THE HOME FARM OF ST AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY, CANTERBURY, BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISSOLUTION

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This paper combines the results of excavations at Barton Court Grammar School (2006-7), which uncovered early medieval land boundaries and associated finds together with elements of the later complex of Home Farm (barton) estate buildings, and a review of documentary sources relating to the history of the Home Farm as a whole.

It covers the period from the establishment of the barton, probably in the eighth century, through to the end of the nineteenth century. The archaeological investigations also revealed evidence of Prehistoric and Roman occupation at Barton Court, not further discussed here.

Barton Court Grammar School is located in Longport, on the south-east side of Canterbury (NGR 615766 157506), within the historic grounds of the home farm or 'barton' of St Augustine's Abbey, established *c*.598. Following its dissolution in 1538, the farm was sold by the Crown, and continued as a gentry estate until the mid twentieth century, when it first became an educational establishment.

This report outlines the main results from archaeological interventions conducted by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust during construction works at the school and, in particular, focuses on an open-area excavation carried out prior to construction of a new Food Technology Block between December 2006 and January 2007 **(Fig. 1)**.

The school is situated above the flood plain of the Stour valley, on a gently sloping plateau at approximately 18m AOD. Formed on Margate Chalk, the underlying geology is overlain by a Head deposit of clay and silt. To the north-east, the ground rises steeply at St Martin's Hill, to approximately 47m AOD, marked by outcropping Thanet Formation beds, and capped by remnant third terrace river gravels. The Thanet beds comprise a sequence of Palaeocene clays, clayey sands and sands, from which a number of fresh-water springs emerge (Rady 1987, 127; Smart *et al.* 1966, 186).

The first tangible evidence for post-Roman occupation within Barton Court is dated to the *Anglo-Saxon* period, comprising two pits [1246 and 1325], recorded during the excavation for the new Food Technology Block in 2006 (Helm 2008a; 2008b) **(Fig. 2)**, and a third pit [220], located 48m to the east, excavated during construction of an access road for Canterbury Christ Church University Sports Centre in 2008 (Helm 2009) (Fig. 1). These pits were all rectangular in plan, varying

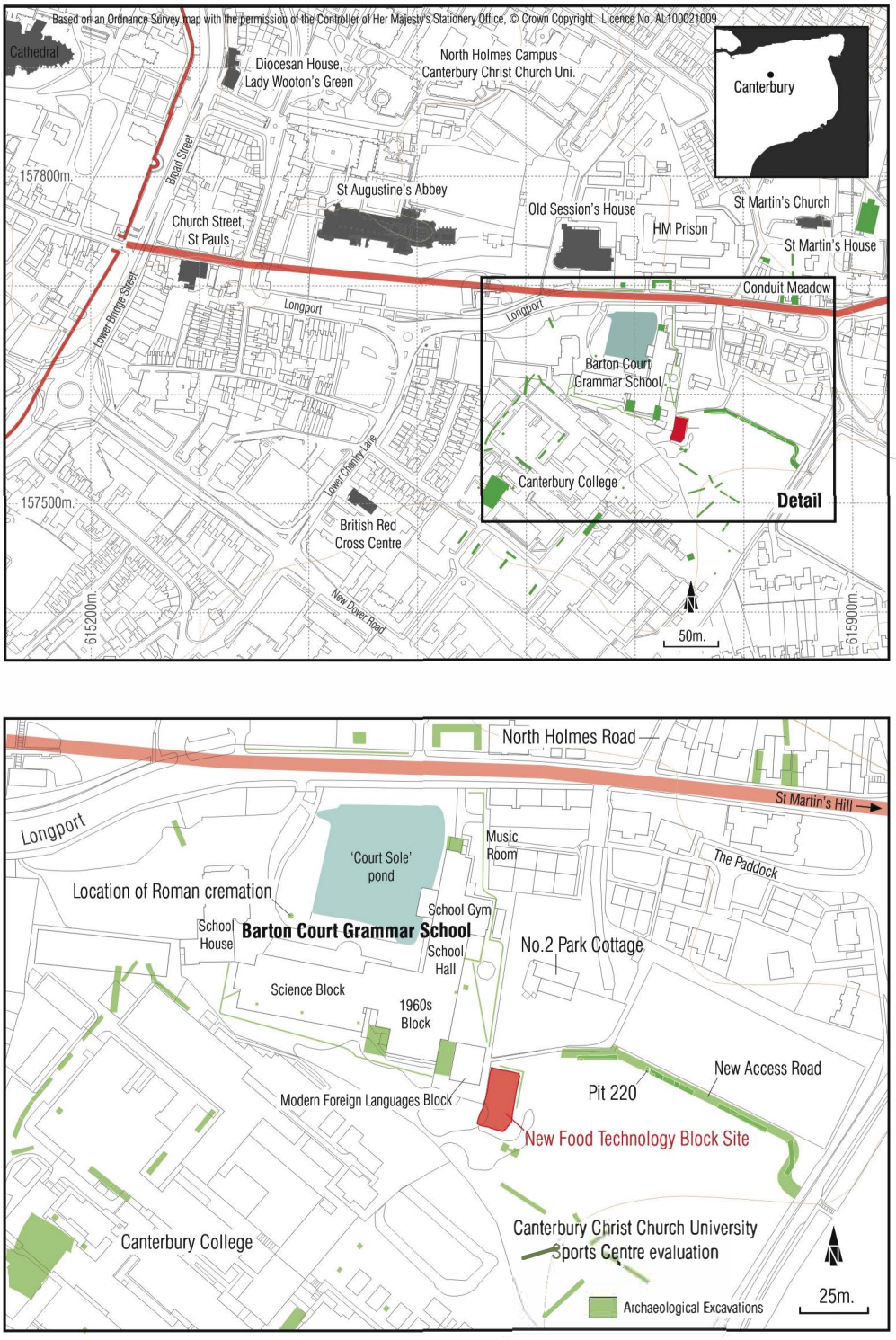

Fig. 1 Location plan, with detail showing investigated areas at Barton Court Grammar School.

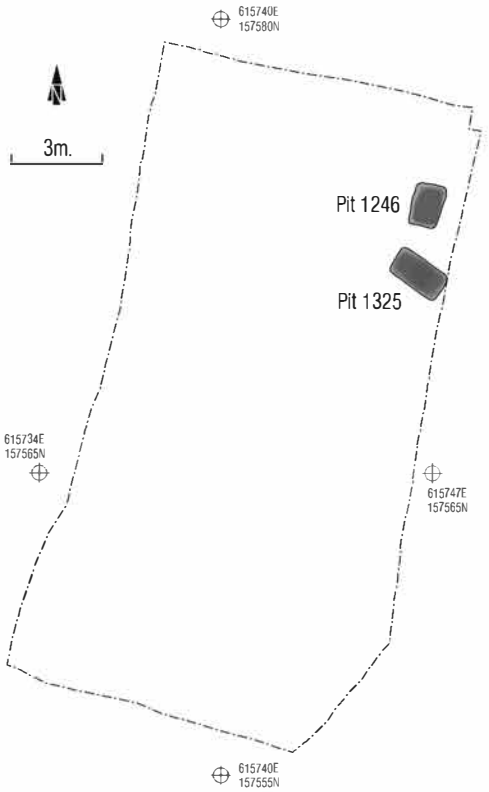

Fig. 2 Anglo-Saxon pits.

between 1.43m and 1.95m long by 0.98m and 1.34m wide, with vertically cut sides and regular, slightly concave bases, between 1.15m and 1.71m deep. Each pit was backfilled with a broadly comparable sequence of silty clay deposits containing cess and other material typical of domestic refuse, and contained pottery of an early eighth- to mid ninth-century date: 48 sherds (528g) from pit 1246, seven sherds (62g) from pit 1325, and 81 sherds (2,467g) from pit 220 (Barber 2008). The most common pottery fabric comprised a Canterbury-type sandy ware (MLS2), the bulk of which consisted of body sherds from two separate jars deposited in pit 1246 and pit 220 respectively. Other less frequent fabrics included 'local' shell-tempered (MLS4, MLS4A, and MLS4C) and flint-tempered (MLS6) wares, and an Ipswich-type (MLS7) ware (**Fig. 3**).

Animal bone recovered from the pits demonstrated a predominance of sheep/goat, followed by cattle and pig, with horse and dog also identified. Wild species were represented by a roe deer tibia, which had been fractured to extract marrow, and badger, which would have potentially been exploited for its pelt. Some differentiation between pits was also evident. The animal bone from pit 1246 appeared to be predominantly cattle butchery waste comprising mainly cranial fragments (with horn cores removed) and foot bones. In contrast, the bone from pits 1325 and 220 contained a mixture of both butchery and consumption waste

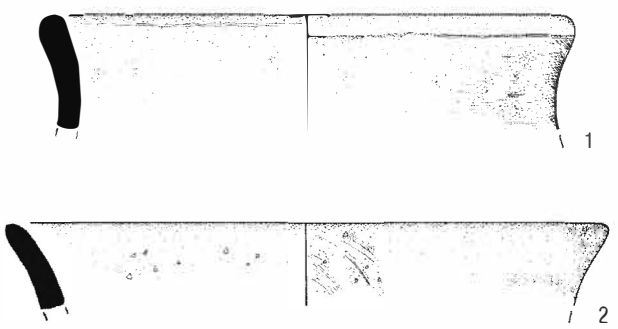

Fig. 3 Anglo-Saxon pottery. 1) Jar with simple out-turned rim. Black core with dull brown to black patchy surfaces, fabric MLS 4C. Pit 1325. 2) Slightly out-turned and thickened rim from Ipswich-type ?spouted pitcher. Red-brown core with dark grey surfaces, fabric MLS 7. Pit 1246.

more indicative of household refuse. Interestingly, the main meat-bearing elements, notably the upper limbs for sheep/goat and the rear limbs in cattle were under-represented or entirely absent, suggesting that these prime joints of meat (lamb shoulder and beef rump) had been removed, consumed and disposed of elsewhere (Jones 2010).

Remains of domestic chicken, geese and ducks were also recovered (Allison 2010), as were fish (Locker 2010). Significantly, the fish bone assemblage had a marked absence of exclusively freshwater species, and was dominated by migratory eel and marine species (mainly herring), as well as shellfish (mainly oyster) (Allison 2011). An emphasis on the consumption of marine fish species appears to be a pattern reflected at other high status or monastic sites from the eighth and ninth centuries (Barrett *et al.* 2004). It is suggested that this might reflect a growing diversification in the exploitation of coastal resources and control of and access to contemporary marine fisheries as is suggested between the early monastic foundation at Lyminge (Thomas 2013) and its coastal holding at Sandtun, West Hythe (Gardiner *et al.* 2001).

Plant remains, surviving either as charred crop processing and cooking refuse, or as mineralised material derived mostly from faecal or midden waste, were also recovered from the pits. A simple cereal (probably mainly wheat and barley bread) and pulse based (beans and peas) diet was represented, presumably augmented with meat, with a few flavourings coming from garden herbs such as opium poppy and mustard, and supplemented with native hedgerow and orchard fruits and nuts. Comparison of the Barton Court assemblage with other contemporary assemblages from southern England by Wendy Carruthers indicated a greater similarity with rural rather than urban sites, particularly with no exotic fruits or spices identified (Carruthers 2010).

In addition to pottery and food waste, a small number of personal items was identified. These included fragments from one or more decorated bone combs from pit 1325 (Bevan 2008) (**Fig. 4**), and a rare, cast copper alloy utensil (comprising a

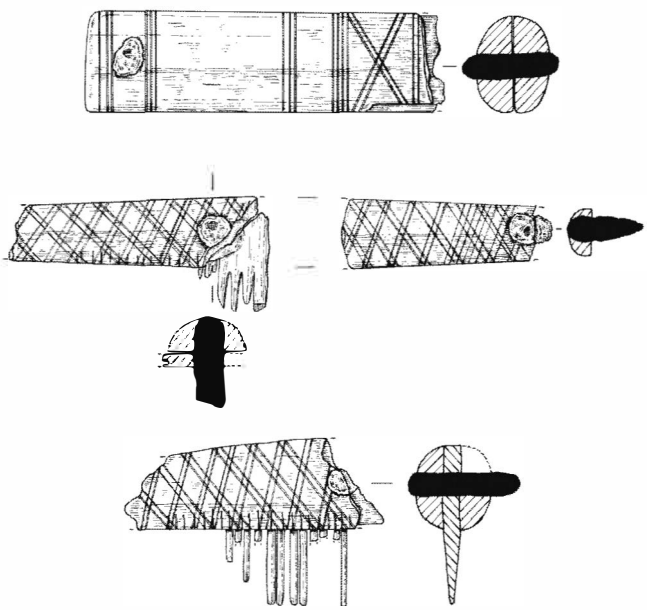

Fig. 4 Fragments from Anglo-Saxon composite bone comb, pit 1325.

three-pronged fork at one end and a strainer, formed of an oval bowl with perforations, at the other), from pit 220 (Richardson 2008) (**Fig. 5**, no. 1).

Six further pits, and three post-holes, perhaps indicating the presence of an adjacent timber structure, all of a probable mid to late Anglo-Saxon date, were identified immediately to the north-west of the new Food Technology Block excavation while monitoring groundworks during the installation of associated services (O'Shea 2007).

It is not clear when the barton or home farm of St Augustine's Abbey was first established. An early seventh-century date is accepted for the foundation of St Augustine's Abbey and it would seem, if a later thirteenth-century copy of a charter dated AD 605 is to be believed, that the land occupied by the barton had

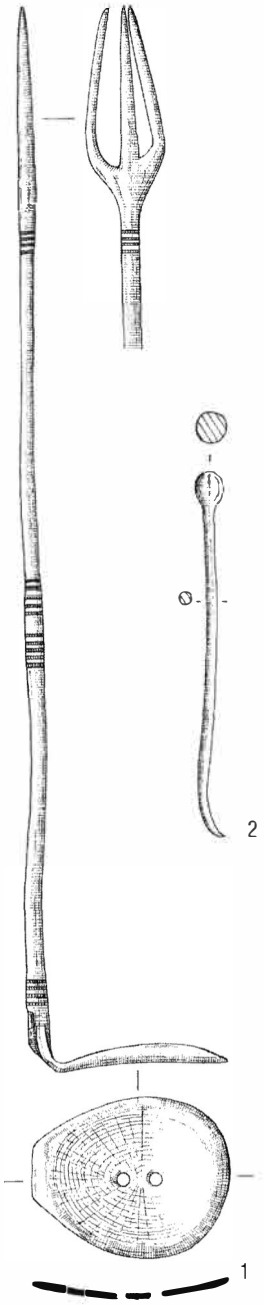

Fig. 5 Anglo-Saxon metalwork. 1) Cast copper alloy utensil. Length: 139mm. Width (spoon bowl): 22mm. Thickness (midpoint of shaft): 4mm. Weight: 7.5g. Pit 220. 2) Pin with globular head and plain shaft. Probable Type A dress pin. Length: 49mm. Ditch 1055.

been included as part of this initial endowment (Kelly 1995, 9-11). However, the present results indicate that significant activity did not take place within the barton until the early eighth century and it is reasonable to suggest that the development of the barton did not immediately follow the initial foundation of the abbey, but rather was more likely contemporary with a later expansion and development of the abbey during the eighth and ninth centuries (Blockley 2000; Gem 1997).

Evidence for the foundation of St Augustine's Abbey is largely restricted to masonry structures recorded during early excavations (Sparks 1984), and only limited associated pre eighth-century activity has so far been identified during more recent work (Hicks 2015; Saunders 1978; Sherlock and Woods 1988). Outside the abbey, an early settlement, perhaps forming part of a 'royal ville', has been postulated for the area surrounding St Martin's Church (Sparks and Tatton-Brown 1987, 201); the church generally accepted to be Queen Bertha's chapel referred to by Bede and established before the arrival of St Augustine in AD 597 (Gem 1997; Tatton-Brown 1980; 1994; Taylor 1998). This 'royal ville' probably formed part of a larger trading emporium or 'wic' extending between Canterbury and the port at Fordwich, encapsulating the area later occupied by the manor of Longport, held by St Augustine's Abbey, and the manors of Colton (Northgate) and Caldecote (St Martin's), held by Christ Church Priory (Brookes and Harrington 2010, 87; Sparks and Tatton-Brown 1987, 203-205).

Excavation immediately east of St Martin's Church, has identified nine potential late sixth- to seventh-century burials perhaps forming part of a wider cemetery surrounding the early church (Sparey-Green 2003, 19-20; 2015). However, evidence for settlement activity along St Martin's Hill has so far been limited to the later eighth and mid ninth centuries. At the 'Conduit Meadow' site, immediately south of St Martin's Church, this comprised at least nine pits, containing domestic refuse and cess, concentrated along the frontage of a metalled track way which extended along the southern part of present-day North Holmes Road towards the north-east, perhaps continuing as far as Fordwich (Rady 1987, 129-134), while immediately east of St Martin's Church, a further sixteen pits were recorded (Sparey-Green 2003, 20; 2015). To the south of Barton Court, within the grounds of Canterbury College, activity included a possible mid to late Anglo-Saxon field boundary, aligned north-east to south-west, and two pits (Newhook 2008), while below the British Red Cross Centre, an intensive sequence of late Anglo-Saxon pit digging was identified to the rear of Lower Chantry Lane (Gollop 2013).

No evidence for activity between the tenth and early eleventh century has yet been identified at Barton Court and a corresponding hiatus of activity is recorded from the surrounding areas (Hicks 2015; Newhook 2008; Rady 1987, 134; Sparey-Green 2003; 2015). How far this hiatus was generated by the threat of Viking raids, or from a combination of more nuanced and multiple reasons, notably the changing political and economic climate, remain to be seen (Eales 2000, 12; Sparks and Tatton-Brown 1987, 205).

During the *early medieval* period a north-east to south-west aligned ditch [1134], perhaps representing a land boundary extending towards St Martin's Church, traversed the new Food Technology Block site (**Fig. 6**). The ditch, which measured up to 1.56m wide by 0.41m deep with a concave base, had evidence of a least one episode of re-cutting [1055]. Finds from the fill of the primary ditch included

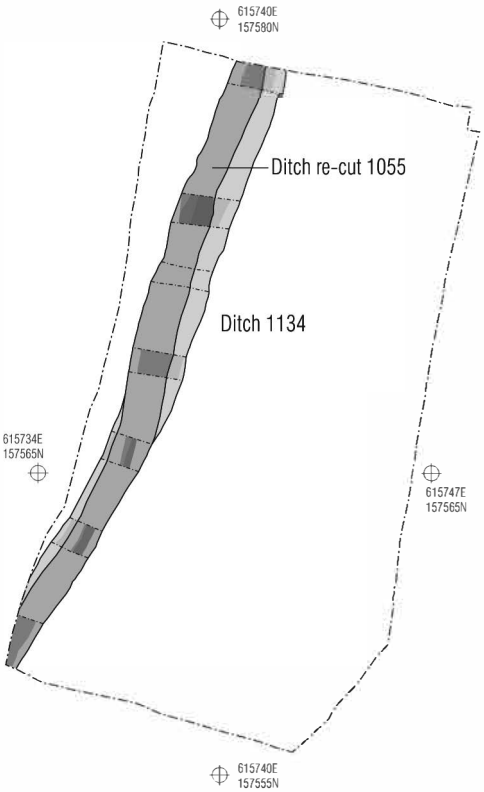

Fig. 6 Early medieval boundary ditch.

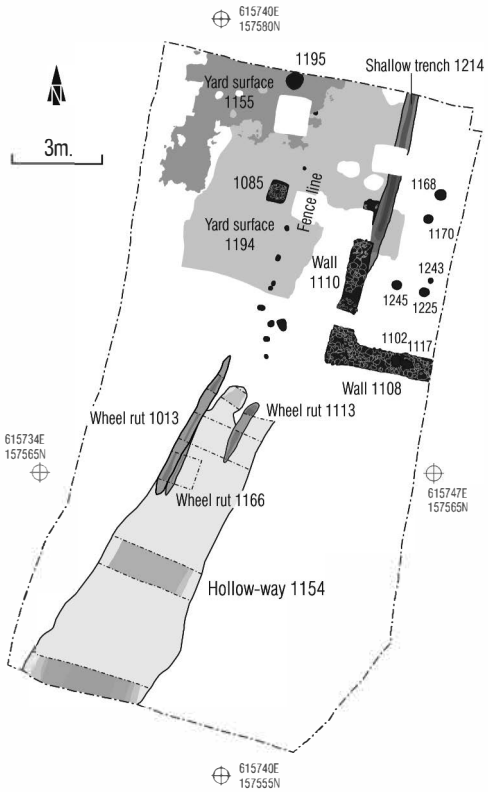

Fig. 7 Late medieval masonry-founded building, yard and hollow-way.

three sherds of early medieval pottery of Canterbury-type sandy ware (EM1), one a D-profiled beaded rim suggesting a late eleventh- to twelfth-century date (Barber 2008), in addition to two residual sherds each of earlier eighth- to ninth-century Canterbury-type sandy ware (MLS2) and 'local' shell-tempered wares (MLS4 and MLS4A). The later backfill of the re-cut ditch contained only one sherd each of Canterbury-type sandy ware (EM1) and shelly sandy ware (EM3) respectively, with a broad date range of between the late eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Barber 2008). In addition, a plain shafted and globular-headed copper alloy pin (Fig. 5, no. 2), an example of a Type A dress pin commonly attributed to a middle Anglo-Saxon date, but also occurring in later contexts up to the eleventh century (Biddle 1990, fig. 150, nos 1429-36, 554-556), was recovered from the later ditch re-cut (Bevan 2008).

In both the primary and later re-cut ditches, animal and plant remains were poorly preserved. Animal bone comprised a minimum of one animal each of sheep/goat, pig, horse and dog (Jones 2010), along with a small quantity of marine fish bone comprising eel, herring and whiting (Locker 2010), and oyster shell (Allison 2011), while very small quantities of charcoal, charred cereal grain and chaff were also present (Carruthers 2010).

Elsewhere across the barton, a general scatter of features dating from the mid eleventh to the thirteenth century has been noted. These include at least one pit located on the north side of the barton, adjacent to the frontage with Longport (Diack 2001), a large uncertain feature, measuring at least 4.5m wide by 1.6m deep, located during construction of the Modern Foreign Languages Block in 2001 (Diack 2003), and four further pits, located during construction of an extension to the Modern Foreign Languages Block in 2005 (Linklater 2007). All of this activity appears to have been focused west of the ditch identified below the new Food Technology Block and it is plausible that this ditch, at least in the early medieval period, demarcated the eastern extents of the barton and its associated buildings from the surrounding farmland.

In the *Late Medieval* period the infilling of the re-cut boundary ditch by the thirteenth century signaled an eastwards expansion of the barton complex, with the former ditch partially overlain by a roughly metalled yard surface which fronted a new masonry-founded building located to the east, and a trackway, represented by preserved wheel ruts, running from the building's frontage into a hollow-way located to the south-west (**Fig. 7**).

Only the south-west corner of the building was exposed during the excavation. The building was located 4.25m east of the infilled boundary ditch [1055] (Fig. 6) and formed a rectangular structure with a visible external width of 4.98m (4.3m internally) continuing beyond the eastern limit of excavation, and a visible length of 9.27m (8.48m internally) continuing beyond the northern limit of excavation. The wall segments [1108 and 1110] measured between 0.55m and 0.81m wide and were formed of roughly coursed, undressed chalk blocks and angular flint nodules bonded with a light yellow brown sandy mortar characterised with inclusions of marine shell. The walls had a maximum surviving standing height of 0.42m. No evidence for foundation trenches was observed and later material abutting against the external wall faces indicated that the walls formed earth laid footings, presumably for a timber superstructure. This interpretation was reinforced by two surviving sockets for upright timbers [post-holes 1102 and 1117], each 0.37m and 0.40m in diameter respectively and up to 0.19m depth, cut into wall 1108.

The north-west side of the building was open-fronted, the south-western wall [1110] extending 5.56m before terminating in line with a square, chalk filled post-pad [1085], offset 2.59m from the north-western frontage, and in alignment with a circular post-hole [1195], located 3.02m to the north-east. Both the post-pad and post-hole appear to represent parts of a projecting timber-framed porch. Across the open frontage, a shallow trench [1214], which measured at least 6.1m long by 0.48m wide, with a concave base up to 0.20m deep, potentially formed the setting for a former timber sill beam or perhaps a 'leap', a horizontal board extending across the entrance used to retain grain while threshing (English Heritage 2012, 17). Within the building's interior, no trace of a floor surface was evident. However, an internal partition was represented by five post-holes [1168, 1170, 1225, 1243 and 1245], each between 0.16m and 0.36m in diameter and up to 0.61m deep.

A metalled surface [1194], formed of small to medium sub-angular flint nodules within a compacted chalk matrix, represented an exterior yard extending 5.6m from the north-western frontage of the building, and continuing northwards beyond the limit of excavation. At some stage this yard was widened on its west side, with a

new compacted chalk matrix with flint [1155], approximately 2m wide, partially overlying the original yard surface 1194.

To the south, a series of parallel wheel ruts [1013, 1113, and 1166], extended from the edge of this exterior yard into a gently sloping hollow-way [1154], up to 4.06m wide, which continued south-westwards beyond the limit of excavation. Where the hollow-way terminated at the edge of the exterior yard, a line of eleven post-holes traversed the yard's surface forming a fence-line broadly parallel and 2.25m west of the building's frontage. The post-holes varied between 0.11m to 0.38m in diameter, and between 0.05m and 0.09m deep.

The number of finds from all these features was notably low, perhaps indicating that the barton was regularly kept clear of waste as a result of systematic collection and spreading of such material onto surrounding cultivated fields (Barber 2008). Discounting three sherds of mid to late Anglo-Saxon pottery, which are almost certainly residual, only four sherds (16g) of pottery were recovered. These were noticeably less abraded than the earlier pottery, and consisted of three sherds of early thirteenth- to mid fourteenth-century Tyler Hill sandy ware (M1) recovered from the basal fill of the hollow-way (1154), and a single glazed body sherd from an open vessel in Canterbury transitional sandy ware (LM1.2) of *c*.1475-1550, recovered from the surface of the exterior yard.

Small, heavily weathered animal bone fragments, of which identifiable species were limited to sheep/goat, cattle and pig, were retrieved from the metalled yard surface, the fills of the hollow-way and from post-holes within the building's interior (Jones 2010). Bird bone was limited to a single pelvis from a domestic fowl (Allison 2010). A small assemblage of fish bones and shellfish again reflected the abbey's continuing dependence on marine species and eel (Locker 2010; Allison 2011).

The form of the masonry-founded building, with an open frontage and porch extending onto an exterior yard, is characteristic of a barn-like structure. The document sources quoted in the second half of this paper list wheat, barley, oats, peas, vetch and hay as commodities produced variably by the home farm and abbey tenants, all of which would have required storage. Though charred plant remains from this period were sparse, the archaeobotanical record indicated that all of these crops were present, with both wheat and barley being the principal cereals. Other crops were also identified, including rye, which was possibly grown as a maslin with wheat, as well as horse beans and cultivated flax (Carruthers 2010). While none of the documents directly mention livestock housing it seems likely, given the identification of the three main species of livestock in the faunal assemblage, that such housing would also have been present.

During construction of a lift shaft on the eastern side of the existing school gym, an area of metalling was exposed, laid on a clay bedding, perhaps forming an external yard, but also potentially the interior surface of an agricultural building, with the clay bedding overlying a potential rammed chalk floor of probable late medieval date (Helm 2008a, 4). Elsewhere across the barton, other features included a refuse pit containing late medieval roof tiles exposed during construction of a new access road located to the north-west between the school and Pilgrims' Way (Helm 2009).

As well as being the administrative centre of the home farm of the abbey, where abbey tenants from outlying manors brought their produce, the barton was also

where the manorial and liberty courts were held (Tatton-Brown 1997, 133-135). The court hall was likely situated below the present main school building, which replaced the medieval manor house in the mid eighteenth century (see below; Tatton-Brown 1997, 135).

The barton would have required a range of buildings associated with the processing and storage of the agricultural produce and other commodities generated both from the home farm and surrounding holdings. Presumably, a proportion of this produce would have been held for use by the abbey, transferred as required to the range of service buildings, including a brewhouse, bakery and barn, located within the abbey's outer precincts to the north (Hicks 2015). Interestingly, the building identified during excavation at the new Food Technology Block site also does not appear to have been recorded, while archaeological monitoring works conducted within the area shown to have been occupied by the 'great barton barn', now occupied by the Science Block, have consistently failed to find any trace (Helm 2008a; O'Shea 2007).

Post-Dissolution: the Dissolution itself, and the later transfers of ownership, initially at least, did not appear to have any visible impact on the daily working-life of the farm. In 1750, the old Barton Court manor house was demolished and a new house, surviving today as the school house, was built in its place as a new family residence. Other modifications to the existing farm buildings likely took place at this time, though the great barn, which continued to be represented on maps of the area, appears to have survived into the early nineteenth century.

It is probable that the building identified in the excavation was demolished as part of this process, with a halfpenny of George II, dated 1757, retrieved from the backfilled trench forming the potential 'leap', providing a *terminus post quem* for this event (Bevan 2008). Clear indications of demolition associated with the building were observed. These comprised a concentration of angular flint nodules and chalk fragments (1089) dumped against the external face of wall [1108], tumbled chalk blocks [1111] abutting the external face of wall [1110], and an extensive spread of broken peg tile (1001), presumably deriving from the dismantled roof, dumped partially across the former yard (**Fig. 8**). The roof tiles were all medieval in date, with three main tile fabrics present: one from the Tyler Hill kilns, located immediately north of Canterbury, dated to the late twelfth to fourteenth century; another from an as yet unidentified Canterbury kiln, perhaps one operated by the abbey itself, dated to the late twelfth to sixteenth century; and a third from an unknown tilery, probably of late twelfth- to late fourteenth-century date (Pringle 2008).

It was not clear from the excavated data at what date the hollow-way leading to the open fronted building and yard went out of use. No material was recovered from the feature's later fills, which comprised weathered silts slumping into the feature from the east, but it is clear that this predated the demolition of the open fronted building, with demolition layer 1089 partially extending across the head of the former hollow-way.

Following the demolition, a loamy soil (1006) formed across the excavated area, in places surviving up to 0.30m thick (**Fig. 9**). Likely representing cultivated ground or a garden, this soil contained few finds, but included three abraded sherds

Fig. 8 Post-medieval demolition deposits.

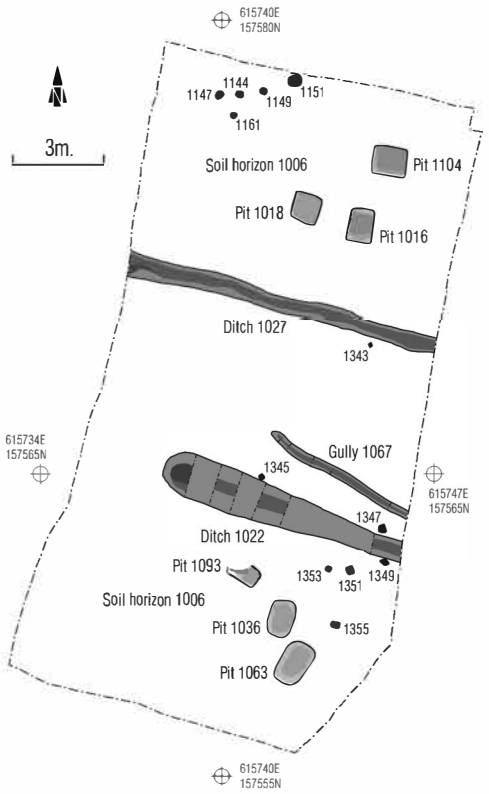

Fig. 9 Post-medieval agricultural features.

of medieval Tyler Hill sandy ware (M1), and a single fragment of an eighteenth-century tobacco pipe stem (Barber 2008).

Two ditches [1027 and 1022], traversed the excavated area from south-east to north-west, truncating the loamy soil 1006. The ditches were spaced approximately 6m apart. The northern ditch [1027] cut across the southern end of the demolished building and the former exterior yard, and measured 0.70m wide by up to 0.24m deep with a concave base. The southern ditch [1022] extended from the eastern limit of excavation for a distance of 8.31m before terminating at its north-west end, with the ditch measuring 0.69m wide at its visible south-east end, broadening to 1.46m wide at the terminal end. The southern ditch had a surviving depth of up to 0.39m with a concave base. Only the northern ditch [1027] contained datable finds, comprising five sherds of post-medieval glazed earthenware (PM1) of mid eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century date and two stem fragments from nineteenth-century clay tobacco pipes (Barber 2008). Three post-holes, one located to the south of ditch 1027 [post-hole 1343], and two located to the north of ditch 1022 [post-holes 1345 and 1347], potentially represent the remnants of fence-lines running alongside each ditch.

A shallow gully-like feature [1067], situated between 0.73m and 1.46m north of

ditch 1022, extended from the eastern limit of excavation for a distance of 5.25m before terminating at its north-west end. The gully measured 0.45m wide and had a surviving depth of 0.10m, with a concave base. No finds were recovered from the fill of this gully, but it is likely both the gully and the adjacent southern ditch were contemporary with the northern ditch, and are likely to have continued in use up to the early nineteenth century. While only conjectural, the alignment of the ditches, and their associated facing fence lines might represent a broad farm track or drove way for livestock extending from the farmyard complex and providing access into the barton fields.

To the north of ditch 1027 and to the south of ditch 1022, two corresponding groups of pits and post-holes were observed, truncating the loamy soil 1006. The northern group comprised three sub-rectangular pits [1016, 1018 and 1104], and five post-holes [1147, 1144, 1149, 1151 and 1161], while the southern group comprised a further three sub-rectangular pits [1036, 1063 and 1093], and four post-holes [1349, 1351, 1353 and 1355].

The pits measured between 0.95m and 1.49m long by between 0.63m and 0.93m wide. The southern pits had been truncated by modern ground reduction and only survived at a depth of between 0.18m and 0.25m, while the northern pits had surviving depths of between 0.57m and 1.04m. Finds from these pits again indicated a late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century date, with pottery comprising four sherds from large glazed red earthenware (PM1) dishes, one sherd from a London stoneware (PM25) tankard, and one sherd from a blue painted pearlware (LPM12B) tea bowl from pit 1104, and one sherd from a plain late creamware (LPM11A) chamber pot from pit 1018. A single bowl from a late eighteenth-century clay tobacco pipe was also recovered from pit 1104. Pit 1036 contained the truncated remnants of an articulated adult horse skeleton (Jones 2010).

The post-holes potentially represent parts of fence-alignments, perhaps forming enclosures for livestock. All nine post-holes measured between 0.20m and 0.46m in diameter and varied between 0.11m and 0.41m deep.

Beyond the excavated area, other investigations identified further post-medieval elements. These include a brick floor situated adjacent to the pond identified during construction of an extension to the Music Room in 2002 (Diack 2002), and might represent the floor of an outbuilding or yard associated with the new mansion house. More of this brick floor was exposed in 2006, in the course of laying new services, and a further sequence of late post-medieval deposits associated with cultivation, building clearance and landscaping was observed across the school site (O'Shea 2007).

Approximately 46m to the north, within the adjacent property at No. 2 Park Cottages, a large post-medieval quarry was exposed during evaluation trenching (Gollop 2009). The quarry had been infilled with demolition material, including chalk and flint rubble, potentially derived from the demolished building excavated below the new Food Technology Block, and was in turn overlain by metalled surfaces representing a trackway and adjoining yard fronting onto Longport, dated to the later eighteenth to early nineteenth century. To the south-east, a second quarry infilled with redeposited chalk and post-medieval brick rubble, exposed during construction of the Canterbury Christ Church University Sports Centre, was dated to the early nineteenth century (Helm 2009).

Conclusion

The Anglo-Saxon findings demonstrate that the school grounds were occupied from at least the early eighth century. While a direct association with the ecclesiastical foundation of St Augustine's Abbey could not be confirmed, that this occupation related to the barton or home farm of the abbey was strongly implied by the recovered finds. Most notable in this regard was the demonstration of selective consumption of livestock within the grounds of the farm, with prime cuts being consumed elsewhere, presumably within the abbey refectory, and a preference for marine resources comparable to other contemporary ecclesiastical foundations of the time.

However, the location of the main archaeological investigation below the new Food Technology Block to the east of the farm complex significantly limited our understanding of the morphology and development of the home farm buildings. In particular the site of the medieval manor house and court hall, and the adjacent barns and other associated buildings which would have formed the heart of the farm complex have still to be identified below the existing school buildings. Understanding the complexity of the farm, and its changing fortunes from the middle Anglo-Saxon period remains a significant challenge, particularly as so few medieval documentary sources survive for the barton which might shed better light on understanding the workings of the farm.

The numerous small-scale observations conducted by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust have to a large part demonstrated that the potential for the survival of more extensive structures and features below the present school buildings is high, and our archaeological understanding of the home farm will no doubt be enhanced as and when future development takes place within the school's grounds.

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The author has drawn upon a wide range of specialist archaeological reports submitted as part of the post-excavation process – see list at beginning of the bibliography.

Illustrations were prepared by Peter Atkinson (site plans) and Barbara McNee (finds). Post-excavation work was managed by Peter Clark. This report benefited from reviews by Peter Clark and Alison Hicks and copy editing by Jane Elder. The site archive will be deposited with Canterbury City Museums.

THE DOCUMENTARY SOURCES FOR THE BARTON OF ST AUGUSTINE'S

(SHEILA SWEETINBURGH)

During the Middle Ages, Barton Court was the site of the home farm of St Augustine's Abbey, one of the two great and ancient Benedictine monasteries in Canterbury. After the Dissolution the farm became crown property. It was sold soon after and over the next 450 years it was the private residence of several gentry families. Such a history of ownership might suggest considerable documentary resources for the site pre- and post-Reformation, and there is an archive of sorts for the later period. However, materials for the pre-Reformation period are extremely limited and, in particular, there are almost no estate accounts or court rolls; the odd survivals offering little information. This is a result of the almost total destruction of St Augustine's Abbey, its post-Reformation owners, occupiers and visitors seeing it primarily as a resource, whether in terms of building stone, agricultural land or waste parchment and paper. Moreover, even some of the abbey's documents that survived the Reformation have since gone, including manuscripts destroyed in the Cotton Library fire of 1731. Nevertheless, a few abbey registers are extant and these provide tantalising glimpses of what must have been at the medieval complex.[1]

As a way of trying to extend the analysis, it may be worth considering what the records say about Christ Church Priory's home farm or Barton because it seems likely that the two monastic houses would have had similar facilities to meet the demands of their large communities. Even though there are significant differences, with regard to proximity to the mother house and to the river, and the presence/absence of a mill, both bartons must have acted as storage depots for agricultural produce from outlying manors as well as from the demesne land of the home farm.

Additional documentary sources for the modern period in the form of maps have proved useful, especially those of the St Lawrence Tithery, which seemingly provide ideas about the composition of the site for the pre-nineteenth century period. Consequently, this study has had to rely on the limited documentary survivals to try to piece together what might have occupied the site of Barton Court.

The home farm of St Augustine's Abbey (c.800-1538)

Information regarding the early history of the area comes from a spurious charter said to date from AD 605 (Kelly, *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey*, pp. 9-11). According to this royal grant, King Æthelberht gave a considerable area of land situated to the south and east of Canterbury to the abbey. The charter contains a complex boundary clause; some of the landmarks are difficult to identify today, but it appears to mark out the limits of the abbey precincts and the abbey's home farm.[2] Even though the charter is considered to be a post-Conquest forgery (earliest extant copies are from the thirteenth century), it is feasible that the abbey did hold this acreage and that it was given to the monks by King Æthelberht. Such a holding would have been a valuable asset, both as an area of local farmland and as a place of storage for foodstuffs and other commodities brought in from the abbey's outlying manors that could not be stored within the precincts.

Being a gift of the crown, the barton or Longport manor (as it was also known)

was exempt from royal jurisdiction and was outside the liberty of Canterbury. As a consequence, the abbot was not only able to hold the manorial court but also the view of frankpledge where minor infringements of the law were heard, as well as the assize of bread and ale.[3] Such rights were lucrative assets and thus were recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086. According to Domesday, the manor comprised one sulung and one yoke in the Hundred of Bridge, another yoke in Westgate Hundred and included 70 burgesses who were in the city of Canterbury (*Domesday Book: Kent*, 7, 4). The demesne had 2.5 ploughs and the 28 villagers and 63 smallholders had six ploughs. Not all the land was arable because 17 acres were designated as meadow. A late thirteenth-century survey provides a more detailed account of the extent of the manor, indicating that most of the farmland was in three fields of 85, 147 and 150 acres, the total acreage being just over 475 acres (CCAL: Lit MS E19, f. 172) (**Fig. 10**). Other surveys provide further clues, and Dom. John of Sturry noted three areas that may relate to Barton Court itself: 'the forestall before the gate/door of the court' 1.5 acres; 'curtilage with houses and buildings' 3.5 acres 1.5 virgates; 'in the garden' 3 acres 1 virgate (KHLC: U350/O1).

The manor was said to be worth £20 pre-Conquest, but its value substantially increased over the next 20 years to £36 4*s*. in 1086 (*Domesday Book: Kent*, 7, 4). Although not directly comparable, it is worth noting that in the mid fifteenth century, probably at a time of increasing financial difficulties on the abbey's manors, Longport was still a very profitable holding, two surviving annual accounts showing receipts of £49 14*s*. and £46 17*s*. 4*d*. respectively. By this time the manor had been farmed out but the abbey continued to fund building repairs, spending over 18*s*. in 1468-9 (CCAL: DCc/Ch Ant A66d&e).

Being the home farm, the abbey continued to receive part of the rent in kind rather than cash, and the commodities provided give some indication of the type of buildings that must have been on the site of the farmstead. From the abbey registers it seems that Longport was supposed to provide 250 quarters of wheat, 208 quarters barley, 15 quarters oats and 12 quarters peas, though at times the amounts apparently fell far short of this requirement, as well as varying annually (BL: Arundel 310, f. 139). For example, in 1497 the account lists 100 quarters of wheat and 101 of barley, whereas in the 1460s it was only 40 quarters wheat, 80 quarters barley and 5 quarters peas, but the amounts had risen again by the early sixteenth century (CCAL: DCc/Ch Ant A66a; A66d&e. *Valor*, I, p. 18). Thus there must have been barns and granaries to accommodate wheat, barley and oats for before and after threshing, and similarly storage space for peas.[4] An indication of the importance of the pea crop can be ascertained from Abbot Hugh's grant, in 1137, of the tithes of peas and wheat from the demesne land of Longport manor to his new hospital of St Lawrence (CCAL: Lit MS C20, pp. 9, 34).

These were not the only crops stored at Longport because the abbey expected its tenants at Chislet to bring hay to Canterbury. These provisions were recorded in the manorial custumal, each *sulunga* or *tenementum* allocated a specific number of loads.[5] Furthermore the tenants were also expected to build the hay barn when the need arose, although what sort of structure this was, was not specified (*Black Book of St Augustine*, pp. 115-18; Sparks, *Chislet and Westbere*, p. 39). In addition, the abbey is recorded as having bought 18 loads of straw in one year in the later

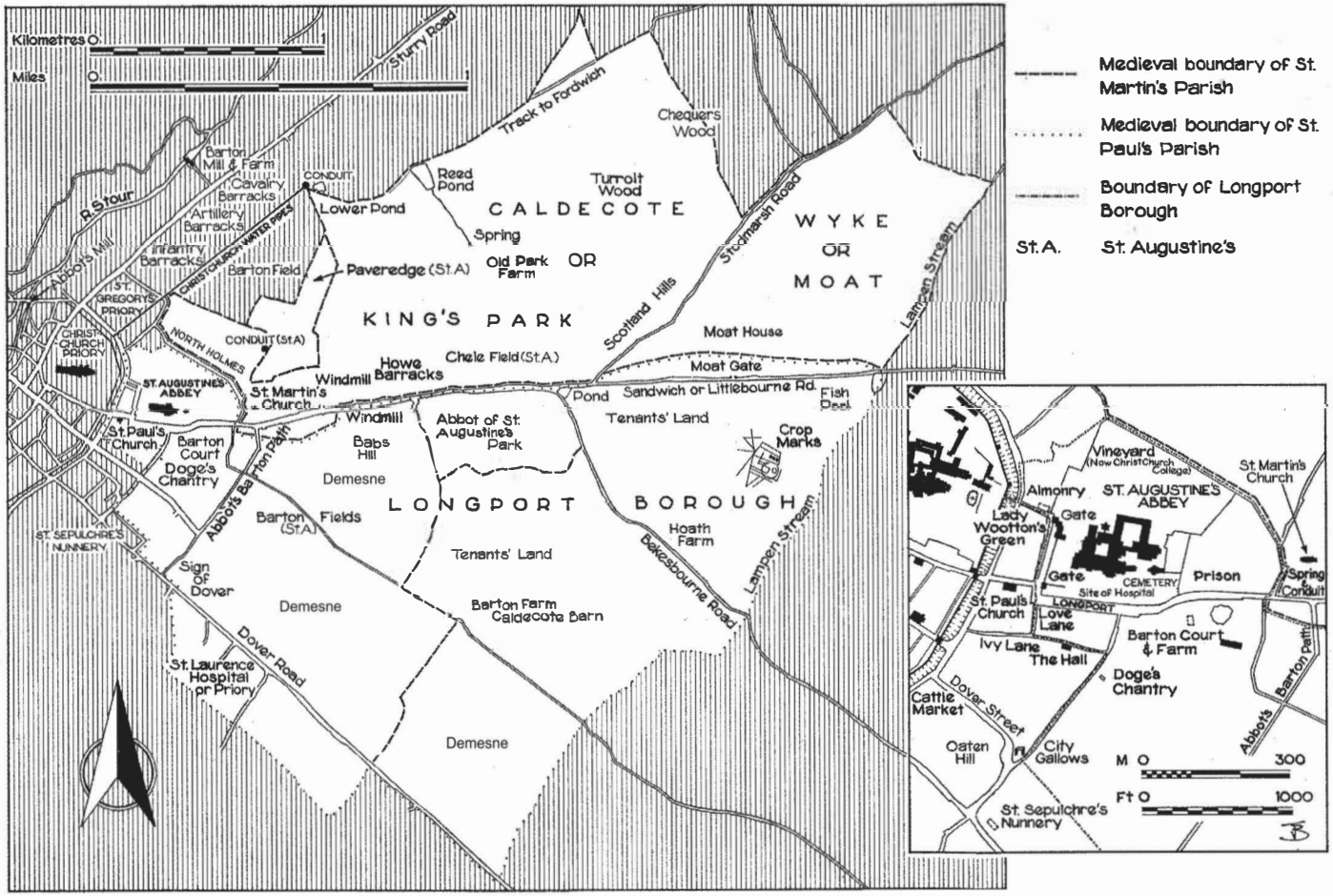

Fig. 10 The demesne and tenanted lands of St Augustine's Abbey in Longport. Courtesy CAT.

fifteenth century and it seems likely that at least some of this was stored on the farmstead at Longport. Similarly, vetch was bought in and it too must have required some type of storage facility (CCAL: DCc/Ch Ant A66d&e).

A mixed farming regime was practised at Longport, which may have included cattle rearing (*Thirteen Centuries*, no page number). Pigs were important, however, and the demesne land apparently supported a pig breeding herd, spending some of their time, at least, grazing areas of parkland such as Trenley Park wood (*ibid.*). Sheep were also kept, possibly a ewe flock but the manor was expected to send ten 'multon' to the larderer each year and these may have been wethers (BL: Arundel 310, f. 140). Even though none of the accounts, rentals and other manorial sources directly mention livestock housing, it seems highly likely that such housing did exist at the home farm, perhaps close to the stables where some of the straw was used (CCAL: DCc/Ch Ant A66d&e). Unlike some manors, Longport was not listed as providing hens but those that came from other manors as rent may have been kept there until required by the kitchen (BL: Arundel 310, f. 140). Even though there is no mention of a dovecote in the pre-Dissolution records, the presence of one in the late sixteenth century may suggest that the abbey did have one at Longport to provide birds for the abbot and his guests.

In addition to the granaries, barns and other farm buildings, the farmstead included a court hall which was situated on the west side of the complex (Tatton-Brown, 'Abbey precinct', p. 133). The manorial court and view of frankpledge were held there, and the place probably also accommodated the abbey's bailiff/farmer, possibly men such as Nicholas de Berthona (*Black Book of St Augustine*, p. 156). Close by was a large pond called the Court Sole and a gate/door which may have opened on to the road that separated the barton from the abbey precincts, and in particular the cellarer's garden (CCAL: CC/P/1/A/1; Tatton-Brown, 'Abbey precinct', p. 133). Interestingly, the *c.*1640 map of Canterbury and its southern suburbs does not show the pond, but it does appear to show a boundary wall, a gateway and a barn adjacent to the Longport road which may indicate the survival of a medieval feature (CCAL: Map 123). The rental of 1375 appears to note all three features: 'a barn next to the gate of the court ate Courtsole' (CCAL: Lit MS E19, f. 120). Thus the layout of the home farm appears to have been that of a typical courtyard plan focused around the 'Court Sole' pond, with the court hall forming the western side. Later maps potentially illustrate the surviving remnants of this medieval layout.

It is unclear from the documentary sources whether the farmstead buildings were primarily timber or stone.[6] Even though a carpenter and a tiler were apparently the most commonly-employed builders at Christ Church Priory's barton, it seems likely that there was a mix of construction types (CCAL: DCc/Bedels Rolls: Barton Carucate). Concerning the Priory's barton there are a few references to new buildings, such as a thatched building constructed in 1326, though whether this was timber-framed or stone is unknown. In terms of the type of building there was probably a considerable overlap and it is worth noting that at the Priory's barton there were granaries, barns, stable, cattle, sheep and pig housing, as well as a dovecote. There was also a mill, unlike the abbey's barton, its mills being elsewhere including grain and fulling mills at Sturry. Nevertheless, for both the abbey and the priory, their respective home farms were integral parts of the monastic economy,

the farmsteads comprising a complex of agricultural buildings and those needed for the effective administration of the monastic estates.

A gentry estate

Following the Dissolution the abbey and its holdings were taken by the king, initially Longport manor being leased to Robert Best, a yeoman from Ash. As the tenant he was expected to provide 46 quarters and two bushels of wheat, 105 quarters of barley and four quarters of peas, and 53*s*. 4*d*. in money, that is a total value of £84 19*s*. 4*d*. (*Valor*, I, p. 180). Best was succeeded by Clement Kemp, but during his tenure the manor was sold by Edward VI. The new owner was Sir Thomas Cheney, who had also purchased the neighbouring abbey lands, including 'le old Park', which he held until his death in 1558. His son inherited the vast Cheney estates, being one of the most powerful men in Kent, but he was far less successful than his father and his financial difficulties meant he had very little option but to sell the manor (Hasted, *Kent*, XII, pp. 238-9). Possibly in response to Cheney's difficulties, certain local prominent citizens saw opportunities to enclose small pieces of the manorial lands (CCAL: U3/81/6/16/1). The new owner, Sir Edward Herbert, showed little interest in the manor and almost immediately sold it to Thomas Smith. Smith, as customer to Queen Elizabeth, became extremely wealthy and in addition to Longport he acquired the house and manor of Westenhanger, which was his primary residence. His tenant at Longport presumably lived in the manor house, and it was he who tried to plough up part of the demesne land of Babbs Hill in 1582. As a result the mayor and aldermen of Canterbury complained to the crown because the area had traditionally been used for shooting and Smith promised them that it would not happen again.

In total Longport manor was said to contain 20 messuages, two tofts, a dovehouse, 20 gardens, 430 acres of land, 50 acres of meadow, 120 acres of pasture, 15 acres of woodland and 50 acres of heath and waste (the manor having been extended in the late Middle Ages). The site of the manor house was within an eight acre plot, nearby was a close of four and a half acres of arable land, a close of 24 acres of pasture at Babbs Hill and an arable field, Barton field, of 144 acres. There were also six messuages in neighbouring Longport Street (CCAL: U451/T1). A contemporary map, though impressionistic, shows five buildings at 'The Barton' (**Fig. 11a**). One is probably the gateway, another may be a large barn, a third looks more like a livestock building and a fourth has a chimney, the manor house perhaps, but the fifth is unclear (CCAL: Map 49).

Thomas Smith was succeeded by his son Robert, who initially may not have lived there but was said to be 'of Barton' at his death (CCAL: U451/T1) John, Robert's son may similarly have moved to Barton, and when he married Ann, daughter of John Raynye the elder of London, the Longport manor was part of the jointure settlement agreed before the wedding in 1624 (CCAL: U451/T1; T3). John and his wife founded an almshouse (completed 1657) on land adjoining the manor house, providing it with a legacy of £1,500 and £32 per year to be divided among the pensioners (*Thirteen Centuries*, no page number). Ann also made provisions for the almshouse, including 50 acres of land (CCAL: U451/T1). The *c*.1640 map shows the boundary wall, barn and gate [see above] and also a twin

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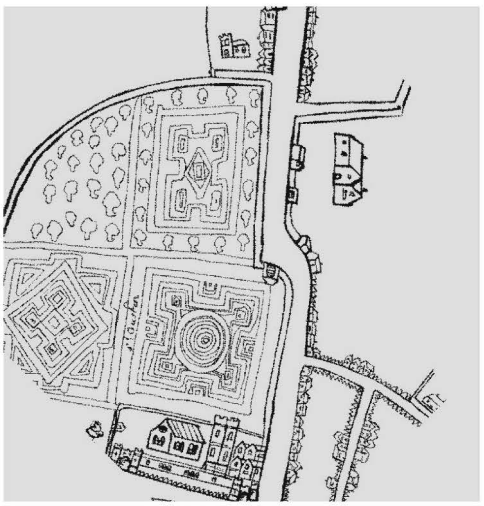

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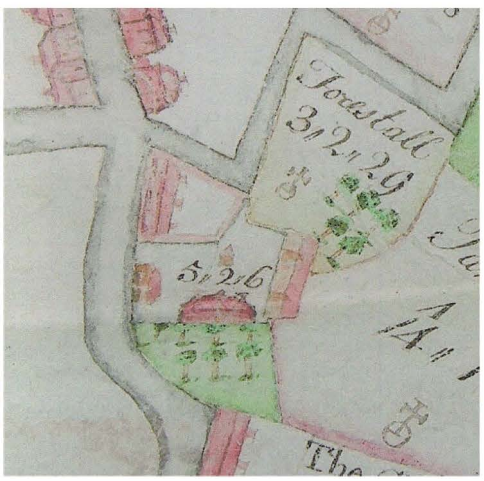

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Fig. 11 Early maps of Barton Court. Reproduced courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.
(a) Detail from late sixteenth-century map (Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library (CCAL): Map 49).
(b) Detail from *c.*164● map (CCAL: Map 123).
(c) Detail from 1672 map (CCAL: U16●/1/1)

gabled building with chimneys that is presumably the manor house (CCAL: Map 123) (**Fig. 11b**). If it is, then it would seem that 'The Barton' was a very substantial gentry residence, perhaps on a par with the houses created at other ex-religious institutions such as the hospitals of St Laurence and St James. Unfortunately, the extant courts rolls and views of frankpledge throw no further light on the layout of the property, although the pond and associated watercourse are regularly referred to, mainly in connection with nuisance cases (CCAL: CC/P/1/A/1; U451/M1).

During the later seventeenth century the estate was the subject of a number of transactions, presumably in a bid to raise money, and eventually the majority of the estate was purchased by Solomon Hougham for £7,224 in 1671. The description of the property mentions the [manor] house with orchards, gardens, backsides, stable, pigeon house, forestall and yard; and Barton barn (CCAL: U451/T1). A map dated 1672 shows four buildings (**Fig. 11c**): possibly the gateway (though it could be a barn close to Longport Street), the manor house which seems to have a garden or orchard behind it, the great Barton barn, seemingly as long as the manor house and what may be the pigeon house (CCAL: U160/1/1). This site covers 5 acres 2 roods 6 perches and abuts the 'Forstall' at Barton barn, the 'Forstall' being slightly smaller at 3 acres 2 roods 29 perches. The map also shows the Smith almshouses but not the great pond. Again, the manor house appears to be a very substantial gentry residence.

Like his predecessors, Solomon Hougham rented out the various farms and tenements, his income derived from the rents and court dues he continued to collect at the manorial court and view of frankpledge. Dying childless in 1697, his namesake and nephew inherited the estate, although three annuities were to be paid from the rent received for Barton field, including one to fund a charitable dole of bread and ale by the churchwardens of St Mary's church at Sandwich (The National Archives [TNA]: PROB 11/437). Solomon junior similarly died without male heirs in 1714, the estate passing to Charles, his brother. Charles and his son Henry continued the policy of leasing the estate, and they were apparently forced to mortgage the estate in an attempt to raise capital, a frequent occurrence at this time. Henry died in 1726, his widow continuing to manage the estate until William, their son, came of age. Probably the last map to show the 'medieval' manor house pictorially was produced in the early eighteenth century to show the lands belonging to the tithery of St Lawrence. It is difficult to know how accurate the drawing of the house at Great Barton is, but it differs from others in the vicinity which may indicate a relatively high level of accuracy. Barton barn is also depicted but none of the other buildings which presumably completed the complex.

William Hougham married one of the daughters of John Corbett of Bourne Place in 1744 and this probably explains his desire to demolish the old house and construct a new mansion house that was a fitting residence for his new family. His new house was built in 1750 and he may also have been instrumental in the development of what appears to be parkland behind the mansion complex on the maps produced by W. and H. Doidge (1752) and Andrew and Wren (1768) of Canterbury and its suburbs. The other structures shown probably included stables, as well as agricultural buildings, and there also seems to be a small acreage of hops to the west.

Under the terms of his will made in 1803, William Hougham's son, another

William, was the major beneficiary, but he also provided his granddaughter with substantial bequests. William junior similarly resided at Barton Court until his death in 1829, and, lacking male heirs, his niece Catherine Chesshyre was the major beneficiary (TNA: PROB 11/1750). Catherine and her husband the Rev. William Chesshyre received her inheritance after her aunt's death in 1839. They presumably resided at Barton Court because three years later he complained about the state of the vicarage adjoining St Paul's church, leading to its demolition. The Rev. Chesshyre was the incumbent at both St Paul's and St Martin's, as well as serving as a member of the cathedral chapter during the last years of his life (CCAL: DCc/MANDSP/1846/1; DCc/MANDRC/1858/1).

From the map evidence it is not clear exactly when Barton barn disappeared, to be replaced by a far smaller structure, but it is not shown on an early nineteenth-century map of the St Lawrence tithery, or on the slightly later tithe map of St Paul's parish (CCAL: U160/1/13; TO/C1/8B). This suggests that it occurred before Catherine and William took up ownership but they may have been involved. The Chesshyres had eight daughters which must have been a drain on the family income and may explain the proposed sale of part of the estate in 1850. In agreement with the terms laid down in his will, Catherine revived this scheme after his death in 1859, keeping for herself Barton Court house, its buildings, gardens, kitchen garden, pleasure gardens and adjacent pasture, in total 25 acres, and, ensuring that the trustees began to sell off plots of land elsewhere (KHLC: EKA-R/U438/T130/54). The timing was fortunate. Having been upgraded in the late eighteenth century (it became a turnpike road) the New Dover Road abutted fields, making it a prime target for residential development by wealthy Canterbury families, especially as it was also proposed to construct the London Chatham Dover railway in the same area. Although it would be difficult to ascertain the exact chronology of the sale of various building plots along the New Dover Road, it is clear that a considerable amount of building took place in the 1860s and 1870s (this development can also be traced in the census returns; TNA: St Paul's parish census returns 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1991. CCAL: Map 199/17; Map 181).

In 1902 Barton Court and what remained of the estate was sold off, its new owner, Colonel John Russell, living there until his death in 1909 (CCAL: CC/P/1/K/19). Thereafter his wife and daughters continued to live at the house, the estate under the management of his trustees. The early 20th century was a difficult period for such families, and as a way of generating income some of the Russell daughters became increasingly involved in the day-to-day management of the dairy herd. And after the First World War the family extended their horticultural enterprise, erecting glass houses at the Chantry Lane side of Well field and growing vegetables and flowers (*Images of Canterbury*, 179). Their retail outlet was a shop at the New Dover Road entrance to the farm. They also opened up the parkland, using some to plant apple trees, while a ditch with a fence at the bottom was used to keep the cattle off the lawn (Lyle, 92, 94). However the further requisitioning of the mansion by the armed forces in the Second World War saw further changes, and in 1945 the city authorities bought the premises as part of their strategy to increase the availability of schools in Canterbury.

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ENDNOTES

1 Although transcriptions or translations of some have been published, a few are in manuscript form only, mostly either at the British Library or in Cambridge. Mrs Margaret Sparks has examined the Corpus Christi College manuscript and has kindly described its contents to the author.

2 *Thorne's Chronicle* includes a 'modern' rendition of the boundary clause: 'It is surrounded on the East by the Church of St Martin and to the East by Mellehelle and so to the North by Wivescrowche again to the East and South as far as Fiss-pole and so to the South and West as far as the King's road leading from Chaldane Crouch as far as Canterbury. And so to the West to Rederchepe and so to the North to Drontyntone'; pp. 8-9.

3 Unfortunately so few medieval court rolls survive that it is impossible to know how much these court dues were worth, but in two year in the late Middle Ages they provided 15*s*. 8*d*. and 10*s*.; Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library [CCAL]: Lit MS B2; U14/2.

4 According to the account of 1432-3 there was said to be 284 quarters of wheat in the granary, 325 quarters of malt in the malt house and 8 quarters of wheat in the bakery; 80 loads of hay also remained; CCAL: DCc/Ch Ant A218a.

5 For example, the *sulinga* of Fayreport owed 16 loads hay, the *sulinga* of Boytone owed four more; *Black Book of St Augustine*, p. 100.

6 Following considerable storm damage in the late fourteenth century, a considerable sum was spent on repairs but the account gives few details; CCAL: U14/5.