

FAIRFIELD HOUSE, STOGURSEY, SOMERSET: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE GROUNDS AND THE HISTORIC FABRIC OF THE HOUSE

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INTRODUCTION

The Fairfield Estate lies in a coastal area bounded on the North by the Bristol Channel and Bridgwater Bay, on the east by the estuary of the River Parrett and on the south-west by the slopes and steep scarp of the Quantock ridge (Fig. 1). This triangular area

of land is generally below 50m above sea level and at its south-east angle is the town of Bridgwater, with its medieval castle and port on the lowest crossing point of the once important inland waterway of the River Parrett. Fairfield is situated in the western angle of this triangle, only 2.5 kilometres from the sea. The area contains numerous small villages

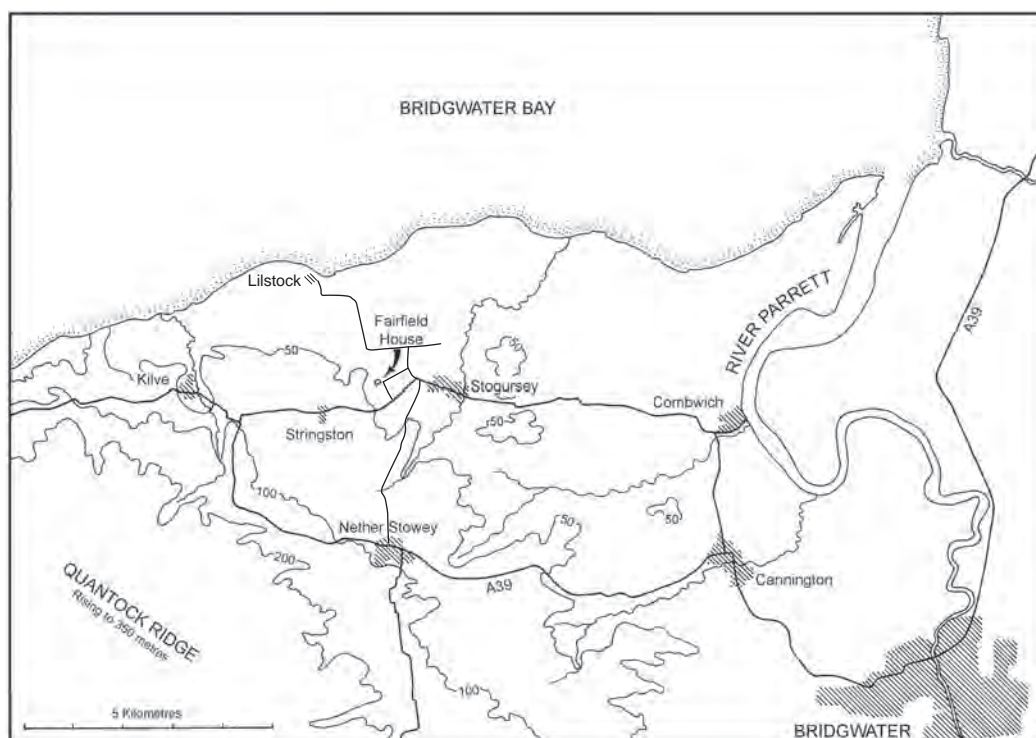


Fig. 1 The location of Fairfield House



Fig. 2 The south elevation of Fairfield House (photo by Bob Croft)

and hamlets of Saxon or earlier origin as well as the larger settlements of Comwich, Cannington, Stogursey and Nether Stowey. Fairfield House is situated 1.5 kilometres west of Stogursey, and a similar distance east of the village of Strington, the boundary between these two parishes. The medieval village of Fairfield probably lay to the east of the house, though there is now no evidence of its location. Though today the public road lies some distance south of the house, this was not the case prior to the early 19th century. Before the planned diversion of the road to its present course, it ran from Stogursey in the east through Fairfield and on to Strington to the west. This original road still remains forming the back drive to the house from the east, but to the west its line is only preserved in the field boundaries.

Between 1993 and 2012, various studies of the house and grounds were carried out. Between 1993 and 2001 the progressive removal of external render from the three wings of the house exposed the masonry and allowed the recording and study of the structural history of the building (Rodwell, 1993, 1995, 1996 and 2001). This took place during extensive restoration of the building, including the

main roofs. From 2005 to 2009, five seasons of archaeological excavation took place in the grounds, as part of an educational project run by the nearby Kilve Court Education Centre (Graham and Shaw, forthcoming). During this project, a documentary survey was also carried out to try to draw together the written evidence for the development of house and grounds. In 2009 the timbers of the roof of the west wing were surveyed and in 2012 the north and east wing roofs were surveyed at the same time as samples were taken for dendrochronological dating (Arnold and Howard 2012). This report presents the evidence from each of these studies and is followed by a synthesis which attempts to chronicle the changing nature of the house and grounds over the last five centuries.

THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

There is a wealth of surviving documentary material relating to the history of Fairfield and its owners and this has been drawn together in *The Victoria County History* (VCH 6,137-45). The history has also been thoroughly studied over the

years by a number of people including the present owner, Lady Elizabeth Acland Hood Gass (Gass, 2009), and her 18th-century predecessor, Thomas Palmer FRS MP. Palmer's unpublished history of the estate was written in about 1733 (DD/AH 21/2). He had sight of a number of even earlier documents and accounts, now lost, and his account is quoted at length in Collinson's *History and Antiquities of Somerset*, published in 1791. The account which follows concentrates only on those elements of the documentary evidence that may shed light on the development of the house and grounds. It is based on a longer account written as part of the Fairfield Study Project 2005-2009 (Graham and Shaw, forthcoming).

The earliest reference to the name Fairfield is in 1167 when the manor was granted to Martin de Ferefelle. In 1288 a chapel was built, but in his

account, written in the early 18th century, Palmer states that '*the greatest part*' of the '*ancient village*' had been pulled down for '*above a hundred year's back*'. The documents reveal nothing of the medieval manor house but show that much building work was done at Fairfield from the mid 15th to the mid 16th century. In Palmer's account, William Verney (owner from 1462-1489) was granted a licence in 1473 '*to build a wall and seven round towers about his mansion house of Fairfield (three of which towers are yet remaining) and to enclose two hundred acres of ground in a parke*'. His grandson Robert Verney (owner from 1507-1547) is credited with building '*a fair gatehouse of Ham stone and a fair chapple and four fair chambers with a new buttery*'. Palmer adds, however, that later in the 16th century '*all of this was fallen to ruin, this Robert being the last of his name that lived*



Fig. 3 Fairfield house and grounds as shown on the mid 18th-century map of Stogursey parish (D/P/stogs 23)



Fig. 4 Detail from an 18th-century painting of Fairfield showing the Elizabethan house built by the Palmers

in Fairfield'. The form of the house at this time is unknown, but it appears to have lain beneath the west wing of the present house and elements of it can be seen incorporated into that structure (below, The Building Survey). The present house was begun in the late 16th century, following Elizabeth Verney's marriage to William Palmer in 1571. In his 18th-century account Palmer writes that his ancestor Thomas Palmer, Elizabeth's father-in-law, 'soon after his son's marriage . . . pulled down the old house at Fairfield and began the present fabric'. The carved stone above the porch has a date of 1589. The sources differ slightly as to when this house was finished. Palmer writes that it was completed by Elizabeth and William's son Thomas, who died in 1605. Gerard of Trent, on the other hand, writing in 1633, states that Fairfield 'is now in the possession of the Palmers, and at it Sir Thomas Palmer some years since began a goodly house, but left it unfinished as it still remains' (Somerset Record Society, 1900).

Gerard's work was only found and transcribed in 1900, so his account was unknown to Palmer, writing his history in the early 18th century. The

editor of Gerard's account explains the delay in the completion of the house thus; 'Thomas Palmer, at the accession of King James (in 1603) retired from England to Spain and died at Valladolid in 1605. His son, William, instead of finishing the building, being a person of great learning chose always to live in London, for which he was fined £1000 in the Star Chamber in the reign of Charles I. His brother Peregrine succeeded on his death in 1652. Fairfield.' Recent dendrochronological dating of the roof timbers of the north and east wing of the house gave a felling date 1630 and 1627-52 respectively (below, The survey of the roof), suggesting at least some work during the ownership of William.

From the middle of the 18th century a number of detailed maps survive which show the development of both house and grounds. Two maps are of particular importance; one is a map of the parish of Stogursey (D/P/stogs 23/4) dated to the mid 18th century and showing the house and grounds at that time, much as they would have been known to Thomas Palmer writing his history of the estate in 1733 (Fig. 3). The other is the Chilcote survey of the estate in 1795 (DD/AH 65/12), which was

commissioned by John Palmer-Acland who had inherited the estate in 1771. This map (Fig. 5) shows the changes to both house and grounds made under the new owners in the later 18th century.

The earlier of the two maps (Fig. 3) is important in that it shows the manor house and its gardens as created by the successive periods of building documented above (and described in Phases 1-3 of the Building Survey below), including features which were swept away by the extensive changes of the later part of the 18th century. The house is shown occupying the north-western part of a rectangular walled enclosure, characterized by

three round towers along its eastern side. These are the three towers 'yet remaining' of Palmer's account of 1733 (above) and the enclosure is probably that for which a license was granted in 1473. To the east, the road from Stogursey comes to just south of the middle of the enclosure's eastern side, turning sharply south to follow the outside of the wall until just south of the middle of the west side, whence it continues west to Stringston. A road is also shown going around the enclosure's north-east corner, giving access to buildings and yards to the north of the house and the farm buildings beyond. The map shows no detail of the interior of the rectangular



Fig. 5 Part of a map of Fairfield in 1795, from Chilcott's surveys of the manors of Fairfield and Durbarrow (DD/AH 65/12)



Fig. 6 Fairfield House on the Stogursey tithe map of 1841

enclosure, only the outline of the buildings in its north-west quarter. The house itself appears much as today; with the three wings and central porch facing south and attached service wings to the north (see also Fig. 7). It also shows, however, an attached building to the west (referred to below as the West Annexe) which is no longer extant and which at this time formed the southern side of a yard to the north-west of the house. The map shows the road skirting the walled gardens around the house, with a wider area to the south, possibly indicating a gateway, and a long pond or pool south of the road. Though the map does not show any detail of the gardens within the enclosing wall, oil paintings of the early 18th-century hanging in Fairfield do show this detail, though in a rather stylized way. All show the symmetry of the southerly aspect of the house with formal gardens to the south of it crossed by a path

to the main door. One shows the long pool shown on the map, but this is absent on what is probably the latest painting (Fig. 4) which shows a walled garden specifically south of the house much smaller than the area of the map.

The survey of 1795 shows a landscape much changed (Fig. 5). The old, walled enclosure has gone and the public road follows a smoother course to the south of the house. A new entranceway from the road lies to the south-east of the house from which curving drives lead to its east side and to the stables and yards to the north. The buildings of the west annexe have also gone. It can also be seen that the formalization of the estate grounds had begun in earnest. Though the boundaries of the small fields that lay to the north and east of the house in the mid 18th century (Fig. 3) can still be seen on the map of 1795, they are now shown laid

out as gardens and orchards. A large, walled garden now lies west of the house, perhaps an intentional replacement of the walled garden that previously lay east of the house, and the grove that lay west of this in 1750 has now been expanded to form an encircling girdle around the whole of the house grounds, with only the southern aspect left open. The maps themselves give the broad period when these changes took place, but a more precise date is suggested by the account book of Richard Taylor for the period 1st April 1779 to 30th March 1782 (DD/AH 40/4.2). He was in charge of extensive building works at this time and the book lists all his expenses and payments to labourers, contractors and suppliers and his remuneration by the Palmer-Aclands. Though much of the work carried out was probably on the re-ordering and renovation of the Elizabethan house, in 1782 he was paid for the demolition of the 'old kitchen' and a dairy, both of which may have been parts of the west annexe. There are also references to work on the 'garden wall', but it is not clear whether this was demolition or construction.

Pencilled onto the map of 1795 (Fig. 5) are the lines of a proposed longer drive going off to the south beyond the public highway. This drive was not constructed until the public road was moved to its present position probably in the early part of the 19th century. Letters from Peregrine Palmer-Acland in London to Mr. Watts, the estate manager, suggest that he was a driving force behind many of these later changes, even before he inherited the estate in 1831. A letter dated February 18th 1822 states '*I would have the hedges in the new road made clean from weeds also this spring*' (DD/AH 63/1/1.10). If this refers to the new Stringston-Stogursey road, it indicates its construction before 1822. The earliest map to show the new road and longer drive, however, is the tithe map of 1841 (Fig. 6) which shows the new road, drive and lodge at the crossroads. The old road from the east has been relegated to acting as a second drive to Fairfield House, while to the west it has gone, its course marked only by field boundaries.

THE BUILDING SURVEY 1991-2001

Beginning in May 1993, early 20th-century roughcast rendering was stripped from all the elevations of the house to be replaced by a more suitable lime mortar render. This allowed the

structural history of the building to be studied and recorded in elevation drawings. The three elevations of the west wing were recorded in 1993; the south elevation of the north wing in 1994 and 1995; and the west and east elevations of the east wing in 1999 and 2001 (Fig. 7). A report on each stage of work was written (K.A. Rodwell, 1993, 1995, 1996 and 2001) and the account which follows is drawn entirely from those reports, extracts from which are shown in *italic*. Since these reports were written, however, a survey of the roof has been carried out and dendrochronological dating of its timbers have conclusively dated the last three of the four main construction periods identified in the survey. These can now be related with some confidence to the known owners of the house.

Phase 1; the late medieval manor house

The northern parts of the walls of the west wing appear to be the primary period of construction for which there is evidence. This masonry stands 22 feet (6.80m) high and there is evidence of a single window opening on its east side, with a sill at about 12 feet (3.80m) above ground level. The surviving masonry indicates a single story, high-roofed hall at least 52 feet (16m) long and 26 feet (8m) wide. The construction date is unknown, but it predates the stonework of Phase two.

The northern half of the west elevation of the west wing (Fig. 8) was constructed of lias rubble of variable size set in lime mortar; it was truncated to the south by phase 4 rebuilding and the uneven NW corner, without proper quoins, suggests that the original range has been shortened. There are no surviving original openings. The only contemporary features are two sets of three large putlog holes. A smaller area of similar walling survives between the windows of the east elevation (Fig. 8); a higher proportion of large blocks makes the junction with work of the next phase clear. There is part of an original window, its jamb (2m high) and sill formed of lias blocks; the head is missing. The opening (visible to 0.20m) is splayed and retains limewashed plaster. Beneath the sill is a band of eroded stonework which suggests the possibility of a former lean-to roof line. The strip of wall at the north end of the elevation may also belong to this phase and may include another opening.

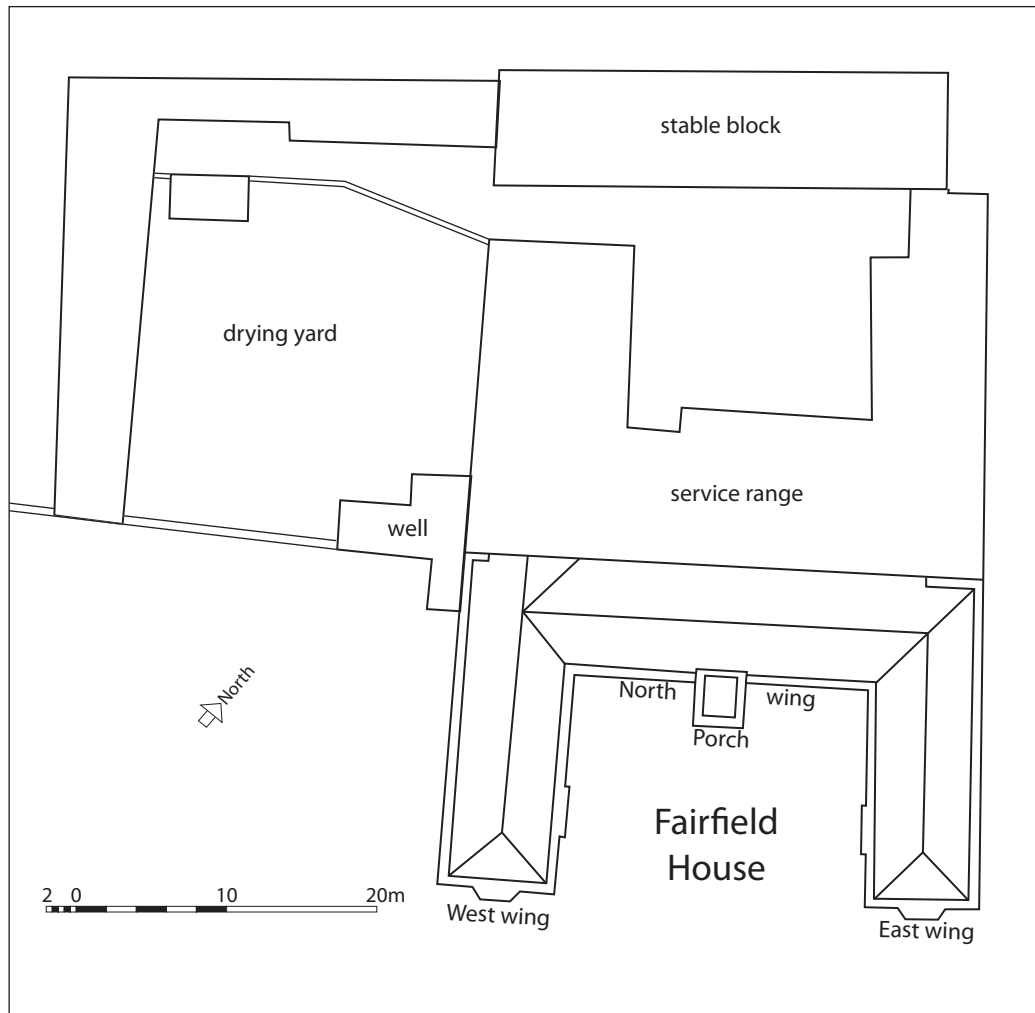


Fig. 7 Plan of Fairfield House with, in outline, the service ranges to the north.

Phase 2; building by Robert Verney 1504-1547

This was a rebuild and probably extension of the earlier hall, under a substantial, ornate oak roof, dated by dendrochronology to about 1525. This is during the ownership of Robert Verney, credited in Palmer's history (above) with much building work at Fairfield, including 'four fair chambers with a new buttery'. The same width as the earlier hall, it was at least 70 feet (21.5m) long. There is evidence of windows in both sides, indicating two floors, the upper floor open to the ornate roof (Fig. 9). The oriel windows at the south end appear to be of this phase. Evidence from the roof suggests an

internal division, the smaller southern part having a chimney breast. The West Annexe, against the west side of this building appears to have been built at the same time as these changes were made, and was entered from a doorway in the south-west corner of the larger of the two ground floor rooms.

The south end of the west wing was constructed of regularly coursed, squared lias rubble, set in lime mortar, with limestone quoins and dressings. The chimney stack and wall to the south were added to the east elevation (Fig. 8) and much of the older work was refaced, to add the chamfered plinth course, possibly remove older projections



Fig. 8 Elevations of the west wing (from a drawing by Kirsty Rodwell 1993)

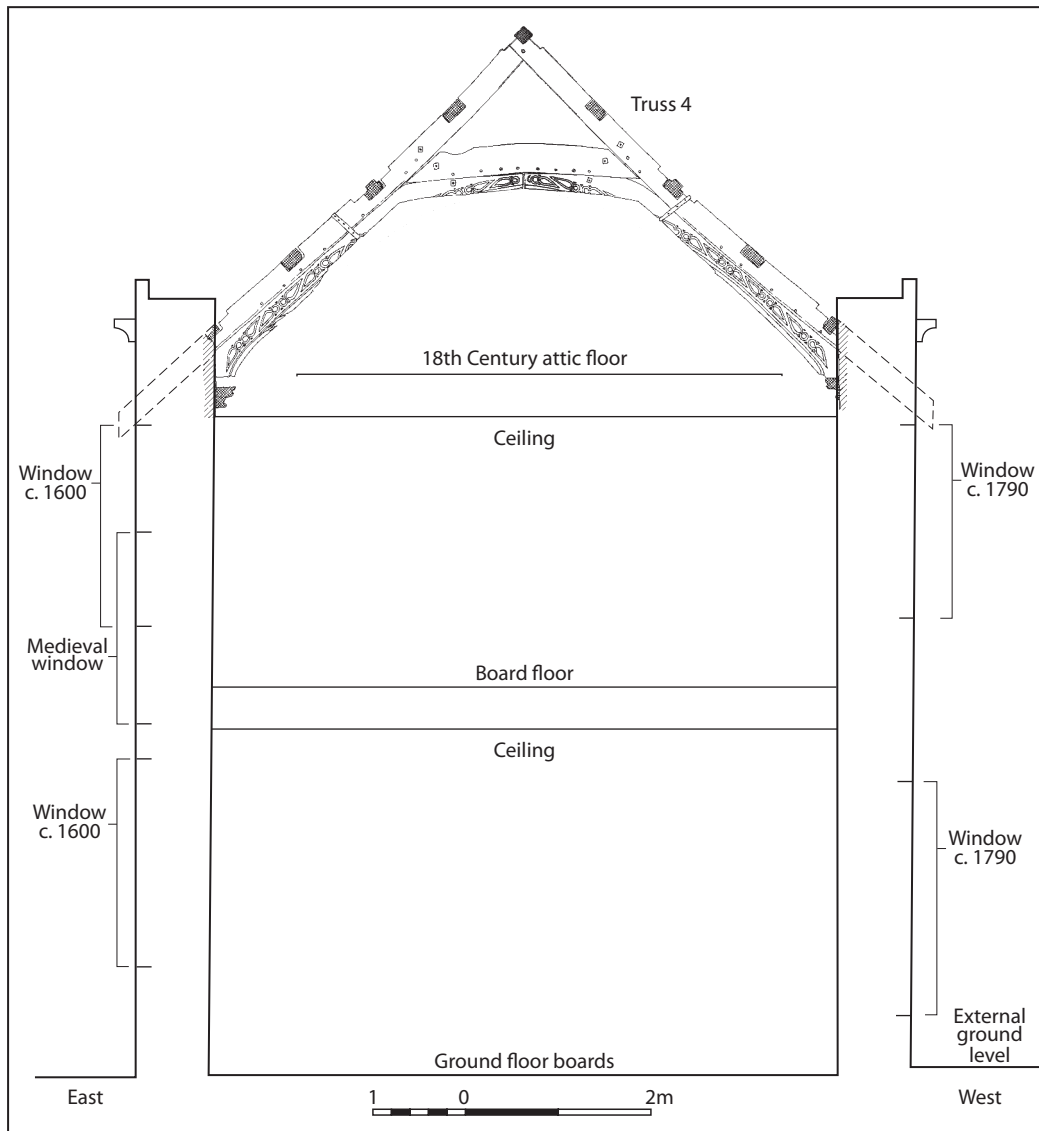


Fig. 9 Cross section of the west wing showing the early 16th-century roof timbers in relation to the existing floors

and insert windows. Part of the relieving arch for a ground floor window survives at the north end of the elevation, and the rebuilding of the upper wall suggests a first floor window for which there is no direct evidence. . South of the stack there is another complete relieving arch for a ground floor window.

The centrepiece of the south elevation is the two story canted oriel, which also employs limestone

quoins. The windows have been altered in Phases 3 and 4, but the continuous hood-mould, now dressed back, over the ground floor lights is original. On the SW corner is the scar of an external boundary wall 2.70m high.

On the west elevation there is evidence for a projecting wing, 5m from the SW corner and 7.5m wide externally. It is demarcated by the absence of

a plinth course and by the scar of the south wall, which is integral with this build (Fig. 8). The north wall has left no trace where it abutted the Phase 1 masonry, but is demarcated by the line of the Phase 4 blocking. Entry to this wing (the West Annexe) was by a door with a chamfered oak lintel, above which are traces of a relieving arch. Limewashed plaster survives on the reveals. There is a relieving arch for a ground floor window in the wall to the north and traces of another to the south.

Phase 3; the Elizabethan house, built by the Palmers, 1571-1640

This phase began following the marriage of Elizabeth Verney to William Palmer in 1571 and saw the construction of the north wing with a central porch and an east wing mirroring the dimensions of the earlier building which now became the west wing. With matching windows throughout, it presented a symmetrical aspect to the south, from which it was approached (Fig. 4). Dendrochronological dating of the roof timbers of each of the new wings, however, shows that the timbers are from trees felled around 1630, so the work seems not to have been completed until then, under the ownership of Elizabeth's grandson.

In the west wing, work of this period was confined to the windows: three pairs of a standard six-light pattern were inserted into the east wall. Two of these replaced pre-existing windows and utilized their relieving arches, but the middle pair was new and the relieving arch to the ground floor window was formed of wider, more regular blocks (Fig. 8). The lower windows had returned hood-moulds and sills 0.30m above their present level. The sills of the upper windows have been replaced, but not lowered. Windows of the same pattern were inserted into the oriel, but only one large window appears to have been inserted into the west wall (hood-mould traces; ground floor north). A single low light south of the present garden door, with a stone surround similar to the others, is probably also of this period.

In the south elevation of the north wing with its central porch (Figs 2 and 4), the wall is built of *lias* rubble with limestone dressings, set in lime mortar with a coarse aggregate, and is essentially a single build, butted against the west wing. Like the west wing it has a plinth course, but set at a slightly higher level and with an ogee moulding which is continuous around the porch. West of the porch there are four eight-light windows; those

on the ground floor have dressed-back hoods below relieving arches. The rubble is coursed into building lifts between the windows, indicating that they are integral and not inserted. The porch is of the same build extending to the base of the present parapet. Ashlar is used on the ground floor for a doorcase with a four-centred head and semi-octagonal stops, surmounted by a classical entablature and flanked by fluted pilasters on deep plinths. Over the doorcase is a recessed panel with ogee moulding and sloped sill which formerly held a coat of arms, later replaced in brick. A limestone lintel was probably a hood mould without returns. The six light first floor window is of the same type as those to the west, with a cut-back returned hood mould and integral relieving arch.

East of the porch where there are two windows the full height of the wall, there is no record of the wall following the removal of the render. It can only be assumed that it showed the same structural phases as the rest of this wing.

The contemporary east wing is built of *lias* rubble with limestone dressings and has a continuous ogee-moulded plinth course. The west elevation has three pairs of six-light, mullioned and transomed windows and a projecting chimney stack, mirroring the east elevation of the west wing, as does the south elevation with its oriel window, completing the symmetry of the building's southern aspect. Very little of the wing's eastern elevation appears to be original, being largely rebuilt in Phase 4. Of the five paired windows symmetrical to the elevation only the northern ground floor window retains any original fabric, with six-lights, a cut back hood mould and a stone rubble relieving arch. A narrower rubble relieving arch to the south may be from a four light window or possibly an original door in this side of the building. At the north end of the wing the plinth course returns into the wall and there is part of an arched opening, probably a door, formed in *lias* with a chamfered surround. This indicates that the wing was originally longer.

A number of small alterations to the fabric of the Phase 3 structure were evident, which fairly clearly preceded the major changes of Phase 4. Included as a separate phase in the original reports they are included here as an element of Phase 3. In the east wall of the east wing a central doorway was inserted, possibly by cutting down below an existing window. In the west elevation of the west wing, two small openings were inserted into the wall, north of the projecting West Annexe (Fig. 8).

Phase 4; the remodelling of the house under John Palmer-Acland 1771-1800

Following the demolition of the West Annexe, the house was remodelled with a parapet and cornice around all three wings and new windows. The roof was modified with hips at the south end of each wing and at the junction between the wings. The timbers used at the hip were felled in Spring 1779 and the documentary record includes bills for extensive work, including demolition at this period.

Late 18th-century alterations made extensive use of brick, as well as reused stone. In the west wing (Figs 8 and 9), a new cornice and parapet were added; windows on the east and south elevations were modified by removing the hoods and lowering the sills and provision was made for eight new windows (one subsequently replaced by a door) of the same pattern in the west wall, by creating openings with brick relieving arches. The West Annexe was demolished and the former internal wall largely rebuilt to incorporate six new flues to two new chimney stacks.

The same changes were evident in the north and east wings. On the porch *the three light upper window (although probably reused) is an insertion, integral with the rebuilt parapet. There is a quantity of reused 16th-century coping and window mouldings incorporated into the wall over the window head. The cornice and parapet are of this phase and the finials are contemporary, although they echo details of the doorcase.* On the east elevation of the east wing, the inserted central door is replaced by a window and a new doorcase built to the north, possible on the site of the original Phase 3 door. The cornice and parapet continue a short distance around the north-east corner which has been renewed above the level of the roof line of the brick range that runs north from here. The irregular junction between this brick work and the Phase 3 masonry of the east wing suggests that it replaced an earlier structure that continued the line of the west wing.

The service buildings to the north of the main house

The earliest plan of the house, dated to the middle of the 18th century, shows these buildings as the mirror image of the main house (Fig. 3). It is possible that elements of the western range are medieval, being attached to the identified medieval structure of the west wing of the main house, but the fabric is simply not accessible for survey. Visual

inspection of the northern part of the west wall of the range shows a structural sequence, but none that can be related to the phases of the main house described above. The eastern service range, which in its current form is a brick built structure of the 19th century, clearly replaced an earlier structure and there is some evidence that this was built at the same time as the north and east wings of the main house (Phase 3, 1571-1640), though its size at that time is unknown.

THE SURVEY OF THE ROOF

The survey was confined to the three wings of the historic house, being an east and west wing with a connecting north wing (Fig. 7 and Fig. 2). Each wing has a ground floor, an upper floor and an attic floor beneath the slope of the roof. The roof is built with large oak trusses and purlins throughout, with a hip at the south end of each wing and (until 1991) at the junctions between the wings. The attic floor is lit by dormer windows. The timbers of the roof reflect more than one period of construction and the survey was carried out to try to understand and date these periods.

As part of the restoration and repair of the building that began in 1991, the roof of the west wing was stripped for the repair and restoration of its major timbers and the refashioning of the hip at its north end. This work and the clearing away of the partitions of the existing attic floor revealed the nature of the late medieval roof of the west wing. Restoration and repair of the north wing began in 1994, followed by the east wing in 1999. For both these phases of work the architects Jeremy and Caroline Gould drew up external elevations of the building, detailed plans of the attic floor with the position of the roof trusses marked and numbered as well as technical drawings of the roof trusses which required repair. Though some detail of the roof timbers was recorded this was not a formal survey of the historic roof and the medieval roof of the west wing remained unrecorded at this time, though its timbers were left exposed to view in the attic.

In 2009, the Heritage Service of Somerset County Council arranged a survey of the roof of the west wing, which was carried out by Lewis Brown, Chartered Land Surveyors, in October of that year. Using the latest in electronic measuring technology, this produced a computerized overall plan of the roof timbers but no elevations were

drawn or written description made of the timbers or carpentry. Subsequently, funding was provided by English Heritage to sample the various sections of the roof for dendrochronological analysis and dating. This work was done in 2012 by Alison Arnold and Robert Howard of the English Heritage Scientific Dating Team, and to provide a framework upon which to locate the samples, the timbers of the north and east wings were planned in detail by Alan Graham, using tapes, a plumb-bob and a pencil. Selected trusses were also drawn in each of the three wings to record details of construction and all the drawings were annotated to record carpentry details and differences between the elements of the roof. This work drew together all the earlier records and with the precise dating provided by the successful dendrochronological survey, an account of the structural history of the whole roof can be made.

The early 16th-century roof of the West Wing

The roof of the west wing is clearly the oldest part of the structure and the dendrochronological analysis gives a felling date for its oak timbers of 1508-1528. There are seven extant trusses, numbers 1-7, each comprising an A-frame of timbers 7-8 inches wide by 10 inches deep (Fig. 10, 1-7 and Fig. 11). The frames are fixed by slightly arched cross-pieces of a similar width but deeper at 12 inches; two oak pegs fix the mortice and tenon joints at each end of it. The undersides of the trusses have long mortices cut in them to take the tenons of the arched braces, fixed by rows of pegs. The braces are 6-7 inches wide and the full span of the roof is covered by two timbers, each from the moulded wall plate to a butt joint at the apex. All seven trusses share this method of construction and differ only in the extent of the carved decoration on the braces. Trusses 4-7 have decorative carving on both faces and a moulded edge (Fig. 11); Truss 3 is plain, but has a comparable moulding on only the northern side of its edge. Trusses 1 and 2 are also plain but have moulding on both sides of the edge, heavier and more complex than that on trusses 4-7. All the braces have been damaged and cut away to provide head room when the small rooms in the attic were built (Fig. 12).

The apex of each truss is cut for a squared ridge timber up to 5 inches across (not easily visible). Each side of the truss supports four purlins fitted into lap joints on their upper side. The purlins are 8-9 inches wide and 5 inches deep with a rounded,

stopped chamfer on their lower edges. At the north end of the roof, four curved sway braces survive in the angle between truss and purlin, being timbers 10 inches wide and 2.5 inches deep. They fit into lap joints cut into the upper face of purlin and truss, and these joints are visible on all seven trusses and the surviving original purlins. These braces would essentially have formed two rows of circles (though ovals in the longer bays at the south end of the roof) along each side of the roof.

The seven surviving trusses form six bays of differing width; the four northerly ones are six foot between trusses, the two southerly eight foot (Fig. 10). Joints for purlins and braces on the north side of Truss 7 and the stump of a truncated purlin show that this roof had continued further north. At six foot wide, a further three bays would put the gable end of the wing just north of the present end wall, which is probably a later rebuild contemporary with the construction of the north and east wings (The Building Survey, above).

To the south, there are two bays eight foot wide, but that the roof continued as a third bay to the south of Truss 1 is clear. The two upper purlins on the east slope and the three upper purlins on the west slope of the roof match the purlins of the rest of the roof. The top two on each side have been cut off to form a hip (see below), but the third purlin on the west is complete and shows the carpentry joint to slot into a truss eight foot south of Truss 1 (the other purlins of the bay are recent replacement timbers). The position of this truss, however, does not match the position of the present gable end, suggesting a later extension of the wing by up to 2 feet (0.70m), though the survey of the building's walls showed no evidence of this (Fig. 8).

The existing trusses show a late medieval roof of six bays but there is clear evidence of another bay to both the south and the north, giving an overall length of at least 57 feet (17.5 metres), with an internal span of 21 feet (6.4 metres). If there were three bays north of Truss 7, which is possible, if not indeed probable on the evidence of the walls, this would increase the length to just over 70 feet (21.5 metres). The roof was substantially built with oak timbers and lavish use of oak in the curved sway braces of which only four remain but would have numbered 160. On the basis of the width of the roof bays and on the carved decoration of the truss braces, the roof is in two parts; the narrower bays of the northern part of the roof (perhaps up to seven bays) and the three wider bays of the southern part. The four trusses in this northern part

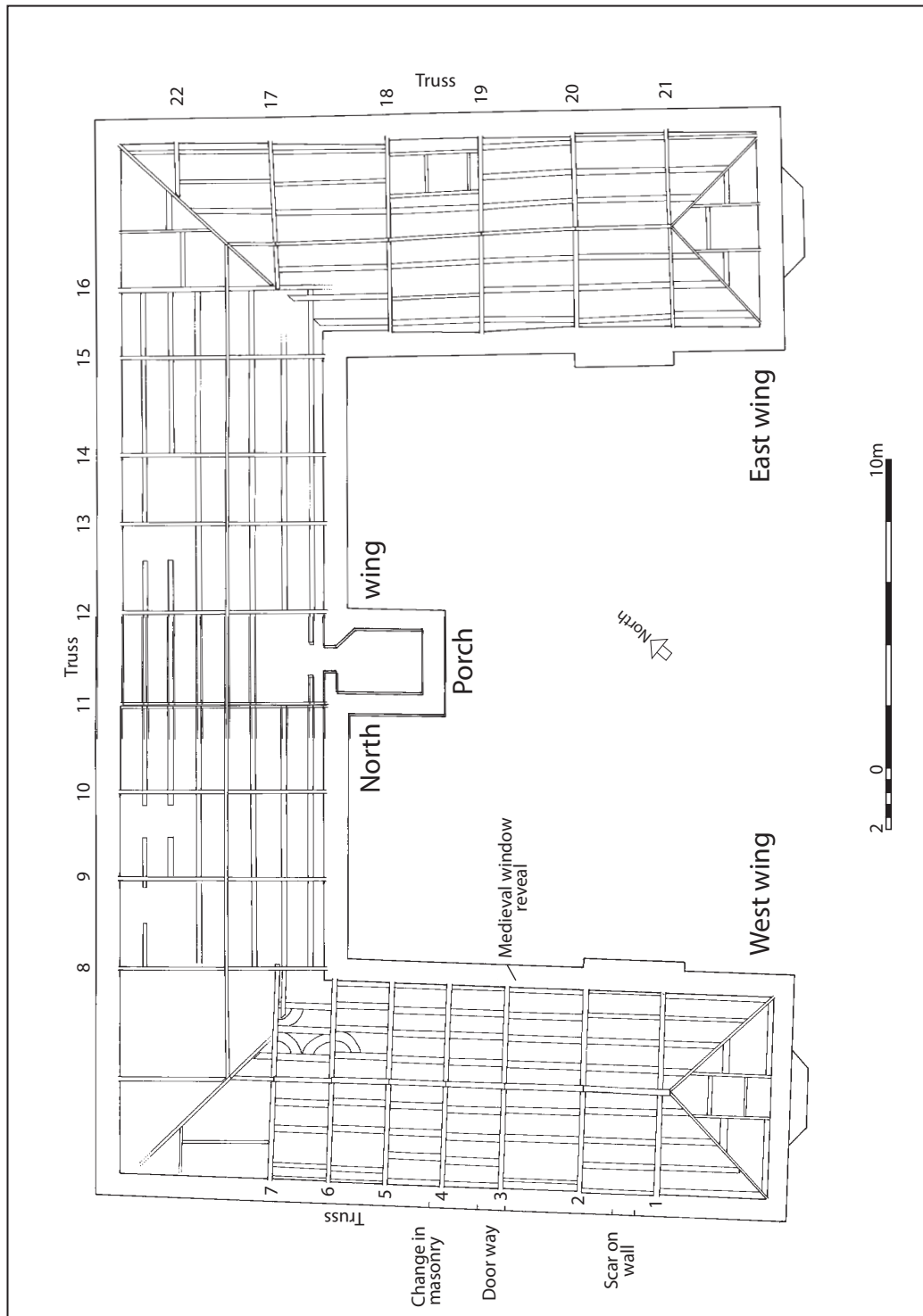


Fig. 10 Plan of the roof timbers

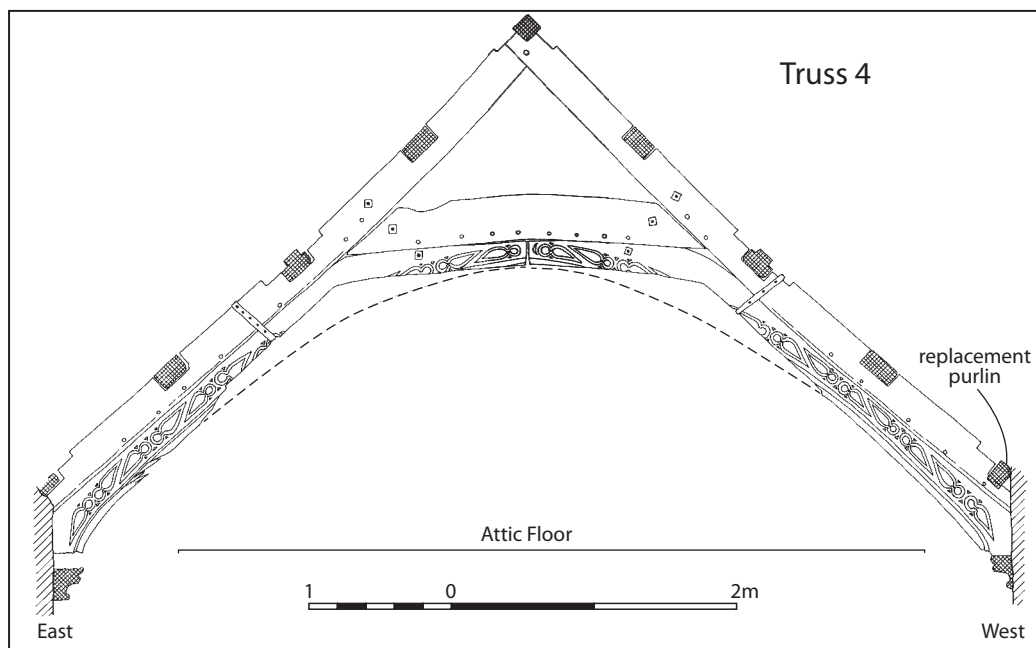


Fig. 11 The early 16th-century roof of the west wing; elevation of Truss 4



Fig. 12 The decorated beams of the early 16th-century roof, showing Trusses 7, 6 and 5, looking from the south-west (photo by Bob Croft)

all have elaborately carved braces, whereas Truss 3, between the two sections of roof, is plain except for a moulding on its northern edge only (on Trusses 4-7, the moulding is symmetrical on both edges). It is probable, therefore, that this truss lay against an internal gable, dividing the space beneath the roof into two chambers. A dendrochronological date was obtained from elements of Trusses 1-4, all having a felling date of 1508-1528. This suggests a single period of construction, above a first floor hall of two chambers.

The 17th-century Roof of the North and East Wing

The evidence of the Building Survey (above) clearly showed that the north and east wings were added to the existing west wing. This extensive period of building began in the late 16th century with a date of 1589 on the porch central to the north wing, but when it was completed is less certain (above, The Documentary Evidence). The dendrochronological dating gives a consistent felling date of 1627-1652 for the timbers of the east wing roof and 1630 for the north wing. This would allow a slight time lag between the two roofs and construction differences between the two roofs could support this. Though the junction of the two roofs has been much altered with the construction of the existing hip, what remains could indicate that the east roof was built up to the (thus slightly earlier) north roof.

The roof of the north range was the most difficult to access and examine because of the ceiling of the partitioned rooms of the attic floor beneath it. There are nine identical trusses (Fig. 10, nos 8-16) each being an A-frame of 4.5 inch by 10 inch oak timbers, each with a single, curved cross brace, 7 foot 6 inches above the attic floor. All the joints are mortise and tenons held by two oak pegs. There is a 4.5 inch square ridge timber and three purlins on each side measuring 4.5 by 8 inches. Tenons cut on the ends of the purlins have a sloping upper side to fit mortises in the centre of the rafters. The spacing of the trusses 8-15 is regular, at 9 feet 6 inches and symmetrical around the central porch tower, except for Truss 14 which is too far west. No reason for this could be seen nor whether the truss had been moved at a later date. Dendrochronological dates on purlins between Trusses 14-15 and 15-16 are, however, the same. Truss 8 is the westernmost Truss, and a single purlin to the west of it could be seen running up to what would have been the valley in the angle between the west and north wing roofs.

The older, west wing roof would have continued north to a gable (Truss 7 lies within the line of the north roof); the purlins of the north roof would have continued to its eastern slope. Most of the visible timber at this north-west angle of the house is however, modern, dating from the modifications of the early 1990s when the existing, late 18th-century hip was replaced with a north gable.

At the east end of the roof, Truss 16 lies only 7 feet east of Truss 15 (the same space as between trusses 13 and 14), within the line of the East wing roof. It appears to be a complete truss, its southern end resting on an internal wall below. Mortises in its east face show that purlins had existed west of it, though none remains. Given the position of Truss 16, it is not impossible that this roof had continued east to a gable end, being completed before the east wing roof.

The east wing roof has the remains of six major trusses (Fig. 10 nos.17-21 and 22). Of these, Trusses 18-21 appear to be in their original positions, with a regular spacing of 9 feet 6 inches, matching the north roof. Each of these trusses is an A-frame of oak timbers 5 by 10 inches, each with two cross braces, the lower one having a clearance of 6 feet above the attic floor (Fig. 13). The principal rafters have a mortise and tenon joint at the apex, with a single peg. The cross braces are held with dove-tailed lap joints set into the rafter, and with a single peg. At the apex, a ridge beam may have been set into an open mortise, but this could not always be seen. Three purlins on each side of the roof were 5 by 7 inch timbers, their ends cut to tenons for mortises central to the rafters. As with the north roof, the upper face of the tenons is bevelled. At the south end of the roof the five original purlins (the eastern purlin is a replacement) have been cut for the present hip, but would originally have slotted into a truss on the gable or into the stonework itself.

North of Truss 18, three bays at 9 feet 6 inches would extend up to the north wall, but the existing two trusses, 17 and 22, are unevenly spaced and may have been put in with the construction of the hip. Truss 17 has the same mortises for the purlins as the rest of the roof, but has only a single cross brace, with no evidence of lapped dovetails. At the west end it has been cut off and the end seems to rest on the slope of Truss 16. Truss 22, of which there is only the east end, has mortises on its northern side, indicating the positions of purlins. Dendrochronological dates from all six trusses appear to be coeval, with a felling date for the timber of 1627-1652, so the irregularities in the roof

may be due to changes when the present hip was put on the north-east corner of the house.

The hip roof of the late 18th century

The existing hips at the south end of both east and west wings have always been considered contemporary with the parapet added around the top of the house in the late 18th century. Dendrochronological dating of the timbers used on the hips has confirmed this, with a felling date of 1777-1796 for the west roof and spring 1779 for the east roof. The oak timbers used for the angle of the hip are 3 inches thick and at least this deep. In the east roof they have been nailed to the apex of Truss 21 and the cut off middle purlins of the original roof have been used as purlins on the slope of the hip, either side of the dormer window. A similar situation can be seen at the west wing with some reuse of the cut-off original purlins.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

Autumn 2009 saw the Fairfield Community Archaeology Project's final season of fieldwork.

The project began in 2005 as a means to enable under-16 year-olds to experience professionally led archaeological fieldwork, investigating the development of the grounds of Fairfield House. It was initially offered by nearby Kilve Court Education Centre as a five day residential course for eleven young people aged 13 to 15, led by Rachel Shaw, with Alan Graham directing the excavations. The site proved ideal for what was primarily an educational project. Documentary evidence provided a chronological framework and the maps in particular allowed the students to work out how the house and grounds had changed over time. The archaeological excavations followed from this study, with trenches located to examine the nature of features shown on the earliest map (Fig. 3) but absent from the later map (Fig. 5). The level lawns and pastures of the grounds made the location and opening of excavation trenches easy, providing a safe, comfortable working environment and the house itself served as a wonderful backdrop to the whole project (Fig. 2). The residential course based at Kilve was at the core of the excavation project throughout its five years, with a total of 45 young students taking part. In the project's second and third years, day courses were offered to local groups

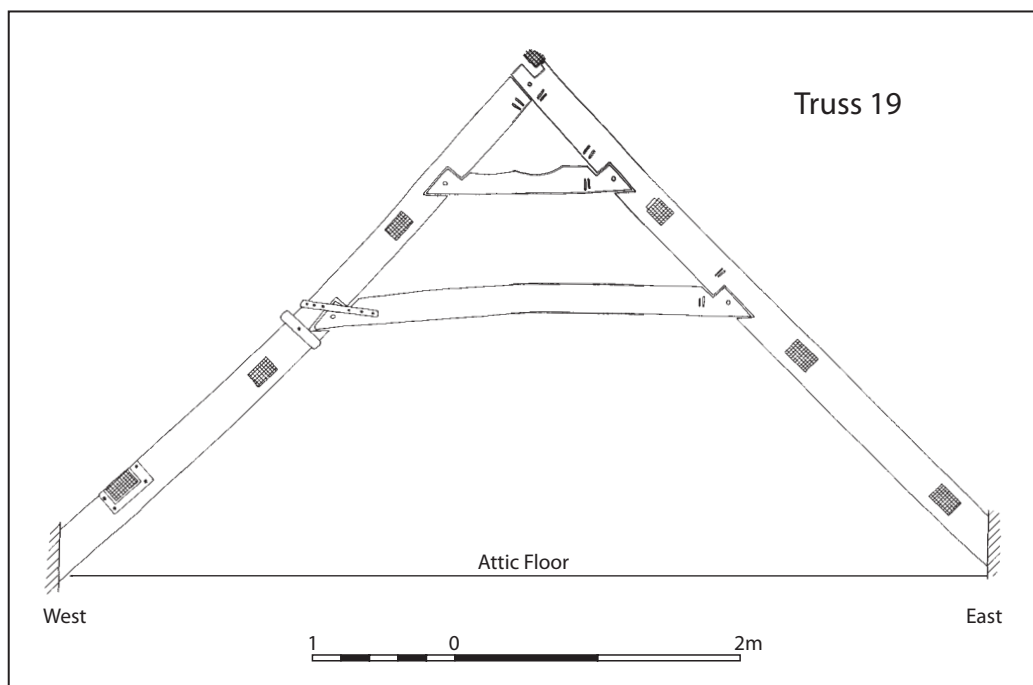


Fig. 13 The early 17th-century roof of the east wing; elevation of Truss 19

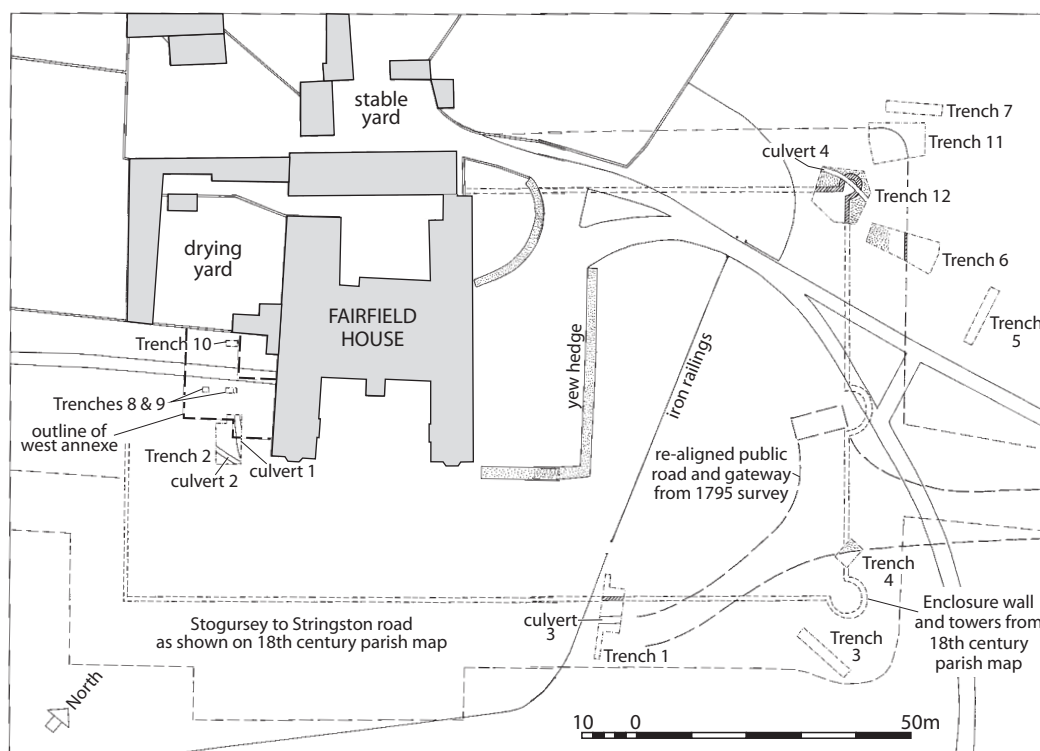


Fig. 14 Fairfield House and the location of Trenches 1-12 in relation to the features shown on the 18th-century maps

and individuals following the Kilve week, and in 2008, what was now a three week project offered day courses to A-level students of archaeology from local colleges and a week of excavation experience to members of local archaeological groups. The concept and approach proved successful and during the final year, the field work lasted four weeks and a total of 342 people, of all ages and levels of experience, participated or contributed in some way.

Throughout the five years of the field work a balance was struck between the educational aspiration of providing a coherent, enjoyable and fulfilling experience of archaeological field work to all the participants, and the practical needs of an archaeological field project. An extensive account of the educational rationale behind the project, the practical way that this was achieved and the course of the archaeological field work has been written (Graham and Shaw, forthcoming). The excavation trenches aimed to examine two elements shown on the early map (Fig. 14); the walled enclosure

south and east of the house (for which a licence was granted in 1473) and the roads that skirted it; and the west annexe. The south-east part of the enclosure was examined in Trenches 1, 3 and 4 in 2005-6 and 2009; the north-eastern part in trenches 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12 in 2008-9. The site of the west annexe was explored in trenches 2, 8, 9 and 10 in 2005 and 2008. All the trenches revealed the red-brown rounded gravels of the local Head deposits, with variation in the north-east where bands or pockets of sandy clay were encountered.

The walled enclosure south and east of the house

The wall and towers

The nature of this was best shown in Trench 12, which exposed the remains of the wall and tower of the enclosure's north-east corner (Figs 15 and 16). A single course of both the northern and eastern arms of the boundary wall was exposed at a depth of c.0.20m. Both were approximately 0.80m wide



Fig. 15 The north-east corner of the enclosure of 1473, as revealed in Trench 12. Internally the clean surface of the geology; externally the cobbled surfaces. Culvert 4 cuts across the tower from top left to right. Scales 2 metres

and comprised laid and faced Lias limestone blocks enclosing a fragmentary rubble core bonded with clay. The junction of the two arms was marked by the incomplete footings of a roughly circular tower, approximately 3 metres in diameter, which was partly quarried out to the north and bisected by a substantial drainage culvert (Culvert 4). The opening into the tower was very narrow at 0.35m (not much more than a foot). The walls and tower appear to have been a single period of construction, though within the curve of the tower wall there appears to have been an added foundation, perhaps for a seat or ledge within the shelter of the wall. No evidence of the date of the construction of the wall was recovered.

Externally to the east a cobbled surface of worn limestone set on edge survived, 1204, at a level of 38.45m OD against the wall face, but sloping down gradually to the east. Further north and east was a surface of finer cobbles, 1205, extending around the outer face of the tower. This surface was comparable with the metallised surfaces of the road, 619 and 609 in Trench 6 to the east (Fig. 19) and it may be that

the coarser cobbling formed a hard standing along the wall between the projecting towers and was not the road as such. A similar situation was apparent to the north; a rather fragmented Lias cobbling 1207, in the angle of the tower and wall giving place to a finer metalling 1206, to the north.

The southern side of the enclosure was located in Trench 1 (Fig. 14), where the line of the wall was represented only by the trench 68 from which the masonry had been quarried for re-use. This was 0.90m wide and 0.50m deep with vertical sides and a flat base (Fig. 18). Its lowest infill comprised debris of limestone rubble and mortar fragments 59 (Fig. 25), clearly remnants of the destroyed wall, overlain by loamy infills 58 and 57. Fragments of Lias limestone with attached mortar suggested a mortared construction.

Levelling within the enclosure

Within the line of the north-east corner and within the tower, the surface of a clean sandy clay (part of the geological sequence) lay directly beneath

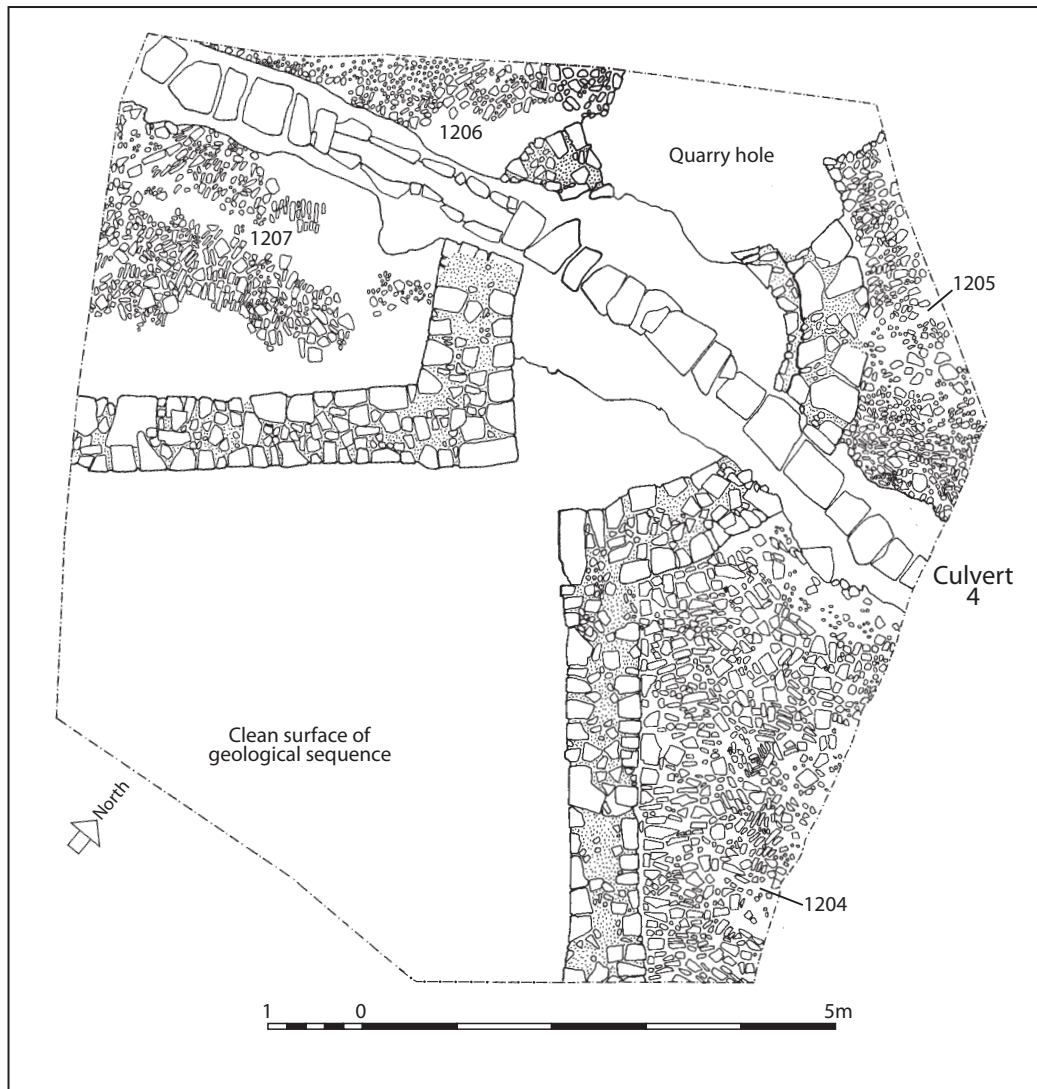


Fig. 16 Plan of the wall and tower at the north-east corner of the enclosure of 1473, as excavated in Trench 12

the existing topsoil at a level of c.38.55m OD. No evidence of a contemporary internal land surface remained and the extent to which this area has been levelled down, either during the construction of the wall or subsequently, is not clear. To the south, however, in Trench 1, there was evidence of levelling up within the line of the wall. In the northern part of the trench, extending at least 6 metres from the back of the wall, were layers of clay and stone rubble, 56 and 55 (Fig. 18). These

were not present to the south of the wall line, and were probably therefore deposited against the inside face of the wall. They lay above the surface of the geological strata at a height of 38.08m OD and were 0.35m thick, bringing the ground level up to 38.43m OD, very close to the height of the ground within the tower to the north-east. The lower layer, 56, comprised large fragments of limestone in blue-grey clay, evidently derived from the Lias clay that underlies the area. The upper layer, 55, contained

only lumps of blue clay within a dark rubbly loam. Both layers contained building material, including wall plaster and fragments of glazed, late medieval roof-ridge tile and slate, with a scatter of animal bone from the upper layer. Pottery sherds from a number of vessels were recovered with sherds from the same vessel in both layers. The date of the vessels appears consistently to be c.1600, more

than a century later than the 1473 licence to build the wall and towers. It appears therefore, that this levelling was contemporary with the major rebuilding of the house in the late 16th century and early 17th century, perhaps indicating a re-working of the gardens at this time. Alternatively, the wall was not built until this period.

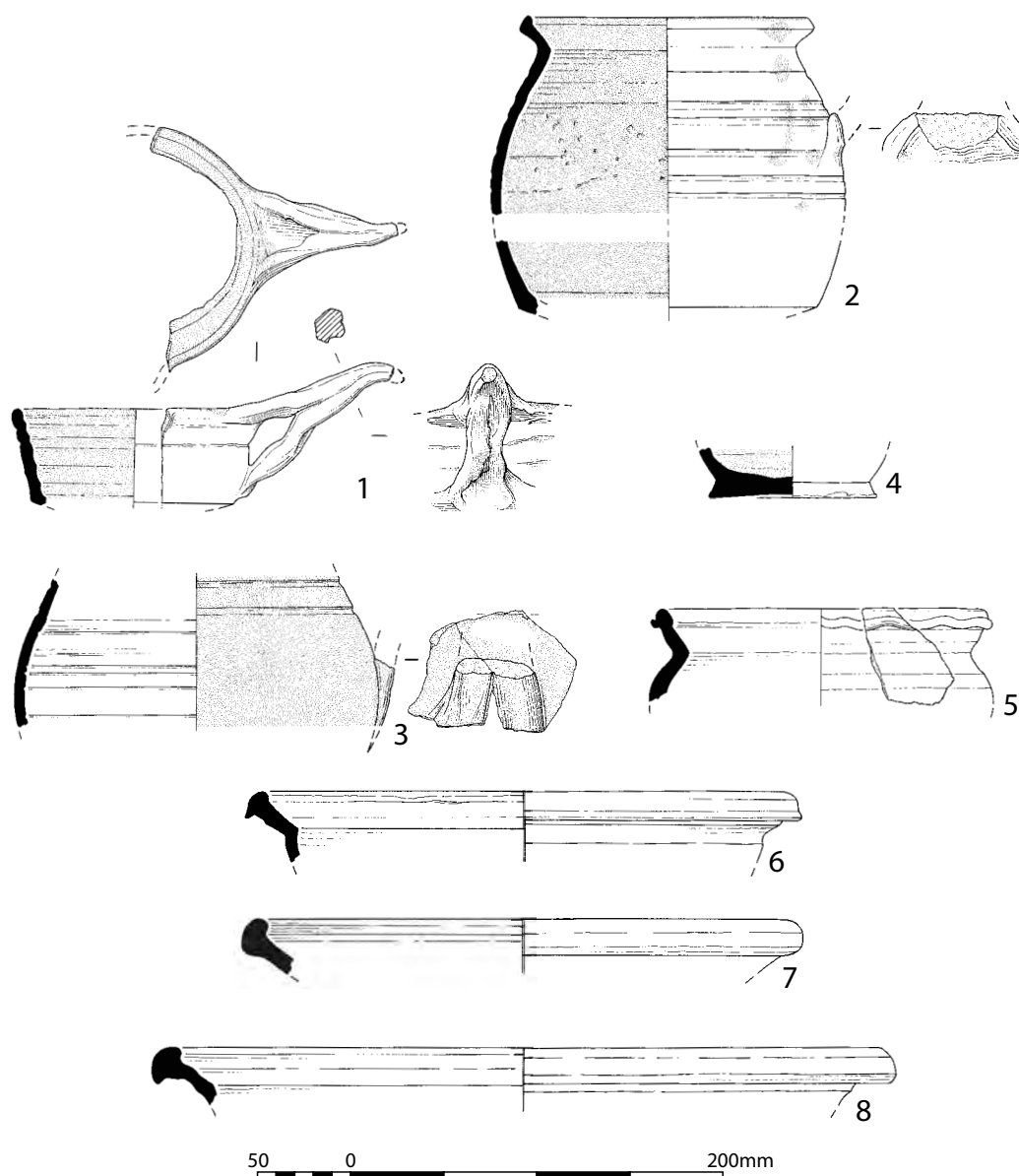


Fig. 17 Pottery from levelling layers within the line of the enclosure. At 1/4 scale

Pottery from levelling layers 55 and 56: by Jo Draper

The pottery group dates from around 1600, fitting well with the material from Exeter of that date. The range of forms is typical of this period, but the distinctive pan (maybe with feet), no.1, is hard to parallel apart from the distinctive handle.

Illustrated pottery, Fig. 17.

Unless otherwise stated all vessels are in good regular earthenware fabric, usually red, and all pots seem very similar. Surfaces are reddish, often dark red.

- 1 Shallow pan with handle, and maybe with three long feet. Amber glaze internally. No blackening, which suggests it has not been used over a fire as one would expect. The very unusual handle can only be paralleled in the South Somerset type series from Exeter (Allan 1984, p. 150, Fig. 64 no. 5) – on a pipkin with tripod legs. This dates from the 16th century – this pan may be later.
- 2 Chamber pot, olive green glaze internally with splashes externally, shape matches those from groups of c. 1600 at Exeter (Allan 1984, Fig. 87 no. 2005).
- 3 Chamber pot or wide jug: the external olive glaze and the ridges on the unglazed interior suggest that this is a jug, although the profile and handle are very like no. 2. Intense fine throwing rings internally.
- 4 Base, grey fabric, rather pitted olive green glaze internally. One of two similar bases present.
- 5 Jar, no glaze on surviving sherd.
- 6 Dish, unglazed, rough and wobbly line of slip up and over rim. One of two such vessels present.
7. and 8. Unglazed dishes.

Metalled road south of the enclosure

In trench 1, south of the line of the wall the clean surface of the subsoil was overlain by a compact gravel surface, 71 (Fig. 18). This was c.1.30m wide and extended from the line of the wall face to the sloping edge of a broad hollow 70, parallel to the wall line. Only the northern edge of this hollow was exposed, but it was at least 4.50m wide (the evidence from Trenches 6, 11 and 12, and the 18th-century map indicate an overall width of c.9 metres) with a level base at c.37.60m OD, 0.50m below the cobbled surface 71. Within this hollow and lying on the surface of the head gravels was a sequence of at least four, very compact metalled surfaces each formed by a thickness of c.0.10m of coarse pebbles of local origin (generally Old Red Sandstone from the local Head deposits) in a sandy matrix (Fig. 18, 86). These were excavated only minimally in the southern part of Trench 1, where they were extant to the south of the later trench for the culvert. The surface of the top layer, 0.70m below the present land surface, had a distinct slope down to the south, but whether this was a camber is unclear.

The metalling did not extend north to the edge of the hollow (its precise northern extent had been removed by the trench for the later culvert), but between the slightly raised bank of the surfaced road and the edge of the hollow was what was essentially a ditch. In the base of this lay a thin band of dark loam, comparable to the dark loam above surface 71, adjacent to the wall. Though these layers may represent a soil and turf cover of the area between road and wall, the subsequent layers of rubbly loam were characterized by bands of mortar fragments (Fig. 18, 67, 63 and 64), derived either from the weathering and decay of the wall, or perhaps its demolition or alteration. An overlying layer of dark, relatively stone free-loam (62) slopes down south towards the extant road metalling, finally obscuring the hollow between the road and the wall.

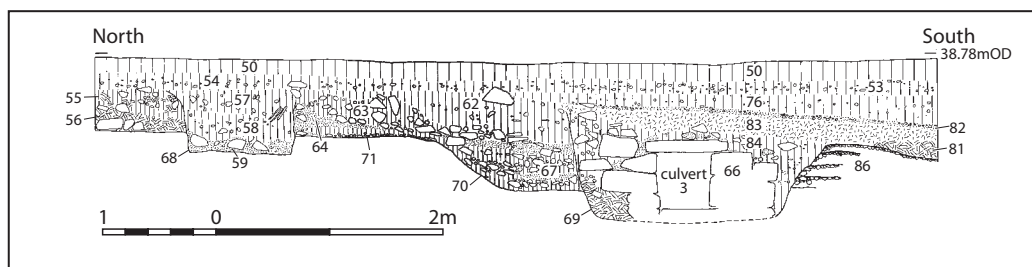


Fig. 18 Section of Trench 1 showing the foundation trench 68 on the line of the enclosure wall, the metalling 86 of the public road and the later stone culvert

No pottery or other artefacts was recovered from these layers.

It is not known whether the hollow pre-existed the road metalling, being dug as a token moat around the outside of the wall, or whether it was dug specifically for the diverted road.

The metalled road to the north-east of the enclosure

The cobbled surfaces immediately adjacent to the walls of the enclosure in Trench 12 have been described above. Trenches 6 and 11 (Fig. 14), to the east and north-east revealed the surfaces of a metalled road, and demonstrated what precisely the lines on the Stogursey parish map (Fig. 3) represented. Trenches 5 and 7, lying further east and north revealed no archaeological features.

In Trench 6, a sequence of layers of gravel metalling was excavated (Figs 19 and 20). Immediately inside the enclosure wall in Trench 12, the surface of the geological sequence was found below the topsoil at a height of 38.55m OD.

Some 12m to the east in Trench 6 it lay at c.38.25m OD, indicating a natural fall of the ground surface eastwards. Between these two points, however, the level has been reduced by as much as 0.45m and the primary metalling of the roadway lies above the Head deposits at c. 38.10m OD. As was the case with the road to the south, this road also appears to have been deliberately set below the contemporary ground surface, but whether this was the original purpose of the hollow is not known.

The primary metalling 619 formed a band at least 5m wide, with a sloping eastern side, and consisted of coarse, local pebbles, including some limestone, with a very hard even surface. How it related to the surface 1204 which lay adjacent to the enclosure wall is not known, but it was at least 0.15m lower than it. It was overlain by a resurfacing of finer, compact rounded gravel, 609, which extended further to the east, perhaps representing a widening of the road. Its surface sloped consistently down to the east and a third layer of metalling, 613, of mixed rubble and pebbles appeared to be a levelling up of this sloping surface, being a band only 2.60m wide



Fig. 19 Trench 6, the retaining wall 606 which defined the eastern side of the hollow around the enclosure with the metalling of the road. Left of the scales is the rubble from the collapsed/demolished wall. Scales 2 metres, looking south

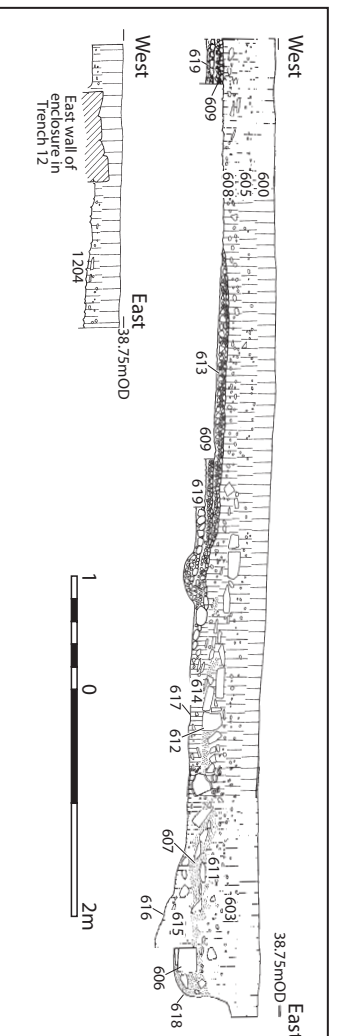


Fig. 20 Long section of Trench 6 and short section of Trench 12, across the top of the demolished enclosure wall

set along its eastern side. Layer 613 contained small earthenware sherds and a fragment of a cream ware handle dateable to the later 18th century, giving a useful likely timespan for the maintenance of the road. It also contained fragments of a thick-walled garden pot, in heavily sanded fabric, comparable to sherds of a glazed pot from Trench 4 to the south (layer 201). Ornamental garden pots such as these occur from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Beyond the metalled surfaces to the east the hollow continued for a further 3 metres, with a small shallow ditch, 616, defining its eastern side. This had a dark, clayey loam infill, 615, which spread west to the road edge as layer 614 (Fig. 20). The layers contained no artefacts. At some stage, the eastern edge of the hollow was redefined with a stone wall 606, built of Lias limestone blocks in hard yellow mortar, forming a single face with rubble behind. This was built as a retaining wall against the higher ground to the east and may not have extended much above that level. It is this wall that is shown as a boundary on the parish map, forming a playing card corner around the enclosure's north-eastern corner. This evenly curved corner was revealed in Trench 11 (Fig. 14), as an area of demolition infill against the top of the geological layers to north and east, but was not excavated to show the remains of the wall or road itself.

The site of the west annexe; Trench 2

In 2005 the trench was set out as a 3 metre square located using the mid 18th-century map (Fig. 3) to cross the line of the south wall of the annexe (Fig. 14). Only the eastern half was excavated further than the removal of the topsoil, and of this only the southern half was taken to a remotely

conclusive stage. The trench was then backfilled. Following the geophysical survey of this area in 2007, a larger trench was opened by machine in 2008 to pursue further the elusive remains of the west annexe suggested by the survey. At 5 metres by 7 metres it lay mainly to the south of the earlier trench, and was machine excavated to a depth of about 0.60m, removing most of the layers of tipped infill identified in the original digging. The excavation which followed conclusively demonstrated the absence of any structural remains of the west annexe. The remains of two stone-lined culverts were, however, found, both of which may have served as drains from the west annexe, both running down to the south-east. They had clearly been demolished before the general levelling-up of the area and the digging and infilling of a number of large, rectangular pits, probably horticultural in purpose (Fig. 21). Trenches 8, 9 and 10, to the north were trial pits which revealed the same sequence of deposits as Trench 2.

Underlying the whole trench were the red-brown Head gravels encountered across the whole site. Where not evidently truncated along the southern side of the trench, the surface of these lay at about 38.90m OD, 0.35m below the present lawns.

Culvert 1

This ran along the eastern side of the trench and had been constructed within an uneven trench 33, some 0.60m deep below the surface of the natural gravels (Figs 21 and 22). Its line appeared to curve, running initially parallel with the west wall of Fairfield House and then curving towards the south east. The trench was about 1.40m wide and within the area of the excavation only elements of the culvert's

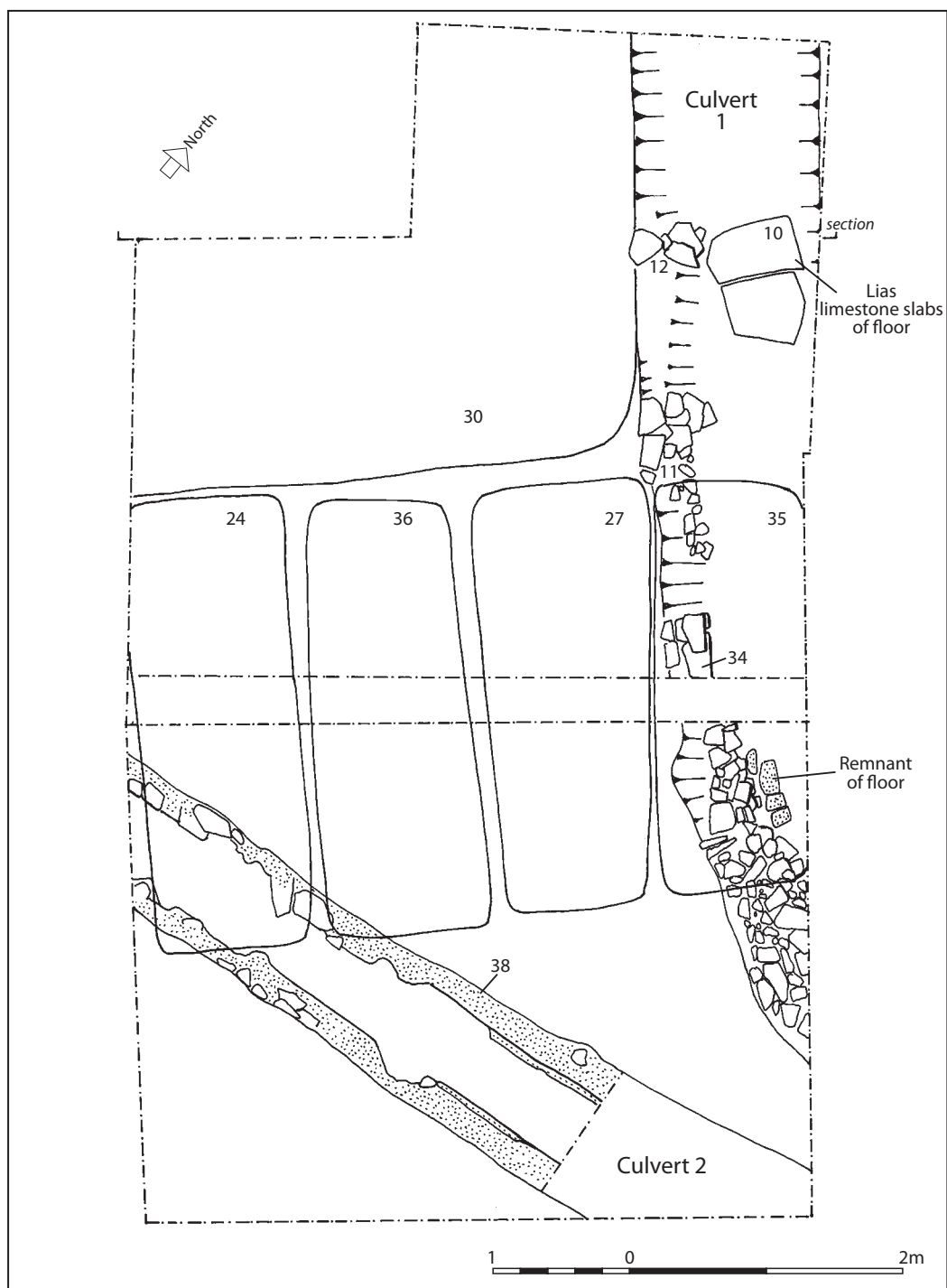


Fig. 21 Plan of culverts and pits excavated in Trench 2 in 2008

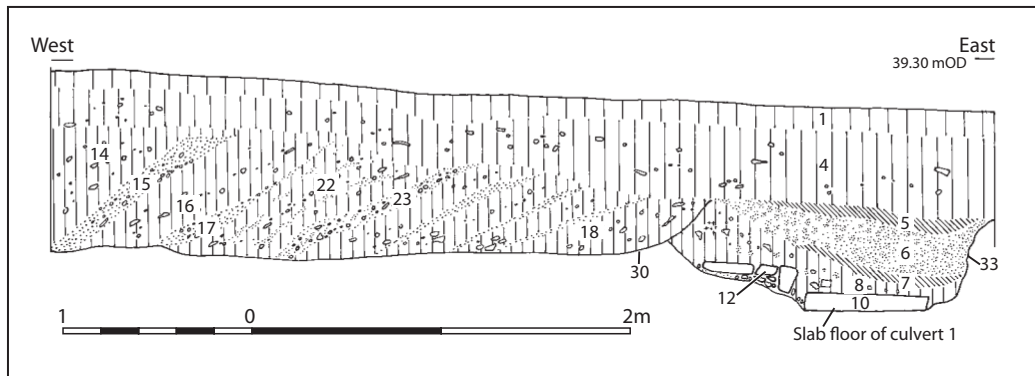


Fig. 22 North section of Trench 2 showing the demolition debris tipped into Culvert 1 and the tipped layers in Pit 30

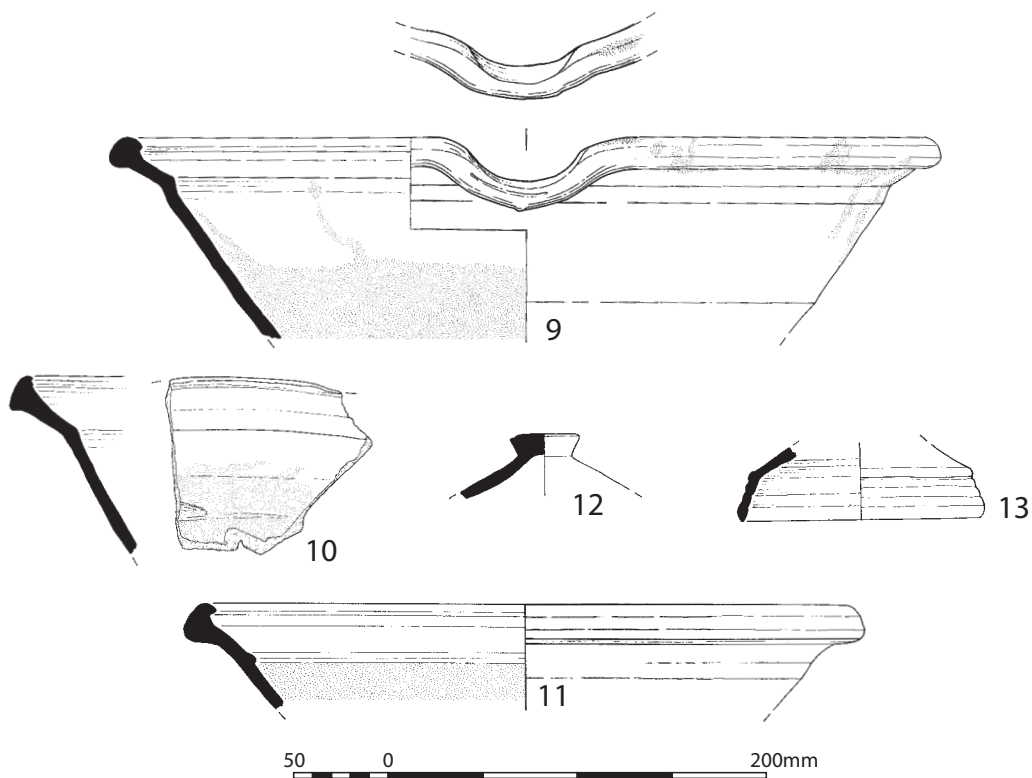


Fig. 23 Earthenware pancheons 9-11 from the infill of Culvert 1. 9, pancheon with a large lip and a distinct change in angle giving a band or flange inside, below the rim; internally glazed lower part. 10, as 9 but with wider rim band and rather distorted. 11, as 9 but with a more pronounced rim and glazed inside from just below the band. Glazes are olive green and the distortion of no.10 could suggest it is a waster. Nos.12 and 13, lids from Trench 9. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$

western wall and fragments of floor remained in situ. The wall was constructed of roughly coursed Lias limestone rubble 12 behind a vertical face of shaped blocks 34, which survived in only one place to a height of 0.20m. The width of the wall was about 0.45m so with a similar wall along the eastern side of the culvert a channel width of about 0.50m is possible. The base of the culvert had been lined with stone; in the north two large Lias slabs 10 remained in situ; to the south, the remnant of a cobbled floor of Old Red Sandstone remained. No trace of the capping of the culvert remained; probably substantial Lias slabs, these would have been removed for reuse when the structure was demolished. Even where the floor of the culvert remained, there was no trace of a layer of infill reflecting its period of use and whether it was a foul drain or simply a water channel is unclear.

After its disuse, it had been very thoroughly dismantled, probably for the re-usable stone it contained, and all the infills along its line post-date this event. The fills comprised a series of tipped layers, sloping down steeply from the north. The primary fills were loose, clayey loams, 9 and 8 (Fig. 22), containing much debris of plaster and mortar as well as fragments of stone and brick and a single fragment of a glazed roof-ridge tile. Joining sherds of pottery from a large pancheon were found in these layers (Fig. 23, no.9) together with other earthenware of probably the 18th century (in Trench 9, to the north, a section of the destroyed culvert was also excavated and contained sherds of similar pancheons). These layers were overlain by a band of black, soft, silty loam containing much charcoal, soot and ash, 7, in turn overlaid by broken up mortar and plaster debris, 6, followed by a further black layer, 5. These layers all tipped down to the south where they interleaved with layers of loam and stone rubble (excavated in 2008 as layer 28). These layers contained both earthenware and finewares that date to the later 18th century.

Culvert 2

This ran across the southern part of Trench 2 (Fig. 21), approximately north-west to south-east. Its meeting with Culvert 1 lay beyond the trench to the south-east, so there is no known sequential relationship between them. Differences in construction suggest, however, that they may not have been contemporary. It was built into a vertical sided trench 0.90m wide, 39, and its extant structure comprised two walls of mortared rubble, 38, the

faces of which defined a channel 0.56 wide and 0.30m deep. The wall faces were heavily daubed with mortar and there was evidence of a mortar surface along the base of the channel. As with Culvert 1, there was no evidence of any deposits along the culvert pre-dating the removal of the capstones. Along its length there was an infilling of dark loam with much mortar debris, 25, evidently derived from the removal of the capping stones.

At its western end, the infilled culvert is recorded as lying beneath the infills of the two pits 24 and 36. The pottery from the infilling has been dated to the 18th century, suggesting it may have been demolished at the same time as the other culvert as part of the general demolition of the structures of the western annexe. Incorporated into the fill at the western end of the excavated culvert were the remains of more than one dog; there was no evidence of a separate cut or grave, so the carcasses were evidently dumped with the general backfill.

Evidence for the demolition of the west annexe

No physical evidence for the walls or floors of the documented structures against the west wing of Fairfield House was found, suggesting a very complete demolition and clearance of the site. The backfill along the destroyed culvert included debris clearly not derived from the culvert itself; being layers of mortar and plaster debris, charcoal and fragments of mortared stone and brick. This material must derive from the demolition of a substantial mortared structure of stone, perhaps with some use of brick, and with fine internal plaster. Clearly, reusable building material was salvaged and these layers represent the non-reusable debris that remained, and which was used to level up along the line of the culvert and probably the site of the annex, though this more general levelling was subsequently removed by the pits described below.

Pottery from the layers dates to the 18th century, including cream ware sherds of the later part of that century. Documentary evidence suggests this date for the demolition of the annexe, with a specific date of 1782 for pulling down a kitchen and dairy. The three large pancheons (Fig. 23, nos.9-11) which came from the primary infill of the culvert were the sorts of vessels used in these places, for food preparation and in particular, the skimming of cream from milk.

Rectangular Pits

On the probable site of the structures of the western annexe, and perhaps intended to remove the layers of general debris from its demolition, a number of large rectangular pits were dug with steep sides and flat bases, going down some way into the underlying gravels (Fig. 21).

The largest of these, 30, lay in the north-west part of Trench 2 and was at least 3.40m east-west, with its eastern edge revealed also in Trench 9 (Fig. 14), to the north, giving a length of over 8m. Its infill was characterized by a sequence of steeply tipping deposits (Fig. 22) that comprised general, dark, clayey loams, with scattered stone rubble, mortar and slate fragments (layers 14, 16 and 18) with bands of sandier, more gravelly loam (layers 22 and 23) and reddish sandy bands (layers 17 and 15); a number of the layers showed laminated sub-divisions. The feature seems clearly to have been infilled from the north-east with material brought from elsewhere. The layers contained only a limited amount of building debris, so they are not demolition layers as such. They also contained pottery and vessel glass dateable to the 18th century as well as animal bone, clay pipe fragments and metalwork.

To the south of pit 30 was a row of smaller pits of uniform size, forming an east-west row (Fig. 21, pits 24, 36, 27 and 35). These were 1.20m wide and 3.20m long and, though up to 0.65m deep, they were only separated at the base by ridges of gravel, and appeared to share a common, very uniform infill of brown loam with a scatter of pottery and debris of slate, mortar and stone (layers 19, 20, 21 and 26). The pottery can be dated to the 18th century.

The purpose of these pits is unknown but there is a clear difference between the very large pit, 30, with its distinct tipped infills and the row of smaller pits to the south with their very homogeneous infill. There may have been an element of gravel quarrying in their digging, perhaps for the ornamental garden paths of the newly cleared grounds, as well as ground clearance and levelling to provide a deep, well drained subsoil for horticultural beds. They recall features described by William Cobbett (Cobbett 1980, p.13) used in preparation for fruit beds. The pottery from the layers is consistently 18th century and, though brought from elsewhere as levelling material, would date the event to the later 18th century, perhaps closely following the demolition of the buildings of the western annexe.

The Pottery: by Jo Draper

The majority of the pottery from the demolished culverts and the overlying pits dates to the 18th century, with only a few sherds that can be dated to the earlier post-medieval period. Sherd size is generally small with numerous different vessels and fabrics represented in both the fine glazed wares and the earthenwares. The primary layers of infill along the demolished Culvert 1, however, are different, containing larger, joining sherds of a small number of earthenware vessels and lacking the finer glazed sherds of the rest of the sequence.

Layers 8 and 9, in the northern part of the culvert, contained joining sherds forming almost a quarter of the rim circumference of a large pancheon (Fig. 23, no 9). Large sherds of two comparable vessels were recovered from the line of the culvert in Trench 9, to the north (Fig. 23, nos.10 and 11). These pancheons are very distinctive, with a pouring lip and a flanged rim. They can be broadly paralleled at Donyatt (Coleman-Smith & Pearson 1988, p. 239, Fig. 123 nos. 12/54 & 12/55) with a date of 1700-1750 suggested. However similar vessels are at Exeter in groups of c. 1600-1660 (Allan 1984, Fig. 87, no. 2026 with lip and Fig. 96, no. 2166) and also in the type series (*ibid*, p. 151, Fig. 65, no. 1a) for the 17th-century South Somerset wares. Many from Exeter are sooted externally. Lipped pancheons do not need to have the band inside the rim (*e.g.* from Exeter, Allan 1984, Fig. 99, no. 2246, a pancheon with a large lip and no band round the rim). This band looks like a lid-seating, and since the depression for the lip is contained within this band, a lid could have worked. It is possible that these pancheons were made at the little-known kilns at Nether Stowey, only 3 miles (5km.) south-east of Fairfield House, which seem to have been in production in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The only other sherds from these layers were two small earthenware fragments, probably also from pancheons and three joining sherds of a single vessel, glazed internally and evidently a chamber pot comparable to that found in Trench 1, to the east of the house (Fig. 17 no 2); the fabric and finish are indeed so similar as to suggest it might be the same vessel though a join could not be found. The vessel from Trench 1 can be dated to c.1600 and this could have a bearing on the date of the pancheons described above.

Though there is a difference between the pottery in these primary infills and that from the overlying sequence, it may be the result of little more than two

different sources of earth with which to level up this area, which, until the middle of the 18th century, was occupied by the structures of the western annexe.

From the immediately overlying deposit, layer 7, two sherds of creamware were found, one being a substantial piece of the rim of a plate with feathered edge, dating to the later 18th century. A second large sherd of this plate was found in the overlying layer 28, amounting in total to almost half its circumference. Otherwise, layer 28 contained the wide range of relatively small sherds of earthenware and glazed finewares, typical of the rest of the assemblage. The finewares comprised sherds of creamware, Staffordshire/Bristol slip ware and a single sherd of Westerwald stoneware. In addition, plain tin glaze and white stoneware were present as well as a single fragment of blue-painted Chinese hard-paste porcelain. All can be dated to the 18th century and a contemporary range of earthenware fragments was present.

The pottery from Pit 30, Pits 24, 36, 27 and 35 and from the infill of Culvert 2 was the same in both date and nature and range of sherds. There was, however, a wider range of tin glaze ware, including blue painted as well as small fragments of stoneware.

The Glass

A small assemblage of glass fragments came from the fills of the culverts and pits comprising 17 fragments of bottle or vessel glass with only 7 small fragments of window glass. All the bottle fragments were relatively small, with the exception of the three bottle bases each with a kick. Of these, only one (layer 25) had the high kick and straight sides of

an 18th-century bottle; the other two (layers 25 and 28) had a lower kick suggesting a rounded bottle and may be 17th century. The two bottle necks (Fig. 24) also suggest this date (cf. Draper 1993, 194, Fig. 106, no.6). The presence of this earlier material in an otherwise 18th-century assemblage compares with the earlier material in the pottery group.

In addition, there is a single fragment of fine (c 1mm thick) clear glass, being the folded rim of the base of a stemmed glass; this could be an heirloom and considerably earlier than the 18th century context in which it was found (layer 28).

Metalwork

Five pieces of lead window came were recovered from these layers. Four were small strips up to 150mm long, the fifth a more complex piece comprising a disc 14mm in diameter with three extant radiating strips to an outer (?circular) border, clearly from an ornamental window.

Twenty iron objects were found in the layers comprising nails with a single pierced strip probably the binding from a wooden bucket. The nails were all small, floorboard type nails with the exception of a single large flat-headed nail, 110mm long from Layer 25 and another 139mm long with a T-shaped head from Layer 28. The shanks of both these large nails were bent.

Levelling beneath the present lawns

Overlying the fills of Pit 30 was a homogenous, dark, gritty loam (layers 3 and 4) up to 0.40m deep (Fig. 22). This contained pottery that could be split into an early 18th-century group and a mid 19th-century group. This layer may represent dumping

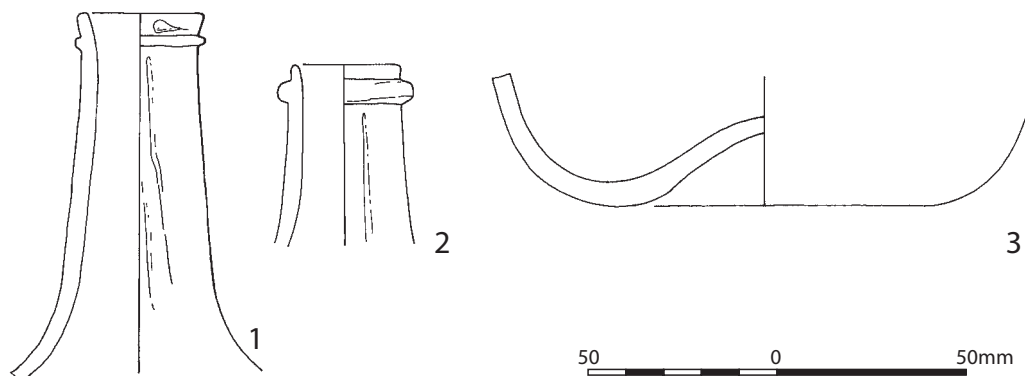


Fig. 24 Glass bottle fragments from Trench 2

and levelling up for the lawns that now lie to the south and west of the house. A single stamped clay pipe bowl was found in the layers. This was stamped GEO/WEBB/IN/CHARD, being George Webb, a South Somerset pipe maker dated 1680-1710. A large group of iron from the layers was dominated by nails.

Landscape changes of the late 18th and early 19th centuries

The acquisition of the house by Sir John Palmer-Acland in 1771, led to major changes to house and grounds and the plan of the estate by Chilcott, dated 1795 show these (Fig. 5). Most relevant to the excavations is the complete disappearance of the walled enclosure to the south and east of the house and the realignment of the road across its former south-east corner with a new entrance to the grounds (Fig. 14). The old access road to the stable yard had gone, and curving driveways now lead to the new entrance in the east side of the house.

In Trench 12 (Fig. 14), the walls and north-east corner tower had been demolished down to the lowest courses and the stone removed (Fig. 15). The cobbled surfaces to the east and the metalling of the road in Trench 6 were overlain by a band of dark clayey loam 608, containing small limestone rubble and gravel (Fig. 20). This layer contained small sherds of glazed and earthenware pottery dated to the 18th century. Though this layer may represent the disuse of the road and a period of neglect, it may simply be the first of several layers of deliberate infilling to obliterate the line of the road following the demolition of the standing walls. East of the road, the retaining wall was demolished, leaving only the lowest course in situ, and the rubble and mortar used to fill the hollow to the west of it (Fig. 19 and Fig. 20, layers 607 and 612). A large iron key, 124mm long came from layer 607, with two pieces of heavy iron work, an S-shaped hook and a stout, short bar from layer 612, perhaps showing the destruction of a gateway in the wall. The whole area seems then to have been filled in up to the level of the demolished enclosure wall with layers of stony loam 611, 603 and 605, with a finished level at c.38.55m OD and only a slight slope down to the east. The present topsoil and turf sit above this horizon and the remains of the wall (Fig. 20). Within the line of the old enclosure, it is not known whether levelling down took place at this time to achieve the level parkland that the area had now become. This is certainly, however, a possibility,

as no laid surfaces or old soils were found within its line.

In Trench 1, the wall was completely removed leaving only the quarry trench, 68, to mark its line (Figs 14 and 18). No evidence of the date of its infill was found, but late 18th century is likely from the map evidence which shows that the south-eastern corner of the old enclosure now lay beneath the realigned road and the new gateway to Fairfield House. Evidence of the southern side of this road was indeed found in Trench 4 (Fig. 14), confirming that it crossed the corner of the enclosure, with the site of the old corner tower now some way to the south. This comprised the southerly edge of two layers of hard gravel metalling; the lower, 206, was of coarse rounded limestone pebbles and seemed to be the base for a layer of finer pebbles, 202, forming a smooth, very compact metalled surface, immediately below the present topsoil. Layer 202 contained sherds of pottery dateable up to the mid 19th century, as well as earlier material, including fragments of two clay pipes, probably 18th century. In all, the gravels were up to 0.60m thick and lay over the sloping surface of a series of tips of loam with stone and mortar and plaster debris (layers 201, 204, 208, 209 and 210) filling either the line of the destroyed enclosure wall, or a hollow that ran along its eastern side. These layers contained a few small sherds of 18th-/19th-century earthenware. The sequence in the trench seems to represent the levelling up of this area, following the demolition of the old enclosure, presumably in advance of building the new gateway to Fairfield House and the realignment of the adjacent section of road, dateable on the map evidence to the late 18th century.

Trench 3, which lay within the line of the road around the south-east corner of the enclosure showed only a depth of c.0.40m of uniform sandy clay with pebbles beneath the topsoil. Though thought during excavation to be the undisturbed geological sequence, because of the levels found in Trench 1, where the surface of the old road lay at c. 0.60m below the present ground surface, it is not impossible that this material is clean levelling material spread during the late 18th-century landscaping.

The eventual disuse of the road was indicated in Trench 1 by the construction of a large, stone built culvert cut into its northern side, and the spreading of a dump of clay spoil over the latest metalled surface (Figs 14 and 18, Culvert 3 and layer 81). Culvert 3 was built into a wide trench cutting the



Fig. 25 Trench 1 showing, to the left, limestone rubble in Trench 68, being the line of the southern wall of the enclosure of 1473. On the right the large capstones of the later culvert, cut into the metalled surfaces of the now disused public road. Scales 2 metres, looking east

northern side of the layers of road metalling and had a floor of limestone slabs, substantial mortared walls and heavy capping stones over the channel, which was 0.45m wide (Fig. 25). Blue Lias clay had been used as a packing in at least one side of the construction trench, which was otherwise filled with rubbly loam and mortar, layer 84, which contained small sherds of pottery dated to the 17th and 18th century. Above this was a layer of clean clayey loam 83 (probably redeposited from digging elsewhere) which spread southwards over the road metalling, with a thin spread of mortar fragments above it, 82. This was covered by a sequence of layers of gravelly loam filling in the remaining hollow above the line of the road and generally making up the ground level over the whole of the trench to c.38.55m OD (layers 76, 54, 53, 52 and 51), the same height as the levelling in Trench 12 to the north. These layers contained a mixture of small pottery sherds of the 18th century as well as sherds dated to the early 19th century. These comprised a fine pearlware rim of c.1810 and a creamware sherd with part of an inscription to

Admiral Howe, a naval hero of the late 18th and early 19th century.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS.

There were three aspects to the recent study of Fairfield House. A survey of the house walls, as revealed following the removal of external render; a survey of the roof timbers of the three wings and the taking of cores for dendrochronological dating; and archaeological excavation of historically documented features in the grounds. These three studies can be drawn together and considered against the well documented historical account of the estate and its owners, to produce an account of the development of the house and grounds from its medieval origins to its Regency form, in four broad phases. Phase 1 is the medieval manor house of which the evidence is very limited; Phase 2 a Tudor rebuilding during the first half of the 16th century; Phase 3 an Elizabethan house of the later 16th century; and Phase 4 the remodelling of the

existing house and gardens in the style of the late 18th century as seen today. Fairfield House is one of many historic country houses in Somerset and all share a similar sequence of development, the main variant being a matter of scale.

Though the manor of Fairfield is known from documents as early as 1167, the study revealed little of the medieval manor house and landscape that preceded the present house and grounds. The lack of medieval pottery sherds from the excavations (two small fragments) is surprising for the site of a medieval manor, but may reflect the scale of the late 18th-century landscaping around the house. The survey of the walls of the west wing, however, confirmed the presence of a medieval structure incorporated into the present building, dating at the latest to the 15th century but very probably earlier. Aligned north-south, parts of the east and west walls of this building remained, with evidence of a window high in its east wall. It appears to be part of a hall, aligned north-south, and its fabric clearly predated that of the Phase 2 building, which dates to the first part of the 16th century. Late medieval halls of this type survive as an element of many of the country houses of Somerset (good examples are at Coker Court and Lytes Cary; for photographs see Dunning 1991, facing pages 28 and 86) and they were invariably one element of a group of buildings, often including a chapel, around two or more sides of a courtyard. At Fairfield, no elements of contemporary structures have been recognized but that the hall perhaps formed the eastern side of the manor complex may be suggested by the later form of the buildings (Phase 2). This complex would have stood on the north side of the road between Stringston and Stogursey. Of the medieval village nothing is known, though it probably lay astride the road some distance east of the manor house. In the area of gardens and parkland that now surround the house, the undulating, stream-threaded, pond-dotted landscape of the medieval period and earlier has likely been obliterated by the extensive landscaping of the last several hundred years.

It is in the late 15th and early 16th century that the nature of the manor house at Fairfield becomes clearer. William Verney, who was the owner from 1462-1489 was granted a licence in 1473 'to build a wall and seven round towers about his mansion house at Fairfield'. The 'mansion house' at this time would have included the medieval hall identified in the fabric of the present building and the enclosing wall, with three towers remaining, is clearly shown on the mid 18th-century map of Stogursey parish

(Fig. 3). It was a rectangular enclosure, 422 feet long east-west by 240 feet north-south (130 by 75 metres), enclosing an area of about 2.5 acres, with a tower on each of the eastern corners and one central to that side. The location of the other four towers can only be surmised but an element of symmetry is likely; corner towers on the western side seem probable with perhaps two towers flanking a main entrance from the west. Within this enclosure the house lay in the north-western quarter (Fig. 26). The excavations established both the accuracy of the 18th-century map and the nature of the wall and the north-east tower (Figs 14 and 15), though no evidence of the actual date of its construction was recovered.

Excavated in two places, the width of the wall was only 2.5 feet (0.80m) as was the wall defining the north-east corner tower (Fig. 16), into which the opening was very narrow, barely sufficient to allow access. The excavations showed that outside the wall there was a broad flat-bottomed hollow, which at some stage had a low retaining wall built around its outer edge, and it is the playing card corners of this feature that is shown on the 18th-century map. From the outside, the aspect of the wall and towers would have lent a defensive air to the enclosure, the height of the wall enhanced by the hollow along the outside, suggesting a moat, and it is clearly a statement of power and wealth. With a foundation width of only 2.5 feet (0.80m), however, the wall can have been little more than a garden wall enclosing a large, private space to the south and east of the house. That this space would have become an extensive formal garden around the manor house is probable, though its precise form is unknown as is the period when it was laid out. It may be that the formal patterns of a Tudor garden were not created until after the enlargement of the house by Robert Verney, the owner from 1507 to 1547, the windows of which would have looked out across it.

There are no known entrances to the enclosure. A main entranceway from the west can, however, be suggested, based on the likely form and location of the house within it. Once the enclosure was built, the Stogursey to Stringston road would have skirted its southern side and this was certainly the case by the 18th century, with another road leading to the stables and farm building to the north of the house (Fig. 3). The excavation revealed elements of both roads, in each case with a succession of metallised surfaces along the hollow outside the wall, which seems to show the maintenance and re-surfacing of the roads over a period of time. These surfaces

are not necessarily the Tudor period road, however, but a later formalization of the route using the pre-existing hollow.

A major rebuilding (Phase 2) of the manor house took place during the ownership of Robert Verney, 1507-1547, who is credited with building 'a fair gatehouse of ham stone and a chapple and four fair chambers with a new buttery'. Elements of these buildings were identified in the survey of the house and roof. The roof timbers of the present west wing of the house are parts of a substantial, decorative oak-beamed roof with a felling date for the timber of 1508-1528. With a span of 21 feet, this covered a building up to 70 feet long extending from and built onto the shell of the old hall of Phase 1. This Phase 2 building had windows in both east and west walls and an oriel on its southern end appears to be of this phase. A building of two floors therefore, the upper floor would have been open to the ornate carved roof beams, with their moulded edges and foliate carving on the braces (Figs 11 and 12). The evidence of the roof indicates that the building was divided internally, making two chambers on each floor. The smaller southern chambers had the oriel and chimney breast. Built at the same time and entered by a door in the south-west corner of the more northerly of the ground floor chambers was another building, the west annexe, still extant on the plan of the 18th century (Fig. 3). It is tempting to associate these structures with the 'the four fair chambers and new buttery' of Robert Verney and this annexe may indeed be what was described as the 'old kitchen' demolished in 1782.

The building is similar to many in Somerset at this time, with a first floor hall, open to the roof beams and fine windows giving light and views of the outside. Near Cannington, the manor of Gothelney has an upper hall of this date with an arch-braced roof (Dunning 1991, 61), and the early part of the 16th century, under the reign of Henry VIII, sees a spate of building in Somerset. A well-documented example, and perhaps a close parallel to the 'four chambers' built by Robert Verney can be found in the south wing of the manor house at Lytes Cary. Built c.1533 during the ownership of John Lyte and his wife Edith this wing was added to the south of the late medieval hall and comprised two chambers on each of two floors with an oriel window looking south (Buckle 1892, figs following page 100 and Dunning 1991, 84).

The manor house of this period lay in the north-west part of the larger enclosure and the chambers of Robert Verney would have looked

east onto an enclosed garden with which they were fairly symmetrical, with the oriel looking south onto the smaller part of these gardens (Fig. 26). Where the gatehouse and chapel mentioned in the documentary record lay is unknown, but it is likely that, along with stables and other service buildings, they lay north and west of the known chambers of this date, the gatehouse probably on the site of the earlier entrance. Nothing is known at this date of the internal arrangement of the garden but it is likely to have imitated the gardens of the royal palaces of this date 'usually square, divided into quarters containing elaborate knots made of clipped shrubs, often with a fountain at the centre and often surrounded by raised or covered walks' (Bond 1998, 48). At about 2.5 acres, this garden lies at the smaller end of a range of late medieval gardens for which there is documentary evidence; from the 2 acres of Brympton d'Evercy to the 5 acres of Shapwick House (Bond 1998, 39). There is also archaeological evidence of large, enclosed, rectangular gardens of the late 15th and 16th century as at Low Ham and Witham Charterhouse (Bond 1998, 52) in both instances larger than the Fairfield enclosure. What is not paralleled, are the faux towers of the enclosing wall at Fairfield.

The walled garden to the east and south of the house was a feature of Fairfield until the late 18th century, though its original aspect may have changed with the rebuilding and enlargement of the house (Phase 3), which followed the marriage of Elizabeth Verney to William Palmer in 1571. This added a north and east wing to the existing house, which thus became the west wing. It was a two story building throughout, with matching windows and a symmetrical southern aspect around the tower of the central porch; a classic E-shaped Elizabethan plan (Fig. 26), comparable to many houses in Somerset, including the much grander Barrington Court and Montacute House. Though the work is said to have started not long after the marriage, one oak timber in the north wing roof has a felling date of 1630 (more than fifty years after the probable commencement of the work) while the timbers of the oak roof of the east wing have a felling date of 1627-52 and there is evidence from the structure of the roof that the two are of different periods of construction, the east wing roof being the later. This corroborates the writing of Gerard of Trent who recorded that the house was still unfinished in 1633 and the works may have been finally completed under Elizabeth's grandson, William, who died in 1652, or even her great-grandson

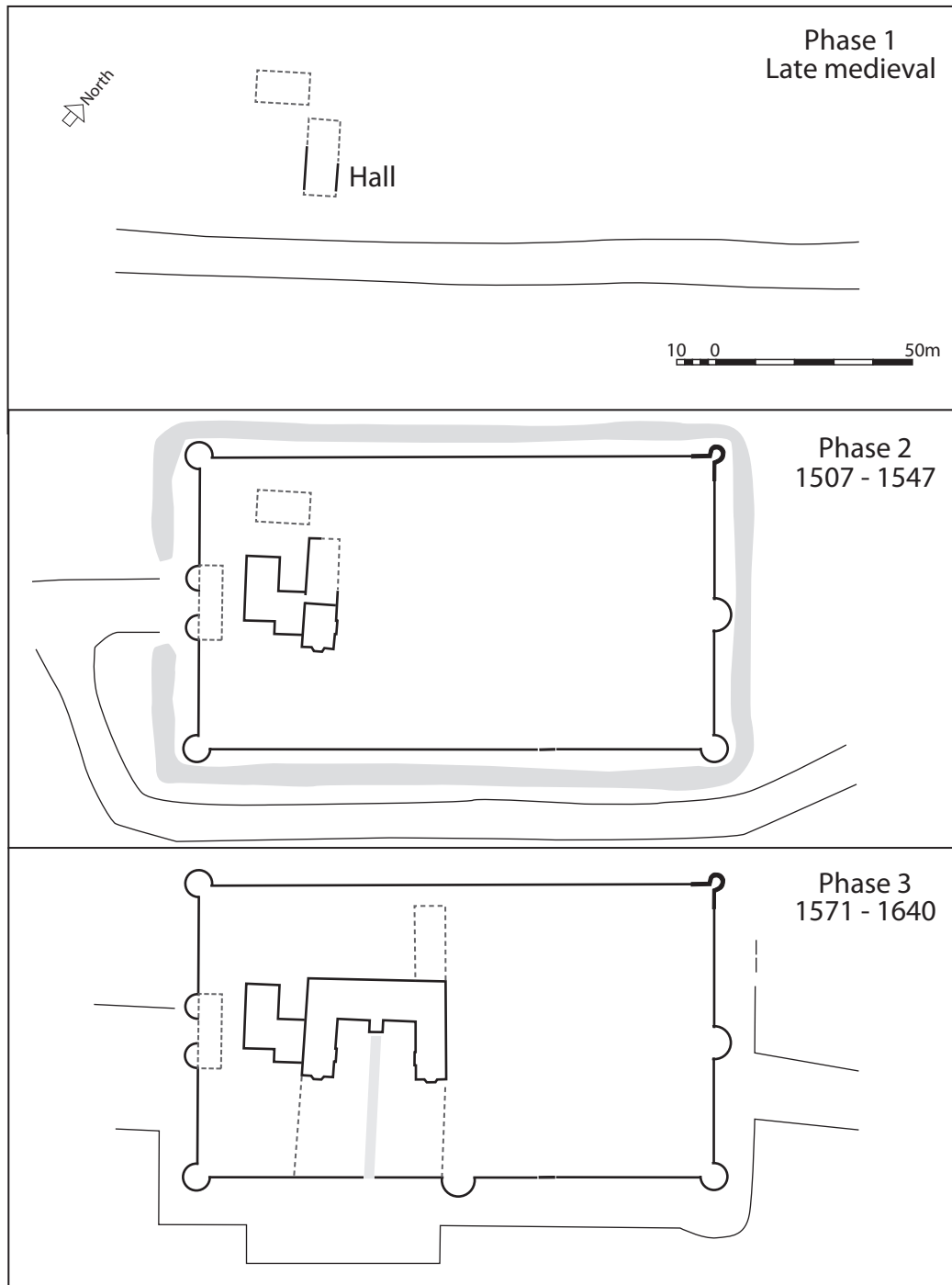


Fig. 26 Interpretive drawing showing the three main development phases of Fairfield House and grounds

Peregrine. The long period that the building works took may be due to the fact that the Palmers also owned Parham House in Sussex, which they rebuilt in grand style between 1578 and 1583 (Kirk 2009, 28-30). Subsequent Palmers may have been largely absent from Fairfield, Thomas dying in Spain in 1605 and his son William preferring a life in town.

Layers of rubble excavated behind the line of the garden's south wall appear to date to this period of building, containing pottery of c.1600 (Fig. 17), and elements of the gardens may have changed extensively at this time, perhaps including a raised walkway around its perimeter. After the house was enlarged, the area of garden to the east was now a square, and may have been relaid to reflect this. Square knot gardens would have been not uncommon in the 17th century; an estate plan of Nether Stowey in 1750 shows the house and gardens, with two formal gardens adjacent to the house, including one defined by an apparently crenelated wall (Bond 1998, 62, fig 6.1), and the wall at Fairfield may have been similarly ornate. The enlarged house was now orientated southwards with the main doorway facing south, framed by the two projecting wings. This was now the formal approach to the house and the 18th-century paintings show this, with a wide path up to this door, from a gateway in the south wall of the enclosure (Fig. 4). The map of the mid 18th century shows no paths or drives within the garden but does show a wider area of road south of the house, probably reflecting the position of this formal entrance. Certainly by this time there was also a road going around the north-east angle of the garden, giving access to the stables and other service ranges north of the main house.

A recently recognized painting of Fairfield from Parham House (now at Somerset County Council Heritage Centre) shows the house in the north-west corner of a walled garden, with doorways in the wall and a large gateway south of the main door of the house (Fig. 27). The walled garden has all the expected elements of the pleasure garden of the earlier 18th century though it may have its roots in the Elizabethan and Tudor garden, with geometrical paths and beds, statuary and trained trees. Though the layout of both house and garden may have been treated by the painter with the same artistic licence as the wider Somerset landscape of the background, it nevertheless captures the essence of Fairfield prior to the major changes of the later 18th century.

All this changed in the later 18th century, after the estate was inherited by Sir John Palmer-Acland, who, with his son, extensively changed the appearance of the house and created the lawns and level parkland that surround it today (Fig. 28). Extensive renovation of the house included the renewal of the windows and the construction of the parapet and cornice that now surmount the walls. This involved cutting off the lower ends of the roof trusses and the hips that characterize the present roof were constructed at this time replacing the original gables. Dendrochronological dating of the hip timbers gives a felling date of Spring 1779. It may also have been at this time that the attic floor in the west wing was constructed, with the inevitable damage to the timbers of the early 16th-century roof. The west annexe was also demolished at this time, with bills for demolition paid out in 1782. Excavations to the west of the house, exploring the site of the west annexe shown on the mid 18th-



Fig. 27 18th-century oil painting of Fairfield House and gardens, from the Palmers ancestral home, Parham in Sussex. Now at the Somerset Heritage Centre



Fig. 28 Fairfield House in its pastoral landscape of the late 18th century

century map, revealed no trace of the building. All foundations and floors had been removed during its demolition, and the area was then prepared to become part of the gardens and lawns west of the house.

Contemporary maps document the landscape changes; the excavations showed something of how they occurred. The enclosure wall of the late 15th century was demolished, leaving only the lowest course of the north-east corner and tower *in situ*, directly beneath the present topsoil and turf. The road which ran around the east and north sides of the enclosure, and which had been resurfaced a number of times during its use, was abandoned and covered over. The whole area appears to have been levelled down or up, razing the old gardens, to create the flat ground across which curving carriageways now approached the new doorway in the east side of the house (Figs 5 and 6). To the south-east the demolition was more extensive, with no trace of the wall remaining and there was levelling up across the line of the old road and surrounding area above which lay the metalling of the re-aligned road (in Trench 4) close to the new entrance to the house and grounds. All this took place in the later 18th

century, but this realignment of the road appears to have been almost a temporary measure, waiting on permission to completely relocate the road, some 300 metres south of the house, which probably took place in the early 19th century. The demise of the old road was shown in Trench 1, where a large stone culvert was constructed along its line, followed by the levelling-up of the whole area with layers of fine gravel and loam. A similar stone culvert was found in Trench 12, cutting across the demolished tower of the old garden wall and drainage works, taking water from springs to the west and north of the house, where clearly an element of this period of landscaping, which extended the level lawns around the house into the flat parkland beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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project enabled it to expand and thrive and the lasting educational value of the project in terms of experience and inspiration for the many participants is immeasurable.

The project could not have happened without the consistent support and encouragement of the owner of Fairfield, Lady Elizabeth Acland Hood Gass, as well as Bob Croft (Somerset Heritage Service), Andy Simms, Jo O'Callaghan and Hayley Slade (Kilve Court Education Centre), Barry Lane (SANHS), Mick Aston and Aubrey Knowles (Treasurer Fairfield Project Group). Brian Mitchell (Fairfield Estate) helped in numerous practical ways throughout the years of the project and in the conservation repairs to the house. Alan Graham and Dick Broomhead provided archaeological direction. Rachel Shaw was the course director and main tutor, supported by Adele Mitchell, Naomi Hughes, Esther Johnstone and Vicky Woodall. Pottery drawings are by Nick Griffiths other drawings by Alan Graham, Dick Broomhead and Rob Read. Many people of all ages gave time and effort to doing the fieldwork and post-excavation processing, in all weathers. These included successive teams of young, keen and quick-learning Kilve Court diggers who were at the heart of the project.

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