

The extensive system of earthwork bank and ditch that still envelopes the historic core of the town is generally accepted as the defensive perimeter established in the late ninth century. Some doubt has been raised as to whether this system represents the late ninth century *burh* or a subsequent redevelopment of the enclosure due to ambiguities within the limited collection of documentary material for the pre-AD1100

period (Roffe 2009, 41-2). At present no evidence of an earlier defensive layout has been recorded as part of any archaeological investigation of the settlement.
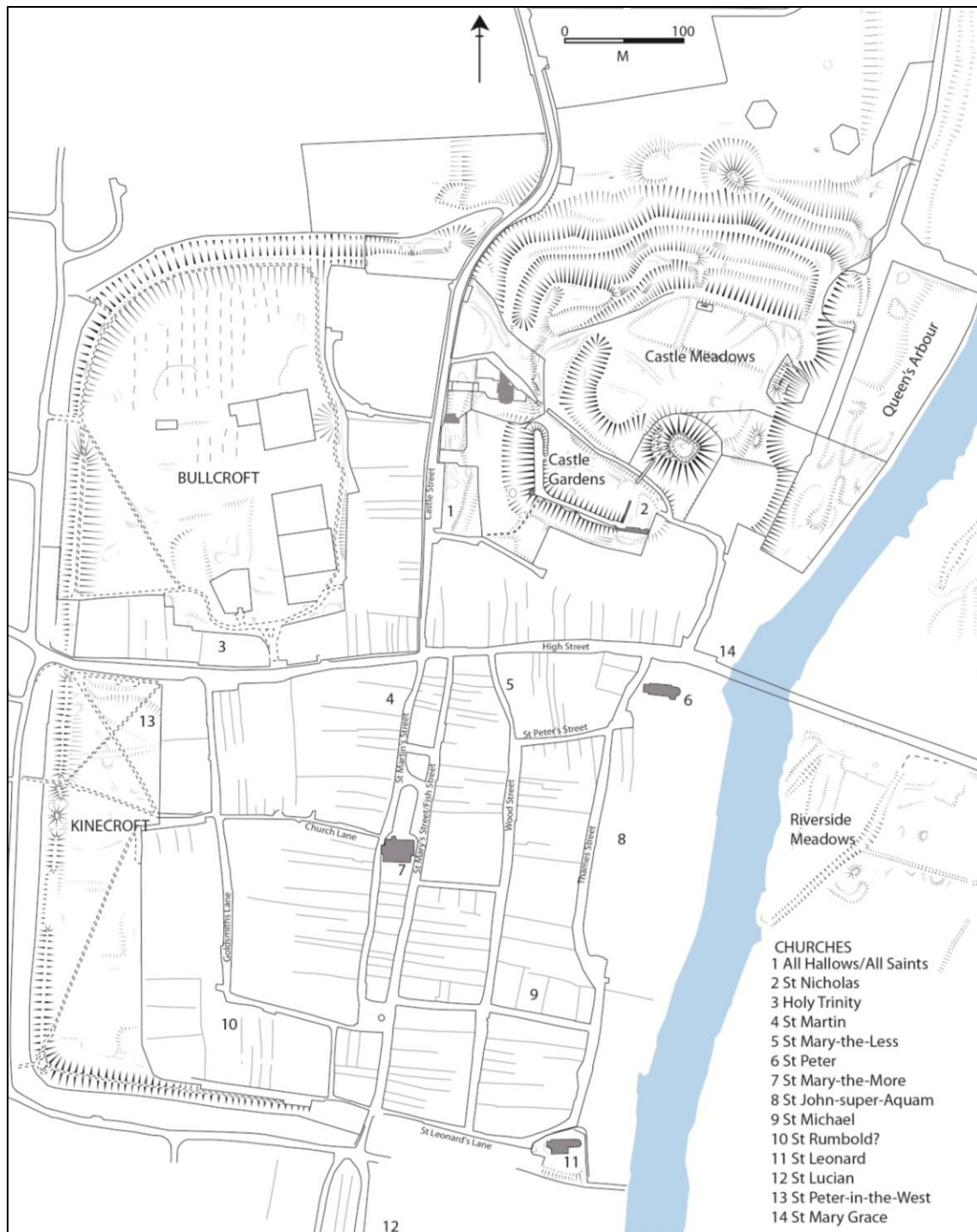
Figure 4.2 Plan of Wallingford, incorporating the results of the analytical earthwork survey and plot analysis (Source: Michael Fradley).

The *burh* perimeter at present consists of an earthwork bank with a substantial ditch along the western, north-western and south-western perimeter, with evidence of substantial cuts through and degradation of the earthwork fabric at a number of points (Fig. 4.2). The surviving portions of the bank measure around 15m wide and between 4-6m in height, while the outer ditch is of a similar width with of a depth of 2-4m. The eastern sections of the north and south sides of the *burh* defensive circuit have both been removed; to the north side by the spread of the later medieval castle while to the south the line is lost beneath later residential development. The continuation of the *burh* defences near St Leonard's Lane is apparently confirmed by a reference to a bank at the south end of Wood Street on which trees grow in a record of AD1550 (VCH 1923, 517). There is no definitive evidence as to whether the rampart continued along the eastern edge of the town or if the river itself formed a natural barrier. Additionally, an argument has been put forward that a bridgehead was also established as part of the *burh* defences on the east side of the river, the line of which is preserved in the recent borough boundary which incorporated a broad triangular wedge of land on the eastern river bank (Hinton 1977, 37).

Limited excavations of the *burh* defences have demonstrated two broad phases of construction, although these appear to differ in form around the town circuit. Excavations by Brooks along the northern rampart revealed an initial construction of gravel with turf revetments that was stabilised by an arrangement of vertical timber posts, and which was subsequently subject to an increase in size and stone revetment (Astill 1984, 76; Brooks 1966, 17-20). The trenches from this early investigation were reinvestigated as part of the Wallingford *Burh* to Borough project, confirming the identification of the form and alignment of the rampart but also disputing the earlier

recording of post holes beneath the bank which were reinterpreted as being derived from substantial root penetration.
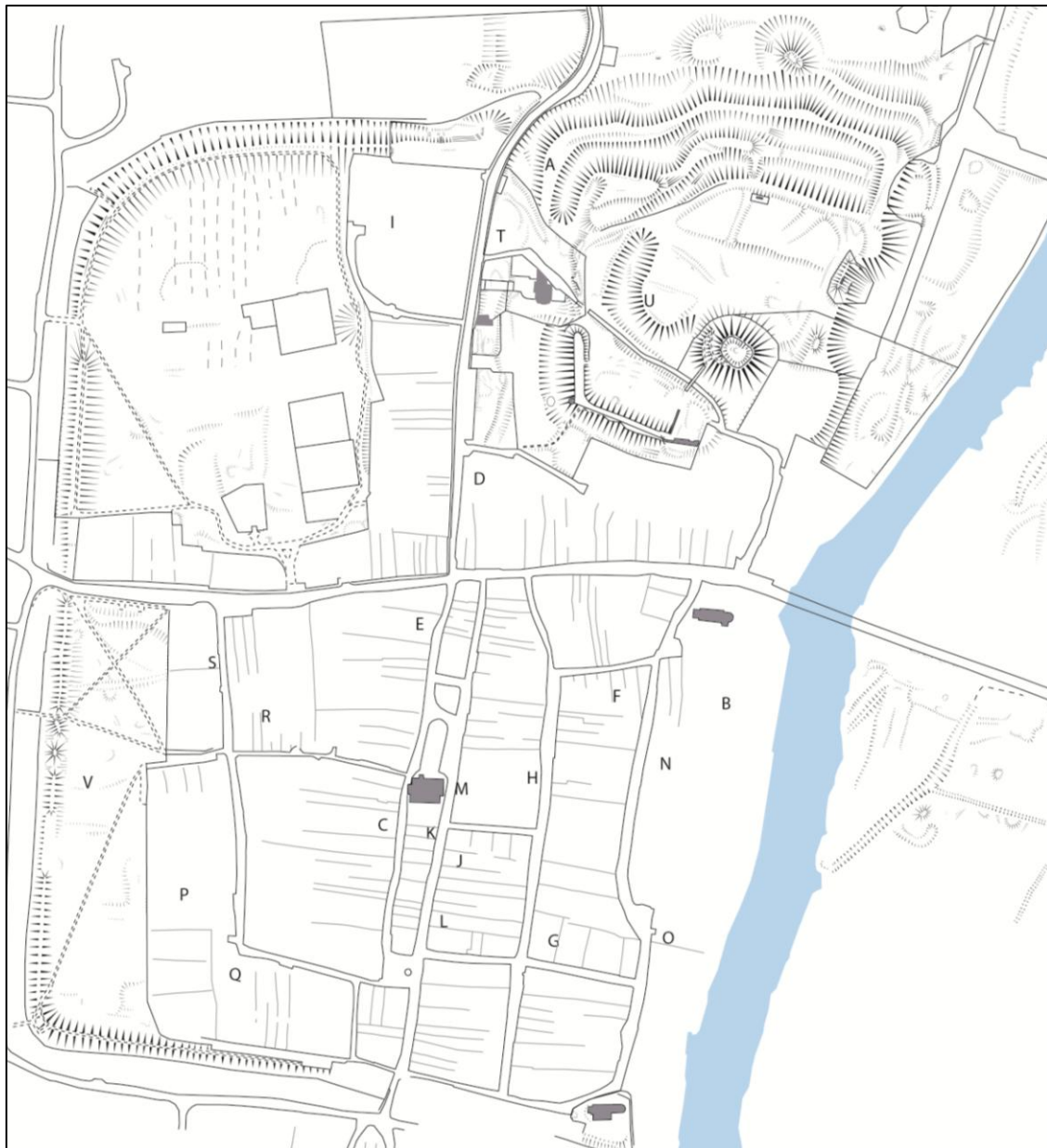
Figure 4.3 The location of principal archaeological excavations in Wallingford. A: Castle Meadows (1960s). B: Thameside/Coach House. C: 9-11 St Martin's Street. D: Lamb Garage. E: St Martins Churchyard. F: St Peter's Lane. G: Wood Street car park. H: 68-70 Wood Street. 16a/17a Castle Street. J: 17-20 St Mary's Street. K: 51-53 St Mary's Street. L: 21-23 St. Mary's Street. M: 12 St Mary's Street. N: The Studio. O: Cromwell House. P: Crispin Place. Q: St Rumbold's Church? R: Harris Garage. S. Masonic Centre. T: 24 Castle Street. U: Castle Meadows (2009). V: Kinecroft (2008-9). (Source: Michael Fradley).

An archaeological investigation ahead of the insertion of a gas pipeline along the western defences of the Kinecroft park recorded the form of the original bank. This consisted of a structure of clear horizontal turfs with no evidence of vertical revetment posts. The defences were subsequently increased in height during a second phase of construction with the addition of a substantial sandy loam layer (Durham *et al.* 1972, 82). At this stage it is not possible to state whether the two construction phases identified at the different sites are contemporary or not, despite their structural differences.

Figure 4.4 The *burh* rampart from the north-east surviving amongst the dense complex of the earthworks in the Castle Meadows. The scarp of the pre-Conquest rampart is principally the area highlighted by the tree shadow (Source: Michael Fradley)

The outer ditches of the defensive circuit would have also been an important water conduit, feeding watermills and, from the thirteenth century at least, the castle moats. Analysis of the drainage around Wallingford has argued that elements of wider water

management system beyond the settlement may be contemporary with the early *burh* enclosure, although excavation along the southern side of the perimeter suggests that the channel may be of natural origin at this point (Grayson 2004, 33-5; Kiberd 1997). Identification of a second, outer ditch on the west side of the *burh* defences proved unfounded; a large ditch on the south side of St John's Road may be such a feature, but is too poorly dated at present to develop a more complete interpretation (Moore 2004a; Mudd and Durham 1990). The line of an unidentified water course formerly feeding into the interior area of the *burh* may be preserved in the meandering eastern boundary of the Bullcroft Park, and would have diverted in the northern outer *burh* ditch after the construction of the latter.

Understanding of the *burh* defences has improved as a result of analytical earthwork survey in the Castle Meadows area, which has recorded the alignment of the earlier perimeter within the castle complex in the north-eastern quadrant of the town (Fig. 4.4). This indicates that to the east of the town's north gate the alignment of the defences drops to a more southerly angle, mirroring the layout of the perimeter along the south side of the *burh*. This is relevant as it has been conjectured that the change of alignment in the course of the southern defences occurred in order to accommodate St Leonard's Church and therefore proved that the latter pre-dated the construction of the *burh* (Roffe 2009). The results of the earthwork survey do not disprove that St Leonard's church was not an early foundation, but this position cannot be supported by the present analysis of the *burh* layout. There has also been little evidence to support the idea that the defences continued around the eastern, riverside section of the settlement; a section of undated chalk wall recorded at the Coach House off Thames Street appears to be a formal rather than defensive barrier on a par with the rest of the *burh* (Creighton *et al.* 2009, 74). There was also no evidence of

defensive earthworks to support the proposed 'bridgehead' *burh* on the east side of the River Thames, although a significant ditch identified in the Riverside Meadows suggests that drainage of the bridgehead area was important (Pitt 2010).

Figure 4.5 The hollow way of the axial northern road at Wallingford from the south, prior to its shift in the thirteenth century due to the expansion of the castle complex. The height difference between the two sides may be the result of more prolonged, intensive occupation on the higher, western side of the road (Source: Michael Fradley).

Modelling the street pattern of the early settlement has also been supplemented by the results of analytical earthwork survey (Fig 4.3). In a series of excavations in the 1960s the original north gate of the *burh* was identified in an area that was redeveloped as part of the castle complex in the thirteenth century, shifting the entrance and the road known as Castle Street westwards to their present location (Brooks 1966). Survey in

the Castle Gardens area has recorded a 13m wide hollow-way of the original axial north-south route running for a length of 100m, and continuing north through an area of residential development in a more fragmentary for a further 40m (Fig. 4.5). This alignment indicates that the northern section of this road connected to St Martin's Street, rather than St Marys Street. Overall the course of this road can be seen to be meandering and at an oblique angle to the overall *burh* perimeter layout, potentially indicating that it developed prior to the *burh*. The early relevance of this route as part of the *burh* is indicated by the archaeological evidence; the majority of tenth-century material recorded in the intra-mural area is sited adjacent to the road. This includes cellared buildings at Castle Meadows and 9-11 St Martin's Street, residual material at the heavily disturbed Lamb Garage site off Castle Street, and the cemetery at St Martin's Church itself where burials are currently dated from the late tenth century onwards (Durham 1981; Soden 2010; Hull and Pine 2001; Brooks 1966).

The application of plan-analysis to the settlement form, based on cartographic data from the 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey mapping, has also produced highly relevant topographical findings. Of prime interest is analysis relating to the High Street, which also fails to conform to the straight, rectilinear road layouts of the planned late Saxon town models. At a point 175m east of the *burh* west gate, the High Street bows northwards, only returning southwards at its eastern end toward the river crossing. The eastern segment of this course is mirrored by the short section of St Peter's Street to the south of the High Street; any continuation of the former street to the west has been removed by the redevelopment of the major north-south streets, as discussed below. On the north side of High Street and the south side of St Peter's Street there is a recurrence of plots *c.*8.5m wide and, in the few cases where the rear of the enclosure has not been disturbed, *c.*60m in length. The plots in the intervening

zone between High Street and St Peter's Street are thinner and demonstrate far less regularity, while the continuation of Wood Street and Thames Street through this area divert obliquely. The section of Thames Street cuts through, or separates sections of, St Peter's Church cemetery, following the observation of burials on the west side of the road at 5 High Street (OHER: 16027), while to the south it also cuts through the earlier plot boundaries on the south side of St Peter's Street. This evidence can be interpreted as showing that a wide routeway or open area was laid out, with planning of plots on both its north and south sides. The intervening area has subsequently been in-filled with far less regular encroachment, leaving just the route of High Street and the relatively short length of St Peter's Street.

It is possible that up to three churches stood in this conjectured wide routeway. Excavation has proved that St Martin's Church and its cemetery had been founded by at least the late tenth century (Soden 2010). There is less to clarify the date of construction for St Mary-the-Less and St Peter's Church, which also stand within this area, but it is possible that both could be pre-1066 foundations. It seems likely that, at the very least, St Martin's Church stood in this open area. Interestingly, if the course of the fossilised former water course identified in the western boundary of the Bullcroft is extended to the south-east, it would cross this zone at its interface with the principal north-south axial road and cross the eastern side of St Martin's church. It is potentially relevant that the two churches recorded at both ends of this feature are dedicated to St Peter, although the context of foundation for the two establishments is poorly understood. It is argued that this is further evidence that this central axial route through the *burh* was carefully developed by those active in the settlement in the late ninth or tenth centuries.

Although excavation in the wide routeway area has been limited, data collected to-date has confirmed little evidence of activity before the AD1200s. The area immediately west of St Martin's cemetery contained no evidence of activity or occupation prior to the thirteenth century (Soden 2010). By way of contrast, excavations on a heavily disturbed site south of St Peter's Street (i.e. within the early plots bordering the routeway) did include residual pre-Conquest ceramic material (Anon 1994). The pits recorded at the Coach House off Thames Street could also relate to properties fronting on to the southern side of the St Peter's Street (Creighton *et al.* 2009, 74). On the north side at 101 High Street a complete cooking pot of late eleventh- or twelfth-century date was recovered from a linear feature at the rear of the property (Clarke 1995). It may also be relevant that Holy Trinity, a potentially early *burh* church and a possible high-status secular enclave linked to St Peter-in-the-West and documented from the late thirteenth century, stood at the western end of the wide routeway (Herbert 1971, 17; Roffe 2009, 36-7). Medieval stratigraphy has been observed but not sampled at the junction of High Street and Goldsmiths Lane (OHER: 12393), while the only groundwork to receive formal archaeological monitoring failed to penetrate below eighteenth-century deposits and post medieval garden soils (Hull 1997; 1999a). A major residence housing the constable of Wallingford Castle was also recorded in the fourteenth century immediately south of St Peter's church, that is, at the east end of the wide routeway (Herbert 1971, 21).

On the basis of the present evidence this morphological form and its corresponding archaeological data indicate that a formally planned, broad routeway was created through the centre of the *burh*, leading toward the river crossing. Given that there is little indication of activity relating to the river crossing prior to the foundation of the

burh, it is also postulated that this layout was created contemporaneously or soon after the establishment of Wallingford in the late ninth century, which is tentatively confirmed by the available archaeological data. The interior area appears to have remained open, apart from at least one church foundation and its cemetery, with wider, informal encroachment in the later medieval period, including the disruption of much of its western end.

Moving beyond the axial street system, the evidence for unambiguous intra-mural settlement and occupation during the tenth century is relatively limited. Surface stripping of the car park on the east side of Wood Street revealed occupation layers, structural evidence and a pit containing a small quantity of St Neots Ware (OHER: 16249). Early occupation has also been recorded at 40 Wood Street (Keevil and Underwood 2009); although in both cases the dating can only convincingly be narrowed to the Saxo-Norman period, rather than essentially pre-Conquest or tenth century. A large pit recorded at 68-70 Wood Street contained an assemblage of tenth and early eleventh-century pottery (Durham 1985, 110). Two small interventions in the riverside zone east of Thames Street at Cromwell House and The Bridge House have recorded pre-Conquest pits and ceramics, suggesting high archaeological potential in this area (Norbury 2010; Creighton *et al.* 2009, 74).

The eleventh century

The model of development presented above differs significantly both to the traditional concept of the planned Late Saxon town as well as ongoing re-analysis. In contrast, it is argued that it is during the eleventh century that major changes occur, both in an increase in populace and the instigation of extensive plan elements. At its base level it

is during this period that activity and occupation can be recorded from sites across the intra-mural area, with a significant proportion of this occurring from the mid-eleventh century onwards.

This is demonstrable in the northern part of the town through the analysis of available excavated data. In addition to continuity in the Castle Meadows and former Lamb Garage sites, various excavations to the west as far as the boundary of the Bullcroft Park indicate that groups and individuals were beginning to occupy land in this area directly in this period. Interventions at 16a Castle Street, close to the eastern boundary of the Bullcroft Park, have produced deposits of eleventh- to thirteenth-century material (Anon 2002). At 17a Castle Street a more defined sequence dating from the mid-eleventh to late twelfth century, with three tenement plots and a possible building identified within the sequence (Bashford 2001; Moore and Williams 2008). This area may have linked to Castle Street via Howdes Street, which was documented in the later medieval period as leading the grounds of Holy Trinity Priory in what is now the Bullcroft Park (VCH 1923, 517).

Morphologically, the plan analysis of the settlement indicates a substantial re-development of the street layout in the southern half of the town. It is argued on the basis of this evidence that St Mary's Street (formerly Fish Street), Wood Street and the southern section of Thames Street (the northern section has been re-routed in the later medieval or post-medieval period) were all appended on a north-south alignment to the earlier east-west wide road of the High Street. The connecting east-west routes of Hart Street, St Leonard's Street and any other minor alley ways in this area may be contemporary. It is unclear whether the complex of roads to the west including Goldsmiths Lane, Church Lane and Kinecroft are of comparable date due to the

paucity of surviving plot layouts in this area, although their oblique orientation would suggest not; they could potentially be earlier or later in date than the gridded street pattern of the town's south-eastern quadrant.

Archaeologically this process of redevelopment is dated to the eleventh century based on the large number of sites whose occupation begins at this date. Imprecisely located development trenches somewhere near the west side of the Market Place recovered ceramic material from a conjectured rubbish deposit dated to the late eleventh and twelfth centuries (Grove 1938). Evaluation at the rear of 17-20 St Mary's Street recorded a sequence of occupation that ceramic dating would suggest began between the mid-eleventh and mid-thirteenth centuries (Pine and Weale 2010). At the Town Hall site, between St Martin's Street and St Mary's Street, limited emergency monitoring recorded a sequence of pottery from the eleventh to the seventeenth century (Keevil 1995). Excavations along that same intervening strip of land at 51-53 St Mary's Street provided a sequence of occupation from the mid-eleventh century into the fourteenth century (Pine 2004). Watching briefs at 21-23 St Mary's Street only identified a single pit containing twelfth- to thirteenth-century material although this area may have suffered a greater degree of later disturbance (Croney 1997; 1998). At 12 St Mary's Street any medieval evidence may have been entirely truncated by post-medieval activity, although no residual medieval material was identified (Heaton 2003). At the rear of properties on the west side of Market Place excavation down 0.8m failed to reach the natural soil level or archaeological deposits, although two small 2m deep trenches did record medieval and post-medieval pottery finds (Hull 1999b). At the rear of 1 Market Place, toward the Wood Street frontage, excavations revealed deep sequence of late post-medieval pits, although differentiation in the deposits on

the north and south sides of the area suggest this was previously two separate plots (Gilbert 2006).

Evidence from the streets to the east of St Mary's Street have produced less evidence of medieval occupation, although this may be expected away from the settlement's axial road system. Saxo-Norman ceramics from 40 Wood Street and the car park further north have been discussed above, with occupation potentially beginning in the eleventh rather than the tenth century (Keevil and Underwood 2009). At The Studio, on Thames Street, a group of pits excavated suggested a sequence of occupation dating from the mid-eleventh century through to the early thirteenth century (Moore 2004). A number of interventions have penetrated post-medieval layers without recording any earlier activity as at 38-39 Wood Street and 5 St Leonard's Lane, leading to suggestions that any medieval evidence may have been entirely truncated (Brown and Dalton 2000). This interpretation might be questioned due to the absence of residual material, although there is clearly an issue in the urban environment with major truncation and the failure of developer-funded interventions to penetrate post-medieval deposits. This has been the case at 18-20 St Mary's Street and 2 Thames Street, as well as 12-13 St Mary's Street where medieval pits were only tentatively identified beneath nineteenth-century make-up layers (Cass and Lowe 2008; Taylor 2007; Hoplin 1983a). Work at 36 St Mary's Street at the southern end of the road failed to identify predicted evidence of a southern gateway, the *burh* rampart or any medieval layers which may have helped develop its understanding, instead encountering only modern foundations and post-medieval made ground (Lowe 2003).

The development of this street system is argued to have occurred in parallel with the most concerted period of settlement growth in the history of medieval Wallingford.

The close-set, parallel streets of St Martin and St Mary appears to have been an intentional form with areas of wide internal space utilised for market and trading activities. In addition to the Church of St Mary-le-More, a guildhall was founded to the south the church with shop space on the ground floor (VCH 1923, 533). This intra-mural parallel road form is mirrored to the south of the *burh* with the Reading Road and Squires Walk formation, potentially the site of a documented cornmarket. This was not connected directly with the intra-mural parallel street system to the north, which narrowed to cross through the south gate before broadening again to form the southern open area. The implication is that they are near-contemporary morphological developments, although they may have been separate socio-economic entities.

This later chronology for the redevelopment of the south-eastern quadrant in the eleventh century may also explain why St Leonard's Lane appears to encroach upon the *burh* bank in this area (Durham 1983, 150); it is a later foundation rather than a contemporary of the defensive perimeter. Archaeological evidence would suggest that the east-west wide routeway remained open until the thirteenth century, while a fish market was held in stalls in the cemetery of St Mary-the-less, but overall there is a suggestion of a re-alignment of primary economic activity on to the north-south alignment of St Martin's and St Mary's Street. The cemetery of St Martin's Church, which is likely to have been abandoned in the fourteenth century, may also have been encroaching outwards as inhumations have also been recorded at 4 St Martin's Street and 20/21 Market Place (OHER: 7780; 7782).

This period would have also witnessed the growth in the number of churches in the settlement, instigated by the burgeoning population reflected in the archaeologically demonstrable expansion of the town and the cemetery evidence from the Waitrose

site (Soden 2010). Excavations have only confirmed the early date of St Martin's Church, although there is vibrant debate over the chronological development of Wallingford's ecclesiastical topography based upon the available documentary material (Dewey 2009; Roffe 2009). The Benedictine Priory of Holy Trinity was founded in the southern part of the Bullcroft Park in the late eleventh century, potentially as a renewal of an earlier pre-Conquest parish church. Limited excavation has at least begun to give some indication of the extent of the priory. Along High Street evidence of buried deposits and possible structural remains conjecturally linked to the former Holy Trinity Priory including a charnel pit containing at least 45 individuals have been recorded and 60 and 64-6 High Street and in the vicinity of the Bullcroft Park (Dalton 1997; Dalton and Hiller 2001; Ford 2004). Further test-pitting around the Bullcroft would appear to confirm the details obtained by the analytical earthwork survey of this area; that the priory complex may only have extended over the southern half of the present park and High Street frontages (Sims 2008).

The twelfth century

Characterising the south-western quadrant of Wallingford during the medieval period is more difficult than the southern-eastern due to a lack of topographical detail and consistent archaeological results. The fragmentary street system in this zone and relative absence of known church foundations may indicate that settlement in this area was more dispersed than observed in other sections of the town. At the Harris Garage site to the south of High Street and west of St Martin's Street, a low density sequence of features of eleventh- to fourteenth-century date was recorded (Ford 1991). It is possible that these features relate to activity at the rear of properties fronting High Street or St Martin's Street; the recovery of hare and woodcock bones

indicate a possible high-status diet which is relevant in light of the elite enclave conjectured at the west end of the High Street (Herbert 1971, 17). Investigations to the rear of the Old Post Office Site of the street recovered material of twelfth to fourteenth century date, but similarly may relate to occupation along St Martin's Street (Pine 2003; Hammond 2004). Excavations at the southern end of Goldsmiths Lane identified burials and stone structures, potentially part of the St Rumbold Church complex, interspersed with pit digging of mid-eleventh- to thirteenth-century date (Hoplin 1983b, 148-9).

The street system in this area, consisting of Goldsmiths Lane, Church Lane and Kinecroft, is likely to be a conglomerate of different period, elements of which have been lost in the post-medieval period. Excavations in the Kinecroft Park itself have demonstrated that the road known as Kinecroft previously continued westwards, possibly linking to a secondary break in the defensive perimeter and bounded by at least two domestic plots on the south side of the road that were occupied for a short period during the late eleventh or twelfth century (Creighton *et al.* 2009, 72). Excavations at the south end of Goldsmiths Lane have also led to the tentative suggestion that it formerly continued southwards, and that its sharp turn westwards to join St Leonard's Square is a later addition (Hoplin 1983b, 149). Intervention on the east side of the Kinecroft has produced varied results. At Crispin Place excavation 1.5m down to the natural surface failed to recover any archaeological finds or features, yet nearby at 11 Crispin Place a series of twelfth- to thirteenth-century midden deposits were uncovered alongside an assemblage of unstratified eleventh to fifteenth-century ceramics (Williams 2007; Cartwright 2008). Finally, differential earthwork preservation in the southern portion of the Kinecroft Park has enabled the identification of at least three rectilinear enclosures that may constitute further

evidence of settlement. The date of this potential activity is not currently known, and it is apparent that these identified enclosures exhibit an orientation parallel with the western *burh* defences rather than the network of roads and boundaries that have been present to the east since at least the nineteenth century.

Figure 4.6 The remains of a post-medieval causewayed drive from the west. The drive is located at the north end of the Kinecroft and runs parallel to the High Street, while the remains of the two gate piers to a no-longer extant residence can be seen in the eastern boundary wall. High-status occupation is documented in this area from at least the late thirteenth century (Source: Michael Fradley).

A survey of property in Wallingford from AD1550 indicates that properties stood between High Street and the Kinecroft (Field 1917a, 22). Earthwork survey in the Kinecroft has not identified any obvious evidence of medieval settlement at its northern end of the park at its interface with the High Street, but this area had been

compromised by post-medieval landscaping including a formal driveway parallel to the High Street leading into a predecessor of the present Wallingford House (Fig. 4.6). In part this may overlie earlier, medieval evidence, but it may also indicate a relatively direct continuity of high-status occupation in this area. As stated briefly above, high-status properties are recorded as standing at the northern end of the Kinecroft from at least the later thirteenth century.

While the twelfth century saw the emergence of new areas of settlement within the intra-mural area, processes of contraction also begin that would become endemic during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The occupational evidence recorded on the Kinecroft had certainly been abandoned by the close of the twelfth century, while no thirteenth-century ceramics were recorded on some of the sites west of Castle Street (Creighton *et al.* 2009, 72; Bashford 2001). By way of contrast, evidence of infilling within the postulated east-west wide routeway during this period would suggest the process was more complex than one of linear decline. What is clear is that the expansive period of growth, witnessed primarily during the eleventh century at Wallingford, had stalled. The expansion of settlement and increase in material consumption experienced in many other English towns from the late twelfth century onwards does not appear to have taken hold in this case (Schofield and Vince 2003, 1).

Modelling settlement development at Wallingford

The integrated characterisation of settlement development, utilising archaeological and morphological evidence, has produced a model distinct from earlier interpretations (Fig. 4.7). An important conclusion of this review is to move away from considering the settlement as a fort in the first instance, or whether it had an immediate dual function

as a town. The primacy of its use as a fortification is undermined by its lack of an eastern rampart indicating that riverside access was more vital than defence, unless conclusive physical evidence of the bridgehead *burh* on the east side of the river is identified in the future. Equally there is limited archaeological evidence of a substantial nucleated settlement during the tenth century that could be characterised as part of a distinctly urban economy. Instead Wallingford is recognised as a central place, whose monumental form and layout in an area of previously low-density settlement would support the argument of direct elite involvement.
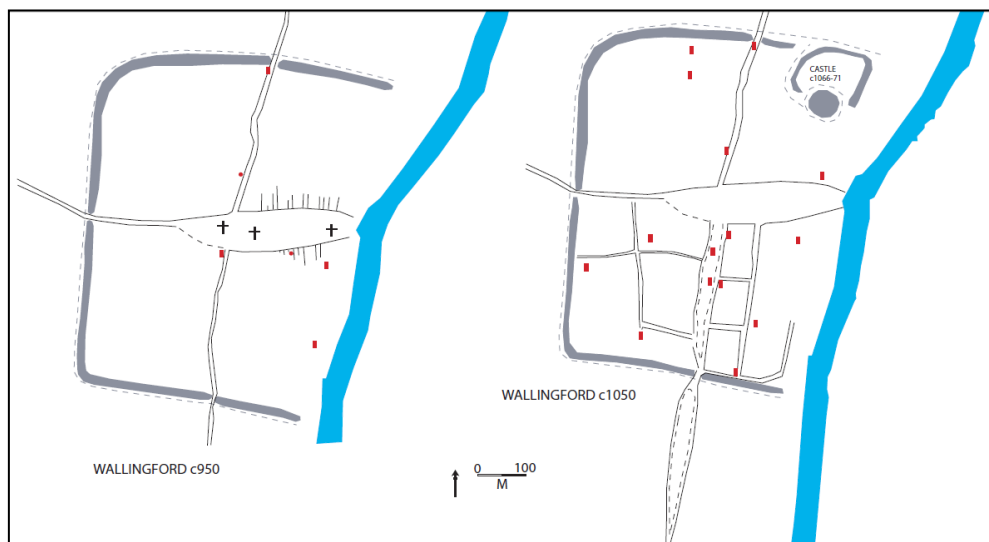
Figure 4.7 Modelling the development of Saxo-Norman Wallingford. The red blocks indicate areas where occupation of the respective phases has been recorded, while red circles denote where only residual finds have been recovererd (Source: Michael Fradley).

The characterisation of the tenth-century morphological form again pulls the interpretation of early medieval Wallingford away from the tradition model of late-Saxon planned urbanism. The meandering north-south road that has been identified running through the settlement contrasts with the rectilinear neatness of the *burh* earthworks, and the gridded street system previously argued by advocates of the planned Late Saxon town (Biddle and Hill 1971). The north-south axial road could

feasibly pre-date the foundation of Wallingford in the late ninth century. This road continues northwards, crossing the River Thames at Shillingford where a bridge was possibly extant by at least the tenth century, indicating the possible antiquity of this route (Grayson 2010, 7).

The identification of the early east-west 'wide road' focused on the river crossing is particularly important, and in the present model is interpreted as an early addition to the topography of the *burh* and supplementing the pre-*burh* north-south axial road (Fig 4.7). There is certainly a paucity of evidence at present to prove the existence of the wide routeway conclusively; there is no suggestion of its form in the parochial boundaries as they survived in the nineteenth century (Dewey 2009). Any indicators may have been lost in the encroachment and subsequent consolidation of parishes in line with the rise and fall in church numbers during the medieval period. Nor is it necessarily unique, and may be paralleled by a model of development suggested at Gloucester, that envisages a comparable 'wide road' unit focusing on the primary river crossing (Heighway 2006, 221-4). An important difference exists in that Gloucester has a Romano-British antecedent, with its wide road utilising the original Roman road on one side and an original early medieval bowing alignment on its north-eastern perimeter. Initial colonisation again consisted of church units (St Michael and All Saints), with subsequent encroachment obliterating much of the earlier Romano-British road (Baker and Holt 2004, 109).

What exactly was the purpose of settlement form to those responsible for the foundation and development of Wallingford? It is possible that it functioned as some form of drove way or livestock corral, or an embryonic market place. An additional theory might be that it was utilised as an elite processional way, perhaps in

combination with the functions listed above, particularly given the linear arrangement of churches which interestingly mirrors the elongated layout of high-status structures at Middle Saxon elite sites such as Yeavering in Northumberland or Atcham in Shropshire (Taylor 2010; White and Barker 1998, 42). It is interesting that at Wallingford the western end of this morphological feature had potentially developed into a high-status residential enclave by the thirteenth century (Herbert 1971, 17), a situation with potentially earlier origins, as well as a wealthy tenement at its east end by at least the fourteenth century.

Whatever the exact purpose of this early form, it clearly challenges the earlier model of an Alfredian planned town that has been prominent since the 1970s. Instead it is argued that the distinct, gridded street layout of the south-east quadrant of the intramural *burh* is in fact a product of expansion during the eleventh century. This included the re-orientation of the settlement back on to a north-south alignment, with the development of two more formal 'wide roads' with a clear marketing function in both its intra and extra-mural segments. Above and beyond the basic narrative of settlement development, this process indicates that this changing form was not simply a linear process of expansion. Instead there is evidence of fundamental change in the composition and orientation of the settlement from the late ninth into the close of the eleventh century. The settlement of Wallingford was not simply a static entity that was to fill gradually over time, but a fluid body open and subject to change and development. Continuing into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the complex process continues with zones of expansion and contraction as in the Kinecroft, as well as the filling of the east-west 'wide road' with dense tenements.

The varied populace of Wallingford in the late eleventh century would have experienced and appreciated their surroundings in a very different way to the smaller group utilising and inhabiting the *burh* earlier in the tenth century. Not only had the settlement changed physically and in its levels of material consumption, but the emphasis of movement had altered away from its focus on the river crossing to an extensive economic zone between St Martin's Street and St Mary's Street, even continuing into the extramural area to the south. Who was the driving force in this rapidly changing scene? Crown officials and the elite linked to the settlement were almost certainly involved given the degree of planning evident and the settlements character as a royal *burh*. The local mercantile group and urban elite may also have been involved, particularly given the central presence of the guildhall within the new intramural market area. By way of contrast the earlier east-west wide routeway became increasingly gentrified, with the Holy Trinity complex and a zone of high status secular settlement at its western end, as well as elite-controlled goldsmith production. Whether the regulated development of Wallingford's south-eastern quadrant occurred before or after the Norman Conquest, it is also clear that those individuals who founded the castle in the settlement before AD1071 were not directly concerned with influencing the settlement development or imposing themselves spatially upon it.

Wallingford Castle *c.*AD1050-1150: History and background

The substantial earthwork remains of Wallingford Castle dominate the north-east quarter of the historic core of the town, exhibiting a rare level of preservation for an urban castle. The first reference specifically to the castle occurs in AD1071 relating to the imprisonment of the Abbot of Abingdon, so that its date of construction lies within the period AD1066-71 (VCH 1923, 523). In the aftermath of the Norman Conquest

the army of Duke William of Normandy crossed the Thames at Wallingford, but there is no evidence that a castle was raised at this date. An argument has also been put forward that the description of Wallingford provided by Domesday Book may also imply that the castle occupied the site of a pre-Conquest landholding and residence in the hands of the Crown or its servants (Creighton 2002, 140; Rohan 1989, 312). The castle and settlement played a significant role on behalf of Matilda under the command of the near-legendary chivalric figure of Brian fitz Count (Davis 1910, 299-300; Rohan 1989). Despite this historical presence Wallingford Castle has been largely absent from the literature of medieval castles, in part due to the virtual absence of standing masonry around the site and a lack of published archaeological evidence. The earthworks of the castle and the *burh* defences have also been largely neglected, despite their excellent state of preservation, having only been subject to topographical survey by the Ordnance Survey.

From the perspective of the present research project a significant problem stemming from the extent of royal patronage of Wallingford Castle is in reconstructing the original eleventh-century complex when the site has been subject to such a significant degree of redevelopment over the last millennia. The heyday of the castle is generally considered to have been in the thirteenth century under the successive Earls of Cornwall, Richard and Edmund, whose relevance to the town appears still to have held relevance in the sixteenth century when visited by Leland, although important building campaigns are also recorded during the fourteenth century under Piers Gaveston and Princess Maud, as well as under King John earlier in the thirteenth century (VCH 1923, 523-527; Gough 1806, 215; Smith 1907, 119). The site was refortified by Royalist forces during the English Civil War and subsequently demolished by Parliament, with accounts surviving for the cost of demolition and sale of materials (VCH 1923, 530-1).

On visiting in AD1768 Gough reported the west rampart planted with trees, the southern ramparts within garden grounds and the outer northern rampart encompassed within a corn field, while fragments of walls were visible in houses, presumably on the castle site (Gough 1906, 226). Herringbone masonry was reported as standing at the walls of one of the castle entrances at this time, while continued activity within the castle grounds is attested by the conversion of a building called the 'Priests' Chambers' at the former Collegiate Church of St Nicholas south of the castle motte into a malt house (VCH 1906, 215; Lewis 1835). A mock-Tudor mansion also called Wallingford Castle, demolished in the 1960s, was built by John Allnatt Hedges in the south-west corner of the castle enclosure in AD1837, alongside the extensive landscaping of the adjacent area now known as Castle Gardens (VCH 1923, 531; Pevsner 1966, 249).

The archaeological form of Wallingford Castle

The extensive complex of earthworks in the areas known presently as Castle Meadows and Castle Gardens give a distorted image of the scale and form of the castle first erected in the late eleventh century (Fig. 4.8). The early castle consisted of a basic motte-and-bailey form of fortification, with a large circular motte about 11m in height at the southern end and a sub-rectangular bailey to the north (Fig. 4.16). Analytical earthwork survey of the castle monument has enhanced this basic reconstruction. It is possible to demonstrate that the original castle, like many of its urban contemporaries, utilised the northern rampart of the earlier *burh* enclosure, although the complex would be extended northwards beyond this line in the later twelfth or thirteenth century. On its eastern side it utilised the line of the river terrace as its perimeter, as

did the enclosure of the *burh* before it. An outer ditch was dug along the west and south side of the castle; it may have bifurcated on the southern side of the complex to completely encircle the motte and physically separate it from the bailey, although this could not be demonstrated conclusively on the basis of the earthwork evidence. The ditch was not cut as deeply as the water-carrying *burh* ditch along the north side of the castle, and so would have presumably been a dry ditch, unless an additional intramural source of water could have been tapped to run through the castle ditches. The castle bailey was originally enclosed by a substantial earthwork bank, only two sections of which survive on the eastern side of the bailey.

This original motte-and-bailey castle complex has only been subject to one campaign of excavation, which did not penetrate the later medieval occupation phases and therefore did not provide evidence of activity relating to the early castle or pre-castle land-use (Gaimster and O'Conor 2010, 418). In the absence of clear archaeological data it is presumed that the bailey and motte of the original castle were further enclosed by wooden palisades, and all structures within the complex were similarly of a timber build. The principal entrance to the castle complex was along the western side of the bailey; additional entrances to the north and east may have been later additions. The motte was ascended by some form of staircase or approach on its north-eastern side; a well depicted in the first edition 25" Ordinance Survey edition may be a relatively early component, possibly linked to a forebuilding at the base of the motte.
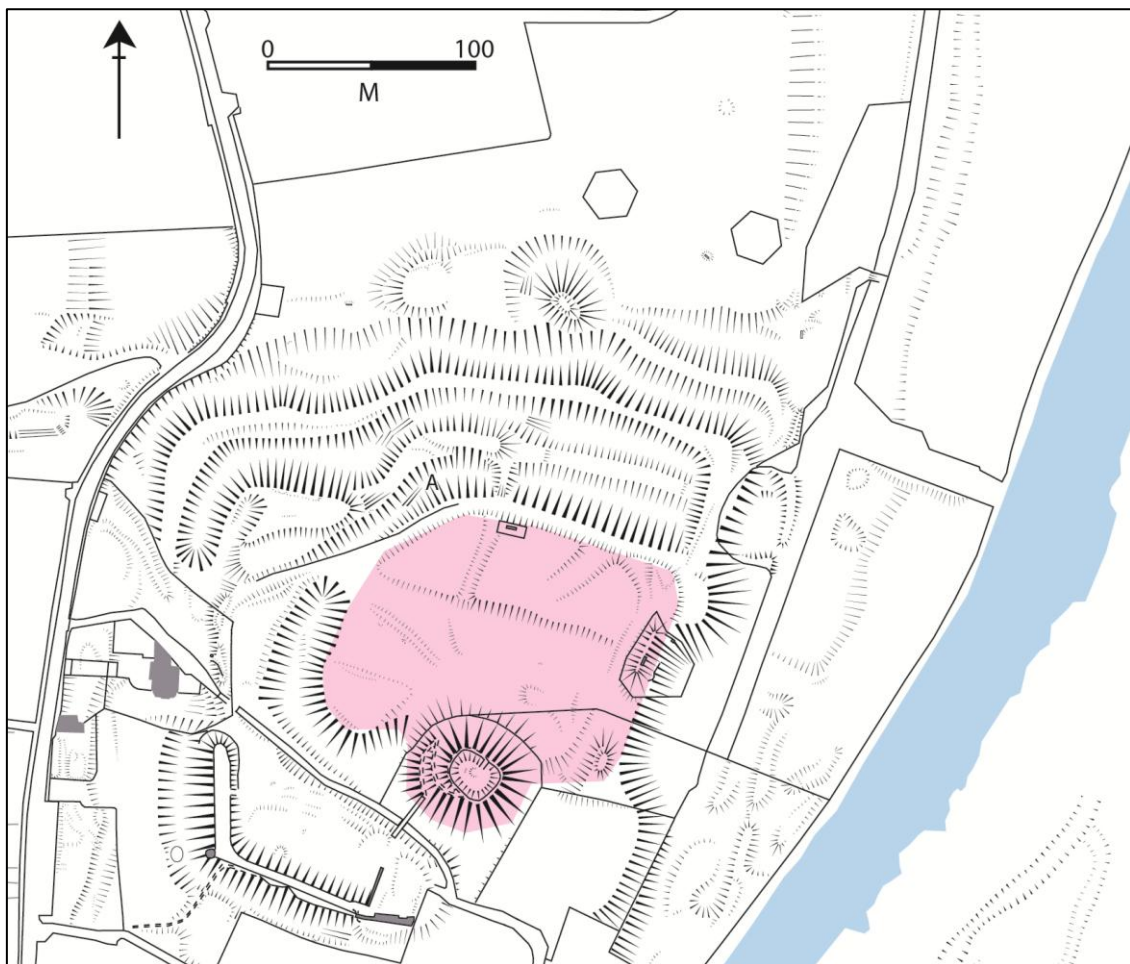
Figure 4.8 Earthwork plan highlighting the extent of Wallingford Castle in the eleventh century. Only two short sections of the bailey enclosure bank erected in this period survive on the east side of the castle, while the motte may have originally surrounded by a ditch around its northern face. The scarp of the pre-castle *burh* ditch survives within the later castle ditch at the point labelled A (Source: Michael Fradley).

The analytical earthwork survey also identified a complex of water management earthworks in the riverside zone known as the Queen's Arbour between the castle and the River Thames (Fig 4.14). The various features recorded link closely to the projecting spurs into the Queen's Arbour on the east side of the central castle complex which are considered above to be of late twelfth- or thirteenth-century date, and so these water management features are of a comparable or later date in construction. These are almost certainly later medieval features, although this zone

would have been connected to the castle and may have contained features such as watermills even in the late eleventh century.

Wallingford Castle in the later medieval period

The process of development, expansion and redevelopment was relatively continuous at Wallingford Castle. On the basis of the analytical earthwork survey it is possible to identify two broad periods of major expansion which can be dated to the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries. This expansive process marks the development of Wallingford Castle out from the majority of urban castles, most of which were never expanded significantly beyond their original footprint or were subject to this level of sustained elite investment. Two clear exceptions are Nottingham Castle and the Tower of London which were both major Crown holdings, and whose expansion took place in tandem with the dramatic urban growth which began in earnest from the later twelfth century. This cannot be demonstrated at the same level at Wallingford where there is little evidence of an increase in the size and density of the settlement in this later period, or in the patterns and quantities of material consumption. The continued aggrandisement of Wallingford Castle therefore took place at a time when its appurtenant urban settlement was failing to thrive relative to many other urban centres across England. This contrast of fortunes between the medieval castle and the urban space at Wallingford should not necessarily be interpreted as a simple case of the former taking advantage spatially of the misfortunes of the latter. On the contrary, investment by members of the elite in the castle appears to have taken place irrespective of the town, an idea which can be substantiated further through a detailed examination of the development of former.

The first major expansive period of the castle, probably during the first half of the twelfth century, saw the construction of a second bailey on the south-western and western side of the original castle complex (Fig. 4.9). The area of the bailey enclosure to the south-west of the castle motte was tested archaeologically in excavations by the Department of Environment (DoE) in the early 1970s. In addition to providing a limited glimpse of eleventh- and twelfth-century pre-castle activity, this work was more prolific in producing the unusual evidence of a range of twelfth-century cob-built structures which were housed within the bailey, prior to being buried in the thirteenth century when the ground level of the bailey and its rampart were raised dramatically as part of that later redevelopment of the castle complex (OHER: 7782.02). These structures were interpreted as domestic in function, possibly kitchens and ancillary structures, all of which implies that at least the eastern part of this bailey was utilised for low-status production activities. The impression therefore is that although this bailey encroached further over the urban space of Wallingford, it did not in itself make a dramatic imposition on the community of the town.

At the eastern end of the outer bailey a multi-period sections of substantial masonry walls survive. This complex includes portions of the collegiate church of St Nicholas in addition to portions of medieval walls and post-medieval structural elements. The college was originally founded in the late-eleventh century, but this pre-dates the supposed expansion of the castle into the outer bailey area in the twelfth century. It is argued presently that the collegiate complex was originally located in the castle's inner bailey, and was only moved to its position in the outer bailey in the course of its refoundation in the thirteenth century after the ground level of this area had been raised.
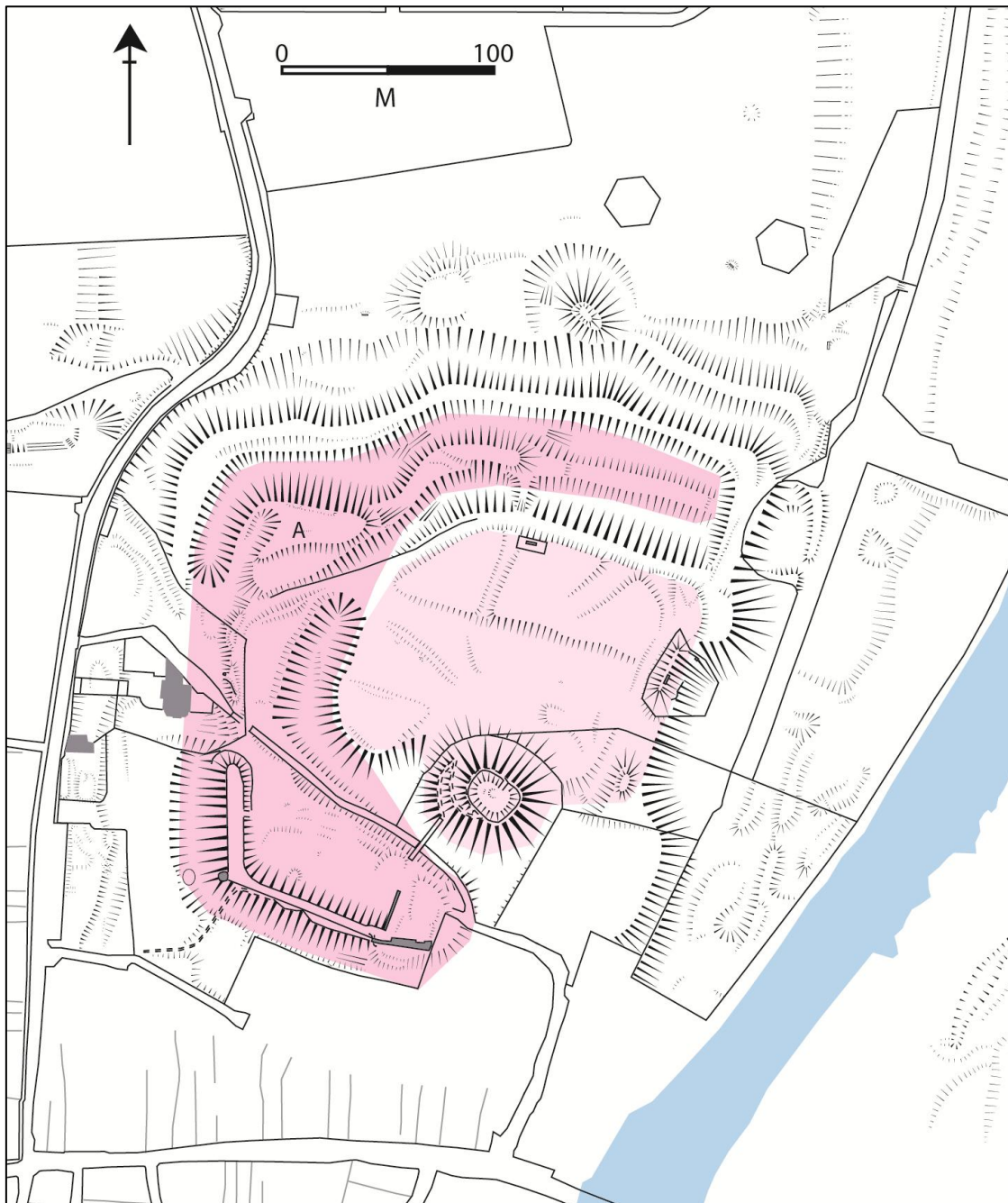
Figure 4.9 Plan of Wallingford Castle in the early twelfth century. A large rectilinear outer bailey was added to the west side of the castle along with an outer wall along the northern face of the inner bailey. A large sub-rectangular earthwork was raised to a height overlooking the original castle enclosure in the area labelled A which has been interpreted as the footings of a substantial tower gate (Source: Michael Fradley).

The outer bailey culminates at its northern end in a large, degraded sub-rectangular earthwork measuring around 60m by 40m and standing up to 2m above the height of

the adjacent primary castle bailey. The south-eastern portion of this feature has been cut away by later activity, including a post-medieval carriage way. The earthwork stands in a position adjacent to the accepted primary entrance into the castle inner bailey to the east. However, the scale of the earthwork is monumental and there are few parallels of a gatehouse of such a size of twelfth century date in England. The fact that the earthwork rises significantly above the level of the inner bailey would also suggest that it was not simply operating as a gatehouse. It is interpreted in the present thesis as a form of major tower structure within which was a combined role as an entrance into the inner bailey, similar to the gate tower at Richmond Castle (N. Yorks.) or Ludlow (Shrops.), but on a significantly grander scale (Fig 4.10). A low platform within the western side of the earthwork may even indicate the position of a staircase that would ascend into this hypothetical structure.

There is an issue of phasing in the structure of this earthwork; excavations in the Castle Gardens area discussed above recorded that an original, lower outer bailey of twelfth-century date was substantially increased in height in the thirteenth century (Fig 4.11). It is possible that this feature was subject to a similar increase in scale in the thirteenth century, and the form of the complex in the twelfth century would have been simpler. One aspect of the earthwork that might counter such an argument is that along its northern face it maintains the alignment of the original *burh* rampart. If the earthwork had been raised further in the thirteenth century it might be expected that it would have pushed north of this line, as can be seen in the expansion of the inner bailey to the north by the thirteenth century. On this basis it is asserted that a major structure was raised on the earthwork during the twelfth century. This is not to suggest that the motte was not also crowned with an important structure which it almost certainly was, but that a second lofty focus was provided in the twelfth century

in the form of the western tower. On an experiential level this would have been of major significance in the development of the castle complex. Not only would this structure have dominated movement into the inner sanctum of the castle complex, but to any traffic approaching the town from the north on the south-south-easterly orientation of the road would have been moving directly towards this feature, only diverting westwards towards the north gate of the town on the edge of the settlement perimeter.

Figure 4.10 The twelfth-century tower gate at Ludlow Castle, Shropshire. The infilled archway of the large original gate can be seen at the base of the structure (Source: Michael Fradley).

Figure 4.11 The ramparts of the south-western bailey from the south. When first constructed in the twelfth century the bailey area and its ramparts were significantly lower, and were only raised another *c.*1-2m in height in the thirteenth century. In the left-hand side of the image the gable end of The Coach House can be seen; fragments of walls possibly associated with the thirteenth-century castle were identified encased within the walls of this late post-medieval building (Source: Michael Fradley).

An outer bank and ditch were also created extending from the monumental rectangular earthwork and continuing along the north face of castle, roughly parallel to the line of the earlier castle bailey. This bank was surmounted by a masonry curtain wall, projecting forwards from the western tower structure, and would have further extenuated the increasingly grand form of the castle and its contrast the ill-kept form of the *burh* perimeter. This feature was not retained following the later thirteenth-century expansion of the castle, although may in part have been utilised at its western end as a bridge support across the widened stretch of castle ditch. Contemporary with the construction of this outer wall line was the possible expansion of the line of the inner bailey northwards, extending several meters beyond the line of the former *burh* ditch and bank, marking a distinct break in the relationship between the castle and the pre-Conquest enclosure (Fig 4.12).

Alongside this expansion was the construction of two spurs of land on the eastern side of the inner bailey into the area of the Queen's Arbour (Fig 4.12). As on the northern side of the bailey, the expansion outwards has entailed the destruction of the bailey bank and its probable replacement with masonry walls. This can be seen most clearly on the eastern side of the bailey where two sections of the original bank survive, but stop to the north and south immediately at the point where these two land spurs were created. The northern of the two spurs formed part of the inner bailey, and possibly housed a substantial structure set within the outer walls of the castle. The southern, larger spur created a separate enclosed space which could be interpreted as a third bailey. Interestingly, on the basis of current understandings of entrances and access around the castle, this bailey is one of the most inaccessible areas of the complex, equal in this respect to the castle motte. It is possible that this was devised as a form of enclosed, feminine space with its own particular structural layout, riverside setting and south-facing gardens. This links to ideas raised by Gilchrist about the use of secluded positions within castle complexes to house specific feminine accommodation (Gilchrist 1999, 109-45).

A focus on creating a grand northern facade can be developed if the thirteenth century expansion of the castle is also taken into account. The focus of new building at this stage was on the construction of a grand curtain wall studded with circular towers across the north face of the castle (Fig 4.13). This new curtain wall did not reuse the earlier bank and wall along the northern facade of the castle, instead requiring its demolition. Geophysical survey in this area appears to indicate high resistivity spread along the alignment of the demolished walls, probably indicating significant masonry remains (Gaimster and O'Conor 2010, 419). Not only was a relatively new bank and

wall levelled, but its masonry components were not extensively robbed; the levels of conspicuous waste are indicative of the status and wealth of the castle builders during this period.
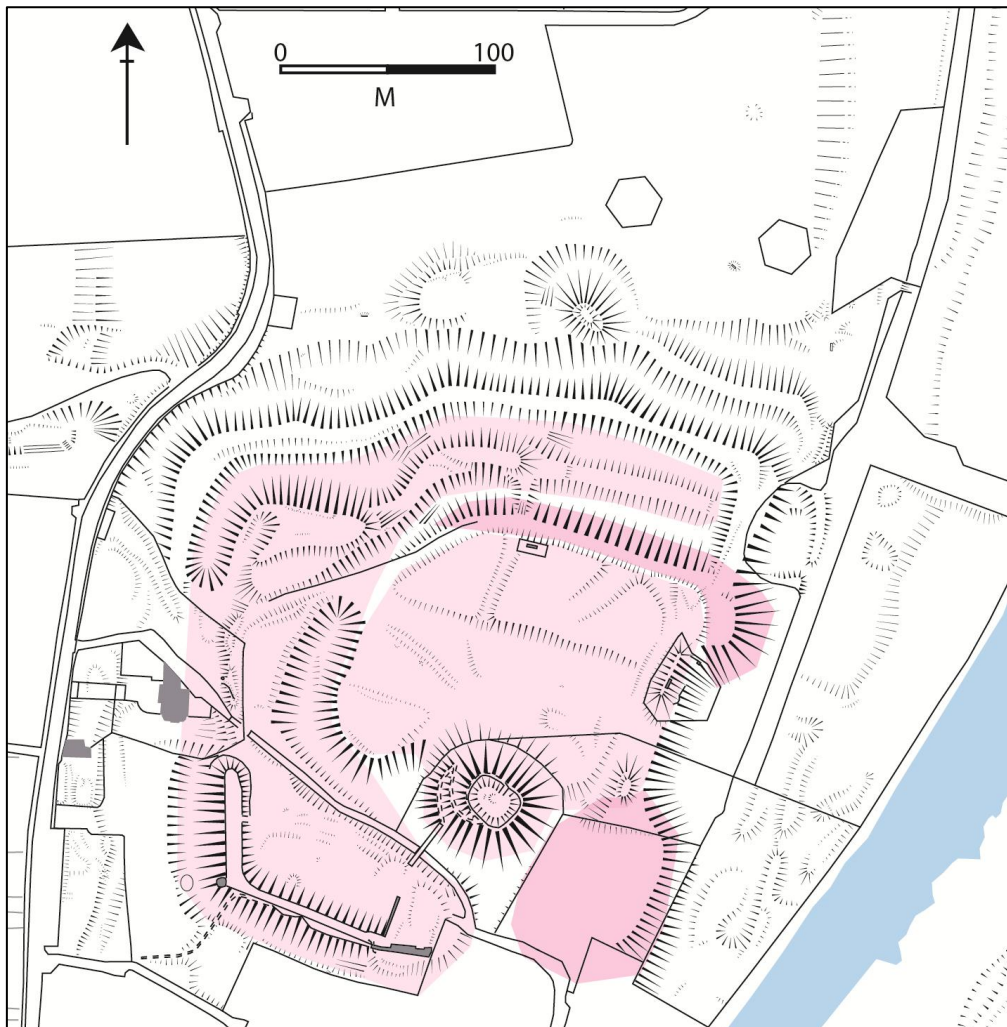
Figure 4.12 Plan of Wallingford Castle highlighting the areas extended in the later twelfth or early thirteenth century. These additions to the complex represented a major earth-moving operation as the castle was extended over the earlier *burh* ditch alignment to the north and over the low-lying riverside zone to the east. This period of construction may have also seen the levelling of most of the inner bailey bank and the raisng of the internal surface level of both the inner and outer baileys (Source: Michael Fradley).
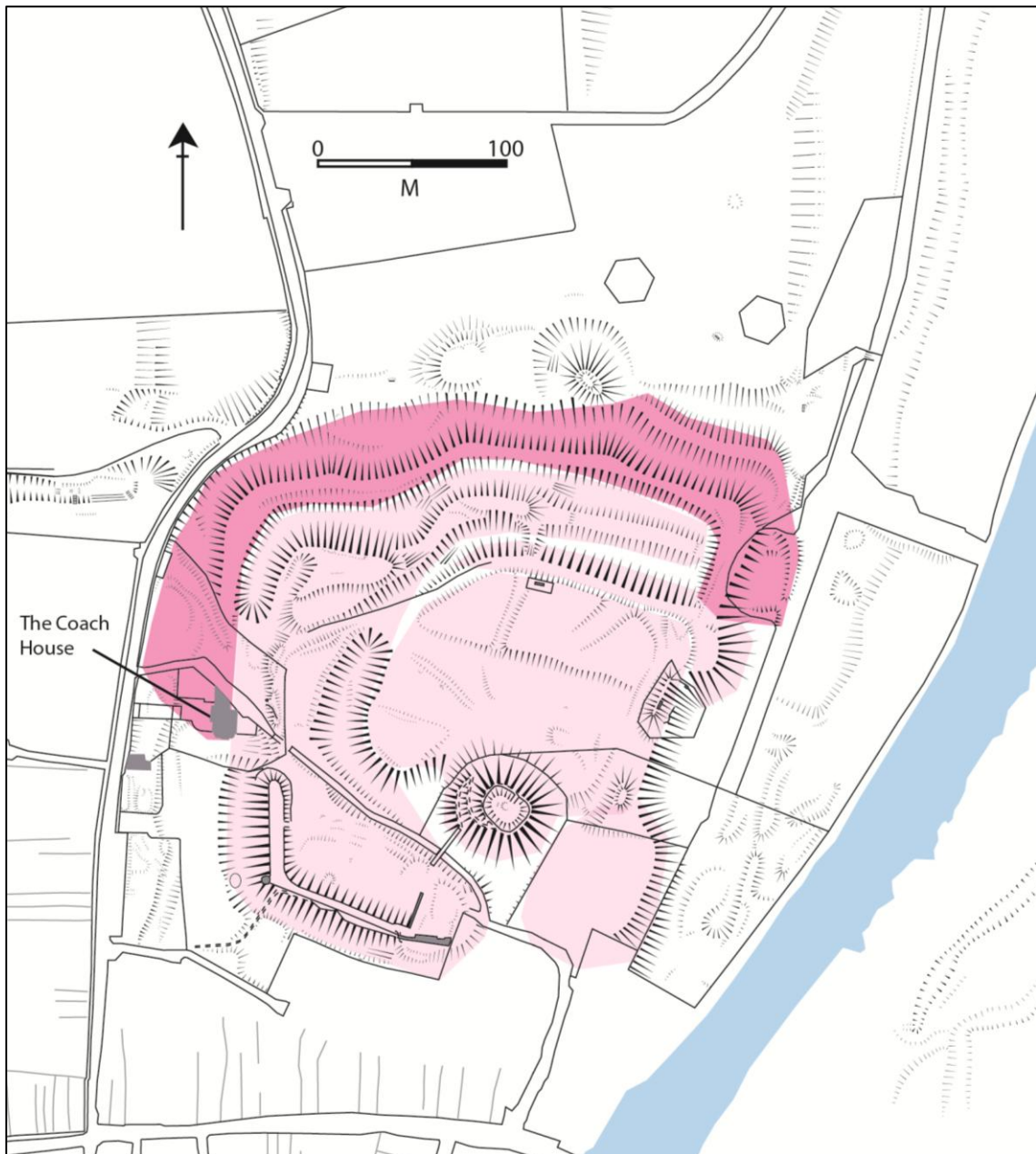
Figure 4.13 Plan of Wallingford Castle highlighting extenions to the complex in the late thirteenth century. A masonry wall was added along the northern façade of the castle, the position of circular turrets along the course of which are still visible as earthwork 'bulges'. Thick walls inside The Coach House may form part of a gate at the terminus of this wall (Source: Michael Fradley).

Integral with the new northern circuit of curtain wall was a complex water management system that channelled in and around the increasingly complex system of castle moats, and including the construction of a large fortified dam at the eastern end of the circuit where joined it to the inner bailey (Fig. 4.17). Analytical earthwork

survey in the Castle Gardens area indicates that this curtain wall circuit did not continue around the south-western and southern perimeter of the castle complex, although this area was incorporated into an enlarged castle fee. Investigations inside The Coach House, a post-medieval property on the west side of the castle standing on the alignment of the outer castle bank as it stands in the Castle Meadows, has identified structural walls up to 1.06m thick (Fig. 4.13). It is possible that these represent the remains of a former structure or gatehouse at the terminus of the outer curtain wall. The construction of this wall and outer moat further imposed on the town of Wallingford, in this case cutting through the town's original north gate, necessitating the shift of the principal road and town gate to the west. This sequence of events was recorded archaeologically by excavations in the 1960s (Brooks 1966), and demonstrates the continued irrelevance of the urban fabric in the eyes of the castle builders.

Despite the renewed process of encroachment which took place at the expense of the urban settlement with the development of the outer bailey in the twelfth century and the shifting of Castle Street in the thirteenth century, it is clear that this expansion of the castle was designed to further accentuate its northern facade. This complex design may have been for a time at the forefront of ostentatious display in castle design during the thirteenth century, indicating the status and ambition of its builders. Investment was also made in the development of the eastern facade of the castle which overlooked the River Thames, as well as a complex of ponds and mill systems linked directly to the castle in the area of the Queen's Arbour, further indicating the status of the castle household and their access to foodstuffs such as fish and wildfowl (Fig 4.14). The latter system was part of the designed landscape around the castle, demonstrated most prominently by the presence of a large stone walkway leading out from the castle

across the dam of the principal castle pool (Gaimster and O'Conor 2010, 419). This walkway may have connected to several possible routes around and into the castle complex, designed to be experienced in a variety of ways by different audiences and status groups.
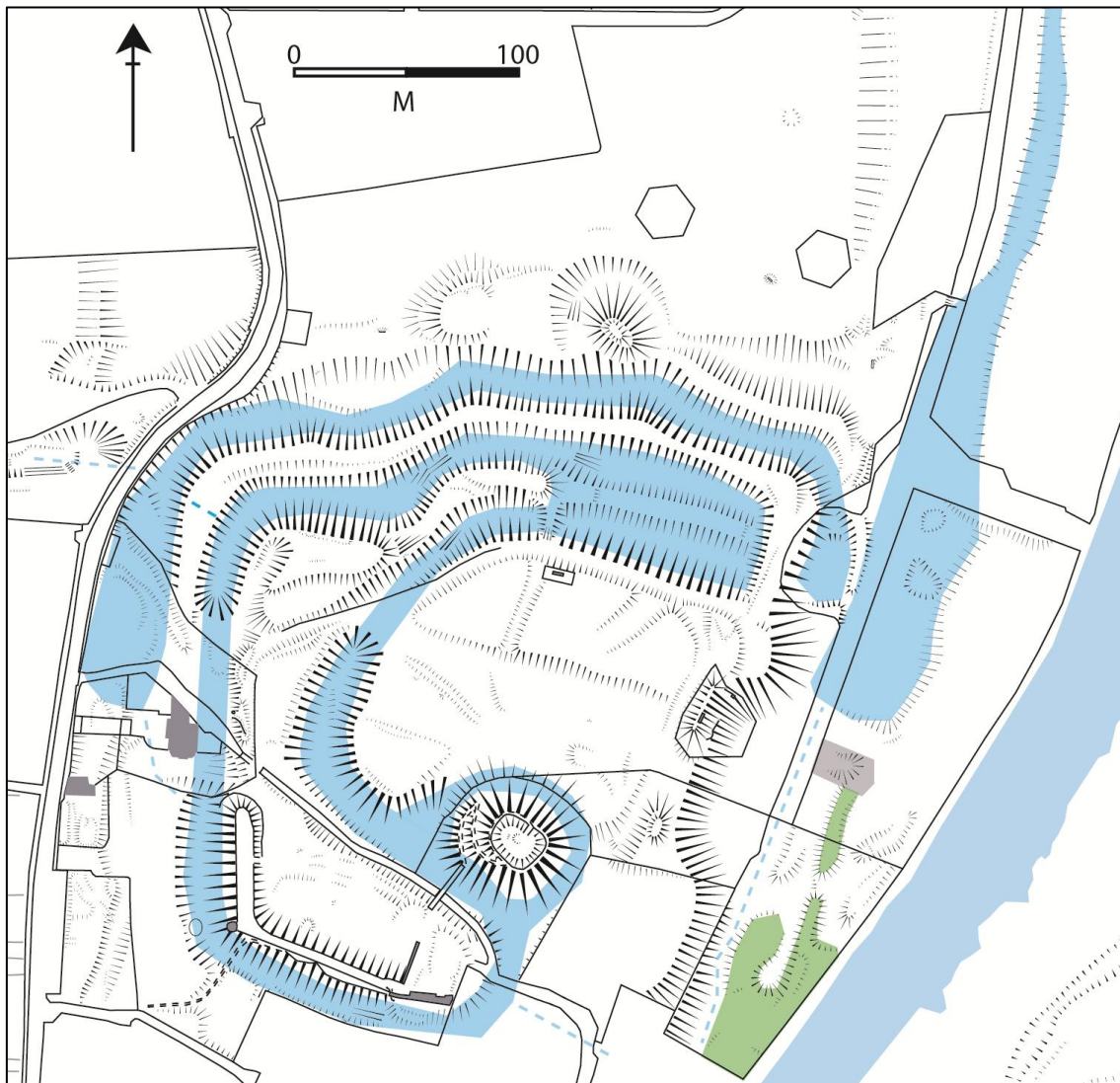
Figure 4.14 Plan indicating the water management systems around Wallingford Castle. It is argued that, with the exception of the ditch across the northern façade, the castle moat only became water-filled in the thirteenth century. A complex water system was also developed to the east of the castle in the area known as the Queen's Arbour. An apsidal masonry platform has been identified in the area highlighted in grey, while the area in green denotes a raised causeway connecting this feature with riverside quay to the south (Source: Michael Fradley).

The elite landscape at Wallingford Castle

It is argued presently that a hunting landscape may have been developed to the north of Wallingford which was linked to the castle. It is conjectured that the area of Clapcot was utilised as a park between the late eleventh century and the late thirteenth century, after which time large tracts of this area were leased out. The majority of urban castles were not linked directly to a hunting zone, although some functioned as points of residence *en route* such as Winchester to the New Forest and Gloucester to the Forest of Dean. However, the substantial outward expansion of Wallingford marks it out from this group, and it is interesting to note that the expansive urban castle at Nottingham also had an attached hunting unit.

There are several strands of evidence that support the contention that an area utilised for elite hunting activities was established at Wallingford Castle. Firstly, and most conclusively, individuals with hunting professions were listed in the borough documents during the thirteenth century, and almost certainly linked to the castle community (Herbert 1971, 123). Secondly, the scale and permanence of elite patronage at Wallingford Castle, particularly during the thirteenth century, would be remarkable if the site lacked elements such as hunting grounds to satisfy the passion for such activities amongst the medieval elite. A major reason for the long-term success of Windsor Castle as a royal centre was its convenient proximity to London and its adjacent Forest, with massive palatial extension and enhancement of its hunting facilities, which included a number of distinct parks, recorded from the thirteenth century onwards (Astill 2002, 5-11; Jansen 2002). Wallingford saw the enactment of one of potentially the last mêlée tournaments in England at the castle in the early

fourteenth century, which is likely to have required the large open space of the postulated hunting landscape to the north (VCH 1923, 526; Crouch 2005, 130).

Archaeologically the area north of the castle contains an interesting range of evidence to support this theory. Prominent amongst this is a set of parallel banks running immediately north of the Castle Meadows area on a gently curving alignment mirroring the course of the River Thames to the east (Fig 4.15). The banks have been heavily eroded by agricultural activity, but still stand *c.*0.5m high and *c.*30m wide. The banks continue northwards for *c.*1.8km and are separated by a distance of *c.*100m to *c.*180m, before abruptly coming to an end immediately south of the small settlement of Rush Court, in which survive the remains of a medieval moated site. A similar, more complex arrangement of banks survives on the north side of the River Thames in the area around Warborough; a watching brief in this area interpreted a sectioned segment of one of these banks as a medieval headland (NMRC: Dorchester Bypass excavation archive). There is limited evidence to support this interpretation and, on the basis of the relationship between the banks and the cropmark evidence around the Dorchester Cursus complex to the west of Warborough, these features could potentially date to any period between the Iron Age and the later medieval period. Similarly, the banks north of Wallingford Castle could be earlier features of unknown function, but it is argued presently that they were established or adapted as the bounds of an exceptionally early example of a deer course. The moated site at Rush Court may have been used as a lodge or corral from which deer could be released, channelled southwards by the banks as part of the chase and finally culminating in a 'kill point' immediately north of Wallingford Castle from which the activity could be viewed. It may be relevant that the terminus of the southern end of the bank system focuses on the large, rectangular earthwork mound in the north-west corner of the

castle complex which has been interpreted in the present study as some form of major gatehouse tower. It is possible that this structure was erected in this position in order to view this hunting zone, and from which the structure itself could be viewed, giving a possible context and chronology for the development of both features.
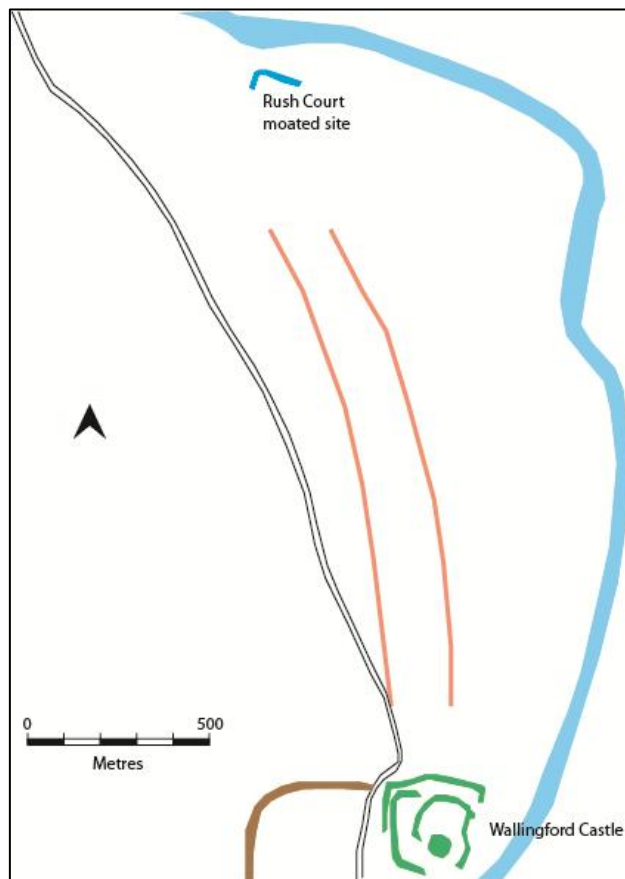
Figure 4.15 The conjectured hunting landscape at Wallingford Castle. The two linear banks may be as early as late prehistoric in origin, but it is argued that they were utilised in the medieval period as an early form of deer course with a moated complex at its northern end and a 'kill zone' to the south in the area overlooked by Wallingford Castle (Source: Michael Fradley).

In many respects the feature at Wallingford Castle has parallels with many of the suggested examples of medieval deer courses postulated by Taylor, particularly in its length of *c.*1.8km and the presence of a moated site at its northern end (Taylor 2004, 37, 49). If Clapcot Liberty was utilised as some form of deer park the presence of the northern road from Wallingford crossing through the centre, although an unusual

element, would not be a unique feature of a medieval deer park (Stamper 1988, 142). Deer courses attached to royal houses have been recognised and historically documented downriver at Windsor and at Clarendon in Wiltshire although dated to the fifteenth century, and only conjecturally for the latter (Roberts 1997, 134-7; Richardson 2007, 39-40). The parks to which the courses were attached however can be dated back at least to the twelfth century and both were conceivably hunting landscapes of the immediate pre-Conquest period (Astill 2002, 4-5; James and Gerrard 2007, 45).

The eastern facade of the castle was also extended and elaborated by the thirteenth century, possibly in conjunction with the enhancement of a range of water systems in the Queen's Arbour. Its enhancement may also have taken place in relation to the River Thames which would still have been an important avenue of movement, especially of aristocratic and ecclesiastical parties with whom the complex of the castle was probably intended to engage with directly. The environs of Wallingford Castle to the north and east were being carefully manipulated by elite members investing in the complex to create a series of components associated with their elite status, such as ponds for fish and fowl, as well as hunting grounds. Encountering these various features, the wealth of the castle elite would be presented to any visitor, whose acceptance of which reinforced the status of the castle lord.

The elite components identified to the north and east of the castle relate to the heyday of the complex in the thirteenth century. The Riverside Meadows area would almost certainly have been exploited in some capacity when the castle was first erected, potentially even in the pre-Conquest period. It is possible that the unenclosed areas of the castle fee, in the southern and eastern sections of the Castle Gardens area

were also utilised in some form, perhaps ornamentally given their south-facing position. The postulated deer course was abandoned before the end of the thirteenth century, which may explain the absence of any 'park' related place names in this area. It is possible that the Clapcot area was too confined to make it a viable reserve for game and deer, or that the deer course was ahead of its time in providing a too-sanitised form of hunting for contemporary tastes.

Figure 4.16 The tree-covered motte of Wallingford castle from the west. In the background to the left of the motte is a small portion of the original bailey bank on which stands a portion of late-medieval masonry wall (Source: Michael Fradley).

The location of Wallingford Castle

In considering the wider topographical position of Wallingford Castle within the late eleventh-century townscape, it shares the common characteristics of many urban

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castles in being situated in the corner of the *burh* defences overlooking a principal watercourse. Based upon the present interpretation of the earthwork evidence it is argued that the original castle bailey utilised the line of the pre-existing *burh* rampart, and was only extended beyond this line in the twelfth or thirteenth century. The eastern side of the bailey utilised the line of the river terrace, again mirroring the probable boundary of the earlier *burh*. The motte was located at the southern end of the enclosure, in a position deeper inside the *burh* interior.

When viewed in plan form the position of the castle within the *burh* enceinte appears remote and removed. As a dominating structure to be utilised by an armed retinue to control the settlement it seems contradictory that it was sited distant from both the central crossroads of the settlement and the river crossing. Taking into account the distribution of eleventh-century settlement identified through the excavations described above, it is more apparent that the castle was situated in an area of contemporary settlement. To the west of Castle Street the evidence for domestic occupation indicates that households were being established in this area around the time that the castle was erected. The characterisation of the settlement as a whole would suggest, however, that the core of social and economic development at Wallingford was centred upon the wide routeway leading to the river crossing and the market areas of the southern axial road. Expansion and redevelopment in the south-eastern quadrant of the *burh* also highlights the extent to which a decision was made to establish Wallingford Castle in a position remote from the most active area of settlement development. Instead of linking the castle to the core areas of settlement and economic activity, its builders chose a position that took advantage of the existing line of the *burh* defences. This choice of castle location also enabled a commanding position over the river, while the construction of the motte at the southern end of the

bailey created a visual focus that would have been primary along the skyline of the town, contested only by any contemporary church towers.

Returning to the theme of the castle's relationship with the contemporary settlement pattern, it is important to reinforce the fluctuating process of urban settlement in this period. In part this is necessary in order to avoid a narrative of urban castle construction as a disruptive event upon a static layout of pre-Conquest settlement, and therefore maintaining the traditional distinction of pre- and post- Conquest England. But at a boarder level it is a requirement of any attempt to come to terms with an understanding of a townscape through an investigation of archaeological data which provides material at so many different and ambiguously entwined scales, both temporal and spatial. At Wallingford there remains a distinction between the *burh* enclosure raised in the late ninth century and the archaeologically convincing development of settlement within that *burh* enclosure in the eleventh century. The importance here in relation to the castle is that rather than having a destructive impact upon an illustrious and dense settlement it instead fits as one element within a fluid archaeological narrative of occupation. The occurrence of eleventh-century material in the vicinity of the castle could have derived from habitation not even a generation old before the erection of this monumental fortification adjacent, an argument that could stretch to incorporate much of the contemporary occupation across the town.

Wallingford Castle and the urban space

Spatially a consideration of the pre-Conquest settlement is drawn towards the *burh* defences as a delimiting element in the development of urban habitation, despite the temporal gap the construction of the enceinte and the attestable growth of

Wallingford. By the beginning of the twelfth century we understand from documentary sources that settlement had expanded south of the *burh* into the area currently identified as the cornmarket. This area has not been rigorously tested archaeologically, and on the basis of the documentary evidence available it is possible that the origins of settlement in this area could potentially pre-date the foundation of the *burh*, which is interesting given the archaeologically attested presence of an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery a short distance to the west and the enigmatic concentration of St Lucien, St Rumbold and St Leonard's churches in this area (Hamerow and Westlake 2009; Roffe 2009, 36-8).

Open spaces existed within the *burh* in the eleventh century but would still be 'owned' in some form, and therefore not necessarily available for settlement development. At least part of the Kinecroft area was opened up for a short phase of settlement around the late-eveventh or early twelfth century, demonstrating that growth in these intra-mural open areas was not entirely restricted, and the earthwork evidence suggests possible occupation of unknown date in the southern section of the park. It may even be necessary to use caution in labelling this settlement the product of population growth, when it could feasibly have been shifted elements of intra-mural occupation, particularly from the vicinity of the castle which saw major expansive events over the town during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The individuals responsible for the foundation of Wallingford Castle chose to ignore these open spaces when selecting a site for the fortification, but nor did they opt for a position that imposed upon the core of the settled area. The decision of where to erect the castle was not made passively; it was not a case of 'fitting-in' where open space was available.

Figure 4.17 The earthwork dam of the castle's thirteenth-century curtain wall as it turns at the eastern end of the castle complex to join the inner bailey, from the south-west. A complex water-management system developed at Wallingford Castle and in the associated riverside area known as the Queen's Arbour (Source: Michael Fradley).

It has been conjectured that some form of royal palace complex may have been located in the north-western quadrant beneath the castle site (Dewey 2009). This position has little support in the wider *corpus*; at all locations where pre-Conquest royal sites associated with urban settlements are known it can be demonstrated that the post-Conquest urban castle was founded at a distinct, separate position. Even at the rural site of Old Windsor the post-Conquest royal castle of Windsor was constructed on a different site to the pre-Conquest palace and settlement. In all cases the royal palace was maintained alongside the castle into the twelfth century (Keevil 2000). In spite of this evidence, the evidence from Domesday Book suggests that the area in which the castle was erected may have been utilised for some form of specialist role, possibly a royal estate centre (Creighton 2002, 140). This might be interpreted as demonstrating some form of high-status continuity on the site, physically legitimising the apprehension of power networks to which the urban castle is frequently linked. In

terms of its overall position, the one peculiarity at Wallingford is that the majority of riverside urban castles were sited on the downriver end of the respective *burh* defences. In the case of Wallingford Castle the fortification was founded at the upriver end of the *burh* circuit, which may suggest that an additional factor, such as the presence of a high-status pre-Conquest enclave, may have influenced the choice of castle builders to deviate from the more typical downriver location.

Finally, in terms of considering the extent to which the position of a castle allowed its garrison to exert a physical control over the urban populace, it could be argued that that the castle's very position in the *burh* enclosure enabled this without having to physically dominate any specific area of activity or movement. At Wallingford, however, there is an additional body of evidence demonstrating that the castle building elite were very capable of identifying crucial points of movement to be controlled during periods when such an exertion of physical and psychological power was involved. During the civil war of the mid-twelfth century a number of fortifications were ambiguously documented in and around Wallingford. Two of the more conclusive examples were erected by opposing forces at either end of Wallingford Bridge; at the west end this involved the fortification of the St Peter's Church site and at the west side the development of a site known as Stephen's Mount (Morris 1989, 198; Potter 1976, 92-3, 226-7, 236-9). In this instance, during a period of heightened tension and conflict, it is possible to observe the fortification of either side of the bridge with a clear intention of controlling and dominating movement across it, in a way that cannot be identified in terms of the position of Wallingford Castle in the context of the wider eleventh-century townscape.

Conclusion

On the basis of the available archaeological evidence the settlement of Wallingford in the eleventh century was developing and expanding on a similar urban trajectory to many of its contemporaries across England. In the late eleventh century a castle was inserted into the north-western quadrant of the intramural area of the *burh*, adjacent to both the River Thames and the Late Saxon defensive settlement perimeter. In this respect the process of castle building at Wallingford was typical of the majority of urban castles in England. Contrary to perceptions of these structures as dominating and controlling these urban centres, a position was chosen for Wallingford Castle that largely ignored the focus of development centred on the southern section of the settlement, and was at a distance from primary infrastructure points such as bridges, town gates and central crossroads. In its monumental form the castle was clearly a defendable structure with a military capacity, but there are questions as to whether it was constructed with any form of practical consideration as to how it could be used to control and dominate the settlement populace. In this sense the contrast with the short-lived castles erected at either side of the river crossing in the twelfth century during a period of documented conflict is stark.

The later medieval development of the castle and town is also of interest. Archaeological evidence indicates that the urban growth of Wallingford seems to have stalled in the later twelfth and thirteenth century. There is evidence of fluctuation in the extent of the settled area, although areas of occupation had been abandoned in the Kinecroft and along much of Castle Street by the close of the thirteenth century. This social and economic situation does not seem to have had a significant influence on the elite appetite for investment in Wallingford Castle, with the creation of a second rectangular bailey in the twelfth century encroaching further into the interior of the

burh. The monumental development of the castle increased further in the thirteenth century, but the impetus was on creating increasing grand facades to the north and east away from the town. The elaborate curtain wall constructed along the north face of the castle did not even fully enclose the western and southern perimeter. Those responsible for the elaboration of Wallingford Castle were manipulating the structure in relation to how it was experienced visually by a different audience than the townspeople. Instead the intended recipients were almost certainly fellow members of the social elite who would encounter the castle panorama from the riverside zone or the hunting grounds of Clapcot to the north.

5 The urban castle in eastern England: Huntingdon

Introduction

The case study of Huntingdon (Cambs.) represents an urban contrast to that of Wallingford. This is clearest in the understanding of its physical form; while the early urban perimeter of Wallingford is largely demarcated by its *burh* defences, the archaeological investigation of the interior has produced limited results of contemporary settlement in the proceeding centuries. By way of comparison the situation at Huntingdon has been the identification of a range of archaeological evidence relating to an early urban settlement, but with no indication of a defined enceinte despite documentary references to the town being fortified from at least the early tenth century. Efforts have been made to characterise pre-Conquest Huntingdon (Spoerry 2000), but since this date a number of large scale excavations as well as significant smaller interventions have provided the basis of a much richer interpretation spanning the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. It is the analysis of this archaeological material alongside original topographical survey that will form the primary dataset of the present analysis. As in the previous chapter, a characterisation of Huntingdon and its castle across the period *c.*AD900-1150 will be achieved through an integration of data obtained from excavation, analytical earthwork survey and topographical analysis of the settlement plan.

Settlement background

Huntingdon is located on the banks of the Great River Ouse on the borders between Eat Anglia and the East Midlands (Fig 5.1). In the records of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is

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a reference to the market of Huntingdon in AD656 under a grant by Wulfhere, King of the Mercians, although the reliability of such an early record is highly questionable (Swanton 2000, 31; Oakey 1996, 125). On firmer ground the earliest references to the presence of Huntingdon as a fortification comes with its use and subsequent abandonment for the nearby fortress of Tempsford by Danish forces, followed by its conquest and refortification by Edward the Elder in the early tenth century, with further confirmation of the presence of a market at the settlement in AD963 (Swanton 2000, 101-3). The location and extent of this Danish fortification is currently unknown, with informed suggestions including the former fortified Romano-British settlement at Godmanchester to the south of Huntingdon, beneath the conjectured oval form of the later Norman castle or even a double *burh* utilising both these fortifications (Spoerry 2000, 37-40). Huntingdon would subsequently appear at the head of its own shire and as with the majority of county towns was as a large and significant settlement by AD1086.
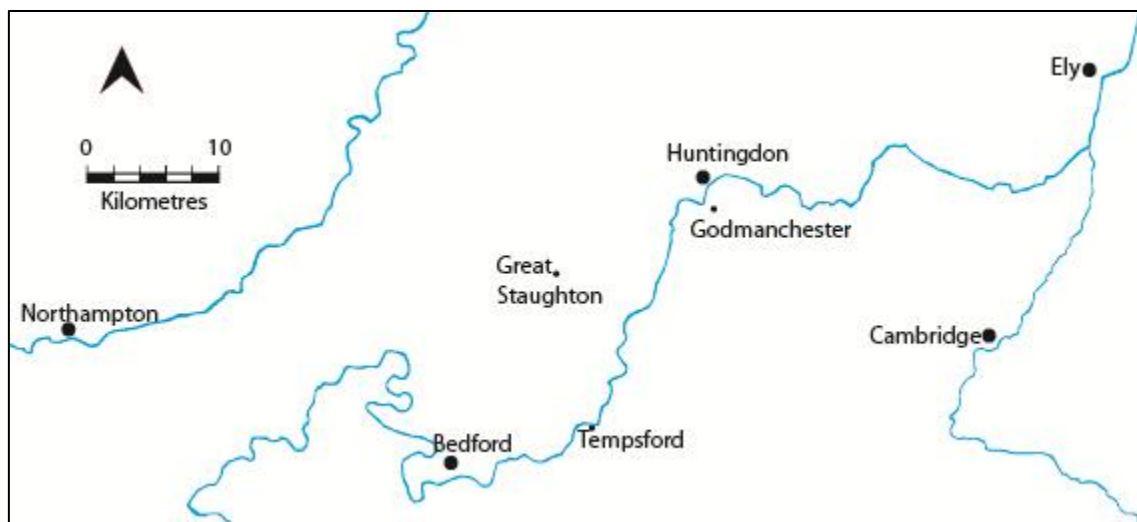
Figure 5.1 The regional settlement context of Huntingdon (Source: Michael Fradley).

It has been argued that Cambridge was established as a *burh* with aspects of early urban development as part of the Mercian kingdom in the later eighth century with the

refortification of the earlier Romano-British defences, and that this was further augmented with a second, larger *burh* following the Wessex advance in the early tenth century (Haslam 1984a). A similar development might be expected at Huntingdon given that it too sits at the lowest bridging point of a major river before it enters the Fens (VCH 1932, 121), although earlier medieval occupation may have been concentrated in the environs of the former fortified Roman settlement of Godmanchester (Green 1977; Gibson 2003). Evidence of minor Romano-British evidence has been recorded around Huntingdon including a Roman villa, much of which appears focused along the riverside area. The Roman Road known as Ermine Street passed through the Huntingdon area, and efforts to reconstruct its course have created a model which suggests that it originally passed beneath the post-Conquest castle (Green 1977; Ladds 1937; VCH 1932). The road is assumed to have remained in use until the construction of the castle which entailed the diversion of the principal road through the settlement and the bridging point across the river, thus having an even wider impact on the urban fabric than in other cases. This model has been widely taken up, despite a complete absence of substantiating archaeological evidence having been provided by a sequence of excavations in recent decades (Spoerry 2000, 36-7).

Huntingdon Castle fulfils the principal criteria of an urban castle and is generally accepted to have been built in the years following the Norman Conquest. Historically it has a limited documentary history and may have been involved in conflict during the Anarchy period of the early twelfth century, while an area of royal forest has been identified at Sapley which may have been utilised via Huntingdon Castle (CHER: 02629). One opinion has been to see the construction of Huntingdon Castle as a royal elite measure to curb the power of Earl Waltheof, the last remaining major English landowner who held the comital of Northampton and Huntingdon (Golding 2001, 44),

but this ignores the evidence of contemporary urban castle construction at other towns across the kingdom in this period.
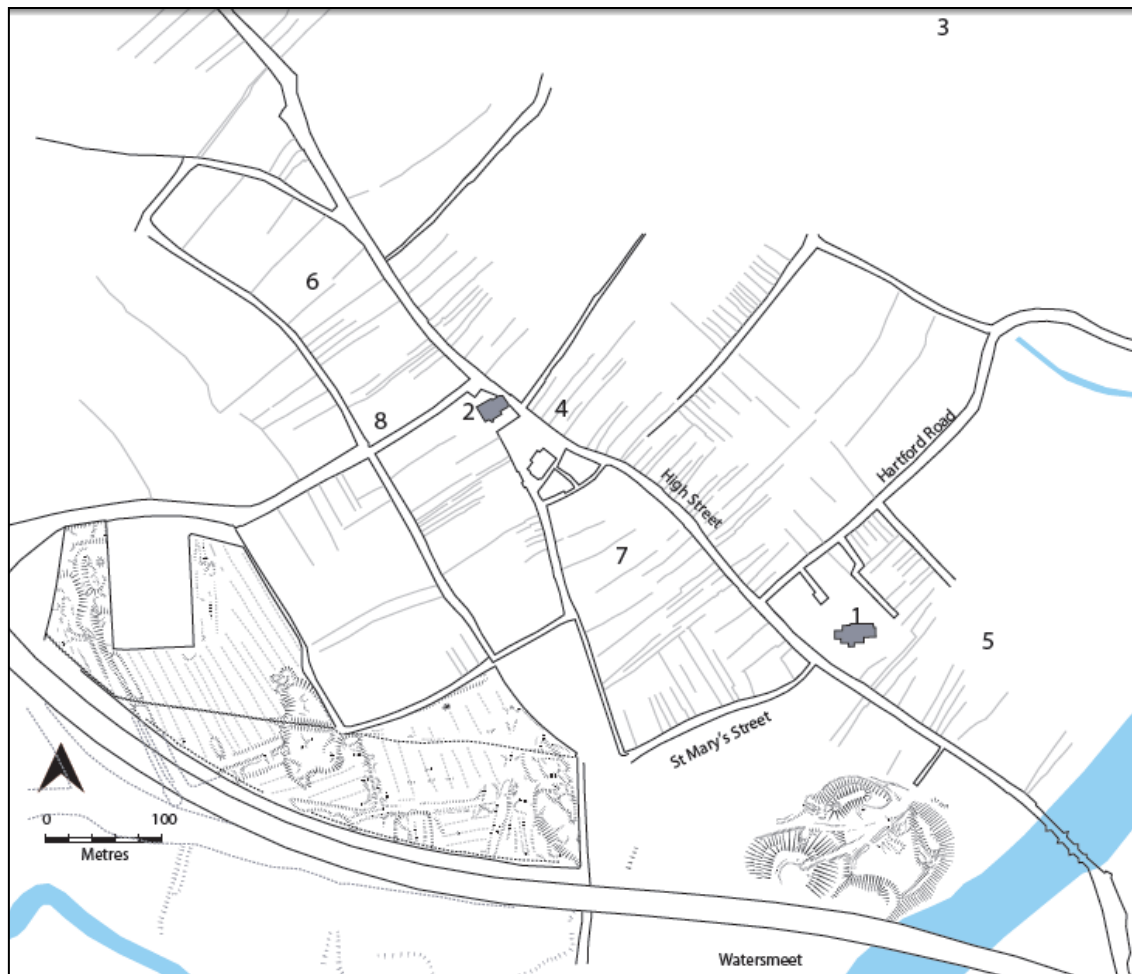
Figure 5.2 Plan of the historic core and the known location of its medieval churches. 1: St Mary's Church. 2: All Saints Church. 3 St Mary's Priory. 4. St John's Hospital. 5. St Clement's Church. 6: St John the Baptist. 7. St Benedicts. 8. St George's Church. (Source: Michael Fradley).

The earldom and castle of Huntingdon came into the hands of the Scottish crown, and whose involvement in the rebellion of AD1173-4 led to orders for the castle's demolition in royal accounts (VCH 1932, 130). This period of destruction may have only been symbolic and somewhat superficial given that the chapel and county gaol were still recorded on the site in the fourteenth century and can be indirectly assumed to have been maintained into the sixteenth century, while the earldom and castle were

only fully forfeited by Robert the Bruce in 1306. The castle was refortified during the Civil War period in the seventeenth century, but principally given over to civilian uses in the post-medieval period, including a possible windmill situated upon its motte.

The demise of the earldom may have impacted on the political importance of the town, while it struggled economically with competition with nearby St Ives (VCH 1932, 123). However, the town still retained the economic vitality to construct a stone bridge on a new crossing site in conjunction with neighbouring Godmanchester in the early fourteenth century. By the thirteenth century the town had sixteen parish churches and three religious houses, with another three just beyond the town boundaries, further indicating that it had been party to the urban economic successes expansion of the period (Fig 5.2). At present only two of the former parish churches are still standing, while the town itself continues to function as a mid-ranking market town, albeit without its adjoining shire which has been absorbed into Cambridgeshire. The surviving earthwork portions of the castle are today maintained as a public open space.

Huntingdon urban settlement *c*.AD900-1150: The archaeological evidence

A range of developer-funded archaeological projects over the past decade have enabled a complete re-evaluation of the early urban history of the settlement (Fig. 5.3). Excavation at the junction of Hartford Road and High Street, a site adjacent to the presumed early church of St Mary, produced extensive evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation (Mortimer 2007). The scale of early evidence far surpassed that which had been identified during a much earlier evaluation stage (Welsh 1994), with the net result that the project was woefully underfunded and many of the stratigraphically lowest and

perhaps most informative features remained unexcavated. However, data was recovered to demonstrate relatively dense occupation of the site from the late tenth or early eleventh century with features including possible structures, wells and pits (Mortimer 2007, 11-12). A major boundary ditch was recorded running across the site perpendicular to the High Street, implying that the latter route was in place at this early stage. In addition it is noted that all the securely dated early features were located on the south-east side of this feature, which suggests it may have formed an important early boundary and therefore more than simply delimitation between properties (Mortimer 2007, 13). However the early phase of this boundary was heavily truncated and only survived in a number of short stretches as a minor ditch or possibly even a beam slot, and it is difficult therefore to recreate its form or function with any confidence. This general concentration of activity in the south-eastern section of the site continued into the twelfth century. The hypothesis put forward by the excavator was that this boundary may have formed part of the reorganisation of the town's urban form, and potentially its northern limit in the wake of the Norman Conquest and changes entailed by the construction of the castle on the settlement's topography (Mortimer 2007, 13, 16). This reliance on a vague historical context is unfortunate; the excavated evidence fits better into a narrative of developing urbanism from the turn of the eleventh century as has been identified at Wallingford above, and even at major sites such as Winchester where the widespread but relatively 'rural' occupation of the tenth century gives way to more dense 'urban' material in the succeeding century (Astill 2006, 236; Biddle 1970, 287). It is further undermined by evidence to the south at 22 High Street where the sum of features consisted of a basic succession of two pits dating from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries (McCall 2008).

To the north-west of St Mary's Church archaeological evaluation along Wood Street off Hartford Road revealed only thirteenth-century occupation with traces of earlier twelfth-century deposits despite its proximity to the earlier settlement activity at the High Street junction (Wills 2003, 5-9). In contrast the results obtained nearby from 12 Hartford Road provided evidence of a narrow linear feature which was replaced by a broader feature of tenth to twelfth-century date, as well as potentially contemporary clay quarrying (Connor 1996, 5-7).

Along the main thoroughfare itself archaeological evaluation at 112 High Street identified a number of sparse, poorly dated features and possible occupation layers of probable tenth to eleventh-century date, but the site was more marked by a major increase in pit digging from the twelfth century, reaching its height of activity during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Richmond 1996). On the south-west side of the High Street at numbers 90 and 91 a sequence of eleventh to twelfth-century pitting has been considered indicative of nearby contemporary occupation (Heawood 1994). To the south-east of St Mary's Church at 151 High Street archaeological monitoring of a development proved ineffectual as the on-site excavation failed to penetrate the plots post-medieval make-up layers (Brogan 2008). However, an earlier evaluation stage had identified a sequence of rubbish and quarry pits apparently beginning in the later eleventh century, but with a primary period of activity spanning the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, sealed below later post-medieval layers (Mundin *et al.* 2005). At 146 High Street an archaeological evaluation failed to identify any medieval deposits, concluding that if there had been any medieval occupation in this area it had been thoroughly removed by post-medieval activity (Pearson 2001).
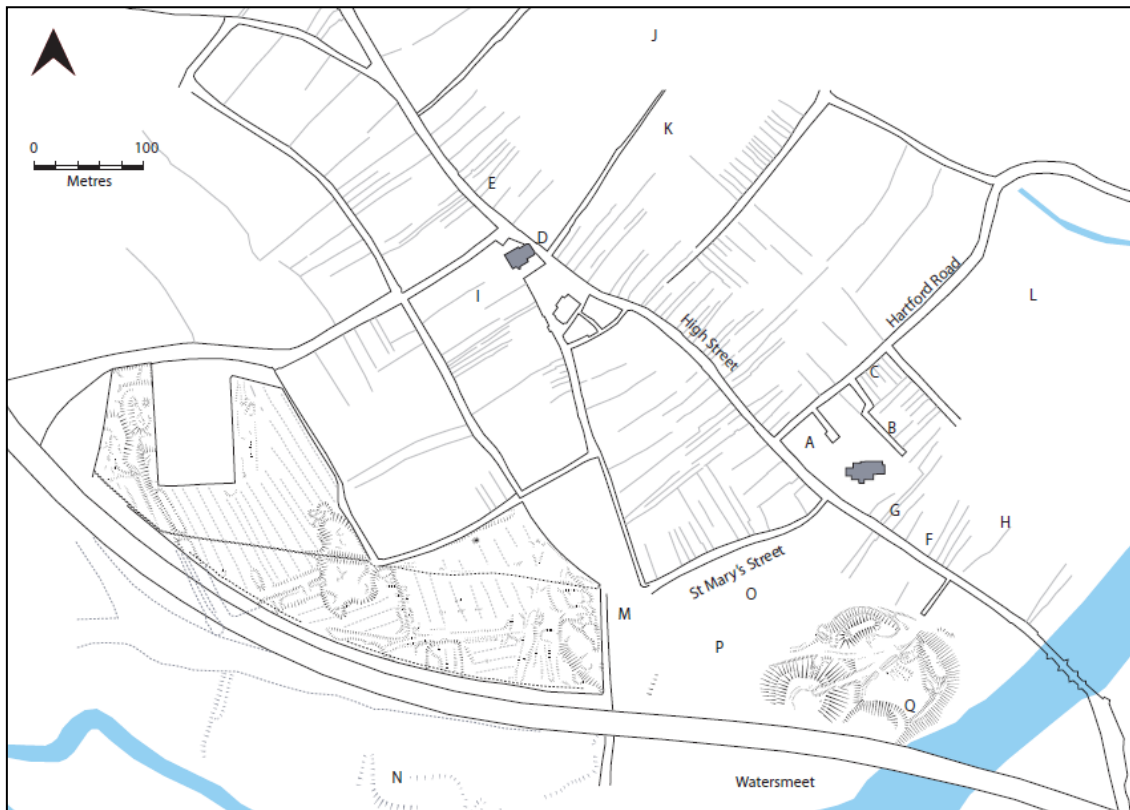
Figure 5.3 Plan of excavation sites in Huntingdon, including the results of the analytical earthwork survey of the Mill Common area. A: Hartford Road junction. B: Wood Street. C: 12 Hartford Road. D: 112 High Street. E: 90-1 High Street. F: 151 High Street. G: 146 High Street. H: Orchard Lane. I: Walden House. J: The Old Drama and Music Centre. K: St Germain Street. L: Ouse Walk. Mill Common (1992). N: Whitehills. O: Pathfinder House. P: Red Cross Centre. Q: Castle Hill. (Source: Michael Fradley).

Evaluation on the south-east side of Orchard Lane revealed traces of pre-Conquest activity and possible building remains, but the area was subsequently used as a graveyard loosely dated to the Saxo-Norman period (Oakey 1996, 129-32). This has been linked conjecturally to the documented church of St Clement, perhaps marking an expansive phase from private chapel to parish church in or around the eleventh century. Archaeological investigations at St Clement's Passage itself recorded a garden or cultivation soil of tenth to twelfth-century date with deposits of small-scale rubbish dumping which would seem indicative of nearby contemporary settlement (Roberts 1999, 12-4).

The general impression from investigations further north in the historic town centre is that evidence of urban occupation rarely began before the twelfth century and only becoming more defined by the thirteenth century. At Royal Oak Passage an archaeological evaluation identified probable backyard activity in the form of pits and post-holes dating to the twelfth to the fourteenth century (Hickling 2005). Extensive excavations as part of a modernisation programme across Huntingdon town centre have further confirmed this situation. At the rear of the Walden House complex, adjacent to All Saints Church, no pre-Conquest features were identified, and there is only evidence of dense occupation and activity from the thirteenth century onwards (Clarke 2006, 14-7). The impression is therefore given that this area near to the later medieval market site remained relatively marginal to any settlement focus until the period of urban expansion in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Subsequent excavations at the southern end of the modernisation site, which have at present not been released as grey literature, has identified a major boundary discussed further below and dated to the later twelfth century but not retained thereafter (Rachel Clarke Pers. Comm.). On George Street evidence of thirteenth to fourteenth-century quarry pits were recorded alongside the heavily truncated remains of contemporary buildings (Cooper 2000).

A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken at the far north of the conjectural limit of the later medieval town. At 69 Great Northern Street only a single large post-medieval pit was recorded in an area otherwise sterile of earlier deposits (Prosser 2000). Similar post-medieval results were drawn from a nearby archaeological evaluation at 19-20 Great Northern Street (Prosser and Seddon 2000). A similar paucity of features of medieval or Romano-British features have also been noted

further north on land adjacent to the projected course of Ermine Street in an area assumed to have been utilised as medieval common (Edgeworth *et al.* 2004; Edmonson *et al.* 2006). On the western side of the historic core limited archaeological investigations off Ambury Road have drawn a blank in identifying medieval deposits (Abrams 2000). An evaluation area off Spittals Way did produce evidence of later medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (Hoad 2007). However, at the former Bus Depot on Stukeley Road (Ermine Street) an area of roadside settlement including structures and pits and a probable large rear plot ditch beginning in the mid-eleventh century and intensifying in the later medieval period has been recorded (Rees 2009). Contemporary activity has been recorded at nearby sites, with the origins of activity dating to the pre-Conquest period (House 2008; Spoerry and Cooper 1999; Spoerry *et al.* 2010).

A comparable area of relatively isolated settlement has been recorded to the north-west of the presumed limit of the medieval town ditch. Initial excavations at The Old Music and Drama Centre identified post-holes and linear features indicating the presence of medieval occupation. The majority of these features were dated to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, but within this complex were traces of earlier Saxo-Norman deposits broadly dating from the eleventh to the early twelfth century (Cooper and Spoerry 1998a, 7-11). This evidence has been enhanced by the complete excavation of the site where well preserved features dating from the mid-eleventh century onwards, including boundaries and buildings have been recorded (Gilmour and Spoerry 2009). This sequence appears to begin the immediate post-Conquest period on the periphery of the newly re-founded Priory of St Mary, with buildings located both internal and external to the Priory boundary, and adjacent to a documented crossing of the water course that would later become the known as the King's Ditch.

It is presumed therefore that the buildings located within the excavated boundary relate to the management of the Priory estate, with the church itself located 250m to the north-west. This focus of settlement and industry may have been relatively localised as evaluation of a site immediately south-east of the church site noted only a small number of minor features dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with no evidence apparently pertaining to the Priory itself.

A major evaluation in the intervening area between the latter sites on the periphery of the later medieval town and the High Street has demonstrated that there is little evidence of a continuous swathe of settlement between these two zones. The large development area off St Germain Street recorded only a small number of Saxo-Norman ditches on the western part of the site with no occupation evidence, suggesting the area was utilised agriculturally during this period (Freke 1999, 7). In contrast the site became a hive of activity and occupation between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, with evidence of a potentially contemporary town boundary ditch aligned NW-SE and measuring 7.5m in width.

To the south-east of the latter site, evaluation work alongside Ouse Walk has identified important evidence of Late Saxon channels apparently designed to control the local hydrological flow, redirecting it further to the north (Clarke 2007, 7-34). Importantly a residual sherd of mid-Saxon Ipswich Ware was recovered, implying earlier activity in the vicinity. Following the improved water management of the area evidence of encroaching medieval settlement was recorded from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, including potential remains of industrial activity (Clarke 2007, 8-35).

To date the evidence produced by archaeological excavations around the historic core of the town presents an interesting narrative of settlement development. A core of sites dating archaeologically to the Saxo-Norman period has been identified around the southern zone of the town. There appears to be a focus in the area above the river terraces of the Great Ouse, or in the case of the Hartford Road sites in the vicinity of the tributaries of the latter. Excavations at Ouse Walk have confirmed the investment in hydrological management undertaken from at least the later Saxon period, even in an area beyond the known contemporary settled area. But this should not be taken as evidence of a defined early urban core as excavation has also demonstrated several areas in this area without sign of early occupation, or where activity did not reach significant levels until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. As evidence at The Old Music and Drama Centre has made clear, particularly alongside that from the Mill Common area discussed below, there is also a clear sign of discrete contemporary settlement in areas beyond this zone which cannot merely be regarded as peripheral.

4. Archaeological investigation on Huntingdon Mill Common

Contrary to its present name Mill Common is not in fact a medieval ancient common, but formed part of the town's open field system in the later medieval period (Fig. 5.4). At present it consists of an open area of some 6.17ha of open land on the western side of the historic urban centre, and is utilised as pasturage and as a public open space. Previously is covered a much greater area, but gradual encroachments over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the construction of the railway line in the 1840s which divided the land into two discrete sections, has severely diminished its extent. Despite this reduction in overall size the surviving portion of Mill Common still retains a distinct potential for archaeological earthwork survey given that the area has

largely been given over to pasturage since the abandonment of the medieval field system which has enabled the survival of earlier archaeological earthworks. Its potential also goes beyond its proximity to the later medieval urban centre, as a number of earlier fieldwork projects have highlighted that the early medieval settlement may have taken a very different form to its late medieval successor, to the extent that Mill Common has been identified as an area of high potential in discerning that earlier medieval form (Spoerry 2000, 44).

Figure 5.4 Huntingdon Mill Common from the west. Huntingdon Castle is located behind the trees in the centre-right of the built-up area at the rear of the image (Source: Michael Fradley).

Four evaluation trenches were cut across Mill Common in 2005 as part of a community archaeology campaign with a partial aim to elucidate further the archaeological potential of this area. The trench positions were led in part by an appreciation of the present earthwork evidence and by a partial geophysical survey which have provided a range of relevant results. Toward the eastern perimeter of Mill

Common a ditch feature, first identified through geophysical survey, was part-excavated and shown to be a massive ditch some 4m wide and 2.5m deep whose line has subsequently been identified to the north during excavations west of the town centre and dated to the later twelfth century (Mortimer 2006, 16). Over the survey area excavations through the still apparent ridge and furrow system suggested that based upon ceramic deposits that had entered the soil system via manure would suggest the field system was laid out and in use between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

At the western end of Mill Common a trench was excavated across the linear ditch feature known as the Bar Dyke which suggested a sequence of development for this previously enigmatic feature. Beginning with a minor hollow-way, poorly dated between the seventh and thirteenth century, running parallel and to the east of the present earthwork ditch, this was joined by a ditch on the alignment of the present earthwork that dated to the late thirteenth or fourteenth century. The excavator suggested that the earlier ditch was in-filled prior to or during the construction of the later ditch, although this was not stratigraphically proven, while the later ditch was apparently also used as a track way as it began to fill with material. An alternative interpretation might see the two ditches as co-existing for a time as a track way alongside a boundary feature, and only later as the latter ditch fell into disuse was the original narrow hollow-way abandoned and the wide former ditch used as a replacement. This process would therefore have taken place prior to the reconstructions of the seventeenth century, discussed below, while it would also imply that neither of the medieval ditch features ever had an adjacent bank on their east sides. Subsequently the ditch was re-cut on a greater scale in the early post-medieval period, an event linked by the excavator to the documented conflict of the English

Civil War period (Mortimer 2006). A re-evaluation of this interpretation will be offered below in relation to the earthwork survey of these features.

To the south of the present carriageway of the A14 road is an archaeological site known as Whitehills, which was investigated initially in a sequence of rescue excavations in the 1960s. In spite of the limited resources of this campaign, a remarkable sequence was recorded which included evidence of a Roman villa, early medieval church and graveyard, as well as a possible medieval siege castle and the site of a post-medieval gallows and windmill (Spoerry 2000). Recent radiocarbon dating of skeletal remains from the graveyard have dated the majority to be pre-Conquest in date including at least three potentially dating back to the eighth century, while a small number of post-medieval internments are likely to be associated with the documented gallows (Vincent and Mays 2009). Despite the proximity of a number of archaeological investigations to the medieval church and burial site at Whitehills, very little evidence of contemporary activity has been recorded. At the Edward House and Glendower sites only earlier Romano-British features were identified, possibly being connected to the Roman Villa underlying the Whitehills graveyard (Cooper 2003; Grant and Wilkins 2003; Woodhouse and Sparrow 2007).

On the eastern periphery of Mill Common an archaeological evaluation recorded localised evidence of medieval occupation layers and a ditch broadly dated to the tenth to thirteenth centuries (Leith 1992). In contrast an evaluation to the north of the present Mill Common at The Views residential site no evidence of medieval activity or occupation was recorded beyond a single ditch dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Cooper and Spoerry 1998b). There is justification for questioning the quality of some of the archaeological results in this area, for instance at the Watersmeet site

where the evaluation and excavation stages were undertaken by different organisations and producing starkly contrasting results. In this case the evaluation suggested significant Saxo-Norman deposits, whereas the excavation results related principally to a Romano-British cemetery and other contemporary features (Cooper and Spoerry 2000; Nicholson 2004; 2006).

Topographical survey of Huntingdon Mill Common

The measured survey of the Mill Common area has produced a rich detail of its landscape history (Fig 5.5). The clearest evidence of medieval activity in the Mill Common survey area is the extensive tracts of ridge and furrow plough earthworks. These features represent sections of at least four furlongs of a former open field which formed a large agricultural component of the medieval settlement at Huntingdon. Although elements of medieval open field systems have been dated to the pre-Conquest centuries, it is implied by the limited excavation evidence that this section of the arable system at Huntingdon may not have been established until the twelfth century (Oosthuizen 2006; Mortimer 2006). This is not to assert that this area was therefore marginal and previously unutilised, but that on the basis of dated pottery recovered from the ploughsoil and presumably having entered the system as manuring scatters, there was an intensive period of arable cultivation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In addition, a large ditch feature was identified at the eastern end of Mill Common by a geophysical survey and partially excavated, with subsequent developer-funded excavation to the north of Mill Common revealing the same large ditch feature with evidence suggesting it was dug and in-filled in the later twelfth century. Within the Mill Common area this ditch feature cuts obliquely across the surviving ridge and furrow earthworks, which may indicate that this field system was

not laid out until after the abandonment of the ditch. It is necessary to state however that this does not assert that the area was not utilised agriculturally prior to the late twelfth century, albeit less intensively, given its proximity to known settlement foci in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Measured earthwork survey also identified evidence of pre-ridge and furrow features that may feasibly relate to the earlier medieval form of Huntingdon. These consist of a number of linear scarps surviving between the later medieval ploughing furrows. At present these earthworks suggest a low, linear feature some 40m in length; it may have been significantly more prominent in the past prior to it being subject to at least a century of medieval arable cultivation. These features alone do not indicate any significant activity, and given current knowledge of archaeological distribution in the locality they could feasibly belong to the earlier medieval or Romano-British periods.

In addition, however, an interesting complex south of the linear features would suggest a more dense concentration of activity possibly linked to the Whitehills site.   This large complex is cut along its southern side by the A14 dual carriageway, which originated in the nineteenth century as a railway embankment, and thus its complete form was not surveyed. Measuring 35m by at least 35m and up to 1m deep, its layout matches the alignment of the pre-ridge and furrow linear feature to the north, while internally a number of low linear scarps were recorded on a principally north to south alignment. This feature had been interpreted as some form of quarrying pit, but the neat rectilinear form of the earthwork would suggest a more complex function. In addition a terrace cut on the north-west side of the feature measuring 12m by 10m probably represents a building platform, while continuing the alignment of the north side of the feature both east and west and demarcating the northern side of the

terraced platform are two sections of low bank measuring roughly 30m in length respectively.

Figure 5.5 The Mill Common survey area. The potential early medieval features are highlighted in green, including the track linking to the east with St Mary's Street. A: Bar Dyke. B: Whitehills. C: Mill Common excavation site (Leith 1992). (Source: Michael Fradley).

Along the northern side of the complex the terrace of a track-way was also recorded some 4m wide and dividing it from the ridge and furrow to the north. To the west this track way is lost beneath later activity and the A14 carriageway, while to the east it also appears to fade into an area of medieval or post-medieval quarrying and spoil dumps. However, taking into account the latter activity the track way appears to demonstrate an alignment that would connect to the present St Mary's Street, which ends abruptly about 150m to the east. If this conjecture is correct then it would be important in linking this area with one of the earlier streets in the town and an area of concentrated Saxo-Norman activity. The curving form of the present section of St

Mary's Street as well as its eastern terminus at St Mary's Church could both be argued as evidence of an early, 'unplanned' element of Huntingdon's topography, and would further give context to the tenth or eleventh-century occupation layers identified alongside the route of this conjectured track (Leigh 1992). In its more immediate context these earthworks stand in an interesting position between the pre-ridge and furrow linear some 25m to the north and the Roman villa and late Saxon church and burial site at Whitehills just over 100m to the south-south-west.

The final element assessed by the earthwork survey relevant to the present study is the feature known as the Bar Dyke briefly discussed above in relation to previous excavations on Mill Common (Fig 5.6). The principal elements recorded by the present survey relate to the remodelling of the feature in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The southern straight section of the earthwork with a low wide bank on its eastern side is most likely the result of development of the feature as part of a drainage system in the nineteenth century, potentially contemporary to the construction of the railway to improve the flow of water beneath the embankment of the latter. As such the eastern bank of the Bar Dyke can be dismissed as a late addition, while at its southern end the drain intersects with a former track-way re-cut from the north-east, which appears to have been part of a drain from the large quarry are in the central area of Mill Common. Excavation has demonstrated that the northern section of the present earthwork form part of a ditch of probable seventeenth-century date and linked to the Civil War refortification of Huntingdon. Based upon the evidence of the earthwork survey it is argued that these elements relate to the creation of two adjacent fortified positions, potentially for the use of artillery guarding one of the principal roads into Huntingdon, rather than part of a continuous circuit encircling the town.

Figure 5.6 The Bar Dyke from the north-west. This section of the ditch was probably re-cut in the nineteenth century as part of the development of the railway embankment beyond the line of trees. It was this action that created the bank on the east side of the ditch (Source: Michael Fradley).

Excavations have also demonstrated the existence of medieval features below these surviving post-medieval elements, principally a large ditch below the seventeenth-century ditch of thirteenth or fourteenth-century date, and a smaller ditch or hollow way potentially dating to between the seventh and thirteenth centuries running parallel immediately to the east. It is possible that a small section of one of these ditches survives as an earthwork at the northern end of the surveyed section on the Bar Dyke where it was perhaps less intruded upon by post-medieval redevelopment. It is not clear which of the two medieval ditches it connects; its position would suggest the earlier ditch although is scale might imply the later feature. Previously it has been suggested that the Bar Dyke formed part of the eastern town boundary of Huntingdon although there is little substantiating archaeological evidence of a major boundary (Spoerry 2000, 40). It would seem improbable, although not necessarily impossible,

that a town boundary would be constructed that would enclose such a wide span of arable land as can still be seen on Mill Common, even accepting the limited evidence of medieval settlement around the Whitehills area. There is also no convincing excavated evidence of an internal boundary bank that might be expected alongside a town ditch. A more convincing interpretation is that the medieval Bar Dyke is one of a track way and boundary or drainage ditch between areas of open field arable cultivation. Only during the Civil War did the surveyed section take on a more actively martial role, and even in this guise probably not as a continuous circuit around the town.

Huntingdon Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

Huntingdon Castle is amongst those documented as raised in the course of the movement of an army headed by King William I to and from the north of England in AD1068. It was probably being utilised by the sheriff of Huntingdonshire during the late eleventh century, and the lordship of the castle at the head of an earldom of Huntingdon was developed during the twelfth century, largely in the hands of the Scottish crown. The involvement in the latter group in the inter-regal conflict of AD1173-4 led to the castle falling under siege, with an opposing fort erected over the Whitehills site, and a subsequent order for its demolition. The latter was only partial, and both a gaol and chapel are subsequently documented at the site, indicating some degree of continued elite occupation in the form of the sheriff's office.

The castle survives as a relatively complete earthwork complex (Fig. 5.7), indicating that its documented demolition did not require any substantive levelling, and has been surveyed by the RCHME at 1:1250 (NMR: AF0622096). Categorised as a motte-and-bailey castle form, this detailed form of survey has helped to show how the castle form

was altered during the seventeenth-century civil war with the use of the motte as gun battery and the expansion of the eastern bailey rampart, although providing little detail of its utilisation in the medieval period (Taylor 1974, 64). The latter has been touched upon by limited excavations on the site; poorly recorded observations on the east side of the castle report the existence of a stone barbican which would imply the castle was at least partly built in stone by the time of its demolition in the late twelfth century (Spoerry 2000, 46). A section was also made of the castle ditch nearby during the construction of the town ring road in the 1960s which suggests evidence a ditch nearly 6m wide and 3m deep (CHER: 01774).

Figure 5.7 Huntingdon Castle motte from the east (Source: Michael Fradley).

Following the development of the A14 dual carriageway in the early 1970s, a small salvage monitoring project was undertaken on the south-east side of the surviving castle earthwork complex during the re-establishment of a footpath down to the

riverside. This project interpreted the rampart in this area as a post-medieval establishment as seen in the limited section cut, while beneath the bank a number of east-west aligned burials were recovered with evidence of nails; indicating the use of wooden coffins. Traditionally this apparently Christian cemetery has been interpreted as being attached to the castle chapel.

In contrast to the accepted view it seems highly unlikely that the chapel of an urban castle would have been augmented with its own burial ground. The populace of the zone embraced by the chapel of the urban castle were largely transient and its small church merely catered for this non-resident population and clerks of the officials and nobility who were based on occasion at the castle. Even Eustace, one of the early documented Sheriffs of Huntingdon was likely to have been based more permanently at the motte-and-bailey castle of Great Staughton some distance from Huntingdon despite his official position at the latter town (Lowerre 2006, 132-5). Tension may have existed between sheriff and lord as suggested at Wallingford; in the case of Huntingdon Castle the site was also a focal point of the earldom of Huntingdon.

Returning to the case of the excavated cemetery there is an obvious lack of substantiating archaeological evidence on which to base its interpretation, particularly given that no associated church has been identified. The presence of nails does not negate the possibility of this early burial date; nailed wooden coffins had become increasingly common throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, and so a pre-Conquest date remains perfectly feasible (Hadley 2001, 104). The unexpected discovery of a late Saxon church and burial ground at the Whitehills site far from the core of the medieval town simply reinforces how poorly the ecclesiastical topography of pre-Conquest Huntingdon is understood, which in turn can encourage speculation

of the early date of the human remains at Huntingdon Castle. Ultimately there is a convincing circumstantial case that the context of the burials would indicate their pre-Conquest date and association with a contemporary church.

The existence of a potential second, western bailey has been disputed by excavations south-west of the present castle site in the area presently known as Watersmeet. Extensive archaeological investigations primarily recorded Romano-British activity and burials, in part confirming evidence obtained to the north-east during archaeological rescue work ahead of the development of the A14 carriageway in the early 1970s (Nicholson 2006; David Cozens pers. Comm.). There is certainly significant discrepancies between the results of the evaluation and excavation of the site, and it is surprising that the medieval remains identified during the earlier phase of the investigation were not forthcoming during the later large-scale phase (Cooper and Spoerry 2000; Nicholson 2006).

A recent evaluation to the west of the surviving castle earthworks at the Red Cross Centre has recovered evidence of a large ditch tentatively identified as a contemporary outer defensive circuit of the medieval fortification. The feature has only been subject to a limited evaluation which uncovered evidence of a ditch around 6m wide and around 1.8m deep, curving around on a primarily north-east by south-west orientation (Brown 2008, 5, 21). The projected continuation of the ditch southwards does not sit easily with the disputed bailey scarp in the Watersmeet area, although it could feasibly relate to the remains of a small ditch 1.7m wide and o.25m deep cutting through the fill of a palaeochannel on the same alignment (Cooper and Spoerry 2000, 7). The latter feature contained Saxo-Norman material in its upper fill and was conceivably cut

through the natural incline of the palaeochannel in order to drain the outer castle ditch, and thus contained residual earlier material in its lower fills.

Archaeological evaluation of the Pathfinder House site ahead of recent redevelopment recorded very limited Saxo-Norman activity, although a major ditch was located toward the south-western perimeter of the site. The ditch was aligned roughly E-W and at a width of 4m and a depth of 2m representing a major feature. Although dating evidence within its fills was poor it is likely to be part of the same ditch identified at the Red Cross Centre (Ashworth *et al.* 2006, 31-2). A lens of redeposited natural was highlighted as probable evidence of an associated bank to the south which had been used to backfill the ditch, and the feature was tentatively identified as being associated with the castle complex. Subsequent excavation has recorded a shallow inner ditch, although the dating and understanding of both ditches is complicated by quantity of residual Romano-British and Saxo-Norman material in many of the excavated features (Mellor 2009).

At 11-12 High Street a restricted evaluation trench uncovered the fills of what was conjectured to be a large ditch aligned on a north-west to south-east alignment and apparently in-filled in the twelfth or early thirteenth century (Clarke 2005). Augured deposits from a lower unexcavated deposit also recovered Thetford Ware broadly datable to the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Unfortunately due to the limited extent of this trench (a $2m^2$ trench with a $1m^2$ sondage into the medieval deposits) it is not possible to be certain as to whether these deposits are the fills of a massive ditch or pit, or even whether the lower, unexcavated deposits relate to the same feature. However, if these remains do relate to a ditch it represents a very significant identification of a feature of at least 1.2m in depth, and in a position and alignment of

great import when considered in the context of the large ditch features recorded west of the castle and at the Pathfinder House site.

If this ditch configuration, even including a potential second, inner ditch, is correct then it would suggest that a second small enclosure may exist on the north-west side of the castle enclosure. Excavation on the Pathfinder House site has recorded Saxo-Norman features within this potential internal area including a ditch and sub-rectangular pit (Mellor 2009). At the current stage it is not possible to take this interpretation of the castle form forward, nor is it possible to rule out the possibility that either of these ditch systems originated prior to the eleventh century either as part of a *burh* enclosure or an earlier development. From the little information surviving from the original 1970s excavation it is possible this is the same double-ditch system as that identified as the defences of the pre-Conquest *burh* during that earlier campaign (Buckland *et al.* 1989, 84-6).

Discussion: The Urban Context

When the builders of Huntingdon Castle first physically entered the settlement in the late AD1060s they encountered a built environment very different from the one experienced by a similar contemporary retinue at Wallingford. In the first instance there was not a clear circuit of urban defences demarcating the immediate perimeter of the settlement. On the basis of the evidence presently available there may have been a relatively small D-shaped enclosure of Anglo-Scandinavian origin directly beneath and potentially defining the footprint of the post-Conquest castle. This is potentially supported by the similarity of scale between the Huntingdon example and the probable site identified at Tempsford (Fig 5.8) with which it is directly linked

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historically (Fradley 2010; Swanton 1996, 101). An enclosure of comparable date has also been recorded on the north side of the River Wensum at Norwich, although it is significantly larger than the feature at Huntingdon (Ayers 2004, 6).
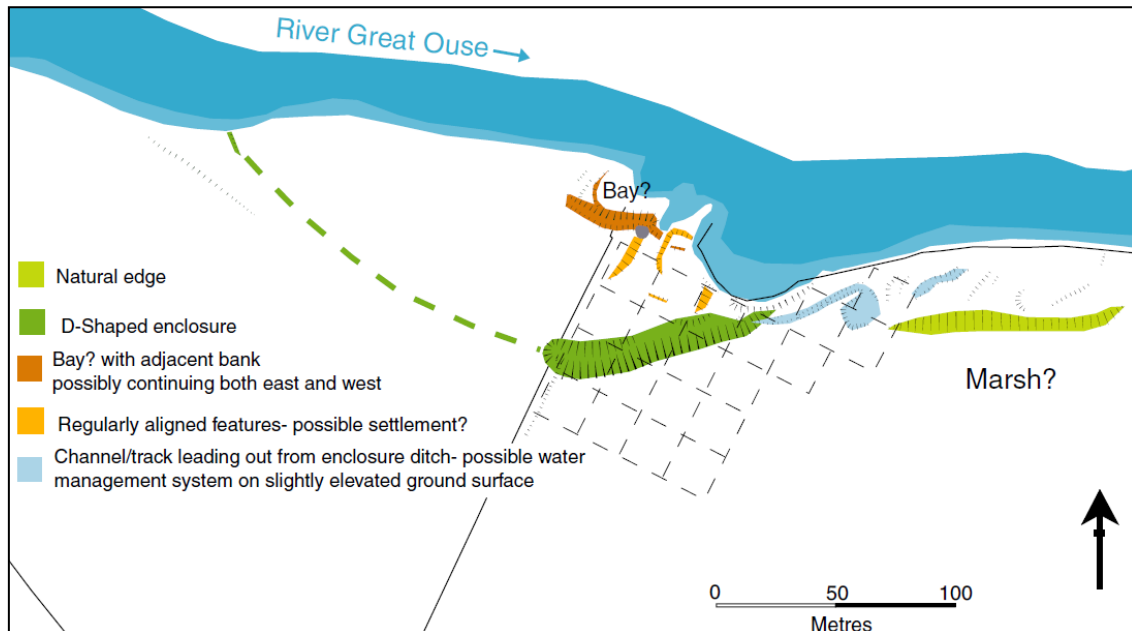
Figure 5.8 Earthwork survey plan of Tempsford (Beds.). Historically the enclosure was created by a Scandinavian force that had moved upriver from Huntingdon prior to their defeat at this site against and English Army od Edward the Elder in the early tenth century (Source: Michael Fradley).

There would have been similarities in the relevance of the settlement's riverside location and crossing point, as well as the common experience of urban and economic development during the eleventh century which saw a growth in the number of churches. The two settlements also lack any immediate precedent in the form of a Romano-British town, although Huntingdon developed around the established highway of Ermine Street and may have been the site of a larger rural settlement than currently evidenced at Wallingford. However, the most conspicuous differences lie in the poly-focal layout of settlement at Huntingdon, consisting of a wide dispersal of occupation nuclei beyond the historic core of the later medieval settlement.

In part the starkness of this contrast derives from the lack of a defined early medieval perimeter which at other sites often provides some form of structure to settlement development. It has been archaeologically demonstrated that at Wallingford in the eleventh century swathes of the intramural area were not occupied by intensive settlement, but physically it was enclosed as a single settlement unit within its defences and street system. This position may be more a reflection of the questions asked and preconceptions applied by archaeologists than the conditions experienced by the medieval inhabitants and visitors to these settlements. For instance, the identification and cartographic mapping of urban perimeters is frequently a mainstay of introductions into the physical form of the early medieval towns. But as has been made clear through the previous analysis of Wallingford, the construction of *burh* defences and the development of an urban settlement are not necessarily contemporary processes.

It has been the contention of the present study that any early fortified area is likely to have been in the Castle Hill area as previously predicted, although this has yet to be confirmed archaeologically (Spoerry 2000). The identification of a pre-Conquest medieval cemetery on the castle site would seem to indicate the presence of an early settlement focus in this area, although a lack of modern excavation on Castle Hill has not provided any evidence to characterise it. Excavations at Watersmeet, the Red Cross Centre and Pathfinder House on the known perimeter of the castle have to date revealed limited evidence of eleventh-century occupation or activity, suggesting that any settlement focus on Castle Hill may have been relatively localised. It may be that this area was the site of the earliest occupation at Huntingdon, although the evidence from the Whitehills cemetery further west along the riverbank suggests that it may have been in use from as early as the eighth century. It is possible that as a royal *burh* enclosure the Castlehill site may have contained some form of elite settlement,

which must be borne in mind when considering the location selected by the builders of Huntingdon Castle.

Two relevant concentrations of settlement in the vicinity of St Mary's Church and the Whitehills site are linked physically with the church and burial sites, as is conjectured at Castle Hill. Admittedly, there is not any excavation evidence at present at the Whitehills site to confirm the presence or character of any contemporary settlement, although analytical earthwork survey has demonstrated probable evidence of contemporary activity to the north. The current body of excavated evidence suggests that these zones were not joined to the Castlehill area directly. In addition, there is evidence of detached occupation on the east side of Mill Common, the former bus depot site off Ermine Street and the Old Drama and Music Centre, as well as significant water management activity at the Model Laundry site that may be linked to the watermill recorded in Domesday Book (VCH 1932, 122).

Are there any identifiable factors that may have influenced the development of this relatively dispersed settlement pattern, with the areas between perhaps characterised agriculturally or for use in other open-area activities? It is possible to suggest that some of these areas may have been utilised for different activities such as the water management development at the Model Laundry site, while the earthworks north of the Whitehills site have few parallels with the expected form of urban or rural tenements. An alternative hypothesis may consider these separate settlement areas as linked to the urban tenements of the elite, the extent of whose urban landholding in the immediate pre-Conquest period has been attested (Fleming 1993). Due to the difficulties in characterising Saxo-Norman urban settlement forms, it is problematic to assess whether the built environment developed by the inhabitants of tenth and

eleventh-century Huntingdon was distinct from the majority of its contemporaries. However, the settlement did not remain static, and continued to change in both composure and scale as its community grew in size and complexity.

It is possible to crudely chart the partial nucleation of this early settlement form as it transformed over time into the recognisable form of the late medieval borough. On the west side of the town the extensive ditch of late twelfth-century date can be understood as a short-lived attempt by a specific group to enclose and delimit the contemporary urban form, regardless of its historical context. The short-lived nature of this feature would suggest that it was not an insertion that was supported by the majority of the urban populace. It is also possible to demonstrate that this ditch was cut at a time before the development of All Saint's Church and the settled area in its vicinity, as those digging the ditch would have failed to encompass this area within its projected course. It is possible that the market place at Market Hill had already been established, perhaps being held just outside the entrance of the conjectured pre-castle enclosure, although further archaeological investigation would be required to verify this position. The unexpected rate of urban and economic development in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries may have equally contributed to the demise of this perimeter as the town's inhabitants, new and old, adopted new strategies to engage with the rising population levels and increasing commercialisation of this period.

During the thirteenth century the settlement appears to have fitted into the footprint of its known historic core, although there was certainly continued fluctuation within that settled core over time. Beyond the settled area open fields were established by the early thirteenth century at least in the Mill Common area, and perhaps at an earlier date in other areas around the town. During the growth of the nucleated core of

Huntingdon it is possible to identify the continued occupation of the outlying settlement foci into the later medieval period. A small community continued to occupy the area beneath the Old Music and Drama centre into the thirteenth century. At the Whitehills site a sample of burials suggests that internment in the cemetery was abandoned by the late eleventh century, although the identification of renewed stone build in the church itself may imply continued use into the post-Conquest period (Vincent and Mays 2009). Equally the fossilisation of the conjectured road continuing the line of St Mary's Street on to Mill Common towards the earthworks north of the Whitehills site may also imply the continued movement of people between this area and the later medieval historic core into at least the twelfth century, when the open fields in this area were established. It is possible to speculate that this track may have also continued westwards and possibly converged with the excavated track along the Bar Dyke alignment at an important riverside site such as a mill, fishery or landing place which, based upon the available excavated evidence, remained a relevant focus into the later medieval period.

The impact and aftermath of Huntingdon Castle

Huntingdon Castle fulfils the defining characteristic of the urban castle in being situated in direct association with a large, pre-Conquest urban settlement. A large motte and bailey was erected in a prominent riverside position amongst areas of demonstrated pre-Conquest settlement activity, potentially fully within the footprint of a small *burh*. In the present analysis the contention has been proposed that the cemetery identified during emergency recording on the east side of the castle is likely to belong to a pre-Conquest church. If this interpretation is correct then it puts Huntingdon amongst a *corpus* of urban castles that have produced evidence of early churches and graveyards

that were demolished or abandoned ahead of the foundation, a group which includes

Norwich, Cambridge and Newark (Ayers 1985, 18-25; RCHME 1959, 306-7; Marshall

and Samuels 1994, 53-4). Contemporary settlement may also be expected in the

vicinity of this ecclesiastical site and it may therefore be feasible to contend that

secular elements of the pre-Conquest urban fabric were also demolished in order to

facilitate the raising of the castle.

In other respects however it is more difficult to define the castle with regards to its

urban context. This is most explicit with reference to any form of pre-Conquest urban

enclose or *burh* defences; at the majority of examples where these defensive lines are

known then associated castles are found adjoining or in the corner of the circuit

(Creighton 2002, 143). At Huntingdon it has not been possible to define any element

of an early defensive circuit despite a large growth in the quantity of excavated

archaeological data over the last decade and both geophysical and earthwork survey in

the Mill Common area. Some form of *burh* fortifications are believed to have existed

relating to both Danish activity and the reported refortification of Huntingdon by

Edward the Elder recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but it has not yet been possible

to substantiate this evidence archaeologically (Swanton 2000, 101-3). Based upon the

results of the earthwork survey and limited evaluation work available it is argued that

the Bar Dyke feature at the west end of Mill Common is unlikely to have formed part

of a pre-Conquest defensive circuit. Instead the surviving portion originated as a track-

way of uncertain date between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, and only in the

thirteenth or fourteenth century was it accompanied by a more significant boundary

ditch on its west side, before falling out of use and being replaced by a track within the

later feature. Even this later ditch seems unlikely to have formed part of a wider town

ditch, but instead may have simply divided or provided additional drainage to two

arable open fields including the extensive evidence of medieval plough furlongs within the Mill Common survey area.

Two elements of an apparent urban circuit have been identified, but both are understood to relate to post-Conquest phases and seem to indicate to distinct events in the later history of Huntingdon to define its urban space. The first of these is the deep ditch recorded on the east side of Mill Common and the town centre modernisation site to the north, which has been dated to the later twelfth century and is understood to form the west side of a defensive enclosure around the town. Secondly on the eastern side of the town is the water course known as the Black Ditch, which has presumably formed a boundary of some form through Huntingdon's history, but was possibly accentuated from the twelfth century onwards by a parallel ditch as recorded at the St Germain development site. While these two features have a common twelfth-century date of construction, the latter was maintained into the fourteenth century while the former was infilled soon after being dug and its alignment lost or ignored by subsequent settlement development, although this does not negate the possibility that the two features were linked. In general however the two ditch alignments do appear to suggest that by the twelfth century attempts were being made to enclose a large area of developing urban settlement which would at its southern end included the castle, although ironically Huntingdon Castle would be partially demolished in the late twelfth century.

The question of any pre-Conquest urban defences existed at Huntingdon remains a key issue. It is possibile that an early defensive focus may have been retained at the former walled Roman settlement of Godmanchester, although the pertinent question of why the shire would take the name of Huntingdon acts against this interpretation

(Spoerry 2000, 40). The largely unexplored area of Huntindon Castle could also be the location of an early enclosed nucleus, and that by the eleventh-century urban settlement had developed beyond its limited bounds. A key evaluation on the west side of the castle identified a large ditch which although apparently utilised as part of the castle enclosure may have originated as part of a *burh* enclosure, although this conjecture lacks any substantiating evidence (Brown 2006, 21). This excavated ditch may even been a second outer ditch given that it is too far from the castle motte to encircle it, but not far enough to enclose a second bailey. Thus the castle may have been surrounded by a double ditch, potentially of two different phases, with one linking back to an early pre-Conquest *burh* enclosure. Alternatively the castle motte may have been surrounded by a ditch separate from the outer castle ditch, as the earthwork evidence clearly survives on the east side of the castle mound at present, further complicating any attempt to resolve the issue of reconstructing the early form of the castle or any form of pre-Conquest circuit.

An additional concern when reconstructing the castle and its impact on the early urban topography is the interpretation of the route of the Roman road of Ermine Street through the medieval town. The accepted theory is that it took a linear route directly through the castle site only to be replaced following the construction of the latter monument and succeeded by a new road and timber bridge to the east which was in turn abandoned in favour of a stone bridge a little further downriver. Urban castles undoubtedly had an impact on the existing tracks and roads within the urban fabric, for instance the post-Conquest castle at Bedford necessitated the alteration of one of its key roads which became fossilised in the modern townscape, while thirteenth-century extension of Wallingford Castle caused the shift westwards of one of the town's arterial roads (Barker 1973). The construction of the second castle at Canterbury

incorporated the Worth Gate of the former Romano-British town walls, while the road that passed through it was diverted east along Castle Row (Frere *et al.* 1982, 56). At York Castle the construction of the fortification and its adjacent water management systems including the extensive fishpond of the King's Pool caused the rerouting of the Fishergate road into the town, while at Shrewsbury the sole landward route into the town apparently passed through the outer bailey of the castle (RCHME 1972, 60; Baker 2003).

The case of Huntingdon differs from these other examples in that the general route of Ermine Street was clearly an arterial road of singular importance within the town, as reflected in the linear development of the later medieval town. For the construction of an urban castle to cause such complete disruption of the settlement form, and in particular to disrupt a primary river crossing whose existence predicated the very existence of a major centre appears out of setting with the wider trends of this castle type. This caution in accepting the prevailing model can be sustained when one examines the existing evidence for the route of Ermine Street passing through the castle site. To date no conclusive evidence of a road of any date running from north-west to south-east through the town away from the High Street has been recorded despite the now extensive excavations across the Pathfinder House site which would seem likely to have covered any deviation the proposed road may have taken. The recording of a single ditch of Romano-British date at the Benet Court site provides poor evidence and may not even be associated with a road (Spoerry 2000, 36-7). As a result not only does it seem increasingly unlikely that Ermine Street took the route that has been maintained by the existing model of Huntingdon's historic landscape, but as such there is no evidence to demonstrate that any road continued in use into the immediate pre-Conquest period.

On the basis of the present evidence it would appear more feasible that in the pre-Conquest period the arterial road through the Huntingdon area took the same route as in the post-Conquest phase, passing immediately east of the castle. The identification of a significant boundary of late tenth or early eleventh-century date running perpendicular to the High Street near its junction with Hartford Road may provide limited substantiation of this claim. Thus it is argued that while the construction of Huntingdon Castle clearly led to the demolition of elements of the pre-Conquest urban fabric including a graveyard and probable church, it did not cause the disruption of the town's primary road and river crossing. However, the castle did stand in a position that physically dominated both the road and the river crossing, but in doing so may have simply replicated the spatial relationships of the preceding *burh*. The relationship of the castle with the bridging point may, however, have been of secondary or incidental importance in comparison to its riverside position; the majority of urban castles were situated alongside major rivers but rarely alongside bridges or fords as at Wallingford, Worcester and Bristol.

Returning to the individuals who entered Huntingdon and founded the castle in the late AD1060s, what can be extrapolated about their intentions from this characterisation? It is clear that their choice of site was not passive, but was selected as part of a detailed consideration of the local topography. It is asserted that given the absence of a large *burh* encompassing the settlement as identified at many other sites, they chose to raise their castle within the full circuit of a small, riverside *burh* of possible Scandinavian origin. This may therefore be an example of relatively direct physical continuity between a pre-Conquest *burh* enclosure and a post-Conquest urban castle. Importantly, they also chose to disregard the Romano-British enclosure at

Godmanchester on the adjacent riverbank where a smaller Late Saxon community was focused in an immediate extra-mural area. Despite the relative locality of Godmanchester and its presence within the same shire, the castle-builders at Huntingdon chose direct continuity with the pre-Conquest settlement topography.

This decision will almost certainly have entailed the destruction and displacement of the existing settlement in the area of the castle, although this has not been demonstrated archaeologically. This may have been of incidental relevance to the individuals founding this structure, who in part may have been legitimated through the powers of the crown, in order to obtain the desired topographic requirements of an elevated, riverside location. However, in relation to the wider settlement the castle had a relatively limited direct impact. If the role of the castle envisaged by its builders was as a structure through which the urban settlement could be monitored, this was negated by the relatively dispersed layout of town. At some urban centres such as Norwich there is evidence of a massive reorganisation of the settlement morphology beyond the footprint of the urban castle, and so it was clearly within the means of the elite to undertake the reorientation of a town in some circumstances. If this were the case at Huntingdon it might be expected that the settlement would be rearranged in a nucleated form on the impetus of the crown in order to facilitate an active physical relationship between castle and town. However, there is little evidence that any comparable process took place, and it is feasible that some of the dispersed settlement foci, such as the Old Drama and Music Centre site, developed in the post-Conquest period. There is some evidence that burials were declining at the Whitehill cemetery in the late eleventh century, and the church itself was certainly redundant by the late twelfth century. It may be that the area utilised as a cemetery expanded or shifted around this time, and while it is not possible currently to characterise any attendant

settlement, the road connecting this area to St Mary's Street was still utilised in the twelfth century when an open field was laid out over Mill Common. Instead the process of nucleation along the High Street is characterised as taking place in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ironically in the period after the partial demolition of the castle and potentially at the behest of the urban community rather than the crown or wider elite acting from a position of power focused on Huntingdon Castle.

The ecclesiastical landscape also seems to have had little bearing on the site chosen for the castle. A probable pre-Conquest cemetery was buried by the earthworks of the castle, although it is possible that the church was utilised as the chapel subsequently documented at the castle site. There is tentative evidence that an early church previously stood on the north side of St Mary's Street, but without corroborating evidence it this cannot be discussed in terms of the long-term development of Huntingdon. Church foundations of the post-Conquest period such as All Saints and the Hospital of St John are notably located at the northern end of the town away from the castle. The redevelopment of an earlier church at the Austin Priory of St Mary complex from the early twelfth century received significant elite investment, but was positioned in an isolated location to the north of the later medieval town. The presence or absence of churches appears to have had little impact on the choice of location made for Huntingdon Castle.

Assessing the economic impact of the castle structure is a more difficult issue to broach. The market adjacent to All Saints Church is likely to be a later development occurring alongside the expansion of the town in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and it is not possible to identify an earlier trading area. If the construction of the castle had caused a shift in the alignment of Ermine Street and the river crossing then it

would almost have had a detrimental impact on the urban economy, but it is argued presently that there is no evidence that the imposition of the fortification disrupting the pre-Conquest road network. Again there is no conclusive evidence of the builders of Huntingdon Castle directly disrupting or spatially manipulating economic elements of the townscape in order to enact control over it.

The decision made at Huntingdon regarding the castle location is comparable to that at Wallingford. A position was selected that imposed on the pre-Conquest settlement, but did not necessarily dominate it physically. A riverside location was important, and the fabric of the earlier defences incorporated, albeit in a complete fashion at Huntingdon due the relatively small scale of the pre-Conquest enclosure. The castle was not inflicted directly upon any core of the settled area, nor is there any indication that its structure or inhabitants projected any specific influence over the subsequent development of the respective towns. At both sites there is a tentative suggestion of a link to a central zone of pre-Conquest royal power, although neither has produced substantive archaeological evidence of this. At Huntingdon a close relationship between the castle and the axial road through the settlement and river crossing can be identified, although it is suggested that this is a coincidental result of its direct re-use of the pre-Conquest *burh* enclosure. The visually prominent castle mound, for instance, is located at the western end of the complex away from the river crossing. If an aggressive, physical prominence was required overlooking the axial road and bridging point, it might be expected at the eastern end.

Physically the urban settlements of Huntingdon and Wallingford would have been encountered in very different ways in the eleventh century, evidenced significantly in the absence of an encompassing *burh* enclosure and dispersed form of occupation at

Huntingdon. In spite of this there is still a sense of common purpose in the topographical setting selected for the construction of an urban castle. In terms of the re-use of elements of earlier defensive circuits and possible seats of royal office there is a sense of physical continuity, albeit renegotiated through a northern French structural form. In both cases there was a physical disruption of the occupied area, and this may have been inevitable via the imposition of a monumental form such as the castle. The installation of the castle marks a departure from the form of the pre-Conquest townscape, but as has been demonstrated in the case studies of Huntingdon and Wallingford, these settlements were fluid, changing physical entities. However, in neither case is there a strong indication that the castle was not intended to be a point of interaction with the urban settlement on an everyday level, nor did it enact any influence on the form and direction of subsequent urban development. There is a sense that there was a need by castle-builders to install these structures in close association with their respective urban centres, with direct physical connections to the fabric of the *burh* enclosures and adjacent to major water systems, but with no impetus to be a part of that town.

Conclusion

The analysis of Huntingdon has provided an effective case study alongside that of Wallingford in the previous chapter. The two centres have a number of similarities, but also hold a number of key differences which notably include their pre-Conquest defences and the scale and form of their urban growth. The review of existing archaeological work at Huntingdon alongside the results of earthwork survey in the Mill Common area have allowed an innovative new assessment of the urban condition of the town in the eleventh century, most notably in its poly-focal layout. There is a

clear commonality in rationale in the selection of a site and imposition of an urban castle that does not have a close direct relationship with the town or its subsequent development. In terms of the longevity of Huntingdon Castle, it was partially demolished after little more than a century in the context of inter-elite conflict. Its association by this later date is with the elite earldom of Huntingdon, while the urban settlement was party to a very different social and economic experience consisting of a growth in population and economic activity. Conversely, Wallingford Castle continued to expand and prosper under the patronage of a succession of elite communities while the town stagnated economically. However, even after the partial demolition of Huntingdon Castle in the late twelfth century, it continued to be utilised as the site of a county gaol and probable sheriff's office, therefore continuing to operate at a degraded level as a fortified elite centre.

6 Regional perspectives on urban castle-building: the Severn Vale

Introduction

The following case study will provide an analysis of eleventh-century urban settlements located along the River Severn region running from Shropshire, through Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (Fig 6.1). Primarily this includes the county centres of Shrewsbury, Worcester and Gloucester, as well as the emergent urban centre of Bristol. Consideration will also be given to embryonic urban centres of the immediate post-Conquest period at Quatford (Shrop.), Berkeley (Glos.) and Tewkesbury (Glos.). Winchcombe (Glos.), an early urban settlement and former shire centre, is also selected; it sits on the River Isbourne, a tributary of the River Avon but is chosen due to its proximity and the expanse of its former shire over the River Severn region.

In common with previous case studies, an account of the current state of knowledge of the eleventh-century settlement form will be provided for each example, followed by a description of the urban castle where relevant. Due to the large number of potential urban units discussed within this chapter, the length and detail of these summaries will be correspondingly brief in comparison with previous case studies. This section will be followed by an open discussion of the evidence and its relevance in terms of informing present questions influencing the locations selected for castle sites and its bearing on interpreting the relationship between castle and town.
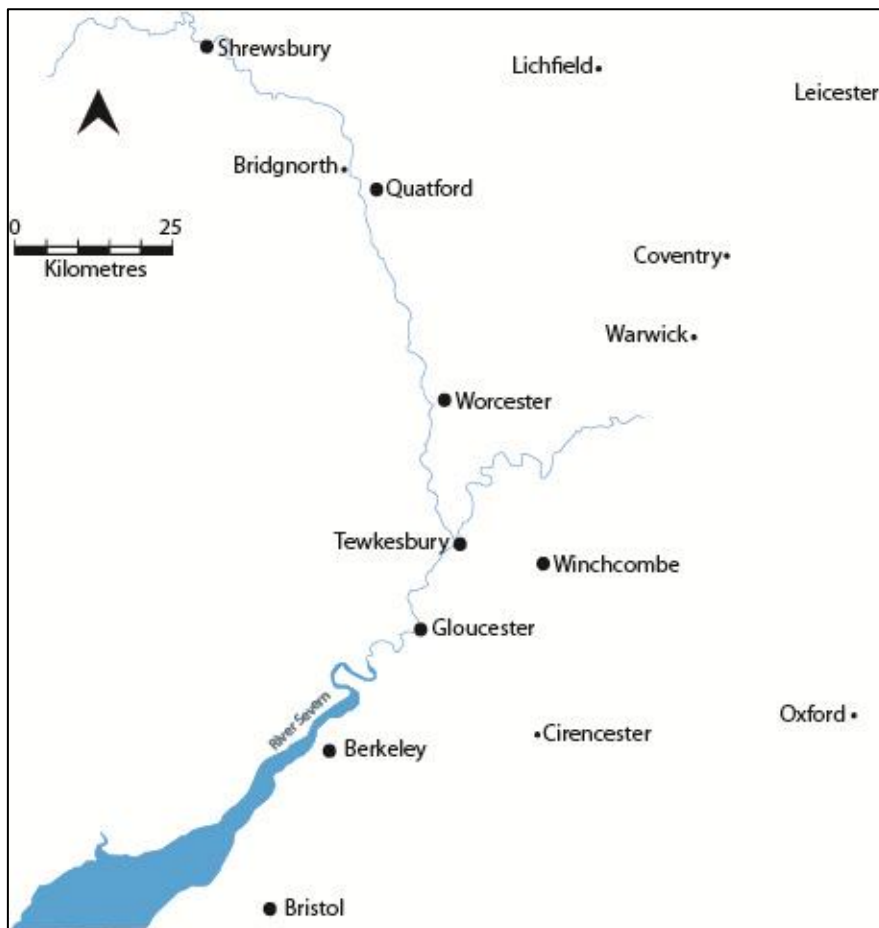
Figure 6.1 The regional settlement pattern of the River Severn study area (Source: Michael Fradley).

SHREWSBURY (Fig. 6.2)

Located within a large loop of the River Severn on a raised sandstone outcrop, the medieval settlement of Shrewsbury developed *c.*7.5km upriver from the major Roman town of Wroxeter. Documentary evidence records Shrewsbury as a 'city' in AD901 implying its importance as a royal or religious centre, and it was documented as the county centre by the early eleventh century (Barker 2003, 1, 4). An early characterisation of the medieval town and its archaeological potential was understandably cautious in its approach to the limited evidence available (Carver 1978, 249-50). Due to the elevated and restricted nature of the town site there has been demonstratable difficulty in identifying early deposits lost to erosion and subsequent

terracing, although these processes are not typical of the historic core as a whole (Baker *et al.* 1993, 60).

Shrewsbury urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

The early defensive circuit remains enigmatic, and its study has been eclipsed by the more tangible evidence relating to the larger town wall constructed in the early thirteenth century and, to a lesser extent, a smaller post-Conquest circuit (Barker 1961; Carver 1983; Radford 1961). Speculation has been made regarding the course of an original defensive circuit, or even a short line cutting off the neck of the loop of the River Severn in which Shrewsbury sits, but little evidence has been recorded during subsequent excavation and analysis (Drinkwater 1883; Baker 2010).

Analysis of the town's churches, which numbered six in the post-Conquest period, has been used to demonstrate the historical complexity of the town. While the paucity of pre-Conquest archaeology and documentary material relating to the settlement has reinforced a perception that it was a late establishment, the presence of four superior churches clustered on the high spur of the town has been conversely used to argue a much greater longevity and political importance in this period (Bassett 1991, 18-19). Only at St Mary's Church has a pre-Conquest foundation been demonstrated archaeologically, when in 1864 the plan of an earlier church with an apsidal end was recovered (Baker 2003, 28). The Benedictine Shrewsbury Abbey of SS Peter and Paul was established between 1083-7 by Roger Montgomery on the site of a wealthy pre-Conquest extramural property, possibly as a re-foundation of the wealthy private church already extant at the site, and was to be become one of the major landowners within the town over the following century (Baker 2002, 15-18). Observations beneath

the abbey floor have identified medieval deposits which could include elements of this pre-Conquest settlement (Baker 2001).
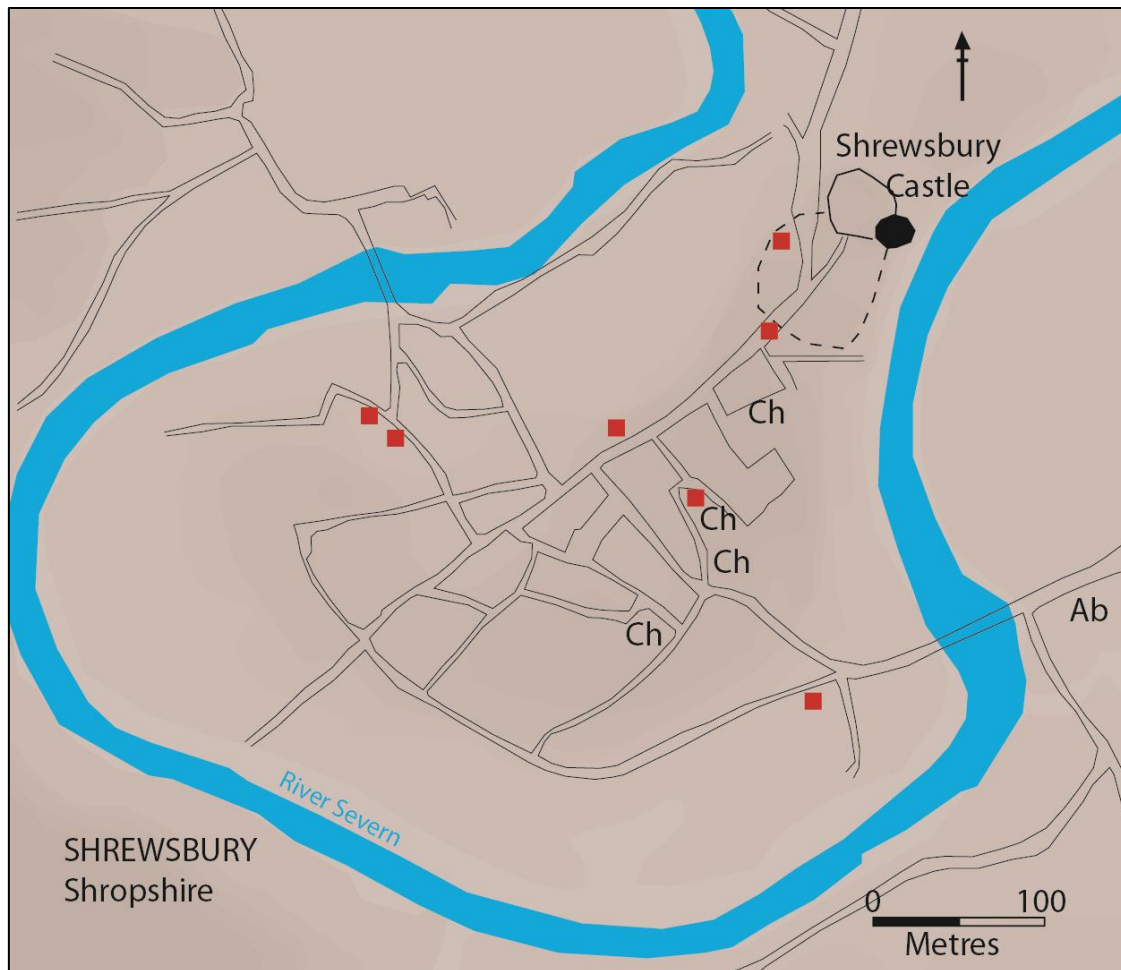
Figure 6.2 Shrewsbury. The red squares indicate areas where eleventh-century deposits have been recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Given the paucity of archaeological interventions that have provided positive evidence of eleventh- and twelfth-century occupation in the town, characterising its form is therefore problematic. The assertion that Stafford Ware pottery recovered from across Shrewsbury's historic core, residual or otherwise, demonstrates that the pre-Conquest settlement was as extensive as the later medieval town is a poorly qualified hypothesis (contra Baker 2003, 5). Features containing Stafford Ware have been recorded in stratified sequences within the historic core of the town. At Rigg's Hall off

School Lane near the Burgess Gate and Shrewsbury Castle an internally stake-lined pit and a succession of other pits were recorded as Saxo-Norman in date, while an externally stake-lined pit of similar date was uncovered at Pride Hill Chambers (Carver 1983, 7, 41-2, 57, 66). Amongst a number of medieval pits recorded in a rescue excavation at 2a St Alkmund's Place Stafford and Stamford Ware pottery was recorvered (Toms 1978, 33-8). Immediately beyond the conjectured southern perimeter of the castle enclosure the remains of a timber structure dating to the mid-eleventh century was recorded, possibly abandoned in the wake of the latter (Hannaford 2000). Pre-Conquest structural remains were also recorded at the Owen Owen site although the identification is not certain (SHER ESA3497; ESA3485).

Further evidence of pre-Conquest activity has been recovered further west of the higher ground at 7 St Austin Street where a series of pits containing Stafford Ware pottery attest to an extended period of occupation which were subsequently sealed by a later medieval or early post-medieval yard soil (Hannaford 2005). A watching-brief failed to record further evidence of Saxo-Norman activity, although work immediately south at 10-15 Barker Street did identify a number of pits containing Stafford Ware (Hannaford 2006; Baker 2007). At the St Austin Friary site limited excavation has demonstrated that activity on the sample site did not begin until the twelfth century (Hannaford 2007). Similarly no evidence of activity prior to the thirteenth century has been indentified at the well-preserved site of St Julians Friars, although a sequence of sediment deposits dating from the pre-Conquest period up to the thirteenth-century construction of the town wall were recovered from the Century Cinema site with a 50% sieve recovering over 10kg of pot, bone and metalwork waste (Tavener 2002; 2004). A section of a metalled road surface and make-up identified at Mardol Head by a number of separate interventions has been proposed as an element of the pre-

Conquest settlement infrastructure (Baker 2004). At present this theory has yet to be substantiated archaeologically, with no evidence currently available to take the date of these features back further than the twelfth or thirteenth century. The market place prior to the thirteenth century was in the graveyard of the churches of St Alkmund and St Julian before being moved officially to the present market square site in AD1261, the latter formed from an area of reclaimed wetland (Baker *et al.* 2006, 181). There is the possibility that multiple market places were in existence, even in the pre-Conquest period, although none of the conjectured sites stand in the immediate vicinity of the castle site (Baker 2010, 98).

Shrewsbury Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

Shrewsbury Castle has been subject to relatively little concerted archaeological or historical study. It consisted of a motte and two bailey enclosures standing on grounding descending northwards at the neck of a peninsula created by a large loop in the River Severn. The castle would have dominated the landward entrance to the town from the region east of the River Severn, although it is not clear if the original route on to the peninsula led through the castle outer bailey or along the small sliver of land immediately west of the enclosure. Domesday Book records that the castle of Roger of Montgomery had taken over 51 dwellings as part of the construction of the castle, although the context of the statement is ambiguous; its inclusion simply details the difficulty of the settlement's inhabitants had in fulfilling their tax obligation (Morris 1986, 252a). Although there is no documentary evidence to clarify the situation, it is probable that Shrewsbury Castle was constructed prior to the formation of the earldom of Shropshire before AD1072 under the control of royal power (Mason 1964, 79).

Of the structures which crown the site at present much is post-medieval in date including the folly of Laura's Tower which tops the motte itself, built by Thomas Telford in 1790 (Baker 2003, 14). The motte itself was disfigured by its partial collapse, along with its wooden tower in the thirteenth century, the erosion of which was possibly exaggerated by the action of Shrewsbury Abbey's mill. Around that time the outer bailey appears to have fallen into disuse, though its extent can still be reconstructed with confidence from topographical evidence (Radford 1961, 18-9; Baker 2003, 14-5). Limited excavation in the area of the castle outer bailey at its present pedestrian entrance off Castle Gate has only eludicated the extent of post-medieval landscaping in the area, with almost 2m of make-up overlying natural gravel deposits and containing only a small quantity of late medieval material (Wellicome 2009). Similarly, excavation within the surviving castle inner bailey has failed to provide any meaningful results relating to the medieval structure (Baker 2005). Observations along the route of a water main renewal identified a sandstone wall just beyond the presumed line of the outer castle bailey as well as remnants of a timber structure with a radiocarbon date of AD1025-1049, which is likely to have been abandoned or destroyed during the process of urban castle construction (Hannaford 2000).

Summary

The ecclesiastical topography of Shrewsbury suggests that a nucleus of settlement stood on the highest ground in a loop of the River Severn. Excavations across this area indicate a number of additional settlement areas that were potentially quite dispersed. The builders of Shrewsbury Castle chose not to utilise the high ground or associate with the ecclesiastical complex. Instead a site at the neck of the river loop was utilised,

mirroring the castle positions at the topographically similar sites of Durham and Bristol, which had a major impact on landward movement into and out of this area. Although the castle site was visually dominant from positions outside of the settlement, particularly from for any river traffic and from land on the eastern riverbank, it was detached from much of the settlement interior.

QUATFORD (Fig 6.3)

Attempts to study the character and development of the settlement at Quatford are presently limited by a lack of documentary evidence and archaeological investigation. In part it is hampered by its historical trajectory where the borough and collegiate church were apparently transplanted to the new castle at nearby Bridgnorth c.AD1100 by Robert de Belleme, who undertook a similar transfer of the inhabitants of Vignants to his elevated, fortified settlement of Fourches in Normandy (Croom 1992, 19; Chibnall 1973, 228-9). It is best characterised as a post-Conquest castle-borough settlement, its study is included due to its Domeaday Book reference that certifies an attempt to develop a market and urban settlement in the years following AD1066.

Quatford urban settlement c.900-1150

Utilising town plan analysis Slater has argued that the site of the later castle of Bridgnorth re-used the earlier promontory site of the *burh* located on its sandstone bluff above the River Severn (Slater 1990, 65). Addition, a second rectangular *burh* in the area known as Low Town on the east side of the river was conjectured based on its uniform morphological plan, creating a form of double *burh* used to combat Danish incursions as identified at other settlements such as Bedford (Edgeworth 2009).

However, no evidence has been forthcoming to substantiate either interpretation. At present it is not possible to conclude whether Quatford or Bridgnorth was utilised by Danish and English armies in the early tenth century, although given that neither were parochial or manorial centres in AD1066 would suggest that regardless of location neither site had developed as permanent settlements.
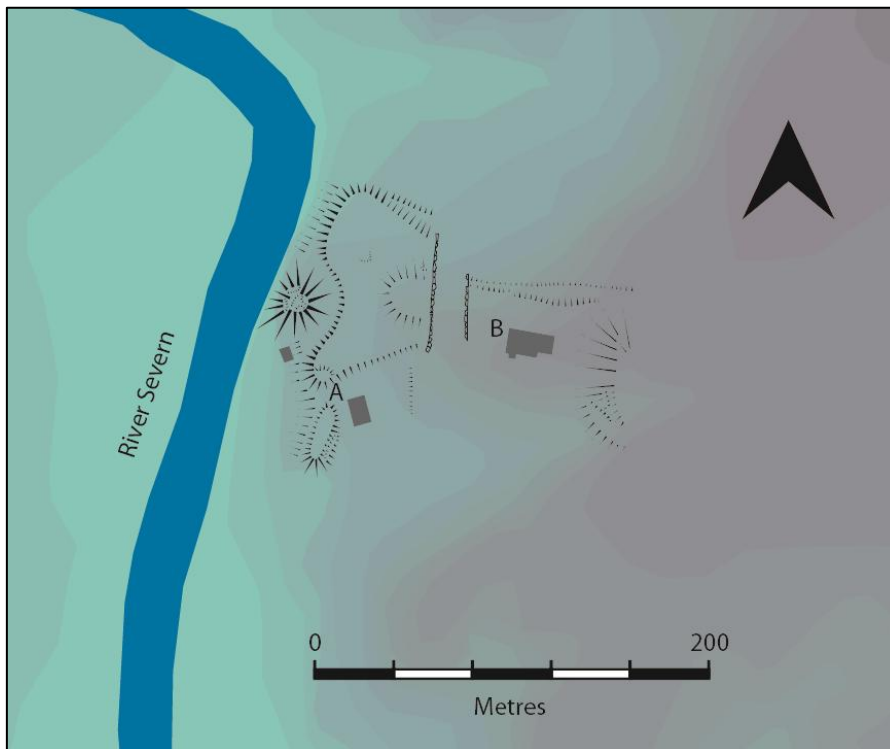
Figure 6.3 Earthwork plan of Quatford Castle. The settlement area east of the motte was not enclosed by a bank or ditch. The small gate leading down to the conjectured river crossing is labelled 'A' and St Mary's Church is at 'B' (Source: Michael Fradley).

The College of St Mary Magdalene, located on a ridge overlooking the castle from the east, was reputedly dedicated in AD1086 and endowed with land for the provision of six canons, presumably intended by Roger Montgomery to provide a secure income for his clerks. As with the castle and borough, it was relocated to the new foundation of Bridgnorth in the twelfth century (VCH 1973, 123-4). Elements of the original Norman stone church survive in the form of the chancel and parts of the nave and

west tower, as well as a possible original font (Newman and Pevsner 2006, 481-2). A bridge was recorded at Quatford in copied transcriptions of the foundation charter of the Collegiate Church of St Mary Magdalene, although it is not clear whether this was an extant pre-Conquest feature, and had been apparently replaced by a new crossing at Bridgnorth by at least the thirteenth century (Maxwell and Thompson 1927, 2; VCH 1989, 70). From the twelfth century onwards surviving documentation records only a ford or ferry at Quatford; it would appear that the crossing at Bridgnorth had become the primary crossing point by this period (Mason and Barker 1966, 44).

The Domesday borough of Quatford is recorded as paying nothing, which is largely accepted as reflecting its newly established status, and while the castle is not referenced directly a 'new house' is reported which may be directly associated with the castle site (Morris 1986, 254a). Excavations east of the castle motte recorded a large number of post-hole features, although no clear building plans could be identified and no datable evidence of material culture was recovered (Mason and Barker 1966). It is possible that these features relate to structures making up this incipient settlement form, which may have also spread into the wide valleys to the north and south.

Quatford Castle c.AD1050-1150

Quatford Castle survives as a partial earthwork, consisting of a motte and an elongated trapezoidal platform to the east which is commonly identified as a 'bailey'. This raised area lacks an enclosing bank, palisade or ditch, and cannot therefore be fully categorised as a bailey, although it appears to have been utilised in a similar capacity in housing an associated community within a definable area. Parallels to this 'bailey-type' platform can be recognised at the ringwork site at Fordhall, overlooking the River

Tern in north-east Shropshire, and the urban castle of Twt Hill at Rhuddlan (Quinell and Blockley 1994, 2; Fradley 2006b, 15-6).

Figure 6.4 Quatford Castle motte from the west side of the River Severn. From this exposed view the mound can be seen to be nearly entirely natural in origin (Source: Michael Fradley).

At the western end of the site of Quatford Castle and directly overlooking the River Severn is the castle motte, the core of which was made up primarily by a rise in the sandstone ridge (Fig 6.4). The present motte crest has a diameter of a *c.*9m, with evidence of a large T-shaped cut, presumably a result of an undocumented intervention prior to 1960. The motte may have previously been larger and have suffered from erosion due to the action of the River Severn to the west; slight erosive slumps are visible on the east side of the motte while the exposed sandstone 'cliff' is clearly visible on the riverside. The motte is then separated from the ground to the east by an 8m

wide ditch, although the form of this feature may have been altered by its poorly documented re-excavation in the 1830s (Mason and Barker 1966, 42-3).

The castle site was the subject of a basic survey in the early twentieth century, although the reputed bailey form had already been altered at this stage by nineteenth-century road building (VCH 1908, 398). In addition to the limited account of the agricultural development of part of the castle site in 1830-1, the only significant archaeological intervention has been the excavation of part of the castle bailey ahead of the widening of the adjacent road in the 1960s (Mason and Barker 1966, 42-3, 49). In sectioning the ditch and bank the excavation revealed 70 undated post holes within the bailey area, while the suspected ditch was found in fact to be more akin to a stone-worn path while even the bailey bank appears dubious given its unstratified content of finds dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries (Mason and Barker 1966, 49-50). An area of embankment was identified in the present study in the north-west corner of the 'bailey' platform, which linked with a partially natural ridge bank to the west created a form of gateway connecting to a small terraced track leading down to the river edge to the south.

Summary

Quatford offers an interesting perspective on the development of an early castle-borough site. Evidence of pre-Conquest activity is not currently available; it is possible that a river crossing was extant in this period, which in turn influenced the selection of the site for development as a post-Conquest borough. This process was interrupted *c.*AD1100 as part of a transfer of settlement to the more accessible and less topographically restrictive site of Bridgnorth, potentially due to a combination of

political and economic factors. It is interesting that even in the conflict-prone region of the Welsh borders on a high-investment site such as Quatford that the castle consisted of a motte and an adjacent ridge-top area of settlement, with no bailey enclosure or any other evidence of defensive adaptation. In common with many urban castle sites, Quatford Castle utilised a position with a strong association with the adjacent river, a relationship that would be continued at Bridgnorth Castle.

WORCESTER (Fig. 6.5)

The origins of Worcester as an important medieval settlement lie in the Romano-British period when a small urban unit developed alongside the Severn, including an enclosed area around the site of the medieval cathedral and extensive extra-mural zones. The importance of the area in the medieval period is probably linked to its connection to the Severn and the viability of its river crossing (Baker and Holt 2004, 142). Documentary sources assert that an episcopal see was established in AD680, and it is implied that in addition to the precursor of the cathedral church, St Helen's and possibly both St Alban's and St Margaret's churches were extant by the early eighth century in a cluster at the southern section of the later medieval settlement (Dyer and Clarke 1969, 27; Baker and Holt 2004, 128). Worcester stands out as the site of a fortified *burh* in the unusual survival of a grant of rights of the bishop in the settlement, placing the construction of the settlement defences in the late ninth century (Dyer and Clarke 1969, 28; Baker and Holt 2004, 133-4).

Worcester urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

A probable pre-Conquest layer immediately north of the cathedral, potentially within its contemporary precinct, was tentatively recorded and found to contain significant quantities of burnt cereal with further unexcavated deposits below (Deeks *et al.* 2004). Little is known of the early church itself, although pre-Conquest burials have been identified during excavations around the complex (Clarke 1980). To the north of the cathedral at 15/19 Fish Street a long sequence of urban deposits were encountered beginning in the post-Conquest period, but again the depth of deposits meant that potential pre-Conquest levels could not be identified (Miller *et al.* 2002).
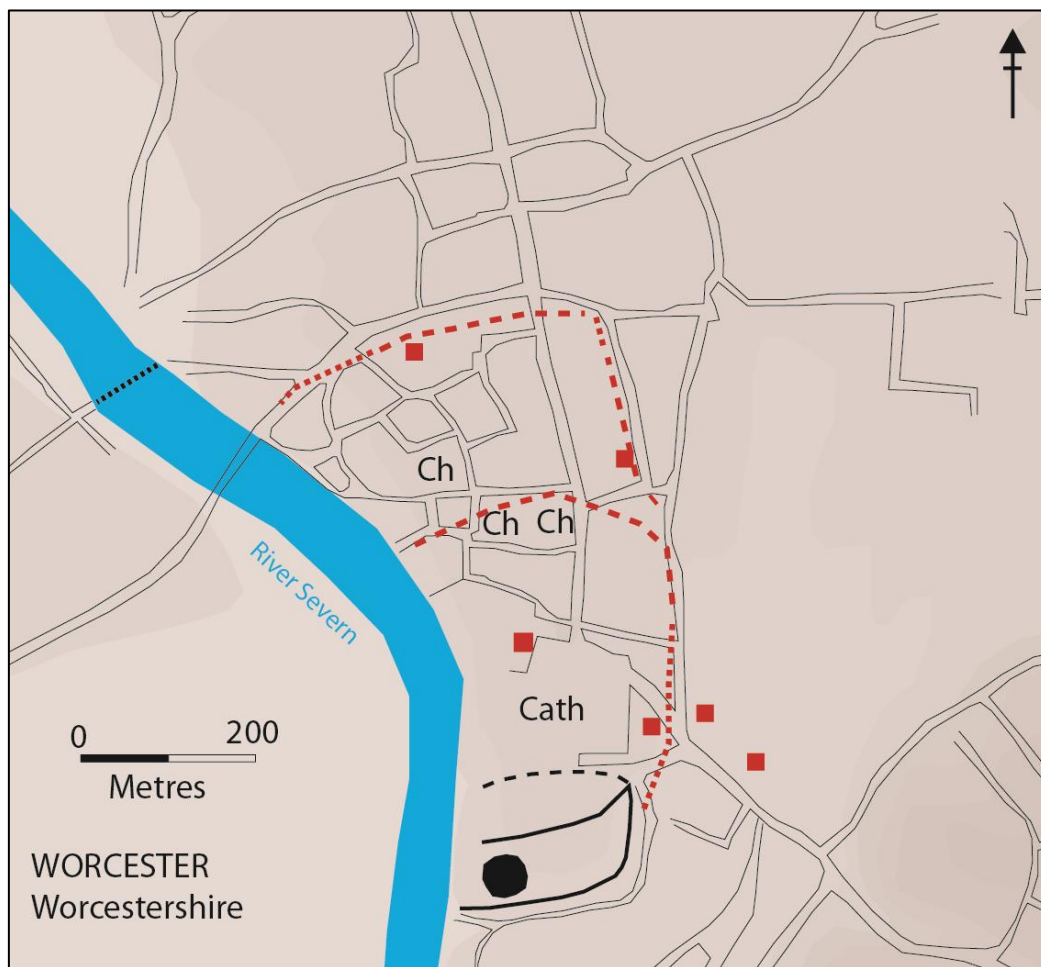
Figure 6.5 Worcester. The inner enclosure was created in the Romano-British period, with the upper segment added when the settlement was developed as a *burh*. The black stippled line indicates the position of the medieval crossing point, and the red squares areas where eleventh-century occupation has been recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Evaluations at the City Arcade site off the High Street did not reach the level of pre-Conquest deposits, but there remains a significant archaeological potential for the Saxo-Norman period in this area (Jackson and Buteux 1999). Subsequent excavation demonstrated this to be the case, including the discovery of the hitherto unexpected line of the probable short-lived *burh* ditch and subsequent activity including a number of iron-working hearths (Griffin and Jackson 2003). Similarly, a watching brief at the King's Head in the Sidbury area at the southern end of the late-medieval town wall circuit was unable to discount the survival of earlier medieval deposits (Miller and Jones 2001). Previously, excavations in the area had produced evidence of at least eight pit groups of ninth to eleventh-century date which strongly suggests occupation and settlement in the vicinity; previously it was unclear whether this area was located within the *burh* defences, but more recent analysis would seem to confirm that it was an intra-mural position (Carver 1980a, 165, 180).

The Warner Village Cinema site off Friar Street produced a single cess pit of eleventh-century date, while secondary deposits of worked stone imply nearby contemporary craft activity (Jackson *et al*. 2002, 64). To the east of Friar Street post-Roman occupation was recorded in a series of evaluation trenches from the twelfth century onwards, despite lying only 100m east of the cathedral precinct (Napthan *et al*. 1997). A similar medieval chronology has been recorded on the west side of Friar Street (Darlington 1989). North of the late medieval cathedral precincts limited evidence of post-Conquest activity has been recorded, but with a ceramic archive so poor as to only be assignable to the broad range of the eleventh to fourteenth centuries (Edwards 1989; Vaughan 2004). A single re-deposited ceramic sherd of pre-Conquest date from a limited evaluation of the Commandery site south-east of the inter-mural settlement

is currently poor evidence of settlement, although further deposits may survive around the post-Conquest hospital site (Goad *et al.* 2004). A single pre-Conquest sherd from the Hopmarket Yard site to the north-west of the identified *burh* defences as part of a wider programme of archaeological recording implies peripheral agricultural activity in the area with a relative intensification into probable horticultural, extractive and dumping uses in the later medieval period (Miller 1999; 2001).

The large excavations at Deansway provided evidence of the bank and small sample of ditch from the *burh* defences, as well as timber buildings, cess pits and lime-burning debris of ninth to eleventh-century date, with the latter settlement intensifying in the period through to the thirteenth century (Dalwood *et al.* 1992, 125; Dalwood and Edwards 2004, 55-7). Masonry remains of a potential twelfth-century first floor hall and associated complex have been recorded at the Elgar School of Music and an adjacent site to the south off Deansway (Wichbold 1996). Similarly at Sansome Street north of the late-medieval town wall extra-mural activity is not attested until the twelfth century, although this may have been agricultural rather than settlement (Darlington 1988). At 9 New Street activity along the line of the later medieval town wall dated to around the twelfth to thirteenth century, with potentially earlier evidence sealed below in unexcavated deposits (Patrick *et al.* 2002). Archaeological work at the medieval suburb of Lowersmoor is suggestive of activity and occupation beginning in the twelfth century (Cook and Williams 2004). Low levels of pre- and post-Conquest material have been recorded around Britannia Square to the north of the medieval historic core (Napthan 1993).

Worcester Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

Worcester Castle was situated at the southern end of the sand and gravel spur that forms the Worcester Terrace with the ground dropping down from north of the Cathedral church. To the south of the castle site was the confluence of the Frog Brook and the River Severn, next to which a crossing point of the latter known as the 'Diglis Ford' has been identified (Carver 1980b, 19). It is widely accepted that the castle consisted of a motte at its western end overlooking the River Severn; an inner bailey to the east; and an outer bailey to the north. A comparable parallel bailey layout is evident at the urban castles of Bedford and, less conclusively, at Guildford in Surrey (Baker *et al.* 1979; Poulton 2005). Documentary evidence indicates that it was constructed at some point before September AD1069 by the sheriff Urse d'Abitot, partially enclosing part of the Priory complex to the north which elicited criticism from leading contemporary ecclesiastics (Beardsmore 1980, 55). Surviving records implie that masonry buildings had been constructed on the site by the mid-twelfth century, and that by the time the outer bailey was returned to the priory the King's house was located in the latter area (Beardsmore 1980, 55-6). The castle had gone out of use as an elite centre by the early fourteenth century, although it would continue as the site of the county administration office, in particular as a prison, through into the nineteenth century (VCH 1971, 390). Stylised plans of the surviving portion of the motte and inner bailey in the early nineteenth century provide a basic sketch of its form, with the eastern end then dominated by the county prison, immediately prior to the destruction of the complex.

Early conjecture of the castle position in relation to the pre-Conquest defensive circuit took the view that the *burh* ditch may have divided the inner and outer bailey components (VCH 1971, 391). The growing body of excavation data is suggestive that the pre-Conquest defensive complex may have extended further south than previously

envisaged and thus bounded the southern perimeter of the castle (Barker 1969, 51; Darlington and Evans 1992, 32; Griffin 2004; Baker and Holt 2004, 142). In some respect the importance of the position of the *burh* defences is decreased by the data from the City Arcade site that the ditch had become largely redundant at some point during the tenth or early eleventh century (Griffin *et al.* 2004, 101-4). This is then followed by a period when activity on the urban defences cannot be characterised or securely dated before their widespread renewal from at least the early thirteenth century (Beardsmore 1980, 58-9).

There are no known elements of the castle upstanding at present, and what little is known stems from documentary sources. Excavation on the proposed site of the southern bailey rampart was prevented logistically from reaching potential medieval deposits while auger sampling suggested the rampart was absent or had been levelled at that location (Edwards 1989). Ultimately it is only the potential of future archaeological excavation on the site that is likely to elicit further details of its form and function, a position which itself is dependent on the extent of deposit survival since the partial abandonment of the site during the later medieval period.

Summary

The evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation at Worcester is of great significance. The defences of the *burh* were compromised during the eleventh century by the expansion of settlement, from which it can be inferred that the integrity of that enclosure was no longer essential. The imposition of the castle in the late-eleventh century still incorporated the earlier defensive system in its position at the southern end of the *burh*, and in doing so also was also established in a riverside context. It may be that the

premeditated need to establish a castle in this position by its builders caused the incidental encroachment over the adjacent cathedral complex to the north. The castle stood on lower ground the cathedral, and was therefore visually separate from much of the settlement, and was also sited in a position that avoided major infrastructure points such as the river crossing at the northern end of the town.

WINCHCOMBE (Fig. 6.7)

The origins of the settlement appear to be as a significant Mercian royal centre from at least the late eighth century, an important component of which was an early monastery linked to King Offa (Bassett 1985, 82-5). However, the identification of Romano-British deposits and an albeit small number of graves radiocarbon dated from the sixth to tenth century at the rear of 12 North Street may suggest a longer tradition of ecclesiastical activity and settlement than implied by the available documentary sources (Saville 1985, 106-7).

Winchcombe urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

Evidence has been gathered regarding the form of the pre-Conquest *burh* enclosure and the monastic complex of Winchcombe Abbey, with more limited investigation of the secular urban environment itself (Brock 1893). As well as revealing the topographical and architectural form of the town, this work enabled an initial characterisation of the historic urban form, as well as conjectural research on the origins of the town and its connection with the short-lived Winchcombeshire (Bassett 1985; Leech 1981, 96-101; Whymbra 1990).

Figure 6.6 The surviving bank of the *burh* at Wichcombe on the north-western side of the settlement. The rich earthwork evidence of the open area to the right was levelled to create a playing field in the 1960s (Source: Michael Fradley).

A *burh* rampart defence was established around at least part of the town, which despite the paucity of dating evidence is believed to have been established around the beginning of the tenth century (Fig 6.6). Excavations at Back Lane suggest, as at Tamworth (Staffs.), that it may in part re-use the line of an earlier ditch and conjectural bank which in this case was dated broadly to the eighth or ninth century and probably linked to the early Mercian monastic complex (Ellis 1986, 131-6). A section of the *burh* bank survives as an earthwork on the north side of the historic town running parallel to the south side of Back Lane, although its extent was reduced by development in the 1960s and 1970s. Conjectural accounts have been put forward regarding the full extent of the *burh* defences, principally encompassing a large area to the east, a line on the north or south terrace of the River Isbourne, and defined by the alignment of Malthouse Lane to the south west (Bassett 1985, 83; Ellis 1986, 96, 132-

5). Bassett's attempt to substantiate the interpretation of the later medieval townscape through the analysis of plot patterns would now seem a little crude in light of the urban morphology research of more recent historical geography (e.g. Slater 1990; Baker and Holt 2004). In particular, there remains controversy over the continuation of the settlement defences on the south side of the River Isbourne; recent archaeological evaluation around Almondsbury Farm has disputed this, although the results of the latter work have been challenged (Anon 2004; Bassett 2008, 221-4).
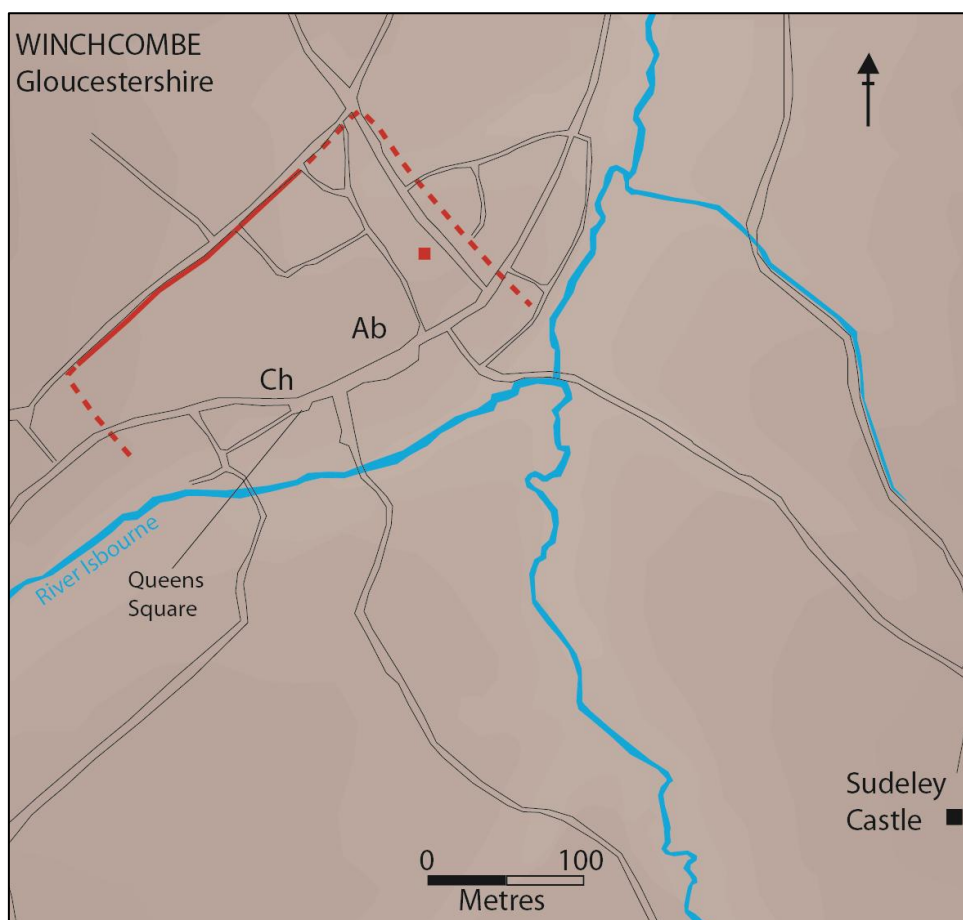
Figure 6.7 Winchcombe. The only pre-Conquest occupation identified is on North Street. Re-analysis of the settlement topography in the present study suggests the north-eastern defensive line may have run parallel to this road.

A potentially important identification stemming from field visits to this present study is the apparent survival of a large bank orientated roughly NW-SE beneath Chandos

Road prior to its junction with North Street which utilises a natural terrace with the ground beginning to drop away to the east. Although any continuation of this feature to the north-west or south-east has been removed by subsequent development, it is conceivable that this marks the return of the *burh* rampart from the west on the line of Back Lane. In part this interpretation is borne out by developer-funded interventions to the east which have to-date only identified later medieval features and material culture (Derham 2002; Thomas 2002; Barrett 2003a; Hicks 1999; Nichols 2003; Anon 2004). On the east side of North Street a single evaluation at Barebones Farm failed to identify an outer ditch, but did record a sealed, undated layer which could potentially have formed part of the body of the *burh* bank (Barrett 2001a).

Unfortunately, little developer-funded excavation has taken place in the vicinity of Winchcombe High Street, so there is currently no evidence with which to compare with that on the west side of North Street. There may be some value in an AD1857 report of a significant structure reported east end of Abbey Terrace following groundwork on the site in AD1837, although nothing to confirm the suggestion that this related to a medieval royal site, while the present name of The Old Mint House at 8 Hailes Street can likely be dismissed as a post-medieval misidentification (Donaldson 2001, 18, 23). Further west mixed results have been produced by investigations off Gloucester Street, including the remnants of a ditch measuring 1.72m wide by 0.45m deep aligned north-north-west to south-south-east at the rear of 55 Gloucester Street (Barrett 2003b). Although only a single fill was identified containing later medieval material, this linear feature could potentially relate to south-western perimeter of the early medieval settlement, as its position and orientation would fit effectively into the wider circuit. Even if this feature did form the south-western perimeter, it is clear from

work to the east on Gloucester Street that there is no evidence of dense settlement activity in what would have been part of the intra-mural area. In a number of investigations both east and west of 55 Gloucester Street there is only limited evidence of any medieval occupation, while in others the limited investigation brief ensured that the excavated area was not taken down to the level of natural deposits (Catchpole 2002a; Marshall 2001; 2003; Cullen 2002; Anon 2005a; Barrett 2003c; 2004a). The potential therefore remains that medieval deposits may be sealed beneath the later build-up of those sites which were not fully excavated, although the contrast with evidence recovered from North Street remains stark.

Winchcombe Abbey was a major component of the urban space both physically and economically. Excavated in AD1893, the later earthwork survey in 1963 and numerous subsequent investigations have identified probable fishponds to the north-west of the abbey as well as demolished ancillary buildings (Brock 1893; Ellis 1986, 98-9). No evidence of previous secular settlement has been redorded, which would imply that much of the area remained part of an abbey precinct throughout the medieval period. The abbey was re-founded by Bishop Oswald in AD969 at which time the adjacent parish church of St Peters may have been established. This may have also seen the redefinition of the abbey grounds, with evidence of a cemetery at 12 North Street replaced by probable secular domestic activity around the tenth century, and the identification of the probable precinct boundary from the same period west of Cowl Lane (Bassett 1985, 87-8; Ellis 1986, 97-105; Saville 1985, 107-8). Subsequent developer-funded archaeological evaluations in the area to the north of the church and in the vicinity of the surviving *burh* bank has provided further evidence of the later medieval abbey precinct, but no suggestion that the wider settlement ever extended into this area (Catchpole 2002b; Nichols 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2002a; 2002b; Heighway

1996; Barrett 2001b; 2002; 2004b; Bashford and Vallender 2002; Reilly 1995; Williams 2001; Havard 2000; Cox 1997; Goult 1998; Wright 2002; 2004c; 2004d; 2006; Anon 2005b; Thomas 1998; Derham 2001). One exception may be the later medieval features, including possible property boundaries, at the west end of this area adjacent to Back Lane (Anon 2005c).

Winchcombe Castle *c*.AD1050-1150?

A significant problem in considering the character of eleventh-century urbanism in Winchcombe and its relationship with the pattern of post-Conquest urban castles is the vague understanding of a conjectured castle site within the town itself. In the sixteenth century Leland claimed the castle stood south of St Peter's Church, traditionally beneath the seventeenth-century property known as the Jacobean House which stands at the west end of the open area known as Queen's Square, a name which hypothetically may be relevant (Leech 1981, 98). However, if this had been a castle site it has left no distinct topographical or archaeological trace, which would not be surprising if it was assumed that this was a short-lived Anarchy-period fortification, as is the case at comparable settlements such as Malmesbury (Catchpole 1993). Leland also recorded a report by the last prior of Winchcombe that a castle had existed east of the north-east side of the town.

The documentary recording of a castle at Winchcombe comes from the civil war period in the mid-twelfth century when the area was at the centre of conflict between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda when fortifications were also referenced at nearby Hailes and Sudeley (King 1983, 183-4). From AD1139-44 a number of references are made to conflict at the castle and town of Winchcombe, as well as the

refortification of the former (Donaldson 2001, 29). Speculation has also been made as to whether references to Winchcombe castle may in fact relate to the nearby site of Sudeley Castle (King 1983, 184). John of Worcester, for instance, makes no reference to a castle at Winchcombe, only noting that it was attacked and burnt by Miles of Gloucester in AD1140, and that these forces were in turn driven out by the royalist garrison at Sudeley (McGurk 1998, 282-3). In contrast, the *Gesta Stephani* records that King Stephen first took the castle in AD1139, returning again in AD1144 to take a castle that the Earl of Hereford had raised against him, and identifying specifically the castle mound which his forces stormed (Potter 1976, 94-5, 174-5). Whether these latter two castles were in fact the same fortification is unclear, while the existence of a castle at Sudeley and a conjectured site at nearby Hailes all combine to confuse the ambiguous references made by near-contemporary chroniclers (Brown 2006, 12, 26-7; King 1983, 183-4).

Summary

The presence of an urban castle at Winchcombe from the immediate post-Conquest years would not in itself be surprising. Its first appearance in the documentary record during the twelfth century and its traditional association with a location immediately south of St Peter's Church are indicative that if it did exist, it was a short-lived Anarchy fortification. This is interesting given that the settlement was recognised as an important urban centre in the eleven century, even if it was no longer a shire centre. It is likely that important evidence regarding the thought-process and socio-political context behind urban castle building may be revealed in sites such as Winchcombe.

TEWKESBURY

The late medieval settlement of Tewkesbury stands on low-lying ground alongside the River Avon near its confluence with the River Severn. As at Quatford, the development of Tewkesbury can be characterised as a post-Conquest urban settlement, although in this case without an association with a castle. Instead the town is dominated by a major abbey, and as such offers an interesting parallel with the urban power structure of nearby Winchcombe.

Tewkesbury urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

The Domesday Book reference for Tewkesbury appears to indicate the presence of a small embryonic urban community, potentially growing alongside the existing monastery that would be refounded as a major Benedictine abbey in AD1102 (Leech 1981, 90). Archaeological evidence of any pre-Conquest settlement form is limited, influenced partly by a lack of modern development around the abbey and historic core of the town. This area would have had the highest potential in yielding results of that date as the area known as Oldbury appears to relate primarily to an earlier Romano-British settlement (Heighway 2003, 3).

The only major site investigated is that excavated at the the Holm Hill site to the south of the town (Fig 6.9), which included the remains of a stone-built hall overlying the post-holes of a timber predecessor (Hannan 1997). Although the dating evidence for this sequence is not conclusive, it is largely accepted that the timber phase may have originated in the pre-Conquest period, indicating the presence of an elite secular unit in the vicinity of Tewkesbury. The association is not explicit, however, and it may have

been quickly replaced by the abbey as the principal elite authority in the immediate post-Conquest period, and its further augmentation in stone after that time may have been maintainance of a link of patronage with the abbey rather than any connection with the urban settlement. There is no evidence to suggest that the site was replaced or supplemented by a castle unit during the eleventh century or later.
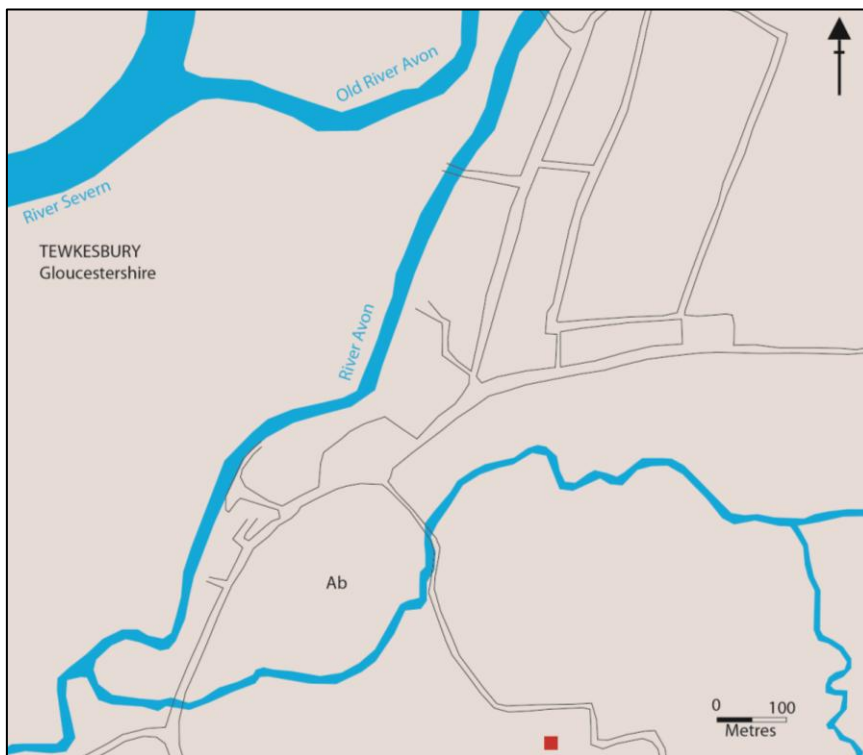
Figure 6.8 Plan of Saxo-Norman Tewkesbury (Source: Michael Fradley).

Summary

An embryonic market settlement may have been in existence at Tewkesbury in the pre-Conquest period. The archaeological remains of an elite secular site nearby have demonstrated that this site was utilised in both the pre- and post-Conquest periods, but was not redeveloped as a castle site in association with the developing urban centre. As at Winchcombe, major elite investment is directed towards a substantial religious complex in the form of a Benedictine Abbey.

Figure 6.9 A view of Tewkesbury Abbey from the high-status secular site at Holm Hill, spatially separated from both the monastic churvh and the embryonic eleventh-century borough (Source: Michael Fradley).

GLOUCESTER (Fig. 6.10)

Gloucester represents the only example of a medieval urban settlement along the River Severn region that heavily re-utilised a large, formal Romano-British settlement. Activity in the area of the Roman walls is attested archaeologically and historically as well as around the riverside New Minster site and the royal occupation of the original Roman fort site at Kingsholm to the north in the period *c.*AD700-900, with a distinct intensification in the following centuries (Heighway 2006, 219-24). The Old Minster of St Peter, later Gloucester Abbey, has a recorded foundation date of AD628 while the New Minster of St Oswald's was certainly formerly established by AD909, although the latter would diminish significantly in status in the post-Conquest period (Baker and

Holt 2004, 15-22). Unfortunately, the advent of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork has had minimal impact on the understanding of the Saxo-Norman settlement, although the lack of evidence identified by excavation may in part relate to the restricted expanse and density of contemporary occupation.

Gloucester urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

The archaeological evidence currently available appears to show a primary concentration of activity along the principal streets within the walls of the former Roman settlement and down to the riverside zone during the tenth century (Heighway 1984; 2006). By *c.*AD1100 this had intensified to include the spread of settlement in the western intramural area, the development of linear suburbs to the north-east and the major expansion of Gloucester Abbey. Excavated areas of the Saxo-Norman settlement include those at 1 Westgate Street, where significant post-Roman occupation is first recorded in the ninth century and intensifying into the later medieval period (Heighway 1979 *et al.* 165-70). As in so many *burh* settlements there is little evidence to confirm the occupation of the apparent planned street systems during the Saxo-Norman period. The archaeological evidence also suggests a spread of settlement in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, with occupation beginning at 13-17 Berkeley Street, 10 Eastgate Street, 22 Southgate Street, 63-71 Northgate Street, Matson Lane and the north side of Catherine Street (Hurst 1972, 43, 62-65; 1974, 39-41; Garrod 1984, 44).

The *burh* defences directly re-utilised of the former Roman wall circuit *c.*AD900 and a supposed concentration of new streets in the south-eastern half of the settlement (Heighway 2006, 219). The north and east gates both appear to have been rebuilt in

the eleventh century (Heighway 1983, 33). One theory concerning the form of the primary street running though the settlement suggests that it may have been a wide routeway encompassing both the original Roman road and the later medieval route to the north-east, and potentially including early churches (Heighway 2006, 221-4). This conjectured layout has clear and interesting parallels with the similar example described in greater detail at Wallingford.
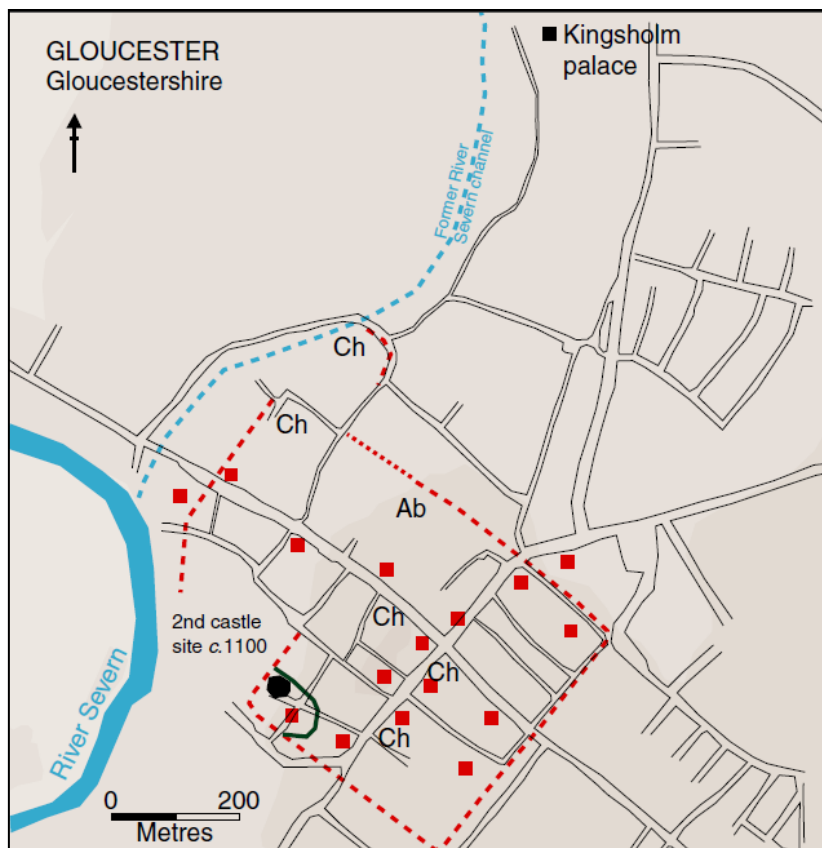
Figure 6.10 Gloucester. The red squares indicate sites where eleventh-century deposits have been identified (Source: Michael Fradley).

The palace at Kingsholm represents an important royal focus that brings into question the role of the post-Conquest castle in the south-west side of the intramural zone. Limited excavations on the site have identified a pre-Conquest complex on the same alignment as the preceding Roman settlement, apparently falling into dis-use in the early twelfth century (Hurst 1975, 274; 1985, 19-20, 94, 133). Although spatially

distanced from the core of the urban settlement it has been conjectured that the wide street of Hare Lane may represent a formally established ceremonial route between palace and *burh*, subsequently developing as a suburban ribbon settlement (Hare 1997). It has been argued that the construction of the castle removed the power focus away from the Kingsholm site, although this may be a simplification of a much more complex relationship between the two features (Heighway 1984, 379).

Gloucester Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

The urban castle at Gloucester is among the small number of examples in England where the site of the castle itself was moved, in this case moving from a position within the old Roman walls to an extramural location. Excavation of the first site identified occupation levels from the castle bailey and what was thought to have been the edge of the motte ditch, although subsequent investigations have suggested this was part of the second castle's barbican gate, built on an adjacent site in the twelfth century (Atkin 1991, 21; Darvill 1988). The importance of the latter evidence has not yet been fully realised. It suggests that the original castle was significantly smaller than previously realised and that any castle motte would have been a particularly small example for a castle located within a major urban centre. It had been conjectured that the first castle may have originated as a ringwork, subsequently developed as a motte-and-bailey form, which was used as evidence by English in her model of early urban castles (English 1995, 55; see also Hurst 1984, 80-1). This situation was not resolved by later fieldwork at the castle site, although no impression was given that the motte was a secondary addition, as only *c.*1m depth of material survived archaeologically from the castle mound which was poorly built over an unstable lens of sand (Atkins 1991, 22-3). The south-western extremity of the castle is believed to have been identified toward

the Commercial Road and Ladybellegate junction consisting of a clay-filled ditch at least 3.5m wide and 3m deep with late medieval finds in its upper fill (Hurst 1974, 12).

Understanding of the site of the castle has been further enriched by the excavations at Commercial Road which have shown limited evidence of pre-Conquest occupation including a ruinous Romano-British structure, which was partially robbed and possibly housing a farrier's workshop prior to the construction of the castle (Darvill 1988, 45-6). The lack of domestic occupation in this area of the town led Baker and Holt to suggest that demolished properties recorded in Domesday Book and the later Evesham Survey of AD1097-1101 may have been on the west side of Southgate Street to provide a wider field of view from the castle (Baker and Holt 2004, 63). However, there is currently no substantiating evidence to support such a view, which has been formulated as part of a model in which the role of the castle within the urban space was one of aggressive surveillance. The castle itself was actually located on land sloping down toward the River Severn, away from the highest ground in the central part of the city.

The date at which the first castle at Gloucester was abandoned and a new castle was constructed is not known precisely, but a reference to land acquired on which the castle *donjon* was constructed before AD1112 would imply the second castle was a standing entity by this date (Hurst 1984, 105). It is conceivable that construction could have begun on the later castle as early as the late eleventh century, as it is now the site of a prison and has not been subject to recorded archaeological excavation from which a more exact date could be gleaned (Heighway 2006, 224-5). Equally, it is not clear how immediately the site of the first castle was abandoned; only the upper levels of motte ditch could be investigated and these were found to contain thirteenth-century

material. At this date the adjacent Domincan Friary was granted land on the castle site, intially restricted to the outer bailey ditch and only allowed to further encroach on the castle site, not including those sections redeveloped as part of the second castle, following a later land grant of AD1246 (Baker and Holt 2004, 63). Rapid investigation of the south-western interior of the castle only identified a single phase of late eleventh to early twelfth-century occupation, including narrow stone wall foundations (Hurst 1974, 12). The area of the first castle investigated on Commercial Road lay within Crown ownership into the nineteenth century, the identification of a mixed soil above the castle layers implies that it reverted to an agricultural or horticultural use after the abandonment of the fortification (Darvill 1988, 19, 46-7).

Understanding why the original castle site was abandoned at such an early date is of key importance in grasping the function and relevance of the urban castle. A first step is therefore to distinguish some key differences between the two sites. The second castle was extra-mural and, like a number of other urban castles, was positioned by its builders in a more immediate relationship with the adjacent River Severn. The later castle was also substantially larger than the first castle, having reached an area of some 3.6ha by at least the mid-thirteenth century, comparable with the large royal urban castles at Hereford, Worcester and Shrewsbury (Baker and Holt 2004, 84). As at many urban castles, the second castle at Gloucester was utilised as the site of the county gaol until its demolition in the late eighteenth century and subsequent replacement with a new prison complex on the same site.

Summary

The first Gloucester Castle may be amongst one of the earliest urban castles raised in the post-Conquest period, perhaps in conjunction with sites in London and Winchester. In parallel with many urban castle sites it was built utilising the corner of an extant *burh* circuit, although, unlike its successor, the castle was not developed with an immediate relationship with the riverside zone. Why was the site abandoned in favour of that used for the new castle in an adjacent, riverside position? It may be connected to the demise of the palace at Kingsholm, although this does not explain why the original castle was not expanded or redeveloped. Spatially, the major factor appears to be the necessity for a riverside location, but additionally possible changes in the exact way these structures were utilised and their physical requirements since the construction of first castle may also be highly relevant.

BERKELEY (Fig. 6.11)

The settlement of Berkeley is situated on at the southern end of an elongated triangular plateau of marl and sandstone to the east of the River Severn. In contrast to the process outlined at Tewkesbury, an early monastic foundation was established at Berkeley which by the mid-eleventh century had developed an incipient market settlement. In this case the monastic house was not subject to significant renewal in the post-Conquest period, with the focus of elite power moving to a major new castle immediately to the south-west and an accompanying expansion of settlement northwards.

Berkeley urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

The principal evidence for the existence of an urban centre at Berkeley by the mid-eleventh century comes from Domesday Book which records the existence of a market in which seventeen men lived and paid dues (Moore 1976, 163b). Archaeological investigations within the later medieval historic core have been extremely limited, and have yet to provide any details about the medieval settlement. However, the ongoing Berkeley Castle Project has produced a range of new results which have detailed the condition of the eleventh-century settlement. Primary amongst this developing dataset is the identification of a large sub-rectangular enclosure ditch taking in a conjectured area of $c.3.7\text{km}^2$. The area was enclosed by a ditch, but is potentially double-ditched, its heavily truncated form has produced a coin of Edward the Elder (AD899-924), a mill stone and ceramics of early ninth- to early eleventh-century date (Prior 2005; 2006). Excavation of the interior has at present focused on the south-eastern quadrant which appears to have been the ecclesiastical centre of the settlement. At present it is not clear if this boundary relates purely to a pre-Conquest ecclesiastical community or a wider ranging *burh* enclosure appended to the existing settlement during the tenth century.

The evidence from the probable ecclesiastical centre has produced an interesting sequence of occupation. In the garden of the Edward Jenner Museum evidence of a Roman ditch was followed by a post-Roman midden layer, middle-Saxon pottery deposits, and a robbed masonry foundation whose demolition was sealed by finds of post-Conquest metalwork (Prior 2010). Any subsequent occupation was removed by post-medieval garden terracing, although a watching brief in the graveyard to the south has produced a tenth to fourteenth-century ceramic sequence. Re-used Roman brick and tile have been identified in various contexts in and around the vicinity of the church site and are highly suggestive of a high status centre from at least this early

period (Prior 2005). In the area west of the graveyard preliminary excavation has produced significant occupation evidence of twelfth to fourteenth-century date. Whilst this has yet to be fully excavated it has clear potential to hold secure evidence of pre-Conquest occupation (Prior 2010). A small wharf developed during the medieval period around Berkeley Pill which may have pre-Conquest origins as a landing place linked to the River Severn.
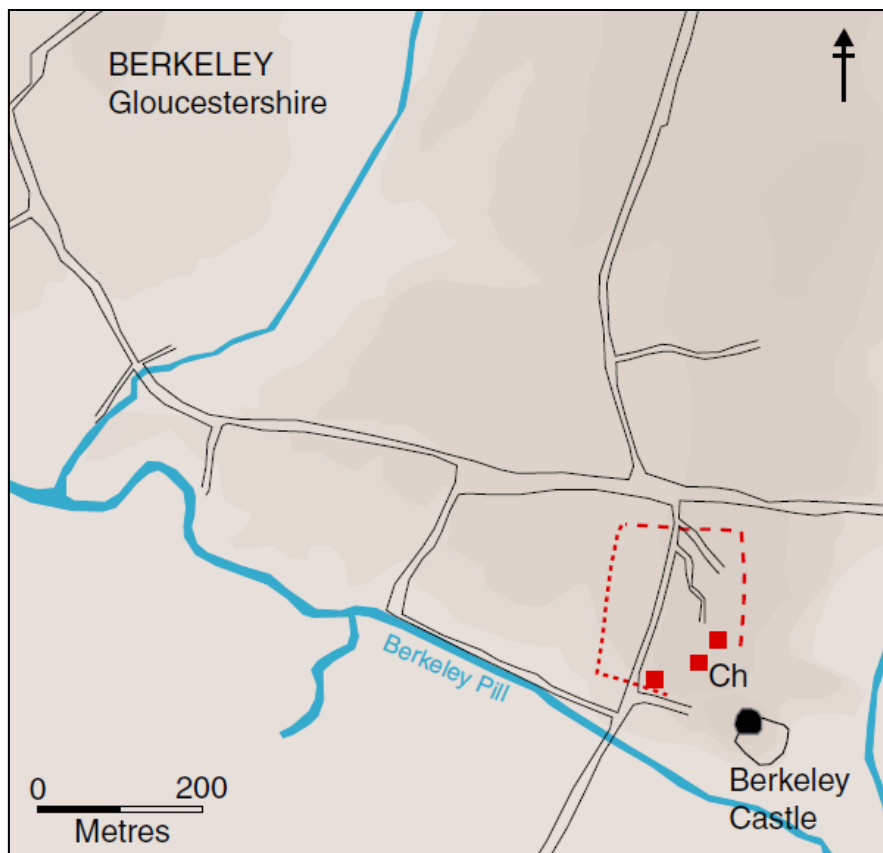
Figure 6.11 Berkeley. The red squares indicate sites where pre-Conquest deposits have been recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Berkeley Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

Berkeley Castle in its original form was a motte and bailey castle reputedly raised *c.*AD1067 by William fitz Osbern. At present the castle contains a range of masonry structures of various periods, including a twelfth-century circular shell-keep encasing

the earlier motte, and is still partially inhabited. There has been little archaeological attention given to elucidate the earliest castles phases or any previous activity on the site, except to establish that the motte was originally surrounded by its own ditch. Limited earthwork survey has suggested that abortive attempts may have been made following the initial construction of the castle to further enclose the church site to the north-west, while a small outer bailey was added to the same side of the castle in the thirteenth century (Prior 2005).

Summary

From a wider perspective and in the context of the evidence recently recovered it appears that Berkeley Castle was founded overlying or immediately south east of the conjectured pre-Conquest settlement enclosure. Understanding of the details of this relationship is hampered by a lack of conclusive evidence for the earlier enclosure, particularly along the southern face of the settlement. It is possible that this boundary was too small to warrant re-use as part of the castle defences, although avoiding encroachment on the ecclesiastical centre to the north-west while holding a prominent position on the plateau edge overlooking Berkeley Pill may be relevant factors. In contrast proximity to the settled areas of the enclosure interior and the market area north of the pre-Conquest enclosure was not a major influence on the choice of site for the castle.

BRISTOL (Fig. 6.12)

The historic core of Bristol developed on a tongue of land formed between the River Frome to the north and the River Avon to the south, a short distance east of the

Avon's entry into the River Severn. From an archaeological and historical perspective Bristol in the eleventh century presents a formidable subject of study. The town has been subject to an array of archaeological fieldwork, particularly in the 1970s, but has suffered from a chronic lack of post-excavation funding, synthesis and limited intervention in the historic core itself (Jones 2006, 189, 194-5).

Bristol urban settlement c.AD900-1150

The origins of the settlement are still unclear, and there is considerable controversy over the form, extent and even the existence of a pre-Conquest *burh* (Leech 1997, 18-9). One hypothesis suggests that Bristol may have originated as a royal mercantile enterprise in the tenth century when a possible road grid system was laid out with evidence of domestic and industrial activity recorded at the site of Mary-Le-Port church (Watts and Rahtz 1985, 16). Despite its conspicuous under-reporting in Domesday Book it had as a central place certainly eclipsed the royal manor of Barton, on whose edge it stood, by the early eleventh century (Moore 1976, 163b). During the eleventh century the town appears to have risen to prominence as the principal English port on the Irish Sea to the detriment of early centres such as Chester (Higham 2004, 168-9; Horton 1997, 10-11).

A number of Saxo-Norman deposits have been recorded throughout the historic core of the town, although the precise dating of ceramic sequences remains open to dispute (Brett 2005, 58). At the site of Bristol Castle an area of pre-castle structures, floor surfaces and a probable iron-working hearth were identified in the north-east corner of the fortified circuit, although only a small area was sampled within the logistical constraints of the excavation (Ponsford 1979, 234-48). To the north of this area of

occupation was a large ditch running east-west with a potentially degraded bank on its northern side, interpreted as the earliest pre-Conquest feature in the sequence. The function of the linear feature is not immediately clear and has no obvious relationship with the occupation area to the south; it will be discussed further in relation to the castle below. An additional pre-castle horizon was identified beneath the area of the castle's East Gate, but further project limitations prevented the investigation of these deposits (Ponsford 1979, 298). No equivalent areas of occupation or pre-castle buried soils were recorded in the small areas excavated at the western end of the castle complex. The importance of the pre-Conquest evidence identified is its challenge to previous theories that the pre-Conquest settlement was restricted to the peninsula to the west of the castle which would develop as the historic core of the later medieval town.
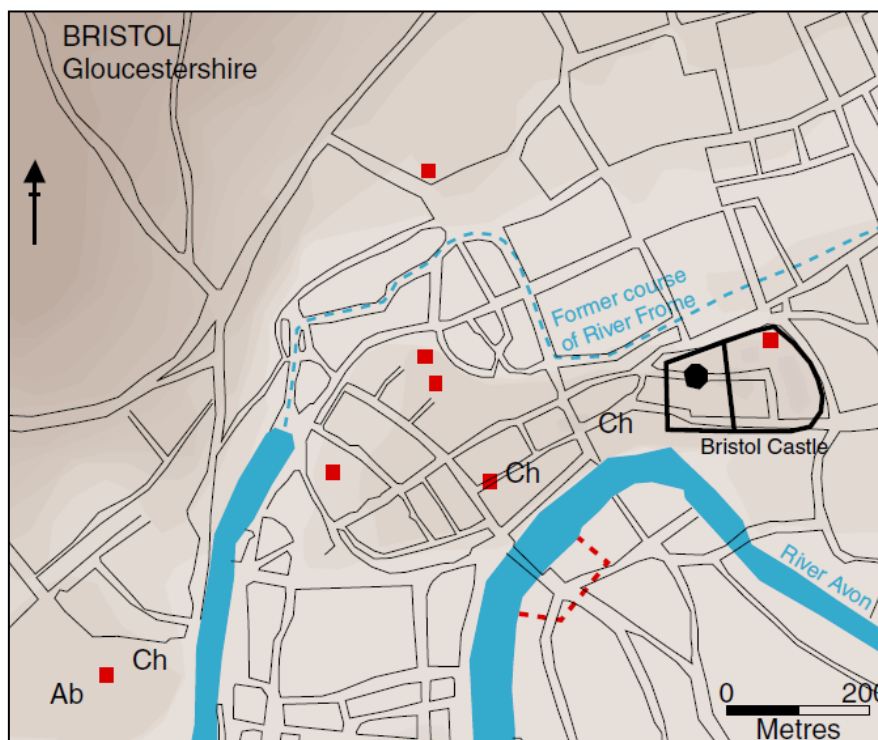
Figure 6.12 Plan of Saxo-Norman Bristol. The red stippled line on the south bank of the River Avon indicates the position of the bridgehead ditch. Red squares denote sites where eleventh-century occupation has been recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Morphological analysis of the urban settlement at Bristol has also led to conjecture that the area to the east of Bristol Castle, latterly known as the 'Old Market', was a zone of post-Conquest expansion (Lilley 2009, 152). This has been linked to the idea that a 'French borough' was established at Bristol, similar to those conclusively documented in contemporary records at Norwich and Nottingham (Drage 1989, 19; Williams 1995, 201-2). This consisted of a separate zone of settlement in which incoming settlers, primarily French in the documented examples, were offered preferable conditions of tenancy. However, there is at present a lack of archaeological or documentary evidence at Bristol to confirm the date at which occupation in this area was initiated.

Limited archaeological investigations within the later medieval historic core have identified sites of eleventh-century activity at the Crown Courts off Small Street, Fitzharding House on Tower Lane and an adjacent site on Newmarket Avenue (Brett 2005, 43-4). Evidence of potentially pre-Conquest eleventh-century settlement and activity has also been recorded at a number of later ecclesiastical sites beyond the perceived historic core of Bristol. Around the St Augustine Abbey site (the present Bristol Cathedral) material recovered includes a stone ecclesiastical relief dated to approximately *c.*AD1050 which may have derived from the nearby site of St Augustine-the-Less (Jones 2006, 194; Brett 2005, 47-8). Similarly, on the north bank of the Frome at St James's Priory, founded *c.*AD1129, evidence has been recovered of earlier activity, although it is poorly dated and does not as yet indicate dense occupation (Jackson 2006, 192). Late Saxon ceramics, along with evidence of timber and stakeholes was recorded at the site of the thirteenth-century St Bartholomew's

Hospital, with environmental evidence suggesting the area would have been dominated by woodland and scrub in the mid-eleventh century (Brett 2005, 51).

A major contribution has been made by excavations on the south side of the River Avon which have partially identified a bridgehead enclosure first hypothesised on the basis of documentary evidence for the area. A large curving ditch, 12m wide and 3m deep, has been excavated with a radiocarbon date suggestive of a construction date in the later tenth century, although already infilled by the early eleventh century and re-cut on a smaller scale at the close of the same century (Brady *et al.* 2009, 18-19; Leech 2009). Initial interpretation has principally followed the hypothesis conjecture that this feature forms part of a fortified bridgehead, the small portion of the interior having revealed no evidence of occupation although there is the possibility that there was previously an internal bank linked to the ditch. There is a suggestion of a line of post-holes on the internal side of the ditch, but it is not clear if this related to any form of revetment or palisade (Brady *et al.* 2009, 27). However, the presence of a small contemporary tributary channel on the east side of the ditch, and its rapid infill potentially through sediment deposits also indicates a drainage function, potentially protecting the bridging point from inundation, additional to its defensive purpose.

Bristol Castle c.AD1050-1150

In a close parallel to the positioning of Shrewsbury Castle, the castle at Bristol was located at the neck of a riverine peninsula, although again it is not clear whether the landward route into the town passed through the castle or along a route to the north. Bristol Castle itself was extensively slighted in AD1653-5 following the Civil War and subsequently built upon by the expanding urban settlement. This area in turn was

demolished and landscaped in the aftermath of damage caused during the Second World War (Fig. 6.7). It has subsequently been the subject of a number of unpublished excavations which have been synthesised as part of a postgraduate thesis, while its documentary history has also been subject to a short summary (Ponsford 1979; Fleming 2004).

Figure 6.13 Bristol Castle from the west across the River Avon. In the foreground is St Peter's Church. The castle was located in the open landscaped area to the right, and was only cleared of housing following the Second World War (Source: Michael Fradley).

Interpretation of both the development of the castle and its association with the pre-Conquest settlement is open to dispute. The original analysis of the excavated evidence suggested the first phase of castle construction was a sub-rectangular enclosure, followed at a later date by the construction of a motte at the western end, both phases preceding the levelling of the motte and construction of a masonry donjon

*c.*AD1137 (Ponsford 1979, 128-35). The distinction of these two early phases is not conclusive and is questionable on a number of levels including the assumption that the initial enclosure was walled in masonry, a characteristic largely unknown amongst the *corpus* of urban castles in their original state. Where masonry was utilised in late eleventh-century urban castle construction, as at Exeter, Colchester and Chepstow, principally it is found incorporated in major tower structures or gatehouses. This interpretation of the castle complex has also been disputed on the basis of the ceramic sequence, which has not been re-evaluated following the dendrochronological dating of the Dundas Wharf assemblages, to the extent that the pottery assemblage current pottery assemblage provides a poor scheme of absolute dating (Leech 1997, 19; Brett 2005).

What can be stated with certainty at Bristol is that a castle was established in the post-Conquest years that in part necessitated the demolition of some areas of pre-Conquest settlement. One element that has not attracted a significant level of attention is the identification of a large pre-Conquest ditch beneath and on the same alignment as the later castle rampart, excavated in the north-eastern corner of the enclosure. The ditch was *c.*1.6m in width and *c.*1.3-1.5m in depth, while the excavator suggested a bank on the north side may have been levelled in order to infill the ditch when it fell out of use (Ponsford 1979, 232-4). The ditch is comparable in scale to the double ditch previously identified at Dolphin Street, and, while large, is not comparable in scale with the *burh* ditches and ramparts known from other sites across England (Watts and Rahtz 1985). Its interpretation is not clear, and may well be relevant in understanding the choice of urban castle site at Bristol. It seems relatively clear that the castle maintained a boundary line established in the pre-Conquest period, although

both may have been influenced by the natural terrace across the crest of which they run.

Summary

In the later medieval period Bristol would be one of the most important urban centres in England. In spite of this prominence, the early development of the settlement remains difficult to characterise. Whatever its possible origins as a *burh*, by the eleventh century the archaeological evidence indicates a broad spread of occupation areas, possibly reminiscent of the situation previously recorded at Shrewsbury. As with the latter example, the castle at Bristol was erected across the neck of 'peninsula' landform. A possible 'French borough' may have been established to the east of the castle, although the chronology of such a development has not been demonstrated archaeologically.

Discussion

The River Severn region provides four examples which each represent a slightly different form of eleventh-century urban development and its association with a post-Conquest castle. Physically the connection between church and castle at Worcester is very close; the fortification is documented as encroaching upon the cathedral precinct. Potentially the castle could have taken this position in order to maintain a strong martial presence over Worcester Cathedral, although this location, adjoining the corner of the existing urban defensive circuit and the river at its downriver end is a common location chosen in urban castle siting. The castle also stands on the southern slope of the Worcester terrace and would have therefore struggled to dominate the

cathedral physically, and would have been cut off visually from much of the wider settlement to the north. The evidence would suggest that the position taken by the castle was dictated more by the location of the pre-Conquest defences and the river than either the church or the rest of the town, despite its proximity to the cathedral. There is similarly little evidence of the conscious development of a close relationship between castle and church, major or minor, at Shrewsbury, Gloucester or Bristol.

The position of the castle on falling ground at the periphery of the settlement core is mirrored at Shrewsbury, and raises interesting questions about visibility. In both cases, despite low settlement densities and structure heights, the castles would be in a poor inter-visual position in relation to the wider town and yet would have seemed relatively dominant from the river, or the surrounding rural areas. The two castles at Gloucester both stood below the highest ground around the settlement's axial crossroad, and similarly at Berkeley the castle is situated on the edge rather than the crest of the settlement plateau. Bristol Castle stands at the eastern end of the low plateau between the Rivers Frome and Avon, with the ground level rising slightly to the west. Inter-visibility with the associated settlement was on balance a low priority in the selection of sites for this group of urban castles.

At Bristol and Shrewsbury there is a clear relationship with the primary landward approach to the settlement not apparent at any other case study examples. The road appears to have passed through the former outer bailey of Shrewsbury Castle, which may subvert any clear notion of this area as a 'private' space. Certainly this is tentatively supported by the evidence from Quatford where the incipient settlement is likely to have been established in the 'bailey' platform to the east of the castle motte. Caution must be applied in reading too much into the roadside relationships at Bristol

and Shrewsbury, as the quasi-peninsula setting may have had a determining influence on the pre-Conquest defensive circuit which in turn structured the castle position rather than the landward approach. Reproachfully it has to be stated that no conclusive evidence of pre-Conquest *burh* circuits at either site, or at the topographically comparable sites of Durham and Stafford. But there is still very little evidence of any other urban castles being significantly influenced by the positions of major roads, and unsurprisingly the only other comparable example at Durham is similarly restricted topographically within a river loop. On balance the relevance of the roadside positions of Bristol and Shrewsbury may be overstated.

It is not possible on the basis of the present state of knowledge to discredit the existence of an urban castle in Winchcombe, and therefore its relevance to our understanding of the overall distribution of such monuments is not clear. Other purportedly peripheral urban settlements such as Tamworth were still subject to the imposition of a royal castle. If there was no castle construction at Winchcombe, or perhaps only a short-lived fortification in the mid-twelfth century, then its absence in the post-Conquest period could perhaps be linked to the expansion of the Benedictine Abbey in contrast to any active secular elite power in the town, although the manor itself would not pass to the abbey from the crown until AD1224 (Leech 1981, 96). There is a possibility that the evidence from Tewkesbury, where a castle was absent despite urban development in the immediate post-Conquest period and settlement importance in the pre-Conquest, gives some indication of the process at work in Winchcombe. In contrast, the pre-Conquest monastic house at Berkeley was heavily degraded in the period prior to the construction of a major sub-royal elite castle. It may be that where an urban settlement existed in association with a dominant

ecclesiastical presence, without the town being a key component in the shire administration as at Worcester, that the imposition of a castle was generally avoided.

Conclusion

Expanding the focus of the study from a single urban settlement to a regional one has allowed the urban castle to be considered in different light. While the level of detail and research of the individual sites is significantly reduced, it has enabled a discussion of the variability in both design and chronology. Common themes include the repeated choice of motte-and-bailey castle forms, although there is dispute over the original form of the castles at Bristol and Gloucester; the use of positions away from the highest positions and economic cores of the settlement; the long-term use of the county town castles as points of incarceration; and the utilisation of riverside locations. There are also conspicuous differences including the small scale and subsequent replacement of the first castle at Gloucester; the use of double baileys at Worcester and Shrewsbury; and the strong ecclesiastical link at Worcester. Importantly this regional case study also allows a consideration of wider urban developments during the eleventh century, including the urban expansion of sites such as Tewkesbury and Quatford/Bridgnorth in order to further contextualise the urban castle phenomena.

7 Urban castle foundations in the Rapes of post-Conquest Sussex

Introduction

An immediate observation on the urban landscape of Sussex *c.*AD1100 is the concentration along the coastal zone (Fig 7.1). This intrinsic link with maritime waters has meant that coastal change has had a constant impact on the commercial and political relevance of these settlements, the majority of which were located near tidal or river enlargements that were inherently prone to spit developments and silting (Woodcock 2003, 8). Inundation and the loss of seagoing accessibility were critical factors affecting all of the sites discussed. There has therefore been a greater degree of economic and political shift between settlements during the medieval period, as well as spatial shift of the individual settlements in response to these factors than witnessed in previous case studies. This is the case in some sense with all the sites discussed: Hastings, Pevensey, Lewes, Steyning/Bramber, Chichester, and perhaps to a lesser extent at Arundel/Burpham.

One element that marks out Sussex from other regional centres in this period is the sub-division and development of the county into a series of semi-independent Rapes held directly by members of the sub-royal elite. The question of whether these units represent a post-Conquest innovation or a pre-Conquest inheritance remains pertinent (Stafford 1989, 110); on balance the evidence would suggest a post-1066 introduction, but the earlier data is both minimal and inconclusive (Mason 1964). The individual Rapes developed their own sheriff offices, while pre-Conquest mints located in some of the settlements continued to strike coins through into the twelfth century. The relationship between castle, urban settlement and honour is imperfectly

understood, although it is accepted that they were closely linked during the study period.
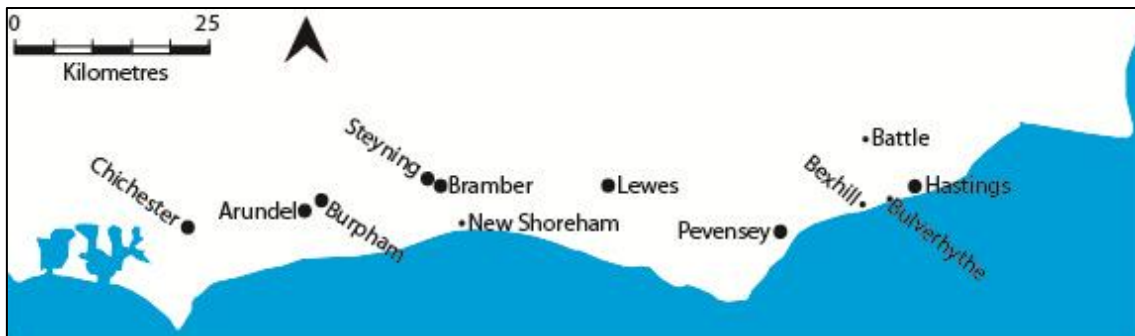
Figure 7.1 Regional location map of relevant sites in Sussex (Source: Michael Fradley).

The type of sites utilised as *burh* and urban foundations in Sussex is relatively varied. Chichester was the only former Romano-British urban site of those adapted as *burh* enclosures; Pevensey re-used the standing masonry walls of a former Saxon shore fort, while Burpham and Hastings were developed on the sites of prehistoric promontory forts. None of these earlier enclosures, with the exception of Chichester, exhibited any direct influence on the urban development of the settlements by *c.*1100. The *burh* of *Eorpeburnan* is listed in the Burghal Hidage and believed to be located in Sussex to the north or east of Hastings. Although a number of sites have been conjectured its location has not been confirmed archaeologically and cannot therefore be discussed in the following chapter.

Hastings (Fig. 7.2)

There is some dispute as to whether the *burh* at Hastings recorded in the Burghal Hidage is in the same location as the present town. An argument has been put forward that the actual site of the aforementioned *burh* was at Pevesney, and that at this early

date Hastings was a regional name, although this has not been substantiated archaeologically and will be disputed below (Combes and Lyne 1995, 213-4). Hastings had by the mid-eleventh century developed as a coastal settlement of some importance, with a mint alone amongst those of Sussex in having been known to continue to strike coins sporadically through into the post-Conquest period (Dudley 1978, 73). Landing points in the late eleventh century are documented at the head of the Bourne Valley, the Priory Valley and Bulverhythe (Harris 2010, 15), which in part encapsulates part of the problem of characterising the early settlement of Hastings as it appears to have consisted of multiple occupation foci across an extensive swathe of the seafront.

Hastings urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

At present the most probable contender for the site of the early medieval *burh* is at East Hill, a promontory fort of probable prehistoric origin at the eastern end of the Hastings seafront, with evidence of significant redevelopment in the early medieval period. The surviving earthwork rampart has been demonstrated to be multi-phased through detailed analysis of its surviving form, potentially including its redevelopment as a *burh* enclosure (Fradley and Newsome 2008). Extensive quarrying of the probable outer ditch to the rampart has unfortunately destroyed any evidence that could substantiate this position archaeologically (Bell 2004). Additionally there are accounts of nineteenth-century excavations that detail the discovery of around 40 inhumations with evidence of charcoal burials, encircling iron rivets and head side deposits including oyster shells and boulders (Ross 1857, 366; 1861, 308). A 30m section of masonry wall was also noted, and although there is an absence of illustrative plans, it seems probable that this excavation took place in the south-western corner of the hill, overlooking

Hastings Old Town (Fradley and Newsome 2008, 8-14). The burial descriptions are of particular import as they have consistent parallels with urban and high-status ecclesiastical internments of early medieval date (Holden 1974, 160-1; Hadley 2001, 98-9; Williams 2006, 122). This provides an interesting parallel with Dover with its enclosure situated in an elevated position, containing an ecclesiastical focus and overlooking a commercial settlement situated in a coastal valley (Coad 1995, 18-9; Phillip 2003, 123-5), although in the case of Hastings the abandonment of East Hill indicates a greater degree of settlement shift.
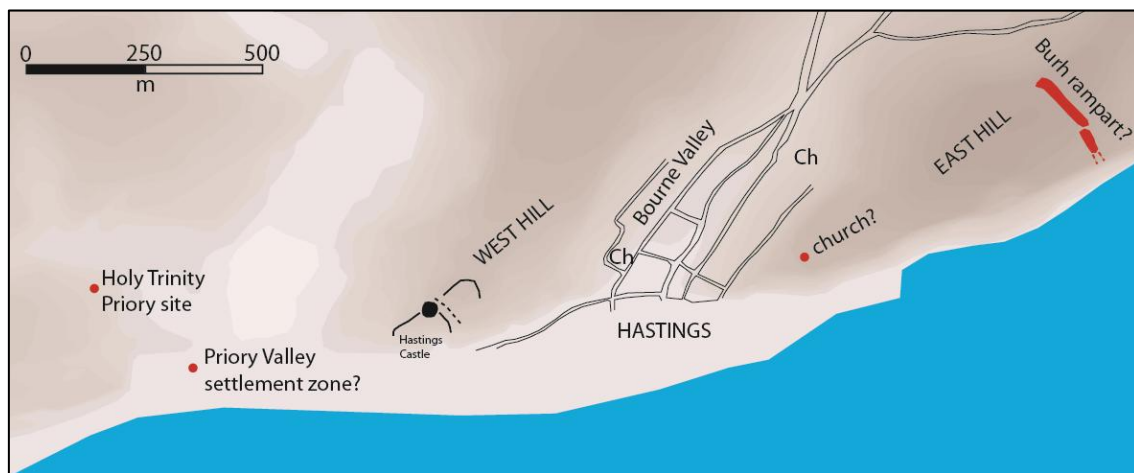
Figure 7.2 Hastings. The eleventh-century settlement may have consisted of several nuclei across the seafront zone. Bulverhythe was located a further 4km west along the coast (Source: Michael Fradley).

A key issue in the interpretation of the early settlement at Hastings has been a paucity of early medieval archaeological evidence, in part due to limited investigation within the well-preserved late medieval historic core of the Bourne Valley and the substantial development of the Priory Valley area in the nineteenth and early twentieth century without any form of archaeological monitoring. Medieval settlement has not been identified archaeologically at either Bulverhythe or the Priory Valley areas. The only exception is the site of the Augustinian priory that stood on the periphery of the latter

zone; the church has a documented foundation date later twelfth century, which is borne out by the archaeological evidence (Martin 1973). The primary evidence for the relevance of the settlement in the Priory Valley during the Saxo-Norman period is the documented concentration of churches in this area, as well as a possible chapel at Bulverhythe, which appear to have become depopulated and abandoned during the later medieval period in favour of a more nucleated single settlement centre in the Bourne Valley (Harris 2010, 17-20).

It is speculated that earlier settlement in the Bourne Valley was located at its southern, coastal end, which was partially inundated in the late medieval period and linked with a retreat of occupation further north beyond the late insertion of the town wall (Rudling and Barber 1993). Early excavations failed to identify any significant occupation prior to the thirteenth century, although residual pottery of eleventh and twelfth-century date was recorded at the Phoenix Brewery site (Devenish 1979; Rudling and Barber 1993, 88). Investigations at 7 High Street failed to identify any archaeological features of medieval date (Stevens 1998; Jones 2000). The location of the later medieval town wall, largely accepted as being of fourteenth-century date, indicates the formal extent of occupation at this period (Ribboconi 2008).

Hastings Castle c.AD1050-1150

The remains of a medieval castle stand at the south end of West Hill, with fragments of masonry surviving within the enclosure of a motte-and-double-bailey (Fig 7.3). An original inner bailey at the southern extreme of the complex has been partially lost to coastal erosion. The construction of the castle was depicted on the late eleventh-century Bayeaux Tapestry, and was investigated as part of the Royal Archaeological

Institute's research project on the origins of the castle in England in the later 1960s (Barker and Barton 1977). Although this work failed in its principal objective of ascertaining whether the motte was a primary feature of the castle, it did recover Iron Age material from the outer castle ditch allowing the assertion that the outer line of the bailey in part re-used a later-prehistoric hilltop enclosure.

Figure 7.3 Masonry structures in the interior of the inner bailey at Hastings Castle. The gorse at the left of the image indicates the area at which the cliff edge has been cut back by erosion and landscaping (Source: Michael Fradley).

There is no evidence that the prehistoric rampart was re-worked prior to the development of the castle, for instance as the outer enclosure of the documented pre-Conquest *burh*. Contemporary accounts suggest that Duke William of Normandy set his men to restore the defences of Hastings after landing in October AD1066, implying that they were in a state of decay (Abel 2001, 29; Chibnall 1969, 168-71), although it is

likely that this overstates the case given the ambiguities of terminology relating to fortifications in this period. Limited archaeological work ahead of the castle visitors centres recorded no features, but did identify a single sherd of West Sussex ware of tenth or eleventh-century date in addition to a complete sequence of eleventh to fourteenth-century pottery (Pontlin 1989). A case has also been presented based upon later medieval documentary evidence that the college developed within the castle complex in the late eleventh century was a re-foundation of a pre-Conquest church, although this argument is not conclusive (Taylor 1969; Harris 2010, 16-7). On balance the evidence is suggestive of at least a limited occupation of West Hill in the pre-Conquest period, as might be expected of such a prominent area in relation to the extended settled coastal zone, although this does not appear to have included a contemporary refortification of the prehistoric promontory fort.

Excavations of the castle motte proved unable to define archaeologically whether it was a primary feature of the complex. The thesis of castle development constructed by English asserted that those fortifications raised during the early Conquest period in campaign conditions were principally ringworks, the historical narrative suggesting that the time and resources necessary to construct a motte would not have been available (English 1995). This included the example of Hastings, with the results of the 1960s excavations cited; it has even been questioned whether the castle documented as built in the wake of the Norman landing at Hastings was even situated on West Hill. In response it is relevant that the original castle motte was formed of a poorly consolidated sandy composition, an observation that was met with surprise by the excavators schooled in the military effectiveness of the northern French forces. The motte was also enlarged, perhaps as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth century, so that the original mound was a significantly smaller feature (Barker and Barton 1977).

Summary

Although it has been questioned whether the present site of Hastings Castle was that documented as being raised in AD1066, there is currently no substantive archaeological evidence to suggest that it was located elsewhere. Its re-use of the enclosure of a redundant prehistoric promontory fort could be conjectured as reflecting a need by its builders to rapidly develop a campaign fortification, although the motte could still be a primary component of the castle complex. In light of this interpretation the castle seems to have been situated in a prominent location on the possible site of a minor pre-Conquest settlement on West Hill. This site eschewed a direct physical relationship with the poly-focal coastal settlements in the Priory and Bourne valleys, and at Bulverhythe, as well as the speculated *burh* enclosure site on East Hill. Conversely it would have maintained a relatively strong visual link with all of these disparate areas.

Pevesney (Fig. 7.4)

An Anglo-Saxon settlement at Pevensey developed within the shell of a late Roman Saxon Shore fort. In the early medieval period its position was remote, being situated on a shingle spit adjacent to the coast and otherwise bounded by salt marshes (Woodcock 2003, 6-8). Coastal change and extensive drainage and reclamation schemes from the later medieval period onwards have dramatically altered this situation, giving the current impression of Pevensey as a small inland centre.
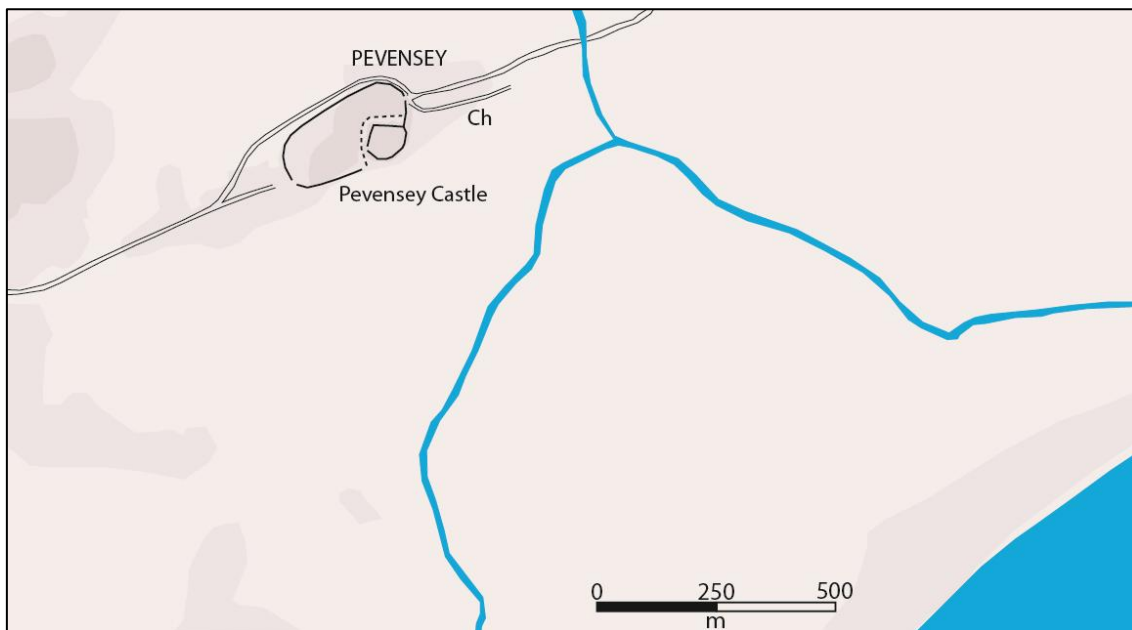
Figure 7.4 Pevensey. The development of the castle within the enclosure of the Saxon Shore fort necessitated the transfer of the pre-Conquest settlement to the area around the Church of St Nicolas to the east (Source: Michael Fradley)

Pevensey urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

Early medieval settlement has at present only been recorded in the interior of the former Roman fort, or otherwise immediately beyond its gates. Evidence of re-occupation has been recorded at Pevesney from the seventh century onwards, developing into a centre for fishing and salt production by the mid-ninth century (Lyne 2009, 41). This evidence is derived from a number of excavations in the early twentieth century, consisting of records of occupational material and pits, with no buildings identified. This work was confined to the interior of the Roman fort, although pre-Conquest pitting was also recorded immediately beyond the east gate (Harris 2008, 24). As at Hastings it has been argued that a pre-Conquest ecclesiastical focus may have been extant within the intramural area and subsequently adapted for use in the post-Conquest castle, although again this position cannot be proved or

substantiated (Taylor 1969). At present there is no evidence of significant, dense occupation continuing into the post-Conquest period.

From the twelfth century onwards there is a growing body of archaeological evidence for occupation to the east of the castle along the High Street (e.g. Dulley 1967). The church of St Nicholas is first documented in the early twelfth century, but could feasibly be a pre-Conquest foundation (Harris 2008, 15). The earliest sequence of occupation, potentially beginning in the late eleventh century, has been recorded adjacent to the Old Farmhouse (Wood and Place 1995; Barber 1999). Evidence of twelfth to thirteenth-century activity has been recorded at Church Farm, while ceramic material dating from *c.*AD1150-1350 was recovered from the Post Office Cottage site (Greatorex 2000; 2005). There is no obvious evidence that the economic basis of the settlement altered between the pre- and post-Conquest periods, although data from the earlier occupation contexts of the intramural zone is limited. It is clear, however, that there was a major movement of settlement eastwards during the post-Conquest period, and that the only convincing explanation for this is the imposition of the post-Conquest castle incorporated the entire walled circuit of the Saxon Shore Fort at the expense of the pre-Conquest settlement.

Pevesney Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

A castle was documented as being established at Pevensey following the initial Norman landing of AD1066, thereby it is probably the first castle founded by Duke William in England. It is probable that this castle occupied the same site as that which developed during the late medieval period, and may have likewise consisted of the entire expanse of the earlier Roman fortification with a smaller, inner enclosure developed at its

eastern end. This latter area was also developed in masonry from a relatively early date in at least the early twelfth century. It is not clear to what extent the outer enclosure of the Roman fort had been maintained in the early medieval period, prior to its redevelopment as a castle; observations of pre-Conquest masonry repairs are poorly dated and could feasibly relate to post-Conquest patching (Harris 2008, 14-22).

Figure 7.5 An external view of the masonry enclosure of Pevensey Castle's inner ward (Source: Michael Fradley).

Any primary evidence of the original inner enclosure at the east end of the castle complex has been largely masked by the subsequent development of this area in the later medieval period. Limited excavation within the castle inner bailey interior has failed to record any pre-Conquest occupation; it is possible that this has been removed during the construction and development of the castle, although surviving Romano-British deposits below seem to indicate that this is not the case (Lyne 2009, 61). Excavations from 1992-5 tentatively identified a possible early motte feature within the castle complex, potentially levelled during the subsequent development of the site as a masonry enclosure (Freeman 1994, 7; Fulford and Rippon 1995). Subsequent analysis has reconsidered the evidence to suggest that it was actually the remnant of an original

earthwork bank of the castle, and that this original inner enclosure may best be characterised as a ringwork. Pevesney Castle is architecturally interesting in that a prison chamber has been identified in the gatehouse basement which may date back at least to the early twelfth century (Chapman 2007, 111-2).

Investigations in the outer bailey area that had provided such extensive pre-Conquest occupational evidence have conversely produced little post-Conquest data, indicating that this space was maintained primarily as an open area during the late medieval period. The settlement chronology as it is presently understood demonstrates a shift to the extramural area to the east of fort, certainly by the twelfth century. This would seem to indicate a motivation from the elite in control of the castle who deemed that the entire fort interior was required as part of the complex. It cannot be ruled out that the extramural location was desirable in offering greater land opportunities and economic sustainability for the borough, and the presence of a market place in the later medieval period in the zone between castle and town would seem to indicate a continued link.

Summary

Based on the present evidence it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the development of a castle complex from AD1066 onwards was the direct cause of a single-phase settlement shift to the extramural zone. The presence of the church east of the castle may indicate that an extramural settlement was already developing in the pre-Conquest period, which could be substantiated by future archaeological fieldwork in this area. However, the creation of a large castle, utilising the Roman fort as an outer bailey with a probable ringwork at its eastern end, stimulated the dramatic

exodus of settlement eastwards. In some respects the post-Conquest situation is similar to that observed at many contemporary castle boroughs, with a market place adjacent to the castle gates connecting to an area of roadside settlement.

Lewes (Fig. 7.6)

The modern settlement of Lewes is located on the banks of the River Ouse and is the county town of East Sussex, although it did not have a comparable prominence during the Saxo-Norman period. A documented *burh*, it was established as the head of its eponymous Rape in the early post-Conquest period. The town has been relatively well sampled archaeologically, although it has produced limited evidence relating to the relevant study period. An early focus may have been on a minster complex, in the case of Lewes at the potentially extramural site of St John-sub-castro. The port facilities of Lewes, like so many of the pre-Conquest settlement centres in Sussex, would prove inadequate and the town appears to have suffered at the advantageous position of Seaford which in turn would be replaced by Newhaven (Harris 2005b, 13-4).

Lewes urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

Several conjectured reconstructions of the pre-Conquest defensive circuit of the *burh* have been attempted. The only probable section so far identified has been recorded on the west side and parallel to St Nicholas Lane, with an associated ceramic sequence spanning the ninth to eleventh centuries and an early tenth-century coin hoard (Stevens 2008, 5). This ditch section had fallen out of use and been in-filled by the twelfth century, although reconstructions of the early *burh* topography have suggested that the western and southern circuits may have continued in use as part of the later

medieval town wall enclosure (Holmes 2010, 76-7). Efforts to excavate the surviving bank of the western defences along Keere Street and Westgate failed to fully penetrate the archaeological deposits, and therefore could not provide any evidence that it was first raised as part of the *burh* circuit (Rudling 1983). Excavations to the north-east of the town on the line of a conjectured branch of the medieval defensive circuit have convincingly demonstrated that no such feature existed (Freke 1975; 1976; Thompson 1967). Investigations on the southern line of a bank and ditch around St John-sub-Castro in fact recorded a twelfth-century date for the feature, which was possibly cut as part of an undocumented fortification of the church during political disturbances of the Anarchy (Freke 1975).
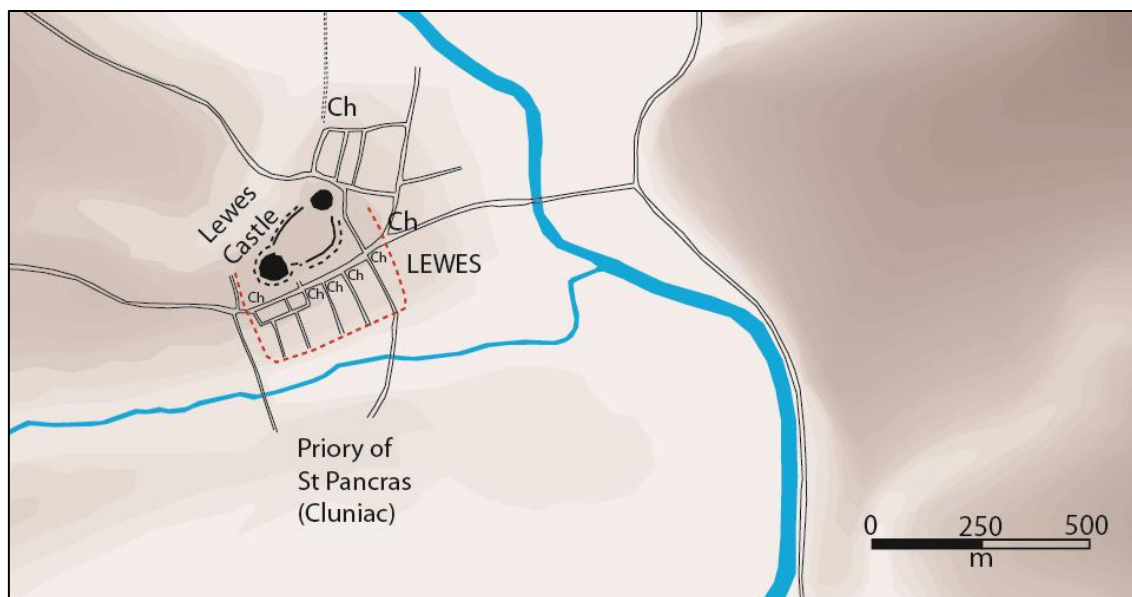
Figure 7.6 Lewes. The unusual double-motte form of the castle may have developed out of the re-use of two of a string of pre-medieval tumuli that previously existed as far north as the Church of St Jon to the north of the *burh* (Source: Michael Fradley).

Excavation within the area of the postulated *burh* perimeter has been limited, primarily to the area of the castle where no conclusive pre-Conquest evidence has been recorded. At present the majority of evidence for Saxo-Norman occupation comes

from the eastern side of the settlement. Rubbish pits of this date were recorded on the east side of North Street, with similar material reputedly retrieved from the poorly-reported Naval Prison site on the west side of the same road (Freke 1976; Norris and Thompson 1963). A cut feature at the north end of St John Street included material of late eleventh or twelfth-century date, but no pre-AD1200 finds were recovered from earlier work on Edward Street (Griffin 2005; Page 1973). A number of excavations around the School Hill area on Brooman's Lane and Friars Walk have recovered evidence of eleventh to twelfth-century occupation, none of which is conclusively pre-Conquest and is therefore suggestive of an area of post-Conquest suburban development (Freke 1978b; O'Shea 1980; Locke 2001; Rudling 1983; Russell 1990).

Topographically Lewes is relatively distinct amongst its Sussex neighbours in that a well-gridded street system survives in the area of the probable intramural area of the *burh*. A lack of archaeological work in this area has meant there is limited detail regarding the date and character of occupation within this street network. The post-Conquest castle appears to be imposed over fragments of a continuation of this grid system into the northern part of the *burh*, which suggest that it was laid out in the pre-Conquest period. An indication of the prosperity of the settlement is also by contemporary church numbers, which had reached at least ten by the early twelfth century, while a significant elite investment was made in the form of a major Cluniac priory to the south of the *burh* (Harris 2005a, 36).

Lewes Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

The motte-and-bailey castle complex founded at Lewes is distinct due the presence of two separate mounds situated at the eastern and western periphery of the bailey enclosure. It has never been conclusively demonstrated archaeologically whether the two mottes were contemporary, primary components of the complex, or whether they were added in sequence as has been the case of the similar phenomenon at Lincoln Castle (Reynolds 1975). In the latter example a small motte was added in the twelfth century to the east of the larger, presumably original motte, with the secondary addition conjecturally linked to the conflict of the Anarchy period. Conversely, at Lewes there has been a tendency to view the smaller, eastern motte as primary, supplemented and replaced as the castle focus by the larger western mound. There is no conclusive evidence for the latter narrative, and it would seem unusual that a second motte would be added, rather than a masonry tower of the form increasingly encountered on developed urban castle sites from the AD1070s onwards. Exceptions do exist; for instance the second motte added at Lincoln Castle, although the examples at Lewes are more integral elements of the overall castle layout (Vince 2003, 172). It has been suggested that a prominent prehistoric or Romano-British barrow cemetery was located along the northern periphery of the medieval settlement and that two barrows may have been incorporated into the castle circuit and raised to form the two mottes (Bleach 1997), which may go some way to explaining the peculiarity of the site.

Large-scale excavations on the castle site have been limited to the crest of the south-western motte, where early masonry elements can be identified within the standing structure. Herringbone elements in the remnants of the castle gatehouse, the plan of which has been excavated, as well as the curtain wall to the west along the southern circuit of the bailey could be of late eleventh-century date (VCH 1940; Harris 2005a,

32-3). Similar constructional techniques can also be observed in the elliptical shell-keep on the crest of the south-western motte. Extensive excavations within the interior of the south-western motte has recorded two phases of a pre-AD1200 arrangement of two opposed structures, probably a hall and kitchen, with the rest of the area otherwise open (Drewett 1992). Small-scale excavations following subsidence on Brack Mount identified a substantial chalk-lined well, although no dating evidence was recovered (Thomas 2001). It is not clear whether a masonry structure also crowned the Brack Mount, although the presence of the well would suggest that it is probable. Excavations within the bailey have been limited, developer-funded interventions that have not revealed any medieval evidence relevant to the present study (James 2001; Riccoboni 2004).

Figure 7.7 The western motte and masonry shell keep of Lewes Castle (Source: Michael Fradley).

Summary

On the basis of present evidence it appears that the position of the early medieval settlement at Lewes remained relatively stable into the post-Conquest period,

particularly compared to the situation at Hastings and Pevensey. It must be emphasised, however, that this is based on a heavily conjectural characterisation of the pre-Conquest settlement, with only limited archaeological evidence of the *burh* enclosure and occupational data currently available. Within these constraints the castle is located in a typical peripheral position to the north of the settlement core, although lacks a direct physical connection to the River Ouse. The unusual double-motte arrangement may have derived from the idiosyncrasies of the site which may have led to the incorporation of two barrow mounds into the complex. It is not currently possible to comment on the chronology of their development or their relationship, if any, with the changing urban settlement form.

Steyning/Bramber (Fig. 7.8)

The settlements of Steyning and Bramber are both located on the west side of the River Adur in what is now West Sussex. The origins of substantial settlement at Steyning are as an important early minster, although this was spatially and politically encroached upon by secular urban settlement between the ninth and eleventh centuries (Blair 1997). The relationship of the Rape of Bramber, created *c.*AD1073 at a slightly later date than the majority of Rapes, to the settlement of Steyning was complicated by the fact that the manor of the latter had come into the possession of Fecamp Abbey, possibly in the immediate pre-Conquest period. The establishment of the settlement of Bramber a short distance to the south-west in the post-Conquest period appears to have been established as a result of the tensions caused by this division of landholding.
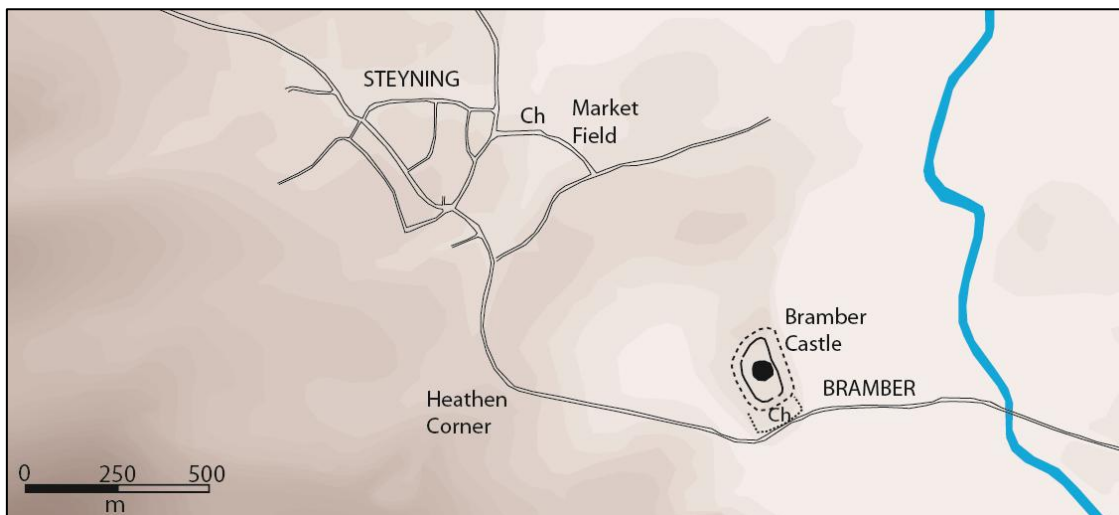
Figure 7.8 Steyning and Bramber (Source: Michael Fradley).

Steyning and Bramber urban settlements *c.*AD900-1150

Excavations at Steyning have produced some of the most complete evidence of a pre-Conquest urban settlement in England. One possibility is that it began as minster church with associated settlement, but with increasing evidence of settlement during the tenth century, and it had reached the status of an important local centre by AD1086 (Harris 2004a, 13, 21). The accidental discovery of burials of probable Late Saxon date at Vicarage Lane Cottage provides a fairly strong indication that the church graveyard was previously more extensive than at present (Harris 2004a, 19). Two further Late Saxon burials recorded at some distance from the settlement at 14 Coombe Drove have conjecturally been linked to a nearby Heathen's Field, and interpreted as part of a peripheral, judicial cemetery of an administrative boundary that preceded the later Steyning/Bramber parochial division (Tod 2001; Hayman and Reynolds 2005, 251).

Excavations demonstrated the presence of a tenth-century high-status settlement component at the Market Field site, consisting of a ditched enclosure with a double-gate that was abandoned in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, while Saxo-Norman settlement was identified to the west and the south-west of the church (Gardnier 1993a; Gardiner and Greatorex 1997, 169-70; Barton 1986; Harris 2004a, 21). Nearby excavation at Fletcher's Croft car park revealed several large eleventh to twelfth-century enclosures, but little evidence of dense settlement occupation, and is possibly linked to a similar pattern of features to the north-west on the Steyning Museum site (Evans 1986; Reynolds 1992). To the south of Fletcher's Croft three Saxo-Norman timber buildings have been recorded at Coombe Court fronting on to School Lane, although at least one building was a rebuild of another (Gardiner and Greatorex 1997). Saxo-Norman pits containing pottery and possible industrial waste have been recorded off Tanyard Lane; while a rich assemblage further south may include potter's waste (Freke 1979; Bennell 2000). Excavations at the Tester site on White Horse Square only produced residual Saxo-Norman pottery, nor were features recorded at evaluations on Penfold Way, Bidlington on the High Street or the St Andrew's Hall site on Jarvis Lane, although the latter was heavily disturbed by the impact of a post-medieval brewery on the site (Gardiner 1988; Beresford 1993; Greatorex 2002; Anon 2001). On the north side of Tanyard Lane, at its western end, a residual pottery sequence beginning *c.*AD1100 would seem to indicate that the Saxo-Norman settlement did not encroach into this area (Gardiner and Greatorex 1997).

There is little evidence of pre-Conquest settlement at Bramber apart from a small number of ceramics recovered from excavations at the castle site. The documentary context implies that it was an immediate post-Conquest development by William de Braose as the head of his new Rape, and in part competing with Steyning which was

largely held by Fecamp Abbey and replacing an earlier river-crossing settlement at Botolphs to the south (Harris 2004b). Ironically both settlements would be eclipsed by the post-Conquest development of New Shoreham during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which was far superior as a sea-going port (Harris 2009b). There is little evidence of post-Conquest settlement beyond the church of St Nicholas, although significant evidence of timber piling of late eleventh or twelfth-century date associated with the bridge causeway and possible wharf (Mabey 1958; Holden 1975; Gardiner 1993b). The area adjacent to the causeway has similarly been built up to create an artificial platform on which much of the roadside settlement stands, although there is no dating evidence currently available to consider this geomorphologic development in the immediate post-Conquest period. A series of poorly recorded archaeological observations in the area south of the castle have also been used to support the conjecture that an additional outwork formerly encompassed the area around the church, potentially including an embryonic post-Conquest settlement (Harris 2004b; Barton and Holden 1977, 17-8).

Bramber Castle _c._AD1050-1150

Bramber Castle is of a motte-and-bailey form, subsequently developed in the later medieval period as a masonry structure. The remnant of the motte, which appears to have been partially levelled following a relatively short life-span, appears in an unusually central position within the natural platform of the bailey. The motte may have been abandoned in preference to the adaptation of the castle's northern gatehouse into a great tower in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. As part of this development a ditch was excavated to create an inner, northern enclosure linked to the new focus on the extended northern gatehouse (Barton and Holden 1977, 24-5). Architecturally

there is extensive evidence that the castle was being built in masonry during the late eleventh century, again potentially from its foundation, although archaeological excavation has demonstrated issues of instability that caused the collapse of sections of the early walls (Kerr 1987; Barton and Holden 1977, 22-4).

Figure 7.9 The surviving section of masonry wall in the bailey of Bramber Castle (Source: Michael Fradley).

As stated above, there remains an unconfirmed theory that a former outwork enveloped the area south of the castle including the church of St Nicholas. The church was initially developed as a college as witnessed at Hastings and Pevensey, although as with the latter this proved short-lived, in this case because it proved politically impossible to carve out a separate parish from that of Steyning (Harris 2004b, 18). The church was subsequently retained as a castle chapel, finally achieving full parochial

status by the mid-thirteenth century, by which time the relevance of Bramber and Steyning as settlements had waned and the urban interests of the Rape of Bramber had long since focused on New Shoreham. A comparable situation to that of Bramber and New Shoreham can potentially be identified across the channel in Normandy between the castle-borough at Arques and the maritime settlement of Dieppe, where investment in fortifications in the twelfth century was limited to the town defences, and a castle was only installed in the fifteenth century (Lardin 2006, 75). A similar situation may be evident to the north-east in the relationship between the lordship centre at Eu and the seaborne town of Le Tréport (Fig. 8.2).

Summary

Political tensions seem to be a key factor in the stalling of settlement growth at Steyning, although issues of maritime access may have equally inhibited long-term development. It is impossible to know whether the high-status enclosure at Market Field would have been selected for the site of a castle, had the settlement been available as the head of a Rape in the late eleventh century. The shift of the settlement focus westwards, and presumably a level of economic contraction, has meant the early medieval settlement has had only a limited impact on the later medieval topography. There is further evidence of early masonry construction at Bramber Castle, as well as the connected foundation of a collegiate church as witnessed at Hastings and Pevensey. Attempts to create a castle-borough at Bramber in direct competition proved equally restrictive, with little archaeological evidence of significant growth. The rise of New Shoreham, linked to the Rape of Bramber, would seem to indicate that the restrictive growth of both the settlement of Bramber and Steyning was in a sense inevitable due

to the constant economic need for an effective link to the sea regardless of the political situation further inland.

Burpham/Arundel (Fig. 7.10)

A late ninth-century *burh* is thought to have been established at Burpham, although its history and early role are poorly documented. Traditionally Arundel has been considered a post-Conquest foundation, largely replacing any role Burpham may have previously held as a central place further down the River Adur. This narrative has been muddied by alternative theories that Arundel may have been established as a *burh* at the expense of Burpham during the tenth century, although this has not been substantiated archaeologically. The Rape of Arundel, which included Chichester and its district, was held in the late eleventh century by Roger de Montgommery, who also held the county of Shropshire as discussed in the previous chapter.

Arundel and Burpham urban settlements *c.*AD900-1150

Archaeological excavations within the promontory fort at Burpham have indicated that occupation continued into the post-Conquest period, but too little data to confidently characterise it as an urban settlement (Sutermeister 1976). The location of the church immediately north of the fortified centre and the core of the present settlement strung out along the roadside to the north-east are suggestive of a gradual shift out of the *burh*, perhaps as its relevance as a central place decreased. It does not suggest a wholesale shift of settlement to the post-Conquest centre at Arundel, although the latter clearly experience significant growth in comparison to Burpham during the later

medieval period. Additionally an associated Late Saxon judicial cemetery may have been identified at nearby Peppering (Hayman and Reynolds 2005, 251).
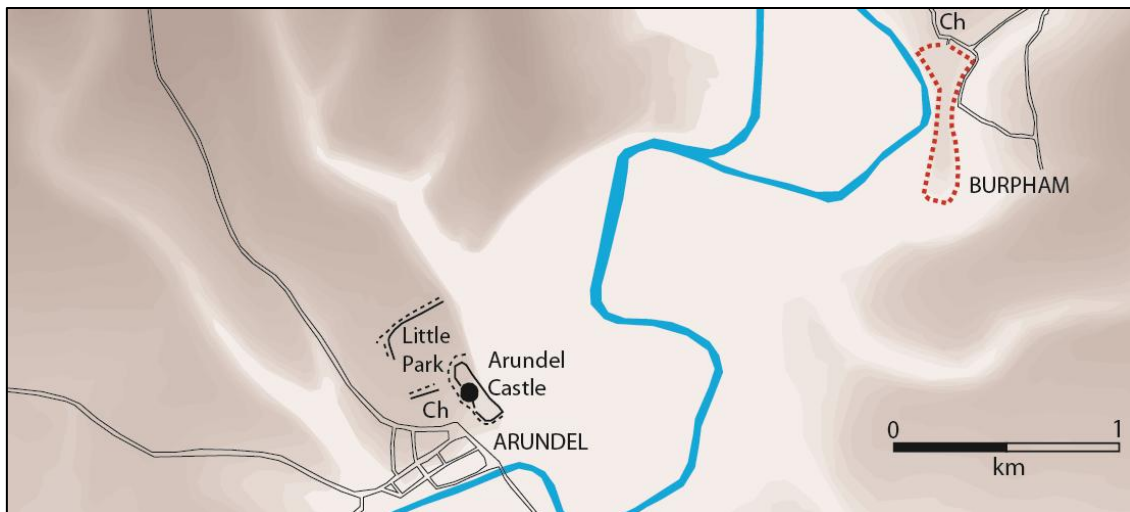
Figure 7.10 Burpham and Arundel. The medieval park was located in the west of Arundel parish (Source: Michael Fradley).

There is no archaeological evidence of a substantial settlement at Arundel in the pre-Conquest period, although a possible minister church and attendant area of occupation are likely to have existed. Conjectured interpretation that an early *burh* may have corresponded in part at least to the Little Park enclosure adjacent to the castle has not been borne out by limited archaeological excavation in this area (VCH 1997, 28; Place 1992; Kenny 1993), instead indicating a date of construction contemporary with the post-Conquest fortification. Conclusive archaeological evidence of pre-Conquest occupation has been recovered from Burpham, although sampling of the site has been too limited to confidently characterise the form of the early settlement (Sutermeister 1976).

It is expected that any early post-Conquest settlement focus will have been in the area around the High Street, in area between the church and the River Arun. St Nicholas

appears to have originated as a minster in the pre-Conquest period (Harris 2009, 27), although there is no detailed evidence of any contemporary settlement. Archaeologically there has been limited investigation within this historic core, so there is at present no archaeological evidence available to further characterise this area. Excavation has currently only identified occupational deposits from the thirteenth century onwards, apart from ceramics of eleventh- to twelfth-century date recovered from alluvial deposits at the base of the bridge causeway (Kenny 1995; Harris 2009a, 30, 33).

Arundel Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

Arundel Castle consists of a central motte with bailey enclosures to the north-west and south-east. The structure of the castle continues to be inhabited in part, was subject to extensive building campaigns into the early twentieth century. Surviving early masonry elements include a Pulborough stone gatehouse south of the motte whose simple form could suggest a late eleventh-century date, implying that elements of the castle were built in stone from its foundation or that subsequent conversion was relatively rapid (Harris 2009a, 30). Other elements, including the circular keep, are arguably of early twelfth-century date based on the extant architectural features visible, giving some indication of the level of investment in the extensive structure during this early period. Conjectural interpretations as to the sequence of bailey development have yet to be substantiated archaeologically; it is feasible that both are primary components, a level of monumentality in keeping with much of the Arundel complex.

Figure 7.11 The motte and shell keep of Arundel Castle (Source: Michael Fradley).

Archaeological excavations on the periphery of the Little Park, the title of which and any association with deer is only recorded in the early fourteenth century, immediately west of the castle have demonstrated that it was an early component of the castle complex of late eleventh or early twelfth-century date, with at least one masonry gateway (Place 1992; Kenny 1993). Its original purpose is unknown, although it is the probable site of vineyards recorded in the mid-twelfth century; it is possible that it had a combined ornamental and economic function as part of its original design (VCH 1997, 54). This associated enclosure is a very unusual component of the early castle complex for which there are no immediate parallels. The limited documentary evidence available suggests that it defined an open space into which access was restricted, providing a specialised zone used for horticulture and pasture, before its conversion into a distinct 'little park' in the early fourteenth century. A large park was established in the west of Arundel parish in a position distant and detached from the castle, reputedly founded in the late eleventh century (VCH 1997, 52). Elements of the earthwork complex of the Little Park have been removed and levelled during the twentieth century; analysis of the early Ordnance Survey 25" map editions of the area may indicate it was multi-phased as the southern boundary bank has a ditch on its northern, 'internal', while the northern boundary bank is ditched 'externally' to the

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north and continues westwards. Alternatively, these supposed discrepancies may relate to a series of specialist, compartmentalised functions over a more extensive area than currently realised.

Summary

Arundel exhibits the characteristics of a castle-borough more than any of the other sites within the Sussex study zone, reflecting its principal expansion in the post-Conquest period. Eschewing the existing centres at Burpham and the more substantial settlement at Chichester, Arundel gives the impression of a conscious development of a regional, elite centre with little reference to any pre-Conquest pattern of elite settlement. The expansive castle, associated parkland and elite landscape components mark it out as distinct, and although maintaining a major riverside connection as with so many other urban castles, its associated settlement was primarily a post-Conquest, unenclosed development.

Chichester (Fig. 7.12)

Chichester differs from the other early urban centres of medieval Sussex in that it was not designated the centre of a Rape until the mid-thirteenth century (VCH 1997, 1), by which date its castle had almost certainly been abandoned. In the pre-Conquest period there appears to have been a dispersal of settlement foci between the intramural settlement of Chichester, the port at Pagham Harbour, the diffuse landing points of 'Chichester Harbour' and the cathedral at Selsey, although the latter was transferred to the south-western quadrant in Chichester on the of a probable site of an existing monastery in AD1075 (Munby 1984, 315-22; Taylor 2003, 161-2).
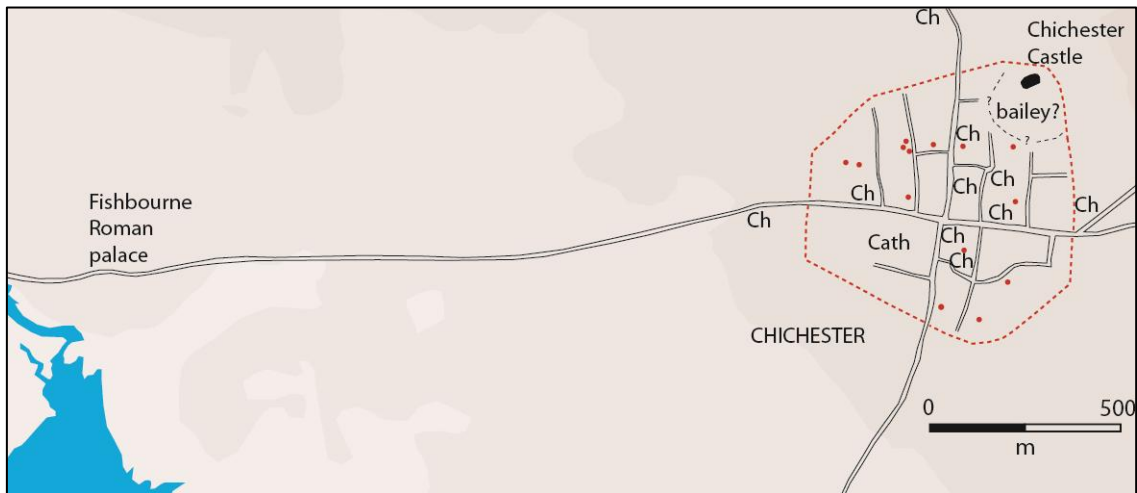
Figure 7.12 Plan of Chichester, with the edge of Chichester Harbour illustrated to the south-west. The red dots indicate locations where eleventh-century deposits have been recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Chichester urban settlement *c.*AD900-1150

The *burh* of Chichester re-used the earlier walls of the Roman town in their entirety. The settlement had no direct access to marine waters, but was listed as a port and maintained strong links with landing areas to the east and south. Internally within the intramural area there is greater evidence of a gridded street system in the northern and eastern sections of the town. This is paralleled by a similar concentration of medieval churches, although there is presently limited evidence of which churches were pre- and post-Conquest foundations (Munby 1984, 327). It has been conjectured on the basis of the limited documentary material available that the early king or earl's residence at Chichester would have been located in the north-western quadrant, replaced in the post-Conquest period by the castle and, more prominently, the new centre of Arundel (VCH 1935, 82-3).

Pre-Conquest ceramic evidence has been principally obtained from the area west of the northern axial road and on both sides of the primary eastern street (Jervis 2009). A pre-Conquest structure with associated pottery and loomweights was recorded in the grounds of East Pallant House (NMR: 245794). A series of early eleventh-century clamp kilns were excavated off Chapel Street alongside settlement remains running from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries (Down 1981, 136-42). A similar sequence was encountered off Tower Lane with pottery production possibly spanning from the early eleventh to the early twelfth century, with more domestic occupation only occurring subsequent to the end of ceramic manufacture on the site (Down 1978, 158-64).

Chichester Castle *c.*AD1050-1150

The concentration of churches in the north-eastern quadrant of the intramural area would seem to provide an indication that the castle was inserted into the central area of occupation within the settlement. An absence of significant archaeological intervention on the castle site prevents any more substantial discussion of its impact on the pre-Conquest townscape. From the fragmentary standing remains it is possible to reconstruct the castle enclosure as consisting of a motte at its northern end and bailey to the south. A house and chapel were recorded at the site during the twelfth century, and a prison was installed in AD1198 during a period in which the castle was in the hands of William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke and sheriff of Sussex (VCH 1935, 79-80). A brief record of an excavation on the castle mound in the early nineteenth century interpreted the mound as a Romano-British barrow (Bleach 1997, 133), although this is likely to be an incorrect assumption given its intramural position.

Certainly during the late eleventh century Chichester is likely to have been of secondary relevance compared to the major complex of Arundel Castle at the head of its Rape. In these circumstances it is possible to suggest that Chichester Castle may have been founded prior to the construction of Arundel Castle, as well as the decision to make the latter the head of the post-Conquest Rape. The castle was documented as order to be dismantled in AD1217, and as at the original Gloucester Castle it may have been largely deserted prior to its redevelopment as a friary before AD1269 (VCH 1935, 79-80). Archaeologically the site has not be investigated to modern standards, and unsurprisingly little survives topographically given its subsequent use as a friary and at present as levelled park.

Summary

The castle at Chichester perhaps offers the most typical example of an urban castle imposition amongst those examined in Sussex. Located within the angle of the existing *burh* enclosure, itself a re-used former Romano-British circuit, it is only a lack of an adjacent water course that prevents it fulfilling the major criteria. Existing evidence suggests that it was erected in an area of relatively dense settlement, although an absence of excavation on the castle site itself limits the characterisation of pre-Conquest occupation within its footprint. There is little to suggest any major investment in the development of the site; its brief use as a county gaol site and relatively early demise are again common themes of the historical trajectory of many urban castles.

Discussion

The development of urban castle sites in Sussex provides further details of the array of processes at work in the late eleventh century. This case study zone includes two of the earliest documented sites in England, those at Pevensey and Hastings developed in the period preceding the Battle of Hastings, although it cannot be conclusively demonstrated that either site relates directly to those recorded as part of the present study. A more substantial theme, and one which demonstrates continuity with previous case studies, is the issue of settlement fluidity. This process is notably diverse in the various examples in Sussex, from the relative stability of Chichester and Lewes, to the localised shift at Arundel and Pevensey, coalescence at Hastings and the tenser, competitive link between Steyning, Bramber and Shoreham.

It is possible that the variety and scale of settlement development in Sussex may relate in part to its peculiar tenurial structure in the form of its division into Rapes, combined with the relevance of access to maritime waters. Coastal change within the study period of *c.*AD900-1150 clearly had an impact on the development of Hastings and Pevensey, while access to tidal waters was an essential characteristic of all the medieval centres discussed. But this is not to suggest that Sussex was in some sense inherently distinct from the wider English kingdom, which similarly demonstrates only a broad homogeneity with regard to the chronology and scale urban development.

Fluctuating settlements

An apparent theme of the Sussex case studies examined in this chapter is the repeated occurence of settlement translocation, in some cases to relatively virgin sites. The use of the term 'shift' is questionable; Arundel and Bramber were separate entities from Burpham and Steyning respectively. They were founded and developed, with limited

success in the case of Bramber, in a model that would traditionally be characterised as a castle-borough settlement. In this case, however, Arundel and Bramber actively mirror the role of regional centre exhibited at the neighbouring settlements of Hastings, Lewes and Pevensey. A comparison can possibly be drawn with Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Carlisle and, later, Lancaster in the north of England, although the nature of pre-Conquest settlement at these sites is imperfectly characterised. It brings into question the applicability and efficacy of sub-castle terminology such as 'castle-borough' and 'urban castle' which provides only a classification of the context of castle foundation rather than the nature of the functioning settlement. The risk is that the terminology obscures as much as it reveals.

The process of shift as it occurred at Pevensey is particularly interesting in the sharp movement of settlement from the intramural zone to an area of extramural roadside occupation. The movement was apparently absolute, and the resulting topographical situation is closer to that of an original castle-borough foundation as at Bramber, with its roadside settlement leading away from the castle gates. A more static narrative is recorded at Chichester and Lewes, and it is in these contexts that defensive *burh* ramparts and remnants of gridded pre-Conquest street systems have remained central within the settlement composition. In part, the lack of directly associated river system at Chichester and the relative stability of the River Ouse at Lewes have contributed to this occupational continuity. At Hastings the characterisation of settlement is one of wide dispersal across several landing zones, with the conjectured *burh* of East Hill having potentially already fallen redundant in the pre-Conquest period. The process by which this settlement came to be largely nucleated in the Bourne Valley is on a different scale and with very different incentives, for instance the overarching influence of the sea and coastal morphology at the latter, than that recorded at Huntingdon.

Urban lordships

The Rapes of Sussex and their corresponding castles and urban settlements are relatively distinct in their status as semi-autonomous, compact territories, although comparisons could be made with the post-Conquest earldoms of the Welsh borders and the honours created in northern England. There is some scope for considering castle foundations in Sussex as somewhat distinct in the scale and continuity of investment into the development of these structures, despite disruptions in the personnel of the lordships. This is exemplified at Arundel; the choice of the site of a former minster at the expense of both the *burh* at Burpham and the extensive polyfocal complex of Chichester was a statement in itself. The creation of a monumental castle, with its double bailey layout, associated and potentially ornamental outwork in the form of the 'Little Park' and its extensive parklands are in keeping with the concept of an elite landscape. Masonry components of the castle were being constructed in the late eleventh century, and even included work on the Little Park gatehouses at a date when the majority of castle foundations were still of earth and timber construction.

By way of contrast there is little evidence of similar investment by Roger Montgomery, lord of Arundel, at Chichester Castle, although interpretation is hampered by an absence of archaeological excavation. Similarly, there is a lack of early masonry work at Roger's holdings of Quatford and Shrewsbury as Earl of Shropshire; Shrewsbury Castle motte was still crowned by a timber structure in the thirteenth century (Baker 2003, 14-15). There is a recurrence of early masonry construction at most of the sites discussed in Sussex, which arguably constituted design elements as envisaged at

foundation by their various builders. Collegiate churches established at Hastings, Pevensey and Bramber add to the view of a permanence of lordship investment that has not been encountered in majority of urban castles discussed previously in this study; the castle-borough of Quatford representing an understandable exception alongside Leicester Castle which was also held as a semi-autonomous honour (VCH 1958, 375). At Arundel and Bramber, the case studies which display most clearly the characteristics of a castle-borough, there is also archaeological evidence of infrastructural development in the form of bridge causeways and wharf structures.

The semi-independence and theoretical continuity of hereditary holdings in the Sussex Rapes offers some explanation to the scale of investment encountered. For example, however, it has been noted above that the similarly independent earldoms of the Welsh border do not display a corresponding ostentation in the early design of their structures. An additional factor may therefore be the geographical connection of the Sussex coast and northern France, and its relevance as a landing point and interface between the two geopolitical zones. The core French estates of the counts of Eu, lords of Hastings, stood almost adjacent across the Channel, while Hastings would remain a prominent royal landing point throughout the late eleventh century (Harris 2010, 18; Green 2006). Building techniques and the extent of transfer of personnel and materials emphasises the relevance of this connection, in part a result of the scale of post-Conquest masonry castle construction in Sussex. The use of Caen stone in England in the late eleventh century is largely restricted to ecclesiastical building, is otherwise restricted to the Sussex examples and the major donjons at London and Rochester (Dujardin 2010).

The urban castles of Sussex in the national context

To what extent do the urban castles of Sussex conform physically to the attributes identified amongst the wider patterns evident in English examples? At Chichester, Pevensey and probably Lewes the common theme of re-using the line of the existing defensive circuit is evident, to an unusual degree at Pevensey. At Hastings a later prehistoric promontory fort was utilised, and although the hill on which the castle was situated may have been occupied during the pre-Conquest period, there is no evidence that this defensive line had been re-established before AD1066. The second common factor of proximity to a major water system is less prominent in the Sussex examples. At Chichester the settlement itself was not situated adjacent to a river, but at Lewes the castle is notably distant from River Ouse. The castle at Pevensey was situated adjacent a tidal river, while the elevated castle at Hastings clearly had a strong visual connection with the extensive seaboard of the settlement. A more definitive connection is apparent at the new foundations of Arundel and Bramber, although the latter is distanced from the Adur by a broad flood plain.

There is no conclusive evidence of any re-use of pre-Conquest high-status sites, although there has been a marked lack of excavation in the interior of the various castles. The documentary evidence at Chichester is suggestive that the castle did not utilise the site of the earlier earl or king's hall, although this is not conclusive. Evidence of impact on ecclesiastical complexes is equally limited; at Lewes the castle did not develop a physical connection with the earlier minster site of St John-sub-Castro. The case for the re-use of pre-Conquest chapels at Hastings and Pevensey may have been overstated, while the new foundation at Arundel appears to have been juxtaposed with the earlier minster of St Nicholas. The ecclesiastical grip of Fecamp Abbey over the settlement of Steyning was even instrumental in the movement of the secular lordship

of the territorial Rape to nearby Bramber. Chichester Castle and cathedral are physically distinct, although the latter may have been established, albeit possibly on the site of an important pre-Conquest monastery, nearly a decade after the foundation of the castle.

The morphological form and scale of the castles is not in itself unusual, with the exception of Pevensey, consisting of motte and bailey structures. The unusual dual-mound arrangement encountered at Lewes is potentially a result of an attempt to utilise the existing topography of barrows; it is not possible to comment on whether this created a distinct form of usage within the castle complex in comparison to a castle with a single mound. Arundel, physically unhampered by existing topographical constraints, is distinctly monumental in its form and its associated elite landscape. As stated above, the early, extensive use of masonry construction across most of the Sussex urban castle group is relatively distinctive. This has been linked to the importance of the various sites as continental access points into England and the relative permanence of lordship structures associated with these castles. In contrast, the use of these sites as shrieval offices and subsequently as formal prison sites, both for their individual territorial Rapes and the wider collective of Sussex is a common theme of urban castle development.

Conclusion

An examination of the urban castle experience of Sussex has provided an opportunity to explore a situation distinct from that detailed in previous chapters. The various castles, with the exception of Chichester, acted as the centres of compact territorial units of lordship and exhibit a level of early investment that reflects this position. They

were primarily sub-royal elite institutions, although many were on occasion taken into the custody of the Crown, but retained something of the responsibilities of more typical urban castles positioned at the centre of a county. But flexibility is also demonstrated in the impact that could be brought to account on the urban settlements themselves, with deliberate shifts and repositioning events recorded at Pevensey, Bramber and Arundel. In contrast, the relative lack of investment and early demise of Chichester, despite the relevance of the settlement and the development of the cathedral complex emphasises the vulnerability of these structures without the firm support of a lordship network. It is also important to note that the proliferation of urban castles across Sussex cannot be attributed to its distinct territorial division into Rapes, but is in fact a product of a wider phenomenon across the south coast from Devon to Kent which witnessed an exceptionally high number of fortifications raised. This situation will be discussed further in the following chapter in relation to wider patterns of urban castle building.

8 Spatial relationships between urban castle and town in England

In the case study chapter a total of eleven urban castle sites have been discussed out of a total *corpus* of 52 examples identified for analysis in the research framework outlined in Chapter Three. A series of common characteristics and themes have been highlighted through the examination of these detailed case studies, as well as areas of contrast and variation. To what extent are these issues representative of the wider group of urban castles?

The present chapter will explore these areas through an examination of the wider *corpus* of urban castle sites in connection with their form, function and spatial relationship with the wider settlement topography, layout and structure. This is feasible because of the low overall number of urban castles, numbering 41 if the eleven detailed case studies are deducted (Fig. 3.1). Additionally a number of these castles are poorly understood both archaeologically and historically, as with the urban castles of Dorset for example, and can therefore only be utilised to make a limited contribution to this synthesis. Taking this into account, this discussion will also explore particular themes through the available documentary evidence, for instance in the use of the urban castle as a component of central government or incarceration, that are not represented in any meaningful form through the available archaeological or architectural evidence.

Scale and Form

Through the detailed exploration of case studies in previous chapters there has been a realisation of the variation in scale and form apparent in urban castle sites. From the

expansive development of Wallingford Castle, to the relocation and dramatic increase of scale of Gloucester Castle and the questionable phasing of development at Bristol Castle, it is clear that there is not a simple linear narrative of urban castle development. Analysis of the early form of the wider castle *corpus* is hampered by a lack of archaeological or historical evidence, particularly in examples subject to extensive subsequent development which have been removed from the modern townscape. For instance, in contrast to the massive designs of sites like Thetford, with a motte with a basal diameter of 100m and standing 22m above the base of its surrounding ditch, are examples like the small urban castle identified at Stafford, which appears to have been no larger than the pre-Conquest enclosure, with ditches only 3m wide and 1.5m deep, whose site it perpetuates (Everson and Jecock 1999, 99; Cuttler *et al.* 2008).

One of the few hypotheses to be developed on the subject of urban castle form and function has suggested that the majority of immediate post-Conquest castles were ringworks at their inception (English 1995). In contrast to Davison's earlier thesis that the motte developed as an earthwork form in the course of the Conquest period (Davison 1969a), the 'ringwork' theory places an emphasis on the 'campaign conditions' in which it was only pragmatic to create an austere fortified enclosure amidst hostile territory. Mottes and further elaborations to the castle enclosure were only added subsequently when peaceful conditions allowed. It is not possible on the basis of available evidence to conclusively take discussion of this subject forward, although the issue of chronology investigated below is of some relevance. However, based on the historical narrative it is important to highlight that the majority of urban castles do not appear to have been constructed until AD1068 or later, that is much later than the 'campaign' period of late AD1066 between the initial landing of Duke

William and his forces, and his crowning at Westminster at the close of the year. Of those examples believed to have been constructed within this period there is currently no reason to doubt the primary presence of mottes at Hastings or the first castle at Canterbury, nor those at Guildford or Wallingford if they too fall within this group. As will be explored in the following chapter, it is clear that the perception and function of the urban castle may have developed significantly in the period AD1066-1150, but there is little evidence to confirm that this was linked to a simple correlation with the basic historical narrative, with a movement from campaign forts of the Conquest to urban castles of the post-Conquest kingdom. Certainly the original thesis raised by Davison, that ringwork or enclosure castles were prevalent in pre-Conquest Normandy including major peacetime constructions such as the ducal complex at Caen, would support this theory (Bates 1989, 54; Decaëns 2000, 16-21).

There is evidence from archaeological excavations that some castle mottes have been modified or heightened, although little to confirm that any were secondary additions to the castle complex. This is relevant because the urban castle *corpus* had been identified as including a high number of very large mottes, the implication being that it emphasised their importance amongst castles, whereas this evidence would suggest that this monumental spectacle was a gradual elaboration rather than an immediate post-Conquest grandiose statement. At the motte of Oxford Castle (Fig. 2.3) a smaller mound of sand and gravel was heightened by several metres with more compacted material (Mumford 2008, 7-9). The excavator interpreted both phases as part of the same late eleventh-century construction campaign due to the presence of late Saxon material in the upper section, although the latter could have been residual and the two elements separated by years or decades. Clear horizontal extension was made to Norwich Castle motte ahead of the construction of a great tower post-AD1094, while

evidence of secondary extensions to the castle mound has been identified at Durham (Popescu 2009a, 445; Carver 1980c, 12). There is a growing body of evidence that motte forms may have been raised and adapted in the later medieval period as at Hastings Castle, as well as the less defined case of Bedford Castle (Baker *et al.* 1979, 13; Barker and Barton 1977). The motte at the Old Baille site in York was raised and landscaped in the post-medieval period, while the crest of the castle motte at Wallingford Castle had also been enhanced in the eighteenth or nineteenth century (Addyman 1977).

In some cases radically different perceptions of early castle phasing have been postulated. At Old Sarum various interpretations of the castle and settlement form have been developed, including several suggesting that the original castle was of motte and bailey form with either a motte located on the edge of the central ringwork (Rahtz and Musty 1960, 353). Alternatively the ringwork itself may have functioned as some form of motte with an outer bailey incorporating the east side of the existing fortification or else the earlier hillfort in its entirety (RCHME 1980, 6-7). The latter interpretation could be compared to recent examination of the available evidence at Lincoln which considered the possibility that the original castle consisted of the entire Roman Upper City and in which the new cathedral was founded, or to Cardiff Castle which also re-used the existing Roman fort in its entirety (Vince 2003, 172; Crouch 2006, 35-7).

There is limited evidence of major spatial expansion of the overall urban castle footprint, although minimal extension in the form of ditch enlargements or minor outward encroachments by the development of gatehouses and barbicans are more common. The example of Wallingford is amongst a small, exceptional group that

demonstrate extensive growth, which includes the evolution of the Tower of London. Vince argues that the continual expansion of the royal fortress faced toward the urban settlement, although there was clearly eastward growth of the complex once the former Roman wall line was abandoned in the thirteenth century (Vince 1990, 39). Excavations have suggested a comparable process at Hertford Castle where a second bailey was added to the original motte and bailey complex in the later twelfth century (Petchey 1978, 163-7; Zeepvat and Reade 1996, 17, 22-3). At Chester it has been asserted that the construction of the castle outside the old Roman walls may have taken place alongside the extension of the town circuit to incorporate the new fortification (Thacker 2000, 21). Additionally, the latter author suggested that an original motte and inner bailey were supplemented by an enlarged outer bailey in the thirteenth century. This has little archaeological support and goes against the trend of other examples such as Shrewsbury which lose an original outer bailey in this later period (Brown *et al.* 1963, 647). The majority of urban castles experienced very limited expansion beyond the confines of their original post-Conquest footprint.

Structure

The limited numbers of excavations that have taken place on urban castle sites have provided some indication of the structures and activities that were built within the castle interior. In general, however, excavation has struggled to identify buildings and activity from castle sites that can be clearly dated to the later eleventh century (for examples see Addyman 1977; Barker and Barton 1977). It may be that this is a reflection of the limited levels of activity and building in many castles at this early date, although these deposits are also particularly vulnerable to truncation by subsequent development.

This methodological issue is a significant factor when considering the identification and recording of primary structural remains within a castle bailey. Investigations of two of the baileys at Norwich Castle have demonstrated that the north-eastern bailey was largely devoid of any building following its construction and that only a small number of identifiable structures were built in the large southern bailey, some of which may have continued in use from the pre-Conquest period (Ayers 1985, 1-3). The latter area did contain several large, deep pits that may have been utilised for storage, as well as evidence of craft activities including a predominance of waste from bone comb manufacture (Popescu 2009a, 366-7). The western section of the bailey at Stamford Castle was extensively quarried in the Saxo-Norman period, and there is little evidence of occupation until the thirteenth century when a substantial building campaign was undertaken (RCHME 1977, 3). Foundations of masonry buildings were recorded in the inner bailey, but without any specific evidence of use, function, or sequence across an occupation period that may span from the late eleventh century to the early thirteenth century (Baker *et al.* 1979, 26-7). In contrast, evidence in the excavated area of the outer bailey produced only occupation layers and pits, with Saxo-Norman black soils suggesting this area potentially continued to be used for small-scale cultivation during the earliest castle phases (Baker *et al.* 1979, 31-5). At Montfichet Tower, at the western perimeter of medieval London, only evidence of pitting was identified in the area investigated, although any building foundations may have been truncated (Watson 1992, 339). Excavation in the interior of Coventry Castle failed to identify evidence of contemporary occupation or activity despite significant evidence in the probable castle moat and outlying areas to the east, although the deepest deposits were not excavated and may have been truncated by significant development from the fourteenth century onwards (Cox and Hancox 2008; Burrows

and Collis 2008). The available evidence, although limited by the number of castle baileys investigated and the vulnerability of early deposits to truncation, indicates that there could be substantial variation in the number, scale and layout of structures within urban castles.

In some cases primary masonry structures have been recorded as part of the initial stage of construction on urban castle sites. The gatehouse of Exeter Castle is an original masonry component of the complex raised in AD1068, and is well-known for the presence of architectural details reminiscent of the style of pre-Conquest England rather than the Romanesque style of northern France. At Winchester a chapel constructed in masonry and displaying Late Saxon building techniques was one of the first structures known to have been raised within the complex, possibly as early as AD1067, immediately preceding the erection of a small earth motte with timber revetment (Biddle and Clayre 1983, 4-5). This latter sequence demonstrates that structures not related to the military use of the castle took precedence over the building of a supposedly defensive motte. As a royal centre Winchester Castle may have been furnished to a higher level to accommodate the relatively high frequency of visits by members of the elite.

One area of masonry structure that is well represented in the castle *corpus* is the development of great square towers or donjons, although none are primary elements of the castles of the immediate post-Conquest decade (AD1066-76). The earliest examples at the Tower of London and Colchester may have been planned when the respective castles were first constructed, but were not physically initiated until the late AD1070s. Excavations at the Tower of London have not given any indication of the form of any structures in use in the immediate post-Conquest period prior to the

erection of the White Tower. At Colchester only the ground floor was constructed in the first building campaign, with two additional floors added c.25 years later, which further confuses our understanding of motive and design intentions when castle building was initiated at that site (RCHME 1922, 51). A similar interruption in building is recorded at the White Tower before its completion at the close of the eleventh century, which seriously undermines a perception of these structures as dominating symbols of the Norman Conquest (Impey 2008a, 1). From c.AD1100 onwards towers would be developed at a significant number of urban castle sites, often requiring the demolition or partial abandonment of earlier mottes which could not support the weight of these new masonry additions. This included towered structures at replacement sites in Canterbury and Gloucester, redeveloped sites like Rochester and Bristol, as well as annexed settlements that would develop as regional centres such as Carlisle and Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Summerson 1993, 1-14; Dixon 2008, 260-1). These structures could include external aesthetic adornments such as the polychrome coursing of the castles at Colchester and Guildford, and the extensive ornamentation of Norwich Castle donjon (Renn 1982, 128).

A 'second wave' of masonry shell keeps was raised on existing mottes within urban castle complexes, although the massive expansion of Norwich Castle motte allowed large rectangular donjon to be raised on its summit. The addition of shell keeps appears to have taken place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and is identifiable at sites including York Castle, Lincoln and Warwick, as well as a probable number of other urban castle sites with mottes whose mounting structure is unknown. At Southampton the shell keep may have been established in the early twelfth century, but the evidence for this is not conclusive, while a thirteenth-century date is argued for Oxford Castle (Oxley 1986, 116; Guy 2006, 159).

A wider range of masonry structures was likely to have been developed on urban castle sites, such as gatehouses and halls, but upstanding preservation of these features is poor. The foundations of a masonry aisled hall were observed during building work at the site of Dorchester Castle in the late nineteenth century, although no detailed records survive (Draper and Chaplin 1982, 92). An impressive hall first erected in the mid-twelfth century survives in the otherwise depleted complex of Leicester Castle (VCH 1958, 344). As with the masonry tower discussed above, these features survive at castle sites from the twelfth century onwards.

There remains a recurrent issue of how to characterise the early form of structures within a castle complex in its earliest phases of development. There is constant assumption that a range of structures such as a hall would have been present, and evidence from Winchester and Gloucester indicates that this could be the case. In contrast, the evidence from other sites such as Southampton, Stamford and Montfichet Tower are lacking in comparable remains. The issue of differential preservation is raised again, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there is a tension between the perceptions of the density of structures that would be exist in a castle complex and the absence of such evidence emanating from the excavation of urban castle sites.

The lifespan of the castle complex

It is clear also that the lifespan of the urban castle could be extremely varied, and that movement from use to disuse is neither necessarily clear nor linear. From the relatively rapid abandonment and replacement of the first castle at Gloucester, to the political destruction of Huntingdon Castle with its probable continuation of use as a

prison, there are clearly inconsistencies with the role and necessity of the urban castlein enabling elite control in England.

Recent excavation at Stafford has identified a short-lived castle ditch which was probably abandoned in the twelfth century, but as at Huntingdon the site may have continued in use as a prison (Cuttler *et al.* 2008). The urban castle sites that are assumed to have existed at Derby and Ipswich may have had similarly short chronologies; Excavation off Cox Lane in Ipswich could potentially have recorded such a sequence, including the continued use of a pre-Conquest enclosure alignment and demolition evidence of ashlar-faced masonry buildings (West 1963). Similar to the short-lived feature at Stafford, a ditch excavated at Aylesbury internal to the identified *burh* defences in an area documented as the Castle Fee was found to have been infilled during the twelfth century (Farley 1974, 431-3). Although a full profile of this feature was not recorded, the steep-sided ditch at least 3.2m deep is likely to be the outer lip of a relatively short-lived urban castle ditch.

There is clearly evidence for fluctuation in the planning of the overall castle complex, as with the abandonment of the large outer bailey at Shrewsbury Castle. The process of contraction of the outer enclosures of Norwich Castle has been well-documented archaeologically during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Popescu 2009a). This sequence was not universal; at Chester the form of the large outer bailey of the castle is preserved in its current use as local government offices and may have only been added in the thirteenth century (Thacker 2000, 21). An enlarged or outer bailey was potentially created at Guildford Castle, although the archaeological evidence is currently inconclusive; what is more striking in this example is the development from *c.*AD1170 onwards of a palatial complex that soon in-filled and negated the western

castle defences (Poulton 2005, 8-10, 136-7). This spatial contrast between palace and castle complexes will be explored further in the following chapter.

The traditionally accepted narrative of the urban castle lifespan, with some important exceptions and occasional short-lived reversals of fortune, is one of gradual decline as the medieval period progressed. This is exemplified by Schofield and Vince (2003, 56) and supplemented by their perception of the castles demise as inevitable, as if it were in some way anti-urban. This viewpoint is a clear simplification; many urban castles survived as definable complexes in the post-medieval period, and a large proportion is recognisable above ground in their respective English townscapes even in the early twenty-first century. Redevelopment, as occurred at Cambridge Castle in the late thirteenth century as part of a significant masonry building-programme, was not the norm, and may have related to specific political conditions, for example, as a clarification of royal elite power alongside the development of the university complex on the south side of the River Cam. The influence of political context and the strong association between members of the elite with specific urban castles is also demonstrated at Bedford Castle, which is similar to Huntingdon Castle in its rapid demise following its role as a focal point in civil conflict, but subsequently only utilised as a quarry and tip (Barker 1973, 21). A more wholesale demise of castle structures was encountered following the Civil War in the seventeenth century, an episode often preceded by the renewal of elements of castle defences as at Cambridge Castle. However, even in the latter example significant earthwork components such as the motte were retained and the site continued to be utilised as a centre of shire administration. The later post-medieval period would see a continued civil function in some sites as local government or prison units, although over time these may have become obsolete in the face of rapidly changing urban and wider social structures.

Only a minority of examples such as Dover Castle and the White Tower would remain largely intact, as built during the medieval period, although use and function continued to change considerably.

Waterscapes and the urban castle complex

The management of water was an important element in the design and function of a medieval castle. At a basic level wells may have been required to provide water for the castle inhabitants, while water may have been fed into castle ditches to create wet moats. Additionally water systems around the castle complex could be adapted to form features such as fish-ponds and mill feeds which had both an economic output as well as functioning as symbols of status and wealth as recognised at Wallingford Castle (pp126-7). Research into castles has also identified how watery settings could be utilised to produce visually enhanced vistas in and around a castle. Finally, major water systems such as rivers could be utilised as waterways for communication as well as for the restriction of access into a castle.

In the majority of cases the relationship between the urban castle and the principal water course appears to be one of the few near-essential requirements in its positioning. Of the *corpus* of identified castle sites 39 (75%) were positioned within 100m of a primary river course, although in reality the majority are positioned in a far closer association with a river terrace. This figure also includes the coastal sites of Hastings, Pevensey and Dover which stand or stood in close proximity to maritime waters. Importance was clearly attached in having a castle established in a position with direct access to a major water system, and this may be in terms of utilising and controlling it as a route of communication.

The pattern of castles located adjacent to rivers is not consistent across the country as at Lincoln and the first castle at Canterbury where an original motte and bailey was replaced by a masonry castle closer to the River Great Stour around AD1100 (Bennett and Frere 1982, 70-3). This mirrors a similar contemporary movement at Gloucester where, significantly, the castle was moved outside of the pre-Conquest defences. Winchester Castle and Exeter Castle also fall out of this pattern in being located in an elevated point within the urban circuit away from Test and Exe rivers respectively. Nottingham Castle, in its imposing position above the town, also lacked an immediate relationship with the River Trent or the River Leen, despite its proximity to the latter, but importantly was also located outside the original pre-Conquest defensive line (Drage 1983, 118; 1989, 15-34). As discussed previously, Shrewsbury Castle also stood in an elevated location above the River Severn, maintaining a strong visual but not necessarily physical presence over it and is comparable with the position of Durham Castle and, to a less dramatic extent, Bristol Castle.

Figure 8.1 The White Tower in London as encountered from the River Thames. At the close of the eleventh century the tower would be visually dominat in relation to its surroundings (Source: Michael Fradley).

Returning to the majority of urban castles located in riverside positions, Hereford Castle (Fig. 8.2) is uniquely important in that it may re-use the site of the castle raised at the town by a Norman elite member who was granted lands in the pre-Conquest period by Edward Confessor (Shoesmith 1980, 1; Swanton 1996, 176). This would appear to demonstrate that a riverside location was an important relationship outside of the context of the Norman Conquest.

Figure 8.2 Hogg's Mount in the bailey enclosure of Hereford Castle. It has been suggested that this mound may have been the motte of the documented pre-Conquest castle at Hereford (Source: Michael Fradley).

One additional site perhaps worthy of consideration is Chepstow Castle which was first documented in AD1086 as part of the Gloucestershire folio of Domesday Book, within which it is the only manor recorded west of the River Wye. It is part of a castle-borough rather than an urban castle; little is known archaeologically of what preceded the construction of castle and town, and there is no indication of any pre-Conquest urban form (Shoesmith and Allen 2006, 5-7). What is of interest is the survival of its masonry great tower, probably initiated in the decade after AD1066, or at least during the later eleventh century (Fig 8.3). Consisting of an elongated rectangular structure perched on a limestone cliff overlooking the River Wye, it is stark how the eastern side overlooking the river is pierced by a number of window openings while there are none of any size on the western facade overlooking the nascent settlement of Chepstow, a situation that continued unchanged throughout its long developmental history (Turner *et al.* 2006). A traditional interpretation might consider this a reflection of the common threat from the west, or the protection afforded the eastern face of the keep by its low cliff-top position. But this fails to consider the realities of the geo-political situation of the period in which inter-elite conflict could be as common a threat as that from any specific Welsh force, or the relative vulnerability of the eastern front of the Great Tower if the outer enclosure was compromised. Instead it could be argued that the form of the Great Tower at Chepstow embodied a visual, if not physical dominance over a major river system, as has been asserted for the majority of urban castles above, even where no masonry elements survive. It is not possible to make a similar case regarding an elaboration of the riverside face of the White Tower in London, although the addition of its chapel with circular apse did result in an extended facade, a design aspect potentially influenced by similar river-orientated concerns (Impey 2008a).

Figure 8.3 The great tower of Chepstow Castle overlooking the River Wye to the east.

Physical and visual access to a primary river was a major influence over castle-buildings when selecting sites within an existing urban settlement. It is possible that this indicates the importance of inland navigation during this period, which may be masked in the later medieval period by its significant decline post *c.*AD1200 (Blair 2007; Langdon 2007, 110). Even in examples where a direct physical relationship between castle and primary water system does not exist there is arguably a more complex relationship at work, as at Norwich Castle which sits on a chalk ridge between the River Wensun at some distance to the east and north, and its tributary, the Great Cockey Stream, immediately to the west (Popescu 2009a, 37). There are clearly examples which

eschew this relationship, where castle-builders were influenced by different topographical factors. It may be relevant that two of the castles in question, Exeter and Winchester, may have been amongst the earliest urban castles raised prior to the proliferation of documented castle construction in the period following the siege of Exeter in AD1068. This issue of chronology will be explored further in Chapter Eight.

Bridges and fords

It is important to emphasise that while there is a strong correlation between castle and river, there is a much lower level of physical proximity between castle and bridge or ford. Only four (8%) of the sites can be identified as having a direct physical association to a major river crossing. There may potentially be a number of further examples, such as Worcester Castle, which were associated spatially with a minor ford.

In an analysis of Christchurch (Dorset) the insertion of the post-Conquest castle adjacent to the crossing over the River Avon was a close spatial link between castle and bridge (Haslam 2009, 109). This may reflect the different geopolitical conditions of its later date of construction of *c.*AD1094, and may even be a coincidental result of the primary rationale of the castle-builder to encroach upon the periphery of the ecclesiastical complex to the south. The connection at Huntingdon Castle has been previously discussed, while further upriver Bedford Castle bailey may have abutted the road adjacent to the river crossing, but its full extent westward has not been demonstrated archaeologically and could conceivably represent a secondary extension of the castle enclosure (Baker *et al.* 1979, 63). At Stafford and Tamworth the castle sites are in close association with crossing points across the Rivers Sow and Tame respectively.

All of these examples are linked to relatively minor water courses, with the exception of Huntingdon, and it must be queried why other examples with important crossings across major river systems did not include a similarly direct association. It can be asserted with confidence, therefore, that the need to directly control or dominate pedestrian or equestrian traffic utilising the principal urban river crossing was not an essential role of the urban castle. Castle mottes and crowning structures may have enabled a basic visual link with the river crossing, but this cannot be characterised as a direct physical or readily accessible presence.

Pre-Conquest defences

In addition to the strong correlation between the urban castle and water courses, a second major link can be seen in the connection with existing urban defence complexes. As with the riverside association this cannot be portrayed as complete across the *corpus* of urban castle sites, and in particular is hampered by an imperfect knowledge of the extent of pre-Conquest defensive circuits and the urban castles themselves. Of the identified *corpus* of sites a total of 36 examples (69%) are located in a position bordering the existing settlement defensive circuit. In most cases a site would be selected in an internal angle of the earlier perimeter, presumably to maximise the practical benefit of partially utilising an existing rampart or wall. Examples to the contrary include Colchester and Southampton castles, although the sites utilised still abutted a length of the pre-Conquest urban defences. The thesis developed by English placed emphasis on this relationship developing through the needs of expediency during the campaign conditions in the immediate post-Conquest period. This interpretation is derived from a reading of the historical context in which a

northern French army was occupying a hostile English land, although there is no specific evidence in any contemporary sources that pre-Conquest defences were re-used for this reason.

There are a smaller number of contrasting cases in which an intramural position abutting the earlier defences was not selected as an urban castle site. It may be possible to consider Nottingham Castle as straddling the definitions of the urban castle and castle-borough (Marshall 2006, 260-2). In its spur-top position it follows closely many of the characteristics of the castle-borough as well as the repeated association of castle and settlement observable in eleventh-century Normandy itself such as Falaise (Davison 1969b). In a number of other cases the urban castle is found beyond the pre-Conquest defensive circuit, as at Stamford where the castle appears to a have utilised the site of an earlier enclosure to the west of the settlement. At Gloucester the movement to an extra-mural position *c.*AD1100 may be considered more utilitarian in the adoption of a larger, riverside location, perhaps alongside the abandonment of the royal palace at nearby Kingsholm, which like the White Tower in London on the River Thames would have dominated the initial view of the settlement to those navigating up-river on the River Severn.

There is a relatively conclusive link between the site selected for an urban castle and proximity to an earlier *burh* enclosure circuit. Even in those examples where an extramural location was utilised, such as Stamford or the second castle at Gloucester, these complexes were still designed to be positioned immediately adjacent to the *burh* and link directly to the physical fabric of the earlier defences. At Nottingham and Chester the castles were positioned at a greater distance from the earlier *burh* defences, but were immediately connected by an extension of the urban settlement

into the intermediary zone (Fig 8.4). This suggests a physical connection that went beyond the pragmatic concerns of re-using standing ramparts, and towards a need by castle-builders to construct fortifications that were connected in some sense to the material presense of the *burh*.

Figure 8.4 The motte and later medieval structures at Chester Castle. The motte was erected away from the pre-Conquest *burh* at the end of a spur of land overlooking the River Dee (Source: Michael Fradley).

Urban gateways

In those cases where the urban settlement was fortified, the gateways through the perimeter could be an important feature if the primary role of the castle was to control movement through that access point. There is in fact very little evidence of a direct association between the castle and gateways into the urban complex. Due to the size of the castle and defended urban enclosure, which could include multiple entrance

points, it is inevitable that there will be proximity to at least one gate. It cannot be substantiated, however, that this proximity relates to a direct role of monitoring and controlling movement of traffic passing through this access point. Instead it is probable that the urban castle was not constructed in order to control movement through urban gateways, which calls into question the traditional interpretation of the castles as primarily dominating these centres of population.

In a small number of cases a very direct physical relationship between castle and urban access points has been recorded. At Winchester the royal castle was situated immediately south of the western gate of the town, although the castle itself was provisioned with its own extra-mural access point. This situation could be interpreted as a by-product of the castle-builder's choice having primarily been dictated by the need to occupy the highest point within the walled circuit, immediately south of the west gate. A similar preference of an elevated position can be discerned at Exeter Castle. At Canterbury the castle site was moved *c.*AD1100 and re-used the former Worth Gate of the Roman town defences as the south gate of the new castle complex (Frere *et al.* 1982, 56). As with Wallingford, the later White Tower complex in London would border a city gate, yet the original eleventh-century castles in both cases were smaller and situated primarily in positions against the existing settlement defences and adjacent to the primary water course.

As highlighted in the earlier detailed case studies of Bristol and Shrewsbury, the original castle layouts appears to have encompassed the landward entrances to the urban settlement, insisting that entry into the town via this route would have required passage through the castle circuit. Early bridging points, as well as possible ford and ferry sites, ensured that this passage was not essential but may have disrupted existing

patterns of movement into the respective towns. This arrangement of defensive components is only replicated at Durham, and is not the case at the comparable, although significantly broader 'peninsula' site of Stafford. It may be a consequence of the restricting topography of the other three sites rather than a meaningful attempt to physically dominate primary traffic routes.

The urban settlement

One of the most potent physical images emanating from current understanding of the imposition of post-Conquest urban castles is the widespread destruction of pre-Conquest occupation areas and disruption of road networks to make way for the construction of these fortifications. At Shrewsbury, for instance, Domesday Book records that 'the Earl's castle has taken over 51 dwellings', although this source does not provide a consistent account of castle construction or impact (Morris 1986, 252a; Harfield 1991). In addition to a number of documentary accounts of property losses, due in part to castle construction and often in reference to a loss in tax-paying households rather than the specific conditions of destruction, there is also a growing body of archaeological evidence detailing property loss. As such it is possible to identify destruction at Oxford, Northampton, Winchester and possibly Newark, where no documentary evidence exists (Jope 1952; Hassall 1976; Biddle 1970; Chapman 1985; Marshall and Samuels 1997, 10). Claims have been made to the likely clearance of occupation on the periphery of urban castle sites to provide a more complete field of fire for observation and the launching of projectiles, although such a hypothesis has yet to be demonstrated archaeologically (for example Baker and Holt 2004, 63). At the second castle at Canterbury limited evidence of agricultural activity was recorded outside the complex, but it is not possible to reconstruct the context in

which this developed as open ground (Bennett *et al.* 1982, 52). In a number of cases it is possible to reconstruct the extent of medieval castle fees, as at Wallingford, Norwich and the Tower of London which often extend beyond the known outer boundaries of the respective complexes. Only the physical form of the castle fee at Norwich is understood in any detail, and when first established appears to have been demarcated by a bank and ditch which have been interpreted as defensive in nature (Popescu 2004, 211). No comparable features were recorded in the better-preserved earthwork complex at Wallingford Castle, although the fee in this example was the result of continual expansion into the thirteenth century, by which point such a physical boundary may no longer have been required.

The disruption of existing settlement was not an essential requirement of urban castle construction, but a destructive by product. In examples such as Gloucester the areas presently excavated at the castle complex were sparsely occupied and economically peripheral, while only one excavated site at Bristol Castle produced evidence of pre-castle activity. Only fragmentary pre-Conquest material has been recorded at the Old Baile site at York, overlying a Romano-British cemetery (RCHME 1972, 87). At Nottingham and Guildford the castles were built outside the area of pre-Conquest settlement. At Coventry eleventh-century occupation was recorded immediately east of the identified castle site, although no specific evidence was recorded to demonstrate that this settlement pre-dated the castle foundation (Colls and Hancox 2008).

Urban castles were not the only imposition that could require the destruction of existing settlement. The extensive process of church building and borough development in the late eleventh century would necessitate some clearance and disruption of the existing topography, especially in the case of the monumental

cathedral priories such as Norwich and Lincoln (Roffe 2007, 133). The impact ranged further than the church itself: at Canterbury it is documented in Domesday Book that in AD1086 28 properties were pulled down and a road diverted to make way for a new ecclesiastical palace complex (Parkin 1972, 183). The extension of the pre-Conquest palace at Winchester in the post-Conquest period also entailed some destruction of existing property (Biddle and Keene 1976, 293). The bishop of Durham would initiate the clearance of settlement between castle and cathedral at Durham to create an open expanse between the two monumental structures during the AD1090s (Leyland 1990, 410)

The 'French Borough' established in the area between the castle and earlier settlement core at Nottingham appears to include a new street system that was laid out in relation to the castle gates, in a provision that would be expected in a castle-borough foundation (Drage 1989, 19; Marshall 2006, 261-2). Similarly, despite massive disruption at Norwich the development of the castle also appears physically to closely link to a renewed settlement zone to the west, although the principal castle gate led out from the south side of the complex, and there is no evidence of an additional gate leading out to the new urban area (Popescu 2009b, 263). Further examples of this process may have occurred at other sites such as Northampton, and further complicate the pattern of settlement development during this period.

Subsequent expansion of the castle complex could be equally destructive, for instance with the additional loss of a house at the York Castle site recorded in AD1070 (RCHME 1972, 60). At Nottingham an outer bailey was established by at least the mid-twelfth century, while compensation is recorded to the owner of the single home lost to the construction of an additional barbican ditch in the early thirteenth century

(Drage 1983, 120). The second castle at Canterbury raised in the early twelfth century was built over an area utilised for pitting in the pre-Conquest period, although extensive pollution and truncation prevented a more detailed characterisation of this earlier settlement form (Bennett *et al.* 1982, 48-51).

The impact of the castle on pre-Conquest urban settlement is therefore incredibly varied. Disruption on a massive scale did occur, but so did processes of settlement renewal and investment. Other urban castles made only a minor impact on the core of earlier occupation centres, which leaves an overall picture that this destruction was an unfortunate secondary condition of the process of urban castle building. The selection of an urban castle site by the elite overrode any specific consideration for the retention of elements of the pre-Conquest urban fabric, at least to the extent to which it can currently be characterised. The presence of an urban castle on a specific site was thus of greater importance to the elite than the continuing network of social and economic relations centred on those areas that were to be cleared to enable that castle's foundation.

Market places

In general it is not possible to identify any strong link between the positions of castle and market place in the townscape of the eleventh century, with only four (8%) examples recorded. A major constraint with regards to this particular topic is the uncertainty of market positions at this early date, which may not have taken place in the same position as those identifiable in the later medieval period. There is certainly a close physical link in some examples such as Tamworth, Thetford, Stamford and Norwich (Everson and Jecock 1999, 104; Roffe and Mahany 1986, 6), but their

numbers are so small as to suggest that this is merely a coincidence forced by the relative spatial constraints of the urban form. At Norwich and Thetford it has been argued that the market place was established in the immediate post-Conquest period in association with the castle development, mirroring the economic connection identified in many castle-borough sites (Everson and Jecock 1999). At Norwich it has been suggested that an 'appearance doorway' in the castle's Great Tower, the construction of which began *c.*AD1094, deliberately overlooked the market place, although conversely no gatehouse has been located on the west side of the castle linking castle and the market area (Popescu 2009a). It is important to note that three of the four examples are located in eastern England so there may be a regional significance. A further example not recorded within the current *corpus*, as its site is as yet unidentified, is the castle at Derby which was recorded at 'copecastel' in AD1085, roughly translating to 'the castle near the market' (Creighton 2002, 136).

There remains a methodological issue of dating the establishment of these formal market places, and therefore a possibility that the two features may have been developed independently. At Stamford, for instance, the position of the market in relation to town and castle can only be conclusively identified in the twelfth century (Mahany and Roffe 1983, 216). There is certainly no close correlation with market places as can be seen in so many examples of new boroughs established in the centuries after the Norman Conquest.

Churches

The close relationship between castle and church, whose construction and development was dictated by the medieval elite. Strong arguements have developed

that demonstrate how castles could be built as part of a specific strategy to enhance their position and legitimacy that could have a direct bearing on church structures and ecclesiastical authority (Creighton 2002, 110-32; Fradley 2006a). This form of relationship is less conspicuous or consistent with reference to the urban castle group.

In terms of church destruction ahead of urban castle building, the proliferation and density of church numbers in the pre- and early post-Conquest periods in East Anglia and the East Midlands may in part account for their potentially inevitable clearance, but examples at Hereford and Barnstable clearly demonstrate that it could occur in the west of England (Blair 2005, 406; Miles 1986). Several church and cemetery sites appear to have been impacted on by the construction of the castle at Norwich (Popescu 2009a, 358). In total of nine (17%) examples have been recorded, although the actual figure is in all probability higher due to the small sample of excavation at urban castle sites at present.

Figure 8.5 Durham. The area between the castle and cathedral was cleared of settlement by the bishop in the AD1090s (Source: Michael Fradley).

There is some evidence of direct physical associations being developed between urban castles and major church complexes. In the case of the cathedral priories, including both those seats of bishops established in the pre- and post-Conquest periods there is a direct physical association between eight (53%) of the fifteen examples of urban units containing both a cathedral and early post-Conquest castle. This includes the short-lived bishoprics of Thetford and Chester which, within decades, would move on to Norwich and Coventry respectively. At Rochester church and cathedral stand adjacent, although there remains the possibility that the castle is secondary to an original extra-mural example to the west (Ashbee 2006). At Norwich and Lincoln there is a close physical association between castle and church, although in these examples the foundation of the cathedral complex post-dates the construction of the castle, by several decades in the case of Norwich. Where masonry construction was utilised on the respective castle site a complex relationship of architectural links and oppositions could develop between cathedral and castle, as has been argued at Lincoln (Stoker and Vince 1997). This is not in itself surprising as both forms of building project could be initiated and continued by the same patron, while the physical process of building would be undertaken by the same craftsmen (Bonde 1984; Gardiner 1984). Durham Castle has a prominent elevated association within the existing cathedral complex, although church and castle are separated by a distance over 100m, with their apparent proximity necessitated by the physical constraints of the site (Fig. 8.5). Following the demise of the Earldom of Northumbria in AD1075 the castle fell alongside the cathedral into the hands of the bishop, with the motte possibly even being heightened at this date, the intervening area cleared of settlement and the complex itself developed into a palatial residence over the following centuries (Carver 1980c, 12-4; Leyland 1990, 410). The castle and cathedral church at Lincoln are also separated by a distance over 100m, although this is erroneous if the whole upper town

did in fact constitute the large outer bailey of the original castle as it would have encompassed Lincoln Cathedral (Vince 2003).

In contrast there is no explicit association at Exeter between castle and cathedral. This is also the case at the two primary churches in England at Canterbury and York. Castles were not built at Bath and, less surprisingly, at Wells due in part to the general absence of urban castles across Somerset. There is no evidence that castles were developed at any of the bishopric seats such as Lichfield (Staffs.), Sherborne (Dorset), North Elham (Norf.) and Dorchester-on-Thames (Oxon.) prior to their movement after AD1075. At Winchester the urban castle was positioned at some distance from the cathedral and major churches to the east, although the latter did stand adjacent to the pre-Conquest palatial complex which was expanded in the post-Conquest period. In London the White Tower was established at some distance from the church of St Pauls, although the latter may have been bordered by the ill-defined Baynard's Castle/Montfichet Tower complex. There is no evidence that any influence or control was emitted over the London castles by the bishops of London (Taylor 2004, 16).

At urban centres which also housed large or important church complexes there is little suggestion of a strong association with urban castles. The principal ecclesiastical settlements were largely ignored by the patterning of urban castles, with Ely marked out as a notable exception. The important pre-Conquest church settlements of Wessex such as Glastonbury and Malmesbury were not utilised as castle sites, although the latter would be subject to the construction of a short-lived fortification during the civil war of the mid-twelfth century, as would other monastic complexes such as Cirencester (Creighton 2005, 280). At Bury St Edmunds the town was clearly developed and prosperous by the later eleventh century including, as at many other

large settlements, a potential influx of northern French settlers (Campbell 1998, 69). It is generally accepted that the existing settlement was heavily reorganised in the post-Conquest period, while its mint continued to output from the immediate pre-Conquest period through to the fourteenth century, and yet there is no evidence that a castle was constructed in association with this influential centre (Gauthiez 1998; Stratham 1998). At St Albans (Herts.) a royal *burh* and settlement situated within the former Romano-British town of *Verulanium* had largely been abandoned in favour of the urban settlement around the abbey on the east side of the River Ver in the late pre-Conquest period, with no evidence of an urban castle constructed at either site (Niblett and Thompson 2005, 191-5, 263). In contrast, the Earl of Chester had established a castle at Coventry by the late eleventh century, although it was abandoned by the mid-thirteenth century in favour of a moated site and park at Cheylesmore to the south of the town (VCH 1969, 18).

The development of new monastic complexes in connection with extant urban environments in the post-Conquest period also demonstrates a similarly interesting correlation, with peripheral positions utilised for new monastic houses as identified at Shrewsbury and Bristol. This can be demonstrated in the relationship between urban castles at York with the extra-mural Benedictine complex of St Mary sited at some distance from the royal fortifications. At Hereford (Fig. 2.2) the construction of the castle seriously imposed on the site of the formerly important minster of St Guthlac, which was subsequently relocated to an extramural position to the north of the town (Shoesmith 1980, 4-5). In this example there remains uncertainty as to whether the post-Conquest castle replicated the site and layout of its ambiguously documented pre-Conquest predecessor, while a position adjacent to the cathedral may have been necessitated by a need to occupy a riverside position.

Conversely, the decay of the urban castle sites during the later medieval period could also provide convenient sites for the influx of mendicant houses from the thirteenth century onwards. Although abandoned c.AD1100, a portion of the original castle site at Gloucester would eventually be granted to the Dominicans, while the entire site was transferred at Chichester (Munby 1984, 327). In AD1275 a license was obtained to convey the Barnard's Castle/Montfichet Tower complex in London to the Archbishop of Canterbury for its redevelopment as another Dominican foundation (Watson 1992, 336). Land to the north of York Castle was utilised as the site of a Franciscan friary from AD1240 onwards, but may previously have formed a conjectured outer bailey to the castle (Wilson and Mee 2005, 72). Less intrusively, a portion of Dorchester Castle would be leased to the Franciscan order in the fourteenth century (Draper and Chaplin 1982, 91).

A significant number of urban castles were designated extra-parochial zones within the often dense patterning of parishes that continued to accumulate in towns in the post-Conquest period. As at Wallingford, the White Tower would also develop as its own liberty, distinct from the urban settlement (Brooke and Keir 1975, 114). There is clear evidence in the case of some castle foundations that a chapel or ecclesiastical provision was available from its near-inception. At Winchester Castle excavation has provided evidence of a small stone chapel adjacent to the castle motte containing pre-Conquest architectural features (Biddle 1970, 290-1). The apsidal elements of the chapel of the White Tower again demonstrates the importance of providing a visibly religious structure within the urban castle complex, perhaps in part to support household clerks (Fig 8.6). A complex chapel structure was developed at Durham Castle during the late eleventh century, possibly with a reliquary crypt in a lower room (Leyland 1994, 414).

In some cases urban castles can be shown to have included some a religious provision, separate from the often complex urban parochial situation.

Figure 8.6 The Chapel of St John in the Tower of London (Source: Michael Fradley).

While evidence has been provided of church structures and burial grounds being demolished ahead of the construction of urban castles, there is also a suggestion that some features may have been re-used as castle chapels in the post-Conquest period. At sites such as Cambridge and Barnstable where only cemetery evidence has been recovered it is conceivable that an associated church may have survived as a castle chapel (Miles 1986; RCHME 1959). At York Castle the excavation of pre-Conquest burials may be linked to the former minster of St Mary Castlegate, which would continue to serve the castle in the post-Conquest period (RCHME 1972, 60). In other cases minor burial grounds may have developed for the internment of felons as has been argued on the basis of evidence identified at Norwich and Southampton (Oxley 1986, 60-4; Popescu 2009a).

High-status secular sites

The issue of post-Conquest re-use of pre-Conquest high-status sites remains an important one requiring more definitive research at individual castles. Certainly of the known relevant examples it is possible to identify the occupation of what can be broadly termed elite sites, but whether these can in turn be interpreted as royal and allow the construction of castle monuments to be perceived as part of a direct transference of power is more problematic. In total only four (8%) sites can presently be identified that demonstrate evidence of high-status continuity, although the true figure is likely to be higher given that recognition is dependent upon excavation. For instance, at Rhuddlan it is predicted that the castle, Twt Hill, stands on the site of the earlier Ilys, but as yet there is no positive archaeological evidence (Quinell and Blockley 1994, 8).

One important cautionary point can be taken from the major royal sites of the old Wessex kingdom: Winchester, London and Gloucester. In each of these examples the sites of pre-Conquest palace complexes are known, those at Westminster outside London and Kingsholm near Gloucester being extra-mural. In all three examples post-Conquest castles were sited at different locations, and the palatial sites maintained into the twelfth century (Taylor 2004, 7). At Gloucester the abandonment of the palace appears to mirror exactly the movement and expansion of the castle site, which suggests a combination of function in the latter unit or the abandonment of crown interest in the continued maintenance of a palatial complex at Gloucester (Hurst 1984; 1985, 19-20, 94). A similar realignment in favour of the castle over the palace complex has also been asserted at Winchester (James 1997, 54). The palace at Westminster replaced an earlier site thought to lie to the north of St Paul's Cathedral in the pre-

Conquest period; the earlier palace could have remained in partial use into the late eleventh century and the complex may have bordered Monfichet Tower, although the evidence for both castle and palace is sparse (Keene 2004, 18-20; Schofield and Keene 2004, 2-3). Significant investment was made in Westminster Palace in the post-Conquest period, in particular the elaborate hall structure that would mark it out from contemporary palaces, although major extensions were also made at Winchester (Thomas *et al*. 2006, 54). Even in rural locations there is similar evidence of coexistence with pre-Conquest royal sites; the palace at Old Windsor was maintained and may have remained more important than the nearby post-Conquest site of Windsor Castle even into the twelfth century (Keevil 2000, 102). It is therefore difficult to accept any argument for a widespread continuity in high-status royal sites in the position chosen for post-Conquest castles in the pre-Conquest urban environment.

In reference to other examples of urban castles where evidence has been provided in support of high-status continuity of occupation, there is little to indicate that these were necessarily of royal status. It has certainly been made clear through a documentary study of the period that the wider nobility were also heavily engaged in the eleventh-century urban scene (Fleming 1993). Research into documentary sources has developed an understanding of high-status secular complexes in the pre-Conquest period enclosed by a ditch or hedge and entered via defined gateways, with probable excavated rural examples identified at Sulgrave (Northants.) and Goltho (Lincs.) amongst a small *corpus* of recorded sites (Williams 2008, 88-93). These are directly comparable with the evidence obtained from Stafford and Southampton. In the latter case a large eleventh-century post-in-trench hall and outer ditched enclosure was discovered beneath the bailey of the castle and could conceivably form part of a royal

house in the town (Holdsworth 1984, 340-1). The royal link is not substantiated, and the property could equally have belonged to a member of the wider nobility. The evidence of a chapel and associated features from Colchester Castle is also inconclusive in its royal designation, although it does have limited documentary support (Drury 1982, 390). The pre-Conquest elite settlement identified at Colchester may have been sited in relation to the Temple of Claudius which would architecturally exert a massive influence on the footprint of the post-Conquest keep, the largest in England and potentially Western Europe. Interestingly the pre-Conquest palace at Winchester also partly overlay the earlier Romano-British forum, although this could arguably be a coincidence of their mutually central position within the walled circuit (Biddle 1987, 315). At Canterbury the former Roman theatre, which was still largely standing until *c.*AD1100 and appears to have held a central function in the town, potentially as a position of public ceremony, was not utilised by either of the two successive castles built in the settlement *c.*AD1066 and *c.*AD1100 (Brooks 1984, 24-5).

Excavations at Oxford Castle have revealed evidence of a large pre-Conquest hall beneath the castle, while St George's Tower may have originally been raised as part of a pre-Castle elite secular site (Poore and Norton 2009). Of particular interest is the recent discovery of the site of Stafford Castle on the north-western periphery of the historic town core (Fig 8.7). Although only a small section of the probable outer castle enclosure has been identified archaeologically it has demonstrated a close correlation between the castle and an earlier pre-Conquest enclosure of at least two phases. Interestingly, while little is known about the full plan of the site, the scale of the ditches from both the earlier and later occupation phases is relatively similar, with no evidence of any significant increase in the scale of fortification (Cuttler *et al.* 2008). Again there

remains the unanswered question concerning the status of the earlier enclosure; while it almost certainly elite, it is not possible to assert that it was necessarily a royal site.

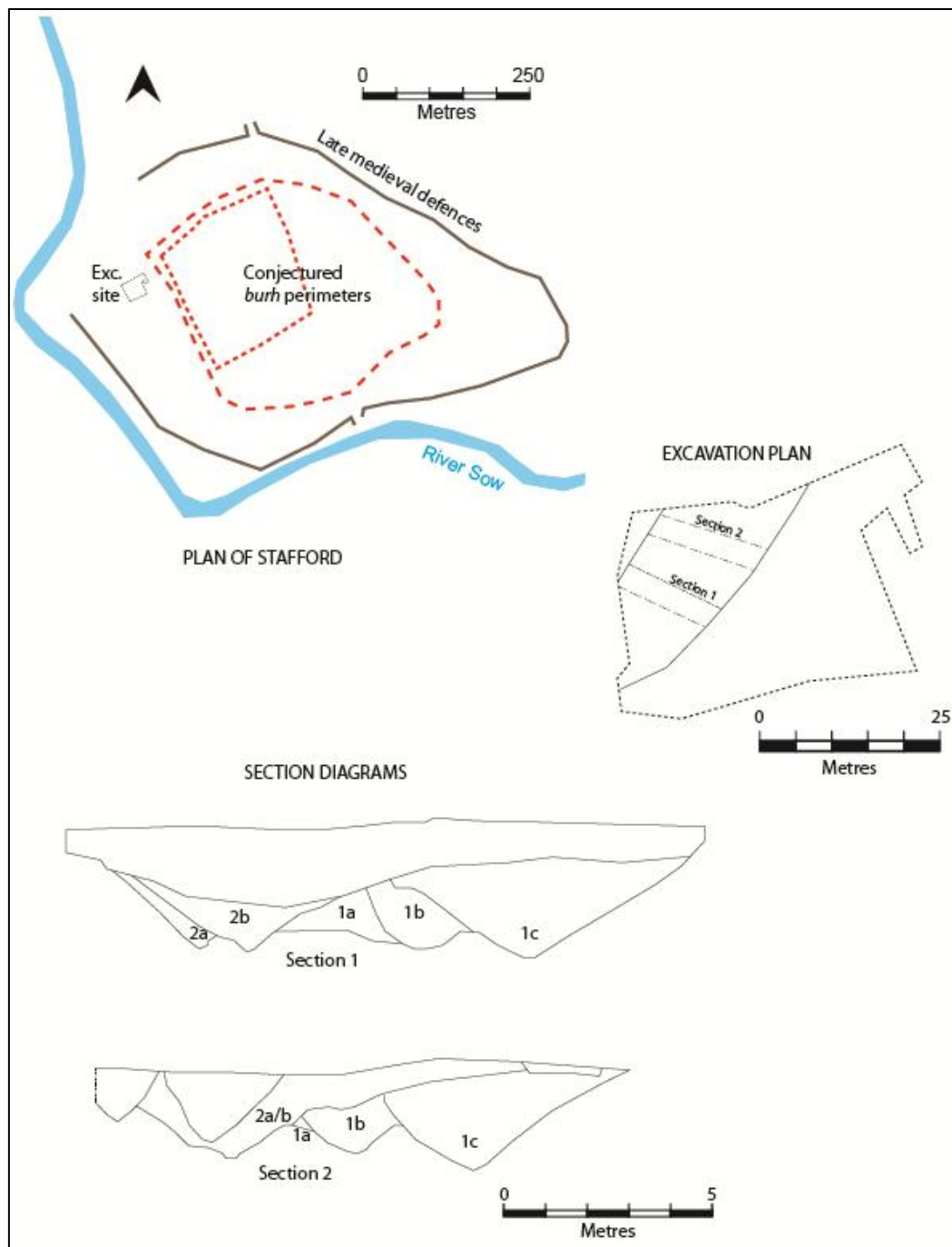**Figure 8.7 Simplified excavation plans from the Broadeye site in Stafford. Ditches a-c has been dated to the pre-Conquest period, while ditch '2a-b' is interpreted as the ditch of the post-Conquest castle. Fragments of a human skull were recovered from feature '1a', potentially suggesting the site had a pre-Conquest role in processes of justice and execution (Source: adapted from Cuttler _et al._ 2008).**

What is clear in the case of all of these examples is that the castle location is in some sense divergent to the standard position at the corner of the pre-Conquest urban defensive circuit. At Colchester and Southampton the castle borders the *burh* perimeter, but at a mid-point along its course. Newark is sited in a comparable position suggesting a similar motive in choice of location, although the composition of the pre-Conquest features is ambiguous; while apparently high-status it may have been a primarily ecclesiastical rather than a secular complex (Marshall and Samuels 1994, 53-4). It is possible to speculate that other intra-mural examples that maintain a non-standard relationship with the existing defensive circuit demonstrate a moderate-high potential of a directly relationship with a high-status pre-Conquest feature. Potential examples that would fall into this category include Tamworth and Christchurch. Stamford Castle is in an extra-mural location, as potentially is Stafford although its pre-Conquest topography is ambiguous, the latter being the clearest example of continuity in the use of the circuit of a pre-castle enclosure.

Excavations at Stamford identified a Late Saxon enclosure beneath the castle, although the limited dating evidence implied that the latter may have become disused as early as *c.*AD900, which distorts any interpretation of high-status continuity (Mahany *et al.* 1982). At Stafford the castle's position notably differs from that chosen at other peninsula sites such as Shrewsbury, Durham and Bristol which are located at the neck of the river-loop. It cannot be asserted that a similar deviance in positioning in other examples would necessitate the presence of a pre-Conquest high-status site. At the Tower of London a small portion of a denuded pre-Conquest ditch was recorded within the castle complex; although no associated evidence of high-status occupation was recorded it is possible given the evidence recorded at the sites discussed above

that this may have formed part of a distinct enclosure within an otherwise sparsely settled portion of the Late Saxon settlement (Impey 2008b, 15).
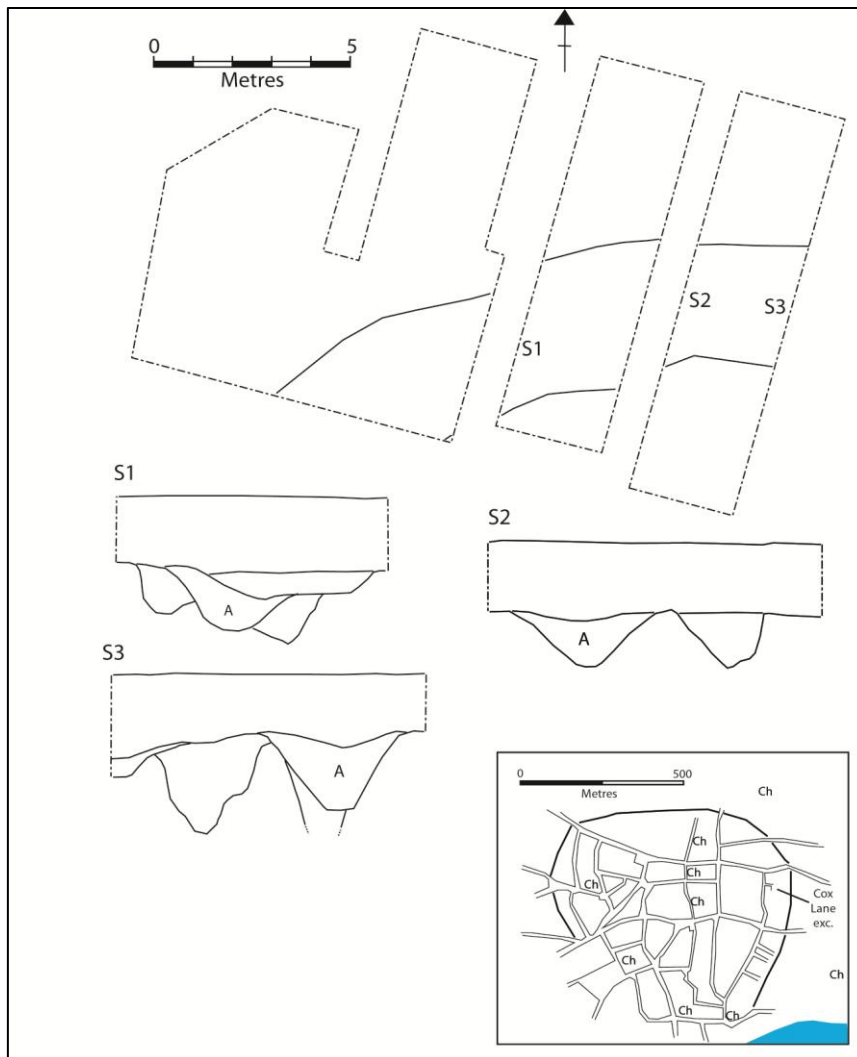
Figure 8.8 Simplified excavation plans from the Cox Lane site in Ipswich. The pre-Conquest ditch of the enclosure, which continued in use into the post-Conquest period, is the feature labelled 'A' in the section drawings (Source: adapted from West 1963).

A final example to be noted stems from excavations off Cox Lane in Ipswich, that recorded a section of a substantial curved ditch cutting through an area of Mid- and Late-Saxon pits about 40m west of the line of the settlements later medieval eastern urban defences (West 1963; Fig 8.8). Interpreted by the excavator as a pre-Conquest high-status enclosure with a ditch *c.*3m wide and *c.*2m deep containing fragments of

stonework with mortar adhering, it was partially re-cut and subsequently infilled between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with finds including ashlar masonry (West 1963, 245-6). It is possible that this site may be a high-status pre-Conquest urban enclosure, with the enigmatic possibility that it was re-used as a small-scale castle as identified more conclusively at Stafford (Cuttler *et al.* 2008). While similar high-status enclosures may await discovery in other pre-Conquest urban settlements, it would seem in the given examples that the presence of these earlier complexes directly influenced the choice of castle location.

A related area of interest is the development of pre-Conquest elite towers within the urban landscape. The subject of these tower-chapels, which blur the distinction between ecclesiastical and secular authority, has developed dignificantly over the last decade (Reynolds 1999; Shapland 2008). A number of these towers survive as part of church complexes into the present, such as at Barton-on-Humber (Lincs.) and Earls Barton (Northants.), but it is possible that some may have been linked to the form of pre-Conquest elite enclosure discussed above. Few conclusive examples in urban contexts have been identified, the most commonly cited being St.Michael-at-the-Northgate in Oxford which may have originally formed part of a gate tower leading into the settlement (Dodd 2003). At Oxford Castle itself the structure of St George's Tower has been argued to have originated in the pre-Conquest period as part of an elite complex, although this has not been substantiated archaeologically (Fig 8.9). At Exeter Castle it has already been discussed how the the masonry gate tower included English pre-Conquest architectural details, and would therefore visually resemble one of these Late Saxon elite towers. Outside the example of Oxford, however, there is at present little evidence that post-Conquest castle-builders attempted to incorporate these earlier symbols of elite power into the structures of their castles.

Figure 8.9 St George's Tower at Oxford Castle. The structure may have originally been constructed as part of an elite complex in the pre-Conquest period and subsequently incorporated into the post-Conquest castle. The post-medieval structures to the left are part of the prison complex aerected on the line of the medieval castle walls (Source: Michael Fradley).

In addition to an understanding of direct continuity of high-status occupation at urban castle sites, it is also possible discuss how post-Conquest urban castles could rapidly develop a sense of antiquity. Important documentary work by Wheatley has demonstrated that while re-utilising an extensive earlier Roman site, within decades of its construction Carlisle Castle had already become entwined with legendary history of the site and its association with mythological figures (Wheatley 2004b). The Tower of London would also rapidly develop similar legendary associations by the twelfth century as seen in the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth and William fitz Stephen (Wheatley 2008, 277-81; Deiter 2008, 31). Extensive Romano-British deposits have been identified beneath the latter castle site, including an extensive timber-framed

structure, but it is impossible to assert whether the identification of such deposits at London or Carlisle in any way facilitated their introduction into legendary history (Impey 2008, 15; Impey and Parnell 2000, 11; Parnell 1983, 112-8; McCarthy *et al.* 1990, 118). It is interesting that both the White Tower and Carlisle Castle were the sites of masonry towers, possibly reflecting the social efficacy of construction in stone.

Analysis of elite involvement in pre-Conquest urbanism has highlighted the extent of landholding and socio-economic links, and it may be this group responsible for the construction of enclosed complexes within the urban sphere (Fleming 1993, 24-5). This demonstrates the potential existence of non-royal elite sites and enclosures within English urban units, possibly existing in multiple numbers. In spite of this situation, there are presently only a limited number of sites that indicate a direct spatial continuity between pre-Conquest elite enclosures within English towns and the development of post-Conquest urban castles.

The wider elite landscape of the urban castle

As an elite residence the medieval castle is frequently identified as being linked to a wider arrangement of landscape components which enabled economic sustainability and expressed the increase in social prestige for those elite (Creighton 2002, 177-93). One element repeatedly seen in conjunction with castles, as well as non-fortified elite residences, are those related to recreational hunting, whether it be in the form of large swathes of land functioning as royal forest, chase or discrete parkland. In addition to providing an elite pursuit, these features could also provide a more functional food source as well as other resources such timber and other wood products.

The urban castle appears to largely buck this trend; as a group they demonstrate few examples of an association with such features generally. Urban castles could provide a convenient station en route to an area of royal forest (Creighton 2002, 186), although there is little direct physical connection which would suggest the relationship was one of convenient coincidence rather than a preconceived symbiotic plan. A link can perhaps be assumed between the castle and palace sites at Winchester and Gloucester with the New Forest and the Forest of Dean respectively; as early as AD1069 William I was recorded as hunting at the Forest of Dean when he was informed of the Danish fleet sighted off the east coast (Williams 1995, 37). The association is not direct, as often identified between castle sites and parks, but these examples can perhaps be envisaged in an alternative form as important regional centres from which forest hunting expeditions could proceed. Similar relationships could be expected between other sites such as Northampton Castle with Rockingham Forest (Green 2006, 302), as well as Oxford and the hunting landscape around Woodstock. These resources were not pivotal in the establishment of an urban castle; major castles such as Lincoln and Norwich were able to develop despite an absence of royal forests across the respective shire of either settlement. From the perspective of the longevity of an urban castle site, however, it is possible that the availability of hunting resources may have influenced any decision to maintain or invest further in a structure, as was proposed in the case of Wallingford. In Dorset, for instance, all areas of royal forest were abandoned between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the period in which the castle of Dorchester was discontinued, with the probable exception of its prison and other county offices (Young 1979, 62, 152). From a long-term perspective it would be post-Conquest hunting lodges such as Woodstock and Clarendon, the latter located close to Old Sarum, which would develop into medieval palaces rather than castle sites (Keevil 2000, 23-6).

At Wallingford an argument has been made for the establishment of a specific hunting area to the north of the castle and town. Interestingly Nottingham Castle, one of the few other urban castles to see continued development through much of the medieval period, was also situated in an immediate relationship with a parkland landscape including fishponds and rabbit warrens, west of the castle and town (Drage 1983, 118; 1989, 19). At Guildford a park was documented west of the palace from the thirteenth century onwards, although is potentially an earlier feature linked to the castle complex (Poulton 2005, 8-10). A park at Moulton was also documented in connection with Northampton Castle in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Creighton 2009, 129). In the long-term development of an urban castle site, however, it is difficult to correlate how influential the proximity of elite hunting and recreational components may have been in continuing investment in an urban castle complex.

A significant contrast in game consumption between urban and rural castle sites has been recognised previously, with remains clearly higher at castles with a countryside location (Creighton 2002, 18-20). Excavated deposits from urban castle sites have provided only limited evidence of the consumption of venison, although this may reflect specific disposal patterns. At Bedford Castle there was a notable absence of deer bones from excavated deposits, which consisted primarily of cattle, with lesser quantities of pig, sheep and birds (Baker *et al.* 1979, 62). Large game figures in only low quantities from excavated urban castle deposits, and where deer are identified it is frequently Red Deer rather than the imported Fallow Deer. At Norwich there is very little evidence of a change of status indicated by the various dietary remains recovered, including the consumption of game (Popescu 2009b, 992-3). One exception is Lewes Castle, where deer made up 10% and 8% respectively of the animal bone assemblages

recorded in the early kitchen and motte courtyard, as well as the widespread presense of rabbit bones (Drewett 1992, 98-9). It is possible that Lewes Castle, as the centre of a discrete, hereditary territory in contrast to the majority of urban castles, witnessed a greater investment in the production and consumption of elite game. Sykes notes that the level of inequality in the exploitation and access to game and livestock resources in post-Conquest England surpassed that witnessed in France (Sykes 2005, 197). In spite of this situation in elite and lower social status contexts, it is clearly not borne out in the evidence presently available from urban castle sites in comparison to assemblages recovered from rural castle and castle-borough sites.

In contrast to the lack of evidence linking urban castles with parkland and areas of Royal Forest, there is an interesting body of evidence indicating the presence of gardens and ornamental features within these complexes. From the late twelfth century a moated garden was documented as the 'kingsorchard' on the adjacent bank of the River Wye to Hereford Castle (Whitehead 1995, 198). As at Wallingford, gardens had been established at the Tower of London complex by the late thirteenth century, and a castle garden is recorded at Oxford in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Creighton 2009, 34, 72). A raised courtyard garden is documented in the castle complex at Old Sarum, while an island retreat (the 'Naight') was developed in the River Severn adjacent to the second castle at Gloucester (Short 1965, 37; Creighton 2009, 61). Documentary sources during the twelfth century record the presence of a bird house and herb garden at Winchester Castle (Biddle and Clayre 1983, 8). The documentary evidence does not indicate whether any form of garden components were created as early as the late eleventh century, although the evidence presented at Arundel indicates that this could be a possibility.

The provision of hunting resources was clearly not a priority in the context of the creation of the *corpus* of urban castles. Where distinct parks were created as at Nottingham and Wallingford they may have been relevant in maintaining the efficacy of the castle site over time as an attractive addition to the latter's residential status. In the majority of cases a decision was clearly made that an associated park would not or could not be established in the immediate hinterland of the urban centre. In those minority cases where a park was established it may simply have been through the fortuitous socio-economic local conditions of the late eleventh century, or even perhaps the continuation of existing pre-Conquest hunting rights. This situation stands in clear opposition to the majority of post-Conquest major castle foundations, where the association of an attached hunting element of some form was more clearly the norm. Instead, and potentially due to the limitations of space, there is documentary evidence suggesting investment was focused on smaller garden and ornamental components.

Castles and urbanism in eleventh-century Normandy

The evidence from Normandy implies the number of castles after AD1050 increased significantly (Fig. 8.10); previously it was a structural form limited to the upper echelons of the elite (Bates 1982, 114). Rouen was the largest settlement in Normandy and already contained a residence of the Carolingian counts overlooking the River Seine at the western end of the centre at the beginning of the tenth century (Fig. 2.5). Conversely the Norman dukes established a palatial castle complex at the south-eastern limit of the inner Gallo-Roman defences at a site south of the cathedral (Guillot *et al.* 2006, 196-7; Cailleux 2006, 143). The Gallo-Roman defences may have been utilised as a precinct boundary by the cathedral, and the castle would therefore

represent a significant encroachment upon this sector. Of all the castle features associated with urban settlements in Normandy those of Rouen perhaps demonstrate characteristics most comparable with the English urban castle, potentially because it was already established as a major settlement when the castle was originally constructed. In contrast, following the hegemony of the French crown over Normandy in the early thirteenth century the existing castle was demolished and replaced by a new complex on an elevated site overlooking the urban settlement, although the earlier Carolingian palace survived (Bates 1993, 8).
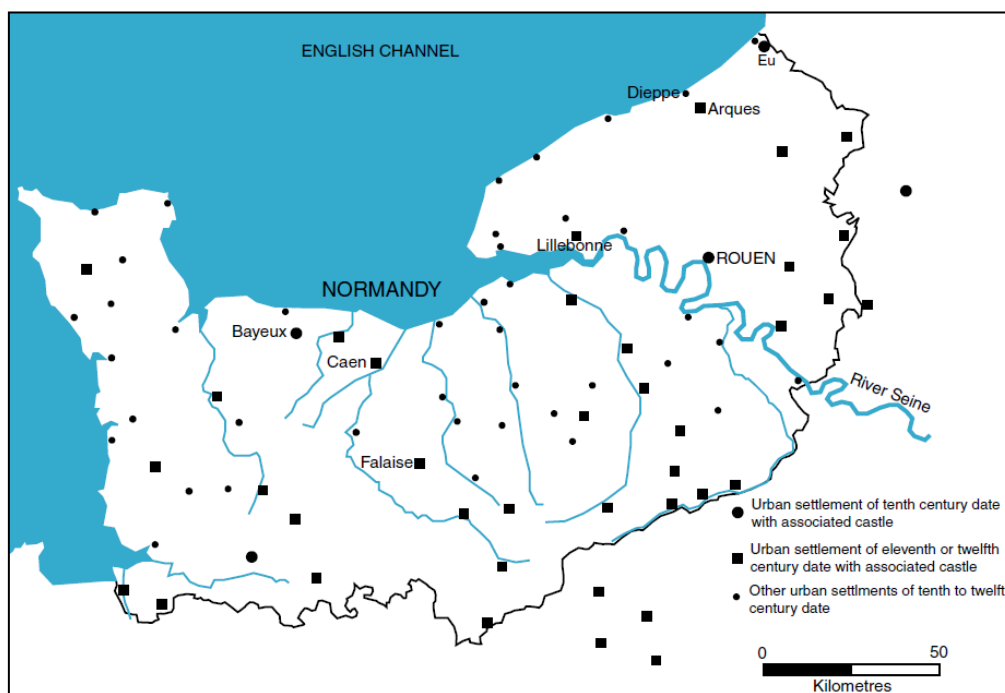
Figure 8.10 Towns and castles in eleventh-century Normandy (Source: adapted from Bouet and Neveux 2006).

Similarity is evident in other urban centres in Normandy where a former Gallo-Roman circuit was adopted (Impey 2008b, 19). At Bayeux, possibly the earliest medieval urban settlement to develop after Rouen, a castle was established in the western corner of the former Gallo-Roman defences (Fig. 8.11), removed from axial roads through the enclosure and both the cathedral and the River l'Aure to the east (Delacompagne

2006, 159). At Lillebonne a castle had been established by at least the later eleventh century in the south-eastern section of the small, Gallo-Roman enclosure, adjacent to the axial road running through the settlement which is located some 4km north of the River Seine (Pitte 2006, 144). In other cases castles were not installed within the Gallo-Roman perimeter, as at the bishopric seat of Lisieux situated alongside the River Touques.
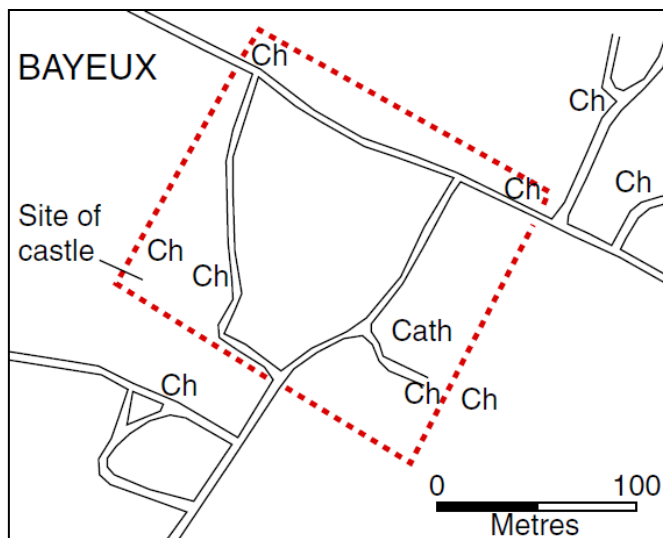
Figure 8.11 Medieval Bayeux. In common with many English urban castles, the example at Bayeux was situated in the corner of the existing settlement defences, away from its principal avenues and gates (Adapted from Delacompagne 2006, 159).

As outlined in Chapter One, the common experience of urban development in association with a castle in Normandy was the foundation of castle-boroughs between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A typical example of this process can be seen at Falaise, established in the early eleventh century and consisting of a castle and associated elongated town extending to the north-east (Lemercier 2006, 135). In many respects the settlement layout is comparable to many examples established in post-Conquest England. There may be some value in considering the topographic position selected by castle-builders in Normandy as a comparison with the choices made in

English urban settlements, potentially by some of the same individuals. In the process of conducting a comparative ceramic study in Normandy with indigenous material excavated at in Somerset, Davison conducted basic earthwork surveys of all the castle sites documented prior to 1066 which survived in 1969 (Davison 1969, 179). Despite a massive variation in the form of the castles surveyed, the project was able to identify a consistent preference for elevated positions at the end of natural spurs of ground (Davison 1969, 180).

Figure 8.12 Cambridge Castle motte. The mound was raised on the end of a natural spur of high ground overlooking the River Cam (Source: Michael Fradley).

In several examples urban castles in England were constructed with a similar preference for spur-end positions as Davison consistently identified in Normandy. At Cambridge, Chester and Norwich the castles utilised geological spurs overlooking rivers, of which only Norwich currently has a securely defined relationship with the pre-Conquest settlement defences (Alexander 1964, 222; Popescu 2009a; Fig 8.12). Nottingham Castle, with its unusual position west of the pre-Conquest settlement focus, was also situated on a prominent, narrow ridge (Drage 1983, 118). As

previously discussed both Winchester and Exeter were located away from expected riverside position in order to adopt elevated positions within the circuit of the pre-Conquest settlement defences.

Conclusion

The examination of the wider *corpus* of urban castles through a thematic perspective following issues raised in previous chapters has enabled the verification of a number of trends as well as the exploration a range of additional avenues. Key amongst the settlement components most frequently associated with the urban castle is the link to both the pre-Conquest defensive perimeter and to the riverside zone. In many other respects, however, such as association with ecclesiastical centres, major points of infrastructure and market places recorded correlations are much lower. There is also massive variation in the form, longevity and internal arrangements of these structures, indicating perhaps that if they were conceived as a homogenous group, that is that William I and his retinue made a decision to raise castles in a large number in existing urban settlements, then input into the actual design occurred at a broad level. The key decision appears to have been the physical connection of these castles with the fabric of the pre-Conquest *burh* or an association with the primary river system. The following chapter will explore these common features in greater depth, introducing a more interdisciplinary approach to the subject.

9 Discussion: change and continuity in medieval governance

The present study of the urban castle phenomenon has built a cumulative picture of the introduction and development of these structures through an analysis of their form and context at a range of scales. This has demonstrated both the rich variety and the potential of archaeological evidence deriving from these sites, but also the inadequacy of current models for understanding them.

What reasoning can be deduced through the present methodology about why the incoming northern French elite chose to construct urban castle structures in the immediate post-Conquest decades? At the micro-scale of the individual urban unit it has been argued they did not simply function as tools through which this group could control movement and activity amongst the urban populace. There is a widespread pattern of urban castle sites avoiding immediate association with key nodal points of communication such as bridges and fords, access routes through the urban perimeter, major crossroads and market places, which would be expected if such a process of control was being undertaken. Certainly this appears to be the case in Wallingford during a prolonged period of conflict in the mid-twelfth century when fortifications are recorded as being established at either end of the only known contemporary bridging point of the River Thames in that region (pp.137-8); no such attitude is evident amongst the *corpus* of urban castles raised during the late eleventh century. The issue of controlling centres of population is further disputed by the fact that the majority of urban settlements not directly associated with shire administration and also containing a major ecclesiastical presence were not selected for the imposition of urban castle units (pp295-6).

This final chapter will set out a detailed analysis of the principal themes emerging from these issues. It will take into account the theoretical position outlined in Chapter Three, as well as further exploring the themes identified in Chapter Eight through analysis of the wider distribution of urban castle sites and comparison with the contemporary situation in Normandy. To begin, the relevance or otherwise of the traditional historical narrative will be explored in order to set the scene for this discussion.

The historical narrative

The enduring influence of an established and traditional historical narrative on the interpretation of the urban castle has been one of the key theoretical discussion points of the present study. The salient issue is that the idea of the urban castle as an imposition- as an act of oppression or a statement of overawing power is directly drawn from this narrative- but this has no conclusive support in either the archaeological or documentary record (pp31-4). Documentary sources from the late eleventh and early twelfth century indicate that the burden of castle-building was a point of tension, although these ecclesiastical perspectives may specifically be a reaction against the imposition of duties of fortification construction on churches, from which they have previously been exempt (Eales 1990, 60). Even the well-known, retrospective conclusion drawn by Orderic Vitalis as to the defeat of the Anglo-Saxon people due to a lack of castles is laced in ambiguity, and gives no detail of the relationship between castle and wider settlement.

Furthermore, the archaeological sources available have also demonstrated in the present study that such a simple 'control' hypothesis is flawed. The positions selected

for urban castle construction have shown only a limited concern with a direct association with key nodal points of movement and activity, such as bridging points, access routes through urban perimeters, market places and major crossroads (see Chapter Eight). The concept of imposition is complex; at a physical level there is certainly a process of large-scale imposition, but the query lies with the extent to which this was exaggerated and necessitated by a need on the part of the castle-building elite to make an explicit social statement of power and superiority. The extent of demolition, and the exact manner in which it re-orientated the urban fabric, is incredibly varied. This again demonstrates that the physical imposition of the urban castle upon existing settlements zones was not a crucial element in the selection of a castle site and its expression of power. Instead a number of other factors, in particular proximity to the existing urban defensive perimeter and the major river system are prominent.

So what has been the impetus behind this interpretive structure, in which the spectre of Norman domination abounds but is rarely demonstrated? An interpretation was presented in Chapter Three that sought to demonstrate how the over-arching narrative of Late Saxon and Norman England had developed, particularly from the 1940s onwards, as the experiences of wartime and subsequent imperial dissolution necessitated a re-moulding of the national narrative. The Late Saxon period, with its non-Germanic material cultural, unification narrative, ambiguous defeat of a violent and expansive Viking foe and notable absence of overseas adventurism or imperialism, provided a new 'origin' narrative for the English nation through the work of leading academics from Stenton onwards. It is within this framework that the impression of the urban castle is situated and accepted by scholars of both pre- and post-Conquest

England as a violent, repressive action. The Battle of Hastings in AD1066 remains a conspicuously divisive date within academic research.

To the partisan supporter of pre-Conquest studies, with many academics having clearly chosen a 'side', the urban castle is part of a wider campaign of social, political and cultural oppression. Placed within a wider narrative it is argued that the structures and institutions were ultimately robust enough to survive this period of Norman brutalism through the medieval period and onwards. The oppressive account is equally accepted by proponents of Norman England, the more traditional of the two perspectives which is situated closer to the viewpoint of the political right and less-influenced by the altering situation of the English nation during the twentieth century. That is not to say that parallel attempts have not been made to establish the Norman role in the contribution to the development of the nation-state and the use of language such as 'Norman achievement' (Brown 1984). The violence of the period is accepted as necessary as part of the renewal of kingdom and sovereign, and a position of integration and superiority within the contemporary European milieu. As part of a national narrative AD1066, the date of the last successful armed invasion of the English mainland, is clearly influential, and fortunately the nature of Norman adventurism creates an acceptable figure. In being of Scandinavian descent and integrated into a French duchy, they remain in a sense nationally distinct, a near-nomadic body who within the traditional narrative disappear from England and France in AD1154 and AD1204 respectively, removing part of the national stigma of having suffered defeat at the hands of an opponent identifiable in the political topography of modern Europe.

The result of this situation is that the concept of the intrusive Norman host is accepted by all, producing an interpretation of the urban castle as inherently culturally

repressive is naturalised, and as such does not require a supportive evidence base. If the archaeological evidence is considered as presented in this study, there are clearly questions that remain unresolved within the constraints of the traditional discourse on the subject. While the narrative itself may not be fundamentally flawed, there is clearly a need for archaeologists to detach their evidence base from that framework.

Private and Public

One pertinent area is the concept of a widespread move of defence and military power from a public to a private sphere in the course of the movement from Anglo-Saxon to Norman England. At its core is the premise that a military system centred on the *burh*, maintained on behalf of the shire by obligatory members of that territory, which was abandoned and replaced by the private medieval castle in which armed groups served on behalf of the elite member in possession of the castle. It is not an issue restricted to the archaeology of England; in France this process is asserted to have taken place during the tenth and eleventh centuries, particularly around the period *c.*AD1000, but even in this sphere the validity of the concept is debated (Barton 2004, 113-5). Fitting in with the political agenda of the post-Conquest perspective in England, this development was a progressive necessity replacing an unresponsive and ineffective centralised system, with a more adaptable system of private enterprise maintained explicitly by the elite. From the pre-Conquest perspective the acceptance of a centrally defined system of public contribution has been an essential part of the development of Late Saxon studies during the twentieth century, taking its cue in part from its wartime experience from 1939-45 with overtones of a united effective front in the face of a common foe. The context of the development of the Wessex *burh* system

during a period of Scandinavian (i.e. Germanic) expansion, mirroring that of the Nazi threat, is incredibly potent (see Chapter Three).

It is argued that because this aspect of the urban castle is acceptable to the pre- and post-Conquest academic perspectives of the period it has remained unchallenged. It is asserted in this instance that the egalitarian nature of the Wessex *burh* may have simplified a far more complex social structure, while the inaccessibility of the urban castle to the urban and wider shire populace may also have been overstated (Golding 2001, 128; Coulson 2003, 30). One perspective may be that the grand system of interconnected royal *burhs* constructed and functioning on behalf of a common, unified kingdom from the early tenth century may have become heavily eroded as an interconnected system by the eleventh century (Abels 2001, 22, 30). In this example a perceived movement of military capacity from public to private hands is far less dramatic. This is equally open to dispute, and falls into a problematic area of implying a decline from a 'golden age' at the turn of the tenth century. Alternatively, the imposition of the *burh* itself could be understood as a centralised insertion comparable to the urban castle itself, also requiring negotiation and compromise over competing social, economic and political factors at both local and regional level.

Following this position, and returning to the *burh* unit at a base, physical level, it can be argued that it consisted of a monumental enclosure defined by major ditches, ramparts and gateways. Given the level of investment and the direct involvement of the social elite it is difficult to support the notion that access and privilege within these enclosed areas was egalitarian amongst the local populace. But any subversion of the traditional narrative of *burh* construction for the people and by the people has retarded discussion on the subject, despite Fleming's highlight of widespread elite involvement

within these developing urban units (Fleming 1993). In addition, there is evidence of enclosed high-status settlement units inside *burhs*, providing a secondary level of controlled access to particular areas of social contact as at Southampton, Ipswich and Stafford (pp299-307). It is conjectured that these barriers were utilised in order to regulate movement and the opportunity to engage in social, economic and political privilege designated by various levels of the elite. The common assumption of the traditional narrative of the late-Saxon period is that the *burh* provided a point of common collection against an alien enemy. But without supporting evidence it is not possible to accept the notion that the influences of local, regional and wider power structures were put aside within the social context of the *burh*, particularly outside of the minority periods of heightened conflict with primarily Scandinavian forces.

Access into the interior of the large pre-Conquest *burh* could conceivably have functioned as much in a socially divisive fashion as one that united. Beyond the conditions of the individual *burh* there is also a question of fragmentation and conflict between *burh* units. This may have been heightened in shires with multiple *burh* foundations; is it possible to characterise the extent to which they were politically and economically competitive? These are issues that have rarely been addressed, again due to a reluctance to deviate from the Post-War narrative of the Late Saxon nationalistic achievement.

How would the remodelled version of accessibility to the pre-Conquest *burh* be characterised? Certainly the open acceptance of a unitary model in which the *burh* system operated fluidly and harmoniously within the English political and social framework is open to serious dispute. On the basis of late-medieval examples where wards and parishes could envelope inter- and extra-mural areas, it is necessary

question to question the cohesiveness of the pre-Conquest urban unit (Creighton 2007, 56). This also opens the temporal issue of *burh* development, in particular that a level of concentrated, permanent settlement had developed in many *burh* units by the mid-eleventh century on a scale or of a character that had been absent during the tenth century. It would seem reasonable to suggest that the inter- and intra-relationships of the settlement had changed significantly over this period, with a major shift toward the economic and the heightened importance of the needs and outputs of that sector (Holt 2010).

Returning to the pre-Conquest *burh*, and specifically its relationship with its shire, this too may have been a divisive element where multiple *burh* units were located within a single shire, particularly where several have been demonstrated archaeologically to have developed economically active settlements by the eleventh century. In cases where *burh* units were politically sidelined, as arguably in Winchcombe or Tamworth, or at emergent centres such as Bristol and Coventry, the potential for inter-settlement rivalry and regional tensions may have increased. Ultimately, it is necessary to broaden our consideration of the *burh* and wider urban settlement pattern by the mid-eleventh century, by which time, if not earlier, complex webs of relationships including political and economic competition between and within towns would almost inevitably have formed. The result of this is that the concept of a simple and linear movement from the public utility of the *burh* system to the private powerhouse of the castle must be resisted in preference of a much more subtle consideration of social relations during the eleventh century.

Function within the urban castle

In the previous chapter it has been outlined how little is at present understood about the internal arrangements of urban castles. At Norwich there were clearly baileys which were either largely devoid of structure, or contained only a low density of buildings in the immediate post-Conquest period. In contrast the interior of Winchester Castle was densely occupied, while due to the monumentality of the enclosure banks at sites such as the White Tower and Oxford, the bailey areas were relatively limited in space. This in part undermines traditional narratives that early castle use related directly to the movement and accommodation of large armed retinues, cavalry and supplies. Ultimately the archaeological interpretation of function in early urban castle sites is limited by both a lack of sufficient excavated examples and a superficiality of evidence available.

An important change in which the castle is fully encapsulated is in the practice of law and justice, and the exaction of power and control through the use of incarceration. The physical reality of medieval imprisonment has received little academic interest in recent decades despite an evident increase in interest in criminality and social marginalisation (Lilley 2002; Appleby and Dalton 2009). In part this reflects the fact that few medieval prisons were distinct structures, instead the majority being components within larger multi-purpose complexes, while from a documentary perspective there may have been a general unwillingness to admit the extent of crime and punishment through written details of incarceration (Geltner 2010, 264).

Different forms of incarceration could be utilised including stocks and rooms or cages used as gaols cells, and these occur in small numbers in the pre-Conquest documentary record, while the use of prisons as a means of custodial punishment is apparent at a low level from at least the eleventh century onwards (Pugh 1968, 2-3).

Archaeologically it is possible to view the castle as a highly distinct form of architecture linked to the imprisonment of those deemed criminal. In some cases our first documentary reference to a particular urban castle occurs simply as a location at which a high-status political prisoner was forcibly housed.

The judicial system that developed in England during the tenth and eleventh century had a strong link to the royal elite. This public dissemination appears to differ from the more private jurisdiction practised by the wider elite over much of France (Baxter 2009). The post-Conquest period did not see the removal of the earlier system, but instead a continued process of development and restructuring in which the influence of the royal elite remained strong. While more explicit control moved into the hands of the lesser elite at a local level in the post-Conquest is evident, its relevance is potentially emphasised by the growing body of documentary evidence, and private jurisdiction can arguably be identified in the documentary record back into the eighth century (Pugh 1968, 1). Given the increasing evidence of enclosed complexes in the hands of the wider elite in the pre-Conquest period, it seems likely that the machinations of localised influence by these groups was already in development and included influence over jurisdictional process.

While there is documentary evidence that the royal sheriff would hold the custody of urban castles, there is no evidence that this was a homogenous situation across space or time (Green 1990, 11; Palliser 2006, VII 4-5). In the case of the post-Conquest sheriffs of Worcester and Oxford, Urse d'Abetot and Robert d'Oilli respectively, the sheriff was in fact responsible for the construction of the castle itself (Brown *et al.* 1963, 771). At Durham the castle fell into the hands of the Earl of Northumberland and subsequently the bishops of Durham who would hold the power to select the

county sheriff. There is a multitude of evidence that the position of sheriff could be open to widespread abuse, although in the context of elite exercise of power this corruption is not so stark. In the later medieval period attempts were made to make the office more accountable with limited success, and control was influenced more by the strength of the crown to regulate the lesser elite (Gorski 2009).

Justice and the urban castle

Importantly our understanding of this link to justice and imprisonment stems solely from the realms of documentary history. The archaeology of the urban castle has provided little evidence of any kind that might be deemed as relating to this particular activity. At Pevesney Castle architectural analysis of the surviving masonry structure has identified a potential gaol in the basement chamber of the castle gatehouse potentially dating back to the twelfth century (Chapman 2007, 110-2). This did not constitute an explicit element of a castle architecture, and there is little evidence from any other example with masonry remains or otherwise of such a feature. This is in itself relevant, demonstrating that imprisonment was not deemed a form of justice, and that the prison was not therefore a structure yet relevant to social manipulation. For the majority held for a serious criminal offence imprisonment represented the prelude to the judicial process before a royal servant, with punishment exacted in the form of fines, acquittal or death. Documentary evidence indicates that prisoners taken from the social elite could to succumb to lengthy prison terms in castles, although not necessarily an urban castle (Green 2006, 192). Robert Curthose would be imprisoned in both Devises and Chepstow in addition to time at Bristol Castle, while King Stephen would also spend a short time in incarceration at the latter (Chibnall 1978, 380, 544-5).

The fact that no specific style or consistent design can be recognised relating to structures utilised to imprison or confine can be recognised across the *corpus* of urban castles is in itself pertinent. Equally the use of design elements comparable to those found at the medieval castle at one of the earliest prison sites at the Strand in London in the late eleventh century (Schofield and Vince 2003, 56) and the continued use of castellated architectural motif in prison structures into the nineteenth century reinforce the strength of this association. The correlation between legitimate incarceration in the configuration of a judicial process and the authority of elite royal power and its patronage may well be played out in the fact that the first documented pre-Conquest gaol occurs at Winchester, and the first purpose-built prison in an extra-mural position on the west side of London between the latter and Westminster. The pervasive nature of the link between the castellated architecture and official incarceration is played out fully at Worcester. At the latter town the construction of a new county gaol in AD1808-9 to replace that which had stood on the site of Worcester Castle since the medieval period carried with it the road name Castle Street into the settlement's northern suburb where the new prison was built (VCH 1971, 391).

A correlation has been identified in the course of investigating detailed case studies between the urban castle and imprisonment. This has varied from the continued use of the later castle site at Gloucester to the employment of Huntingdon Castle as a gaol site throughout the medieval period despite the 'demolition' of the castle in the late twelfth century. The recognition of the association comes primarily through the documentary record; only at Pevensey has an area arguably used for imprisonment been identified in the twelfth-century construction phases of the castle (Chapman

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2007). One additional archaeological characteristic that may be identified is a burial area used to inter prisoners who may have died due to execution or other causes during their imprisonment, as has been argued at Norwich and Southampton (p298). At the latter only one of seven burials recorded in the northern end of the bailey was formally interred during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (Oxley 1986, 60-4).

The Assize of Clarendon (AD1166) and Assize of Northampton (AD1176) attests to the growing theoretical powers of the royal sheriff in relation to castles in England, although it is not certain to what extent this may have been a formalisation or intensification of existing rights (Douglas and Greenaway 1981, 440-6; Rosenwein 1999, 198). From the directions of the Assize of Clarendon in AD1166 the documented number of county gaols established at urban castles increased dramatically (Pugh 1968, 58-9). To what extent this was entirely original use of the urban castle is not entirely clear, or whether it simply represented intensification and increasing formalisation of an existing situation for which there is some evidence remains open to debate (Pugh 1968, 3). Certainly the first documentary reference to Wallingford Castle comes in relation to the imprisonment of the Abbot of Abingdon in AD1071 (Rohan 1989, 312-3). A hall and chamber specifically for the sheriff of Surrey were constructed in AD1247 in the moat of Guildford Castle, during what was a period of terminal decline for the castle (Mills 1957, 254). Conversely, at Nottingham the sheriff offices and gaol were located in the pre-Conquest English borough, although county detainees were sometimes incarcerated in the castle alongside park trespassers and prisoners of war (Drage 1989, 60).

References to the use of urban castles as points of incarceration of high-status individuals appear from the immediate post-Conquest period. At Winchester there is surviving documentary evidence for a pre-Conquest prison of some form on the north side of the High Street, while in the post-Conquest period a county gaol was established on the west side of Jewry Street in addition to point of incarceration at the southern end of the castle complex (Biddle and Keene 1976, 305-6; Biddle and Clayre 1983, 8, 13). By AD1340 Stamford Castle, which by that date was in a significant state of decay, included a house that was used as a prison (RCHME 1977, 3).

A superficial examination of this continuity may suggest that it is largely coincidental, with most of the latter institutions being established from the eighteenth century onwards with largely derelict land retained in crown hands. But this disregards the changing relationship that these changes appear imply between urban settlement and government. Dorchester provides an interesting example in which the castle was apparently sold in the AD1290s and would later come into the hands of the Franciscans, and its use as a county gaol only began officially in AD1305 when it was established at the expense of the county (Brown *et al.* 1963, 629; Pugh 1968, 66). In contrast, excavations have shown that sections of the castle ditch remained open into this later period, while distinct topographical place names relating to the castle remained in usage into the post-medieval period suggesting that only specific portions of the site may have been sold or leased, and its use as a place of incarceration and shire administration may have continued throughout (Draper and Chaplin 1982, 91).

At York Castle the site was utilised as a prison throughout the medieval period and into the twentieth century, yet at the neighbouring Old Baile site a prison was built in the nineteenth century despite having been left open for centuries previously, and its

latter-day use presumably reflects the use of a convenient area of town corporation land (Wilson and Mee 2005, 69-70, 76-9). At Canterbury the second castle was falling into decay by the late thirteenth century, although expenditure on the gaol continued into the fifteenth century (Bennett *et al.* 1982, 65-6). In Somerset a gaol was formerly established at Ilchester, while in Wiltshire a principle gaol was established at the castle at Old Sarum, despite many of the administrative functions of the shire remaining at Wilton as they had done in the pre-Conquest period (Pugh 1955, 5). Archaeologically there is little evidence yet identified of any significant settlement in the vicinity of the castle or cathedral at Old Sarum before the twelfth century, in stark contrast to the earlier sequence of occupation recorded at Wilton (Mcmahon 2004, 10-13). This would suggest that the process of justice could be linked to an urban castle as a centre of elite power, even when it was physically detatched from the urban centre of the shire.

It is not possible to confirm that the urban castle was utilised as an execution site in the medieval period. Evidence from Norwich and Southampton would suggest that felons may have been buried within the castle complex, while documentary evidence from Lancaster Castle would suggest execution may have taken place outside the urban settlement (Champness 1993, 34). It is likely, however, that in either context the castle would have held a specific and sometimes notorious connection to the process of justice in the minds of the wider populace.

Distribution

In considering the overall distribution of identified urban castle sites there are two principal trends that can be defined. The first is the primary utilisation of shire centres

across the country, although this in part reflects the position of the settlements as principal regional urban units. In addition a number of secondary centres were also utilised, including emergent economic powers such as Bristol and Coventry, as well as older centres of political and economic importance such as Thetford and Stamford. The wealth and influence of an urban unit were clearly not the only factors at play given the sparsity of urban castle sites across Somerset and Wiltshire, in contrast with the foundation of sites such as Tamworth Castle despite the town being beset by poverty and stagnation between the tenth and fourteenth centuries following (Gelling 1992, 151).

Wiltshire and Somerset are particularly interesting in that they comprise much of the core of the archaic kingdom of Wessex and the centre of the English crown's power, influence of which diminished north of Gloucester and the River Thames (Barlow 1970, 169). Of the relatively large number of important and potentially urban centres in the region only the ancient hillfort of Old Sarum was utilised, which itself may have been a much smaller settlement than nearby Wilton during the eleventh century. In Somerset no urban castles were established; the bishop's castle at Taunton was not founded until the early twelfth century. One argument might point towards a lack of a primary urban settlement and the poly-focal distribution of function around the urban hinterland. For instance, a *burh* was located at Axbridge, but the principal royal centre was at Cheddar and the major minster at Wells (Scrase 2005, 8). In response, a similar arrangement could be argued at Bristol with a royal centre at King's Barton and minster at Westbury-on-Trym, yet it was still utilised as the site of a major royal castle despite having no clear duty in shire administration. Similarly, in Wiltshire the pre-Conquest bi-focal administrative centre, split between both Old Sarum and Wilton,

continued to be maintained in the post-Conquest period despite the construction of both castle and cathedral at the site of the former.

Figure 9.1 Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire. In spite of the failure of the urban settlement to thrive from the tenth century onwards a castle was still established at this location (Source: Michael Fradley).

A more original observation is the clear concentration of urban castle sites along the south coast of England. In Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Sussex and Kent a high proportion of existing urban or *burh* centres were selected as the site of an urban castle. In Kent, for instance, Canterbury, Rochester and Dover were utilised, although important coastal *burhs* at Sandwich, Romney and Hythe were omitted alongside probable centres at Fordwich and Seasalter (Brown 1988, 223). Despite these omissions there is a clear high density of urban castle units across the coastal counties

of southern England, with the exception of Cornwall where pre-Conquest urban and *burh* settlements are absent.

This dense concentration across the south coast is unparalleled throughout the country and stands stark in comparison to the east and west coasts, as well as the adjacent counties of Wiltshire and Somerset. This contrast is highlighted by the fact that in both Dorset and Devon a number of relatively minor urban settlements were selected as the sites of urban castles. This undermines the theory that a larger than average number of smaller urban settlements existed in Wiltshire and Somerset, which therefore lacked a primary site to be utilised as a context for the imposition of an urban castle. The absence of urban castles in these regions will be discussed further below.

Returning to the central theme of understanding the concentration of urban castle sites along the south coast, the traditional interpretation is one of defence against a maritime threat, particularly given the martial elements of the castle structure. This argument is hamstrung by the apparent paucity of urban or royal castle sites along both the east and west coasts, particularly given the ongoing threat posed by Scandinavian armies and naval forces throughout the late eleventh century. That is not to say that control was not an important element in the establishment of the dense distribution across the south coast, but that this was a form of control in a much broader sense, beyond the constraints of military and physical domination. This strong concentration could relate to the maritime proximity of the French mainland, and Normandy specifically, providing the primary point of passage and the region most familiar to the northern French traveller. It has been noted that the dip in urban fortunes of towns across the south of England was less marked than elsewhere; in some cases towns

became more prosperous in the post-Conquest period, which may in part highlight the importance of this region as an area of transmission across the Channel (Griffiths 2003, 104).

There is very clear documentary evidence for the movement of merchants and the elite between England and northern France in the pre-Conquest period. Edward the Confessor had spent his exile in France and brought men from Normandy into power briefly during his reign (Barlow 1970, 6-8, 73), an action which led to the infamous and ambiguous construction of a castle at Hereford (Swanton 1996, 176). Equally, men from Normandy served under the English king in the pre-Conquest period as clerks and ecclesiastics, while documented figures such as Robert of Rhuddlan would spend time in English elite circles (Barlow 1970, 144, 176). These links should not be exaggerated over the wider context in which England stood as part of a north-European theatre, while the growing influence of the Gallic sector through the eleventh century could equally relate to changing trade patterns and the developing influence and structure of the church and papal power.

For all the concentration of historical writing on the extent of English rebellion and dissent, it is surprising how little attention is paid to the occurrence and threat of inter-Norman warfare in the post-Conquest period. It is in this context that the castle most frequently occurs as a point of conflict between groups and individuals to whom the formalities of the castle were familiar. One of the first threats to the Norman and northern French accession came from the attempted invasion in AD1067 of a former and subsequent ally of William I, Count Eustace of Boulogne, although it was repelled at Dover. Eustace claimed the throne through his marriage to a sister of Edward the Confessor, and had firsthand knowledge of Dover having been involved in a violent

dispute in the settlement in AD1051 in the context of growing tensions centred on the Norman favourites of the English king (Swanton 1996, 172-5). The abortive rebellion of AD1075 is well-known as the cause of the apparent unjust execution of the last English earl of Northumbria, yet the seeds of dissent centred on the northern French elite including the Breton Ralph, Earl of East Anglia, further highlighting the fractious nature of elite politics in this period (Bates 1994, 28). Additionally, the rebellion of AD1088 against William II by a number of Norman and Anglo-Norman elite in which the loyalty of the sheriffs who held the royal urban castles was crucial, while importantly the focus of conflict centred on the southern coastal counties of Kent and Sussex (Barlow 1983, 72). This conflict saw the last of the pre-Conquest English episcopate, Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, take command of the royal castle of the same town for the crown and ride out to defeat the French and Anglo-French rebels of the border counties, further subverting the traditional cultural narrative of the castle (Barlow 1983, 82). Ultimately any nationalist argument fails to cover the variety of conflict and rebellion in the post-Conquest period, which in many respects continues pre-Conquest patterns of elite grievance and dissent (Stafford 1989, 105). As with all physical structures of power, the concentration of urban castle building along the south coast reveals not only the stratagem of the post-Conquest crown to control England but also implicitly indicates the fragility of the political alliance of the principally Norman elite that enabled that power to be manifest.

A second interpretation of this situation may conversely stem from a need to produce a familiar architectural setting for the northern French elite across this area of geographical interface. It is commonplace to highlight the distinctly alien appearance of the post-Conquest castle in the English landscape, although some assert the lack of visual innovation over pre-Conquest models of fortification (Reynolds 1999, 181), but

there is little discussion of the lack of connection for the incoming elite in their encounter with settlement and architectural forms in England. In these terms the widespread construction of urban castles across the south coast may have developed out of a need to provide a familiar point of elite contact within cross-channel movement, which provided reassurance through its provision of known physical form and social etiquette. The castle may be therefore be as much about making the land intelligible to the northern French host as asserting a psychological and physical statement of power and control over the English populace.

Distribution: ecclesiastical urban centres

One of the most interesting patterns to emerge from this study is the limited correlation of urban castle sites with settlements with a major ecclesiastical presence but an absence of a clear role in shire administration. In shire centres that combined a strong secular commercial and administrative presence with the seat of a bishopric such as Exeter, Worcester and Winchester we can identify an urban castle, although with no consistent relationship between castle and church. Contrastingly, in those pre-Conquest urban centres that had developed heavily under the influence of a major church there is a consistent lack of a castle unit. In some cases these settlements may have functioned as *burh* units, but by the mid-eleventh century the secular elite influence had been reduced or abandoned which may explain the apparent absence of an urban castle at Winchcombe and similarly at sites such as St Albans. Other examples that highlight this differentiation in authority include Shaftesbury; the only settlement in Dorset that may be characterised as urban but lacking an immediate post-Conquest castle, but one dominated by a major monastic church. The poorly documented castle surviving as an earthwork on the western periphery of the latter

town is accepted in the present study as a short-lived fortification of the Anarchy period of *c.*AD1135-54. The one clear exception to this pattern is Ely which may be explained by its historical context of involvement in post-Conquest rebellion, but is also notable in quickly passing into the hands of its first Norman bishop and subsequent fall into disuse.

A number of these ecclesiastical urban settlements were subject to small-scale and short-lived castle imposition or encroachment during the politically turbulent period of the mid-twelfth century, as asserted in the case of the earthwork castle at Shaftesbury above. Additional examples highlighted in Chapter Two also include sites adjacent to monasteries at Malmesbury and Cirencester (Creighton 2002, 136; 2005, 280). These units differ markedly in size, form and longevity from the urban castles of the immediate post-Conquest period, and relate more to the instability and conflict of the period than any attempt to restructure power mechanisms across shire and country. A motte located immediately north of Peterborough Cathedral known as Tout Hill is traditionally linked to a period of documented conflict at the settlement *c.*AD1070, but is potentially the product of the later Anarchy period given its church-side position (RCHME 1969, 3). The castles of the Anarchy period may have, in part, been opportunistic efforts to redefine power relations in and around these prosperous settlement forms in favour of their builders and at the expense of the ecclesiastical elite, although the short-term survival of the majority of these structures implies the widespread failure of any such elite policy.

Returning to the main topic of castle construction and ecclesiastical urban settlements, the absence of urban castle sites in the immediate post-Conquest period is an important and potentially contentious observation. A widespread understanding that

has developed primarily through the utilisation of landscape studies in medieval archaeology has been the strong correlation between castle, church and in some cases settlement development (Creighton 2002, 127-31). The statement of absence put forward by the present study opposes this to a certain degree in arguing for a lack of consistent arrangement in pre-Conquest urban centres, and an avoidance of ecclesiastical urban units by castle builders in the post-Conquest period. On closer inspection the close relationship between castle and church relates to priories, many of which were established as daughter houses to existing monasteries in France, and smaller church units. It is the mother houses represented by pre-Conquest major monastic churches in England that were avoided as well as those that were re-founded, such as Tewkesbury Abbey and new establishments at Battle Abbey. In those contexts where new post-Conquest monastic churches were established alongside pre-Conquest urban centres (excluding those centres receiving cathedral-priories), as at York and Shrewsbury, that they were conspicuously founded in extra-mural positions, which suggest that zones of influence and authority between town and church were being explicitly asserted (pp294-7). This pattern is not absolute; at Chester a Benedictine abbey was established in the north-eastern quadrant of the intramural area in AD1092, although it is interesting that the short-lived cathedral of St John was situated in an extramural position from AD1075 (VCH 2003, 25-6). It is equally the case that monastic foundations associated with castle-borough settlements were located in similarly peripheral positions as at Castle Acre in Norfolk, although they could originate as smaller foundations within the castle walls (Creighton 2002, 131; Pestell 2004).

This absence of a correlation between castle and ecclesiastical urban units also has important implications for our understanding of the cultural dimension of the

Conquest period. The English ecclesiastical elite would soon become largely replaced alongside their secular companions by individuals of northern French origin. Despite this political condition, the major English churches might be expected to have remained potential centres of rebellion, as well as facilitators of social and intellectual continuity from the pre-Conquest period. This condition is not played out in the distribution of Norman castles in relation to either major pre-Conquest churches or attendant urban settlements where they had developed. The narrative of cultural domination is weak, and in part already subverted by historical episodes such as the use of Worcester Castle by the English bishop Wulfstan on behalf of the crown to check Anglo-Norman rebellion in the region following the succession of William II. The argument that has been developed by this study would suggest that the role of the urban castle related to the maintenance of a more secular authority, and that links to the church were of a coincidental nature.

Chronology

Supplementing the interpretation of the overall distribution of identified urban castle sites is a potential chronology of the foundation and development of these structures, which further emphasises the lack of a singular narrative within the *corpus*. A number of arguably deviant elements are present in a group which may be expected to be amongst the earliest constructed, which differentiate them from the subsequent majority which are repeatedly found in close association with existing defensive lines or adjacent to primary water systems.

Pevensey Castle represents the first probable castle of the campaign, and is fairly typical of the wider *corpus* in consisting of an enclosure within an existing defensive

perimeter and adjacent to maritime waters (pp236-41). It is perhaps only the absence of a motte which distinguishes the site; the apparent isolation of the structure being the result of the later shift of settlement to a nearby extramural location. The castles at Hastings and Dover present intriguing cases; both are located in elevated positions above probable harbour and settlement areas, and similarly appear to encompass pre-Conquest ecclesiastical settlements and possible associated secular settlements. Dover Castle utilises a portion of the earlier *burh*, although at Hastings this position is ambiguous, with the *burh* potentially located on the adjacent East Hill as discussed in Chapter Seven (pp230-6). In either case the elevated position of *burh* and castle divorces them physically, although not visually, from the settlement's economic and population core closer to the seafront.

The documentary narrative describes the movement of the Norman army on toward Canterbury and then westwards, via a skirmish at Southwark, to Guidlford and following the Thames up to Wallingford. It is of interest therefore that castle sites at both Canterbury and Guildford represent examples of potentially deviant positions in relation to the urban settlement, with mottes located astride the settlement defence circuit in both cases and attendant baileys positioned in inter- and extra-mural areas respectively. There is no documentary evidence that either castle was constructed in the initial military progression of AD1066, but the non-standard location is suggestive that this is the case. In contradiction there is another example of an urban castles positioned astride the existing *burh* defence line at Bedford, which has no direct association with the Conquest campaign, although this relationship may relate to a secondary expansion of the castle complex (Baker *et al.* 1979, 13, 17, 63). A second issue concern is the fact that there is no discrepancy from the majority with the form and position at Wallingford Castle, which could indicate that it was not built until a

later date. There also remains an unresolved issue of the original form of the castle at Rochester, which could feasibly have been visited after Canterbury as the forces under Duke William advanced, and where the interpretation of the Boley Hill earthwork as the original post-Conquest castle, located in an extra-mural position adjacent to the standing intra-mural Rochester Castle, has been disputed (Ashbee 2006, 251; Brown 2006, 25-6).

The chronological development of the urban castle is subsequently marked by the probable construction of three sites at Gloucester, Winchester and London in late AD1066 or early AD1067, although of these examples only the foundation of London is documented. What marks all three sites is their association with major palatial complexes, small baileys and, potentially, small mottes, Investigations at Guildford Castle have similarly conjectured a small elongated initial bailey immediately south of the castle (Poulton 2005, 136-7). At Winchester, Gloucester and London all three examples utilise the existing defensive line, and in the case of Gloucester and London stand in a near-riverside and riverside location respectively. At London this interpretation relates to the development of the White Tower site, but may have been paralleled at a contemporary date by the Banyard Castle complex at the west side of the settlement defences. It is argued in the present study that this group were constructed prior to the wider development of urban castles from AD1068 onwards, and could tentatively and arbitrarily be suggested of being founded in early AD1067. It may even be possible to indicate that Winchester Castle was founded between the close of AD1066 and February AD1067 (Biddle 1987, 312), which may be paralleled at Gloucester and London. It is important to note that only Winchester caused significant damage to the existing settlement fabric; at Gloucester the situation is more ambiguous with excavation evidence suggesting the demolition of low-status workshop

units (pp209-14). There is very little evidence of settlement destruction at the Tower of London.

From AD1068 onwards the 'standard' urban castle form then develops, primarily as an elaboration of the model provided by Winchester, Gloucester and the White Tower. It is possible that a castle was already in existence at Hereford (Fig. 2.2), perhaps indicating the renewal of the fortification documented in AD1051 (Swanton 1996, 176, 200). The documentary evidence suggests the first amongst those raised in AD1068 was Exeter, a ringwork in an elevated position like Winchester, with an usual masonry gatehouse. It is in the period following this foundation that the erection many urban castles are recorded including Warwick, Nottingham and Lincoln. Amongst this later *corpus* there remains some deviation from this simplistic model, for instance in the 'peninsula' sites of Bristol, Shrewsbury and possibly Buckingham. At Stafford currently available evidence demonstrates that the castle perimeter was relatively small, mirroring the scale of pre-Conquest enclosure whose form it parallels, while a number of other sites such as Colchester, Southampton and Stamford also stand in positions apparently dictated by preceding elite enclosures. There are also a number of examples, notably in the east of England at Norwich and Nottingham, where the construction of the urban castle is associated with a massive reorganisation of the urban space. Despite this continued variation, the very reasoning of urban castle construction appears to have changed after AD1067, as suggested by the case of the primary castle sites at Gloucester and Canterbury which were subsequently deemed inadequate and replaced *c.*AD1100.

Re-conceptualising the urban castle: The castle and eleventh-century urbanism

An understanding of towns as dynamic, fluid units has been mooted by previous academics such as Hill who was partly responsible for widely influential 'Winchester model' of Anglo-Saxon urban planning. Importantly he includes the proviso that organic settlement development and less regulated foundations in the wake of an original period of Alfredian planned towns in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, with a similar phase in the mid-tenth century (Hill 1988. 197; 2000). The mainstream view retains an understanding that a significant number of *burhs* were established as permanent, planned settlement units, often reaffirming the importance of the 'Anglo-Saxon achievement' (Hooke 1998, 199-201). In doing so the traditional perceptions of the 'origin' and role of the town in the pre-Conquest period are reinforced, although interestingly it is acknowledged that there has been little accumulation of supportive evidence for these arguments which had been stimulated by the notable lack of criticism of the original planned Anglo-Saxon town model (Biddle and Hill 1971; Hill 2000, 173).

There is now a growing body of research indicating a far greater variation in this process of settlement development, even in the heartland of Wessex. A small but important body of researchers have highlighted the clear diversity of urban development from the tenth century onwards, with Winchester and sites such as Oxford demonstrating archaeologically an intensity of occupation not seen at many other 'town' sites (Hinton 1990, 91-4; Astill 2006). Similarly, despite a significant lack of available data the diversity in development trajectories of the five boroughs of the Danelaw, an area in which archaeologically visible urban growth is often more assured, could be categorically stated (Hall 1989, 205). The available archaeological evidence for the north-west is highly suggestive that the only significant urban centre by the

eleventh century was at Chester, although important alternative settlement centres may have been developing contemporaneously (Griffiths 1995; Higham 2007, 57-60). An important case has been made for differential preservation in urban settings producing a significant skew in interpretation, and an inherent danger in accepting the identification of non-occupation or negative evidence, but at present it is possible to argue for considerable variation in the overall pattern (Vince 1994, 112-4).

There is a massive differential in the scale and status of settlement disturbed as part of the imposition of the urban castle. It is difficult to conclusively demonstrate that this destruction, where it did occur, was a purposeful act, physically and psychologically enforcing the process of Conquest. While it is clear that existing property was a secondary concern to the primary requirement of the incoming elite to install urban castles in designated position, this related to the need to obtain that position rather than maliciously clear existing settlement patterns. In a small number of cases, which may rise as a result of future archaeological observations, pre-Conquest high-status sites were utilised as positions for post-Conquest urban castles. It might be expected that this was a meaningful continuity of elite power, although it conversely may be a convenient re-use of properties forfeited by members of the pre-Conquest elite as part of the conquest process, and as such may represent a concious avoidance of impacting on wider settlement form. Continuation of pre-Conquest power networks could occur in more subtle forms as at Nottingham where the castle developed as the centre of an honour which may have had a pre-Conquest antecedent centred on the chapel of St James (Drage 1989, 20).

Archaeological investigations have shown clear evidence of churches and cemeteries being demolished and levelled to make way for the construction of urban castles,

although in some cases the church unit may have continued in existence as a castle chapel. Investigations at Norwich Castle has been able to highlight at least three church units active in the pre-Conquest period that were removed or encroached upon by the foundation of the castle (Popescu 2009a, 358-9). It has been previously stated that in none of the cases in which a church or cemetery site was overlain by a castle can the ecclesiastical unit be conclusively demonstrated to have still been in use at the time the fortification was constructed (Creighton 2005, 123). The evidence from Barnstaple Castle which suggests some bodies, possibly high-status or recent burials, had been carefully exhumed and presumably re-buried prior to the construction of the castle suggests that relevant spiritual elements of the cemetery was not entirely ignored (Miles 1986, 68). It is likely that future archaeological excavations will reveal further evidence of ecclesiastical units degraded by urban castle construction, but on the balance of present evidence it is possible to suggest that this is not necessarily any more malicious than the removal of secular settlement.

Direct documentary evidence for the clearance of settlement in advance of the construction of urban castles is very limited, but it is possible that some themes can be drawn from these fragments. Of the three urban castles for which any semblance of evidence exists for the context of construction, Dover, Rochester and Exeter, only at Dover is any indication of forced eviction given (English 1995). At the other two examples the documentary narrative gives a contrasting interpretation of a process of exchange and negotiation. It may well be relevant therefore within the broader historical narrative that the latter two were constructed in the period after Duke William had been legitimised through his crowing at the close of AD1066, whilst Dover was established before this event in the aftermath of the Battle of Hastings. The occurrence of urban castle building in these three examples therefore took place

within a significantly different context of elite social relations. In the case of Exeter the indigenous populace had endured a lengthy siege in protest against extractions made upon them by the incoming northern French elite (Liddiard 2005, 20-2). At a later date but in a comparable context, claims of compensation were made for the loss of land and buildings in AD1204 by landowners following the reconstruction of Dublin Castle (Manning 1998, 19). Interestingly this development again took place in the corner of the existing town wall circuit, which in turn possibly led to the removal of existing church structures as in England in the post-Conquest period.

It is feasible that the royal elite may have held more rights over properties than indicated by Domesday Book. This in part facilitated urban castle imposition; although still a significant intrusion, it was possibly no more so than the subsequent development of cathedral precincts or other elements of urban settlement redevelopment (Roffe 2007, 133-4). There is also a more general disdain for urban communities amongst the eleventh century elite; Orderic Vitalis revels in the summary execution of a leading Rouen merchant by Prince Henry (later Henry I of England) when the latter throws him from the tower of Rouen Castle following the involvement of the merchant in an uprising (Chibnall 1973, 220-7; Green 2006, 30-1). Following this position it is feasible that the imposition of the urban castle was a much less dramatic incidence than frequently portrayed. This does not discount that wider forced eviction and destruction occurred in urban contexts, or that 'compensation' was necessarily without coercion or that it even disseminated down to members of lower social groups, but remains an important reflection on the complex context of castle imposition. It is difficult to sustain the interpretation of the castle as a vital component in the control of the urban settlement (Gillingham 1992, 160). There is a consistent patterning in the majority of urban castles in which the principal apparatus and

infrastructure of the town are not the primary focus of the castle's site. Instead there is repeated emphasis on riverside locations or positions adjacent to pre-Conquest defensive circuits, the relevance of which in some cases necessitated the demolition of existing settlement zones.

The castle as focus of regional power

Movement has already been made in reinterpreting the urban castle as an element of town and shire administration as part of a wider process in the field revaluating the traditional military narrative of the castle (Liddiard 2005, 18-19). The present study has taken this change of focus further forward in presenting the royal urban castle as largely divorced from the everyday mechanisms and apparatus of the urban settlement. It is interesting to note that the borough courts, as at Wallingford, could be located in a remote, extramural position (Roffe 2009). Detached from a direct physical relationship with the primary zones of movement and activity within urban settlements, and commonly located on its periphery, the urban castle is instead presented as a structure whose prime purpose was as a centre of regional control and contact. This understanding draws heavily on the better-documented circumstance of the urban castle from the late twelfth century onwards in which the sheriff and shire administration are frequently present, although similar but poorly evidenced situations are recorded in the early post-Conquest period.

The longevity of many sites as a focus of central government is significant, often far beyond the decline of the castles themselves and into the present urban landscape. Shire halls occupy the sites of the baileys of Cambridge and Chester, while prisons occupy and largely obscure the castle sites at Dorchester, Lancaster, the second castle

at Gloucester, and until relatively recently Oxford Castle (Draper and Chaplin 1982, 35-9; VCH 1914, 5-8). In the majority of examples the sheriff was the keeper of the urban castle, although roles were shared with royal constables and other elements of the elite, and in examples such as Colchester Castle the sheriff struggled to maintain any form of permanent residency (Mills 1957, 254; Pugh 1968, 67-9; Palliser 2006, VII 4-5). The White Tower at various times may have additionally been the seat of the sheriffs of Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex and London itself alongside the position of the castle custodian (Impey 2008a, 5). In those cases where the offices of a sheriff weas situated within an urban castle it is likely to have represented an important hub in a communication system that would have linked to the royal elite, key sites of government such as Westminster and Winchester, as well as the shire hinterland itself (Mills 1957, 257-71).

Figure 9.2 Cambridgeshire Shirehall as viewed from the motte of Cambridge Castle. In many examples urban castle sites can be shown to have played a part of local government from their foundation in the eleventh century up to the present (Source: Michael Fradley).

This intense system of administration is better documented in the later medieval period, but may have been evident in some examples from the inception of the urban castle when documented sheriffs are known to have played key roles in their construction (Green 1990, 9), although there is little evidence of this function archaeologically. The longevity of many castle fees may be due the fact that they also housed the county administrative apparatus which would be compromised if brought within the jurisdiction of urban authorities (Mills 1957, 254). The later medieval and early post-medieval urban settlement was marked by an increasingly visible self-governance in the form of guild halls, town offices and other institutions, while a direct link with central government was provided by members of parliament for the respective boroughs. In parallel it is possible to trace the growing abandonment of the urban castles themselves, although their underfunded use as offices of the sheriff often continued unabated as at Huntingdon (Chapter five).

The position of the urban castle as a central point of shire and royal elite power delegation was therefore not uniform across space or time. At Warwick the castle was constructed in the immediate post-Conquest period but soon passed to the Beaumont Earl of Warwick and town rapidly brought under manorial jurisdiction after AD1088, making it unavailable to the sheriff of the wider county (VCH 1969, 452, 464-5; Pugh 1968, 59). At the centre of the independent earldom of Chester, the castle housed the earl's court, prison and treasury, as well as providing offices for his chamberlain and clerks (Thacker 2000, 23). In the decades after AD1066 there is the documented establishment of castles at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cardiff and Carlisle, and later at Lancaster, in each case established within a former Roman fort complex (Fig 9.3). At both Carlisle and Newcastle-upon-Tyne there is archaeological evidence that these sites were established ecclesiastical centres with potential high-status secular elements,

although too little as yet to characterise them as urban settlements (Summerson 1993, 1-14; 2004, 29-30). Despite a lack of pre-Conquest evidence it is clear that these structures would take on regional administrative roles comparable to that of the urban castle *corpus*, further emphasising the ambiguity of distinguishing these castle 'types'.

Figure 9.3 Cardiff Castle motte and shell keep. Although it is not strictly an urban castle, it was raised within the ruins of a large Roman fort and took on a similar role in local government in Glamorgan (Source: Michael Fradley).

It is argued that this central position of the urban castle as part of a heterogeneous process of regional control in part redeveloped or renegotiated a similar role undertaken by the pre-Conquest *burh*. The role of the *burh* in regional control is sometimes downplayed in comparison to their use in regional defence, and in this former role the construction of castles could be considered a reimagining of the structural manifestation of that relationship (Stafford 1989, 112, 135). An alternative

perspective would be to view the king's castle as a successor to the king's hall, although there is clear temporal and spatial variation in this development (Roffe 2007, 126). As discussed above, pre-Conquest power networks centred on the *burh* would almost certainly have been equally heterogeneous. As a result we witness in the urban castle distribution spatially and temporally variable system of power centres overlying another, which goes some way to explaining the lack of uniformity both at micro- and macro-scales. For instance the paucity of urban castle sites in Somerset and Wiltshire may obliquely be a demonstration of royal elite power in this region and its play across a diffuse number of centres; hence the castle of Old Sarum is comfortably located at a centre distinct from Wilton.

It is arguable that by the mid-eleventh century the composition of many *burhs*, due to an increase in socially variable population and economic activity had clearly altered their political and social position. The introduction of the urban castle saw a further disruption in this pattern in beginning a process of renegotiating the existing system of shire administration, still located in many former centres, but spatially distinct. To what extent this may have impacted on the long-term development of urban-rural relations is currently beyond measurement. A range of changes to urban form are recorded across the eleventh and twelfth centuries; potentially of interest is the reduction of elite involvement in towns (Fleming 1993), which may in part relate to a restriction of access to regional power structures in the town itself. This situation would also block these avenues of power to any distinct urban non-noble elite. The creation of small distinct points of regional control could also produce a potentially unstable position. As with his brother King William II before him, King Henry I assured the security of his position through placing loyal parties as sheriffs and holders of key urban castles; the rebellion of AD1088 against William II saw the seizure of urban castles in the south-

east by rebels which seriously compromised the integrity of the kingdom (Green 2006, 50). Ultimately it would be naive to make any qualitative statement regarding the impact of the urban castle 'system', which would itself have not acted independently from other forms of elite power structures, on the pre-Conquest network of regional power. What is important to state is that it almost certainly did influence subsequent changes, perhaps fundamentally in reducing the potential of urban settlements as points of access to regional power despite their economic centrality within those wider territories.

The urban castle reconsidered

The constant theme throughout this study has been the assertion that the traditional perception of the urban castle as a simple tool of conquest was unsubstantiated and formed simplistically from the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest. It has been demonstrated on the basis of spatial analysis of urban castle positions within the developing Saxo-Norman townscape that they were infrequently located in areas where any form of physical domination or control could be enacted by the castle garrison. It is acknowledged that these structures had a military capacity, but in their design they were not expected to engage in the practical rule of an urban populace (Coulson 2003, 89).

This leaves a void in interpretation that needs to be confronted. Evidence of the urban castle's role in regional government has been highlighted, and by the later twelfth century as the documentary evidence increases in both scale and detail it is prominent. So was the urban castle intended to take on the role royal control of shire centre, replacing the royal *burh* of the pre-Conquest period? In part this holds true, the need

to physically appropriate part of the *burh* fabric in the design of so many of these structures seems essential beyond the pragmatic reuse of an existing rampart, despite placing the castle in a relatively peripheral position within the existing townscape. Even at Worcester, where the *burh* rampart had been partially levelled by processes of settlement expansion, a standing section was incorporated into the post-Conquest castle. The material substance of the *burh* itself, despite its dilapidation, was imbued with contemporary notions of power. The remnants of individual high-status properties could also be appropriated to indicate elite continuity, as demonstrated archaeologically at Southampton, Oxford and Stafford. In the majority of cases, however, the link to the larger royal *burh* was the necessary relationship in its connection with the regional infrastructure of the shire system

The actual practice of power, however, was far more complex. As in the case of the pre-Conquest royal *burhs* it is possible to demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of these networks, with multiple *burhs* and urban castles in some counties and a near-absence in others. The uniformity of the pre-Conquest *burh* system was an aspiration which in reality was adjusted to variations in regional society and the changing economic and geo-political conditions of the period. In this respect the urban castle was remarkably similar in the fluidity of its application. In Staffordshire, for instance, the urban castle of Stafford was probably abandoned early in the twelfth century, although the site may have continued in use as a gaol. Administratively the shire was often paired with Shropshire, through which the duties of the sheriff's office could be performed from Shrewsbury Castle, as well as the castle-boroughs of Bridgnorth and Newcastle-under-Lyme, once the latter pair had descended into the hands of the Crown. Castles and urban settlements such as Warwick and Leicester could be passed

into the hands of powerful earls, leaving sheriffs to attempt to conduct their office from outside the shire's urban centre (Pugh 1968, 70-1).

The role of the Crown in this process is informative. There is a tendency to view the majority of urban castles as royal, in part validating their interpretations as tools of conquest in a period of ambiguous succession. The actual involvement of the Crown in these structures is far more complex than the title of royal castle suggests. Returning to the relationship stated previously of how in urban settlements where a pre-Conquest palace site has been recognised the urban castle was established on an alternative site, there is an academic tendency to collate the terminology of palace and castle. At Durham, Thompson argues that the castle was developed in a palatial style, and that an earlier palace had been located at the western end of the earlier monastic church (Thompson 1994, 426-36). Norwich Castle is also claimed to be a palatial complex, largely on the basis of its ornate donjon, along with the White Tower in London (Campbell 2004, 39; Ashbee 2008, 128). In northern Europe a process by which palaces were replaced or combined with castle structures is identified from the late ninth century onwards, although the relationship between fortified and non-fortified structures is complex (Renoux 2002, 21). The relationship that is observed at Gloucester, Winchester and London, as well as rural sites such as Windsor, is that in late eleventh-century England the castle and palace were perceived as two entirely separate forms of structure. A palace was genuinely a royal house in which no group individual but the Crown itself could stake a hold.

The urban castle is different in that although it was theoretically a Crown possession and that investment in these structures came from royal funds, yet the monarch could have little or no direct physical involvement. The role of the urban castle was to

descend to a member of the elite, to form a social bond between the latter and the Crown that acknowledged royal superiority. It was therefore a structure through which complex inter-elite social relations could be played out. These were theoretically royal houses that were passed into the hands of hands of subordinate members of the elite, and through which power could be enacted. In spite of the physical absence of the monarch, the power of the latter could be acknowledged through its control of office holders linked to the castle such as constable as well as its investment in the castle structure itself. The urban castle was therefore not only frequently positioned in a peripheral location within the townscape, but socially marginal due to the lack of clear 'ownership'. This could be compounded by the multiplicity of elite groups linked to an urban castle such as the sheriff and castle constable. These positions were in some instances combined, but at other times were not and could therefore produce tense or divisive social conditions. The relationship between sheriff and urban castle could also be complex, as noted at Huntingdon where the Eustace chose to establish himself at Great Staughton rather than Huntingdon Castle (p162). Robert of Stafford was the probable sheriff of the latter town during at least part of the late eleventh century, a position into which his sons succeeded, but based themselves at the elevated Castle Church site south of the town (Green 1990, 80; Darlington 2001, 32). The sheriff of Essex struggled to establish a gaol at Colchester due to the actions of rival factions based in the castle (Pugh 1968, 67-8). On a material level these situations may be manifest in the changing physical form of urban castle sites as with the dual mottes established at Lewes Castle or the increase in the number of baileys at Wallingford Castle. The royal retention of high-status prisoners could also be a source of social and political tension, especially when the individuals incarcerated were of a higher status than the castle custodian. This process could further reinforce

the indirect power of the Crown in its entrustment of a political prison on a sheriff or castle constable, enforcing a social bond of obligation on the part of the latter.

This was not simply a top-down process, as there is ample of evidence of the control of power structures moving into the hands of the elite. This occurs in the immediate post-Conquest period in the establishment of the semi-independent Rapes of Sussex, the earldoms of the Welsh border and the honours of northern England. The ebb and flow of political power could witness the movement of these territories back into royal hands, or alternatively the movement of control out of the hands of the Crown as at Leicester and Warwick, and the creation of new territorial centres as at Lancaster and Carlisle. The level of investment recorded in the late eleventh in the urban castle sites of Sussex may indicate a greater sense of ownership in the lords of the respective Rapes. Equally the Crown could establish a stronger interest in a particular site as at Old Sarum and Winchester, further complicating any effort to characterise the urban castle and its social role in a homogenous form.

This is not surprising given that in the reality the pre-Conquest structures of power and its physical manifestation in the form of centres such as *burhs*, urban centres and king's halls was so heterogeneous (Roffe 2007, 111; Green 2009, 16). The introduction of the urban castle into the townscapes of England elicits change in the politics of power, but also engages in continuity as well as the continuity of fluidity and renegotiation. There is change, but the pre-Conquest situation had never been static. The urban castle is repeatedly found in a position that physically links to the fabric of the pre-Conquest *burh* because it was envisaged as connecting to and advancing the sense in which it was the central point of control and administration to its wider territory or shire. It is possible that a widespread change that this may have elicited is

the reduction in the involvement of the elite in urban environments that has been demonstrated as widespread in the pre-Conquest period (Fleming 1993). As the power previously embedded in the fabric of the *burh* transferred to the urban castle, it fundamentally changed the nature of access to power for the wider elite. A physical presence in the *burh* interior would no longer suffice, while power was increasingly placed in the hands of sheriff and constable who could be engaged with within the environment of the urban castle, but in which a permanent position could not be established without office.

It is argued that the result of this may have been a decrease involvement of elite in the urban environment. One result of this situation may have been a reduction of inter-elite conflict in urban contexts, and therefore a low level in the development of private fortification within English towns comparable to the proliferation of some structures in other areas of Europe. If this was the case it was almost certainly accidental. The urban castle would also have provided a novel interface between the urban populace and the primarily rural tenants who would perform garrison duties at the castle (Campbell 2006, 65). Previously these duties would have been provided in regards to the wider *burh* in the pre-Conquest period, but now focused specifically on the castle. This may have provided a vibrant interface in times of peace and prosperity, but could equally be divisive during times of conflict. The cultural aspect of the introduction of the castle, and the urban castle in particular, was that it was necessary to make power both manifest and intelligible in an English context to the northern French elite. It was about making the exercise of power understandable to and between those elite, which is why there is a proliferation of such structures along the south coast of England in the contact zone between England and France. Urban castle numbers increase dramatically from AD1068 not necessarily because of rebellion and the threat of future rebellion,

the peripheral locations of the majority ensured the impracticable nature of these fortifications on this front, but as a result of the forfeiture of the English elite that increasingly placed regional power in northern French hands. Returning to Deiter's observation that the construction of a castle asserted power but also acknowledged the failure to exercise that power in any other form, in the case of the urban castle there is an incapability or unwillingness to continue directly in the pre-Conquest model. Instead the castle is introduced, an architectural form whose association with power and the administration of larger territories was by the late eleventh century a familiar aspect of the northern French landscape.

10 Overview

The study of the urban castle has proved revelatory over a number of specific subjects. Overarching the mainstream interpretation of the urban castle is the historical narrative of the Norman Conquest. At the very least this has perpetuated an over-simplified paradigm in which the castle is reduced to a simple tool of conquest and cultural domination, its specific function understood only in the context of the former. The subject is more complex than this initial narrative implies on both a spatial and temporal level.

In a broad sense the construction of castles in the post-Conquest period, if not all castle construction of the period, involved a restructuring of existing power relations on the part of the elite. Importantly in the case of the urban castle is that the process of restructuring appears to have had so little connection to the settlement itself. In the case of the majority of examples the emphasis was on renegotiating the role of central place previously held by the pre-Conquest royal *burh* in relation to the wider shire. Primarily in the hands of the royal elite or immediate lieutenants the urban castle functioned as economic points of revenue collection and centres of jurisdictional control. In this context it is not clear to what the castle was an exclusive private unit of elite reserve, or how far it contrasted with the perceived 'public' enclosure of the pre-Conquest *burh*. At a cultural level the use of the castle architectural form made this restructured power network intelligible to the northern French elite who were its intended custodians.

Methodologically the approach taken to explore the subject has been justified through the breadth of its results, providing insight and avenues for future research that go

beyond the urban castle itself. The combination of topographical analysis, including analytical earthwork survey in an urban context, and detailed reassessment of the results of archaeological excavations in a theoretical framework explicitly divorced from the traditional historical narrative has produced novel interpretation. Connecting this evidence to a critical re-examination of urbanism in England around the eleventh century has offered a far-reaching account of the period that impact on wider themes of medieval settlement development.

Appendix A: Earthwork survey at Wallingford, Oxfordshire

The following text will report on the results of a programme of analytical earthwork survey undertaken in and around the town of Wallingford. This work used a range of Leica 1200 GPS, Leica 1200 Total Station and traditional hand-and-tape methodologies to visually identify and record archaeological earthwork which were subsequently depicted graphically as a hachure survey model (Fig A.1). The details of this approach are outlined most accessibly in RCHME/English Heritage volume on landscape investigation by Bowden (1999). The survey fieldwork was carried out principally by the author, with occasional practical assistance from Oliver Creigton, Geri Cowell and Adam Worth. The fieldwork was undertaken over the space of several expeditions between June 2008 and July 2010 alongside the Wallingford *burh* to borough research project, with the majority of recording taking place over a period of seven days in June 2008.

The focus of survey work was three large open areas around the historic core of the settlement known as the Kinecroft, Bullcroft and Castle Meadows/Castle Gardens. Additionally, survey also took place on the smaller Riverside Meadows area on the east side of the River Thames, as well as smaller areas of open ground and private gardens around the town. The following report will outline the earthwork evidence geographically, beginning in the south-east corner of the settlement and working successively around it in a clockwise movement.
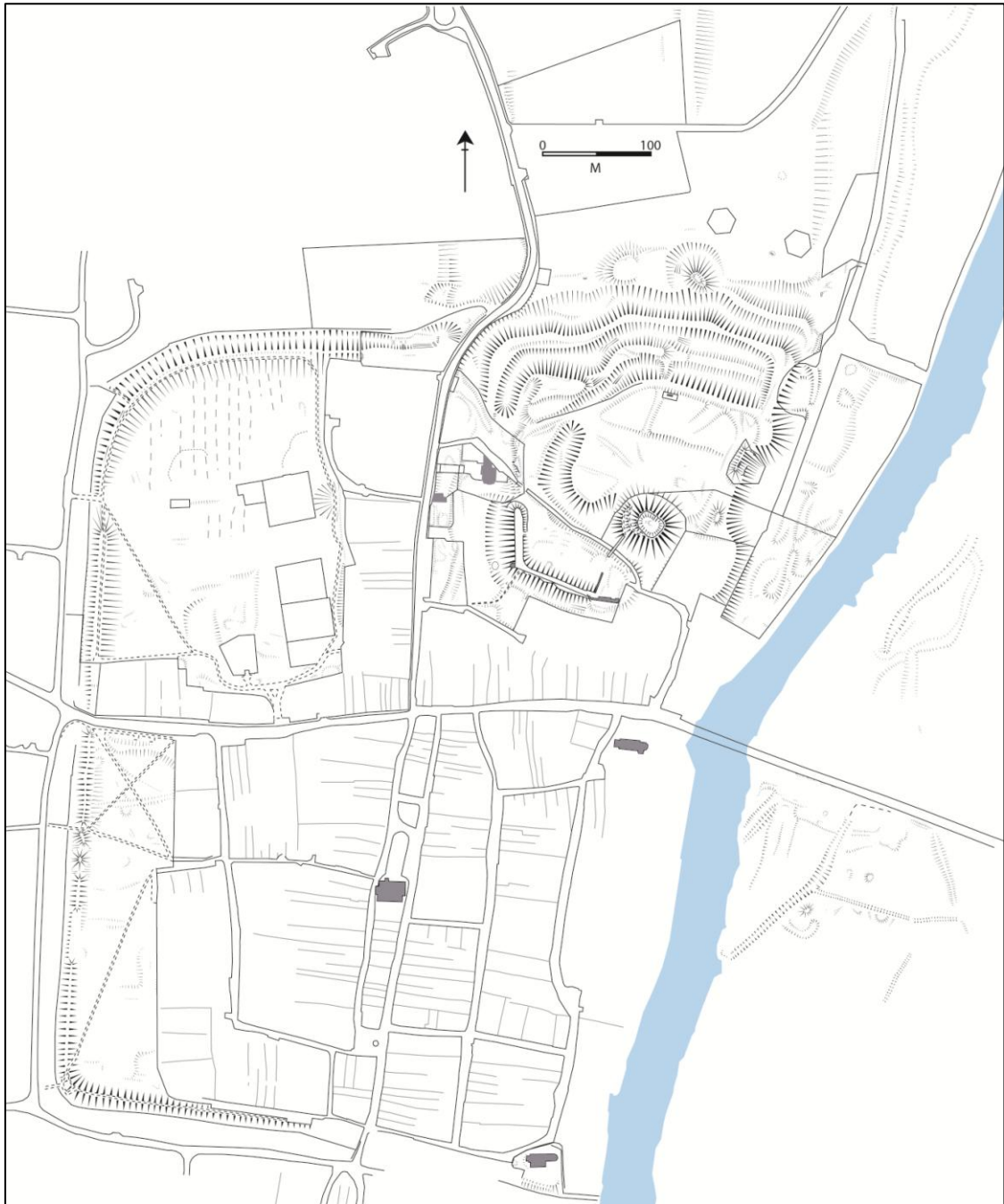
Figure A.1 Wallingford earthwork survey plan (Source: Michael Fradley).

St Leonard's Churchyard (Fig A.2)

The church of St Leonards is standing and its ground maintained as a cemetery and nature area, although it no longer operates as a place of worship. It was substantially rebuilt during the nineteenth century, although fragments of masonry of eleventh to twelfth-century date are still visible on the north side of the church. There are few

specific details available regarding the earlier form of the church. The graveyard is a relatively small irregular area surrounding the church, the most notable earthwork element of which is the fall of ground to the south into the line of the *burh* ditch. Potentially linked to this feature is a denuded mound of earth at the west end of the graveyard, abutting the boundary wall. It is possible that this represents the remains of the *burh* rampart bank, which has otherwise been levelled across this area to enable the expansion of both the church and cemetery space. It would appear less likely, although not impossible, that this mound was created by dumping related to the post-medieval renovation of the church given the restricted plot on which the church is situated, which would have encouraged the removal of spoil from the site. An additional point of interest is that if this feature does represent the remains of the *burh* bank in this area, it suggests that the church, depending on its earlier, medieval form, may have abutted or even been built into the rampart, which has implications upon the sequence of development in this area.
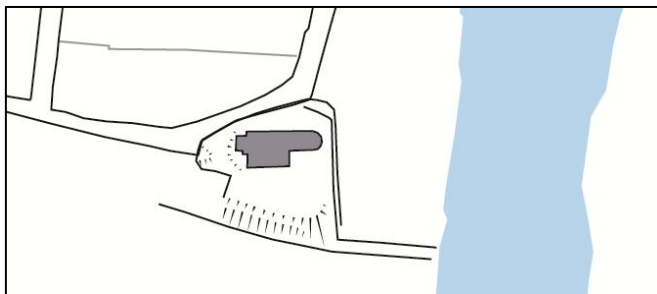

Figure A.2 St Leonard's Churchyard earthwork survey plan (Source: Michael Fradley).

Kinecroft

The Kinecroft is a large, elongated area of land in the south-west corner of the town's historic core. At present it is maintained as open grassland and is criss-crossed by tarmac paths, and is defined on its western and southern sides by the heavily vegetated

remains of the *burh* bank and ditch. The ditch in this area was partially in-filled during the later twentieth century and the water-flow along it sent through a culvert along the same course. The bank survives in moderate condition, and there are four breaks in the western section. These cuts have been recorded on Ordnance Survey map editions from the late nineteenth century onwards, and the date at which they were created is unknown. The three northernmost cuts are small, and link to paths and gates leading westwards out of the *burh*. A fourth small cut previously existed further north along the bank, but this was in-filled during the later twentieth century. To the south of these smaller cuts is a larger cut about 30m wide, suggesting a different context of construction. There is limited evidence of the erosion or spread of the internal face of the bank, especially in comparison to the evidence recorded in the Bullcroft area discussed further below. Only along a portion of the northern end of the western bank circuit was an erosion spread identified.
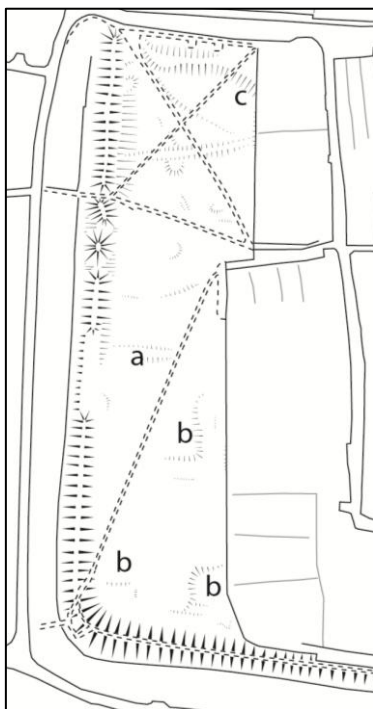

Figure A.3 The Kinecroft earthwork survey plan (Source: Michael Fradley).

Preservation of archaeological earthworks across the interior of the Kinecroft was relatively limited. A short section of bank, 4m wide by about 25m in length and 0.3m in height, running east-west across the area appears to mark a boundary in land management practices between the northern and southern sections of this area, and consequently the condition of the archaeological topography (Fig A.3: a). It may be relevant that this section of bank links to the northern end of the wide break through the *burh* bank discussed above, and the latter feature and this division of land may be related. To the south of the bank three areas of earthworks forked of scarps defining rectilinear enclosures on a north-south/east-west orientation (Fig A.3: b). Although no building platforms were identified, it is possible that these features relate to settlement of indeterminate date.

To the north of the bank the earthwork evidence was less consistent, possibly suggesting a greater degree of levelling or arable cultivation in this area. A bank cutting across this area on a near east-west alignment is thought to be a late post-medieval feature linked to a section of underground pipework, and was recorded overlying the eroded spread of the *burh* bank at its western end. At the northern end of the Kinecroft a large, low spread bank, principally aligned east-west, was recorded curving in from High Street at its western end and widening and abutting the Kinecroft boundary at its eastern end (Fig A.3: c). This was interpreted as a causewayed driveway of post-medieval leading to a former property to the east of the Kinecroft on or near the site of the present Wallingford House. This interpretation was based on the fact the widening of the driveway at its eastern end corresponded exactly with the position of two gate piers encased within the boundary wall, while the drive is also lined with mature, deciduous trees. A scarp to the south of the causeway on a north-west to south-east alignment may be part of a linked area of ornamental garden. The

date of these features is uncertain, but must pre-date the construction of Wallingford House *c.*AD1800, the faced of which faces to the north and is situated to close to the gate piers to be contemporary, and therefore was probably created between the sixteenth and eighteenth century in connection with an otherwise undocumented grand property.
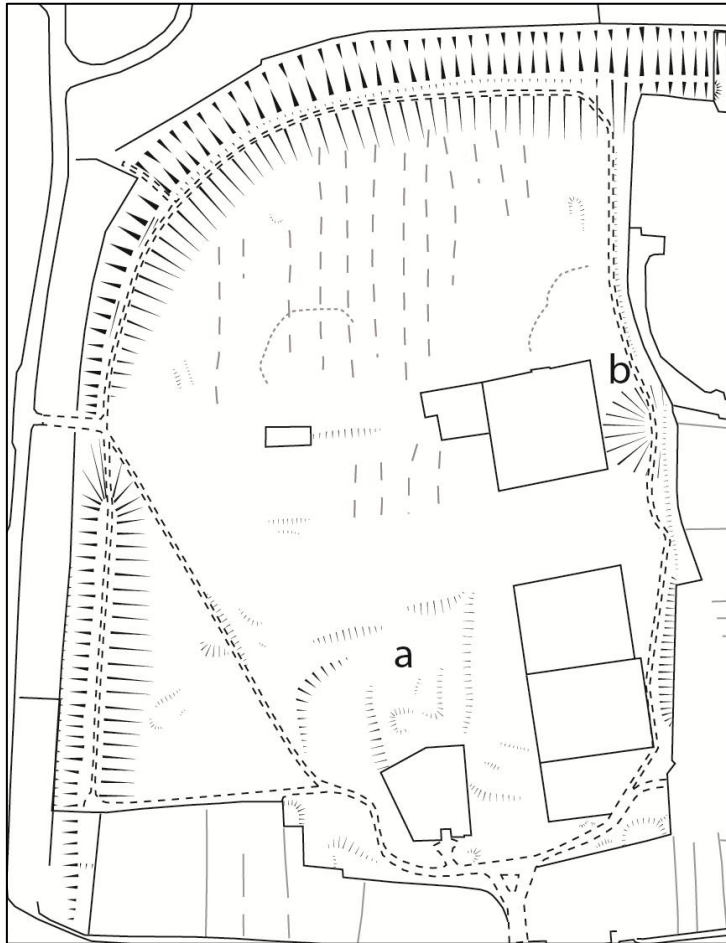

Figure A.4 The Bullcroft earthwork survey plan (Source: Michael Fradley).

Bullcroft

The *burh* bank as it survives in the Bullcroft area is of a different to that recorded in the Kinecroft. The internal face of its bank is heavily spread, suggesting extentive livestock trampling or alternatively that the bank itself was constructed of poorly-

consolidated material. The outer ditch was significantly deeper than in the Kinecroft as it had not been culverted in this area, and on the northern side of the Bullcroft the height from the base of the ditch to the crest of the bank was *c.*10m. Levels taken across the ditch base demonstrate that from the point that it was recorded in the south-western corner of the Bullcroft to the north-eastern corner a drop in the ditch level of 2m was recorded. The long curve of the north-western corner of the *burh* enclosure may have been constructed as such in order to aid the flow of water around the northern side of the *burh*.

Internally the northern section of the Bullcroft is dominated by the slight remains of ridge and furrow ploughing earthworks on an N-S alignment and potentially of medieval date. In places these features overlie the spread bank of the *burh* rampart. In the southern section of this area were a range of fragmentary, rectilinear earthworks that are likely to be elements of the priory complex of the medieval Benedictine church of Holy Trinity (Fig A.4: a). These are likely to overlie the remains of various buildings and enclosures linked to that small monastic house. A large circular depression was also recorded on the eastern side of the Bullcroft which is potentially of archaeological origin (Fig A.4: b). The eastern boundary of the park is a relatively meandering linear that may indicate that it was formely the alignment of a water course, possibly made redundant by the creation of the *burh* ditch. The circular depression recorded may therefore have originated as some form of pond connected to this water course.

The Castle Meadows
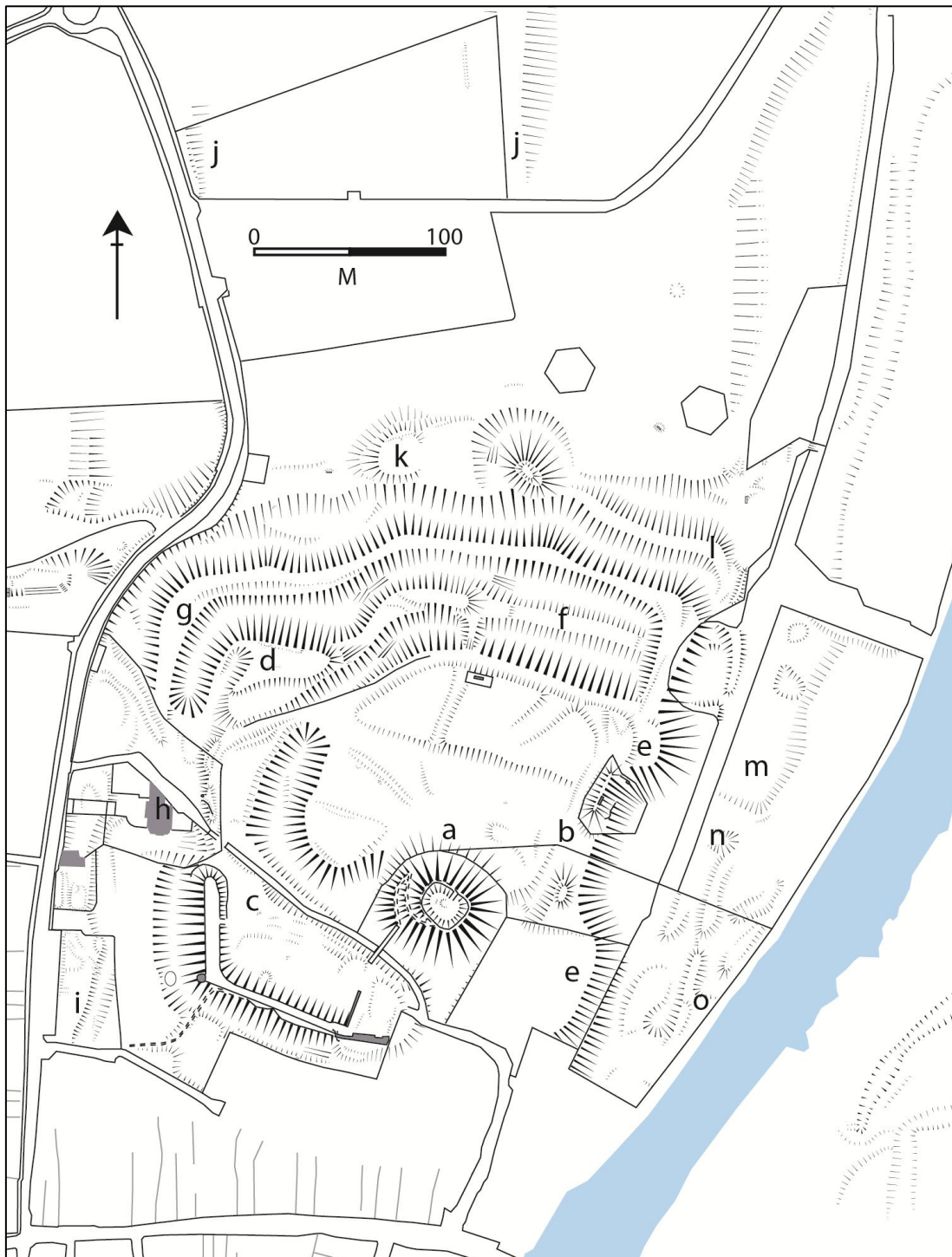
Figure A.5 Wallingford Castle earthwork survey plan (Source: Michael Fradley).

The earliest recognisable phase of the castle development is the remnants of the original motte and bailey castle constructed in the late eleventh century. The most conspicuous element of this early fortification is the sub-circular motte with a basal diameter of *c.*65m (Fig A.5: a). It is *c.*13m high without the inclusion of its partial outer ditch, although the small section with a flint revetment wall at its summit may be a

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post-medieval landscaping extension, so the diameter of the motte crest could alternatively measure *c.*15m or *c.*25m. An outer ditch *c.*20m wide survives around the southern portion of the motte and may have originally continued around the northern side. There is no evidence of any medieval structure on the motte, the few masonry elements on its crest are probably nineteenth-century additions. The 1st edition 25" Ordnance Survey map indicates that a well was present on the north-west side of the motte, while the sixteenth-century plan of the castle inner bailey indicates an external staircase in a similar position; this may suggest that the mound was approached from this point in the medieval period, and potentially including a fore-building housing a well.

The rough sub-rectangular form of the original castle bailey still survives on the north side of the motte. Measuring *c.*120m east-west by *c.*80m north-south, the bailey appears to have originally been enclosed by a bank, probably topped by a timber palisade when first constructed, of which two short sections survive on the eastern side of the bailey (Fig A.5: b). The larger, northern section of these surviving banks is still mounted by a section of medieval masonry, while the gap between the two lengths of earthwork may indicate a former gateway or access point from the riverside zone to the east. It is assumed that the bank continued around the bailey enclosure when it was first constructed, but these were subsequently levelled to enable the construction of masonry walls with more substantial foundations. That the two sections of bank survive on the east side of the bailey may suggest that this area was the first to be redeveloped in masonry and was simply added to at a later date, rather than being levelled as probably occurred around the rest of the earth and timber circuit.

The enclosure was also surrounded by a ditch on all but its eastern side which was situated at the top of a river terrace, with the Thames and its waterside meadows bounding to the east, although the early bailey ditch has been heavily extended and modified. This original castle ditch was almost certainly dry; the north-facing scarp of the earlier *burh* outer ditch was identified within the north-western portion of the castle ditch, indicating that the water flow in the *burh* ditch was at a significantly lower level than the castle circuit and could not therefore feed into the castle circuit. In opposition to this interpretation, it is possible that an alternative water source from within the town fed into the castle ditch circuit, although attempts to reconstruct the intra-mural hydrology of Wallingford have yet to identify a sufficient source. It is also interesting that the position of the *burh* ditch indicates that the northern *burh* circuit changes to a more southerly orientation, mirroring that conjectured along St. Leonard's Lane at the southern end of the *burh*.

Earthwork preservation in the inner bailey interior was relatively poor, with little that can be linked to the medieval occupation of the site. The northern portion of the bailey area is dominated by a series of raised platforms divided by a series of perpendicular and diagonal set paths. These features almost certainly relate to areas of post-medieval formal gardens, and are also probably linked to an additional sub-triangular platform in the south-west corner of the platform. The latter platform is cut by the castle ditch on its southern side, indicating that this section of castle ditch has been heavily re-cut in the later post-medieval period. It is possible that this re-cut relates to the improvement of drainage in the castle ditch in order to reduce flooding in the equally sunken Castle Lane which was developed in the early nineteenth century. The remaining features in the central area of the inner bailey are relatively amorphous, including some probable tree throws and a possible building platform immediately

south of the site of a post-medieval mansion which geophysical and cartographic sources have demonstrated standing in this part of the inner bailey. A section of a carriage drive was also recorded running north-south along the eastern edge of the bailey interior, again of post-medieval date and linking to a number of other carriage routes around the castle site. A small section of masonry wall also survives on the northern edge of the site; although it is a probable folly, it is likely that it stands on the line of the original castle wall and indicates that there was a substantial berm between the later medieval castle wall and ditch.

Later medieval development of the castle complex

Wallingford Castle experienced several phases of major expansion during its long history, the interpretation of which is aided by excavation in two areas of the site during the 1960s and 1970s. The first recognisable expansion is the addition of a large, sub-rectangular bailey annexe defined by a bank and outer ditch on the south-western side of the original motte and bailey (Fig A.5: c). Excavations in this area have demonstrated that the initial expansion of this area was in the twelfth or early thirteenth century, but that this early form was buried beneath a massive vertical expansion of the area later in the thirteenth century, which appears to have maintained the shape of the original annexe but significantly raised the ground level and overall monumental form of this enclosure. The earthworks in the southern section of this annexe appear to relate to the building and associated gardens of an early nineteenth-century mansion called Wallingford Castle which stood at the western end of this enclosure until its demolition in the 1960s. At the northern end of the annexe is a large sub-rectangular platform measuring approximately 50m by 40m, and is cut along its south-eastern corner by another post-medieval carriage drive (Fig A.5: d). An

elongated platform measuring about 20m by 10m is cut into the western side of the mound; this could be the result of a later building cut into the side of the mound or alternatively an original feature operating as basement or stairwell leading up to the mound above. The sixteenth-century map indicates that this mound is situated at the probable position of a bridge leading into the inner bailey to the east, so it is likely that the mound housed some form of gatehouse. However, the monumental scale of the mound and the fact that is stands significantly higher than the level of the inner bailey may also suggest that this gatehouse was a relatively large and impressive structure, potentially combining the fuction of gateway and great tower as evidenced at other castles such as Richmond (N. Yorks.). It is not at present clear as to whether the mound as it presently stands was a component of the original annexe, or if it is the product of the thirteenth century raising of the enclosure.

The next phase of expansion saw the earthwork platform of the inner bailey pushed northward by a further 10m. The bailey wall line does not appear to have been taken northwards with this addition. It appears that it fulfilled the dual function of providing stability the inner bailey wall, potentially at this stage being redeveloped in masonry alongside the levelling of the original earthwork bank of the enclosure, whilst also providing a walkway outside the castle wall, a function that continued into the post-medieval period when it was utilised as a carriage drive. This northward expansion would appear to post-date the addition of the south-western bailey as the latter maintains the northern line of the pre-Conquest *burh* perimeter, while the increase to the inner bailey pushed beyond this line. If the two elements were planned concurrently then they both might be expected to have maintained the same perimeter line. Alongside this phase of inner bailey expansion a second bank and probable wall added to the north of the inner bailey, separated by a ditch, and

connecting at its western end to the south-western bailey. This outer bank is about 20m wide and it appears it would have caused the original inner bailey northern ditch to dry up. The course of the bank at its eastern end is unclear as it is masked by the subsequent development of the castle during the thirteenth century. Connected to the northern expansion of the inner bailey were two platforms constructed eastwards on to the river terrace (Fig A.5: e). The northern example is definitely contemporary, although it is only conjectured at present the southern platform was constructed at the same date. These represent massive landscaping episode, in particular the large southern development which stretches at least 60m in length and 25m beyond the earlier river terrace and created a third courtyard or bailey area which would develop in the later post-medieval period into the site of Wallingford Castle Farm, now replaced by the Thameside Mansion residential building. If present understanding of the various entrances into the castle is correct, this third bailey would have been one of the inaccessible zones of the castle, comparable to the motte itself. Following the work of Gilchrist, it is possible that this area may have housed a secluded feminine space or garden, given that the site was remote yet south-facing with enhanced riverside perspectives (Gilchrist 1999, 109-45). The northern artificial spur was significantly smaller measuring only 20m wide and 10m beyond the natural terrace; it was probably designed to allow the construction of a major tower or chamber block overlooking the river.

The final phase of major expansion at the castle is represented by the construction of another bank, ditch and probable curtain wall along the north side of the castle (Fig A.5: g), potentially contemporary with the raising in height of the south-western bailey. The earthwork of this additional bank, which excavation in the 1960s demonstrated to be of thirteenth-century date, is studded with regular circular spurs on its northern

face which almost certainly represent the sites of at least 5 curtain towers. At its eastern end the bank turns southwards and joins the platform of the inner bailey, running over the line of the earlier curtain wall and creating a large dam. This is important because it appears to demonstrate that at least part of the earlier outer northern wall was abandoned and potentially levelled (Fig A.5: f), while also indicating that a water management system had been developed to create wet moats around the entire castle complex. On the western side of the castle the bank has been levelled in areas of residential development and is absent in the open area of the Castle Gardens, indicating that the wall circuit did not continue around the south-western side of the castle. It is possible that the wall line came to an end at one of The Coach House, a property situated along the conjectured line of the outer castle bank (Fig A.5: h). A section of the southern ground floor gable wall of this property measure 1.07m thick; although encased in render and plaster it is highly probable that this encases earlier medieval masonry given its position and context. It is feasible, therefore, that this was the site of a medieval structure, potentially a western gatehouse, at the terminal end of the outer castle bank. It is not clear what route the outer castle ditch would have taken; it seems feasible that it would have swung around the south face of this structure and fed into the ditch of the south-western bailey. It seems probable given the general level of investment in the castle during the thirteenth century that the outer perimeter did not continue around the south face of the castle is that the focus was on providing a grand northern facade to the castle rather than a lack of resources. A hollowed cut running east-west in the area south of the Coach House was part of another carriage drive leading up to the early 19th century mansion in the Castle Gardens as indicated by later Ordnance Survey editions.

The surrounding environs of Wallingford Castle

A major discovery the west of Wallingford Castle was the remains of the hollowed track of the original north-south road through the *burh* (Fig A.5: i). That the road had been shifted to the present course of Castle Street in the thirteenth century due to the continued expansion of the castle had already been demonstrated by excavations in the Castle Meadows in the 1960s. What had not been realised is that the earthwork of this road had survived, and as part of the survey was recorded for a length of 100m, with the western side of the hollow way continuing northwards in a more fragmentary state for a further 40m through an area of residential garden. Measuring about 10m in width, there was a notable differentiation in the height of the two sides of the hollow, with the western side measuring 0.4-0.9m in height while the eastern side was only stood 0-0.2m in height. This suggests a much greater intensity of occupation on the western side of the road, although occupation was more limited on the eastern side throughout the history of the *burh* or since the imposition and expansion of the castle is not clear.

At its southern end the earthwork ran through an area traditionally associated with the site of All Saints/All Hallows Church. Although this area has clearly been utilised as a cemetery in the post-medieval period (the church itself having been demolished during the seventeenth century Civil War) there was no evidence of the church structure itself which is surprising given the level of earthwork preservation in this area, and its site is open to question. Overall the orientation of the earthwork road lines to the section excavated in the Castle Meadows to the north and the present course of St. Martins Lane to the south. Taken as a whole it gives the impression of a relatively meandering route, somewhat at odds with the conventional view of planned,

gridded layout assumed of the Wessex *burhs*, perhaps indicating a pre-*burh* origin of the road which was fossilised within the later settlement development.

To the north of the castle the area was largely blank of earthwork evidence which, given the lack of modern cultivation, would suggest it has always has been an open and uninhabited area from at least the medieval period. At the extreme north of the survey area the terminal end of two large, broad (*c.*30m wide) banks, previously identified through aerial analysis running in parallel *c.*100-180m apart for c.1.8km northwards (Fig A.5: j). The date and function of these features is currently unknown; sampling of a more complex system of similar features as part of the Dorchester Bypass excavations to the north interpreted them as medieval headlands, but this conclusion is not secure or well-date (NMR: Dorchester Bypass Excavation Archive). At present it is not possible to suggest anything more than their being constructed between the Iron Age and Medieval periods for an unknown function. The earthwork survey indicates that the features terminated at the position recorded, and did not continue southwards into the Castle Meadow area. They clearly survive to the north despite exposure to extensive cultivation to date, yet it is not possible to reason why they would have been levelled so completely in the Castle Meadows, and as such it is possible to conclude that they never did.

A broad 8m wide scarp *c.*120m in length was recorded running roughly north-north-east by south-south-west at the northern end of the Castle Meadows area. This feature is in part a modification of the river terrace; it follow the same alignment as an adjacent row of coniferous trees, both of which are orientated towards the site of the nineteenth century Wallingford Castle mansion, indicating that this feature is linked to a period of post-medieval landscaping. Immediately north of the outer castle ditch are

two large, sub-circular mounds, *c.*20m and *c.*30m in diameter respectively, the eastern example surrounded on all but its southern side by a 15m wide ditch (Fig A.5: k). Excavation of the western mound appears to confirm the interpretation of these features as crude artillery bastions constructed during the documented conflict at the site during the seventeenth-century Civil War. These features are the only probable earthworks of this date recorded across the castle site, indicating a paucity of defensive investment and possibly confirming the presence of a minor entrance into the castle complex at this point. Overlying the western mound is a fragment of a north-facing scarp orientated east-west, the probable remains of a later field boundary.

Parallel to the outer castle ditch and running eastwards from the eastern Civil War bastion, is a flat-topped bank *c.*5m wide along its crest (Fig A.5: l). This well-formed feature creates a raised walk-way above the castle ditch to the south and a broad, potentially natural channel, to the north, and appears to link to a complex of earthworks in the riverside Queens Arbour area to the east. The primary survival in northern section of the Queens Arbour is a major sub-rectangular pool which was fed by a meandering sub-channel of the River Thames recorded to the north as well as the outflow from the castle ditches during the later medieval period (Fig A.5: m). The present hydrology of this area has been substantially altered by the creation of post-medieval drainage channels, the result of which is that none of these features now regularly carry water. On the west side of the large pond is a raised bank with a small sluice-break at its southern end, which continues the route of the walkway noted alongside the outer castle ditch and discussed above. This bank itself is linked to the construction of a small pool on its western side between it and the large dam of the castle itch system to the west. This raised feature was not recorded continuing southwards due to the impact of post-medieval drainage ditches and probable infilling

and levelling; cartographic sources indicate additional rectangular ponds survived in this area into the nineteenth century, but of which no earthwork trace survives.

However, it can be conjectured that it may have linked to the large apsidal-ended masonry feature detected running east-west, of which the only earthwork trace is an amorphous depression in its centre (Fig A.5: n). The latter feature is itself likely to stand on the southern side of a major dam feature holding bank the large pond to the north, and may have been utilised as a heavily ornamental walk-way linking to the proposed entrance on the east side of the castle and the raised walk-way recorded continuing around the north-west exterior of the castle complex. At the western end of the apsidal masonry feature another flat-topped earthwork bank *c*.4-6m wide linked to it and continued to the south-south-west for *c*.70m, broken at one point by a 5m wide sluice-break, before its eastern scarp dog-legged eastwards to create part of an open rectilinear platform with a slight bank on its western side (Fig A.5: o). The latter platform could be interpreted as some form of quay-side zone for river shipping, overlooked by the projected third bailey area immediately to the west, which connected to the castle complex via the walk-way systems discussed above. The eastern entrance into the castle would have provided a private and utilitarian entry into the castle for its household directly into the inner bailey, the route around the north-west facade being intended for guests to provide a panorama of the grand structure before a more complex and segmented entry via the northern, western or southern gate. To the north of the 'quay' are fragments of an amorphous bank and elongated pit of unknown function and not clearly linked to the medieval complex, while to north are defined channels, a pond and two platform areas, one of which could potentially have housed a watermill.

Appendix B: Earthwork Survey at Huntingdon Mill Common, Cambridgeshire

The open area of Mill Common measures roughly 6.17ha in area (Fig B.1), but prior to encroachment during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it encompassed a much greater extent of land. Currently it is used as light pasture on the perimeter of the town centre and is open to the general public. The history of the town and the archaeological potential of Mill Common, particularly in relation to the early medieval development of the settlement has been covered extensively and need not be repeated (Spoerry 2000). The area was surveyed during April 2009 using a Leica 1200 GPS device. The following report will outline the results of the survey and, where appropriate, offer basic interpretation of the features encountered.

Survey results

Several linear features were identified as pre-dating the establishment of the medieval open field system that runs over much of the Mill Common area. A short 2m wide south-facing scarp, surviving in three short sections was identified in the furrowed area beneath the later medieval plough ridging (Fig B.2: a), indicative of a linear feature orientated a little off E-W and measuring 40m in length and a probably related small section of scarp was located on a similar alignment 7m to the north. The surviving ridge and furrow to the west is orientated WSW-ENE which would suggest that these scarps were not part of an earlier form of the open field system with longer ploughing tracts continuing eastwards into this area.
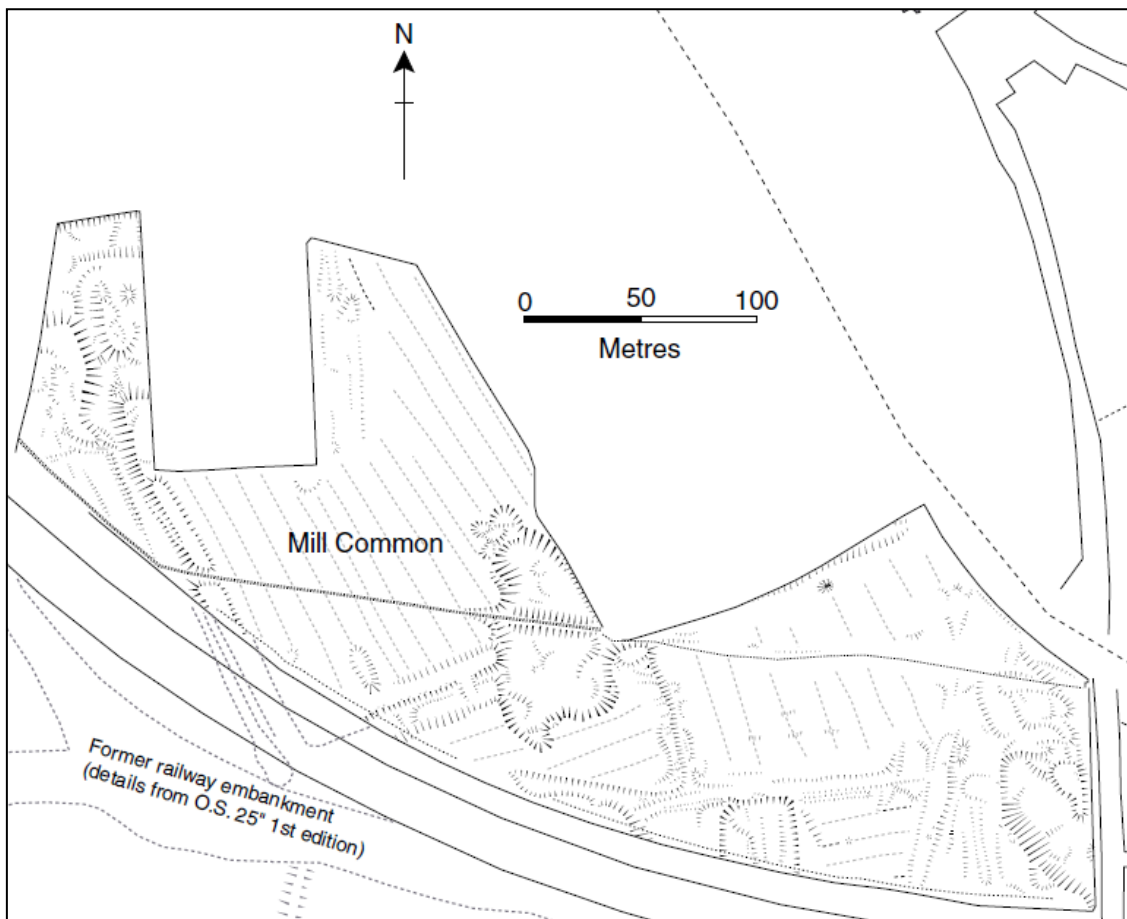
Figure B.1 The Mill Common survey area to the south-west of the historic core of Huntingdon (Source: Michael Fradley).

The importance of this identification is heightened by the fact it appears to correspond to a larger complex to the south. The linear feature matches the orientation of the headland 17m to the south at the end of the furlong, although this alignment is heavily disturbed to both the east and west by later post-medieval activity. The implication of this relationship is that the layout of the medieval field system may have been influenced in part by an arrangement of earlier features. Immediately south of the headland is a terraced 4m wide track way (Fig B.2: b). Of particular interest is that the alignment of this track appears to link with that of St. Mary's Lane whose line ends somewhat abruptly a little over 100m to the east. The intervening area between these routes has been heavily disturbed by post-medieval activity, and so it remains a distinct possibility that the two features were part of the same track in the medieval period.

To the south-east another fragment of a medieval furlong survives, but to the south-west is a large rectilinear cut feature, potentially a complex of early settlement. Measuring 35m by at least 35m and up to 1m deep, the southern end of this feature is encased by the embankment of the A14 carriageway. It too matches the alignment of the pre-ridge and furrow linear feature to the north, while internally a number of low linear scarps were recorded, principally on an N-S alignment. On first inspection is was assumed that such a deep cut feature related to some form of quarrying, but the neat square form of the earthwork would suggest a more complex function as would its internal features, although the latter give little immediate indication of that function. A building platform terrace was recorded on the north-west side of the feature measuring 12m by 10m, while demarcating the southern side of the terraced track way on both the east and west side of the principal rectilinear depression are two sections of low bank measuring roughly 30m in length respectively.

This combines to form an interesting complex of earthworks, the date and function of which are not immediately apparent. Unfortunately there is no clear relationship surviving with the medieval ridge and furrow to the east and north, which may in itself imply a construction date after the abandonment of the open field system. However, this complex does mirror the alignment of the pre-ridge and furrow linear to the north, and the proposed link between the track way and St. Mary's Lane whose curving route leading directly toward the early church of St. Mary would support the interpretation that it formed an early component of medieval Huntingdon's settlement form. If this track to the earthwork complex had been abandoned by the early post-medieval period, as implied by depictions of cartographers from John Speed onwards,

then it lends itself to the interpretation that this earthwork complex is indeed of medieval date and potentially part of an early settlement focus.
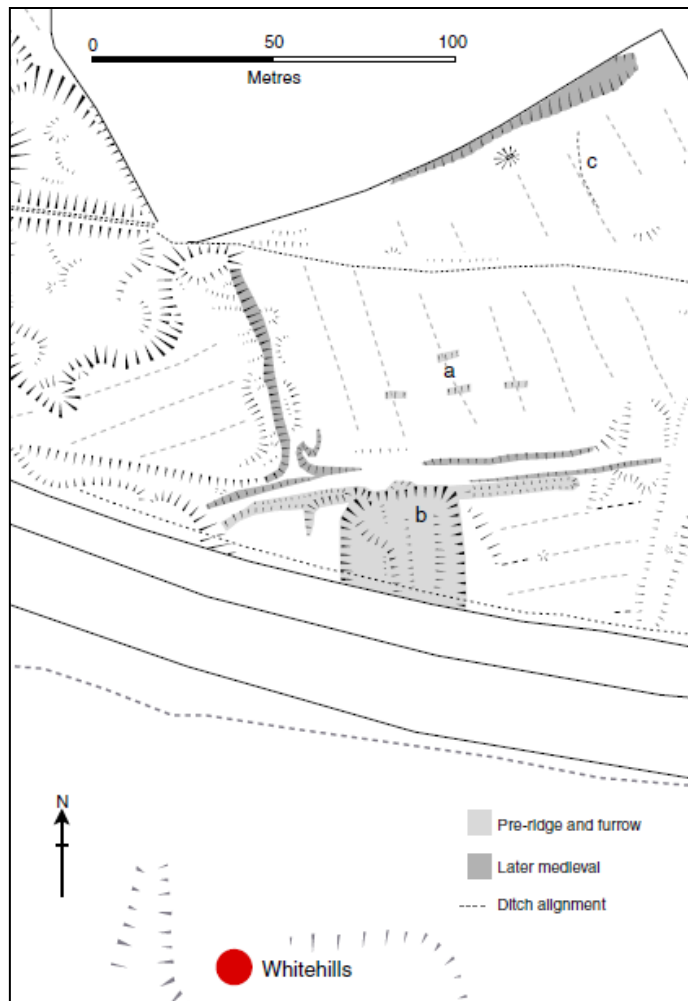
Figure B.2 The central area of the Mill Common survey area. Significant features include pre-ridge and furrow linears (a) and a related complex (b). A large, late twelfth-century ditch identified via geophysical survey and excavation (c) has also been illustrated (Source: Michael Fradley).

The Bar Dyke (Fig B.3)

The earthwork feature known as the Bar Dyke is located at the western end of the survey area, consisting of a large ditch principally orientated NNW-SSE. Recent excavation across the feature has confirmed the existence of multiple phases of construction on this alignment, including two medieval ditches pre-dating the extant

ditch earthwork (Mortimer 2006, 20-2). The ditch as it survives at present fades out before reaching the northern limit of the survey area. The ditch itself can be divided into distinct sections; a sharply cut, straight southern segment and a more amorphous northern stretch.

The degraded northern section of ditch is the older of the two and relates to its development in the medieval and early post-medieval period. The ditch is about 70m in length, 12-20m in width and slightly meandering in its course before fading out at its northern end. A large break in the eastern side of the ditch (Fig B.3: a) about 23m wide was recorded, and there is no indication that this branch of the ditch continued further eastwards. The form of the present ditch has been tentatively dated to the Civil War period by excavation, and in this context it is possible to suggest that the ditch in this area was cut in order to protect a series of independent bastions and thus the break separates these two units. This interpretation has the added benefit of explaining why there is no evidence of the ditch continuing further north as it would suggest that it never did, but in fact curved around the northern flank of the bastion. It would also imply that there was never an internal bank to the ditch, with these features instead functioning as slightly raised, open platforms. Parallels of similarly crude Civil War defences can be identified as sites such as at Northampton Castle and the northern perimeter of Wallingford Castle (Oxon.), providing entrenched positions for artillery units (Christie *et al* 2008, 53-4; Chapman 1985, 51). As with the defences of the medieval settlement it is not necessary to consider the Civil War defences of Huntingdon as a single, continuous perimeter, but instead may be a heterogeneous combination of elements such as these potential fortifications.

A number of small, amorphous earthworks were recorded to the east and west of the Bar Dyke feature. Few of these can be interpreted with any confidence and the majority may be contemporary with or post-date the construction of the Civil War-period Bar Dyke. To the north of the surviving section of the Bar Dyke the ground drops down before rising up once more at the southern edge of the modern road embankment. Explaining this drop in ground is difficult as it is not linked directly to the Bar Dyke system. Within this area a low meandering linear east-facing scarp aligned roughly N-S survives and is apparently matched by a smaller raise of ground some 7m to the east on the edge of the survey area which may represent the two sides of a degraded ditch feature (Fig B.3: c).

The Bar Dyke excavation revealed that the Civil War-period ditch followed the line of a late medieval ditch. This in turn followed the alignment of a hollow-way immediately to the east whose date of origin could lie anywhere between the seventh and the thirteenth century and may link to the slight linear ditch feature identified to the north (Fig B.3: c; Mortimer 2006, 21, 28). Importantly, while confirming the probable antiquity of this alignment the excavations demonstrate conclusively that the Bar Dyke does not form part an earlier *burh* enclosure associated with an embryonic urban focus. Instead it only appears to have become a significant boundary in the thirteenth or fourteenth century at a time when it would have apparently been contemporary with and enclosed the extensive arable fields to the east, before being used as a hollow way. The excavated evidence is ambiguous as to whether the earlier lane and later medieval ditch were utilised at least for a time together, as what dating evidence exists for the later stages of use of the hollow-way may be intrusive (Mortimer 2006, 21). Given that the two are apparently aligned so carefully in parallel it is highly suggestive

that they did function together for a period, which in turn provides weight to the proposition that there was never a bank on the eastern side of the medieval ditch.

In contrast the southern section of the Bar Dyke ditch (Fig B.3: b) is prominent and sharply cut, measuring about 12m in width with a corresponding bank on its eastern side 10m wide. This section of the earthwork runs for a length of 80m, although by including the evidence of the Ordnance Survey 25" 1st edition (1888) it is possible to demonstrate that it continued for a further 50m, at which point it was joined at a right angle by a linear feature to the east aligned WSW-ENE. The latter feature (Fig B.3: d) appears to have originated as a long medieval track way running between furlongs of medieval ridge and furrow, but at a later date this western section was deepened, widened and linked into the Bar Dyke ditch, which created an embankment on its north-western side.

The rectangular form of this layout, with its apparent internal embankment has led to speculation as to whether it may be a surviving remnant of a Danish *burh* thought to have been located at Huntingdon (Spoerry 2000, 44). This idea is demonstrably incorrect, as the two alignments recorded are two separate features re-cut and joined at some point in the post-medieval period. The alignment to the east was heavily re-cut to provide drainage to the large quarry area at its north-eastern end, and therefore both of these sections are either contemporary with or post-date the abandonment of that quarry. It is possible that this work was undertaken alongside the construction of the railway embankment raised in the 1840s, necessitated by the need to control the water flow as it passed beneath the railway without destabilising its bank. To the south of the point where the two drainage courses meet the early Ordnance Survey editions show a bank and probable ditch continuing south of the railway embankment on a

NNE-SSW alignment. This may have fed the drain down to the river, although there is no evidence as to whether this too utilised an earlier feature.
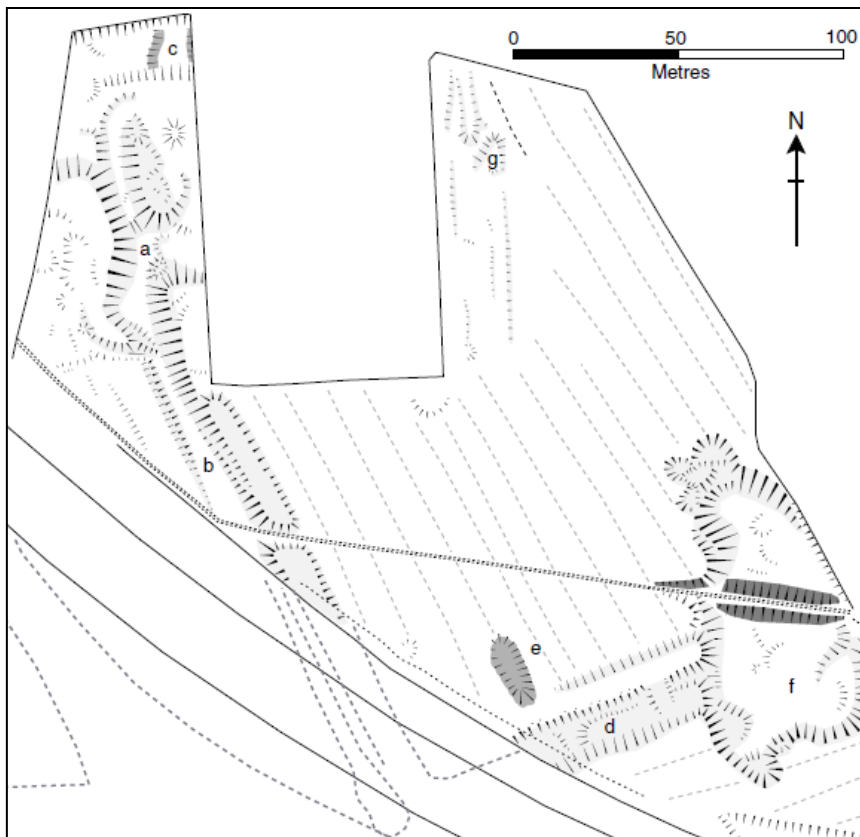
Figure B.3 The western section of the the Mill Common survey area. A seventeenth-century cut (a) and nineteenth-century re-cut (b) of the Bar Dyke are depicted, along with a possible section of a preceeding ditch (c). A re-cut section of a medieval track (d), areas of quarrying (e, f) and a possible rabbit warren set within post-medieval garden earthworks were also recorded (Source: Michael Fradley).

Ridge and Furrow (Fig B.1)

A complex of medieval ridge and furrow earthworks survive from at least four furlongs of the town arable open fields, with some variation in ridge width and possible evidence of subdivision of cultivation strips. In addition to these four fragments of furlongs a possible fifth section of ridge and furrow was recorded toward the south-

east corner of the survey area just off a N-S alignment. These ridges appear to measure between 7-9m in width, but too small an area survives to be able to confirm whether this was in fact part of the medieval field complex. Interestingly in the small area beyond the Bar Dyke feature at the far west side of the survey area there was no conclusive trace of ridge and furrow surviving, although arguably two fragmentary linear scarp sections roughly 25m in length on the same alignments as the plough marks east of Bar Dyke could potentially provide contrary evidence.

In addition to the terraced track way located between medieval furlongs discussed above (Fig B.2), a second long track, again running between arable furlongs was identified running across a large section of Mill Common. Beginning in the north-east corner of the survey area as a shallow hollow-way measuring 9m in width, the track continues south-west for 80m at which point it merges with a modern pathway. It is unclear why the course of the modern path, in its present position from at least the later nineteenth century, has diverged so slightly from the course of the earlier hollow-way. The path continues to the south-west for a further 60m where its course is abruptly cut by a large open post-medieval quarry, at which point the present surface track turns and continues to the north-west. A large causeway of probable twentieth century date crosses the quarry, but is aligned E-W and joins with an informal track way continuing westwards. However, to the south-west on the far side of the quarry the line of the medieval track way can be seen continuing on its original alignment. At this stage its form has been heavily altered as it has been adapted as part of a post-medieval drainage system as discussed above in relation to the Bar Dyke. The route of the track beyond its meeting with the Bar Dyke is unknown.

In total the course of this track way runs for a distance of nearly 300m. It is presumed that given its close relationship with the medieval field system that it is near contemporary, and there is currently no evidence to suggest that it pre-dates the later medieval period. An interesting addition to this picture is that the line of the track way if continued to the north-east appears to align with a passageway leading directly on to the High Street. This possibly follows the line of an earlier, informal passage that is today elaborated in the form of the made road of Malthouse Close and the access way of Literary Walk alongside the Commemoration Hall. This would suggest that this access route may have been carefully laid out in relation to, and perhaps even simultaneous to the formal laying out of the medieval High Street. A direct link is therefore provided between the commercial hub of Huntingdon's main street and the arable holdings of the towns inhabitants through which we can begin to understand in detail how the latter moved between the two seemingly distinct zones.

Quarrying

Mineral extraction has had a dramatic impact on the earthwork evidence of Mill Common, most notably in the form of the large open quarry pit in the centre of the survey area. Earlier small scale quarrying can possibly be detected in the form of a small oval pit (Fig B.3: e). It is possible that the pit was quarried when there was a partial abandonment of arable cultivation in this area at a time when the strips were still individually owned, and its confinement to this single ridge may be explained by it being dug by the owner of the strip.

The major quarry in the centre of the survey area (Fig B.3: f) is of a completely different scale, and consists of a large central pit with several minor pits dug at its edge

to the north and south. The earthwork of this quarry measures around 100m in length, 40m in width and 2m in depth. The quarry, at least in its present enlarged form, post-dates the abandonment of individual strip ownership of the medieval fields as it cuts through a swathe of the visible ridge and furrow earthworks. The Ordnance Survey 25" 1st edition (1888) suggests that quarrying may have continued further to the north in an area at present developed with residential housing. As discussed above the former track way that continued through this area on a NE-SW alignment was heavily re-cut to the south-west in order to provide drainage for the quarry which would otherwise have presumably held water.
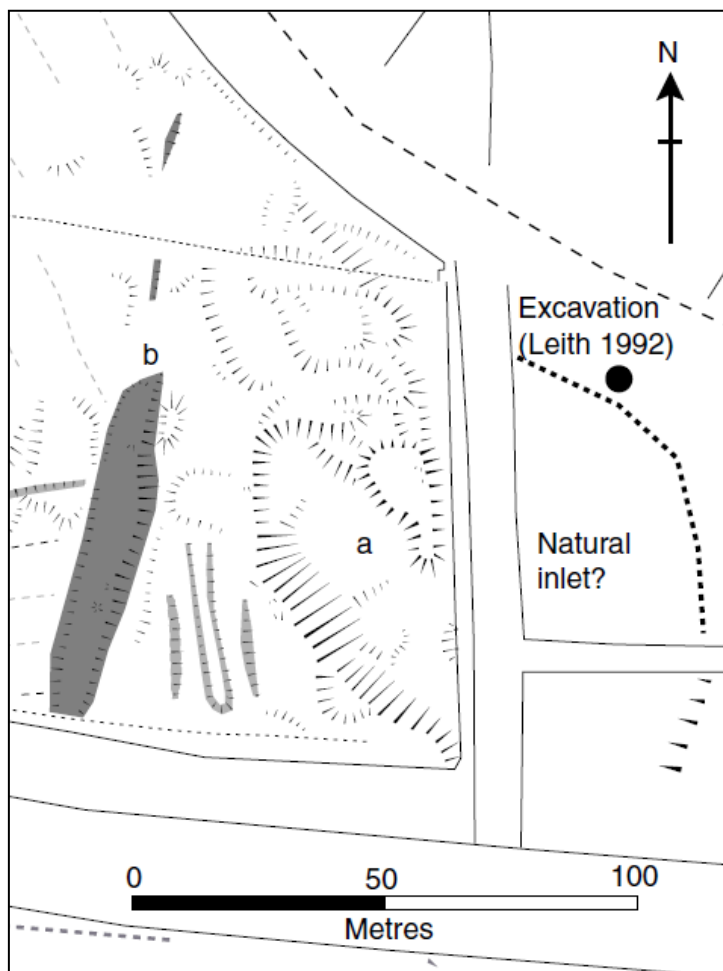

Figure B.4 The eastern end of the Mill Common survey area. A large, partially quarried riverine inlet (a) was recorded, as well as a raised causeway which may have been constructed as part of an early twentieth-century military runway (Source: Michael Fradley).

One final area of significant quarrying has also been identified on the eastern periphery of the survey area (Fig B.4: a), although contrary to earlier views on the basis of the present survey work it is argued that its form may be the combined result of quarrying, natural topography and possible earlier archaeological features. There has been significant earth movement in this area, principally evidenced by spoil heaps rather than discrete quarry pits. However, the principal feature in this area, consisting of a broad scarp up to 12m wide beginning in the extreme south-east corner of the survey area and heading out on a north-westerly alignment, is probably natural in origin. Adjoining on the west side of this scarp is an L-shaped terrace measuring 8m by 10m which may even the remnant of a building platform overlooking this slope rather than evidence of quarrying. To the north evidence of quarrying and spoil is more marked; a minor archaeological trench was excavated in this area which demonstrated the extent of dumped material in the vicinity from the medieval period onwards, but failed to reach a natural surface and ultimately was too small to contribute significantly to the interpretation of the area (Mortimer 2006, 22-3). To the east of the survey area on the far side of this depression archaeological evaluation has demonstrated that the present topography is in many places the result of post-medieval ground make-up, and that occupation layers and at least one ditch with dates potentially spanning the tenth-thirteenth centuries have been identified below (Leith 1992, 7-10; Fig B.4). This demonstrates clearly that the fall on the eastern side of this area relates to natural topography rather than extensive quarrying, and this is likely to also be the case on the west side of the survey area. The overall impression presented by this topographical evidence is that this area was marked by the existence of a large bulbous inlet of land leading south to the river and perhaps linked to a now-redundant water course (Fig B.4). An arrangement of wide channels and water management dating from the

medieval and Romano-British periods has also been revealed by excavation to the east of Mill Common around Hartford Road and the west end of Montagu Road (Clarke 2007; Mortimer 2007). This work has highlighted a lack of understanding of the hydrology and river tributaries around the urban core of Huntingdon and how this may have influenced settlement development. The features identified on the east side of Mill Common suggest similar evidence of water systems and river inlets.

Landscaping

To the east of the County Hospital site a number of linear features were recorded that have been interpreted as part of a garden landscape attached to the former hospital building. A number of these features were previously identified by geophysical survey in this area but were construed to be land drains (Mortimer 2006, 14). However at the northern end of and integrated into this complex is a large, bulbous earthwork with exposed areas revealing what appears to be a brick-chambered rabbit warren (Fig B.3: g). The majority of the scarps aligned N-S may represent the remains of slight former garden terraces. One land drain was encountered during excavation but was aligned on the same orientation as the ridge and furrow to the east and south (Mortimer 2006). Importantly this suggests that the grounds to the County Hospital plot formerly extended further eastwards and included an ornate garden system and a small managed rabbit warren, although whether this relates to the construction of the present structure in the mid-nineteenth century or an earlier building is not clear. The present study was not able to identify any cartographic material that would support this interpretation, although the form of the surviving earthworks is relatively conclusive.

Transport

A major development in the later nineteenth century was the construction of the railway line, encasing a linear swathe of land with its embankment and dividing what remained of the Mill Common area into two discrete sections. The southern section has been the subject of increasing development during the course of the twentieth century to the extent that no large open areas survive at present. Following the closure of the railway line in the 1960s the A14 carriageway was developed in the early 1970s, further encasing part of Mill Common.

One particularly interesting use of the Mill Common in the modern period has been the stationing of a squadron of the Royal Flying Corp in this area in the latter stages of World War One. This squadron was primarily based to the east of the survey area on land that has now been largely developed. However, they may have been responsible for some of the activity in the eastern extremity of the survey area, including fragments of a low, broad embankment measuring up to 12m wide, aligned NNE-SSW and apparently running over all visible earlier features and largely ignorant of their orientations (Fig B.4: b). The fragmentary remains suggest a length of at least 130m; possibly the remains of a crude runway.

Conclusion

The measured analytical earthwork survey of Mill Common has enabled a detailed analysis of its surviving archaeotopography. Despite the increasing encroachment of this area since the nineteenth century, this earthwork survey has still been able to

make an important contribution to current understanding of both the site and its relationship with the wider landscape.

Glossary

Burh: an early medieval term for an enclosure. In the present study this has referred specifically to the large royal *burhs* constructed from the eighth to the tenth century

Castle: a medieval fortified elite centre

Great Tower: A large masonry tower sometimes referred to as a *donjon* or keep, which was built at the centre of most major castle complexes in England during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Motte-and-bailey: A form of earth and timber castle consisting of a raised mound or motte and an adjoining enclosure known as a bailey. This form of castle was constructed in England during the later eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Post-Conquest: occurring the period after AD1066, i.e. AD1067-1150.

Pre-Conquest: occurring in the period before AD1067, i.e. AD900-1066.

Ringwork: A simple form of earth and timber castle consisting of a single banked enclosure. Where an adjoining enclosure was also raised these castles are sometimes termed ringwork-and-bailey castles.

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