The Medieval Manor at Stanton St John: A 700th Anniversary?

By Nigel Gilmour

SUMMARY

In recent years, a number of repairs and alterations have been undertaken at the manor house in Stanton St John. These have been accompanied by a study of the fabric, the layout and the setting of the buildings, which has included both a dendrochronological analysis and a detailed recording of the elevations of the house. The results of the study are presented, together with a review of the historical and landscape background to the manor.

Three ranges of an early-14th-century stone-built house survive, including what appears to be an inner gatehouse with a chamber over, as well as two further connected two-storey chamber blocks. The lower part of a presumed garderobe survives, and the site of a lost hall has been provisionally identified. All are set within an earlier layout, with parts of barns and stables surviving, having been rebuilt at various times. The early-14th-century work created what must have been a relatively small high-status house, facing a court and incorporating an inner gatehouse – possibly part of an unfinished plan to develop an inner court. All three ranges date from the time of John de St John (1st Lord St John of Lageham) who held the manor from c. 1270 until his death in 1316. He was a knight and created baron in 1299. Stanton was not the St Johns's most valuable manor: its significance may rather have lain in its close proximity to Oxford.

The village of Stanton St John is situated five miles east-north-east of Oxford and about two and a half miles east of St Andrew's Church in Headington: the heart of the old royal estate of *Hedenadun* from which Stanton's medieval manorial estate was presumably created. The extent of Stanton's former manor can now only be traced in the layout of the parish, which straddles the Upper Jurassic Corallian ridge of the 'Oxford Heights', interrupted here by a gentle depression or saddle. To the north-east, the parish includes an extensive area of low-lying clay vale, above which the lower slopes of the ridge are also clay and occupied by a belt of woodland. On the other side of the ridge it includes an area of sandy soils, once heathland, corresponding to an outcrop of the characteristic Beckley Sand member of the Corallian series.[1]

To the south, the ridge is capped by Wheatley Limestone, including a shelly freestone interspersed with much harder Coral Rag,[2] which can be seen to have been quarried near the village (Figs. 2, 3). The core of the village lies a little lower, on calcareous sandstone close to the 300 ft. (100 m.) spring-line, overlooking a short valley leading up to the saddle. The rest of the historic village occupies another small valley to the north, at the head of which stands the manorial complex, grouped round a courtyard, and flanked by its farmyards.

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[1] A. Horton et al., *Geology of the Country around Thame: Memoir for Geological Sheet 237* (British Geology Survey, 1995), 40.

[2] W. Arkell, *Oxford Stone* (1947), 33–5.

Fig. 1. Location map including the principal English manors held by Roger de St John *c.* 1250.

The historic entrance to the courtyard of the manor house was to the south, beside a road junction at the centre of the village. Immediately opposite stands the parish church, which appears to have originated as a typical 12th-century two-cell church.[3] Further south lies an area of regular household plots, presumably the result of planning in the Middle Ages (Fig. 3, '**V**').

[3] R. Gem, 'The English Parish Church in the 11th and Early 12th Centuries: a Great Rebuilding', in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches. The Local Church in Transition 950–1200* (1988), 21–30; E. Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (2000), 208, 219–25.

The manor house consists principally of three linked two-storey stone-built ranges arranged almost at right angles to form an asymmetric 'Z'-shaped building facing a courtyard to the south (Fig. 4). To these have been added a number of outshuts to east, west and north, while three further buildings also face the courtyard, including a stable and two sheds.

Facing the domestic ranges is the stable, previously assumed to be medieval by virtue of its buttressed south wall,[4] but these buttresses are massive, roughly built structures added to the building to support a leaning wall. Their simple detailing, with chamfered plinths and buttress weatherings, are no more than traditional, and of uncertain date. The other buildings of the courtyard were traditional stone-built open-fronted sheds: that to the south-east a wagon shed and that to the west a cow house, which once faced an inner fold yard (Fig. 4). Immediately to the west of the courtyard is a further group of farm buildings dominated by two barns, also traditional stone-built structures of medieval form but uncertain date. The south-west barn collapsed recently, but its buttressed gable end survives beside the road. The buttresses are again secondary, but symmetrical and more delicately proportioned than those of the stables, and they look more obviously medieval in origin. Together with their attached open-fronted livestock sheds these barns enclosed a pair of farmyards to one side of, but closely associated with, the courtyard.

Previous interpretations of the house have suggested a variety of construction dates, ranging from the 14th to the 17th centuries.[5] Indeed, the house retains a range of datable external details, including some ovolo-moulded stone-mullioned windows as well as, on the west side, the chamfered stone frame of a tall first-floor gable window with a two-centred arch below a very weathered scroll-moulded hood.[6] It has been described as a 16th-century building,[7] an interpretation that concentrated on its overall character, rather than on some of the visible details that point to rather earlier origins. Where such details were considered, one conclusion was that the east range originally contained a first-floor hall.[8] This, in turn, is open to question,[9] particularly in the absence of evidence for any service arrangement.[10] The term 'first-floor hall' needs to be used with caution, particularly since Faulkner pointed out that many upper 'halls' (his quotation marks) were clearly greater chambers: that is, principal 'living rooms'.[11] A quite separate group of true halls were strictly speaking merely 'raised' – and to widely varying extents – on undercrofts. This may have been contrived, in part, in order to create an ascending, formal and often grand approach to a *piano nobile*; the whole remaining at a 'nominal' ground level.[12] Since then, Blair has gone further in clarifying the misinterpretation of chambers as first-floor halls, typically where the evidence for adjacent halls has been lost.[13]

[4] J. Sherwood and N. Pevsner, *Oxfordshire* (Buildings of England Series, 1974), 785.

[5] *Schedule of Listed Buildings* (N.M.R. 1963), PRN8058; Sherwood and Pevsner, op. cit. (note 4); V.C.H. Oxon. v, 283; C. Bond, *Stanton St John, Oxfordshire: Village Survey* (CBA Group 9 Newsletter, 1978), 82; *National Buildings Record: 90885* (R.C.H.M.E. unpublished, 1993), 1.

[6] Sherwood and Pevsner, op. cit. (note 4).

[7] *V.C.H. Oxon*. v, 283.

[8] Bond, op. cit. (note 5).

[9] *National Buildings Record: 90885*, op. cit. (note 5).

[10] J. Blair, 'Hall and Chamber: English Domestic Planning 1000–1250', in G. Merion-Jones and M. Jones (eds.), *Manorial Domestic Buildings in England and Northern France* (Society of Antiquaries Occasional Papers, 15, 1993), 13–14.

[11] P. Faulkner, 'Domestic Planning from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries', in M. Swainton (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Domestic Architecture* (Royal Archaeological Institute Monograph, 1975), 94.

[12] Ibid. 111–112.

[13] Blair (1993), op. cit. (note 10), 1–2.

Following a discussion of the historical setting of the medieval manor, this study seeks to test the earlier interpretations of the house. A priority is to identify the extent of surviving medieval fabric in a building that has seen a considerable amount of adaptation. This should throw some light on the original character and purpose of the three rather curious principal ranges, and also provide clues to lost buildings that were once attached to them. It is not surprising that, as a result of this study, a number of phases of the building's development can now be suggested, but the interpretation inevitably raises yet further questions that could probably only be answered in the future by archaeological investigation.

AN ANGLO-SAXON ESTATE

Domesday Book refers to the Anglo-Saxon estate of *Stantone*, which presumably included a small village, together with its fields, commons and woodland.[14] That no mention is made of a church merely reflects the invisibility of Oxfordshire's local churches in the survey: a consequence of the county's inclusion in the exceptional Domesday circuit IV, which took little account of churches.[15] The omission of any reference to a mill should, again, not be taken to indicate absence, but rather a reflection of the purely local economic significance of smaller mills.[16] The reference to a ten-hide estate suggests that it had retained its original form, having presumably been created as a grant of land from the great Saxon royal estate of Headington in return for specific obligations.[17] There is no direct evidence for the date at which this occurred, but charters concerning this process elsewhere in England appear in significant numbers from the end of the 9th century, and increasingly during the early 10th century.[18] Indeed, the only surviving Anglo-Saxon charter for one of the nearby villages (Woodeaton) appears to be an example of just this: it details a grant of five hides in 904, which presumably created the Woodeaton manorial estate.[19] It was a time of re-conquest under Alfred and Edward the Elder, accompanied by an emerging class of 'theyns' holding land closely tied to military service.[20] Bede referred to the unit of land tenure – the hide – as the amount of land needed to support a family although, strictly speaking, it probably referred more specifically to the land required to provide for the family's fiscal obligations.[21] Five hides were typically (at least in Wessex) that for which the king could require the service of one *miles* – a soldier or man-at-arms.[22] So the Domesday assessment suggests that if, as seems likely, Wessex's example was being followed in this part of Mercia, Stanton's theyn would have been expected to provide two *miles* for the army. The estate included a balanced provision of arable and woodland, as well as extensive commons with meadow and pasture in the vale and rough grazing on the heathland. This appears to have been carefully thought

[14] *Oxfordshire Domesday* (Alecto Series, 1990), VII, ff. 156, 156 v.

[15] J. Blair, 'Introduction' in *Oxfordshire Domesday*, op. cit. (note 14), f. 15; J. Blair, 'Local Churches in Domesday Book and Before', in J. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies* (1987), 275; R. Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology* (CBA Research Report, 47, 1983), 68–71.

[16] R. Holt, 'Mechanisation and the Medieval English Economy', in E. Bradford Smith and M. Wolfe (eds.), *Technology and Resource Use in Medieval Europe: Cathedrals, Mills and Mining* (1997), 139.

[17] R. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (1988), 47, 117.

[18] B. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (1995), 245–7.

[19] G. Grundy, *Saxon Oxfordshire Charters and Ancient Highways* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. xv, 1933), 85.

[20] Abels, op. cit. (note 17), 56–8.

[21] Ibid. 101.

[22] N. Brooks, 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (eds.), *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (1971), 71; Abels, op. cit. (note 17), 108–15; Yorke, op. cit. (note 18), 246; M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past: Place Names and the History of England* (1997), 125.

out, creating what was intended to be, at the very least, a self-sufficient estate – a process that has been recognised elsewhere.[23] Indeed, Stanton's resources must have been expected to provide sufficient surplus to guarantee not only the theyn's military obligations, but also his presumed liability under the *Burghal Hidage* towards the cost of Oxford's defences:[24] a liability unlikely to have been mitigated by a grant of land within Oxford itself, which was once thought a general privilege.[25]
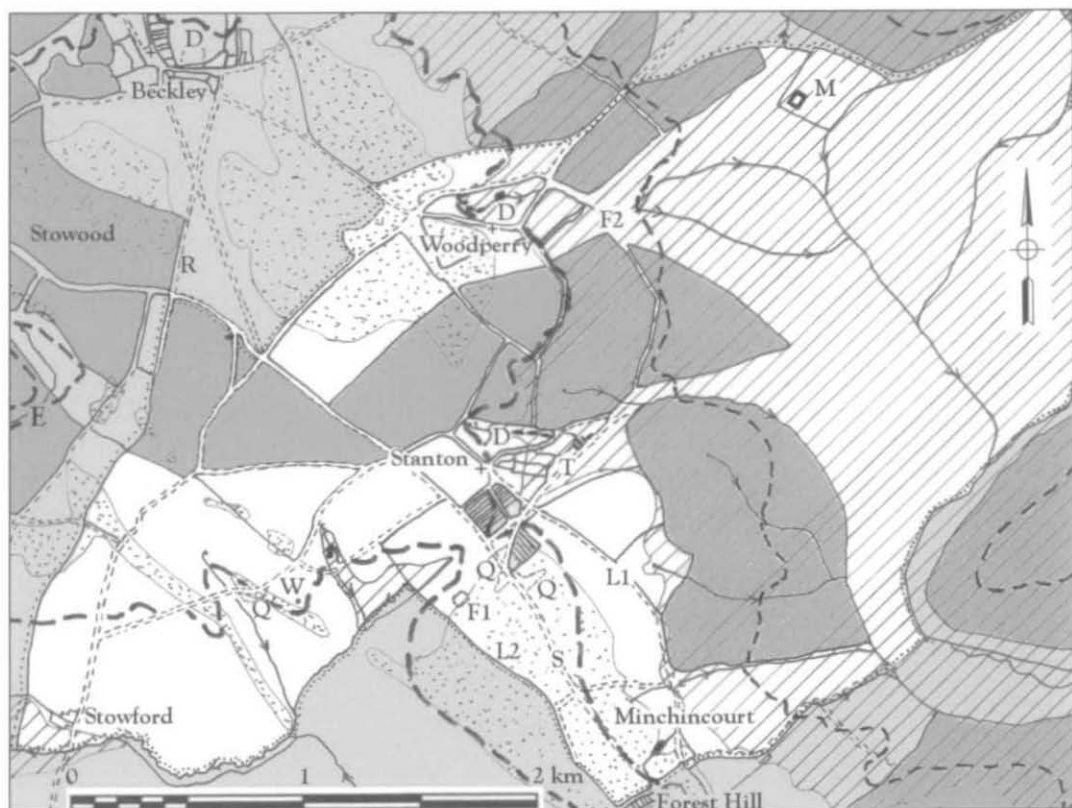

Fig. 2. Topographic map of Stanton St John's 19th-century parish, including the medieval manors of Stanton and Woodperry as well as Minchincourt and Stowford. Clay and alluvium is hatched and Wheatley Limestone is stippled. The other geology is Beckley Sand with Calcareous and Arngrove Sandstones. The contours are 100 m. (heavy) and 70 m. (light). The probable extent of 13th-century woodland is darkly shaded and land outside the parish lightly shaded. The parish boundary is indicated by a dotted line. **T** = track following the valley and stream. **R** = Roman road. **S** = Anglo-Saxon *stræte*. **D** = probable manorial demesne. + = church. **W** = windmill. **Q** = quarry. **F1** = lost early farmstead. **F2** and **M** (moat) = lost medieval farmsteads. **E** = site of Holocene environmental study of peat deposit in Sidlings Copse (J. Killick, R. Perry and S. Woodell, *The Flora of Oxfordshire* (1998), 31–2).

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[23] D. Hooke, 'Anglo-Saxon Estates in the Vale of the White Horse', *Oxoniensia*, lii (1987), 142; J. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (1998), 125.

[24] N. Brooks, 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage', in D. Hill and A. Rumble (eds.), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (1996), 129, 138.

[25] Ibid. 142.

Fig. 3. Possible layout of Stanton's early medieval manor (redrawn from the first edition Ordnance Survey).
V = planned village. Hill Crofts, Court Field, Green Close and Cotterells appear to have been demesne
arable (and were enclosed in 1778 as Manor Farm). Stone Field was one of three common fields, the others
being to the west. Note the 'saddle' immediately north of the lost farmstead. The dotted line indicates the
parish boundary, and the dashed lines indicate ridge and furrow recorded on aerial photography.

Fig. 4. The setting of the manor house *c.* 1800. The principal
surviving buildings are shaded. **C** = cow shed. **W** = wagon
shed. **X** = footings of wall. **Y** = drain. **P** = pound. **D** = ditch.
From the first edition Ordnance Survey and the New College
estate map of 1774 (New College Archive, 5613). Metric
contour © Crown Copyright NC/99/190.

From the outset, a 'manorial' enclosure appears to have been de rigueur. His rank, and the
status of the estate, required the theyn to establish a 'burh',[26] an enclosure typically
surrounded by a ditch and stockade, complete with a 'burh-geat' – presumably a formal
gateway or gatehouse.[27] Within this, the burh included a courtyard with a hall, kitchen and
numerous outbuildings, and there may have been other high-status buildings such as a
belfry.[28] The surviving manorial courtyard possibly occupies the site of a Saxon burh – a
suggestion supported by the association between the site of the manorial buildings and that
of the church, which stands close by, but just outside the entrance to the manorial
enclosure.[29] Whilst the foundation of Stanton's church cannot be traced further back than
its 12th-century documentary and structural evidence, there is good reason to believe that,
along with a considerable number of others, it occupies the site of an early 10th-century

[26] D. Hill and A. Rumble, 'Introduction', in Hill and Rumble, op. cit. (note 24), 3; R. Morris, *Churches in
the Landscape* (1989), 252–3.
[27] A. Williams, 'A Bell-House and a Burh-geat: Lordly Residences in England before the Norman
Conquest', *Medieval Knighthood*, vi (1992), 226–7; D. Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon: Two Sidelines from
the Bayeux Tapestry', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xvi (1994), 182.
[28] Morris (1989), op. cit. (note 26), 255; Yorke, op. cit. (note 18), 251.
[29] A. Reynolds, *Later Anglo-Saxon England: Life & Landscape* (1999), 129.

church.[30] It stands on a small shoulder, which makes it a prominent local landmark when viewed from the east.[31] Curiously, it stands beside a long linear feature:[32] a sequence of lanes, tracks, boundaries and hedge-banks (Fig. 2, '**L1**' and Fig. 3) with a number of attributes of an early farming boundary.[33] The remains of a substantial 'ditch' have recently been discovered to the north-west of the churchyard (Fig. 4, '**D**').[34] Whatever its original purpose, it may have enclosed a site on the little promontory later occupied by both churchyard and pound, and although it could not be dated, it appears to relate to the boundary of an earlier graveyard. While any possible early religious significance of this church site remains an open question,[35] in the absence of any obviously early origins for the manorial enclosure, it is tempting to suggest that the site of the burh was determined by the position of a pre-existing graveyard rather than vice versa. However tempting, the idea is handicapped by uncertainties over the early church in rural England,[36] and is not generally supported by the limited evidence available elsewhere.[37] But it does highlight the particular value of dating elements such as the recently discovered ditch. Whichever site is earlier, it was clearly in the interests of the theyn to maintain a close association between his burh and his proprietary church, through which his local authority could be tied to custom and piety – and to superstition.[38]

The village also contains an area of regularly planned crofts to the south of the church (Fig. 3, '**V**'). These have previously been attributed to the 14th century,[39] but planning (or re-planning) during this period more often involved the amalgamation of such plots (both toft and croft),[40] and although their origin remains uncertain, an earlier date seems more likely. Pressure on available land has been linked to such planning during the 12th and 13th centuries,[41] whilst elsewhere in central southern England there is evidence for such planning during the late Saxon period,[42] and there remains the possibility that it was laid out as part of the village's earliest formative process.[43]

[30] Morris (1989), op. cit. (note 26), 163.

[31] Ibid. 264–8.

[32] Morris (1983), op. cit. (note 15), 63.

[33] D. McOmish, D. Field and G. Brown, *The Field Archaeology of the Salisbury Plain Training Area* (2002), 52–62; J. Bettey, 'Downlands', in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The English Rural Landscape* (2000), 31; D. Hooke, 'Regional Variation in Southern and Central England in the Anglo-Saxon Period and its Relationship to Land Units and Settlement', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1988), 126–35.

[34] P. Early, *Rectory Farm, Stanton St John: Archaeological Evaluation Report* (Oxford Archaeology, unpublished, 2003), 5 and Figs. 6, 7; S.M.R. PRN 16765.

[35] C. Thomas, 'Recognising Christian Origins: An Archaeological and Historical Dilemma' in L. Butler and R. Morris (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Church* (CBA Research Report, 60, 1986), 121–5; L. Quensel-von Kalben, 'The British Church and the Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 10 (1999), 94–5; Morris (1983), op. cit. (note 15), 49, 53–62.

[36] J. Blair, 'Churches in the Early English Landscape: Social and Cultural Contexts', in J. Blair and C. Pyrah (eds.), *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future* (CBA Research Report, 104, 1996), 6–7.

[37] Reynolds, op. cit. (note 29), 130–6; Morris (1989), op. cit. (note 26), 268–9.

[38] W. Rodwell, *Church Archaeology* (English Heritage, 1989), 154.

[39] Bond, op. cit. (note 5), 79.

[40] G. Astill, 'Rural Settlement: the Toft and the Croft', in G. Astill and A. Grant, *The Countryside of Medieval England* (1988), 39.

[41] Ibid. 51, 53.

[42] C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field* (2001), 58; Astill, op. cit. (note 40), 38; C. Currie, 'Large Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', *Oxoniensia*, lvii (1993), 87.

[43] Astill, op. cit. (note 40), 37; Reynolds, op. cit. (note 29), 134–6.

Domesday not only refers to the manorial estate, presumably with its village, but also records two unidentified one-hide farmsteads or hamlets.[44] It has been suggested that these were amalgamated to create the two-hide d'Oilly manor in nearby Forest Hill,[45] but this suggestion is not supported by the evidence and also overlooks an obvious candidate, Minchincourt. Minchincourt lay within Stanton's later parish,[46] and was a one-hide farmstead separately held of the Stanton manor by 1279.[47] The other one-hide Domesday farmstead may have been Stowford. This also lay within Stanton's later parish and was, again, separately held of the Stanton manor by 1279.[48] It must have been rather less than a hide in total by then, although once stated to have included a one-hide farm.[49] Further confusion arises because Stowford was thought to have had its own entry in Domesday as part of the royal forest.[50] This appears to rely on a particular interpretation of the place-name evidence,[51] and of course, if so, Stowford could not have been Stanton's other one-hide farmstead. However, Domesday recorded *stauuorde*, a quite specific entry that continued to be relied upon in the later Middle Ages as a reference to the royal forest.[52] In the 12th century the forest was called *staworde* (and later Stowood),[53] whilst *stouford* was first recorded in the 13th century,[54] and lay outside the forest boundary.[55] In short, Domesday can be taken at face value: its entry for the forest of *Stauuorde* can clearly be identified as the later Stowood Forest, rather than the settlement of Stowford.[56] Although Stowford does not appear by name in Domesday, the 13th-century evidence strongly suggests that it was indeed the other one-hide farmstead recorded for Stanton. That is the simplest explanation, and one of more than passing interest, because both Minchincourt and Stowford probably belong to a recognisable group of 'hyde farms' situated on the peripheries of late Anglo-Saxon estates.[57]

This is not the only evidence for dispersed settlement in the immediate area of medieval Stanton. A localised scatter of 13th- to 14th-century pottery and building rubble has been recorded from a site to the north of Hornley Wood (now Holly Wood), possibly the site of a homestead (Fig. 2, 'F2') in its own woodland clearing.[58] A short distance to the east lies an abandoned moat on Menmarsh Common (Fig. 2, 'M'),[59] together with a discrete area of ridge and furrow. Though, also presumably medieval in origin, this is, again, unlikely to

[44] *Oxfordshire Domesday*, op. cit. (note 14), VII, ff. 156, 156 v.

[45] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 125.

[46] Ibid. 283.

[47] *Rotuli Hundredorum*, ii, 713.

[48] Ibid.

[49] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 283 (the Hundred Roll actually recorded *dimid hidā* for the farmstead).

[50] *Oxfordshire Domesday*, op. cit. (note 14), I, f. 154 v; *Domesday Oxfordshire* (Domesday County Series 14, 1978), 1(10).

[51] *Oxfordshire Domesday*, op. cit. (note 14), f. 49; *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 401; M. Gelling, *The Place Names of Oxfordshire*, i (English Place-Name Society xxiii, 1953), 165, 188.

[52] C. Thorn, 'The Marginalia of Great Domesday Book', in *Domesday Book Studies* (Alecto Series, 1987), 161.

[53] Gelling (1953), op. cit. (note 51), 165.

[54] *Rotuli Hundredorum*, ii, 713.

[55] H. Salter (ed.), *Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, ii (Oxf. Hist. Soc. li, 1908), 96.

[56] *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 401; *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 293.

[57] R. Faith, 'Hides and Hyde Farms in Central and Southern England: A Preliminary Report', *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*, 13 (1998), 33–8.

[58] S.M.R. PRN 13158.

[59] S.M.R. PRN 5295.

relate directly to Anglo-Saxon settlement.[60] By contrast, a much earlier and larger farmstead once stood to the south of the village, but only survives as a soil mark on aerial photography (Fig. 2, 'F1' and Fig. 3).[61] Its overall form suggests a pre-Saxon origin,[62] and it stood in Stone Field at the northern extremity of the Wheatley Limestone cap – which explains the field's characteristically stony soil, and its name. Therefore, this literally was a *stan-tūn* ('farmstead on the stony ground'),[63] and depending on its date of abandonment, a candidate for the origin of Stanton's place-name. Furthermore, it would have been prominently visible from the ridgeway (the medieval London to Worcester highway), apparently important enough during the Saxon period to be referred to as a *stræte*.[64] Stanton's place-name may date from as early as the mid-8th century,[65] thereby possibly pre-dating both village and manorial estate. Perhaps this large, prominent farmstead was the landmark by which the locality became known to travellers and visitors.[66] It is also possible that Stowford, Minchincourt and the *stan-tūn* are relics of a pre-existing pattern of dispersed settlement whose origins lay in the landscape of early farming.[67]

If Stanton's manorial estate dates from the 10th century, its extensive woodland recorded in Domesday (Table 1) does not, but appears to have developed during the later 11th century.[68] This seems to have been carefully planned, either as an economic decision or to create a hunting 'forest',[69] though this is not necessarily a simple distinction.[70] Therefore, it is notable that Stanton's woodland (together with the rest of the manor and its hamlets) remained outside the later bounds of the nearby royal forests of Bernwood, Shotover and Stowood,[71] though within their purlieus.[72]

It was from this period that Stanton entered the historical record, beginning with its Domesday reference. However, the St John family – from whom the village now takes part of its name – only arrived here in the early 12th century, at least two generations after the Conquest.

[60] C. Taylor, 'Medieval Moats in Cambridgeshire', in P. Fowler (ed.), *Archaeology and the Landscape* (1972), 241, 245.

[61] S.M.R. PRN 16407.

[62] R. Bewley, *Prehistoric Settlements* (English Heritage, 1994), 114–19.

[63] Gelling (1953), op. cit. (note 51), 188.

[64] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 116 (unreferenced).

[65] B. Cox, 'The Place-Names of the Earliest English Records', *The English Place-Name Society Journal*, 8 (1976), 12–66; M. Gelling, 'Towards a Chronology for English Place Names', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (1988), 70.

[66] M. Gelling and A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place Names* (2000), xvi.

[67] D. Hooke, 'The Mid–Late Anglo-Saxon Period: Settlement and Land Use', in D. Hooke and S. Burnell (eds.), *Landscape and Settlement in Britain AD 400–1066* (1995), 96–104.

[68] J. Killick, R. Perry and S. Woodell, *The Flora of Oxfordshire* (1998), 32.

[69] P. Dark, *The Environment of Britain in the First Millennium A.D.* (2000), 140.

[70] J. Birrell, 'Deer and Deer Farming in Medieval England', *The Agricultural History Review*, 40, ii (1992), 112.

[71] I. Harvey, 'Bernwood in the Middle Ages', in J. Broad and R. Hoyle (eds.), *Bernwood: The Life and Afterlife of a Forest* (Univ. of Central Lancashire Harris Papers, 2, 1997), 3–5, pl. 4; Salter (1908), op. cit. (note 55), 96–7; H. Salter (ed.), *The Boarstall Cartulary* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxxviii, 1930), 179–81.

[72] B. Schumer (ed.) *Oxfordshire Forests 1246–1609* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. 64, 2004) 91, 93.

Walkhamstead		Barton			Shinfield		Stanton		
Walkhamstead	Lageham	Barton	Sandford	Ledwell	Shinfield	Swallowfield	Stanton	Minchincourt	Stowford
(Parish) 6,791 a.		2,906 a.	2,292 a.		4,313 a.	3,745 a.	2,731 a.		
6 Hides		10 Hides	14 Hides	1 Hide	5 Hides	5 Hides	10 Hides	1 Hide	1 Hide
Minster	Chapel	Church	Chapel	Chapel	Church	Chapel	Church	Chapel	
Free Warren	Park	Free Warren			Park	Park			
1 Mill		2 Mills	1 Mill		1 Mill	1 Mill and 5 Fisheries	2 Mills s		
30 Ploughs		16	16	1	6	7	11	1	1½
In Demesne 3 Ploughs		?	3	1	1	2	3	1	1
Meadow 3a.			100 a.		4 a.	12 a.	60 a.		
Woodland 100 Pigs					200 Pigs	20 Pigs	1½ leagues x 4 furlongs		
Value £20		£20	£20	£1	£7	£8	£10	£1	£1

Table 1. The St Johns's English estates in the mid-13th century. Hidage, plough-teams, meadow, woodland and values are those of Domesday Book. Other data from: *V.C.H. Oxon*. v, 283–9; *V.C.H. Oxon*. xi, 62–70, 172–7; *V.C.H. Berks*. iii, 261–2, 268–70; *V.C.H. Surrey* iv, 284–8.

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE ST JOHN FAMILY AND THE STANTON MANOR

The association between Stanton and the family of St John probably began in the early 12th century, about two centuries before the earliest parts of the present house were built. The St Johns were a Norman family, though not supporters of Duke William's Conquest, and a previous claim that a St John played a prominent role in the invasion appears to have been based on the history of the St Johns of Basing – later the St Johns of Bletso – descendants of a quite separate Norman family of *de Port*.[73] The Norman St John family (more correctly called *de St Jean*) was associated with St Jean-le-Thomas, near Avranches and Mont St Michel, where they were *seigneurs*,[74] *vavassours* of the duke,[75] and foresters of the abbey's Forest of Bévais.[76] St Jean-le-Thomas is thought to take the second element of its name from Thomas de St John who constructed a castle there in about 1121,[77] and in doing so, appropriated large quantities of timber from the abbey's woods. This act precipitated a most serious confrontation with the monastery, which would have had the direst of consequences for him had he not reputedly thrown himself 'like a madman' before the chapter, begging for mercy in a celebrated and most dramatic act of contrition.[78]

Thomas and his brothers, Roger and John, were supporters of Henry I,[79] and following Henry's victory over Duke Robert in 1106, it is known that Thomas was granted land in Oxfordshire where he was a sheriff in 1110.[80] His younger brother, John, may be the soldier of that name who was said to have taken part in an 'invasion' of Glamorgan during Rufus's reign,[81] and was first linked to the county in 1130 when he inherited Thomas's lands here. These lands appear to have included the extensive d'Ivry barony, which had been held by the Crown following the death of the last d'Ivry in about 1100,[82] although they were not inherited by subsequent generations of the St John family.[83] Stanton had been held directly by the Crown from 1100, following its confiscation from the de Lacys for their support of Duke Robert, and it may have been granted to Thomas sometime between 1106 and 1110. The association is first recorded in a charter of 1135–49, in which John granted the church of St John the Baptist to Eynsham Abbey.[84] This charter expressly refers to his wife, leading to an alternative suggestion that Stanton may have come to the St Johns as part of her dowry.[85]

The history of the family remained relatively uneventful until the mid-13th century when Roger de St John emerged as a prominent figure in the baronial movement against Henry III. This may have owed something to his marriage to the sister of Hugh le Despenser,[86]

[73] C. Russell, 'Swallowfield and its Owners', *The Quarterly Journal of the Berks. Archaeological and Architectural Society*, i (1891), 84.

[74] G. White (ed.), *The Complete Peerage*, xi (1949), 341.

[75] *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, vi (Rolls series, 82), 253, 352.

[76] *Cal. Documents preserved in France* (918–1206), 753.

[77] White, op. cit. (note 74), 341.

[78] *Cal. Documents preserved in France* (918–1206), 724; C. Harper-Bill, 'The Piety of the Anglo-Norman Knightly Class', *Battle Studies*, ii (1979), 64.

[79] H. Salter (ed.), *Oxford Charters* (1929), ff. 46 (n.), 80 (n.).

[80] *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ii (Rolls Series, 2), 119; White, op. cit. (note 74), 341.

[81] S. Baring-Gould, *Family Names and their Story* (1910), 243.

[82] Salter (1929), op. cit. (note 79), f. 46 (n.).

[83] White, op. cit. (note 74), 345–6.

[84] H. Salter (ed.), *Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, i (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xlix, 1907), 118.

[85] Salter (1929), op. cit. (note 79), f. 47 (n.).

[86] White, op. cit. (note 74), 348.

Simon de Montfort's justiciar, with whom de Montfort effectively ruled England by 1264.[87] By 1251, Roger de St John held land in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Surrey and Normandy:[88] the English lands were to remain with the family until the later 14th century, whilst the principal manors remained with their heirs until the 16th century. Roger re-unified the two parts of the large manor of Walkhamstead in Surrey,[89] once graced by a minster,[90] where he was granted a most unusual and cautious licence in 1262 to fortify his house at Lageham – so long as he remained 'faithful'.[91] The licence refers to a foss, paling and 'brethachiis': the brattices being literally hoardings but interpreted in this case as towers.[92] Elsewhere these have occasionally been taken to mean gate-towers,[93] perhaps where provided with projecting timber fighting galleries.[94] Whatever was implied by the brattices, Lageham may have been somewhat of a 'Heath Robinson' affair, and typical of a fortification contrived in such troubled times.[95]

Lageham has been noted as the only surviving example of a 13th-century licence based on an earthwork fortification,[96] and in spite of the entire loss of its medieval buildings, it remains impressive. It is the largest moated site in Surrey, enclosing an area of five and a half acres and, apart from two possibly post-medieval causeways, the very substantial earthworks may appear very much as they did when constructed over 740 years ago.[97] Roger also received a grant of 'free warren' in the Lageham demesne lands,[98] presumably a reference to the park mentioned in 1316,[99] of which the bounds and most of the pale can still be identified. The enclosed park covered an area of 500 acres, very substantial when compared with a more typical size of 100 to 200 acres.[100] The general impression is that Roger de St John developed Lageham on a noble scale, reflecting, it would seem, his rising status at court. As a prominent supporter of de Montfort he was appointed one of the twelve councillors to Henry III in 1264,[101] and was among the tragic roll-call of barons and knights killed by Prince Edward's troops at the bloodbath of Evesham the following year.[102] His

[87] M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (1997), 40–51.

[88] *Book of Fees*, ii (1242–93), 835; White op. cit. (note 74), 347–8.

[89] *V.C.H. Surrey*, iv, 283–4; Now Godstone but *Wachelestede* (Walkhamstead) in Domesday Book, and later sometimes referred to by the name of its southern part, Lageham (or Lagham).

[90] P. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Royal Hist. Soc. 8, 1968), 1511.

[91] *Cal. Patent Rolls* (1258–66), 199.

[92] L. Ketteringham, 'Excavations at Lagham Manor, South Godstone, Surrey', *Surrey Archaeol. Collections*, 75 (1984), 239.

[93] H. Turner, *Town Defences in England and Wales: An Architectural and Documentary Study AD 900–1500* (1971), 128.

[94] I. Nelson, *Etal Castle, Northumberland* (English Heritage, 1998), 9 (this may be an unfinished barbican instead).

[95] C. Coulson, 'Freedom to Crenellate by Licence – An Historiographic Revision', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, xxxviii (1994), 95; C. Coulson, 'The Castles of the Anarchy', in E. King (ed.), *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (1994), 69–70 *et passim*.

[96] J. Le Patourel, 'Fortified and Semi-Fortified Manor Houses', *Château Gaillard*, ix–x (1982), 191.

[97] *V.C.H. Surrey*, iv, 284; it has been suggested that the earthworks may exploit an earlier fortification, which would be consistent with the finding of defended sites of the late Iron Age associated with iron-working elsewhere in the Weald, and which could explain Lageham's seemingly anachronistic 13th-century earthwork licence. (S. Hamilton and J. Manley, 'Points of View: Prominent Enclosures in 1st Millennium BC Sussex', *Sussex Archaeol. Collections*, 135 (1997), 105–6).

[98] *V.C.H. Surrey*, iv, 285.

[99] *Cal. Inquisition P. M.* v (1–9 Edward II), 625.

[100] L. Cantor, 'Forests, Chases, Parks and Warrens', in L. Cantor (ed.), *The English Medieval Landscape* (1982), 73.

[101] R. Treharne, *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267* (1973), 295.

[102] *Cal. Inquisitions Misc.* i (1219–1307), 904.

manors were confiscated and granted to Roger de Leyburn and Gilbert de Clare, rather harshly including Shinfield and Stanton – then apparently held in dower by Roger's mother, Lady Emma le Despenser.[103] Stanton went to Leyburn and Lageham to de Clare,[104] which unfortunately does not help to explain the presence of the fine late 13th-century stained-glass arms of de Clare in Stanton's church.[105]

The earliest record of Roger's son, John, is in a charter of 1270, by which he exchanged some estates with his grandmother, Lady Emma.[106] By the terms of the settlement after Evesham he should have by then paid the ransom for his lands – depending on his age.[107] However, in 1277 and 1278 'John de St John' was twice released of debts, each of 200 marks, for his 'good and praiseworthy service in the Welsh Expedition'.[108] As it happens, this would amount to the ransom for a manor such as Lageham, valued at 30*l* in 1265.[109] Unfortunately, the Roll did not specify whether this was John de St John *of Lageham* or his namesake – and distant cousin – John de St John *of Basing*, also a former baronial rebel. By this time he was a knight owing one knight's fee of his lands in Barton, Stanton and Walkhamstead.[110]

It remains uncertain how the St John manors were held during the early years after Evesham, whether John regained his inheritance on coming of age, and which estates his mother and grandmother held in dower. He must have held Stanton from the death of Lady Emma, sometime between 1270 and 1279. During his long military career he was inevitably involved in Edward's campaigns in Wales and Scotland,[111] and possibly in Europe – although some confusion has occurred in the interpretation of contemporary references to *Johannis de Sancto Johanne* (generally referring to his namesake), which have tended to conflate the histories of the two knights. He was created a baron, the 1st Lord St John of Lageham, in 1299, and died in 1316.[112] The discovery of unusually high-quality early-14th-century 'Westminster' floor tiles at Lageham appears to confirm that he maintained his father's house to a high standard,[113] and they may perhaps have belonged to a new or refurbished domestic chapel. The buildings in Stanton, dated to *c.* 1305 (Table 2), must also have been his work, and his tomb may lie beneath a fine early-14th-century canopied recess in the north wall of the chancel of St John the Baptist's church, Stanton. John's son, also John, did not long outlive him, dying in 1323.[114] The two subsequent heirs both died during

[103] White, op. cit. (note 74), 347–9; Emma married a le Despenser after the death of Roger's father in *c.* 1230. She outlived her son, Roger, and was still living in 1270, some forty years after the death of her first husband and nearly twenty years after the death of her second husband.

[104] *Cal. Inquisitions Misc.* i (1219–1307), 904; *Cal. Charter Rolls*, ii, 56.

[105] E. Greening-Lamborn, *The Armorial Glass of the Oxford Diocese* (1949), 156–7; P. Newton, *The County of Oxford: A Catalogue of Medieval Stained Glass* (Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, G.B. i, 1979), 189, pl. 44 (c); C. Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (1954), 6–7.

[106] *Cal. Charter Rolls*, ii (1257–1300), 156.

[107] Treharne, op. cit. (note 101), 329.

[108] *Cal. Close Rolls of Edward I*, i (1272–9), 394, 436.

[109] *Cal. Inquisitions Misc.* i (1219–1307), 904; Treharne, op. cit. (note 101), 325; White, op. cit. (note 74), 324(b); by the terms of the Dictum of Kenilworth the ransom – or 'redemption' – was generally set at a maximum of five times the annual value of the lands; higher for those who fought on, but less if extenuating circumstances had been accepted. In the case of Lageham this could have been up to £150 (225 marks).

[110] White, op. cit. (note 74), 349 (note a).

[111] Ibid. (note b).

[112] *Cal. Inquisition P. M.* v (1–9 Edward II), 625.

[113] Ketteringham, op. cit. (note 92), 247.

the plague years: John, 3rd Baron, died at Lageham in 1349 during the first wave of the plague, and his son Roger died in 1353 aged only 23.[115] Roger's uncle, Piers, then became the 5th and last Baron, but only succeeded to an estate in Lageham during his lifetime. Apart from this (and land held in dower), the St John manors passed to Roger's sister, Margaret de Lovayne,[116] who also inherited the estates and considerable fortune of her first husband, Sir John de Pulteney. Sir John was yet another victim of the plague,[117] and was buried in his chantry in St Paul's Cathedral.[118] On Margaret's death in 1398, the estates were inherited by her daughter (by Sir Nicholas de Lovayne), also Margaret.[119] The younger Margaret died in 1408, which must have been unexpected – coming within days of the death of her second husband – and a dispute over title to the various estates ensued, quite exceptionally resulting in two Inquisitions Post Mortem.[120] The second of these inquisitions, in 1413, acknowledged two co-heirs: Sir Richard Chamberleyn, a son by her first husband, and Sir Thomas Seyntclere, a son by her second.[121] Whatever the agreed settlement of the estates, from 1456 the Chamberleyns appear to have held the Stanton manor,[122] though not without further disputes.[123]

There is no evidence of substantial building work at any of the family's manors after the death of John de St John in 1316. Curiously, the tiled floor at Lageham had seen little wear before being apparently broken up and dumped in part of the medieval offices that burnt down in the mid-14th century.[124] However, the documentary evidence does not support the suggestion that the St Johns and their manors suffered 'decline' after John's death in 1316; a decline 'accelerated' from 1349.[125] Certainly, the St Johns may have had difficulty maintaining the baronial residences of Roger and John during the economic recession of the early 14th century (vividly illustrated elsewhere),[126] and the plague struck the St John manors harshly. The area around Barton's church remains virtually deserted, while the development of the nearby Middle Barton village may date from this period.[127] Similarly,

[114] White, op. cit. (note 74), 350.

[115] Ibid.

[116] New College Archives, 9787/294, 12676, 12692; 9787/293, 12693; 9787/292, 12678; White op. cit. (note 74), 350–1.

[117] *Cal. Inquisitions P. M.* ix (21–25 Edward III), 183; *Cal. Close Rolls of Edward III*, ix (1349–54), 507; E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, iii (2nd ed. 1797–1801), 227.

[118] W. Simpson (ed.), *Documents Illustrating the History of St Paul's Cathedral* (Camden Soc. 2nd Series, xxvi, 1880), 84, 199.

[119] Ibid. iv, 507.

[120] *Cal. Inquisitions P. M.* xix (7–14 Henry IV), 453–64, 656; *Cal. Inquisitions P. M.* xx (1–5 Henry V), 9–12, 58–62.

[121] C. Kingsford (ed.), *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de l'Isle & Dudley*, i (Historical Manuscripts Commission), 233; O. Manning and W. Bray, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey*, ii (1809), 326; V.C.H. Bucks. iv, 340.

[122] Not surprisingly, their claim to the Stanton manor appears to have been settled at about the time that Sir Richard's grandson married Sybil, daughter of Sir Richard Fowler, who was Edward IV's solicitor and Chancellor of the Exchequer (B. Wolffe, 'The Management of English Royal Estates under the Yorkist Kings', *English Historical Review*, lxxi, 6, 26).

[123] New College Archives, 9787/310, 12684, 12695; 9787/305, 12685; 9787/306, 4810; 9787/310, 4810.

[124] Ketteringham, op. cit. (note 92), 243, 248.

[125] Ibid.

[126] C. Platt, *Medieval England: A Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to A.D. 1600* (1978), 93; P. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240 to 1400* (1965), 95, 106.

[127] W. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (1970), 299–303.

events in 1354 suggest that the isolation of Swallowfield's church may in part relate to the parish having been effectively depopulated.[128] Both Sandford and Ledwell 'suffered severe losses during the plague',[129] whilst the losses suffered by the Walkhamstead manors were near total,[130] with the mill claimed to be 'out of repair and had brought in nothing that year as all who used to come there to grind were dead'.[131] Stanton fared better, with no evidence of significant losses: the taxation assessment for 1327 recorded forty-three names and the 1377 Poll Tax ninety-one adults.[132] Here, the finding of a set of cleft-oak rafters dated to 1349 (Table 2), re-used in the 19th-century wagon shed, does suggest repairs – albeit rather rudimentary – to one of the manorial buildings. It is a tantalisingly faint glimpse of life here at the height of the plague. Whilst Swallowfield and Shinfield passed to the Crown in 1349, the rest of the St John estates remained with their descendants throughout the later Middle Ages. In spite of disputes over inheritance, there is no evidence of reduced circumstances, and they remained gentry residences of a very wealthy family. Indeed the Lageham and Stanton manor houses remained so, long after the family had left.

The last direct descendant of the St Johns to hold Stanton was Sir Richard Chamberleyn's great grandson, Edward,[133] who eventually sold it in 1526.[134] This was one of a series of transactions apparently intended to consolidate his principal estate at Shirburn Castle. Shirburn was to remain with the family until the early 17th century,[135] whilst, from 1529, Stanton was held by New College, Oxford.[136] The college inherited a sitting tenant, William Frere, a mercer from Oxford,[137] whose family continued to hold the lease throughout the 16th century.[138] His grandson, also William, was the last Frere to hold the tenancy,[139] and it may have been the following tenant, Henry Wotton,[140] who embarked on a substantial reorganisation of the east range when he took over the lease in 1599 – the date of the kitchen fireplace bressumer (Table 2). The alterations involved the adaptation of part of the ground floor of the east range to form a kitchen, with the addition of outshuts, presumably to house the buttery and pantry. The creation of a kitchen in the residential part of the house may reflect the changing status of the hall, which from the mid-16th century would have effectively lost its central role in the daily life of an extended household.[141]

From 1602 until 1732 Stanton was tenanted by the White family. John White, father of John White the 'Patriarch of Dorchester',[142] styled himself 'yeoman' in the first of their

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[128] *Cal. Patent Rolls* (1354–8), 38, 56.

[129] *V.C.H. Oxon.* xi, 171.

[130] *V.C.H. Surrey*, iv, 284.

[131] Ibid. 287.

[132] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 283.

[133] *Dictionary of National Biography* x, 7–8; *V.C.H. Beds.* iii, 433.

[134] New College Archives, 9787/313, 4811; 9787/314, 4812; *V.C.H. Oxon.* viii, 184; Kingsford op. cit. (note 121), 14.

[135] A. Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, i (Bliss, 1813), 584–5.

[136] The notes on subsequent occupiers of the manor principally rely on the New College Lease Books.

[137] New College Archive, 9759, f. 7 v; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 111.

[138] New College Archive, 9760, 64, 99, 108, 200.

[139] W. Williams, *The Parliamentary History of the County of Oxford, 1213–1899* (1899), 107–10; in 1586, the same William Frere built the earliest parts of the manor house of Water Eaton, and his son, Edward, was created baronet.

[140] New College Archive, 9761, 458.

[141] G. Fairclough, 'Meaningful Constructions – spatial and functional analysis of medieval buildings', *Antiquity*, 66 (1992), 363; J. Grenville, *Medieval Housing* (1997), 114.

[142] A. Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, iii (Bliss, 1817), 236–7; F. Rose-Troup, *John White – the Patriarch of Dorchester (Dorset) and the founder of Massachusetts, 1575–1648* (1930).

leases.[143] However, succeeding generations saw themselves rather as gentry, and in 1634 his sons commissioned a 'Pedigree Armes & Creast'.[144] Following the death of John's son, Stephen, in about 1633, the lease was held in trust for Stephen's son, another John.[145] The trustees, who held the lease throughout the Civil War period, included John Nixon, alderman of Oxford, prominent Parliamentarian,[146] committed Presbyterian – and inevitably no friend of the antiquary, Anthony Wood.[147] Indeed, Nixon was appointed mayor in the immediate aftermath of Oxford's surrender in June 1646.[148] With this in mind, the dating of the timbers of the stables and barn (summer 1646 to spring 1647, and winter 1647 to spring 1648, respectively (Table 2)) is notable for two reasons.

Firstly, it is most likely to represent repairs following damage – probably burning – during the fighting here between 1644 and 1646. Perhaps this was the same fate that overtook the new bishop's palace at nearby Cuddesdon in 1644, which Royalists burnt to deny Parliament its use as a garrison.[149] After the disaster of Naseby in June 1645, the Royalists would appear to have increasingly resorted to what was almost a scorched-earth policy of 'firing' buildings that could be of use to the New Model Army – especially Cromwell's cavalry, which had been operating here in the spring.[150] The presence of pink areas of burnt limestone in and around both the stables and barn would support the suggestion that these may have been burnt by the Royalists, and repaired immediately after hostilities ceased.

Secondly, timber was extremely scarce in Oxfordshire at that time, and for many years thereafter.[151] This was due in part to the waste and destruction of woodland during the fighting,[152] and in part to the very high demand for timber for repairs afterwards. Therefore, these prompt and substantial repairs almost certainly reflect the political power of John Nixon during these tumultuous times in Oxford.[153]

The young John White held the lease from 1650 until he moved to Westminster in 1666.[154] He was a 'gentleman of Oxford', a brewer and himself mayor in 1664,[155] and his repairs and alterations to the buildings here were noted in Warden Woodward's diary of his 'progresses' round the New College estates.[156] In 1661, the diary records that the 'works' had been completed: possibly referring to a number of the house's early post-medieval elements that defy close dating. These include a number of ovolo-moulded stone-mullioned windows, fireplaces, inserted floors and partitions, panelling, a lost porch tower and a

[143] New College Archive, 9762, 30.

[144] W. Ryley, 'The Pedigree Armes & Creast of John White of Dorchester', in *The Hampshire Visitation, 1634* (Harleian Ms. 1544), f. 224.

[145] New College Archive, 9764, 93, 351.

[146] D. Eddershaw, *The Civil War in Oxfordshire* (1995), 157; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 156.

[147] A. Clark (ed.), *Wood's Life and Times*, i (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xix, 1891), 437–8.

[148] Williams, op. cit. (note 139), 118; Parliament 'continued' Nixon as mayor in 1647 – alongside the elected mayor – thereby resulting in the unprecedented appointment of two mayors from 1647 to 1648, and revealing its concerns for what remained a politically unstable city.

[149] A. Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ii (Bliss, 1815), 894.

[150] Eddershaw, op. cit. (note 146), 135.

[151] Ibid. 160.

[152] *V.C.H. Oxon.* v, 288.

[153] In 1658, the city ordered portraits of both John Nixon and his wife, Joan, which still hang in the council hall – almost on the site of the former school he founded in the same year.

[154] New College Archives, 9765, 21; 9766, 45, 249; *Westminster Highway Rate*, E851 (Mill Banke, 1666); *Westminster Overseers Accounts*, 2356 (Mill Banke, 1667–74).

[155] M. Hobson and H. Salter (eds.), *Oxford Council Acts 1626–1665* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xcv, 1933), 321.

[156] R. Rickard (ed.), *The Progress Notes of Warden Woodward round the Oxfordshire Estates of New College, Oxford, 1659–1675* (Oxon. Rec. Soc. xxvii, 1949), 72.

staircase. If he was responsible for all, or even most, of these alterations he created an almost symmetrical (if old-fashioned) 'E'-shaped façade,[157] centred on a set-back block (Fig. 2), which is now the east range. It was Renaissance tinkering with a Gothic form, more characteristic of the previous century:[158] but John White was an Oxford man and Oxford was architecturally conservative.

The last White to hold the lease left in the early 18th century,[159] to be followed by a gentry family, the Hargreaves, who appear to have sublet the manor by 1789 to the Sheldons, a local family of yeoman farmers. The Sheldons remained in Stanton until the early 20th century, and their experience of the troubled times of the two 19th-century agricultural depressions is vividly revealed in local records. John Sheldon died in 1825 when he 'threw himself into the well' during the agricultural recession that followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In the mid-19th century, his son had planned to redevelop the yards as a fashionable model farm but New College must have been unwilling to help,[160] and the only building datable to that century is the wagon shed of 1801 (Table 2). Its simple form and large size, as well as its orientation and position close to the entrance, are all typical of a wagon shed of the period.[161] It incorporates part of the boundary wall and possibly other pre-existing masonry, and presumably stands on the site of earlier buildings. A byre was added on the north side of the house, probably in the late 18th century, whilst the hall range was pulled down before 1856 – when maps first record its absence.[162] The principal chamber was re-roofed rather crudely, perhaps in 1877 or 1883, when 'improvements' and repairs to the Manor House roof were recorded.[163] The records also chart the effects of the long agricultural recession in the late 19th century, during which George Sheldon's rent was almost halved.[164]

It was with the Sheldons that the principal changes to the form and status of the house took place. What they left was no longer a gentry residence but a working farmhouse, and it remained as such until the last farmer to live here, Richard Mattingly, hung up his smock and retired in 1938.[165]

THE BUILDINGS

The house consists of the surviving parts of a medieval manorial residence, including three two-storey domestic ranges built at right angles to one another in a 'domino' arrangement, with east and west ranges connected by a cross range (Figs. 5, 6). The quality of the surviving medieval masonry suggests that these buildings were originally built to a high standard, and in the east range it appears to date from the early 14th century, as do floor timbers in all three ranges – although those in the cross range are not *in situ* (Table 2).

[157] Rose-Troup, op. cit. (note 142), 17.

[158] N. Pevsner, 'Double Profile: A Reconsideration of the Elizabethan Style as seen at Wollaton', *Architectural Review*, 107 (1950), 153.

[159] New College Archive, 9769, 419.

[160] New College Archive, Proposed Site Plan (Sheldon, undated).

[161] J. Woodforde, *Farm Buildings in England and Wales* (1983), 110; N. Harvey, *A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales* (1984), 59(4), 87; P. Barnwell and C. Giles, *English Farmsteads, 1750–1914* (R.C.H.M.E. 1997), 56.

[162] New College Archive, Est. Map 2 (1856).

[163] *New College Minute Book* (1874–86), 166, 452.

[164] Ibid. 280, 548.

[165] The contemporary photographs show a more formal gentleman, partly because whenever a camera appeared, Mr Mattingly was careful to remove his working smock.
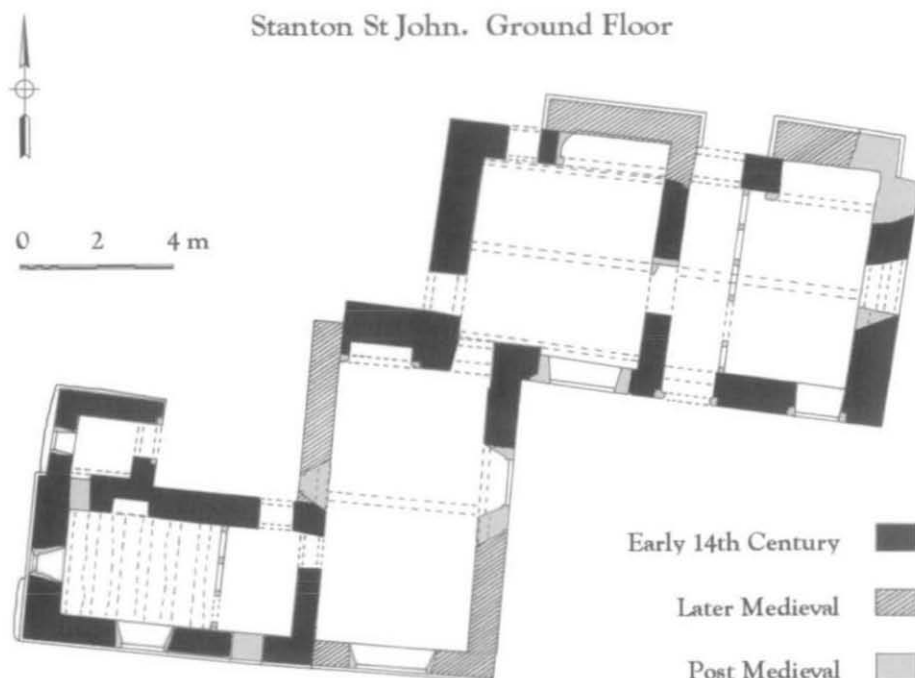
Stanton St John. Ground Floor

Early 14th Century

Later Medieval

Post Medieval

Fig. 5. Ground-floor plan.

Stanton St John. First Floor

Early 14th Century

Later Medieval

Post Medieval
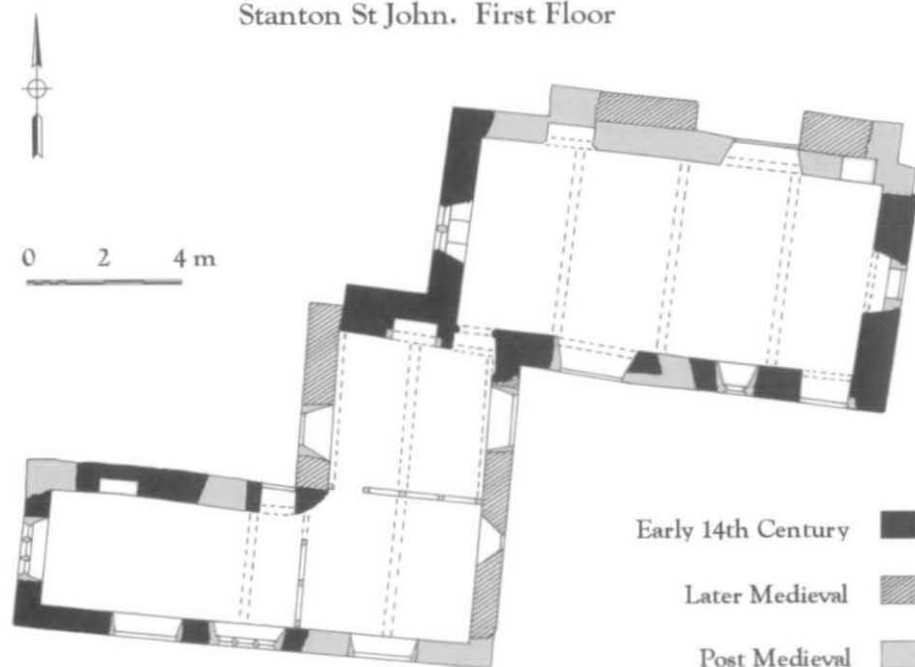
Fig. 6. First-floor plan.

Site	Felling Dates / Ranges
East Range – 1st floor joists	Spring 1303 and Spring 1305
East Range – ground floor bressumer	1599
Cross range – re-used 1st floor joists	1290-1322
West Range – 1st floor joists	1299-1331
Cross Range – roof	Summer 1475
West Range – 1st floor north door	1583-1584
West Range – roof	Winter 1635/6 to Spring 1638
Wagon Shed – re-used spars	Winter 1348/9 and Winter 1349/50
Wagon Shed – principal timbers	Winter 1800/01 and Spring 1801
Stables – roof and hay-loft floor	Summer 1646 to Spring 1647
Barn – roof	Winter 1647/8 and Spring 1648

Table 2. Dendrochronology dates from The Manor, Stanton St John. (D. Miles and M. Worthington, 'Tree Ring Dates – General List (90)', *Vernacular Architecture*, 29 (1998), 114–6.)

An almost complete set of upper-floor timbers of *c.* 1305 survives in the east range along with various contemporary masonry details including doorways, windows and a gate passage. The south and north archways of the gate passage have been blocked to form a window and stack respectively. The masonry of this range can be seen to be contemporary with the adjoining corner of the cross range.

The rest of the cross range has been rebuilt and, whilst its possible early-14th-century form remains uncertain, it includes a fairly complete late-medieval roof – a rough two-bay structure which may date this rebuilding to 1475 (Table 2).

The small west range includes a set of first-floor timbers *in situ* but, lacking sapwood, they could only be dated to between 1299 and 1331. This range has not been extensively investigated and no other datable medieval details have been revealed. Attached to its north side is a small square block, possibly medieval, which has been partially dismantled but survives at ground-floor level.

A further range had abutted the south-east corner of the east range, but there is no evidence of any masonry bonding between these two ranges. The missing range was pulled down in the 19th century, at which time a new stone wall was built along part of its footprint, presumably in order to close the south side of an adjacent post-medieval outshut.

Varying amounts of medieval masonry appear to survive in the principal surrounding farm buildings, which include a wagon shed, a stable, and two barns – the south-west one of which is ruined (Fig. 4).

The stonework

The early-14th-century masonry consists of dressed, well-coursed, fine-jointed grey calcareous grit, as can be best seen on the south elevation of the east range (Fig. 7). The masonry blocks are roughly squared and, although much weathered, some surviving tooling suggests that the faces were originally carefully dressed – as much as the rather hard, shelly, stone would permit. The original quoins are large squared blocks of the same stone. The

dressings of the openings are of pale creamy-white Wheatley Limestone – a coarse-textured, shelly freestone – and both types of stone would have been quarried locally from the Corallian Series of the Upper Jurassic formation (Fig. 3).[166]

The masonry of the rebuilt cross range is of grey-buff calcareous grit, which, by contrast, is less worked, and laid as wide-jointed, roughly coursed rubble walls. However, despite the different masonry, parts of three medieval windows survive here with identical detailing to those in the east range, though these may have been reset.

Two other types of stone are present, both in parts of the buildings that appear to have been repaired or altered, and they probably date from the post-medieval period. Very hard, white, open-textured Coral Rag has been used in blocking the openings in the east range. Beds of this would probably have been present in the quarries supplying the stone for the primary phase of building, so it is possible that these have been reused from dismantled lower-status medieval structures. There is an area of ashlar at first-floor level in the south wall of the cross range. This wall has been rebuilt – possibly more than once – and the ashlar is of a poor-quality soft Wheatley Limestone, similar to the masonry of the 17th-century windows. In contrast to true ashlar, it is relatively narrow-bedded and wide-jointed; this type of construction is sometimes called 'range walling'.[167]

Interpretation of the medieval domestic buildings

The east range – ground floor. In the area to the west of the partition wall there is evidence for original archways on the same axis in both south and north walls (Figs. 11, 12). That in the north wall included a surviving internal segmental-headed arch – presumably a rear-arch – whilst that in the south wall included parts of a segmental-headed outer arch, but not enough survives here to determine if this was pointed – i.e. segmental-pointed (Figs. 7, 13). However, what does survive in the south wall is the stonework flanking the archway internally: in effect the jambs of its lost rear-arch. These were probably about 6 in. wider on each side than the (incomplete) jambs of the outer arch, which may reflect the presence of rebates for doors – now obscured by the masonry infilling around the post-medieval window. The rear-arch in the north wall is of a similar width (Fig. 13), but none of its outer archway has been revealed (and it may be that none survives), so no suggestion can be made as to its appearance. The limited evidence is consistent with an interpretation that what remains in the north wall was part of an open archway at the back of a gate passage. There is no evidence for any medieval windows, which is again consistent with its interpretation as a gate passage. An original doorway led from here into the cross range (Fig. 13), and another – much disturbed but probably original – gave access through the stone partition wall into an adjoining corridor.

Doorways exist at either end of this corridor in both the south and north walls and, although much altered, sufficient details survive to show that both are original. A timber partition formerly separated the corridor from a ground-floor room, from where the use of the entrances could be supervised: in effect a porter's lodge. This appears to have been a normal domestic gatehouse arrangement with the ground floor comprising a gate passage, pedestrian corridor and porter's lodge.

A doorway in the south-east corner of the porter's lodge originally provided internal access, communicating with both the missing south-east range and – possibly by means of a vice – with the upper floor of the gatehouse. The room was lit by a single-light window in

[166] Arkell, op. cit. (note 2), 33–5.
[167] A. Clifton-Taylor and A. Ireson, *English Stone Building* (1994), 106.

Fig. 7. South elevation. (In Figs. 7 to 10 elevations are drawn from rectified photography. Shading indicates 14th-century masonry.)
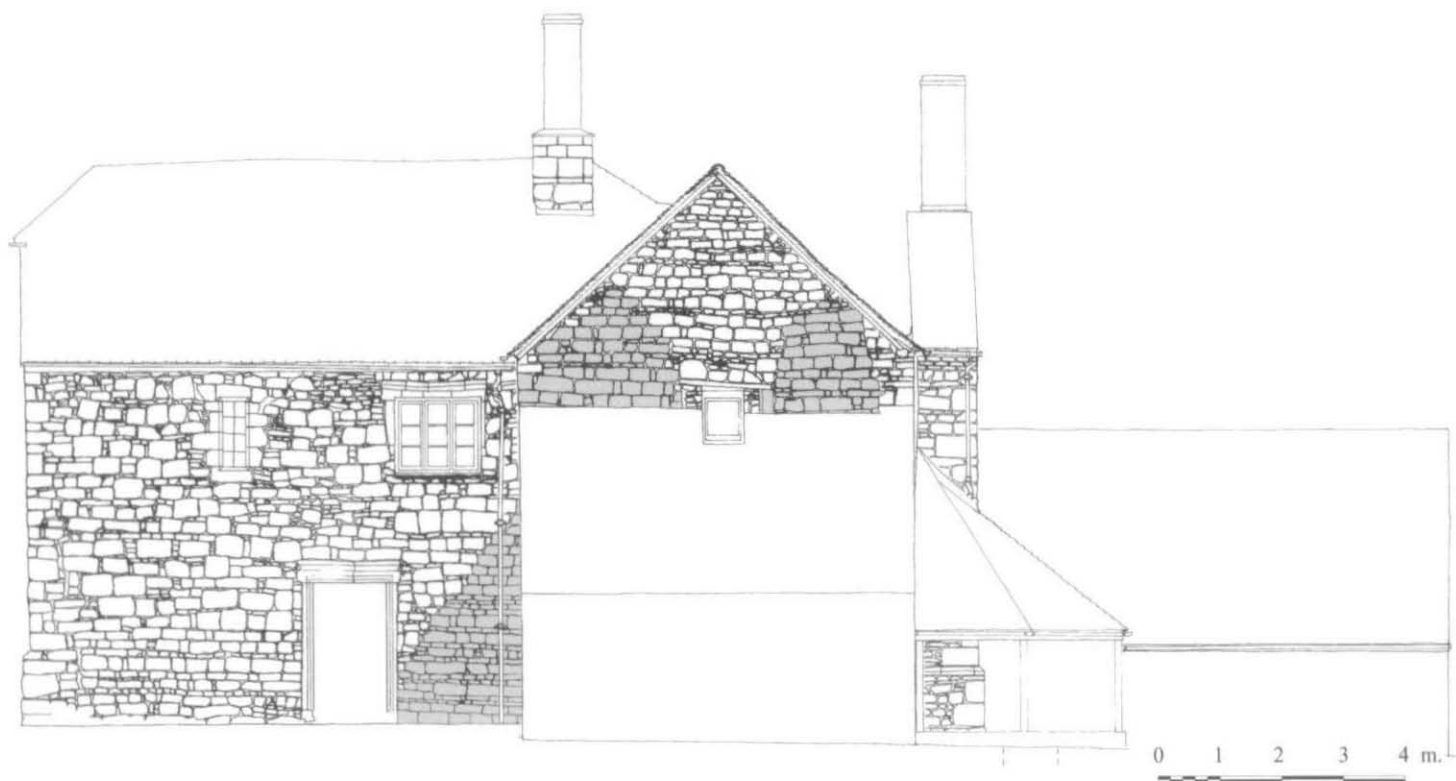
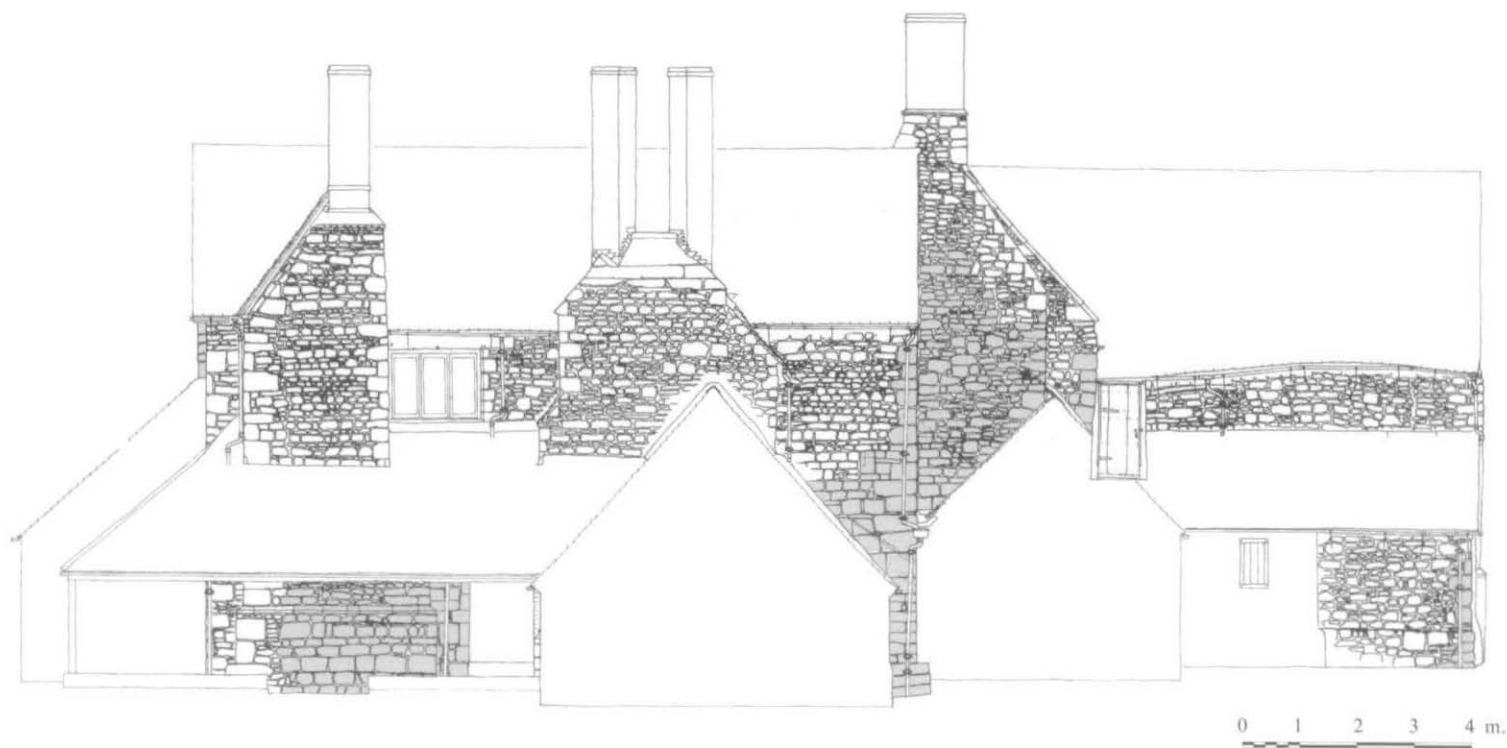Fig. 8. East elevation.

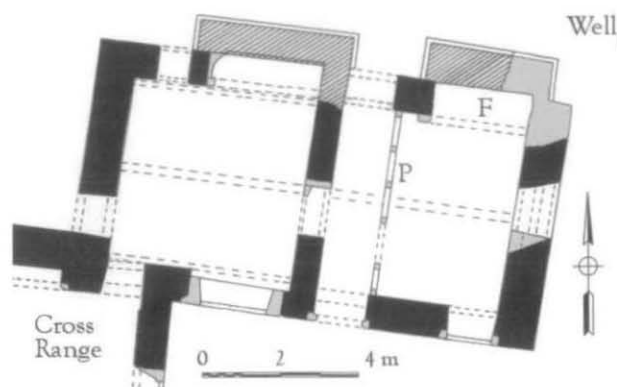Fig. 9. North elevation.

Fig. 10. West elevation.

Fig. 11.   East range ground-floor plan. **F** = fireplace.
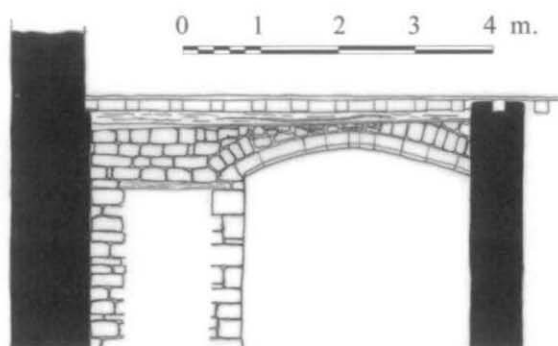**P** = former timber partition.

Fig. 12.   Internal north elevation of the west ground-floor
area of the east range, showing the surviving medieval
stonework. The solid wall to the left is the end wall of the
range and that to the right is the partition wall.

the centre of its east wall, of which parts of a rear-arch and splay survive. A large fireplace now occupies almost its entire north wall, but this appears to be a post-medieval kitchen arrangement: the bressumer has been dated to 1599 (Table 2). This is supported at its east end by secondary masonry, which is part of a reconstruction of the north-east corner of both stack and building. The bressumer appears to be an integral part of the rebuilt corner which, therefore, may represent a remodelling of this part of the building in the late 16th century. It is unlikely to represent a repair: it extends for over two metres round both the stack and the corner of the building, it is built from ground level, and it does not buttress the adjacent leaning masonry of the east wall – and there has been no subsequent movement or other evidence to suggest failure here caused by settlement. On the other hand, it is possible that an adjoining block has been demolished, with doorways at both levels closed by the remodelling. In this case, differential movement in an attached block could have caused the twist in the surviving east wall.
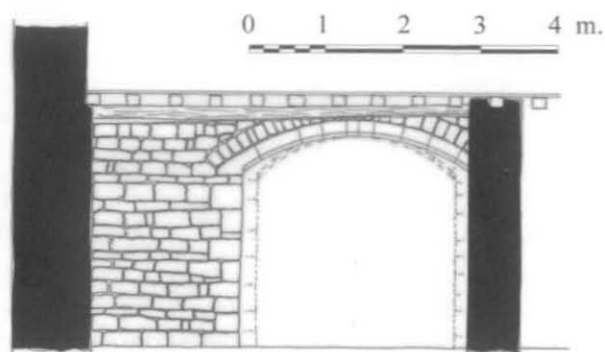
Fig. 13. A reconstruction of the rear-arch in the north wall with a reconstruction of the outer arch in the south wall superimposed in outline.

South

North

0 1 2 m
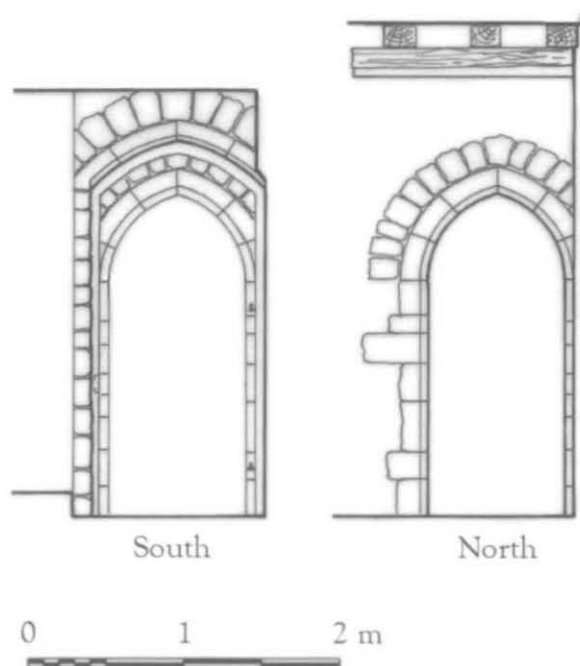
Fig. 14. A reconstruction of the elevations of the ground-floor doorway between the east range and cross range. The pintles (hinge pins) had been removed but their position could be identified, as could the latch socket. The voussoirs of the north arch had been cut back, leaving only the relieving arch. The rear-arch and door recess to the south survive intact.

The west part of the stack and fireplace pre-date the 16th-century remodelling and may have been retained from an earlier arrangement – perhaps a smaller fireplace. However, the stack is not bonded into the original wall to the west, and its masonry contrasts with that in the wall: therefore, there is no evidence that any of the stack is original. The evidence is of a room with an original doorway providing access in its south-east corner as well as, presumably, a doorway leading from the corridor, and possibly also communicating with the ground floor of a lost block to the north-east. It had a fireplace – possibly added later – and evidently no access to a latrine. Although the provision of a fireplace and latrine might be considered suitable comforts for a porter's lodge,[168] neither is essential for this interpretation.[169]

The east range – upper floor. The upper floor of the east range must originally have consisted of a single chamber of some pretension, and communicated with adjoining blocks at three or possibly all four corners. The principal floor timbers include the spine beams and heavy joists dated 1303–5 (Table 2). In the centre of the room, above the ground-floor partition wall, a circular burnt area suggests the site of a central hearth or brazier. If this was original, its central position suggests that the room was not sub-divided: an interpretation that is supported by the provision of symmetrical tall 'gable' windows at either end. The central hearth and gable windows also exclude the possibility of any lost original floor above this chamber.

It would be surprising to find a central hearth at first-floor level over a timber floor structure – there are no parallels for their use in an upper chamber – and the evidence here confirms that it was not without risk. At first sight, an apparently similar arrangement survives in the prior's lodgings of Wenlock Priory, but that is a hall (and 15th century). The timber floor of the prior's hall has been restored, but a stone pier may originally have
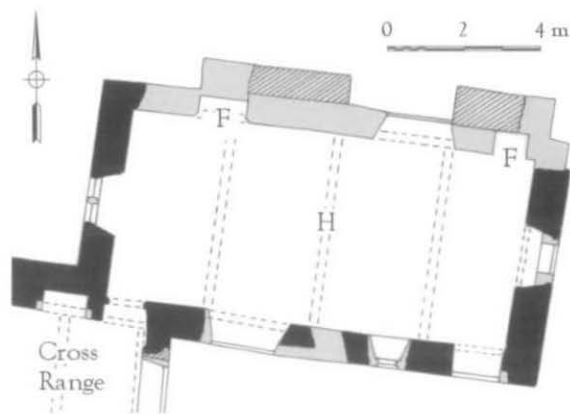

Fig. 15. East range first floor. **F** = fireplace. **H** = hearth.

[168] J. Kenyon, *Medieval Fortifications* (1991), 70; L. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (1952), 421.

[169] Faulkner, op. cit. (note 11), 182.

supported the hearth.[170] Other examples of halls raised on timber floors with central hearths include Ludlow (probably early 14th century),[171] and Edlingham (early 14th century).[172] In both, the hearth was supported by a 6 ft.-square stone pier: presumably sufficient to support a masonry hearth and protect the timber floor from fire. Elsewhere, where central hearths heated upper rooms, these were halls with stone floors supported by vaulted undercrofts.

In addition to the gable windows, the first-floor chamber would be expected to have included side windows. These would have provided views into the courtyard to the south, and over whatever lay to the north, as well as providing an oversight of the comings and goings through the gatehouse, but there is no firm evidence that any parts of the existing side windows are original.

There is evidence for original doorways at three corners whilst, as previously suggested, the fourth corner to the north-east has been reconstructed. In addition, there is a blocked fireplace (itself secondary) at the east end of the north wall, so any evidence for an original doorway here will have been completely lost.

The south-east doorway is now partially blocked to form a window. It includes external dressings – those to the left of the window appear to be original – whilst the rubble internal jambs appear to be those of a rear-arch. This suggests that this doorway faced out, with an inward opening door and an internal rear-arch. This may, therefore, have been the entrance into the chamber, presumably from a vice leading from the ground floor.

By contrast, the south-west doorway faced towards the chamber and presumably, therefore, led from the chamber into the first floor of the cross range.
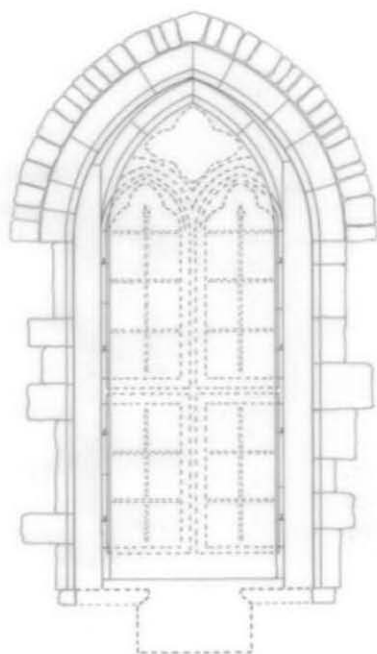
Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the probable internal elevation of the west gable window. The overall form of the lower lights can be deduced, whilst the trefoiled heads of the upper pair is assumed. The exact form of the upper quatrefoil is uncertain, but shown as a typical form of *c*. 1300. (Local examples include the porch west window of St Eadburg's, Bicester, and the nave south window of St Michael's, Cumnor.)

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[170] A. Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300–1500*, ii: *East Anglia, Central England, and Wales* (2000), 592.

[171] W. St John Hope, 'The Castle of Ludlow', *Archaeologia*, lxi (part 1, 1908), 257–328; Faulkner, op. cit. (note 11), 276, pl. xl.

[172] G. Fairclough, 'Edlingham Castle: the Military and Domestic Development of a Northumbrian Manor. Excavations 1978–80: Interim Report', *Château Gaillard*, ix–x (1982), 375.

Little survives of the north-west doorway: just a single arch springer in the corner inside and the lowermost dressings of the west jamb outside (Fig. 9). At first-floor level the north wall has been almost completely rebuilt, probably in the 17th century (the date of the adjacent fireplace), so there is little evidence to suggest the purpose of this doorway, and there are no signs of an attached block having been bonded into the external masonry. However, below this is a small post-medieval sub-basement area, perhaps adapted from a cesspit, so the doorway possibly led to a latrine.[173]

The cross range. This range includes a chamber of two square bays on each floor (each chamber approximately 25 ft. x 12 ft. 6 in.).
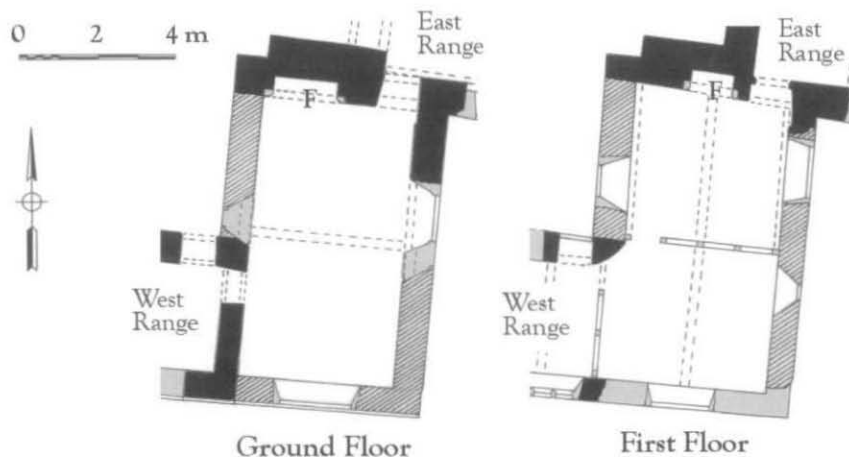
Fig. 17. Cross range floor plans. **F** = fireplace.

The roof. The only surviving medieval roof, this is a two-bay structure, its truss consisting of a pair of raised crucks with arched braces rising to a cambered collar. One cleat survives of a pair that supported the single row of through-purlins, and there is also a ridge purlin. Two raked struts have been added above the collar, and a second cambered collar has been added halfway between the truss and the north gable wall. The half-hip at the south end of the roof also appears to be secondary.

Ground floor. In the ground-floor room, the early-14th-century north doorway survives, as does its internal door recess: it provided access from the gate passage. The north wall also contains a fireplace beside the doorway. This is large for its position, with a wide stone head and no relieving arch – an omission that caused its subsequent collapse – and it may have been inserted to replace a smaller fireplace. It had a flat four-centred 'Tudor' arched lintel, and may date from the late 15th or 16th century. Where visible externally, immediately above the outshut roof, the lower part of the stack appears to include some high-quality masonry, which suggests that it may be original – although much altered (Fig. 9). This would be consistent with the normal provision of heating for one or, occasionally, both floors of a chamber block, and the position of the stack in the angle between the two ranges, as at

173 Faulkner, op. cit. (note 11), 100, 114.

Donnington-le-Heath, was probably a common medieval arrangement.[174] The south wall has been extensively rebuilt and lacks medieval details. The stone wall separating this room from the west range is of uncertain date – at first-floor level its place is taken by timber studwork. It differs slightly in both width and alignment from the adjacent west wall of the cross range and could have been part of a pre-existing end wall of the west range, or may possibly have been built as a stone ground-floor partition.[175] The doorway through it is a crude secondary opening and, therefore, there is no evidence of how (or if) this ground-floor room originally communicated with the west range. In both west and east walls blocked rear-arches of medieval windows survive (Figs. 17, 18) of which that to the west is placed off-centre, respecting the position of the west range. They are segmental-headed – as is the blocked ground-floor window in the east wall of the east range – and they share the general characteristics of all the other original arches in the east range, including the gateways, doorways and the first-floor two-light gable window. Although they cannot be dated, the suggestion is that they are also parts of 14th-century windows, reused when the cross range was rebuilt: they are certainly of a higher quality than the other late-medieval details in this range, including its roof.
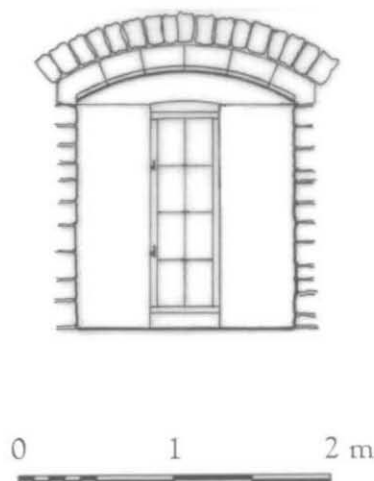

0   1   2 m

Fig. 18. Reconstruction of one of the two identical blocked side windows of the ground-floor room in the cross range. Only the rear-arches, jambs and first few inches of the splays have been revealed. Details of the light are based on the surviving medieval first-floor window.

[174] M. Wood, 'Thirteenth-Century Domestic Architecture in England', *The Archaeological Journal*, cv (Supplement, 1950), 123–4.
[175] Faulkner, op. cit. (note 11), 96.

There is no evidence for the original purpose of this ground-floor room, but it appears to have been reasonably comfortable and (possibly) completely separate from the chambers above. It may have been one of the household offices and is unlikely to have been merely used for storage.[176]

Upper floor. The first-floor room retains evidence for a similar layout, although a west window can only be suggested. The surviving east window is probably original but without its original head, whilst in the rebuilt south wall – as on the ground floor – no evidence of an original window can be expected to survive. At this level the stack and fireplace appear to have been substantially rebuilt, so the presence of an original fireplace in the north wall would only be a suggestion. The room is separated from the west range by a timber partition of uncertain date (possibly 15th century), which includes a very rudimentary doorway arrangement. This room appears to have been an inner chamber with access from the principal chamber, possibly with a fireplace, with windows in the side walls (and presumably one in the gable wall), but no evidence of access to a latrine.

The cross range has clearly been rebuilt, at least partly replacing an early-14th-century structure (Fig. 8). Because the roof appears to be *in situ* and integral to the range's rebuilt form, its dendrochronology date of 1475 would appear to provide a *terminus ad quem* for this work (Table 2). The date is consistent with the late-medieval roll moulding of the principal first-floor beam, the first-floor timber partition, and perhaps the ground-floor fireplace. If the cross range was rebuilt in 1475, timbers from an earlier floor appear to have been reused and, possibly, some early-14th-century windows as well, all of which may have been taken from an earlier cross range. There are some clues to the form that such a 14th-century cross range may have taken, and it presumably connected to both west and east ranges. A possible link with the west range could have been with the blocks overlapping corner-to-corner in a typical medieval manner, identical to its relationship with the east range (Fig. 19).
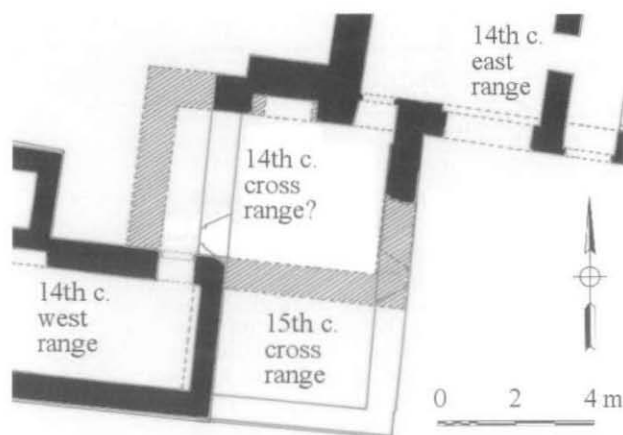

14th c. east range

14th c. cross range?

14th c. west range

15th c. cross range

0   2   4 m

Fig. 19. Reconstruction of the cross range at ground-floor level showing its possible development.

176 Ibid. 116.

Such an arrangement would explain the presence of doorways in the north-east corner on both floors of the west-range north wall. These are early (the lintel of the first-floor doorway provides a 16th-century *terminus ad quem*), and may have originally been medieval, but their positions have no obvious relationship to the surviving medieval layout. The layout of this possible original cross range might explain the rather inefficient placing of its fireplaces which, at present, are both off-centre in an end wall. In the suggested reconstruction, they would originally have been centrally placed in a side wall of each room: a more normal medieval layout providing the most efficient heating. This arrangement is also consistent with the size of the reused 14th-century joists. However, the suggested reconstruction remains no more than a possibility to be reviewed in the light of any future evidence.

The west range. The only specific evidence that the west range is medieval lies in the date (1315 ± 16) of its apparently *in situ* first-floor timbers (Table 2). These consist of a set of five heavy transverse floor joists, spaced at regular intervals, except at the east end where the rhythm has been interrupted by the insertion of a later studwork partition.

The original layout of both floors of the west range remains uncertain, partly because few internal features have been disturbed – and thus revealed – by modern alterations or repairs, whilst, externally, there is no certain evidence for its medieval appearance. On neither floor has definite evidence been found for original windows or doorways – particularly into the small north-west block – nor have the blocked fireplaces been re-opened. However, its intermediate history may provide some clues to its early form: in particular, the insertion of a mid-17th-century staircase disturbed a number of earlier features.
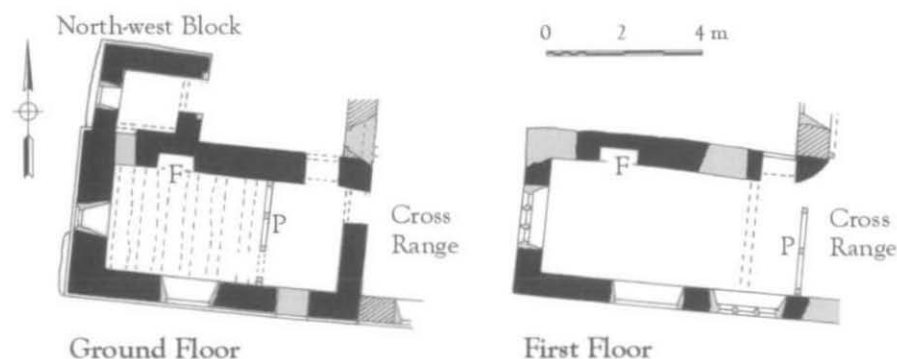

Fig. 20. West range floor plans. **F** = fireplace. **P** = timber partition.

Ground floor. On the ground floor, the staircase blocks an external south door that led into a lobby-like space, with a room to the left and the wall of the cross range to the right. Some external dressings of the doorway survive (Fig. 7): these are unmoulded, lacking even a chamfer, so the doorway may not be original. It is not in the corner of the range, but is centrally placed in relation to the ground-floor lobby. Therefore, this doorway and the ground-floor partition may be of the same date, and both could have been added when the cross range was rebuilt, probably requiring new access to be provided into the west range. The stairs also block a doorway in a timber partition that led from the lobby into the room, resulting in a later doorway through the partition being created at the foot of the stairs.

Facing this, the very rudimentary doorway between the lobby and the cross range has already been mentioned, whilst a fourth doorway, leading out to the north, is also of uncertain date.

Upper floor. On the first floor, the staircase cuts through the east end of an earlier west chamber, the layout of which can still be seen in the loft. This was also separated from the cross range by a small passage or lobby, which was served by an external north doorway as well as a doorway leading through the timber partition into the chamber in the cross range. There is no evidence that the timber partition or either of these doorways is original. All that can be suggested is that the roof of 1638 and the lintel of 1584 may represent *termini ad quem* for the earlier layout of the upper west chamber, and for the north doorway, respectively (Table 2). It may be that here, as elsewhere, the partition between the west range and the cross range – stone below and timber above – represents the late-medieval arrangement,[177] and that access to the upper west chamber was originally from the principal chamber, via the lesser chamber in the cross range. The upper west chamber could have provided the more private, or 'inner' chamber, with the upper chamber of the cross range being an outer chamber, very much as has been suggested for other examples where a series of adjacent upper chambers are known.[178] It would almost certainly have originally been provided with both fireplace and latrine: there is evidence for these although they are probably much altered, the former as a sealed fireplace and the latter in the partially dismantled north-west block. This arrangement may possibly have similarly provided both heating and latrine for the room below. With little evidence of architectural details, it is not possible to comment on the relative status of the chambers on either floor of the cross range and west range: this can only be suggested by their relationship and access.

The north-west block. This block survives to the height of the lean-to roof attached to the north wall of the west range. It has more substantial walls than the rest of the lean-to, from which it is approached through a weathered door frame, probably of 16th-century date, and aerial photographs taken in 1930 show a distinct gabled two-storey structure here. Its internal dimensions are 5 ft. 6 ins. square and it is sited 'behind' the west range, on ground sloping away from the buildings. The doorway appears to be secondary, which would provide a 16th-century *terminus ante quem*, whilst its size and attachment to a chamber block suggests that – whether or not medieval – it was a garderobe. There is room for access from both floors of the west range immediately beside the projecting stack, but the plasterwork has not been disturbed, so no evidence for doorways has been revealed. The doorway has a pronounced northward lean, no doubt the result of subsidence in the block. This is not manifested externally, presumably because the block has been partly rebuilt since, which may help to explain the lack of external evidence of an early date for the block (Figs. 9, 10). Subsidence has not affected the adjacent ranges, but could have been caused here by the presence of a former cesspit below.

Other buildings of the domestic courtyard

Lost south-east range: possibly the former hall and service block. There are no standing remains of this range although there is strong circumstantial and historical evidence for its former existence. The surviving ranges form a domestic group that were probably closely associated with a hall – the centre of the complex – from where access to their upper chambers would

177   Ibid. 96.
178   Ibid. 116.

be expected. At the upper end of the hall this typically included a ground floor doorway leading from hall to staircase: commonly in the form of a partly internal vice, as at Old Soar, Aston Eyre, Northborough and Ludlow,[179] but occasionally by way of an attached vice as at Penshurst (where it was added),[180] or even an external stair, as at Stokesay.[181] The blocked entrances to the chambers on both floors have already been noted at the south-east corner of the gatehouse range, and the assumption is that the upper end of the hall stood adjacent to this corner. However, the south wall of the post-medieval east outshut has been rebuilt, leaving the scar of an earlier wall running east from the south-east corner of the gatehouse. It appears that this lost range overlapped the *east* wall of the gatehouse by about three feet and, therefore, if free-standing, it could not have overlapped the partially blocked doorways, which are in the gatehouse's south wall (Fig. 4). The implication is that the doorways may have led to an external vice (in this case a newel staircase contained in an attached turret), providing access from the hall to both floors of the east range.

In dry conditions, a 500 mm. wide parch mark can be traced for 20 m. east from the outshut, possibly the site of the north wall of the lost range. Because it was necessary to build a stone wall for the outshut when the 'hall' range was demolished, it appears that what was removed was less substantial and presumably timber-framed, which would also explain the narrow parch mark. It should be of no surprise that the complex may have included stone-built residential ranges attached to a timber-framed hall. It is recorded at Cuxham,[182] whilst at Sutton a 13th-century timber-framed hall was encased in stone in the 14th century.[183] At Stanton, these were self-contained structures, probably built by different generations, to different specifications, and influenced by changing architectural traditions. Indeed, once timber and stone had been rendered and limewashed, they must have been almost indistinguishable.

An account of the house published in 1930 recorded the loss of an 'east wing', pulled down in 'recent times',[184] and a range is shown to the south-east of the surviving buildings on estate and enclosure maps of the late 18th century, but not on those from the mid-19th century.[185] The scar within the outshut and the parch mark are consistent with the position of the north wall of this missing range shown on the early maps (Figs. 21, 22), and it would appear to have measured about 57 ft. x 22 ft. externally (perhaps including a hall of *c*. 30 ft. x 20 ft.). The interpretation is supported by its position and orientation. It faced the principal entrance to the courtyard: a typical relationship in later medieval planning, with a number of near-contemporary examples including Brampton Bryan, Brinsop Court, Chorley Hall and Stokesay.[186]

The site includes sufficient space for a service range to the east of the lost hall, and possibly with room for a detached kitchen in line beyond this. However, the kitchen may have stood to the south of the services (north of the surviving post-medieval wagon shed), in an identical position to the kitchen of *c*. 1300 at Edlingham,[187] and it may have been rebuilt on different occasions in different positions. The north-west corner of the wagon shed retains projecting rubble toothing, perhaps the remains of a wall that once extended north,

179 Ibid. 99–100, 104–6, 108–9, 111, 114.
180 M. Binney and A. Emery, *The Architectural Development of Penshurst Place* (1975), 3.
181 J. Munby, *Stokesay Castle* (English Heritage, 1993), 28.
182 Blair (1993), op. cit. (note 10), 4, 8–9.
183 Currie, op. cit. (note 42), 232.
184 Rose-Troup, op. cit. (note 142), 17.
185 New College Archive, 5613 (1774); New College Archive, Est. Map 2, (1856).
186 Emery, op. cit. (note 170), 517, 519, 528, 575.
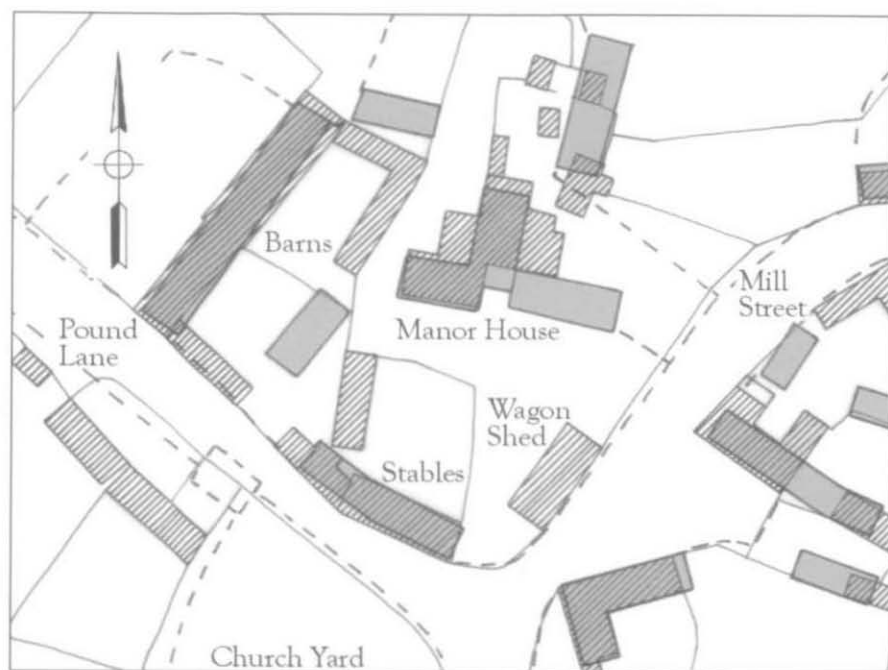187 Fairclough (1992), op. cit. (note 141), 358.

Fig. 21. Site plan based on the first edition Ordnance Survey, surveyed in 1879, with the New College estate map of 1774 (Fig. 22) overlaid. Continuous lines indicate 1879 enclosures; dotted lines indicate 1774 enclosures. Buildings on the 1879 map are hatched; those on the 1774 map shaded grey. The general quality of the 1774 survey can be seen to be reliable, comparing favourably with the first edition Ordnance Survey. The position of the missing south-east range is clearly shown. Scale 1:1250.
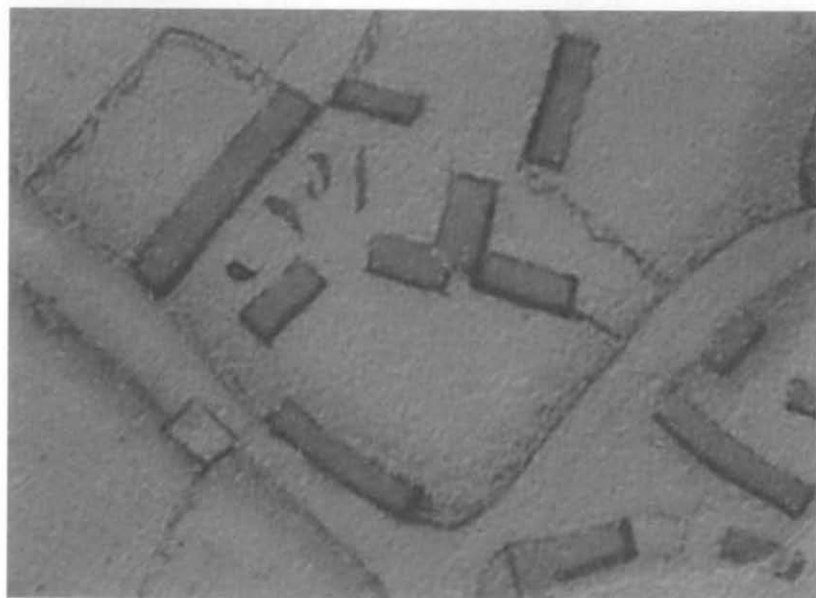

Fig. 22. The layout of the manorial buildings in the late 18th century: a detail from the 1774 estate map (New College Archive, 5613). The manor is identified here by its lease – ℕ⁄₃ 1 – in which it was customarily referred to as 'The Scite' and, after enclosure in 1778 as 'Manor Farm'.

0   2   4 cm
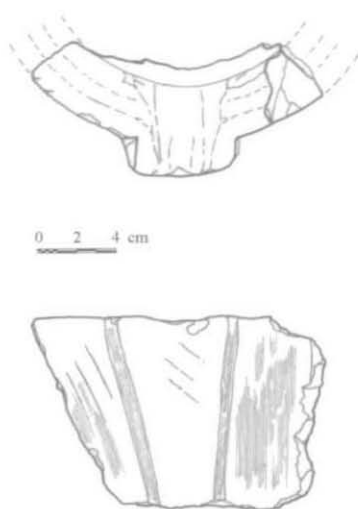
Fig. 23. Drawing of the fragment of a Purbeck
marble mortar found beside footings of the lost
east range of outbuildings. Its rim originally
had an overall diameter of 200 mm. (8 in.) and
there are various faint scorings – on the outer
surface only – from its manufacture.

and footings have been seen between the site of the lost south-east range and the shed, on
the alignment of this possible wall (Fig. 4, '**X**'). Part of a Purbeck marble mortar was recently
found buried in the topsoil immediately beside these footings (Fig. 23). It has a ribbed spout
and grooved rim, similar to those found on the kitchen sites at Eynsham Abbey[188] and
Northolt Manor,[189] and it would appear to be of 13th- or 14th-century date. A stone-lined
drain runs in a south-east direction across this area, about four foot from the adjacent wall
of the wagon shed, and about a foot below the present ground level (Fig. 4, '**Y**'). It discharges
via a spout through what appears to be surviving medieval masonry in the boundary wall.
Here, the wall stands immediately above a much re-cut ditch, which is fed with running
water from an adjacent spring (Fig. 4).

East outbuildings. The lower courses of the back wall of the wagon shed show signs of more
than one building phase, but this is the boundary wall, where various phases of rebuilding
would be inevitable. So there is no reliable evidence that the wagon shed is an adaptation of
an earlier building, and none is shown here on the 1774 map. However, this map almost
certainly excludes various sheds and minor buildings, and the reused timbers of 1349
presumably came from a medieval building in the immediate vicinity (apparently also not
shown on the map).

[188] A. Hardy, A. Dodd and G. Keevill, *Ælfric's Abbey: Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 1989–92*
(2003), 291–4.
[189] J. Hurst, 'The Kitchen Area at Northolt Manor, Middlesex', *Medieval Archaeology*, 5 (1961), 280
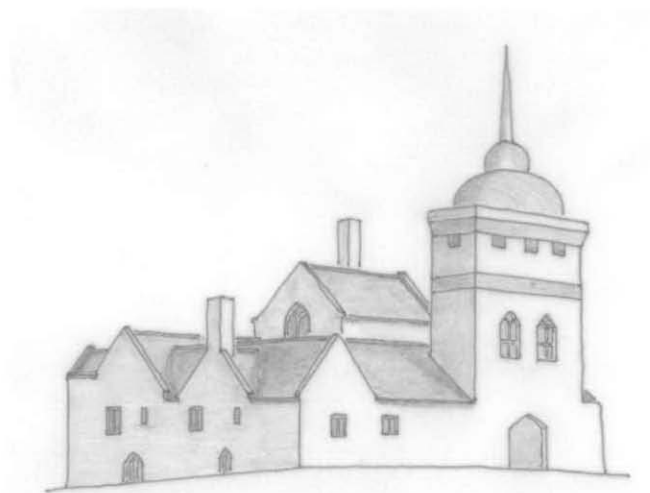(no.3).

Fig. 24. The manor house in 1590: an interpretation of the
drawing illustrated in Fig. 25 and attributed to Erasmus Williams
(Caroline Dalton, pers. comm.).

Fig. 25. Stanton in 1590. This appears to represent the manor
viewed from the south-west. In front is the road from Oxford to
Oakley. North is upwards – where the trees form part of 'Stanton
Wooddes'. The terracotta colouring of the original perhaps
intended to indicate roofing tiles and brick stacks, and (on the
tower) brick courses as well as shadowing, or possibly ochre
colourwash (New College Archive, 5671).

West outbuilding. The walls of an incomplete free-standing building occupy the west side of the courtyard (Fig. 4, 'C'). The building is of unknown date but it is orientated on the surviving ends of the west range to the north, and of the stables to the south, and almost at right angles to the west range.

Stables. The stable block occupies most of the south side of the courtyard, immediately beside the principal entrance in the south-east corner (Figs. 4 and 21). This relationship was practical and may have been normal, but few medieval examples survive except as footings, as at Brough Castle, or in the archaeological record.[190] There is no direct evidence that a gatehouse stood at the entrance in the Middle Ages; but it should be considered probable, and a gatehouse appears here on the drawing of 1590 (Figs. 24, 25). Its former presence might help to explain the complete rebuilding of the east end of the stables, the rest of which appears to consist largely of medieval masonry.

Discussion

An inner gatehouse? The structural evidence is that the existing east range was built as a gatehouse. Although essentially free-standing, this range was apparently an integral part of a residential plan with buildings once attached to three – or possibly all four – corners, of which only the cross range at its south-west corner survives. Its fine upper chamber appears to have formed the focal point of the private apartments, accessible by way of a staircase from what was probably the upper end of the hall in the lost south-east range.

Although the east range is contemporary with the adjacent part of the cross range, it was not bonded into the lost ranges at its south-east and north-west corners. It was certainly not in any way integrated with the south-east range, and these two structures presumably belong to separate building phases. The impression is that the south-east 'hall' range was a pre-existing structure to which the east range was added, and it may relate to a pattern of stone-built chamber blocks being added to halls, particularly from 1300.[191] The west range is close in date to the east 'gatehouse' range (Table 2), but they were not necessarily exactly contemporary, and this range appears to have been more precisely aligned with the lost south-east range (Figs. 4 and 21). These may, therefore, represent an earlier linear layout of hall and chamber arranged along the north side of the courtyard.[192] If so, this arrangement was subsequently interrupted by the addition of the gatehouse. That this was set back may reflect an intention to provide a more complex domestic plan, centred on its upper chamber. This room presumably had windows on all four sides and the plan would have allowed for the integration of further ranges enclosing an inner courtyard to the north. There is no certainty that any such ranges were built during the Middle Ages, for while the surviving buildings of the north courtyard are of uncertain dates, they are probably post-medieval.

There seems little doubt that the principal entrance to the great court lay in its south-east corner (Fig. 21) where an outer gatehouse apparently once stood (Fig. 24) – perhaps on the site of a Saxon burh-gate – and that the east range was an *inner* gatehouse. However, this interpretation of the east range presents problems and raises certain questions. Was it an inner gate as opposed to a secondary entrance? It seems unlikely that a formal gateway in this position acted as a back entrance, partly because it is almost inconceivable that public access would have been permitted to the north. It should be assumed that the east range stood between the great court and what must have been private gardens and the kitchen

[190] Kenyon, op. cit. (note 168), 156.
[191] Blair (1993), op. cit. (note 10), 15.
[192] Ibid. 16.

court, themselves presumably in turn leading to an orchard and great garden (or 'little park'), with the demesne woods beyond. Whatever the outcome, the gateway in the east range seems to have been *intended* as an inner gate leading to an inner court, whether enclosed by buildings or not: the scant documentary evidence available suggests that the planning of such courts by nobility and gentry alike was a matter of considerable sophistication.[193]

Would a gatehouse be expected to stand next to a hall? Such an arrangement does not have obvious parallels, except in conventual lodgings such as the master's chambers at St Cross Hospital,[194] or Christchurch's *porta interior juxta aula hospitium* ('the inner gate next to the guest hall'),[195] and the intention here may have been to rebuild the hall facing an inner courtyard. If so, the original idea was presumably abandoned, leaving these two buildings juxtaposed – a curious result that serves to highlight the apparent lack of consistency among a number of contemporary or near-contemporary residential layouts. Constraints of topography, effects of changing economic circumstances, the piecemeal development of pre-existing layouts, as well as the influences of changing fashions, may all have been responsible for the wide variety of surviving medieval courtyard plans.

THE STATUS OF STANTON'S MANOR HOUSE

The Stanton manor was not large or valuable – neither of which attributes should be taken as a reliable guide to the status of a seigneurial residence. For example, such criteria would not help to explain the character of the more substantial medieval houses nearby, including Sir John de Haudlo's Boarstall and Sir Warin de Lisle's Shirburn. The relationship between manorial buildings, their settings, and their attendant estates is likely to be both subtle and complex.[196] However, here – as elsewhere – its understanding is hamstrung by the fragmentary survival of evidence. Furthermore, what landscape evidence there is for manorial sites has been little studied compared to that for castles, although any distinction between manor and castle may be more apparent than real;[197] whilst many aspects of the landscape of castles have, it would seem, received 'no systematic or synthetic study'.[198]

When John de St John built his manor house at Stanton St John he was a new member of the nobility. It should be expected that this status would be reflected in the quality of the buildings, their planning and their setting but, unfortunately, almost no evidence is available with which to compare the architecture of Stanton and that of his other manor houses. Stanton's particular significance probably lay in its proximity to Oxford, where for generations the St Johns's political power had been centred. John's grandfather was buried in the presbytery of Oxford's Oseney Abbey in a tomb of some splendour,[199] and his father had been appointed constable of Oxford Castle as one of de Montfort's counsellors.[200]

[193] D. Willis (ed.), *The Estate Book of Henry de Bray of Harleston, Co. Northants. c. 1289–1340* (Camden Soc. 3rd Series, xxvii, 1916), xxiv–xxvi.

[194] P. Hopewell, *Saint Cross: England's Oldest Almshouse* (1995), 58.

[195] R. Willis, 'The Architectural History of The Conventual Buildings of the Monastery of Christ Church in Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vii (1868), 125.

[196] P. Everson, '"Delightfully Surrounded with Woods and Ponds": Field Evidence for Medieval Gardens in England', in P. Patterson (ed.), *There by Design: Field Archaeology in Parks and Gardens* (B.A.R. British Series, 267, 1998), 32.

[197] C. Coulson, *Castles in Medieval Society* (2003), 83.

[198] Everson, op. cit. (note 196), 35.

[199] L. Smith (ed.), *Leland's Itinerary*, i (1964), 124.

[200] *Cal. Patent Rolls* (1258–66), 393.

Indeed, not surprisingly, the St Johns held a hall or *hospitium* in Oxford,[201] which appears to have stood near the abbey's school in Catte Street: a school that John de St John probably attended.[202]

John de St John's buildings were of a high quality, but neither large nor standing in an obviously elaborate setting, and it seems that in 1305 he was building – or rebuilding – a relatively small but sophisticated residence close to Oxford. Whilst studying the layout and setting of this manor will remain central to any future interpretation of the inner gatehouse, it is the wider political and social world of John de St John that appears to retain the principal key to understanding these 14th-century buildings.[203]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTE

This article was submitted before the publication of the new *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in October 2004. References to *D.N.B.* should be checked against the new edition.

[201] A. Clark (ed.), *Wood's Antiquities of the City of Oxford*, i (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xv, 1889), 185.

[202] Ibid. 89 (2), 570–1; E. Gardner, 'English Nobility and Monastic Education', in J. Blair and B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and The World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (1996), 80.

[203] G. Merion-Jones et al. 'Introduction', in Merion-Jones and Jones, op. cit. (note 10), xvii; Coulson (2003), op. cit. (note 197), 3.