Appleton Manor: A 'Most Remarkable Mansion'

JAMES BOND, DAVID CLARK, JANE HARRISON and TREVOR ROWLEY

SUMMARY

This article presents the findings of a survey of Appleton Manor carried out in 2014–16. New light is shed on the remarkable survival of early medieval elements of the house, on its subsequent development, and on its moated site. The research drew upon an investigation of the estate's ownership from the Middle Ages onwards that was set alongside the findings of new architectural and archaeological surveys. Examination of the house and its grounds is the first part of a larger landscape history project on the development of Appleton.

The historical significance of Appleton Manor (Fig. 1) as a part-surviving late twelfth-century secular building is well known. It was drawn by the Lysons in 1806, by J.C. Buckler in the 1820s, and by Turner in 1851.[1] A manorial history was published in the *Victoria County History* in 1924, and the house was described in *Country Life* articles in 1919 and 1929.[2] Margaret Wood produced an architectural history in 1935, and a brief account was included in Christopher Currie's 1992 survey of the larger medieval houses in the Vale of White Horse.[3] More recently, Oxford Archaeology prepared an historic building appraisal in anticipation of proposed alterations to the building.[4] The recent revision of *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* also identified some further details.[5] The Romanesque carved work was recorded in 2010 by Ron Baxter, the research director of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture.[6]

Nevertheless, much remains to be discovered about the development of the house. Why was such a grand hall-house built here in the late twelfth century? And how did important diagnostic parts of it manage to survive for over eight centuries? After all, as Baxter commented: 'There is nothing unusual in the sculpture here, which must be dated *c*.1190–1200, except for the wholly astonishing fact of its survival in a secular context.' In addition to the importance of the actual structure, the building's location within a medieval moat adds to Appleton Manor's significance. It is one of three moated sites lying in close proximity to each other on the Corallian escarpment, an area otherwise not associated with such features.

In order to investigate these issues an informal research team was assembled in 2014 under the direction of Trevor Rowley, with the active support of the owners, Alison and Simon Jeffreys. The aim of the group was to uncover more fully the history, topography and archaeology of the manor house and its immediate surroundings. James and Tina Bond

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[1] D. and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia* (1806); Bodl. MS Top. Berks. c. 49, no. 24 and MS Top. Gen. a. 11, no. 5; T. Hudson Turner, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England from the Conquest to the End of the Thirteenth Century* (1851), p. 5 and plate 39. For the title quote: S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, 4 vols. (1848), vol. 1, p. 43.

[2] *VCH Berks*. 4, pp. 336–8; A. Marcon, 'Two Berkshire Manor Houses: Fyfield and Appleton', *Country Life*, 45 (5 April 1919), pp. 368–74; A. Oswald, 'Appleton Manor', *Country Life* (11 May 1929), p. 670.

[3] M. Wood, 'Norman Domestic Architecture', *Archaeological Journal*, 92 (1935), pp. 175–6 (and later reprints); M. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (1965), fig. 43; C.R.J. Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', *Oxoniensia*, 57 (1992), pp. 100–102.

[4] J. Munby, 'Appleton Manor, Appleton, Vale of the White Horse: Historic Buildings Assessment', unpublished Oxford Archaeology report (2000).

[5] G. Tyack et al., *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (2010), pp. 126–7.

[6] www.crbsi.ac.uk.

Fig. 1. Appleton Manor, north elevation. Photograph by David Clark.

undertook an earthwork survey of the moat, park and an adjacent field called Long Close. David Clark, Nick Hill and volunteers from the Oxfordshire Buildings Record and others examined the structure of the house. Jane Harrison and volunteers from the East Oxford Archaeology and History Project excavated test pits around the manor house. Trevor Rowley with Alison Jeffreys reviewed the historical record for the manor and its occupants.[7] This article summarises the results of the team's work.

THE PHYSICAL CONTEXT by JAMES BOND and TREVOR ROWLEY

Appleton is located some 8 kilometres (5 miles) south-west of Oxford, near the crest of the low Corallian escarpment extending westwards towards Faringdon, which here rises to about 90 metres OD (295 feet) (Fig. 2). This escarpment separates the upper Thames valley from the Vale of White Horse. The north-western boundary of the parish follows the Thames. Appleton lay within the county of Berkshire until 1974, when changes in local government transferred it to Oxfordshire. The civil and ecclesiastical parish includes the village of Appleton and the smaller hamlet of Eaton (to the north); for a brief period in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the ancient parish also included the hamlet of Bessels Leigh (to the east).[8] The whole of Appleton village is underlain by the Lower Corallian Beds, which in this area equate with the sequence of strata known as Lower Calcareous Grit. These consist of

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7   Dan Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory visited the house but found no timbers likely to be suitable for dendro-dating.

8   F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England, Vol. 1: Southern England* (1979), pp. 14–15. Changes were made to the parish of Appleton with Eaton in 2015 when Tubney was transferred from Fyfield parish.
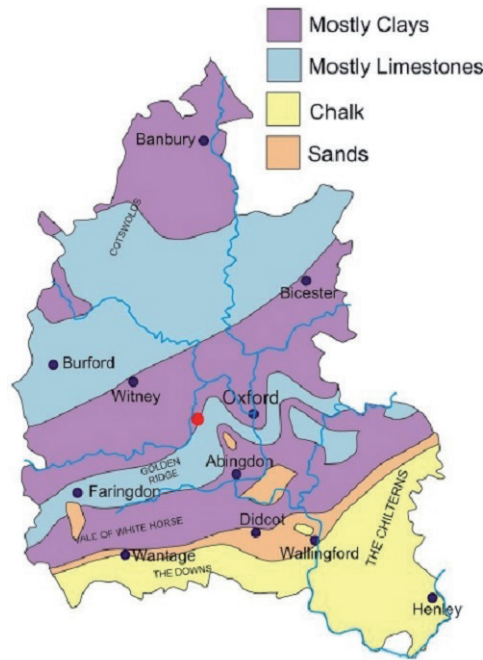
Fig. 2. Geological map. Image from oxfordshiregeologytrust.org.uk/geology.

variable, complex layers of sand, loamy clay, gritstone and pseudo-conglomerate with natural mudstone concretions known as 'doggers'.[9]

The development of the village awaits detailed study, but a few preliminary comments can be offered on its plan as far as it relates to the site of the manor house. The present village, as recorded on nineteenth-century maps (Fig. 3), has the form of a nucleated polyfocal settlement, commonly occurring elsewhere in west Oxfordshire and north Berkshire.[10]

There are several clues to suggest that the plan of Appleton village may have been radically altered at periods antedating the earliest available detailed maps. Today the parish church and moated manor house stand together in relative seclusion from the rest of the village, but this may not always have been the case. It is striking that, while there is now no public road providing direct access between Appleton and the neighbouring hamlet of Bessels Leigh, the course of the present road entering Appleton from the direction of Longworth is almost directly in line with a public footpath heading eastwards from the churchyard which meets a vestigial lane at Bessels Leigh. If, as seems probable, this was once a continuous through route, it would have passed through Appleton immediately south of the manor house and church. Today the direct alignment is discontinued to the east of the southern green, but two of the roads which now issue eastwards from this green follow lines of curvature which suggest that both may represent diversions, pushing public traffic further away from the manor house. To the south Park Lane curves around the edge of the park for some 250 metres before terminating in a cul-de-sac alongside the former Tyntens Manor. There are the vestiges of several fishponds along the line of the Osse Brook, to the south of Tyntens Manor, and it

[9]   Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Sheet 236, 1935–6 revision; W.J. Arkell, *The Geology of Oxford* (1947), pp. 88–92; and see report on test-pits by Jane Harrison below.
[10]   J. Bond, 'Medieval Oxfordshire Villages and their Topography: A Preliminary Discussion', in D. Hooke (ed.), *Medieval Villages*, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph, 5 (1985), pp. 101–23; see especially fig. 9.7, where Stanford-in-the-Vale provides a close parallel.

seems probable that there was an elaborate water management scheme here linked at least to Tyntens' moat. It also seems probable that the park originally extended as far as the Osse Brook. The main road through the village initially turns on its exit from the green as if to approach the manor house and church from the south-west, but after following that course for some 90 metres then veers sharply away between the Plough Inn and the present entrance drive to the manor to follow a more northerly alignment into the corner of the northern green. The curve in the property boundary of Manor Barn (number 191 on the enclosure map) and Eaton Road is mirrored in the property boundaries running to the west and could well represent curved strips taken out of open fields to extend the village or replace part of the village from around the manor house.

The sequence of Ordnance Survey maps shows that, from before the 1870s up to 1913 and beyond, the approach to the manor house from the southern portion of the village led off from the sharp bend in the Eaton Road some 60 metres north-east of the Plough Inn, following a gently curved course through the wooded part of the grounds to approach the front of the house obliquely from the west. It may have been designed to produce a surprise view of the house as it emerged from the woodland. By 1945 this entry to the grounds had been replaced, shifting a short distance north-westward to a new set of gate-piers giving access to a straight gravelled drive. This realignment of the drive coincided with the extensive refurbishment of the house undertaken in the 1920s. Part of the previous drive can still be traced as a hollow way through the woodland.

The earlier route from the south-west is not shown on the 1831 enclosure map, and may itself not have been created before the north-western arm of the moat was filled in. The only entry route shown in 1831 is a straight trackway from the north-west, passing through a large opening in the middle of the range of former farm buildings (which then extended much further to the south-west), and continuing directly over the moat towards the centre of the house front. The surviving portion of the farm buildings, now converted to domestic use and known as Manor Barn, appears to date from the seventeenth century. While there is no obvious external evidence that any part of this range is of medieval origin, it may preserve something of the outline of the medieval farm complex. An outer unmoated farmyard court and an inner moated domestic compound can be paralleled in many other places. The dovecote listed in the inquisition *post mortem* of William Fitzwaryn in 1435[11] probably lay somewhere within this area, along with the barn called 'Dowery Berne' which in the assignment of dower to William's widow Elizabeth in the following year was described as being next to 'le Colnerhows' (*culverhouse*, or dovecote).[12]

The wish for seclusion as a mark of social distinction often led to the blocking or diversion of rights of way and the removal of dwellings which infringed upon the privacy of the occupants of a manor house, thereby making way for the creation or expansion of a park.[13] The Appleton enclosure map names the southern part of the manor house grounds, comprising a little over 4 acres (1.6 hectares), as 'The Park', and the later nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps show this area planted up with scattered trees. It is not known precisely when the park was created, but it appears typical of many small pieces of post-medieval parkland created to afford greater privacy to the big house. It may be significant that the original village of Bessels

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[11] TNA, PRO: C 139/73/11, mm. 1–2.
[12] *Cal. IPM*, vol. 24, no. 722.
[13] Well-known Oxfordshire examples include Nuneham Courtenay and Middleton Stoney where, in both cases, almost the entire settlement was removed and replaced with a new estate village outside the park: M. Batey, 'Nuneham Courtenay: An Oxfordshire 18th-Century Deserted Village', *Oxoniensia*, 33 (1968), pp. 108–24; E. Leggatt, 'The Development of the Medieval and Post-Medieval Landscape', in S. Rahtz and T. Rowley (eds.), *Middleton Stoney: Excavation and Survey in a North Oxfordshire Parish, 1970–1982*, Oxford University Department for External Studies (1984), pp. 11–30. On a smaller scale, private grounds were extended over parts of the villages at Bletchingdon, Chesterton and Great Tew: *VCH Oxon*. 6, pp. 58–9, 92–4; *VCH Oxon*. 11, pp. 225–7.

Fig. 3. *Appleton village on the 1831 inclosure map. Key: 190: Appleton Manor; 170: Tyntens Manor; 229: Manor Farm.*

Leigh was almost certainly moved in a similar, but more radical fashion. The present hamlet lies about 500 metres to the east of the isolated church of St Laurence which sits in an area of parkland that surrounded the former Bessels Leigh House. This imparking could have taken place when the manors were held in tandem by the Fettiplaces or the Lenthalls during the sixteenth or seventeenth century (see below).

Appleton Manor is distinguished from most other medieval manor houses along the Corallian ridge by its moat. Although commonly found in Oxfordshire, the comparative scarcity of moats on the Corallian escarpment reflects difficulties in creating a water-holding ditch on more permeable subsoils.[14] In addition to the moat at Appleton Manor, an 'L'-shaped pond around the plot numbered 170 on the enclosure map shows that Tyntens Manor was also moated (Fig. 3).[15] No visible trace of this moat survives, though it lay only 200 metres south-east of the principal manor house. The moat at Tyntens is shown as partially extant on the enclosure map of 1831, but had disappeared by 1876, when the first edition of the OS 25 inch map was published. During the building of the northern section of Clare Cottage, which now occupies the site of the former Tyntens manor house, it was necessary to dig footings almost two metres deep, presumably to counter the silty infill of the former moat.[16] There is another moat at Tubney Manor, some 600 metres to the south-east. The localized occurrence of a band

14   For Oxfordshire moated sites: J. Bond, 'The Oxford Region in the Middle Ages', in G. Briggs et al. (eds.), *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*, Oxford University Department for External Studies (1986), pp. 135–59, especially pp. 150–1 and map 17.
15   This moat is also specifically noted in the enclosure award.
16   In the enclosure award Tyntens Manor is recorded as 'The Lower Farm House in two tenements with yards, gardens and moat': BRO, Appleton enclosure award (1831): Q/RDC/56; Appleton enclosure map (1831): Q/RDC/56B; personal communication from Alvar Swainton.

St Laurence's
Church

APPLETON MANOR

| | | | | | |
0   10   20   30   40 metres

1 Location of test pits

MOAT

Modern
Garden
Earthworks

Line of drive in 19th century

Realigned drive, early 1920s

N

Approximate outline
of house in late 16th century
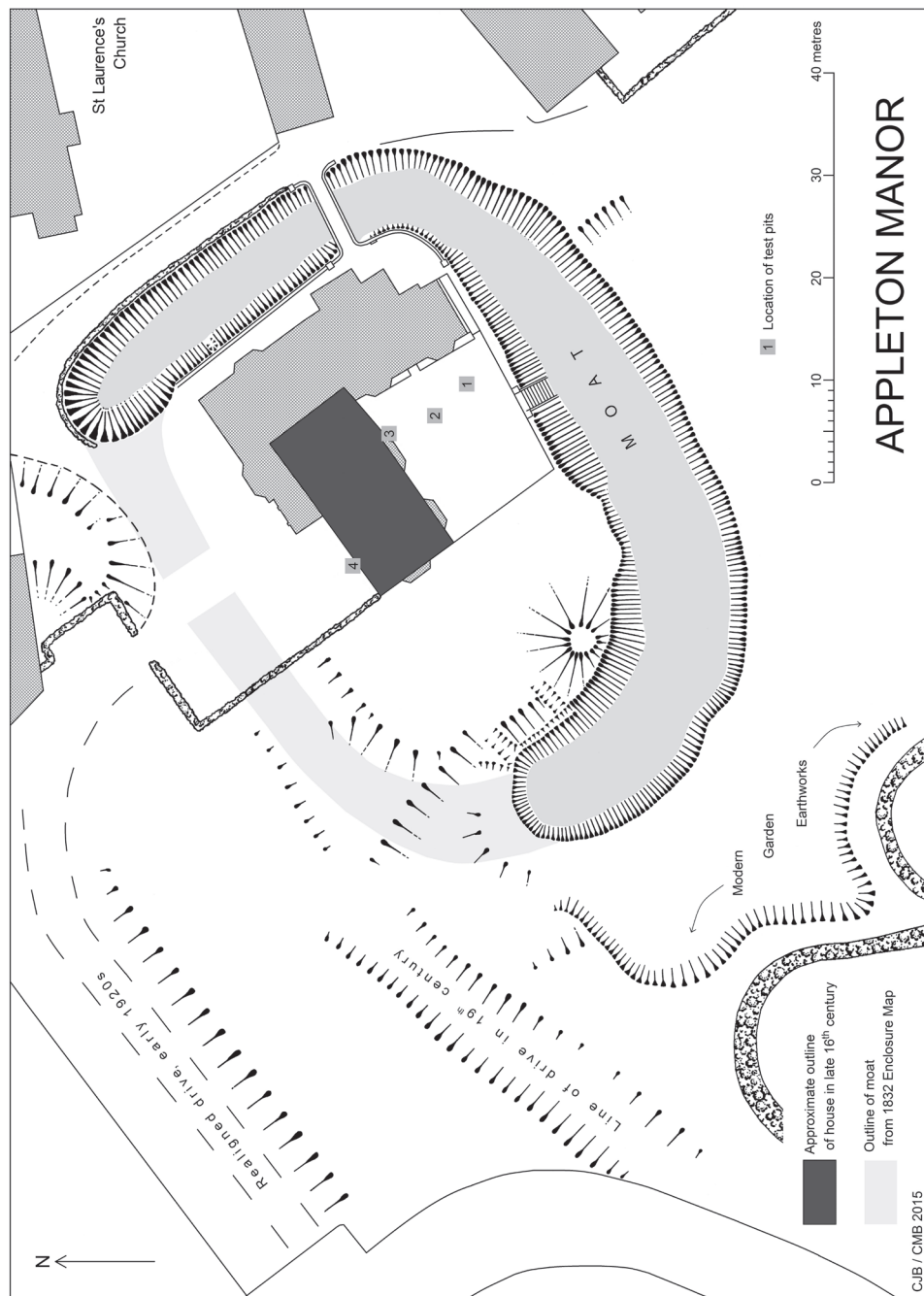
Outline of moat
from 1832 Enclosure Map

CJB / CMB 2015

Fig. 4. Appleton Manor: the moat and adjoining earthworks. Plan by James and Tina Bond.

of clay within the Corallian beds along the Osse Brook provided conditions suitable for moat construction within this very limited area.

At Appleton Manor a wide, deep moat is still prominent around the north-east, south-east and south-west sides of the building. The outline of this surviving portion is clearly depicted on larger-scale Ordnance Survey maps published since 1876. The remainder of the moat must have been filled in around the middle of the nineteenth century, since it is shown in its entirety on the enclosure map of 1831, surrounding a rectangular island with rounded corners, and with a bridge or causeway entrance in the middle of its north-western side (Fig. 3).

The 1831 enclosure map records the moat and its island as covering 3 roods and 27 perches (just over 0.3 hectares). The majority of single moats inclose an area of between half an acre and two acres (0.2–0.8 hectares), with occasional examples extending up to five acres (2 hectares) or more, so the Appleton moat is towards the lower end of the regular size-range. However, the earthworks themselves are comparatively formidable, the moat varying from 8 metres to 14 metres wide and about 3 metres deep, declining to 2.5 metres towards its present western extremity due to the natural fall of the land. It is certainly among the more impressive moated sites in the vicinity of Oxford.

The majority of moated sites occupied level or gently sloping plateau surfaces, above flood level, fed by springs or groundwater seepages, and the Appleton Manor moat falls into this
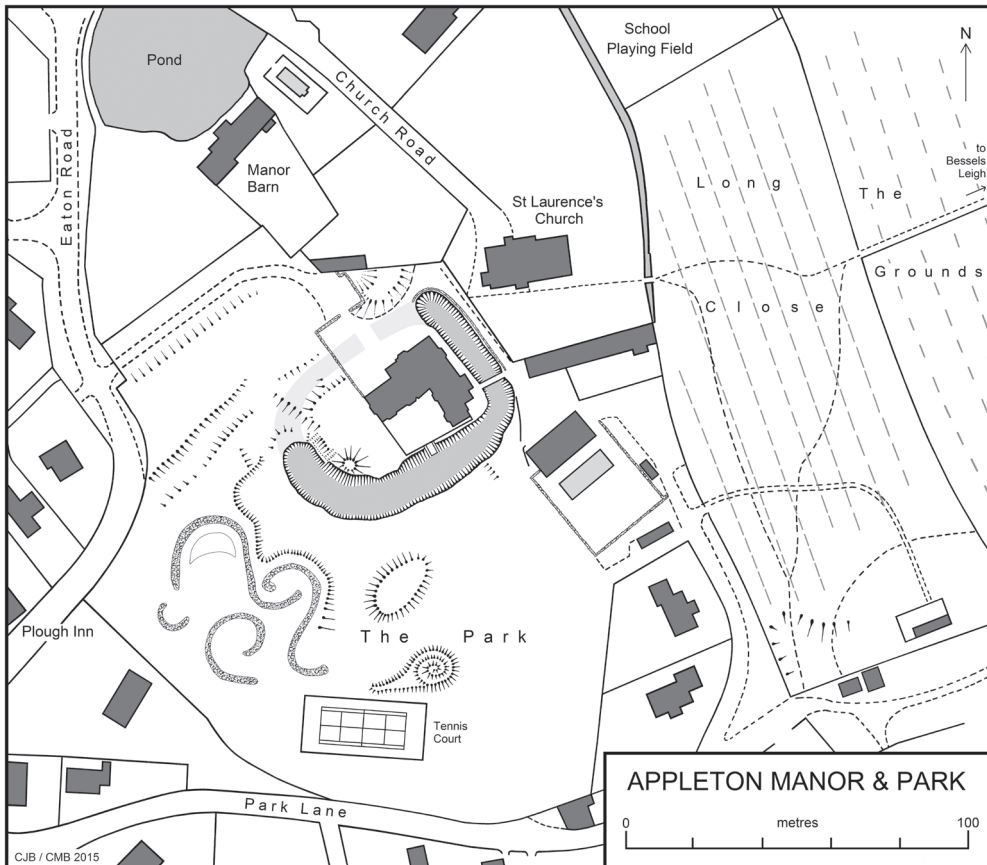

Fig. 5. *Appleton Manor and its park: earthworks and landscaping features. Plan by James and Tina Bond.*

category.[17] A spring is, in fact, marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1876 at the eastern corner of the moat, immediately south of the churchyard. The supply from this spring clearly fluctuates considerably. The enclosure map portrays the moat as entirely water-filled, but all editions of the Ordnance Survey show it as dry. In February 2014, after an extremely wet winter, it was filled to a considerable depth, and remained so for some weeks, although the level had fallen a little by the time of the survey at the end of March. On subsequent visits in drier conditions the whole of the moat floor has been exposed, revealing a shallow 'V'-shaped profile.

The earthwork survey found no evidence for the former existence of any subsidiary moats or fishponds at Appleton Manor itself. However, the 1831 map does show a small 'L'-shaped pond immediately to the north-west (Fig. 3, within the land parcel numbered 191), which is not shown on later maps. This is now difficult to discern on the ground, but the possibility that it did form part of a secondary moat or a fishpond cannot be ruled out.

Since the domestic ranges of Appleton Manor remain standing, the below-ground archaeology of the house itself is likely to remain largely inaccessible. However, the documentary and archaeological evidence from other Oxfordshire sites suggests that a range of subsidiary domestic, service and agricultural buildings and other features would also have been present at Appleton, either elsewhere within the moat or outside it.[18] The earliest portion of the existing house occupied the approximate centre of the island. Later additions extended the house further towards the north-eastern and south-eastern arms of the moat, leaving open space within the western part of the island, though it is possible that there was once a chamber block here. This area is now, and perhaps always has been, a garden area. The relatively small size of the island makes it unlikely that any subsidiary agricultural buildings also lay within it, so the associated medieval farmyard probably lay at some distance from the house, perhaps in the vicinity of the present Manor Barn to the north-west.

Planting and paving had obliterated any earlier features within the eastern half of the moat island, including that portion of the infilled arm of the moat itself. However, to the west of the hedged forecourt and paved area slight earthworks were recorded, including a shallow depression representing the north-western part of the infilled moat, somewhat disrupted by later disturbances. The most prominent feature was a distinct rounded mound within the angle of the south-western corner of the island. It is remotely possible that this represents the base of a small corner tower, examples of which occasionally occur in association with curtain walls in quadrilateral moated castles and fortified manor houses from the thirteenth century and later.

The survey produced no evidence for the period of origin of the moat, and the question whether it ante-dated or post-dated the earliest part of the existing house remains unresolved. The unusual width and depth of the Appleton moat compared with many other Oxfordshire and Berkshire examples, together with its compact perimeter, might imply rather more of a defensive motive than usual, and this might accord with a relatively early origin contemporary with the twelfth-century house; but this cannot be confirmed. It is also possible that more recent work has deepened and widened the moat to create a more impressive appearance.[19]

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[17]   The nearest source of flowing water to Appleton Manor is a narrow canalized drain passing immediately east of the churchyard, separating Long Close from the Park, and passing within about 43 metres of the moat at its nearest point. No evidence was found for any connection linking this drain with the moat. The main local watercourse, the Osse Brook, lies further away, some 240 metres to the south-east, where it is about 4.6 metres beneath the level of the moat; if the moat was ever to be fed from this source it would have required an artificial leat to be taken off the brook about 1.5 kilometres upstream. Again, there is no indication that this was the case.

[18]   P.D.A. Harvey, *A Medieval Oxfordshire Village: Cuxham, 1240–1400*, OHS, 2nd series (1965); idem (ed.), *Manorial Records of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, circa 1200–1359*, ORS, 50 (1976); P. Page et al., *Barentin's Manor: Excavations of the Moated Manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire, 1976–9*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 24 (2005).

[19]   Although Appleton Manor moat appears to be significantly wider than that at Tyntens, the dimensions of the extant portion of Tubney Manor moat are roughly similar.

No traces of earlier village buildings were found in the park. Although some portions remaining under grass were very slightly uneven, no recognizable pattern could be discerned, and the surface irregularities were so slight as to be unsurveyable. The dominant visible earthworks are of recent origin and connected with the use of the area as an extended garden: an irregularly-shaped low grass terrace facing east which fronts an extensive swirling pattern of yew and beech hedges established since 2009; a large slightly raised oval area planted with trees; and a higher circular mount with a narrow terraced spiral path up to the summit raised in 2010–11.[20]

MANORIAL HISTORY by TREVOR ROWLEY

Abingdon abbey held an estate at Appleton in the later Anglo-Saxon period but apparently lost possession in the ninth century, possibly because of territorial disruption caused by Danish raids.[21] Domesday Book records that there were two estates centred on Appleton, each assessed at five hides. One of these, later called Appleton manor, was held by Haldane from the king in 1066 but by 1086 had passed to Miles Crispin, subsequently forming part of the honour of Wallingford, to which it owed suit. Miles Crispin's tenant here in 1086 was Richard fitz Reinfrid.

The other manor, later known as Tyntens, was held by Alwin from the king in 1066 and had passed into the hands of Bishop Odo of Bayeux before 1082.[22] It had a separate complicated tenurial history although from time to time the two were held by the same owner. In the mid twelfth century it was held by the Visdelou family, who also held Rycote (in Great Haseley parish).[23] Presumably the manor took its name from the Tynten family who held it in the fourteenth century. In 1388–9 John and Elizabeth Tynten had an order revoked by which their lands in Appleton had been seized by Chief Justice Sir Robert Tresillian.[24] At the time of the 1381 poll tax, when Tresillian was recorded as the largest landholder in Appleton, he appears to have acquired a dubious interest in Tyntens Manor, perhaps in the 1350s and 1360s when he was a JP in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.[25] Tresillian was executed in 1387, but conflict over Tyntens continued into the fifteenth century and in 1411 John Tynten alleged that Sir Peter Bessells of Bessels Leigh had assaulted him 'after forcibly entering his place at Appleton in the dead of night with a band of armed followers'.[26] In the early sixteenth century the Fettiplace family obtained Bessels Leigh through marriage and resumed claims on Tyntens,[27] and in 1564 they took over Appleton Manor itself. In 1639 it appears that the rector of Appleton, William Dickinson, was using the Tyntens manor house as the rectory house. Tyntens is later recorded simply as a farmhouse and in the later eighteenth century it was held by the Southbys, who also owned Appleton Manor. The medieval manor house was replaced with an 'Elizabethan house', which was demolished in the twentieth century.

A third manor in Appleton village, called Quarrelstead, first appears in 1400–1 when the demesne of Roger Quarel, deceased, is mentioned,[28] and in *c.*1406 it was bought by Sir

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[20] Personal communication from Alison Jeffreys.

[21] M. Gelling, *The Early Charters of the Thames Valley* (1979), pp. 23, 35.

[22] P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Berkshire* (1979), pp. 33, 65.

[23] *VCH Oxon*. 18, p. 246.

[24] TNA: PRO, SC 8/249/12401.

[25] C.C. Fenwick (ed.), *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, Part 1, Bedfordshire to Lincolnshire* (1998), p. 37. Robert Tresillian and his wife Emma were assessed at 6s. 8d. and eleven of their tenants between 8d. and 4d. each. Richard Waryn and his wife Alicia, who were assessed at 2s. 6d., are the only possible holders of Appleton Manor recorded in this taxation.

[26] TNA: PRO, C 1/16/36.

[27] Ibid. C 1/608/22.

[28] *VCH Berks*. 4, p. 339. It seems probable that Quarrelstead manor was created out of engrossed freehold land, a practice that was common in this area in the fourteenth century. Such late arrivals often began as peasant

Thomas Wykeham of Broughton Castle.[29] In the seventeenth century the manor was sold and the proceeds used towards the foundation of Pembroke College, Oxford.[30]

Owners and Occupiers

It is possible to trace the fluctuating fortunes of Appleton manor from the eleventh to the twenty-first century. What is less clear is exactly who was living in the manor house (Appleton Manor) at any one time as on several occasions it was in the possession of a tenant or under-tenant. No one family maintained proprietorship for much more than two hundred years, but there are at least three occasions when the owners updated the house to a high, fashionable standard. The occupants for the most part were county gentry, some with close links to the court and to parliament. Their fortunes waxed and waned and this is reflected in the story of the manor house.

There is nothing exceptional in the early history of tenure of Appleton manor which would explain the presence of such a fine early medieval house here, except perhaps its links with the fitz Reinfrid family. The Domesday tenant of the estate, Richard fitz Reinfrid (d. *c*.1115), also held the adjacent estate of Eaton, in the parish of Appleton, as well as Alkerton in Oxfordshire and Chearsley, Draycott and Ickford in Buckinghamshire. Richard came from Bournainville (Eure) in Upper Normandy, and it is possible that he dwelt in Appleton, as he had an under-tenant occupying his French estate.[31] Richard was wealthy enough to endow the abbeys of Bec in Normandy and Abingdon with land and tithes, including those of Appleton church.[32] Subsequently one branch of Richard's descendants lived in Appleton as the *caput* of their estates.[33] On Richard's death one of his sons, Hugh de Appleton, inherited Appleton and the other Reinfrid estates in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.[34] Hugh also confirmed his father's monastic endowments in Berkshire and Normandy.[35]

It is generally agreed that the earliest features at Appleton Manor – the north portal and service doorways – date from the 1190s, suggesting that it was built by Hugh's son, Richard de Appleton, or his grandson Thomas (d. before 1209). Thomas was succeeded by Geoffrey de Appleton who forfeited Appleton together with his other manors in 1215 for participating in the revolt against King John. Geoffrey was still alive in 1217, when he had letters of safe conduct to parley with the Earl Marshall, but he was dead by 1218.[36] The Crown nominated Roger de Haya as lord of Appleton, but in 1218 there was a dispute involving Geoffrey's heiress, a ward to Walter de Tywa, who appeared to be in possession of the estate. The Crown retained a reversionary interest in Appleton manor for the next two centuries[37] but by 1235 it was back in the hands of Geoffrey's heir, Thomas de Appleton. In 1269 Thomas conveyed the manor to Denise de Stokes and the long Appleton family association with Appleton came to an end.[38]

In 1293 Denise was sharing proprietorship of Appleton with her son Robert, who was also the first recorded rector of Appleton. Henry III gave four fallow bucks from Bernwood

accumulations with successful peasants becoming gentry; they were also targets for upper-class acquisition, which seems to have happened in this case: Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of the White Horse', p. 85.

[29]   www.historyofparliament online.org/volume/1558-1603/member/little-francis-1631, accessed November 2015.

[30]   Personal communication from J.M. Evans. South Lawn on Netherton Road has tentatively been identified as the site of Quarrelstead.

[31]   K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People* (1999), p. 164.

[32]   S.N. Vaughn, *Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan* (1987), p. 168; H.E. Salter, 'Two Deeds about the Abbey of Bec', *Economic History Review*, 40 (1925), pp. 73–8.

[33]   *VCH Berks.* 4, p. 336.

[34]   Ibid. This scattered grouping of manors appears to have remained together under the same lord until the early fourteenth century.

[35]   Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 164.

[36]   *VCH Oxon.* 9, pp. 44–53.

[37]   *VCH Berks.* 4, p. 337.

[38]   Ibid.

forest to Robert de Stokes in June 1270.[39] This reference to deer could imply the presence of a manorial deer park, but though the area around the manor has traditionally been called 'the park', there is no evidence suggesting that there was ever a medieval park on this site.[40]

On Robert's death in 1310 the manor passed into the hands of Giles de la Mote by royal grant (in the absence of a male heir). Giles was Edward II's falconer, designated a king's yeoman and groom of the king's chamber.[41] In 1309 Giles de la Mote had been sent to the court of Robert de Béthune, Count of Flanders with a writ issued by the king introducing him in conventional terms as 'our dear valet'.[42] Giles de la Mote's son Richard was rector of Appleton from 1324 to c.1343 and became lord of Appleton on his father's death in 1334. This arrangement of joint tenure of lordship and rectory found at Appleton in the fourteenth century was an unusual one. Although Richard de la Mote died without a male heir, the extended de la Mote family maintained an interest in the estate for almost two centuries.

During the fourteenth century, several other families were involved with Appleton manor. In 1340, James and Joan de Wodestoke were recorded as being in possession of the manor; James was seneschal to the Duke of Cornwall and served alongside Sir William Shareshill, later Lord Chief Justice. In the same year Thomas de Woodstock granted the reversion of the manor to Shareshill, whose interest in the estate seems to have been transitory.

By 1375 the manor had reverted to Richard's sister, Margaret Fitzwaryn, although the poll tax of 1381 suggests that Richard and Alicia Waryn were the actual occupants of the manor house.[43] In 1398 Margaret's husband, John Fitzwaryn, was accused together with the late parson, William Somerford, of taking an acre of manorial land worth 4d. a year, dedicating it and burying many corpses there without licence. Furthermore John and the next rector, John Brugge, had taken the profits from these burials for more than sixteen years.[44] Appleton remained in the hands of the Fitzwaryns for over a century. A survey carried out on the death of Margaret's son, William Fitzwaryn, in 1435 suggests that the estate suffered from agrarian difficulties typical of the early fifteenth century:

> Appleton, the manor, with the advowson of the church, held of the king in chief as one quarter knight's fee. There is a site worth nothing yearly; 50 acres land, each acre worth 3d. yearly; a dovecote worth 18d. yearly; 6 messuages and 2 cottages worth nothing yearly; 6 acres wood, worth nothing yearly; 40 acres pasture, each acre worth 2d. yearly; and 46s. assize rent payable at Lady Day and Michaelmas equally.[45] [Total: £3 6s. 8d.]

In 1436 William's widow Elizabeth was assigned dower in the form of 'a chamber at the end of the hall of Appleton manor on the east side, a small house called 'Deyhows', a barn called 'Dowery Berne', a stable called 'le Middylstable', together with eight tenements and various parcels of land.[46] The 'chamber' may have been over the service area at the east end of the manor house, but there would not have been room within the moated area for the 'Deyhows', barn and stable. William Fitzwaryn may have been in financial difficulty, as in 1422 he appeared twice before Richard Whittington, Mayor of the Staple of Westminster, firstly as a debtor owing £500 and then as a creditor owed £200.[47]

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[39] *Cal. Close, 1268–72*, p. 201; E. Kitson, 'Notes on Some Rectors of Appleton', *Oxoniensia*, 26/27 (1961–2), p. 341.

[40] The large park depicted on the 1761 Rocque map of Berkshire extending as far as the Osse Brook was probably of post-medieval origin (TNA, PRO: MPZ 1/1).

[41] TNA, PRO: C 241/46/163.

[42] J.C. Davies, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II* (1967), p. 591.

[43] Fenwick (ed.), *The Poll Taxes*, p. 37. The Waryns were assessed at only 2s. 6d. compared to Robert Tresillian's 6s. 8d.

[44] *Cal. Inq. Misc.* vol. 6, p. 379.

[45] *Cal. Inq. p.m.* vol. 24, no. 426.

[46] Ibid. no. 722.

[47] TNA, C 241/225/51; C 241/225/46.

William's daughter Alice, wife of John Gerald, inherited the estate in 1435 and died in 1446, when the manor was valued at the slightly higher figure of £5 a year.[48] During the second half of the fifteenth century during the Wars of the Roses the descent and occupancy of the manor becomes confusing, with a number of parties laying claim to the estate. By 1460 the lordship of Appleton had passed to William Petyt by female heirs of Margaret Fitzwaryn. In that year Petyt, a Yorkist, was dispossessed of his estates and subsequently amongst those with a claim to Appleton was Thomas Denton.

At the end of the fifteenth century the manor was held by John Denton of Appleton (d. 1497). The Dentons were substantial landowners in Berkshire and Oxfordshire and Sir Thomas Denton (d. 1558) was a dealer in monastic land, including estates of Abingdon Abbey, at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries.[49] The Denton family's main seat was at Caversfield, near Bicester and it is not clear if any of the family resided permanently at Appleton during this period, although at least two Dentons were described as being 'of Appleton'. The manor remained with the Dentons until 1564 when John's grandson John Denton conveyed Appleton to his step-brother John Fettiplace.[50] Fettiplace (1527–80) was a Member of Parliament for Berkshire in 1558 and was appointed high sheriff of Berkshire in 1568 and 1577. He has a fine effigial monument in St Laurence Church, Appleton. The Fettiplaces were a widely dispersed and territorially acquisitive family with particular interests in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, but also holding land further afield in the Midlands and the South-West.[51]

Under the Fettiplaces a major restoration of Appleton Manor house took place, when the building was reconstructed and the grand northern porch added.[52] The Norman hall was raised to two storeys, the ground floor divided into two and a massive fireplace inserted; a panelled dining room was put in on the first floor. During this period Appleton Manor appears to have been used in conjunction with the nearby country house at Bessels Leigh, Appleton acting largely as a rather grand annexe or overflow for the larger house, although there does seem to have been a degree of flexibility in the arrangements. For instance, Sir Richard Fettiplace (1564–1615), son of Bessels Fettiplace (d. 1609), made his home first at Bessels Leigh and then moved to Appleton.

The best-known occupant during this period was Richard's wife Elinor Fettiplace (b. c.1570), who moved into Appleton Manor after her marriage to Sir Richard in 1589, when she was about nineteen years old. She was installed in the manor house along with her husband's younger brothers and sisters. Elinor was the daughter of Sir Henry Poole of Sapperton, Gloucestershire, who was one of a key group of royal courtiers, and Elinor herself had connections with many leading contemporary figures including Sir Walter Raleigh, Robert Cecil and Francis Bacon. Elinor is remembered chiefly for her household book (dated 1604 on the flyleaf), which consists of a collection of recipes, remedies and housekeeping tips, remarkable for its detailed account of Jacobean country-house life. She would regularly have been responsible for feeding a household of twenty to thirty members, including servants, retainers and dependants as well as her in-laws and her own two sons and three daughters. Elinor's recipes included mutton with claret wine and Seville orange, poached trout, spinach tart and sweet creams, custards and cheesecakes. Her recipe for meringues, called 'white bisket bread', predated the earliest published French reference by more than fifty years. Apart from a few imported luxury goods the household was self sufficient, reliant on the produce of the garden, dairy, orchards, demesne farmland and fishery.[53] Elinor produced her own ink,

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[48]   *Cal. Inq. p.m.* vol. 26, no. 371.
[49]   historyofpaliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/denton-thomas-1515-1558 (accessed May 2017).
[50]   *VCH Berks.* 4, pp. 337–8.
[51]   Material relating to the Fettiplaces' tenure of Appleton Manor is based on H. Spurling, *Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book* (1986) and 'Elinor Fettiplace', *ODNB*. The Fettiplaces held thirty-seven manors in Berkshire alone.
[52]   See below, 'Architectural Survey'.
[53]   *VCH Berks.* 4, p. 335.

soap, toothpaste, cosmetics, flea powder, rat poison and weed killer. Her chronicle contains thirty-six ways of dressing wounds, more than forty remedies for failing eyesight, plasters and potions for stomach ailments, sixteen cough mixtures, and eleven cures for a bad back and seven for insomnia. On the death of her husband in 1615, Elinor left Appleton to live on her dower lands at Sapperton, where she died *c*.1647. The Fettiplaces enjoyed a reputation for philanthropy and in 1604 Richard and his father, Bessels Fettiplace, founded and endowed Appleton school. Richard also endowed a charity for the distribution of bread and relief to the poor of Appleton parish, which survived unchanged until the 1920s.

In 1634 Elinor's son John Fettiplace sold Appleton and Bessels Leigh to William Lenthall of Burford, Speaker of the House of Commons. Before that in 1616 Richard's sister, Elizabeth Fettiplace, had married John Southby and probably moved into the manor house, thus beginning the Southby family's association with Appleton Manor that lasted for over two hundred and fifty years. In 1662 John's grandson Robert was living at the Manor, when it was recorded as having eight hearths, the highest number in Appleton.[54] Robert died in 1669 and was buried at Appleton. Successive members of the Southby family continued to lease the manor house until 1772, when Robert Southby of Bedford Place, Bloomsbury, purchased the manors of Appleton and Tyntens from John and Elizabeth Cooke. The Southbys maintained a London property, where they appear to have spent much of their time, and Robert was viewed as an absentee landlord by his tenants.[55] He was responsible for selling off parts of Appleton manor and was involved in the early stages of the enclosure of the parish's common land and open fields. Robert died without direct heirs in 1824 and the manor passed to his nephew Robert James Southby, a minor. Enclosure took place during Robert's minority, when the Appleton Manor estate still measured about 250 acres. In the enclosure award the manor house appeared as, 'site of the mansion house and offices with the pleasure garden, moat'. The former Tyntens Manor (Lower Farm House) also had about 250 acres attached to it and was owned by Robert James's brother Richard. In the 1830s a stable and walled garden were added, but apart from minor alterations and the addition of some outbuildings, including a conservatory.

Appleton Manor remained substantially unaltered throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. Robert James was resident at the Manor (with a single servant) in 1841, but his wife died that year and afterwards he left Appleton permanently. From then on the manor house was leased to a succession of tenants and at the time of the 1851 census only the gardener's family was in residence. Amongst later occupants was the Reverend J.G. Cohen, vicar of Northmoor, who was resident in 1877. Robert James Southby died in 1866 and the estate passed to his son Robert Southby. Finally, in 1881 Robert sold the manor house with its remaining land to Mrs Weaving, whose husband John was an Oxford corn dealer. The Weavings were resident until at least 1894; after that there were a number of different tenants and at the time of the 1901 census the Manor was recorded as unoccupied.

The Reverend C.F. Reeks, former vicar of Monmouth, bought the house, park and gardens in 1912 from Mrs Weaving's trustees; the remainder of the surviving estate stayed in the hands of the trustees. The next and last major documented structural changes to the house came after it was bought by an American, Mrs Katherine Timpson, in 1923.[56] In 1924 Mrs Timpson hired the architectural partnership of Blow and Billerey to remodel and extend the house and to landscape the gardens. Detmar Blow was a well-known architect who worked

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[54] In 1664 Bessels Leigh manor house was taxed on 27 hearths: TNA, PRO: E 179/243/26, pt 2, f. 114.

[55] M. Morris, 'The Southbys of Appleton', *Appleton with Eaton, Researches of the Appleton with Eaton History Group,* 1.1 (2013), pp. 2–10.

[56] Katherine Timpson was the daughter of John Henry Livingston. The Livingstons were a politically and socially prominent family from Clermont, Hudson River. Robert R. Livingston helped draft the American Declaration of Independence and the family later acquired extensive estates in the United States and Scotland. Katherine inherited the Clermont estate from her grandfather in 1895. Personal communication from Michael Livingston.

in the Arts and Crafts tradition and had undertaken several major building design and redesign projects in Britain and continental Europe. Although by 1924 Blow was employed as estates manager to the second duke of Westminster, he must have had some involvement in the redesign of the manor house as his signature appears on at least one of the plans for the new work.[57] The rebuilding of the 1920s involved the addition of a new south-east block, the remodelling of existing parts of the north-east corner and the addition of new bay windows on all sides of the house. It was the Blow and Billerey work which gave the manor its present form.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY by DAVID CLARK

Exterior

The north elevation of Appleton Manor (Fig.1) gives some idea of the complexity of the building.[58] To the left (east) side of the porch is the rebuilding in 1924 by Blow and Billerey. Slightly to the right of centre is the porch, the lower storey of which is in roughly coursed limestone – mostly oolitic – with some iron-bearing stone. There are ashlar quoins to the north-east corner, but not to the north-west. Its east and west walls are 584 mm (23 inches) thick and have splayed arrow-slit windows. Straight-joints in the stonework show it was added on to a pre-existing structure. The front doorway is probably early nineteenth century and the door itself appears to be early twentieth-century in date.

The upper floors of the porch have close-studded timber framing and were jettied on three sides – parts of the supporting brackets are exposed. The studs are 165–178 mm (6½–7 inches) wide, with 14-inch centres, and are tenoned into the jetty bressummer and the wall-plate, each with two pegs. The bressummers have double ovolo mouldings, although the east beam had been roughly hacked back by about 19 mm (¾ in), probably when the adjacent wing was added. The top of a jowled post supporting one of the jetty-brackets is visible in the south-west corner.

Off-centre on the north elevation is an oriel window, supported by a pair of decorated brackets. It has five lights, with ovolo-moulded sills and mullions. On the west face of the porch are two small modern windows, but chamfered studs and a single empty mortice for a bracket indicate that there was formerly a three-light oriel window at first floor level.

On the east face, a two-light (blocked) window is visible internally, the ovolo-moulded wooden mullion and frame of which survives in situ. There are also rough diamond-shaped cut-outs which held iron stanchions for leaded glazing. The woodwork on this face was heavily keyed for later plaster, but a good set of assembly marks is still evident. All the studs are numbered, from 1 to 8 starting at the south (building) end. The marks are large Roman numerals, scribed with a race knife across the grain of each stud. There are no assembly marks visible on the other faces. If weathering was a factor, the good survival of the marks on the east face suggests that a wing may have been built on to it fairly soon after the porch was erected.

In the porch gable is a central three-light eighteenth-century window, but empty mortices for a pentice roof, chamfered studs and missing studs indicate it replaced an earlier three- or four-light oriel.

To the right of the porch is a section of rubble stone walling with some evidence of timber insertions and fragmentary evidence of quoins to the right of the porch at ground floor level. Next is a gabled 'wing', the attic storey of which is hung with stone slates.

In the west elevation (Fig. 6), the northern range has a double-height bay window (dating from the 1924 renovations) and an attic roof dormer above. The east wing (to the right) has similar features and a central doorway. At the south-west corner of the building is a

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[57] RIBA, T.422, T.443 and T.447.
[58] The façade in fact faces north-north-west, but for simplicity it will be regarded as facing north.

Fig. 6. West elevation. Photograph by David Clark.

twelfth-century roll-moulding running up the full height of the corner from a point 2,020 mm above the present ground surface. Faced stone continues down a further 970 mm, culminating in a stone (Fig. 7) 220 mm deep which has a chamfer and bar-stop.[59] Below this there is a stone plinth of 830 mm.

The southern elevation of this range (Fig. 8) also has a two-storey bay window and a casement to the attic room. There is a further two-storey bay window to the next bay to the right, inserted in 1924 when a window (previously a doorway) opposite the front (north) door was removed. To the right (east) of this, there is a change in building line. This part of the house has a number of puzzling features which will be considered below. The east range resulted from the comprehensive remodelling in 1924 of an earlier building and was not investigated.

The roof is covered uniformly with Cotswold stone slates, laid in diminishing courses.

Interior

The ground floor plan is shown in Fig. 9 below, with suggested phasing which will be discussed later. Inside the porch is a round-arched portal (Fig. 10) – 1580 mm wide, 2840 mm high, complete with jambs and a higher rere arch inside. The west side has a considerable, long-standing outward lean; the door reveal has been re-cut to the vertical, to allow the door to close. All the stone jointing runs across the mouldings, with no sign of disruption or

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[59]   Exactly the same type of chamfer and bar-stop can be seen to the external corners of Oakham Castle, Rutland (*c.*1180s) and to the corners of buttresses of the west end of Ketton church, Rutland (late twelfth century): personal communication from N. Hill.

Fig. 7. Moulded stone at south-west corner. Photograph by David Clark.

Fig. 8. South elevation. Photograph by David Clark.

irregularity. There are three orders of mouldings with very worn stiff-leaf capitals of *c*.1190.[60] On each side one of the colonnettes (nook-shafts) is missing and on the stone so revealed are some finely scratched circles. On the right-hand (west) side is a circle 3½ inches in diameter on the return facing east, with a centre point but no other obvious features. On the stone below it on the north face is a segment of a similarly-sized circle. On the east side on the north face behind the position of the missing column are two concentric circles 265 mm (6½ inches) and 184 mm (7¼ inches) in diameter respectively with radii (mostly at 45 degree angles) and a centre point. This also extends over two of the stones forming the door-jambs. Above it on the same face is a simple circle with a centre point. There are traces of limewash (some layers with pale yellow ochre colouring) adhering to the doorway in a number of places.

The floor of the porch is some 220 mm (8½ inches) lower than the stone base of the portal jambs, which are supported by bluish brickwork. The ceiling construction is visible within the porch and consists of two dragon-beams supported by the corner jetty-brackets and tenoned into a central beam on the bracket over the front door. This in turn was tenoned into a transverse beam set against the stone wall of the house. There are wooden benches either side of the porch, cut into the internal doorway, and apparently contemporary with the stone walls.

The portal leads to the entrance hall. To the left are two round-arched doorways (Fig. 11) with roll-moulded hoods, and moulded imposts. The bases of the jambs show signs of replacement or reworking. Each doorway is 1190 mm wide and now 2050 mm high (original height *c*.1850 mm). Between the doors is a carved head, weathered, but which appears to be contemporary. Some 1180 mm to the right of the doorways is a vertical line of ashlar quoins

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[60] Tyack et al., *Berkshire* (2010), p. 127. M. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (1965), p. 124 dated them to *c*.1210; The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture suggests 1190–1200 (www.crsbi.ac.uk).

Fig. 9. Ground floor plan. Drawn by Tina Bond.

to a height of 2.4 metres indicating a blocked opening in the south-east corner of the hall. Between the right-hand door-jamb and the quoins the wall is built of roughly coursed stones; to the right are large random stones and then a slight curve in the wall with small randomly placed stones. Built into the rear of this wall is a fireplace with a timber bressummer reducing the wall thickness to about 400 mm. The chimney-breast is visible in the south-west corner of the first floor stair landing but is blocked within the roof space and the external chimney does not survive. Externally, this fireplace wall is delineated by stone quoins and rises to just above first floor level, but the return from these quoins does not obviously align with any of the other walls.

On the opposite side of the hall are a shallow niche and a fireplace with a chamfered timber lintel. Although there are stone corbels in the east wall supporting a girding beam, the (transverse) joists in the entrance hall are modern.

The drawing room to the west is dominated by a large farmhouse-style fireplace (Fig. 12) in a massive stone stack, with vestigial evidence for an oven and spice cupboard to the left, and iron bars within for holding pots or smoking meat. From one of these bars hangs a pair of metal pulleys, again perhaps from some earlier cooking equipment. The bressummer is in two sections, joined by a trait-de-Jupiter scarf joint to make a total length of 3.86 metres (12 ft 8 inches). It is 393 mm (1 ft 3½ inches) deep with a 51 mm (2 inch) chamfer. The section to the right of the joint is the later – probably twentieth-century. The surface to the left has various types of graffiti, including the initials 'IH', scratches of various kinds including crosses, and burn-marks. The burn-mark to the lower left-hand side of the bressummer seems to be truncated at its lower edge, suggesting that it was made before the beam was inserted on the

Fig. 10. Front portal and entrance hall. Photograph by Trevor Rowley.

Fig. 11. Service doorways in entrance hall. Photograph by David Clark.

Fig. 12. Drawing room fireplace. Photograph by David Clark.

jambs. The fireplace has moulded stone jambs similar in profile and dimensions to the roll-moulding at the south-west corner of the house described above.

The drawing room ceiling is supported by a heavy timber beam, 458 mm (18 inches) wide and (formerly) 458 mm deep, with 102 mm (4 inch)-wide chamfers, running east–west and supported by the stone chimney-breast. Its soffit is rather crudely cut back, by first making a series of saw-cuts across the beam. The width of these and their detail suggests the use of a relatively modern cross-cut saw. The process seems to have been started at the fireplace (east) end, and was clearly done in situ, as the end cut is at a slight angle, and the timber is exposed, so the carpenter's knuckles would not have suffered unduly during the work. Having made the saw-cuts, the rest of the beam was then cut out. Although there are some chisel marks, a side-axe was probably the tool of choice. Although this work has fairly comprehensively removed the earlier chamfer, evidence survives of five augur-holes along the northern side of the beam just above it. In one of these, part of a peg remains in place. Thus there was a partition wall pegged to the north face of this beam at some stage.

This room was considerably remodelled in 1924 and so the other beams and joists were not studied in detail. Some of the timbers show signs of reuse. For example, in the soffit of a beam supported on a stone corbel are four empty mortices, with scratched setting-out lines and evidence for the use of early augurs – there were no central 'locating' points. These mortices appear to have been cut into the beam after some years: they were crudely cut, misaligned and had no peg holes.

Eight joists in a small section of ceiling between this beam and the east wall of the room were recorded in detail. Most were cut sections of longer joists – with chamfers and lamb's-tongue stops – from somewhere else.

The room is panelled throughout, with small panels typical of the early seventeenth century. These have dust-shelves to the upper edges of the rails, run-out scratched mouldings to the lower edges and double pegs to the stiles. There are also signs that the panelling has been removed from an upstairs room.

Although the other ground floor spaces were greatly altered in 1924, some earlier features survive. For example, in the room entered through the northern doorway in the entrance hall is a stone fireplace with a timber lintel with an apotropaic mark of two inverted 'V's. The ceiling joists are supported by a transverse beam in the centre of the room, and a further beam set against the wall to the south. All the joists on the south side are machine-sawn, but on the north some are pit-sawn and one group of four consists of pairs of timbers axed along one side and pit-sawn along the other in such a way that they probably came from the same log, squared by axing, then sawn into quarters. It seems that the south side of the ceiling is relatively recent, whereas most of the north side is from various sources, including recycling.

The southern doorway now leads to the staircase hall. The staircase itself was installed here in 1924, but earlier features in the space include a former fireplace in the south-west corner – discussed above in relation to the entrance hall wall. Its lintel is stamped with the initials 'RJS' – probably Robert James Southby, who acquired the house in 1824.

The other ground floor spaces, although containing some earlier fabric, form the service rooms of the present house – with modern fittings – or were known to derive largely from the 1924 remodelling, and so were not investigated in detail. Two features, however, were notable: a cupboard and a large safe. The cupboard has two doors fitted with butterfly hinges, nailed in place, the upper with a ventilated space formed by turned balusters set into the door. The walk-in safe was manufactured by John Tann, 117 Newgate Street, London. The company moved to this address in 1912, so the safe was installed after this date, presumably in 1924. At first floor level, the central chimney-stack between the entrance hall and the room to the west continues upwards with further fireplaces to both sides. One was probably narrowed in the nineteenth century for coal-burning, but has a timber lintel, chamfered to the jambs of the opening. That to the west, however, has a fine four-centred arched stone surround with moulded jambs and vase-stops near the foot. Above is a timber bressummer, which may have acted as a relieving timber to take weight from the fireplace arch, but it may have been the original lintel to the fireplace.

Parts of the timber frame of the porch are visible at first floor level and their main features were discussed above. The central opening light of the north-facing oriel window has a high-quality spring-catch and the outer lights have diamond-section iron glazing-stanchions. The shutters have two solid fielded panels to each fold, with rolled edges, gemel ('H') hinges and also butterfly ones (though some of the latter had been screwed in place and therefore probably not in situ). The window-jambs have chamfers and lamb's-tongue stops.

The porch roof structure has two bays divided by a central truss of two principal rafters linked by a collar, the soffit of which has been cut back to increase headroom. The truss supports two tiers of purlins, the upper pair passing through the principals, the lower pair staggered and jointed into the principals with double tusk-tenons (Fig. 13). The northern bay has curved wind-braces, absent in the south bay. All the timbers are pit-sawn and display level marks,[61] and setting-out marks. Wooden 'nails' of one inch diameter are fitted horizontally into the purlins, perhaps for clothes. The central truss sits directly over the cross-beam noted at the south end of the porch.

At second floor level the attics have been opened up for domestic accommodation but their geography is complex. Thus although the attic room of the porch always seems to have been usable – with a primary oriel – it is not clear where the access was.

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[61] Level marks are lightly scored cross-like marks which were used to obtain two parallel flat faces when hewing a log: D.W.H. Miles and H. Russell, 'Plumb and Level Marks', *VA*, 26 (1995), pp. 33–8.

Fig. 13. Attic room over porch. Photograph by David Clark.

The roof structure at the west is almost completely visible and consists of three bays, with four A-frame trusses, two of which are in the gables. Each truss has a pegged collar, slightly cambered, and morticed purlins immediately above the collar. The principal rafters are pegged at the apex. The upper and lower faces of each purlin have five empty mortice-slots per bay for the common rafters, but none of these survives in situ.

Other roofs are less visible or complete, but phases of alteration are visible – suggesting alteration in situ rather than complete rebuilding.

The 1924 Alterations

Drawings prepared by Detmar Blow and Fernand Billerey in preparation for a major remodelling of the house in 1924 survive in the RIBA collection.[62] They show the layout of the earlier building and the proposed alterations so are important as evidence for the development of the building. Also relevant to these developments are pre-1924 photographs of the house, for example Fig. 14 which shows the gabled west elevation. Before works were carried out a set of drawings was made of the house as it was in 1923. These will be considered in turn, starting with the front (north) elevation (Fig. 15). This shows the western gable of Fig. 14 with a higher roof-line than the ranges to the east, and the windows in the hall range that were subsequently blocked in. It also shows the earlier eastern extension, which was replaced by a new building against the eastern stack of the earlier house but continuing its roof-line. The ground and first floor sash windows of the adjacent range next to the porch were replaced by the present two-storey bay window. The drawing does not show the attic window in the porch, which was presumably blocked in.

[62] RIBA Drawings Collection. Blow Drawings T422, T433, T447.
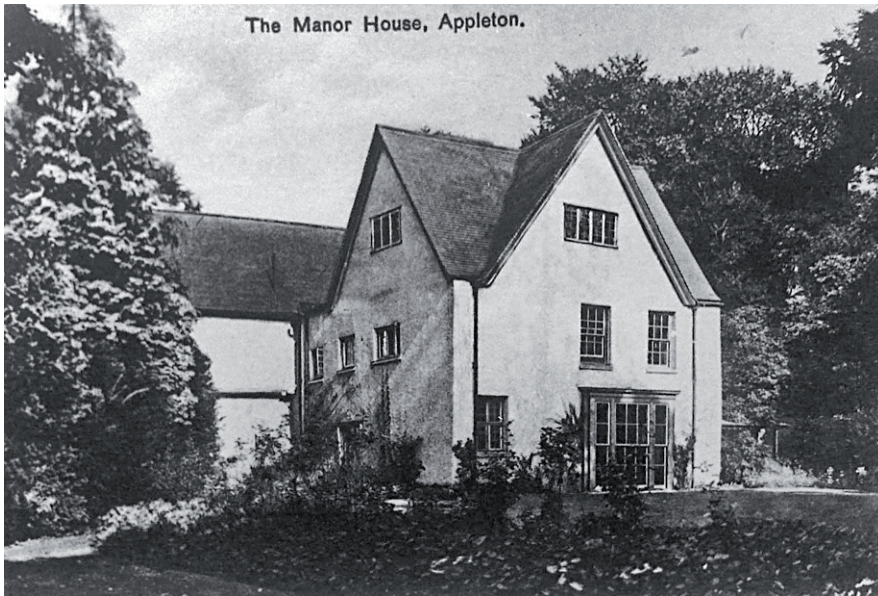
Fig. 14. Appleton Manor from north-west, early 1920s. Photograph courtesy of Alison and Simon Jeffreys.

Fig. 15. Entrance Front. RIBA Collections T.422. Survey drawing no. 2, 20 August 1923.

Fig. 16 shows the west elevation of the pre-1924 house, with the gable of the hall range to the left and a series of garden structures including a conservatory, an engine house and a timber building in the moat itself, which contained two WCs.

The south and east elevations were also drawn and show a somewhat complex arrangement of additions which included a wash-house and kitchen in a wing to the south. These are also shown on the ground floor plan (Fig. 17) which is of exceptional interest in understanding the room layout and circulation patterns of the pre-1924 building, but the inclusion of details such as the positions of beams and joists also points to areas of later alteration. In the earlier house
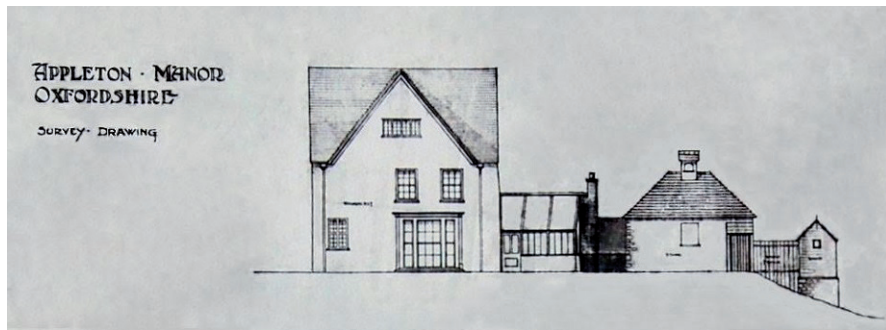
Fig. 16. South-west elevation of Appleton Manor before the 1920s alterations. It shows outbuildings including a conservatory and lavatories over the inner lip of the moat. RIBA Collections T.422. Survey drawing no. 1, 20 August 1923.
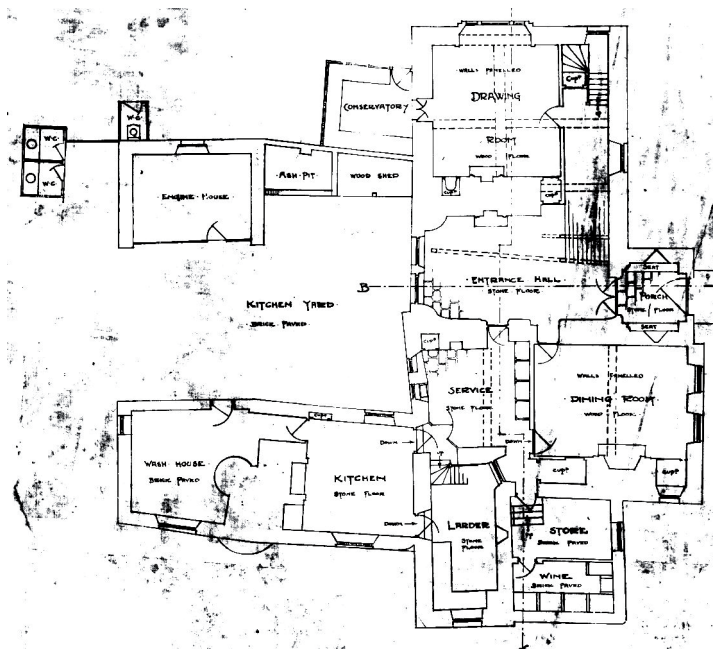

Fig. 17. Ground floor plan before alterations. RIBA Collections T.422. Survey drawing no. 1, 20 August 1923.

there was a clear distinction between the service areas (wash-house, kitchen, larder, store, and so on) to the south-east, with stone floors and its own staircase to the upper floors, and the family rooms to the north and west, with a staircase at the end of a corridor adjacent to the north wall. These worlds met in the panelled dining room, entered from the entrance hall.

The survey also includes a first floor plan, showing the disposition of six bedrooms, two of which were probably for servants as they are reached by a newel stair in the east range. The second floor plan is divided into a western section with two family bedrooms, and an eastern showing a further two over the service area, but accessible only from the family area of the house. There was no connection between these second floor spaces, and the attic room over the porch seems to have been 'lost'.

There are also section drawings which show help to explain some of the changes in floor level within the house and how access to the attic rooms was created – probably in the nineteenth century.

There are also in the RIBA collection a number of drawings showing proposed alterations. Some are coloured to show the proposed alterations in red, but although are neither signed nor dated, they seem to be the architects' initial proposals. They envisaged some additions to the east and large protruding bay windows to east and west, but as shown in Fig.18, retained the irregular plan of the former wash-house and kitchen. There are also two (probably later) plans signed by Detmar Blow and Fernand Billerey. The first (Fig. 19) is dated 12 May 1924, and the second (Drawing no. 21) is a revision dated 25 July 1924, showing the house pretty
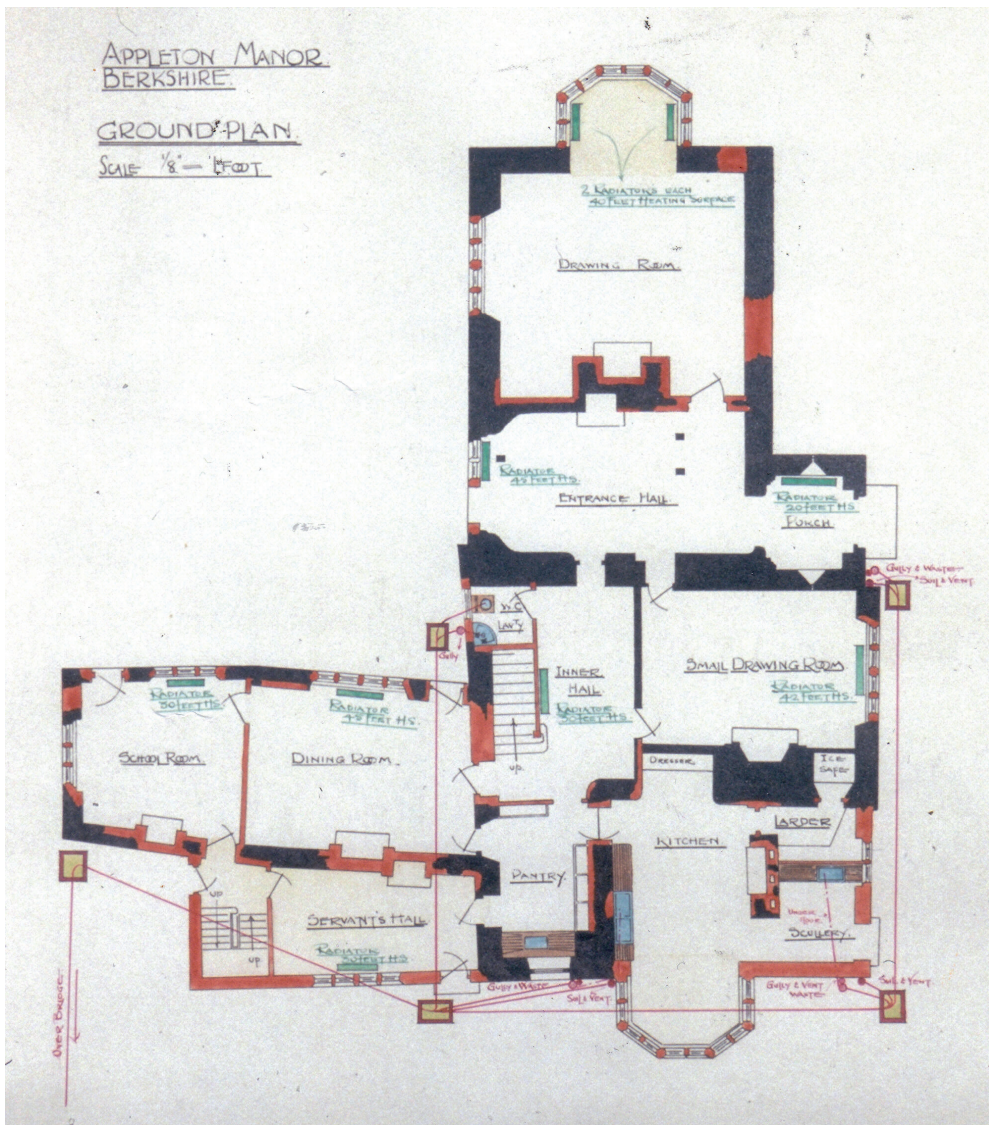

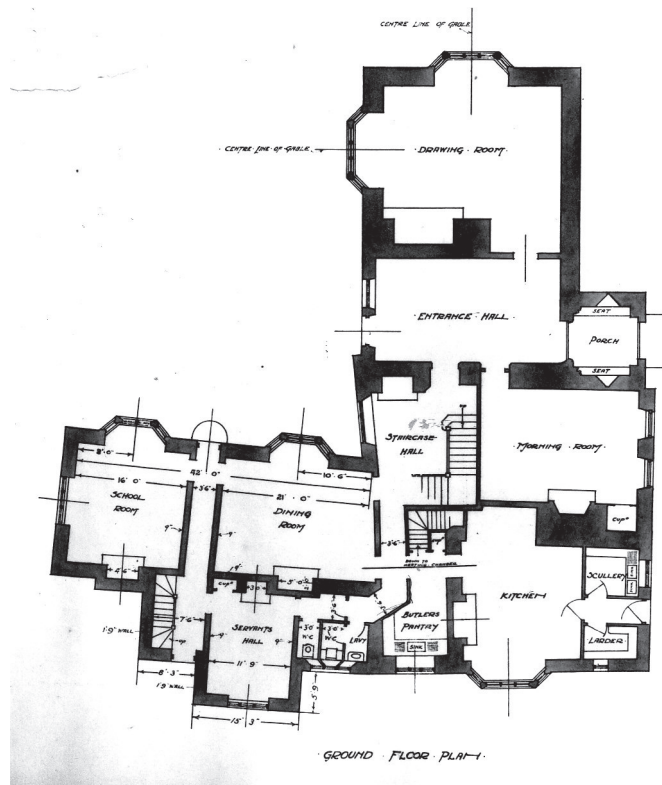*Fig. 18. Undated ground floor plan. RIBA Collections T.422.*

Fig. 19. Blow and Billerey ground plan. RIBA Collections T.422. Drawing no. 20, 12 May 1924.

well as *Country Life* found it in 1929.[63] Both of the 1924 plans show the radical remodelling of the east range, but between these two dates the south door to the entrance hall was replaced by a bay window, an additional staircase to the first floor was abandoned, and a bay window was added to the room to the east of the porch. The main change was, however, at the attic level, where an axial corridor linking the east and west attics was created, thereby removing the need for the newel stair at the north-west corner of the house. Some non-structural alterations are also known from the drawings, such as the removal of seventeenth-century panelling from an upstairs room to the main west drawing room.

Apart from some alterations in the kitchen area, no substantial changes have been made to Appleton Manor since the 1924 works were carried out (as depicted in the *Country Life* plan of 1929).

Discussion

In Currie's survey, Appleton was unique in the Vale as a stone house from the late twelfth century when most of the other survivals are either not domestic in origin (Norman Hall in Sutton Courtenay) or later in date.[64] For analogies, we must therefore look elsewhere in England.

Nick Hill has pointed out that if the present building is on the same plan as the original, the size of the hall is quite small in comparison with most other surviving halls of the period,

[63] Oswald, 'Appleton Manor'.
[64] Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', pp. 90–3.

which are generally aisled and therefore wider. We do not know whether Appleton was aisled, but its size suggests that it was not. Hill has provided the following comparative examples:[65]

Appleton	(c.1190)	11.7 m x 7.3 m	85 sq m
Aisled			
Oakham Castle	(1180–90)	19.9 m x 13.2 m	263 sq m
Fyfield Hall, Essex	(1167–85)	16.5 m x 18 m	297 sq m
Burmington Manor, Warks.	(after 1159)	14.2 m x 14.4 m	204 sq m
Unaisled			
Nassington Prebendal Manor	(early 13C)	7.8 m x 11.2 m	87 sq m
Minster Court, Thanet	(c.1100–1120)	8.08 m x 19.21 m	155 sq m
Horton Court, Glos.	(c.1140–60)	4.88 m x 9.45 m	46 sq m

Unaisled standing residential buildings prior to 1250 are very rare. Comparables for Appleton are thus hard to find. Nassington has much earlier origins, and was rebuilt on the same site in the early thirteenth century, so has its own complications.[66] Horton is a highly unusual small building, not much studied, though, like Appleton, it does have an unusually fine and large main door for its size.[67] One difficulty with these buildings is that with the passage of time their original functions may relate to lost ancillary buildings, perhaps of timber.[68]

The key question for Appleton Manor is the extent of the primary phase of the building, which we may put at c.1190 on the basis of the north portal and the adjacent wall with the twin doorways. The portal was described by Pevsner as 'worthy of any major church', and he considered it contemporary with the north aisle of the nearby church of St Laurence. No one has challenged the assumption that the portal is in situ and contemporary with the service wall, yet all commentators note its uniqueness as a domestic feature, and there are some puzzles, including the fact that the portal sits higher up in the wall than the service doors (the floor level in the porch has since been lowered).[69] There is also a missing doorway at the nearby church of St Laurence in Appleton. The architectural history of that building starts with the arcade between the nave and the north aisle, of two-centred arches on 'transitional' columns with carved capitals, dated to the late twelfth century.[70] The north aisle must have been added to an earlier (or contemporary) nave, but no portal of the period survives. There must have been a late twelfth-century doorway to the church, and it seems at least possible that it was removed to the manor at some point. Rebuilding may also explain the missing nook-shafts, but equally they might have been lost through weathering before the building of the porch. On balance, however, we are persuaded that the portal is original, mainly because the quality of the joints is such that it is most unlikely that these would have survived removal and rebuilding.

The twin doorways sit in the thickest walls in the building, and one may therefore surmise that they were the doorways to two primary service rooms from the 'low' end of an open hall.

[65]   Personal communication from N. Hill.
[66]   *Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northamptonshire: Forty-First Interim Report*, RCHME (1984).
[67]   J. Grenville, *Medieval Housing* (1997), pp. 78–9.
[68]   J. Blair, 'Hall and Chamber: English Domestic Planning 1000–1250', in G. Meirion-Jones and M. Jones (eds.), *Manorial Domestic Buildings in England and Northern France,* Society of Antiquaries Occasional Papers, 15 (1993), pp. 1–21.
[69]   The earlier worn stone floor, at the original level, can be seen in an 1851 Turner and Parker engraving (Turner, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture*, p. 5 and plate 39) and in a *Country Life* photo of 1919 (Marcon, 'Two Berkshire Manor Houses', pp. 368–74).
[70]   Tyack et al., *Berkshire*, p. 126.

Contemporary documents, such as a description by Alexander Neckam, refer to these rooms as the *promptuarium* (cellar or buttery, for liquids) and *dispensa* (later 'spence' or pantry, for dry goods).[71] This plan was innovative in the 1190s – before that the entrance doorway was more central to the hall.[72] One might assume that the buttery would have been to the cooler north; the pantry to the south.[73]

A survey of Appleton Manor made by John Blair, Edward Impey and Christopher Currie suggested that the straight-joint to the south of the service doors was the north jamb of an opening giving access to a straight staircase to first floor rooms.[74] Our examination of the stonework in this part of the house was not conclusive, but this is a plausible explanation; rooms over the services are common, and hence some form of access would have been needed. The other houses of *c*.1190, however (Oakham, King John's House, Warnford, and so on), are aisled and seem to have had staircases rising from the hall at the end of one of the aisles.[75]

Another question is where the kitchen was located. Most high-status residences in the period around 1200 would have had a detached kitchen, often reached by a third service door – such as that surviving at Bishop Auckland. There may of course have been another door at Appleton, which must have been to the north of the present doors because of the likely staircase to the south. In such tripartite layouts, the central doorway is usually that to the kitchen,[76] so the surviving left-hand door at Appleton may have originally led to a separate kitchen building further east than the pantry and buttery. A third service doorway at Appleton would have been very close to the entrance portal, and while it may be argued that this awkward and asymmetrical layout is unlikely, this is the case at Oakham Castle, and so there is a precedent.

Most of those who have studied Appleton Manor agree that the entrance hall and adjacent room to the west formed the hall of the late twelfth-century house, citing the evidence of the roll-moulding at the south-west corner. Margaret Wood, however, was not convinced that this was in situ, and our finding that the moulding does not run down the full length of the wall, and below it is another (clearly ex situ) moulded stone adds to the doubt.[77] Then there is the fact that the moulding is found only on the south-west corner – this does not appear to have been commented upon. Such reuse of Norman stonework is not uncommon: a similar moulding has been noted on one of the corners of Burwell Farmhouse, Witney, a building which has no known medieval origins.

Another factor is that the wall thickness in the 'hall' is not as great as that of the eastern cross-wall with the service doors which is *c*.980 mm thick and appears original. The south and west walls, however, are only some 600 mm thick to the ground floor and some 500 mm to the first floor. Blair has challenged this as a general rule, and points to the bishop's palace at Hereford, which has a thicker service wall than those of the (contemporary) hall.[78] Currie noted the difference in wall thicknesses, but suggested that, taken with the other irregularities at the north end of the cross-wall, this might indicate that the service block 'was built a few years before the hall'. However, taken together the evidence at Appleton strongly suggests that the western part of the hall was totally rebuilt, using recycled stone, probably when the chimney-stack was installed, with major reworking if not rebuilding of much of the north wall. The rebuilt walls are of the normal thickness found in seventeenth-century work, and

[71]   *De Utensilibus* (*c*.1190).
[72]   The bishop's palace at Bishop Auckland (Durham) of *c*.1190 seems to be the earliest confirmed example of the through passage with service doorways at one end of the hall.
[73]   Discussion in N. Hill, 'Hall and Chambers: Oakham Castle Reconsidered', *Antiquaries Journal*, 93 (2013), pp. 163–216.
[74]   Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', pp. 100–1.
[75]   Hill, 'Hall and Chambers'.
[76]   As at New College, Oxford and the bishop's palace at Lincoln.
[77]   Wood, 'Norman Domestic Architecture', p. 175.
[78]   See Currie, 'Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of White Horse', p. 100, n. 127.

much thinner than normal medieval walling. The north-west corner has seventeenth-century quoins of rubble, not ashlar.

As for the later Middle Ages, Margaret Wood was sure that there were traces of a newel staircase within the thickness of the wall to the south of the entrance hall. Our detailed examination of the walling in the south-east corner of the entrance hall did not fully explain the various alignments, thicknesses and features in this area, but it did seem that the curved wall to the east of the inserted bay window was associated with the earlier window in this position, rather than being evidence of a former newel stair.

The next phase of the house included the rebuilding of the hall and the addition of the porch. Moulded stone from the earlier building was reused at the south-west corner and some was also used to build the drawing room fireplace, thus dating the insertion of the main chimney-stack also to this phase. The fireplace is typical of that of a large farmhouse of the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries. The burn-mark on the bressummer is again probably of this period. Recent research has shown these burn-marks to have been applied deliberately to historic timber using tapers, perhaps as part of a ritual to protect the building from fire damage, but the fact that it was applied here before the timber was installed in the fireplace is unusual.[79]

Another possible manifestation of the beliefs of the period is found in the incised circles scratched into the stone of the portal exposed when the nook-shafts were removed. These are typical of marks found near the entrances of other buildings – the concentric circles resemble those on a door-jamb of one of the barns at Cogges Manor Farm and on one of the pad-stones supporting an aisle post at the great barn at Harmondsworth (Middx), both of which are likely to be apotropaic, and dating to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

Sir Richard Fettiplace added the porch after the major outward lean of the north wall to the west side of the main doorway had occurred, perhaps as a result of the rebuilding. The porch provided useful buttressing to the leaning wall, and served to cover the awkward step back to the west of the door surround. It is clear that the original façade of the building could never have included such an awkward set-back, which would not have been consistent with the fine doorway. The porch appears to date from around 1600. We are divided as to whether it was originally built entirely of timber, or whether its stone ground floor is primary. There is no evidence of ground floor timbers – the small visible section under a bracket on the west wall is possibly modern – and the foundations suggest they were built to support the building as we see it today. On the other hand, the ground floor looks 'odd', in that the jetty-brackets are partly concealed, rather than being supported on a wall-plate as one might expect if the walls were primary, and there is an asymmetry in the stone walling – with quoins only at one corner. Moreover, the arrow-slits are too narrow to have been a true defensive feature. Either way, it had three storeys from the start, and must have made an impression on the visitor approaching from the north. As there is no evidence for internal stairs, each room of the porch must have been accessible from a floor of the main house, which therefore must have been three storeys in height – another reason why the walls were rebuilt before the porch was built.

The only other evidence from the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries is found in the fireplaces in the rooms beyond the service doors, suggesting that this section of the building was remodelled during this period. The position of the northern fireplace suggests that this room was built as part of this phase, but after the porch was built, as it covers the east-facing wall. The fireplace in the present staircase hall perhaps used parts of the former newel staircase – if that existed – as a flue.

At some point the main west ground floor room was divided by means of a timber partition just to the north of the fireplace. This is too far over to be the staircase area shown in the 1923 plans, but seems to suggest a division of the property – perhaps to accommodate an aged widow requiring her own private (and warm) space. The fireplace was, however, used

[79]   J. Dean and N. Hill, 'Burn Marks on Buildings: Accidental or Deliberate?', *VA*, 45 (2014), pp. 1–15.

for cooking for much of its life, and the former hall may thus have been divided into various service rooms in the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries.

Appleton Manor does not sit centrally within its moat, suggesting that some earlier structures have been demolished. The south wing shown on the enclosure map formed a 'U'-shape with the present house, indicating a substantial building if the gable formed a pair with the pre-1924 one to the west. There may also have been buildings to the west of the present house.

The east wing (demolished in 1924) was probably built on as a service wing during the eighteenth century – it had a massive stack for a kitchen and wash-house – possibly after 1772 when Southby acquired the freehold. After the demolition of the south wing in the 1830s, the house seems not to have undergone much major alteration, apart perhaps from the addition of some outbuildings to the east at the north end, the introduction of some bay windows and perhaps opening up some attic rooms for servants' accommodation.

The 'before' and 'planned' drawings from the 1920s show clearly what the house looked like before Detmar Blow and Fernand Billerey carried out their remodelling for Mrs Lawrence Timpson. It had a clear separation between staff and family spaces, which was blurred to some extent in the new layout – though the need for a large safe in which the butler could store the silver indicated that the age of the family servant was not yet over. That the plans went through various stages of evolution shows the existence of a close ongoing interaction between architect and client as work progressed, resulting in the 'restrained and accomplished' Arts and Crafts style alterations that add greatly to the character of the building that we see today.[80]

EXCAVATIONS AT APPLETON MANOR, 7–10 APRIL 2015, TEST PITS 1–4 by JANE HARRISON

Four test pits were excavated in the grounds of Appleton Manor over four days.[81] The aim was to discover whether any archaeological layers relating to the early medieval history of the manor had survived later alterations and changes of layout around the central twelfth-century core of the manor house (Fig. 20). Two test pits were located against the walls of the building to investigate the foundations: test pit 3 to the south-east and test pit 4 to the north-west. It was hoped that test pit 3 would help elucidate the configuration of the original service wall and possible cross-passage, so the excavation was located immediately east of a more recent bay-window as close to the wall-end of the service wall as possible. Test pit 4 was sited to try and find out whether lower courses of the north-western wall survived in their original state. Test pits 1 and 2, dug into ground below the existing paved patio, were intended to discover whether medieval layers survived below the disturbance of later building and garden landscaping. The sizes of the test pits by the walls were dictated by services and established planting, of those in the patio by the pattern of large paving-slabs that could be lifted.

Previous Excavations

There has been relatively little archaeological work in the immediate vicinity of the manor (see locations shown on Fig. 20). A watching brief in 2005 at The Paddocks just over 100 metres to the south-east detected no archaeological deposits.[82] More was discovered in small excavations conducted ahead of the insertion of a new cesspool and drain just north-west of

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[80] Tyack et al., *Berkshire*, p. 127.

[81] Test pit 1 centred 44363 01495; test pit 2 centred 44360 01497; test pit 3 centred 44358 01501; and test pit 4 centred 44345 01505. Full excavation reports are lodged in the project archive.

[82] P. Jenkins, 'The Paddocks, Park Lane, Appleton, Oxfordshire', unpublished report for Thames Valley Archaeological Services (2005).
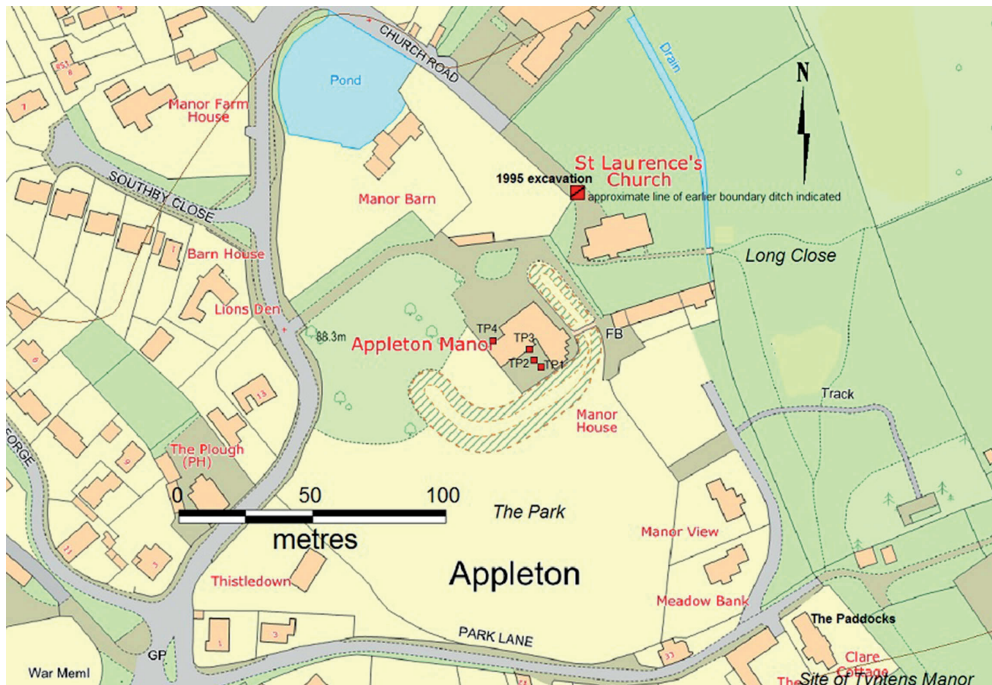
Fig. 20. Location of Test Pits 1–4 in the grounds of Appleton Manor, and of the 1995 excavations at St Lawrence's Church. The Paddocks is just visible at the bottom right. Plan by Jane Harrison. Base map data: Crown Copyright: An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.

St Laurence's Church.[83] Within the 3.15 square metre footprint of the cesspool a truncated north-east to south-west aligned boundary ditch, just over a metre wide and 0.6 metres deep, was revealed cut into sandy clay. One sherd of twelfth- to thirteenth-century pottery was found in the fill of the ditch which suggested, but cannot prove, that the ditch may have been the earlier, possibly medieval, churchyard boundary.

Summary of Test Pit Excavations

All the test pits provided ample evidence for the thoroughness of the alterations and restoration work carried out in the 1920s. A large workforce must have been employed and the major work on the house matched by significant remodelling of the land to the immediate south-east within the moat, and probably all around the building.

Test pit 4 demonstrated that the north-west wall of the hall had been underpinned with shuttered concrete – presumably also in the 1920s – effectively removing any evidence of earlier rebuilding that might have survived at that level. Test pit 3 revealed very different foundations. The south-east wall was found sitting on a 'dogger'-like raft of limestone/mudstone: a floating cap of natural geological concretion, just centimetres below the ground surface (Fig. 21). Builders were presumably aware of the location of these intermittent rafts of bedrock: here they were so close to the surface and possibly also identifiable through differential plant and vegetation growth. Such rafts could – and have been – used as secure foundations for thicker-walled buildings, and may partly have determined the exact positioning of such structures.

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[83]   R. Brown, 'St Laurence's Church, Appleton, Oxon.: An Archaeological Watching Brief Report', unpublished report for OA (1995).

Fig. 21. Test Pit 3 showing limestone dogger beneath house wall. Photograph by Jane Harrison.

It was difficult to be certain without further investigation, but the built foundations seen in test pit 3 may also have incorporated more than one phase of building. Both test pit 2 and test pit 1 produced some medieval pottery (almost entirely residual) and also evidence of a persistent boundary, running north-west to south-east, which may once have lined up with a door in the south-east wall. Otherwise the pits evidenced massive earth-moving work – once again probably the result of Blow's remodelling – which had obliterated any remains of earlier buildings, outbuildings, surfaces or landscape features. After their removal the ground had been levelled-up, partly using what was most likely silty material dredged from the moat, along with some midden-type material containing residual medieval pottery sherds, worked stone fragments and oyster shell. Subsequently a sequence of yard and garden features had been cut into this levelling material, to be filled-in and re-cut in their turn. In both test pits layers of earlier stone paving were uncovered just below the modern concrete slabs, including, in test pit 1, a curved stretch which may have been part of a circular or semi-circular plant-bed surround.

Further test pits may be useful since the 1920s clearance may not have extended a great distance beyond the house. Test pits to the west of the manor, but still within the moat, would determine the extent of the re-landscaping. Small investigations to the south of the cottages lying east of the manor might allow exploration of ground less affected by later work, and perhaps discover undisturbed medieval and earlier layers.

CONCLUSION

Appleton Manor house has puzzled generations of historians, not least in terms of the large scale of the first phase of building, the exceptional survival of early features, and the construction of a surrounding moat in an area with few moats. The house can be better understood when the history of the estate is taken into account, for which there is a more or less complete record from the eleventh century to the present day. The late Norman manor house at Appleton has been dated on stylistic grounds to 1190–1200, about the same time as

the north aisle of the adjacent church of St Laurence.[84] Therefore the original stone building, and possibly the moat, would have been constructed by Richard or Thomas de Appleton, direct descendants of the Domesday tenant, Richard fitz Reinfrid.

The Appletons were a moderately prosperous family and their involvement in national politics prompted a royal interest in the property from 1215 onwards. It would have been one of the most impressive manorial homes in north Berkshire, with no rivals in the immediate vicinity apart perhaps from Abingdon abbey's Cumnor Place. The survival of the twelfth-century building into the sixteenth century was probably a consequence of the manor's declining fortunes during the later Middle Ages. There is evidence to suggest that, during the tenure of the Fitzwaryns in the fifteenth century, the property was in a state of some decay and after it passed to the Denton family in the second half of the fifteenth century, Appleton Manor does not seem to have been used consistently as a primary residence.

The building was not substantially altered until it was acquired by the Fettiplaces in the sixteenth century. The remodelling of the manor would have brought it into line with surrounding country residences, when it would have complemented nearby Bessels Leigh House, the family's primary residence in the area. For over two centuries after the Fettiplaces sold the estate to William Lenthall in 1634 the fortunes of Appleton were largely in the hands of the Southby family. The Southbys might have been expected to upgrade Appleton Manor, but they had their main country seat a few kilometres to the west at Carswell Manor, a fine Jacobean country house in Buckland parish. A branch of the Southby family did occupy Appleton Manor for a while and were regarded as latter-day lords of the manor, but even they were intermittent occupants, holding other houses in London and elsewhere in Berkshire. From 1841 onwards the building was in the hands of short-term tenant occupants. It was not until the 1920s that a largely sympathetic, but radical, restoration of the building was undertaken, paid for by American money.

The survival of the early medieval features and of much of the Fettiplace work at Appleton Manor is thus due largely to the chequered tenurial history of the house. Although several significant families owned or were resident at the manor for a century or more, the house was often a secondary residence or leased to tenants. Consequently, it escaped alteration on a scale that would have swept away its historically unique features.

The earthwork survey produced a detailed record of the visible earthworks, opening up some new questions about the evolution of land use around the manor house. The outline of the moat was certainly in existence and containing water in 1831, and there can be little doubt that it is of medieval origin, but when was it first created? Could it be associated with the late-Norman house and, if so, given its greater-than-average width and depth, could it have had a more defensive purpose than previously assumed? Was it dug in order to cope with the presence of the natural springs found in the immediate vicinity of the house? Or was it added in the thirteenth century or even later, around a house which had already been extended? In view of the evidence for the spread of dredged silty material identified in test pits 1 and 2, is it even possible that the present width and depth of the moat owes more to the major modifications undertaken to the house by Blow and Billerey? The root-and-branch nature of the work was apparent in the trial excavation pits. These demonstrated that a considerable amount of landscaping took place within the moat to the south of the main house, effectively destroying all pre-1920s archaeological deposits there. The excavations also demonstrated that at least part of the south wall of the house sat directly on natural concretions.

It now seems likely that the main medieval entrance to the moated island, which may have comprised a causeway, a fixed bridge or even a drawbridge and perhaps some form of gatehouse, was in the middle of the north-western side of the moat, the portion now infilled. It also seems probable that the medieval farm court lay beyond the moat on this side, and that the surviving converted farm buildings of Manor Barn may demarcate its northern boundary.

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[84]   Tyack et al., *Berkshire*, pp. 126–7.

The architectural survey, tenurial history, landscape study and test pitting outlined here have established a much firmer basis than hitherto for understanding the establishment and possible development of Appleton Manor. Work on the archaeology and landscape of Appleton and area is continuing and will be the subject of a further article.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS