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URBANISATION AND THE URBAN LANDSCAPE: BUILDING MEDIEVAL BURY ST EDMUNDS

ABBY L. ANTROBUS



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Abstract

Urbanisation and Urban Landscape: Building Medieval Bury St Edmunds.

Abby L. Antrobus

Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk) was a great Western European pilgrimage and commercial centre. Primarily, this thesis presents the first synthesis of fragmentary topographical, archaeological, documentary and architectural evidence for the development of this under-publicised town, from its proto-urban origins to *c.*1220. It reveals: a likely Middle-Saxon enclosure; an hypothesised early suburb; a Late-Saxon settlement, church and assembly place; a nine-part grid of AD 1066-1086; 12th-century additions, including defences and the market place; and later 12th-century suburban development and reinvestment. Secondly, the thesis contributes to Medieval urban landscape studies by demonstrating that there is potential to engage with frameworks developed in Historical Archaeology that recognise towns as invested, negotiated and lived spaces. 'Townscape' is framed as an arena in which fortunes were made and contested by individuals and institutions. Rapid urbanisation across Europe was bound up with a commercial boom and the related widespread enfranchisement of urban communities, particularly marked in the later 12th-century. Jocelin of Brakelond's *Chronicle* (1173-1202) reveals the powers of negotiation gained by the burgesses of Bury St Edmunds and here, the aspirations of the population are considered alongside the evolving landscape and building stock. Inspired by studies of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern towns, which demonstrate coincidences between the enclaves of urban elites and the most significant social, economic, political, religious and ritual places in mutable urban topographies, this thesis seeks evidence for the built environment in the formative High-Medieval period. Can patterns be evinced from the historical, archaeological and architectural record to reveal these developing topographies? In dialogue with the exercise of feudal lordship, did the community define themselves in the landscape? The interpretations drawn from fragmentary data are informed by recent work on the diversity of High-Medieval urban building form. What lined the streets of Bury St Edmunds? Where were the most significant buildings?

DECLARATION

No part of this thesis has been submitted for a previous degree and no part has been previously published.

I dedicate this thesis, as a token of love and deep gratitude, to Sue, Terry and Matt Antrobus.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BL	British Library
BM	British Museum (manuscripts now held in the British Library)
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
CUL	Cambridge University Library
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DL	Duchy of Lancaster Collection (PRO)
DoE	Department of the Environment
JdB	Jocelin of Brakelond
NMR	National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon)
OUP	Oxford University Press
PPG	Planning policy guidance notes
PRO	Public Records Office
PSIAH	*Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*
RCHM(E)	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
SCCAS	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
SHBG	Suffolk Historic Buildings Group
SHER	Suffolk Historic Environment Record.
SROB	Suffolk Records Office (Bury St Edmunds branch).
SROB LHR	Suffolk Local History Recording Scheme (1960s)

Assigned codes from the Suffolk Heritage Environment Record have been used to denote sites throughout the text. These take the form of a 'BSE' pre-fix, followed by a three-digit number.

Terminology

In this thesis, unless further clarification is given:

- Early-Saxon denotes the period *c.* AD 450-650.
- Middle-Saxon denotes the period *c.* AD 650-850
- Late-Saxon denotes the period *c.* AD 850-1100
- 'High-Medieval' has been taken to mean the period *c.* AD 1050-1350.
- 'Late-Medieval' is indicative of the period *c.* AD 1350-1500.

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1

INTRODUCTION: URBANISATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

> 'The rents and revenues of all the better towns and boroughs in England were on the increase, to the advantage of those who possessed them and to the profit of their landlords', Jocelin of Brakelond, monk of Bury St Edmunds, 1173-1202 (Brakelond 1989:68).

1.1 Aims of the Thesis

Firstly, this thesis provides a collation and interrogation of the evidence for the origins and development of medieval Bury St Edmunds as it grew from a 'proto-urban' centre to a High-Medieval market town, fair stead and pilgrimage site of international renown. 'Proto-urban' is used here as a term to indicate a focal point in a cultural, religious and administrative landscape that may not necessarily have been a place with a dense or even perhaps permanent population. The thesis explores the topography of the landscape and how, over five centuries, its urban form and function developed. Secondly, then, the thesis brings fresh perspectives to the study of High-Medieval townscapes by exploring the potential to combine a study of the evolving built space of a town with an appreciation of the way that it shaped and was shaped by the activities and aspirations of the urban community that lived within it. A consideration of the emergence of overlapping social, commercial, processional and political topographies above and beyond monumental changes to the town plan is adopted as an interpretative framework. The theme of subscription to urban life is a thread throughout the thesis.

This introductory chapter frames the phenomenon of urban growth in many parts of Northern and North-western Europe in the High-Medieval period as a marked cultural transition that can be explored through archaeological, architectural, historical and landscape evidence. It then explores agendas in historical and urban archaeology which promote the study of 'the urban process' and the formation of distinctive urban ways of

life, and argues that there is potential to take up these themes in the scrutiny of High-Medieval landscapes. Medieval urban infrastructures such as castles, churches, houses, quays, and town walls still give shape to the centres of many European towns, and the strength of the heritage industry shows how much cultural value is placed on remains: alternative understandings will therefore always be welcome. The chapter concludes with an outline of the specific objectives that are met in this study.

1.1.1 Aim 1: revealing a hidden history

The modern town of Bury St Edmunds, shown in Figure 1.1, is a thriving historic town. In the medieval period, it was one of Western Europe's great pilgrimage and commercial centres. In the early 10th-century, the relics of the Anglo-Saxon saint Edmund the Martyr, King of East Anglia, were moved to the settlement which was then known as *Beodericesworth,* reputedly the site of a 7th-century monastery. Together, the church and settlement prospered. Bury St Edmunds formed the religious, economic and administrative centre of a vast, rich rural hinterland which comprised the eight-and-a-half hundreds of the Liberty of St Edmund: effectively, the basis of the modern administrative unit of West Suffolk (see Figures 1.2a-d). More widely, however, St Edmund was feared and revered on an international level. Patronised by royalty, the church and town were linked into the chain of major shrines and the system of trade fairs that formed a network across High-Medieval Europe. The Abbey of St Edmund was one of the largest, wealthiest and most politically influential Benedictine houses in England (Figure 1.3a, 1.3b) (Gransden 2007). Although the ecclesiastical complex was destroyed in the years after the Dissolution of the monastic houses in 1539, the town continued to thrive. Today, the grid of streets to the west of the monastic precinct represents an often cited, well-preserved example of a successful medieval speculative development which is best appreciated from the air, as shown in Figure 1.4.

A settlement with such an illustrious history is a worthy candidate for research into the rise of a medieval centre, yet to date, a detailed and systematic study of the origins, monumental re-modelling and subsequent success of the landscape of the town in the High-Medieval period has not been produced, despite long traditions now in urban

historical geography inspired by the systematic map analysis advocated by geographer Michael Conzen (e.g. 1982, see below Section 1.3.3). This imbalance is in part a result of what is, for archaeologists, the paradoxical relationship between, on the one hand, the preservation and conservation of a historical environment, and, on the other, the fact that it is often the *destruction* of buildings or archaeological deposits which creates an opportunity for study: historic Bury St Edmunds has been well looked after, and many of the buildings in the town are of some antiquity (Carr 1975:55; Binney 1981; Clifton Taylor 1984). Large scale re-development – and hence large scale archaeological work which would offer an opportunity to tell the story of the town – has not taken place. This situation is reflective of that in many of the smaller or historic towns in England, where the lack of published information about the urban fabric is inversely proportional to the historic nature of the townscape (Dyer 2003). Since the inception of the Suffolk Archaeological Unit in the 1970s, however, there have been many small scale excavations or interventions as lesser development projects have been executed. The primary aim of this thesis is to combine this fragmentary material with a new synthesis of topographical and documentary evidence, and a new scrutiny of architectural remains. Interrogation of these varied sources provides a fresh understanding of the streets, buildings and activities that took place in this unique medieval town as it was developed from its Saxon origins.

This is not to say that the history of the town has been neglected. Many books present aspects of the history of Bury St Edmunds, celebrating events and characters in the past life of the town (e.g. Redstone 1909; Lobel 1935; McCutcheon 1987; Statham 1992, Statham 1996; Bishop 1998; Halliday 2002; Meeres 2002). There are also publications of papers produced for visits to the town by academic societies: the British Archaeological Association made an excursion in 1864 (Hills 1865), returning in 1998 (Gransden 1998), and the Royal Archaeological Institute made a tour in 1951 (Maltby 1951; Smith 1951). Further, Robin Eaglen's recent study of the mint (2006) considers the origins of the settlement (2006). Aspects of the landscape of the medieval town *have* been considered - but in an *ad hoc* way.

A puzzling palimpsest

Generally, then, it is accepted that a medieval planned grid of streets was built on the higher ground to the west of that older settlement which followed the line of the river Lark. This earlier settlement is visible in the irregular, curvilinear street patterns to the north and the south of the monastic precinct, as seen on the modern map of the town, Figure 1.1 (Carr 1975:51, Statham 1998:99). Of the streets shown on Figure 1.1, Northgate Street and Southgate Street are recognised as the arterial roads of the earlier elongated settlement – and excavated sections within the monastic precinct have shown that a Late-Saxon road connected them - with Raingate Street and Cotton Lane forming the back lanes. St Mary's Square, on the basis of a 14th century reference which names it the 'Eld Market', is recognised as an old market place (SHER BSE 241; Statham 1998:99-100). In a paper in 1998, Bernard Gauthiez identified, in the curvilinear lines of Crown Street and Bridewell Lane/Angel Lane/ Lower Baxter Street, another probable pre-Conquest street (Gauthiez 1998:93). This thesis does not contest these ideas, but it does expand upon them, considering the landscape evidence in the light of recent models of the motors and mechanisms of urban development in England (e.g. ideas in Blair 2005). In particular, it redresses the fact that the pre-Conquest settlement has not previously been explicitly considered as a multi-phased entity, with a vague impression created that Anglo-Saxon *Beodericesworth* was a settlement that grew continually from its origins underneath the Abbey site. In 1998, when Margaret Statham was writing about the origins of the town, she could only draw upon a few finds of Middle-Saxon pottery (p. 99). Now, however, thanks to subsequent excavations, there is enough evidence to support a re-appraisal of the phases of the pre-Conquest evolution of the town and to comment on the motors and mechanisms of English urban development.

Similarly, there is scope to reassess the grid of streets to the west, which is generally considered to have been laid out immediately after the Conquest, when the new Romanesque church dedicated to St Edmund was begun (Dickinson 1934:46; Lobel 1935: Ch. 1; Smith 1951; Beresford 1967; Carr 1975:51 and pers. comm.; Crummy 1979; Fernie 1998; Gauthiez 1998; Statham 1996:11-12, 1998; Aston and Bond

2000:74-6; Eaglen 2006). For example, in 1951, J. T. Smith noted that the town plan of Bury was an 'instance of Norman development on gridiron or chess board lines, partially obliterating the lay-out of the pre-Conquest settlement' (1951:162). The Domesday Book records that between the Conquest in 1066 and the time of the great survey in 1086, 342 houses had been laid out on land that was formerly plough land. The alignment between the gridiron of streets and the church has often been cited as proof that they are contemporaneous developments (Lobel 1935:3; Beresford 1967:332; Gransden 1981:74; Gauthiez 1998:93, Eaglen 2006:45, Statham 1998:98). However, in 1998 Margaret Statham cautioned against unquestioningly assuming that the grid of streets definitely dates to this time, noting that 'all that can be said with certainty is that there was much house building during the twenty years between the Conquest and the compilation of Domesday Book' (1998:99).

There is, then, a desire for empirical proof that the layout of the street grid immediately post-dates the Conquest. Professor Eric Fernie identified a geometrical relationship between the town plan and the church, and concluded that as both were laid out according to a scheme based on proportions derived from $\sqrt{2}$, they were therefore perhaps of one conception (1998). These proportions are commonly found in Romanesque and Gothic architecture, $1:\sqrt{2}$ being the ratio of the side of a square to its diagonal (see Hiscock 2000), and further explanation and archaeological evidence to support the identification of the town plan of Bury as a product of a design scheme implemented after the Conquest is offered in Chapter 5. That chapter also suggests, however, that neither Fernie's paper nor Gauthiez's in the same volume (both 1998) satisfactorily untangle the geometry of the grid to reveal the original design scheme. It argues that the grid of streets, too, is multiphase, agreeing again on this point with the hypotheses of Gauthiez and Statham outlined in that chapter (Gauthiez 1998, Statham 1998). A report of the discussion that arose at a conference on town plans in 1974 notes that 'individual reservations included the comment that only about ½ of the grid plan of Bury St Edmunds is likely to have been Abbot Baldwin's work' (Platt 1976b:56). This thesis realises the potential to provide a more detailed analysis of the

evolution of the High-Medieval town. It is also concerned with re-creating as far as is possible some of the processes which underlay the growth of the settlement.

1.1.2 Aim 2: understanding 'urbanism in action'

The High-Medieval period saw a phenomenal rise in the number and size of towns across Europe (Nicholas 1997), bound up with changes in the medieval commercial world and in the character of urban government and society. In this context, the observed flourishing of Bury St Edmunds in the late 12th- and early 13th centuries is a success story that is one of many. The second aim of this thesis is to exploit the town as a case study to provide commentary on the processes which drove the rise of urban life: to interrogate the growth of the settlement more closely by moving beyond a *charting* of the evolution of the town to consider in depth *how* it was developed and who by, celebrating in particular the influences of different groups and individuals in the fostering of urban life in this formative period. An underlying theme is that widespread urban development was not an inevitable part of an inexorably changing socio-economic system, but that each individual town was developed as a result of actions which were intended to generate success, and which were performed on a national, institutional, corporate or individual level. 'Success' is used here in the broadest sense to include the creation of social- and political- as well as economic capital or influence: as will be revealed, new insights can be drawn from patterns in the landscape if it is viewed through this lens.

Much recent analysis has focussed on the plan development of towns in this time of High-Medieval growth, revealing that new blocks of towns, infrastructures, or streets with planned plots were created (Lilley *et al* 2005; 2007; Slater 2007). There is, however, potential to frame alternative approaches by allying morphological work, based on map analysis, with both a more explicit appreciation of the activities that took place on streets, and a consideration of the form, function and location of urban buildings. To medieval urban landscape studies, then, this thesis contributes an investigation that undertakes the task of synthesising fragmentary evidence (extracted as far as is possible from a 'living', modern town) to frame the development of its

High-Medieval urban landscape as a three-dimensional, built and inhabited settlement. 'Townscape' is emphasised as something that was shaped on the macro-scale through monumental investment by urban lords or elites, and, on a different level, by the sometimes traceable smaller decisions and subscriptions to urban life made by individuals, groups and institutions as they built and shaped their lives, shops, houses, workshops and, ultimately, the social, economic, commercial/economic and political topographies of their town. In essence, seeking to understand 'urbanism in action' drives the enquiry – *why* and *how* people might have built buildings and been able to do so, and why they carried out activities *where* they did. The next section of this chapter explores some of the characteristics of High-Medieval urban growth, followed by a consideration of general archaeological agendas which have prompted new questions of urban landscapes of this date.

1.2 The High-Medieval urban phenomenon

The 12th and 13th centuries saw an 'urban boom' across Northern and North-western Europe, with a rapid increase in the number and size of towns that comprised its settlement hierarchy (Aston and Bond 2000; Nicholas 1997:321; Lilley 2002:xi; Schofield and Vince 2003:26; Slater 2007). This is not to deny the longevity of post-Roman urban life around the North Sea region, which, as has been increasingly demonstrated archaeologically, spans back many centuries (for overviews, see Carver 1987:40-58; Hilton 1992:25-30, Ottaway 1996; Palliser *et al* 2000). Rather, the statement is intended to emphasise that there was a phenomenal change in the rapidity of urban development in the High-Mèdieval period. In a wide ranging study of the archaeology of medieval towns in Britain, John Schofield and Alan Vince have argued for: a period of urban growth *c.* 1100-1300; a crisis related to the Black Death in the mid 14th century; and a succeeding period of mixed fortunes (2003:26). It is aspects of this first period of urban growth which form the focus of this thesis.

Even more specifically, the time period selected for study targets a particularly marked 'urban boom' in the later 12th century, a time when, in Northern Europe at least, enduring elements of the commercial built landscape were first constructed. The study

of Bury St Edmunds up to *c.*1220 has therefore been deliberately selected in order to consider how this 'urban boom' was negotiated and propagated in one particular town: how the legacy of the High-Medieval heritage that underlies both urban landscapes and, less tangibly, the modern socio-economic system, was created. A consideration of the *longue durée* of urban growth in one place allows the identification of, and appreciation of, the rapidity and immediacy of High-Medieval development as something that differed from what went before.

1.2.1 Origins

It is, as has been mentioned, undeniable that European urban origins are much older than the 12th century. For example, one of the most significant and exciting discoveries prompted by excavations in advance of redevelopment of urban sites through the 1950s, 60s and 70s was the body of archaeological evidence for trade in the 'dark ages', for which there is relatively little historical documentation. The new data directly contradicted Henri Pirenne's classic and widely cited thesis (1925) that, with the collapse of the Roman Empire, this region was effectively cut off from Mediterranean civility to such an extent that urbanism died a death and was only revived in the High-Medieval period (Hodges 1982, critiquing Pirenne). It is now widely recognised that in some places, sub-Roman urban life continued, and that in others, specialised places catering to different requirements of peripatetic kingship formed significant elements in the settlement hierarchy in the Anglo-Saxon period - for example, as distinct centres of trade, defence or religion that represent perhaps a dispersal of what we now perceive to be urban functions (Hodges 1982; Nicholas 1997). Further, early church and secular manor sites, considered in Chapter 4 of this thesis, can be perceived as 'proto-urban' foci in the landscape. This concept was introduced in Section 1.1, and subscribes to the significance of places as centres of consumption and production and, at certain times and festivals, as points where large groups of people would have congregated (Campbell 1979; Hilton 1992:32; Blair 2005; Astill 2006:238).

A particular definition of a town that is helpful in framing this thesis (drawn from wider debate on 'what is a town? – see Schledermann 1970; Reynolds 1977; Hilton 1992:6;

Palliser 2006:II, 2) is that it is a permanent and concentrated settlement that was a centre of demand, trade and production, with a population whose livelihood was based on a re-distributive, non-agricultural economy, and who *regarded* themselves as 'urban' (Hansen 2005:19; Astill 2006:233). Abiding to this scheme, Professor Grenville Astill has recently summarised the case for something of a 9th-century urban sequence in Northern Europe, as the demands of secular or religious aristocratic households for commodities and luxuries led to an intensification of trade, production and exchange at manorial sites that encouraged the formation of settlements with diverse occupational structures (2006:234).

Further, campaigns of excavation have demonstrated the longevity and intensity of occupation in many larger places of post-Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking Britain, revealing undeniably urban attributes: the settlements were often defensible, with large populations, planned streets, and with religious, administrative and industrial complexes. Examples include: Dublin (Wallace 1992); Norwich (Ayers 1997); London (Thomas 2002); Winchester (Biddle 1976a) and York (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002). By way of illustration, it is likely that the streets of Chester, a centre related to the Earldom of Mercia, were, by the early 11th century, characterised by 'crowded frontages and a genuinely urban appearance' (Thacker 2000:20) and at Southampton in the 9th century, excavated tenements, with buildings focussed on the street, yielded varied household assemblages that are evidence of a degree of craft differentiation and production which may go beyond immediate household needs and represent goods for sale (Keene 2001:59). Anglo-Saxon charters from Winchester refer to *Tænner Stret* (AD 990) and *Flæsmangere Stræte* (AD 1012) (Biddle and Hill 1971:75), and the name of Bootham Row in York, first recorded in the 12th century, is possibly derived from the Old Norse *búthum* meaning 'at the booths', which indicates that it was fronted by stalls, workshops or shops from an early date (Room 1992:92).

1.2.2 Transition

The nature of a perceived 'High-Medieval' urban boom therefore has to be viewed against this background. A caveat often noted in studies of town foundation is that an

apparent proliferation in the number of towns in England between the 11th and 13th centuries, as evidenced in charter evidence and documentation, is perhaps as much a factor of a post-Conquest emphasis on the written word in systems of administration, promoted during the period after 1066, as it is of acts of new town foundation (Beresford and Finberg 1973: introduction). Michael Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record* (1993) highlights that Anglo-Norman lordship heralded an increased emphasis on the value of written legal records over oral agreements, leading to an increasingly extensive archive of, for example, property transactions and royal charters that legitimised borough status and market rights (pp.44-74). In making the point that care needs to be taken in attempting to study pre- and historic societies (in the sense that historic societies write things down), Richard Britnell has argued that the documented dates of the foundation of boroughs in the North-East of England give an impression that speculative planning by post-Conquest lords was responsible for the genesis of trade and commerce, whereas in fact, their actions may well have served more as a re-formalisation of earlier 'hidden trade' (1996b). Clearly, then, at the Conquest, the Norman kings acquired a new territory that had a flourishing and developing urban system (Keene 2000:75; Palliser 2006:I, 7). However, the word 'formalisation' is important. It suggests, perhaps, an evolving idea of the role of the town.

New administrative practices after the Conquest may well have heralded a change in the nature of towns as control of commerce and government were increasingly institutionalised. In 1987, Martin Carver noted that 'archaeology has noted many changes in the 11th and 12th centuries, changes in the urban network and changes within the towns themselves': new tenements were laid out, parts of towns were levelled for the creation of monumental Romanesque buildings, and 'gaps' in the settlement hierarchy were in-filled (1987:59). The appropriation of religious sites and the imposition of castles are major physical changes that were effected in many towns: new seigneurial lords often made new investments, which inherently conveyed political messages about a new regime. Detailed case studies of the morphological development of many British towns have revealed particular episodes of foundation or addition after the Conquest, and subsequently through the 12th and 13th centuries (Slater 2007).

Martin Carver, again, has suggested that the development of towns in the first millennium can perhaps be characterised by a series of political choices representing what a town should be (1993:viii): possibly, and to make a sweeping generalisation, the 11th century urban ideal was increasingly one in which religious, commercial and political institutions were permanently and monumentally brought together (Astill 2006:249).

A recent archaeological study illustrates this point. Andrew Hutcheson's re-analysis of 'productive sites' (concentrations of metal work found by detecting, thought to represent trade and production) in the vicinity of King's Lynn (Norfolk) has lead him to suggest that the town, market and Priory founded in the 11th century by the Bishops of East Anglia (hence alternative name 'Bishop's Lynn') were not so much new foundations as mechanisms by which an existing, lucrative locale of trade was appropriated, formalised, reinforced and centralised. Part of King's Lynn, on the Wash, is founded upon the sandy spoil heaps generated by early, industrial-scale salt production and the site was clearly of earlier importance (Hutcheson 2006:74). Hutcheson's intention was to highlight the antiquity of activity in the area before the current town was laid out in the Norman period. It can be extrapolated from this observation that the late 11th-century creation at Lynn was something markedly different, perhaps, to what went before.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, then, new towns were founded, older ones were expanded and re-modelled and gradually, the 'urban phenomenon' spread. A consideration of the mechanisms by which this occurred lies at the heart of this thesis. Firstly, the propagation of medieval urban development was closely intertwined with the exercise of royal, ecclesiastical and seigneurial power (Hilton 1992:39; Keene 2000:75). For example, on the North Sea coast and in France and Spain, medieval urbanism was fostered by feudal lords; in Italy, city states emerged through the agency of powerful families; and Imperial towns were founded by the Zähringen dukes in Switzerland, Austria and parts of Germany (Kostof 1991:109-111).

However, acts of lordship were not the only means by which urban life was promoted, and they do not, alone, account for the particularly rapid phenomenon of urban development in the later 12th century. Particularly inspiring in following this line of thought is geographer Spiro Kostof's work on urban form. This includes a framing of the study of planned and ideal towns in relation to the subsequent lives that emerged within the parameters of plan, layout and topography. His work, global in scope, celebrates the landscape of towns as the results of individual and communal endeavour and of the small scale improvisations and changes that mark social and economic development within broader structures of lordship, planning and public control (Kostof 1991:63, 37). Further, within the medieval context, Gitte Hansen's analysis of the development of Bergen, Norway (medieval *Bryggen)* is founded upon a similar philosophical approach. From this city, extensive excavations have revealed well preserved, deeply stratified, waterlogged archaeological remains. Hansen has analysed the changing activities on many individual plots throughout the medieval period, and has ascertained that after the foundation of the town in the 10th century, the plots were not intensively occupied until the later 12th century, when permanent investments began to be made in the streets and buildings as an urban population flourished (Hansen 2005:228-9). We might begin to consider, when, the impact of actions 'from below' on changing urban forms.

Socio-economic transitions

Although the two cannot be separated, life in a town *did* take place independently of lordship. More generally, then, the urbanisation of medieval society is bound up with broader socio-economic changes which represent, for urban dwellers at least, broader cultural transitions. Major changes in urban life also seem to have occurred in this period. The 'long 13th century', from *c.*1180-1350, is characterised by medieval historians as a period of economic development which saw an increasing reliance on cash and credit based transactions, population growth, and innovation and specialisation in industry (Postan 1972; Gimpel 1979 [1976]; Bartlett 1993:167-197; Dyer 2000; Sutton 2001; Spufford 2002:12-19). The connection between a burgeoning commercial culture and the growth of towns has formed the basis of several major

theses in economic history, in particular Richard Britnell's *Commercialisation of English Society 1000-1500* (1996a), and Edward Miller and John Hatcher's *Medieval England – towns, commerce and crafts 1066-1348* (1995). Increasingly, and of particular importance here, the built environment of towns is recognised as something which was created both in response to commercial change, and in propagation of it.

International synthesis of the masses of urban archaeological data that has been accrued since the 1950s, alongside recent research in the fields of retail- and architectural history, has identified a particular 'common timetable' of investment in urban fabric that began in the late 12th century, with a marked proliferation in investment in stone buildings with commercial functions. In addition to urban infrastructures of castles, cathedrals, churches, houses, market places, town walls, urban manors and wharves, there was a marked increase in the diversity of building form, as evidenced by the greater variety of buildings erected for the purposes of craft, commerce, industry and retail (Harris 1994; 2002). These buildings are considered further in Chapter 2. Of particular relevance here is the observation that the more widespread construction of secular stone buildings represents a 'truly urban' building stock. New forms of shop, warehouse, blocks of smaller units, and multi-storey commercial properties were constructed, effecting a transformation of quays and streets across Europe (Fehring 1994; Garrigou Grandchamp 1994; Bill and Clausen 1999; Ayers 2002:70; Schofield and Vince 2003:109; Harris 2002).

This change in urban building stock is inherently bound up with an intensification of the buying, selling and transportation of goods, and with changes in medieval production, consumption and purchasing patterns (Harris 2002). Not least, a study of maritime technology reveals that in the mid-late 12th century, the carrying capacity of North Sea ships was greatly enlarged (Bill 2002), matched by the increasing investment in deeper quays, new wharves and waterfront consolidation in North Sea ports (Bill and Clausen 1999). These developments tie in to what has been revealed through study of artefactual and documentary evidence as an intensification in the movement of bulk commodities such as cloth, grain, pottery, salt, stone, timber and wool as, on pre-

existing trade routes, larger quantities of basic commodities (in addition to luxury goods) were shipped greater distances (Berggren *et al* 2002). On this theme of transport, historical evidence has been studied to form an argument that from the 12th and 13th centuries, the horse and cart was increasingly chosen over oxen and other pack animals for haulage: horses were bred for greater speed and stamina, and technological developments in harnessing, horseshoes and vehicles meant that they were increasingly employed in a revolution in transport that coincided with broader economic change (Langdon 1984:39-40, 66). In short, the period is characterised by a marked dislocation in production and consumption of goods, with money, labour power and commodities moved over greater distances.

The major question of *why* this happened, tied up as it is with the origins of Western society, has long been a topic for sociological, philosophical and economic modelling of how certain places, at certain times, emerged as 'cradles of capitalism' (Harvey 1989:3, 17-19; Mielants 2001:123-7). This thesis does not set out to explain why, on the macro-scale, such socio-economic changes occurred. Instead, acknowledging the major process as something which affected urban landscapes, it is concerned with how changes were fostered in the urban environment, and with the choices, co-operations and conflicts engendered as urban lives were lived. From this perspective, the urban environment is framed as an arena where commerce, for example, was adopted by individuals and institutions, and where lives that were increasingly more urban were played out: can the landscape of any town in its earliest phases be understood in these terms? Can a nuanced history of intentional investments in evolving streets be revealed to not only re-animate a High-Medieval landscape, but to explore the motivations which drove urban change in this period?

1.3 Archaeological agendas: framing the urban process

This thesis builds upon earlier studies and agendas in urban archaeology which, as a discipline, is several decades old (see below, Section 1.3.1). In particular, the transition from Late Roman towns to Early medieval urbanism has received considerable attention, with investigations into the form, character and role of towns through

periods of continuity in some places and decline and resurgence in others (Hodges 1982; Hodges and Hobley 1988; Christie and Loseby 1996). This thesis is based on the simple observation, however, that if a broader time frame is taken, into the 12th century, medieval towns at the end of this period took on a very different character to earlier settlements (see Nicholas 1997). The rapidity of 11th and 12th century development has been discussed and it is of interest here. What impact did the 'High-Medieval' urban phenomenon have on urban life and urban attitudes, how was it propagated by changing lifestyles and attitudes, and can we make alternative interpretations of urban landscapes?

The arguments of this thesis are inspired by wider trends in archaeological thinking, particularly concerning cultural change. One tenet of historical archaeology as a discipline is a concern with studying the material conditions of social and economic transitions, and there has been an emphasis on key historical changes: from 'medieval' to 'Early-Modern' (Gaimster and Stamper 1997), and from 'Early-Modern' to 'global' (Green and Leech 2006). In exploring these major social shifts from an archaeological perspective, effort has been devoted to the theorisation of the relationships between people and things, people and places, and people and processes. Patterns in the archaeological or architectural record are related to societal change, and framed in terms of the choices made by individuals or communities, which, consciously or unconsciously, reinforced or challenged cultural norms and thus contributed in a small way to wider social trajectories (see Johnson 1993 for a study of the recursive relationship between housing and the spread of the Georgian order; Johnson 1996). This framework is, arguably, equally applicable to the study of the general development of High-Medieval urbanism, which can be seen as a manifestation of 'the urban process'. This has been defined by geographer David Harvey as the 'unfolding of ways of thinking and acting that went hand-in-hand with changes to the urban environment' (1989:6). Martin Carver's *Arguments in Stone* (1993) suggested that changing urban form in the first millennium AD reflects, broadly, changing ideas of the role towns played in society, how people saw and behaved in the world, and the ways that they dealt with changing patterns of wealth, resources and production (Carver

1993:v-vii, 1). It is the aim of this thesis, then, to emphasise this sense of change, investment and deliberate fostering of an urban way of life in the High-Medieval period by paying particular attention to the spaces and buildings of towns.

In adopting this approach, the thesis is inspired by perspectives that have been developed in the Social Sciences since the 1980s, whereby human action is explicitly framed as a driving force in social change. Particularly focussing on changing social spaces and material culture, for example, the broad changes that took place in the physical environments of human societies have been considered in terms of individual choices which contributed to localised, regional and more broad cultural trajectories (Shanks and Tilley 1987; Johnson 1999; see Moreland 1991 and Gerrard 2003:217-31 for the particular impact of these ideas on Medieval archaeology). In the discipline of history, for example, in reaction to the perceived dominance of studies of major events, of detailed quantitative analysis, or broad narratives of social change, 'micro-history', championed by the Italian historian Carlo Ginzberg, emerged as a sub-discipline that aimed to emphasise the humanitarian and empathetic aspects of the study of the past (Muir 1991:xxi). Micro-historians are concerned with causation on the level of small groups, and with studying the motivations, actions and reactions of communities, individuals or local events within their own cultural contexts to shed light on wider attitudes (Ginzberg 1989). The approach of this thesis – a study in local history – resonates with these aims. In archaeology, these ideas are manifest in 'contextual archaeology' – a school of thought which is concerned with understanding patterns in material culture in their own cultural context, in appreciation of the fact that the material world is a medium by and through which culture was reproduced, mediated and challenged on a local and even individual level (Cowgill 2000:51; Hodder 2000:21-2). Within this context, then, the evolution of any particular town that prospered in the High-Medieval period can be considered as a crucible for the fermentation of broader changes that were effected by individual actions, decisions and innovations on the small scale.

1.3.1 Urban Archaeology in Britain.

These ideas have recently permeated archaeological agendas for the study of urban communities. Before considering the development of research agendas which have inspired this thesis, however, it is necessary to consider the historiography of urban archaeology as a discipline in order to understand how current research agendas were reached, and the form of archaeological archives and datasets. Today, the value of archaeological evidence to our knowledge of the heritage and development of many urban centres is well attested and publicised. Yet this knowledge should not be taken for granted: the recognition of the potential to systematically unravel sequences of occupation in 'living towns' from buried deposits was only formally recognised and promoted in the aftermath of the Second World War, as renovation and survey work was carried out in bomb-damaged cities (Gerrard 2003:95-7). The history of urban archaeology – and urban conservation - can be traced in publications and archaeological journals and it has been dealt with elsewhere (Barley 1976, Carver 1987:101-111; Hunter and Ralston 1993; Darvill and Gerrard 1994; Gerrard 2003). A brief synthesis is presented here.

Regeneration and urban development in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s saw widespread demolition in many town centres as they were re-imagined on modernist lines: the potential of the urban archaeological resource to shed light on past lives and development was increasingly recognised as, in some places, major campaigns of fieldwork in advance of development yielded masses of data: one 'success story' from this era is the pioneering project work directed by Martin Biddle at Winchester to investigate parts of the town set aside for redevelopment (Carver 1987:104). Through the 'Winchester Studies', archaeological, geographical and historical study enabled detailed reconstruction and interpretation of the development of parts of the city (Biddle 1976a). The emphasis in this period was on the 'rescue' of a finite cultural and academic resource, in recognition of the new awareness of the potential of archaeological evidence to support enquiries into themes beyond the realms of historical study: urban origins, defence, growth, industry, properties, trade and daily life (Palliser 1976:3-5). In many cities and counties, archaeological units were

established to excavate and record remains in advance of development, subsidised by funds from the government and from local authorities. Alongside some of these successes, however, the general fragility of the British archaeological urban resource was realised. In some places, no recording work was carried out, and archaeological remains and historic buildings were utterly destroyed as mass redevelopment occurred (Gerrard 2003:98). This polarisation was largely due to imbalances and different priorities in the allocation of funds: there was a lack of any formal requirements for excavation in advance of development, or any specifically allocated finances, with money being provided by local and central government funds (Gerrard 2003:136).

Throughout the 1980s, the national rescue budget was decreased, and, with increasing financial pressure, there was a call for reflexive thought on the reasons for amassing data and for the best ways to maximise the resources available to archaeologists (Carver 1987:110). Increasingly, an emphasis was placed on devising ways to predict the likely nature of archaeological deposits so that areas could be prioritised for research questions, and so that the most threatened sites could be protected. A practical approach was the initiation of projects to map the depth, location and nature of archaeological remains to ensure that funds could be allocated to sites of high potential (Carver 1987:108; Gerrard 2003:138). This approach, geared towards modelling, predicting and mitigating damage to the archaeological resource, is the basis of current day practice as it is carried out in many towns, particularly given that the solution to the problem of funding archaeological work, implemented in 1990, was to introduce a 'polluter pays' principle. Note 16 in the Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG 16, 1990)[1] states that any development proposal should include provision for damage to archaeological deposits. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15[2] is an equivalent clause that relates to standing buildings. In accord with PPG 15 and 16, developers may be required to pay for a full scale excavation and recording project, or they could be advised to modify project designs (perhaps after a small scale sampling exercise, or evaluation) to minimise the damage to any structure of underlying archaeological

[1] http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planning&building/ppg16
[2] http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planning&building/ppg15

remains, which then might necessitate only a very small recording project. Obviously, then, a developer has a vested interest in knowing the depth, nature and likely survival of archaeological remains in order to effectively budget for projects. The emphasis in urban research agendas has been in the quantification, mapping and prediction of where archaeological sites might lay in an urban landscape.

Of relevance here is the impact that PPG 16 has had on urban excavations. On the one hand, there have been *relatively* fewer large scale projects since the 1970s, as the locations and extents of projects have been dictated by development rather than opportunistic or proactive research on threatened areas. Further, there has been an emphasis on the formulation of mitigation strategies to protect archaeology and minimise the costs of development – for example, by using raft foundations, which minimises the area of intrusion into the ground (Buckley 1997:1). This is not, of course, to say that large scale urban excavation has ceased and some recent large developments have been preceded by large, open area sites: for example, and to name only two, the Poultry-redevelopment site in London (Rowsome 2000), and excavations running from 2006-2012 in advance of phases of redevelopment in the Hungate area of York.[3] However, the emphasis has, perhaps, shifted.

On the other hand, then, there have been more smaller sites and in particular watching briefs on construction trenches to explore the archaeological impact of smaller interventions: 'the value of this work lay in the careful accumulation of minor clues to the depth and extent of deposits rather than the 'research' merit of any one individual exercise' (Gerrard 2003:185). The twin impacts of PPG 16, namely the generation of more, patchy data which requires synthesis, and the desire to avoid and protect archaeologically sensitive areas, drove the English Heritage initiatives of *Intensive* and *Extensive Urban Surveys*, intended to formulate databases of known archaeological sites, in combination with other information about historic towns (such as tenement histories, topographical information, photographs and maps) to provide an accessible resource to support management and research strategies (English Heritage 1997). Pilot

[3] See http://www.jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/hungate/history/history1.htm for updates.

studies were carried out on Cirencester (Darvill and Gerrard 1994), Durham and York before a more widespread implementation in over 30 major towns, although the coverage is not yet national (English Heritage 1997:4.4). It is the implementation of PPG 16, as revealed in Chapter 3, which makes possible this study of Bury St Edmunds.

An outcome of the directions in the management and funding of archaeology through the 1990s is that projects need to be economically viable, with justifiable results to present to parties who may not, fundamentally, be inspired by the past. Research agendas began to be more widely produced on a national, regional and local scale to produce a framework for reference. Such an activity required a reflexive consideration of knowledge gained in order to identify important research questions, and to prioritise strategies which further maximised or mitigated the preservation of archaeological deposits. Committees establishing research agendas recognised that after more than thirty years of *ad hoc* opportunistic data gathering, there was a pressing need to review evidence already acquired, especially as much of it remains unpublished. The results of many archaeological interventions exist as 'grey literature' – unpublished, un-synthesised and, in some cases, unfinished.

1.3.2 Research Agendas

To pick up the thread with which this account of urban archaeology started, strategies to explore the age and layout of towns, daily life, building types, phases of development, economy and urban hierarchies – all essential questions to any particular place or to the study of a region or period – have, in more recent research agendas, been augmented by arguments that data produced by commercial archaeology can be more directly related to academic trends, and that we should meet the challenges of synthesising masses of data: to depart from a 'directionless' approach that generates a mass of information, much of it unpublished, and to 'create a research programme' (quotations from Carver 1993:vii-viii; see also Clarke 1993:39; Ayers 1997, 2000; Graves 2003a; Ayers 2005; Durham *forthcoming*).

Professor Martin Carver has long been a proponent of collating, publishing and publicising urban data (Carver 1987, 1993:vii). In *Arguments in Stone* published in 1993, three years after the introduction of PPG 16, he suggested that a consideration of the *process* of urban development, rather than the *effects* of urban development, could be a fruitful way to synthesise and interpret archaeological data, by framing an urban environment as one that was continually remodelled and invested through communal and individual endeavour. He advocated the practical approach of considering changes and investment in urban environments – visible in architecture and interpreted from archaeological deposits - in terms of possible underlying intentions. Secondly, Carver suggests that the urban area can be framed as a political landscape, created by sequences of choices, and as an arena in which power was negotiated and displayed between different groups or individuals (1993:v-vii).

This approach pre-empted more recent statements in research agendas which suggest that a framing of the landscape as a lived and invested arena is a potential way to synthesise and exploit archaeological data (Ayers 2000; Perring 2002; Graves 2003a). Rather than considering the form and layout of a town purely in terms of topography, functional elements and as a product of 'social needs' (as advocated by Platt 1976b:56), several recent frameworks have suggested that archaeological data can be drawn into an interpretation of the evolution of urban life, rooted in broader approaches to landscape that perceive them not as inert spaces, but as places invested, implicitly and explicitly with 'commentaries on the political beliefs and class relationships which surround their creation' (Muir 1999:149; see also Mitchell 2002; Creswell 2004). In a paper destined for the review of the East Anglian research framework, Brian Durham (until recently Oxford City archaeologist) poetically wrote that the material traces in the urban environment should be seen as 'the hardware of communities in flux' *(forthcoming*:1*)* and a Council for British Archaeology framework for researching towns in relation to the countryside suggests that 'the subject of study is defined as the urban process rather than the urban artefact... concerned with networks of social and economic relationships that sustained, and were sustained by, complex hierarchies of settlement' (Perring 2002:xi). Finally, in an agenda for the study of towns in the North of England,

Pamela Graves' vision of urban archaeology is concisely expressed: she argues that the landscape of towns can be conceptualised as comprising overlapping social, experienced and contested urban spaces in which social identities, and civic and economic power, were created and explored (2003a).

In particular, moving from the abstract to the actual, Graves has suggested that there is potential to relate stories of townscape - from buildings and excavated data – to historically documented political and economic groups, and the ways that they may have been asserting and creating their power and identity through manipulation of the built landscape (2003a:180). For 14th-century Newcastle, she has argued that the archaeological evidence for sporadic attempts at unified waterfront reclamation (in comparison to the *ad hoc* construction of individual quays, which was also identified) may indicate possible investments by the burgesses of the city at times when they could afford to pool capital and undertake communal action to fulfil goals of mutual interest – a set of actions which would have also promoted and advertised their coherence as a civic body, and the resources that they could command to facilitate trade and shipping (Graves 2003a:181). The potential to make these connections has particularly inspired this thesis, and they resonate with the themes for research advocated by Brian Ayers, who has recently retired from the post as city archaeologist for Norwich.

His ideas are expressed in the research agendas for East Anglia, the region in which Bury St Edmunds lies, and they are therefore of direct relevance here. In the Eastern region in 1997 on the initiative of a co-ordination group of nearly twenty years standing and building on disparate publications of policy statement (e.g. Carr 1975; Dunmore *et al* 1975; 1976; Carter 1982; Eddy and Petchey 1983) the first volume of a regional research framework ('*Resource Assessment*') was published, in conjunction with English Heritage (Glazebrook 1997; see also Brown and Glazebrook 2000; Gurney 2003; Brown *et al* forthcoming).

Brian Ayers has argued that it should be a priority - and that it is within the bounds of sustainability - to begin to collate the data from medieval towns in the region. In

particular, he notes that the time is ripe to consider the subtlety of the patterns of the rise and decline of towns in East Anglia in the 12th and 13th centuries, in recognition that, in this formative period, aspects of urban growth can be related to an understanding of the growth of pan-European economies and societies (1997:63-3; 2000:29). The research agenda recognises the phenomenon of High-Medieval urbanism as a product of increasingly more affluent, sophisticated and centralised urban cultures (Brown *et al* 2000:45). In particular, Ayers has suggested that in interpreting sites, advanced questions of architectural and archaeological remains can be posed concerning more sophisticated spatial questions about where buildings were in a landscape, the significance of their function and form, or perhaps the impact of devices such as heraldry and insignia. It is suggested that we could interrogate the relationships between built form and aspects of the wider social and economic topography of a town (Ayers 2003:30). As a direct inspiration for this thesis, Ayers has argued that 'large questions of historical dynamics *can* be addressed by archaeological methodologies and should not be ignored ... the relationship of economic development to the chronology of urban experience requires greater attention' and 'it should be carried out in a broader framework of academic enquiry, engaging with others undertaking urban research' (Ayers 2000:21, 27, 29).

1.3.3 Urban Morphology

This chapter has already argued that a major question of historical dynamics is the phenomenon of the spread of urbanism in the High-Medieval period. How, then, can we explore the urban process? How can subscriptions to urban life, which contributed to the spread of urbanism, be revealed? It is the premise of this thesis that ideas linking 'urban process', 'urban space' and 'urban archaeology' have yet to seriously penetrate the study of British High-Medieval urban landscapes, where there is potential to relate the development of the size and infrastructures of towns more explicitly to urban political, commercial, social, economic and architectural history.

Instead, recent, prominent work has tended in a different direction, although one still concerned with the mechanisms of urban growth and foundation. Urban research as

represented in a recent volume celebrating 'directions of current research', *Medieval Landscapes* (Gardiner and Rippon 2007:8), includes two papers on urban planning produced by historical geographers who have, or have had, some connection with Birmingham University's *Urban Morphology Research Group* (Lilley *et al* 2007; Slater 2007, see also Baker *et al* 1992; Lilley 1996; Slater 1996; Baker and Holt 2004; Lilley 2005; Lilley *et al* 2005; Slater 2005). Undeniably, work in this field has added greatly to our understanding of urban lordship in British towns and a brief overview of developments in the discipline is presented here. The study of urban morphology is based on the exploration of the development of towns through map regression analysis. The development of a formal approach to unravelling map-based evidence for urban growth is particularly attributed to the German geographer Michael Conzen, whose work in the 1950s emphasised that towns are composite in nature and that a study of increments of growth was possible from successive OS maps (Whitehand 1981:10-17). Conzen was interested in representing graphically the processes and cycles of urban growth and an important observation from his work was the longevity of street and property patterns which, despite subdivision, infilling, amalgamation and rebuilding of burgage plots, often survived from the very earliest stages of town development if not to the present day, at least into the 19th century. Medieval planning was revealed in the identification of standardised plot widths in parts of numerous towns, and archaeological work and building survey increasingly proves the antiquity of many boundaries (Palliser 1976:5).

In order to identify areas of distinction that might relate to developmental moments a town plan is 'disaggregated' using historic maps and other data. Areas are characterised according to the three attributes of street patterns, plot boundaries and building types to formulate a 'composite regionalisation' of the urban space (Whitehand 1981:10-17). Historical and archaeological evidence is often considered alongside observed 'plan units' to give an indication of the date of their foundation. Figure 1.5 shows different parts of the town of Burton-on-Trent: the plan units, identified by Terence Slater, may well relate to blocks of the town created at different times, and/or by different people (2005). In particular, the search for regularity in urban plot layouts has been tied up

with investigations into the agencies of urban growth. Were places 'planned' (and hence the result of lordship) or 'organic' (and hence the result of more *ad hoc*, individual investment)? Conzen highlighted the composite nature of even apparently single phased grid places such as Conwy and Ludlow (Biddle 1976b:27). The urban morphological approach is, therefore, fundamentally valuable to the understanding of the evolution of any particular place, and has long been promoted (Aston and Rowley 1974:90-102; Aston and Bond 1976). Studies have revealed otherwise undocumented and hidden stages of development of towns, in particular those that occurred in the formative periods of the 12th and 13th-centuries (Lilley 1996; Lilley *et al* 2007:31).

Several scholars have sought to move beyond urban morphological study as a 'puzzle-fitting' exercise that results in two-dimensional, disembodied maps of sequential development. Recent synthetic and comparative studies have particularly emphasised the potential for map regression analysis to reveal original design schemes underlying parts of a town plan, and have pursued lines of enquiry into the role of the exercise of lordship in the shaping of urban landscapes (Lilley 1996; Lilley *et al* 2005, 2007:29). Recent work on Gloucester and Worcester, for example, has focussed on the role of ecclesiastical institutions in the shaping of these cities (Baker and Holt 2004). Latterly, the digitisation of map information has lead to the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to compare, display and interrogate historic and modern maps: a recent AHRC funded project (2003), '*Mapping the Medieval Urban Landscape,*' used GIS to produce three-dimensional models of Edward I's castle towns founded in the Welsh Marches, with the conclusion that the similarity between, for example, Beaumaris (chartered in 1283) and Conwy (chartered in 1286), may indicate that the towns were designed by the same architect (Lilley *et al* 2005:37-9).

Keith Lilley's personal research has moved further in this direction. He has argued that there is potential to understand town plans, particularly new creations, in terms of the overtly Christian contexts of their foundation (2004a&b, 2005), just as we might approach the grammar of ecclesiastical architectural design as an embodied reflection of religious ideas (see Hiscock 2000). Lilley has argued that town plans would have been

conceived according to medieval ideals of what a town should be, and that these in turn are related to cosmological thought and philosophy concerning the hierarchical ordering of earthly societies, as mirrors of heavenly structures. It is his suggestion that landlords may well have set out to replicate and create ideal settlements that were inspired by sacred geometries, where the topographies and hence the community were subject to an imposed degree of religious and social order. Symbols of authority are often placed at the actual and metaphorical heart of the landscape; undesirable elements, such as leper hospitals or malodorous industries, are often found located towards the outer fringes (Lilley 2002:xiv-xv; 2004a&b).

Such a perspective certainly prompts questions about the organisation of communities in fledgling towns, and Lilley's ideas form a thread through subsequent chapters of this thesis. However, arguably, they present a prescriptive view of the layout of a town, which conveys the idea of a Christian community organised in perpetuity and which does not, perhaps, allow for a consideration of the 'urban process': of a landscape as somewhere that was contested, varied and vibrant, and where the increasingly commercial economy was also a determining factor in the shape and character of towns. Lordship, as argued above, whilst essential to the story of medieval urbanism, is not the only factor which shaped High-Medieval urban development. Keith Lilley does not, in fact, set out to suggest otherwise. In following the line of interpretation that he has done, he made a conscious decision to pursue one of two approaches that, in the conclusion of his study of Norman towns in Hampshire, he identified as possible future directions for research (1996).

The alternative avenue was based on the recognition that change is *not* something solely effected from above: that evolutions and developments in urban landscapes may well have been promulgated by townspeople themselves (1996:11). He observed that the built environment was subject to adaptive redevelopment, to subdivision of plots, and investment in architecture, and that the growing intensification of urban activity is a sign that 'transformations were negotiated between townspeople and urban lords':

> For some urban dwellers... this was a period that created new opportunities, and even prosperity, as people found themselves in a stronger position and able to capture political and economic control, and mould it to their advantage' (Lilley 2002:xiii).

Lilley suggested that there is potential to explore how landscapes were mediated, lived and contested: he did not, however, move beyond these preliminary ideas, on the basis that there was 'little corroborative evidence to study urban morphogenesis in this period, either from the documentary evidence or from archaeology' (Lilley 1996:133-4, 136). Rather than attempting to explore how relationships between citizenship and lordship might have been played out in the landscape, Lilley therefore focusses instead on the positive evidence for the changes to landscapes that can be linked to royal, lay and ecclesiastical authority (Lilley 1996:134). Similar sentiments, which recognise the importance of the built landscape to medieval urban populations but which lament the sparseness of the evidence, were expressed in a recent volume, *Medieval Landscapes,* which celebrates current and future directions in urban landscape archaeology (Gardiner and Rippon 2007:3-4).

This thesis, then, is based on an optimistic response to this situation. It presents a case study that realises the potential of the fragmentary evidence from one place, Bury St Edmunds, to support an exploration of the changes to that settlement made by acts of lordship on the one hand, and, on the other, the more subtle historical and archaeological evidence for changes made to the buildings, streets and the landscape by the urban population. It aims to move beyond a faceless account of change, and consider, where possible, evidence for the actions of the urban population and people who lived in the town. Importantly, the thesis asks whether there is evidence for *re-investment* in places in the medieval landscape: changes to buildings and the re-writing of commercial, social and ritual topographies, beyond the radar of town plan analysis, are deliberately brought out in discussion.

It is proposed that evidence for buildings, activity, politics and people can be added to the study of the evolving landscape of a settlement, and the increasing subscription to urban life within it. How, fundamentally, can the abstract ideas discussed above be employed to draw insights from archaeological and architectural data? This thesis is inspired by studies produced within the discipline of historical archaeology, presented in the next chapter, which utilise archaeological and architectural evidence for buildings or activity, and documentary evidence for political actions and aspirations.

1.4 Objectives and structure of the thesis

Several objectives are met in the chapters of this thesis as it sets out to achieve its twin aims. These are to provide a studying of the development of Bury St Edmunds and, secondly, to contribute to urban research an archaeological study of a High-Medieval landscape as something that was both formative of and a reflection of escalating commercial change, urban ways of living and evolving urban societies.

The objective of ***Chapter 2*** is to address the fundamental question of how we might draw connections between urban landscapes on the one hand, and the aspirations and intentions of evolving urban communities on the other. It reviews new literature from the fields of architectural and retail history, which inform our understanding of High-Medieval streetscapes. Continuing the theme of transitions with which Chapter 1 opened, it presents an overview of the development of urban society in the High-Medieval period as a process by which increasingly influential mercantile communities sought administrative, financial and political autonomy. It argues in particular that political success was bound up with commercial and economic success, and that this was rooted in urban livelihoods that, in turn, were rooted in the urban landscape. It then explores case studies drawn from Late-Medieval and Early-Modern towns, which have demonstrated the existence of connections between investments made by urban elites, and the most significant political, economic, social and ritual places in a townscape (as evidenced through map analysis, documentary evidence, archaeology and architecture). The observation is made that the High-Medieval period is one in which, as a formative time of urban growth, the foundations of such topographies may well

have been laid. Mary Lobel's political study of the development of the borough of Bury St Edmunds (1935) is discussed, and the argument advanced that the insights gained of the understanding of the political and economic aspirations of the urban community provide an ideal framework to begin to question the evidence pertaining to the medieval townscape.

The objective of ***Chapter 3*** is to appraise the diverse sources available for the study of the origins and development of the town, and the gaps in knowledge which are obviated by this thesis. It is apparent that, since the introduction of PPG 16 in 1990, enough archaeological information has been gained to consider anew the phases of the town plan, in conjunction with aspects of the built landscape of the town, activities and investments within it. The value of synthesising this information is increasingly being recognised, and synthetic volumes on recent archaeology in Abindgon, Reading, Windsor by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, for example, have demonstrated the new information on the development of these sites that has come from development-led archaeology, whilst flagging up the limitations in the often small scale size of the sites (Preston 2005; Anthony *et al* 2006). This is a theme picked up in Chapter 7. In this thesis, the PPG 16 data from Bury is combined with other sources. In particular, the strategy of a cellar survey intended to identify earlier architectural fragments in the town is presented. The dataset comprises evidence of mixed value. Architecturally, the evidence ranges from an extant 12th-century building (Moyse's Hall, which stands in the market place) to isolated fragments. In terms of archaeological evidence, the scale of interventions ranges from excavations, which reveal traces of past activity, buildings and material cultures, to the monitoring of small holes which reveal little more than the presence or absence of layers of different dates. The documentary evidence can also be gauged on a spectrum of usefulness, from passing references to buildings in charters to more informative tracts such as the 12th-century *Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond* which offers incidental information on political disputes and daily life (Brakelond 1989). It is through the study of spatial and chronological distributions of evidence for changes to the landscape that new insights are drawn out.

Chapters 4 to 6 together present an account of the evolution of Bury St Edmunds, starting from its elusive origins as the focus of an Early-Saxon funerary landscape and ending with the early 13th-century, when the town had become an important medieval religious and commercial centre. The chapters build upon and critique previously published accounts of aspects of the development of the town, and, based on a new synthesis and mapping of evidence, suggest new interpretations of its landscape. ***Chapter 4*** is devoted to the development of the pre-Conquest settlement of the town, reinforcing the view of Mary Lobel (1935) that it has long been a significant place and providing a context for the High-Medieval growth. ***Chapter 5*** is devoted to the years after the Norman Conquest when, under the French Abbot, Baldwin, the town was expanded and a new Romanesque church begun. It reveals the aspirations of Anglo-Norman lordship, and modifications made to the town as its success outgrew its size. ***Chapter 6*** charts further growth and investment in the town and in particular presents the burgeoning evidence for investment in stone architecture in the late 12th century (which means that in this respect the people of Bury St Edmunds subscribed to wider architectural fashions). Negotiations and investment in commercial space are considered, particularly in the suburbs. This chapter paves the way for the discussion presented in ***Chapter 7***, which summarises the development of the town, outlines the strengths and limitations of the evidence, and presents a critical assessment of the evolution of the urban landscape into the High-Medieval period as an invested, contested landscape.

Throughout the chapters, the evolution of the landscape and its fluorescence as a commercial centre are revealed, and particular attention is increasingly paid, as the evidence permits, to the nature of the urban community and their activities and aspirations. The selection of a date range which explores proto- to fully urban means that, where possible, the process of 'urbanisation' can be analysed. With this aim in mind, several lines of enquiry have been borne in mind in each chapter:

- What, overall, was the nature of the settlement? When did it become an important centre?

- Where are the areas of change, investment and reinvestment on both monumental and a lesser scale?
- Is there documentary or archaeological evidence for different areas of activity?
- What is the building stock of the medieval town? Are there discernible chronological and spatial patterns within the distribution and form of buildings identified through archaeological, architectural and historical work?
- Is there any evidence for who lived and worked in any particular place?
- What, for example, does charter material tell us about locations and actions? Is there evidence for the control of, investment in and remodelling of urban spaces?
- What do we know about changing political relationships in the town?
- As introduced in Chapter 2, is there any evidence for urban rituals and public displays which inscribed the landscape and reified the urban community?

The discussion in Chapter 7 is separated out into a consideration of different topographies which were both implicitly and explicitly written into the landscape: commercial/economic, sacred, social, political and processional. Were these topographies inscribed by the monastic overlords? Did evolving urban populations subscribe to them, or did they create their own prominent areas in the landscape through their activities and buildings? Were new negotiations and situations encountered, in accordance with the impression gained from an overview of the rapid changes in urban life and buildings in the High-Medieval period, that were played out in the urban space?

1.5 Conclusion

To conclude, the thesis argues that High-Medieval urbanisation was a cultural transition which can be explored as a result of local-level actions and changes. It suggests that exploring the development of a town from this perspective will prompt new insights into its medieval urban heritage. The thesis:

- Promotes the heritage of a major pilgrimage centre and its development.

- Demonstrates that recent research agendas in historical archaeology, which consider aspects of urban society as invested in the buildings and streets of a town, can be fruitfully applied to the study of the landscapes of High-Medieval towns.
- Demonstrates, from recent literature, that there is potential to begin to reconstruct High-Medieval streetscapes and applies new insights from recent work on urban secular architecture to the archaeological and architectural fragments from Bury.
- Collates and appraises the potential of the archaeological, architectural and historical information from a town to support this line of enquiry.
- Offers comment on evolving social, political, economic, commercial/economic, sacred and ritual topographies in a town to consider its three-dimensional landscape, and thus reveal some hidden narratives of the streets from their earliest times.
- Explores the evolution of a town as a changing, invested arena that can be interpreted in the context of the changing aspirations of *both* its urban lords, the Benedictine Abbey of St Edmund, and its urban community.

2

HIGH-MEDIEVAL URBAN LANDSCAPES: AN APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

Whilst accepting that there is a general paucity of evidence, the potential for an archaeological study of the High-Medieval 'urban process' as manifest in the built landscape, beyond a consideration of the exercise of lordship, was advocated in Chapter 1. This chapter considers further how such a line of enquiry can be pursued. It details the nature of High-Medieval urban societies, and considers recent works that contribute to our understanding of changing urban life. Urban morphological work has been paralleled by studies of the evolution of urban secular architecture in the 12th and 13th centuries (Garrigou Grandchamp 1992; Harris 1994; 2002), and, of relevance to the development of streets, by arguments for the complexity of medieval shopping and commercial practices (Keene 1990; Britnell 2006; Keene 2006). Further, the theme of the emergence of dominant mercantile elites in urban communities is a canonical theme in urban history (e.g. Rigby and Ewan 2000). It is suggested that all these strands of investigation, from the disciplines of archaeology, historical geography, and from architectural, social, commercial and economic history, can be intertwined.

The themes of self-government and the emergence of urban elites are bound up with economic growth, and with the dialogues between lordship and urban populations. This chapter presents a summary of the political and social history of Bury St Edmunds, as a framework for analysis. It then discusses case-studies which have explored the relationships between urban landscape and urban society for specific Later-Medieval and Post-Medieval towns. Whilst accepting that it is naïve to simplify patterns in the landscape, these studies *have* revealed a general coincidence between enclaves of urban elites in particular, and the (perhaps changing and contested) most significant social, economic, political, religious, ritual and commercial places in mutable urban topographies (Leech 1999; Graves 2003b; Murray and Crook 2005; King 2006). These

patterns may have been imposed, or created explicitly or implicitly. The chapter argues that the connections and patterns indicated by the studies of historically later societies can inform our enquiries of spatial patterns in, and understanding of, High-Medieval urban life in the formative period of rapid urban growth: the urban landscape was an arena in which, generally, urban populations were able to generate economic, social and political capital, and it might therefore be hypothesised that buildings, streets and spaces within it were increasingly manipulated as such to create urban social and economic 'zones'.

2.2 Architecture and activity in the High-Medieval town

Architectural historian Roland Harris opened his thesis with the observation that 'there has been little progress in the understanding of the secular buildings of the early medieval town, which are arguably as informative as the plan onto which they were imposed' (Harris 1994:1). The body of architectural and documentary evidence from towns of the High-Medieval period *is* considerably less voluminous than it is for later periods, but the work of Harris and others in the field of architectural history, and research in retail history, provide an exciting insight into the sorts of buildings that *might* have existed and which might be encountered in a fragmentary form in British towns. This is a desirable basis for any study that sets out to explore the development of a town in the High-Medieval period: we can enhance the results of urban morphological analysis by appreciating that the High-Medieval urban landscape was likely to have been invested, contested, busy and vibrant. Section 1.2.2 briefly mentioned that, in addition to the more obvious medieval monuments of castles, cathedrals, churches, and town walls, archaeological and architectural work is increasingly revealing that the complexity and diversity of the High-Medieval built environment was particularly marked from the 12th century onwards.

Post-built structures with plank lined cellars are a particularly Late-Saxon urban form, perhaps created as a response to the need for storage, or as a means to gain extra height within the limits of earth-fast post construction (Schofield 2003:31). However, these came to be supplanted by the advent of a recognisably 'truly urban' building stock in

that the buildings have identifiable specialist functions (Fehring 1994; Ayers 2002:70; Schofield and Vince 2003:109, Figure 2.1). Archaeological and documentary evidence from London shows a rise in the number of stone buildings through the 12th century in the main commercial areas around Cheapside, in the Jewry and on waterfront sites between London Bridge and Billingsgate; John Schofield has argued that these were successors to late 11th-century timber structures (Schofield 2003:31). Archaeological evidence in fact reveals that for the first time in the 12th century, there was a more widespread construction of urban secular stone buildings across the whole of Northern and North-west Europe - a process jocularly described by Frans Verhaeghe as the '*pétrification*' of towns (1994:153), and by metropolitan historian Derek Keene as the creation of a 'new, inorganic solidity' (2001:54). In many cases the material was imported, which means that these masonry buildings, or those with stone elements, represented capital investments (Verhaege 1994:153). Looking deeper, construction in durable stone can be understood as a statement of confidence in the future. Perhaps this was bound up with the rapid changes in urban commerce that was based on speculation and credit, and the inherent need to create and convey security and dependability. Writing of the large corpus of over 2,000 French Romanesque houses, Pierre Garrigou Grandchamp takes the view that the new buildings, through which architectural *savoir faire* was demonstrated, represent a particular subscription to urban culture (2002:21). This idea forms a thread to the analysis provided in this thesis.

It is worth emphasising, at this point, that although it is masonry structures which have survived, there were comparable advances in timber-framed building technology: a fact which tends to be overlooked. Work in London, at least, based on analysis of waterlogged timbers re-used in the waterfront, has suggested that innovations *c.*1180-1220 lead to the creation of buildings that were more robust and which were more than likely to have been jettied. In this constructional technique, ubiquitous in medieval towns, upper floors are supported on beams that overhang the walls of a building, giving a cantilevered effect which makes for a sound structure (Palliser *et al* 2000:183). The earliest dendrochronological dates obtained for jettied buildings span back into the

13th century (Pearson 2005:47-50),[3] but it is possible that this building form, which enabled maximisation of space by allowing multi-storey buildings to be built, was one that was more commonly used on typically narrow medieval urban plots (sometimes only 5m/16ft wide) from an earlier date.

2.2.1 Recent work on urban architecture

The early diversity and investment in an urban building stock created for specialist functions is increasingly being recognised. In the early 1960s, perhaps in response to the flowering of the new discipline of medieval archaeology, combined with widespread destruction of historic towns (see Gerrard 2003, Section 1.3.1 of this thesis), 'Billy' Pantin published the first papers which made a case for the systematic study of the form of medieval urban building types (1962-3, 1963). However, in his classification system, Pantin assumed that the form of town houses was essentially an evolution and adaptation of rural types (with open halls and service rooms), adopted in a new context (*ibid*). Architectural historian Sarah Pearson challenges this view in the light of her nationwide survey of the evidence for the earliest urban and rural buildings from the varied sources of dendrochronological dating, building survey and excavation, suggesting that much innovation in building technology occurred in towns as a response not only to topography but also to the unique social and economic functions of the urban environment (2005). In a study of Kentish towns, she succinctly stated that:

> 'From the very first, the evidence in towns is for varied and innovative arrangements which owe little to rural practice... except[ing] at the very highest social levels... the emphasis was on commerce, workshop space and storage' (Pearson 2003:59).

Thus there are observable developments in masonry-built and timber-framed buildings. In 1966, architect Patrick Faulkner published a paper which asked critical questions of the form and likely commercial nature of surviving medieval undercrofts. In particular, Faulkner sought to contextualise the surviving buildings of the medieval

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[3] As yet, no more recently produced examples in the Vernacular Architecture Group's *Dendrochronology Database* contradict this statement:
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/specColl/vag-dendro, accessed 16/09/08.

Chester Rows, where, from the 13th century, buildings were constructed that had first-floor shops over commercial undercrofts, joined by galleried walkways, with further, jettied storeys above. Faulkner considered that the Chester Rows were a particular and local form of what was, in the 13th century, a more ubiquitous building type and that the practice of locating shops above sunken or semi-sunken undercrofts maximised the commercial value and activity of a busy street front (1966:132).

Inspired by the idea that multi-level retailing was an earlier arrangement, Roland Harris, now cathedral archaeologist for Norwich, revisited Faulkner's work to address, in his doctoral thesis, the singularity or otherwise of the Chester Rows (1994). Harris created a gazetteer of 12th-and 13th-century buildings in England to formulate a broader typology of earlier and contemporary structures. In fact, his particular aim of exploring the development of retailing on more than one storey as a means to contextualise the response to urban topography that culminated in the Chester Rows detracts from the fundamental impact of his important study: namely that it offers, from a sparsely scattered archival, architectural and archaeological dataset, a chronology of the introduction and evolution of particular secular urban building types in a period of rapid urban and economic change. He does crystallise this facet of his research in a summary paper on the developing complexity of the urban property market (2002) but publication of his work, which makes a major contribution to urban archaeology, is long overdue.

Harris's gazetteer of over 71 extant, albeit fragmentary, 12th- and 13th-century structures is supplemented with documented and excavated examples which brings his sample to a total of over 100 buildings. As a catalogue, it supersedes the buildings cited in Faulkner's paper (1966), and the urban buildings presented in Margaret Wood's *Norman Domestic Architecture* (1974 [1935]), and *The English Medieval House* (1965). Using architectural, archaeological and antiquarian evidence, both unpublished and published, Harris set out to reconstruct the form, function and appearance of his case studies as far as was possible. Some examples have here been extracted from his work in order to

illustrate the types of buildings that might have existed in Bury St Edmunds before the mid-13th century.

Harris's survey of forms of commercial architecture reveals considerable diversity and his analysis provides specific evidence that the most distinctive innovation in commercial architecture of the mid- to late-12th century that we can identify today was the construction of stone houses with undercrofts, warehouses or shops accessible from the street, with suites of rooms above. These building forms are, for example, distinct from large, urban manor houses (such as Merton Hall, Cambridge, or Frewin Hall, Oxford) which were often set back from the street in private enclosures (Harris 1994:15-20). They are different again from suburban houses which perhaps have window ranges fronting onto the street (for example amongst other 12th-century buildings in Wigford, Lincoln, St Mary's Guildhall was parallel to the street and entered via a courtyard (Harris 1994:38-41)). They differ yet again from the multi-storey chamber blocks that were often to be found set back from the street frontage (for example, as represented by the Norman House, Stone Gate, York (Harris 1994:31-3)).

Fundamentally, stone houses were tied up with rapid changes in the economy that were noted in Section 1.2.2. Many were constructed with vaulted stone undercrofts – sometimes connected to the house above, sometimes not: the undercroft offered an environment for storage that was safer from fire and which offered a controllable climate which, with the increasing movement of bulk goods through the 12th-century (Section 1.2.2) might have been of paramount importance. Whilst some goods needed to be kept dry (spices, for example), a cool undercroft is ideal for the storage of wine (Figure 2.2), and items of wool and fur are best preserved in a damp environment (Hammel Kiesow 2002:66-7). Undercrofts may have served as storage areas for shops and workshops above them, or for traders with stalls on the street. Others, with access to the street, may have served as actual arenas for sale: some are heated, decorated and provided with windows and light wells, which suggests that there was a degree of provision for activities that took place in them, or for the reception of potential

customers (Faulkner 1966:131; Garrigou Grandchamp 2002:14; Harris 2002:54). In fact, undercrofts are often associated with taverns: at Cheapside, 14 of the 31 documented undercrofts that are recorded from the 12th-century to 1350 were connected to taverns (Harris 2002:56).

Some of the buildings in Harris' gazetteer included stone built undercrofts set at right angles to the street, which could have accommodated wares or traders, as was the role of the *selds* in Cheapside (see below). Examples, from among others, include: 21 High Street, Canterbury; Vicar's Hall, High Street, Chichester (1180-1220); a segmental barrel vault at right angles to the street at 76 Westgate Street, Gloucester; and a 12th-century barrel vault underneath 50-6 Howard Street, Great Yarmouth (Harris 1994:94-5, 104-110). Others possibly had a warehouse function: at St Martin-at-Palace Plain, Norwich, a house was built into the slope leading down to the waterfront of the Wensum, where it would have been ideally situated to receive or convey goods to and from boats (Harris 1994:75-6; Figure 2.3). Nine buildings dating to the 12th-century were identified in the major coastal port of Southampton. Of these, buildings on the Western Esplanade, running parallel to the quayside, formerly had arcaded fronts that offered communion with the waterfront (Figure 2.4). King John's Palace, parts of which are preserved within the structure of the 14th-century town wall, has a ground level arcade opening onto the quay (Platt 1976a; Harris 1994:372-4).

Different types of building again had rooms that communicated with commercial street fronts. Moyse's Hall, Bury St Edmunds, is a rare, extant two-storey 12th-century building, considered further in Section 6.5.1. It consists of a double undercroft with two first-floor rooms: the largest of these has stone window seats that overlook the market place. The 'Woollen House', St Michael's Passage, Southampton, built in the early 13th century, had an undercroft accessed from the street, with a gallery and an assumed shop over that which was in turn topped by another floor (Faulkner 1966:130). Similarly, recording and excavation undertaken by Pantin and Martyn Jope during the demolition of S*etreton's,* which formerly stood in the Cornmarket in Oxford, enabled a reconstruction of it as a three storey building, of the mid- to late-12th

century, with an undercroft below rooms 2.1m wide that were, in 1190, named as shops. These in turn lay below a heated room that, in 1317, was described as a 'solar' (Harris 1994:92).

There are also examples which bear traces of evidence for shop forms similar to those surviving to the present day in continental towns (Figures 2.5a, 2.5b); Number 25, Rue de le République, Cluny (France) for example, has an arched façade that opens onto a shop and a stair to the first floor (Harris 1994:3). The Jew's House, Lincoln (1160-1170), has a suite of first floor rooms over three arcaded openings which were formerly Romanesque arches 2.4m wide. They were altered in the 14th century in response to structural stresses but were thought to originally have been separate shops or workshops (Harris 2002:50). Another building in Lincoln, the Norman House on Steep Hill (1180-1190), has a barrel vaulted undercroft which is only accessible from the street. Above that, there is slight evidence that the building may have had an arcaded front, opening onto shops or small units flanking a through-passage to the rear (Harris 1994:80-7). As a final illustrative example, 28-32 King Street, King's Lynn (*c.* 1200) probably has a similar building footprint, with an arcaded front that possibly opened onto shops or smaller units (Harris 1994:52; Figure 2.6).

Harris has also noted that in several towns there are excavated examples of substantial stone-built blocks, possibly residential, at the rear of tenements (for example, at Winchester, Canterbury and York), with frontages built up from runs of timber buildings that may well have been shops and other smaller, sublet properties. There is a documentary reference from Winchester to a group of *eschopes* which, in the early 12th century, stood along the High Street, in front of a larger house (Keene 1990:31). This practice of shop construction is long established and well attested in property records which survive increasingly from the 13th century (*ibid*). An early 13th-century record from Cheapside concerns the division of a property into two parts: along the street front 12 shops were built; land behind was devoted to larger houses (Keene 1990:31). The choice of timber for these buildings contrasts with the use of stone, and represents a differential investment in a building for a specialised purpose: cheap and quick to

erect, well-lit for the purposes of work or sale, and clearly intended to make money from rents. The use of a wooden frame potentially offers a degree of flexibility in the arrangement of the property (Harris 2002:55). By the 12th century, the narrow plots that are seen in many towns of this date were intensely used, and the customs of Hereford of 1154 refer to the fire hazard posed by rows of houses; they may well have been shops, workshops or small buildings constructed in this manner (Kowaleski 2006:354).

2.2.2 Shops and Shopping

Of particular importance to a study or recreation of urban streets is Derek Keene's documentary work on Winchester (1985) and, with Vanessa Harding, London's Cheapside (Keene and Harding 1985; Keene 1990; 2006). The material from Cheapside includes charters, rentals and repair accounts from the 12th-century onwards, and the area is vividly bought to life (Figure 2.7a). Down the centre of the street, until the late 13th-century, there were permanent booths and shops selling bread, meat, leather and cloth, and the area comprised a melting pot of small shops and stalls along the main frontages, with houses set back behind them, and warehouses and workshops built down side streets. Stone houses were intermingled with timber framed structures (Keene 1990:33). The shops were narrow – typically lockable units 6-7ft/1.8-2.1m wide (Keene 1990:37, 43). There are some references to stall boards – these were set up under shop windows to display goods and allow sale through the windows (Keene 1990:29, 40). The best modern parallel for Cheapside is perhaps an Islamic *souq*, area, combining shops, smaller shops and larger merchant warehouses which provided accommodation and further, semi private, sale and storage space. *Selds* were a particular feature of the Cheapside landscape. The word – sometimes written as *seuda* - was common until the 16th-century and although it was sometimes used as an equivalent word for shop (*sceop, schoppa, shoppa),* in this context and elsewhere it more commonly denoted a large structure which accommodated several traders (Morrison 2003:24; Figure 2.7b). Large halls or undercrofts were subdivided to give a type of covered bazaar: in Cheapside, *selds* seem to have been long roofed structures perpendicular to the street frontage, with accommodation for sale from chests, plots

and stalls belonging to certain trades and there was an entry into one every eight or so shops along Cheapside (Keene 1990). In the period under scrutiny in this thesis, selds may have been present in the urban landscape. The earliest documented example is that recorded in Winchester in 1148, which seems to have been a hall for the sale of linen and the term was also used in the 13th century to describe an impermanent structure which comprised fifty booths (*fenestra*) at that city's St Giles' Fair (Morrison 2003:24).

In general, an overview of the built nature of streets therefore conveys the physical reality of the wider social and economic changes that were part and parcel of the 'commercialisation' of Europe. Harris notes that the process of commercialisation had a lasting effect on the evolution of buildings for storage, manufacture and sale (2002:47-9). The increasing investment in the landscape, and the creation of smaller portions and subdivisions, suggests that there was a demand for small units for craft, industrial and commercial use (1994:43). He summarises with the statement that:

> 'The development of selling space (shop, seld, stall and undercroft) is traced in townhouses in the principal streets of major English towns and cities... with compact multi-storey combinations of shops, selds, stalls and undercrofts being in evidence in the later twelfth century and rising to dominate the high streets of England by c. 1300' (Harris 2002:47).

In particular, where there is no evidence of communication between chambers, it is likely that there was a separation of commercial and private quarters (Harris 2002:49-52). This suggests that, just as the urban property market is complex today, so it was in the 12th century, and to anticipate a little, Sections 5.5.1 and 6.4. of this thesis reveals aspects of property division, sharing and subletting in 12th-century Bury St Edmunds.

At this point, attention is directed to medieval observations of urban life. The *'De Naturis Rerum'* of Alexander Neckham provides a rare description of his journey to Paris from Kent *c.*1180. He relates how he saw Parisian markets, market halls, merchants' houses, lock-up shop units with boards and shutters, stalls in all places, undercrofts used as shops, booths at a fair, and, finally, booths of money changers situated on

bridges (Holmes 1966:60-2). Paris in the later 12th century was a place to acquire provisions and luxuries. William Fitzstephen's *Description of London*, *c.*1173, adds to the arsenal of imagination: he describes the presence of large magnate houses in the suburbs of the city, the fairs, feasts, tournaments, and the sale of horses at Smithfield. Further, he reveals that fast-food is not a new invention:

> 'There is in London on the river bank... a public cook shop. There, eatables are to be found every day, dishes of meat; roast, fried and boiled... coarser for the poor, more delicate for the rich... However great is the multitude... entering the city or preparing to go out of it, at any hour ... they turn hither... this is the public kitchen, very convenient to the city and part of its civilisation' (Douglas and Greenaway 1953:958).

Finally, a satirical tract concerning towns, in the *Chronicle of Richard of Devizes* (1189-1192), offers an insight into the more colourful aspects of 12th-century urban living:

> 'Do not associate with the crowds of pimps; do not mingle with the throngs in eating houses; avoid dice and gambling, the theatre and the tavern. You will meet with... pederasts, singing and dancing girls, quacks, belly-dancers, sorceresses, extortioners, night-wanderers, magicians, mimes, beggars, buffoons...do not live in London' (Appleby 1963:65).

Although the seductions of the city may well have been embellished and exaggerated, it would appear that some situations encountered in the 12th century city are similar to those encountered today. This section has presented a general description of what might be found on urban streets. Whilst archaeological evidence of this urban environment *is* fragile and sparse due to the antiquity of the period under consideration, the landscapes existed and it is worth bearing in mind what may well have lined the streets of the more sizable medieval towns. Further, the increasing emphasis on the commercial landscape introduces a sense of intention and activity to the High-Medieval town: the capacity to buy is, arguably, balanced by a desire to sell. Creation of buildings such as those described above is related to the decisions and

actions of individuals and institutions as they reacted to, and propagated, the process of urban commercialisation.

In particular, then, connections between landscape and commercialisation, noted in Section 1.2.2, are an underlying thread of the rest of this chapter. This is not to suggest that the commercialisation of the economy (and the origins of medieval capitalism) was uniquely fostered in the urban environment – certainly, the economic interconnections between town and country, peasant and market have recently been more sympathetically debated (see Hilton 1992; Britnell 1996a; Perring 2002; Giles and Dyer 2005). Nor is it intended to suggest that the primary and only role of towns was economic: to name the more obvious roles that they fulfilled in addition to trade and exchange, towns were also centres of administration, culture, defence, festivity, industry, law, learning, and religion. There are therefore many facets to medieval urban life in this period which are and could be explored through archaeological and historical evidence. However, the major infrastructures of commerce are indicative of a desire to gain and profit: town walls, toll gates, market tolls and regulations all controlled trade. This thesis demonstrates the potential to draw out new patterns from the landscape by adopting a perspective that is deliberately biased towards the burgeoning commercial role of towns, and the development of civic elites whose power was rooted in economic, social and political capital. Commerce relates to shops, buildings and urban livelihoods, and a consideration of it therefore strikes at the heart of life in urban streets.

2.3 Building fortunes

Peter Stabel, in a paper on medieval working lives, has noted that 'important as the spatial dimension of retailing in the urban landscape may have been, it has been paid scant attention in the historiography of late-medieval cities' (Stabel 2006:82). Revisionist work in the relatively recent field of 'retail history' has emphasised and supported the impression gained from the architectural evidence that the selling (or re-selling) of products or services was an important means by which High-Medieval urban wealth was generated, revealing the longevity of these practices not only in London but

also in lesser towns (Keene 1990:29-30; Benson and Shaw 1999; Cox 2000; Dyer 2000; Chapter 6; Welch 2005; Blondé *et al* 2006). Retail historians have sought to explode a historiography in their discipline that has, by portraying the Early-Modern period as a watershed in the trajectory of the development of consumerism, reduced the sophistication of medieval commercial practice to little more than a primitive, localised backdrop for the advent of modernity. Whilst in the High-Medieval period, peddlers, markets and fairs were crucial to the economy (Morrison 2003:5), Derek Keene (1990; 2006) and Richard Britnell (2006), as presented above, have both used documentary sources (accounts, charters, judicial records and tenement histories, for example) to investigate medieval shopping arrangements and emphasise the vibrancy of the urban scene.

The benefit of considering works in retail history is that they provide a perspective that is concerned with the intention to sell. The rapid commercialisation of the medieval economy was explored in Section 1.2.2. By the late 13th-century, there had been a shift in the English commercial network towards a more heavily monetarised economy than one based on feudal dues, and an estimated one in three people earned cash wages (Dyer 2000:257). The increasing emphasis in the economy towards coin- and credit-based exchanges meant that, among some sectors of the population at least, there was ready cash for luxuries, and an increased availability of consumer goods created an increased demand for the production of items for sale (Spufford 2002:12-19). Other studies support this general idea of High-Medieval consumption. By the 1130s, the mercers of London were specialised retailers of luxury textiles and other items pertaining to the house and home (Sutton 2001:12). Their wares included bedding, braids, coverlets, dress accessories, fustian, girdles, hangings, headwear, hemp, linen, napery, purses, ribbons and silk. Sutton's investigation of the mercery trade emphasises that 'mercers worked in the world of 'fashion', they sold adornments of the rich... no mercer was poor, for he had to purchase silk, pearls, gold and silver wire and thread' (Sutton 2001:23). In sum, Edmund King, in a paper on aspects of the medieval economy drawn from central government documents, draws the conclusion

that 'even at the beginning of the twelfth century, just as at its end, England was a land in which everything had its price' (King 1996:8).

'Commercialisation', then, suggests an implied level of disposable income available to at least *some* sectors of society. Whilst major trade fairs were essential to the economy (see below, Section 2.5.1), some of this wealth was vested in urban economies. Shopping, production and selling was an important activity in the urban landscape, and one which therefore can be seen as formative of it. Michael Camille has noted from architectural and illustrative sources the ways that signs and images put up by different people and communities in late-medieval French streets would have competed for visual attention (Camille 2001:92-3). In a similar vein, Derek Keene has argued that cellars and stone houses from the 12th century and later are works of architectural investment: effort was devoted to the creation of environments that would attract business and pleasure. Shop-keeping was an art, and the fact that widows were often given windows from which to ply their trades shows that the negotiation of sale was a personal game, as it is in many situations today (Keene 2000:92, Figures 2.8a, 2.8b). We can consider how the built environment might have been manipulated to promote economic gain: for example, through the acquisition of prime sites in a town, the construction of speculative row shops to gain rent, the increasing subdivision of properties for smaller units, and the fostering and creation of semi-private arenas of commerce (such as *selds)* away from control and regulation. Can intention and investment be identified in documentary, archaeological and architectural evidence from a place? Does it relate to broader subscriptions to civic life?

It is my contention that the town, as an arena of sale, would, by the 12th century at least, have been a built landscape that framed daily competition for business and economic prowess. Whilst it might seem that such a perception of urban life superimposes a modern viewpoint onto life in a medieval town, the physical and documentary evidence does support such a framework. Further, in comparison to the modern town, with ever more chain- and superstores, the medieval business of urban life would have been generally rather more intimately conducted, as it is in smaller

shops today. This prompts recognition of the fact that urban fortunes were partly bound up with the ways that people manipulated public and private urban space, streets and buildings, as they consciously and unconsciously negotiated social, economic and political relationships. Increasingly, the political power held by groups and individuals was related to economic power: this, in turn, was related to the ways that they lived and worked in the urban landscape. The next section, then, considers the political and social evolution of urban societies that occurred at the same time as these developments in architecture and commerce.

2.4 High-medieval urban society

The historically attested enfranchisement of urban communities in High-Medieval Europe has been an enduring theme in philosophical, social and historical discourse on the evolution of Western society (Rigby and Ewan 2000:292-4). Within the context of wider commercial changes, urban elite, professional groups emerged, whose wealth was created in the urban context. Grenville Astill's assessment of the nature of 9th-century manorial sites as centres of consumption and production was mentioned in Section 1.2.1; following through his thoughts on the genesis of urban societies, he has written that:

> 'Urbanisation continued to be stimulated by aristocratic growth and consumption until at least the late 11th/early 12th century, when there are signs that some of the urban population had achieved sufficient economic and political power to achieve a degree of independence' (Astill 2006:234).

Certainly, the demands of secular and ecclesiastical aristocracies were important to the merchant capitalist classes who operated as changers, buyers, lenders, artisans and traders (Hilton 1992:18). In particular, mercantile interests (in property and investment) came to predominate in towns, amongst a mixed population of landed magnates, lawyers and professionals: mercantile wealth, social distinction and urban political power were increasingly intertwined (Rörig 1967:18; Macfarlane 1985:186, 196; Harvey 1989:3). Medieval mercantile capitalism has been considered as the

harbinger of a secular society that values monetary wealth, freedom and co-operation, as opposed to the divinely justified hierarchy, fiscal duties, economy and order of the feudal system (Brucker 1999:358; Rigby and Ewan 2000:292-4). In early 20th-century sociological thought, towns were portrayed as the motors which drove the spread of Western capitalism; as arenas where the bounds of feudalism were broken and where mercantile groups, with a livelihood rooted in capital, negotiated their freedoms from seigneurial power. This view *has* been somewhat revised by more subtle investigations of the relationship between medieval towns and other social institutions: Rodney Hilton, for example, in *English and French Towns in Feudal Society,* has argued that towns were not 'islands in a sea of feudalism' but rather that, as centres of administration, defence, industry, religion, and trade, they served to support and perpetuate it: many rural magnates had houses and interests in towns (1992). Further, the impact of changes to the rural economy on the evolution of nascent capitalism has also been more subtly considered (Perring 2002). However, even with these caveats, it is undeniable that urban societies with distinctive characteristics were formed in the High-Medieval period, and that their activities were both shaped by and shaping of their growing towns. Burgesses, or freemen of a borough, formed the core of the professional population. They held privileges such as the right to buy and sell in the market without toll, to buy and sell land, or to sit on juries and judge their fellows. Unfree, feudal tenants did not share these privileges. Significantly to a consideration of urban identity and urban landscape, freedom of the borough could be bought or achieved: status within the community was therefore linked to economic and political success (Beresford and Finberg 1973:26; Hilton 1992:92).

A recurrent theme in constitutional, economic and legal history is the elucidation of how the evolving nature of urban government was bought about by sectors of town populations as they sought financial and administrative autonomy from royal, ecclesiastical or secular lords. In many cases, urban groups recognised the potentially lucrative benefits to be gained, and communally assumed, requested, forced, or paid for prerogatives and monopolies which had previously been held by feudal lords: perhaps the rights to collect toll, charge rents or reap the profits of the judicial system.

In effect, the acquisition of rights and privileges meant that these urban groups were defined as something more than retainers to feudal overlords (Tait 1936; Rörig 1967; Platt 1976a:21; Britnell 1996a:26-7; Campbell 2000). Whilst not all urban communities obtained formal, written charters of independence, many came to exercise a form of self government with responsibilities for their own funds, taxes, assemblies, courts and rights to elect their own officials and representatives: these civic achievements are often celebrated on town seals from the 12th century onward, which depict stylised skylines and town walls as monumental markers of the 'town' as an entity, or perhaps guildhalls and aldermen (Richter 1979:153; Frugoni 1991; Kostof 1991:283; King 1996:20; Keene 2000:94-5; Rigby and Ewan 2000:292-4; Creighton 2007).

However, as revealed by the evidence from Bury St Edmunds (see below) not all bids for independence were successful, as feudal lords also sought to protect, on their own behalf, income, privileges, wealth, and the existing social order (Hilton 1992:129). Arguably, successful pursuit of such negotiations required some foundation based on a previous level of economic, social and political achievement. Civic charters were often granted or sold to the *Gild Merchant* or an equivalent merchant body who might, for example, have collectively been able to pay for the farm of the borough: this was a fixed sum paid annually to the lord, which in turn gave the holder the right to collect rents and dues by proxy, and therefore potentially make a profit. Farms were often granted as patronage in the feudal system. It was often, therefore the merchants of a town, on behalf of urban communities, who sought privileges of independence (Gross 1890:37). A Gild Merchant was in existence in many towns by the 12th century, either officially as an independent or semi-independent governing body, or with a less prescribed role. Somewhat earlier, in the 11th-century, there was a guild of merchants in Canterbury, the *Cepmannegild,* whose extensive possessions were plundered at the Norman Conquest by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux – the word *cep* or *ceap* means 'market' and so *cepmannegild* denotes an association of 'market men' (Urry 1967:51, 105).

2.4.1 The Gild Merchant

The predominance of the Gild Merchant in urban affairs empowered them to particularly serve their own interests: the mercantile elite held influence over borough finance and jurisdiction, and could act in favour of their own interests, perhaps over subordinate craft associations (Hilton 1992:127-8). There was, in many towns, an eventual blurring of jurisdictional boundaries between town and gild, partly as a result of where economic power and trading monopolies lay: burgesses were generally members of the Gild Merchant, although not all members of that gild had to be burgesses of the town, and they often operated as proto-town councils, drawn from a variety of urban professionals (Gross 1890:61-3; Black 1984:3; Campbell 2000:64; Giles 2000:17; Rigby and Ewan 2000:295).

These urban oligarchies were often self-renewing, tightly-knit groups with familial, social, economic and political connections (Hilton 1992:100). By the Late-Medieval period at least, urban society was dominated by a system of craft, religious and trade guilds which often controlled business and production, monitoring standards, behaviour and dictating the rights and privileges of different individuals in the life of the city. In fact, secular, political philosophies on the virtues of communality, merit and contribution to the civic good can be seen to have evolved in the 12th and 13th centuries (Werner 1985:179; Nederman and Langdon Forhan 1993:ix; Brucker 1999:357). The guild- and conciliar systems of government were based on co-operation, collaboration, mutual trust and common aspirations in the urban community. Guilds fostered communal aspirations and charitable works, facilitated exchange of news, and enabled the functioning of a credit based economy (Keene 2000:74). In some places, craft, ruling and mercantile groups held guild halls; there is a documentary reference from 1148 to a guildhall (*hantachensale*) Street in Winchester (Crummy et al 2008:221). Exeter Guildhall still retains traces of the original building erected *c.*1160 (Tittler 1991:12-15)

The interplay of social relationships in larger High-Medieval towns were formative of community on the one hand (as represented in Guildhalls, for example), but were also

created by individual attempts to gain status within that community, as touched upon above with the idea that individual shops and buildings could have been designed and situated to attract business. This thesis argues that these politics can be united to the study of an urban landscape. There are links to be made between the intangible processes of commercialisation, social development, economic organisation, wealth accretion, contested power and an archaeological study of the burgeoning urban fabric. Such studies, explored below in Section 2.5, have been produced for Late-Medieval and Early-Modern communities, and serve to illustrate how these connections can be made. Firstly, however, we turn to the particular development of community in Bury St Edmunds and its potential as a case-study for an investigation of landscape and society in this earlier, formative period.

2.5 Bury St Edmunds as a case-study

Bury St Edmunds lends itself to the aims of this study and here, it is appropriate to present a summary of the political and economic development of the borough. This study is not, in fact, the first that uses Bury St Edmunds as a case-study to illustrate broader historical themes. It is inspired by Mary Lobel's seminal study of the constitutional history of the town, *The Origins and Development of a Monastic Borough* (1935). Lobel's work is an oft cited case-study of the relationships between an increasingly prosperous merchant community who sought economic and political autonomy, and their feudal overlords, the monks and officials of the Convent of the Benedictine Abbey of St Edmunds. Lobel was an Oxford scholar, and she produced her book during a research sojourn at Cambridge in 1935 (p.*v*). Based on her doctoral thesis, it marked the beginning of her career as an urban historian and it was directly inspired by Trenholme's study of *English Monastic Boroughs* (1927, cited in Lobel). In this work, Trenholme suggested that the conservative attitude of monks, in comparison to other royal, seigneurial or mercantile towns where the landlords perhaps feared less the impact of loss of privilege and revenue, meant that the political development of monastic towns was characterised by particularly difficult and often unsuccessful paths to economic and political autonomy (Lobel 1935:ix). Recognising Bury as a classic example - it was not until the relatively late date of 1603 that the townspeople acquired

a borough charter - Lobel's overriding argument (a forerunner to the theoretically explicit studies in 'microhistory' outlined in Section 1.3 that relate detailed studies in local history to broader phenomenon), was that there was potential to explore further individual mechanisms of change and local discontents. She demonstrated the *ad hoc* way by which privileges, in Bury St Edmunds, were secured by the urban population as they negotiated specific issues with the Abbot and Convent (*ibid).* By undertaking this task, she has revealed the concerns and the aspirations of different parties in the town.

2.5.1 Economic background

Bury St Edmunds existed in a symbiotic relationship with the Abbey, and it is worth at this point considering some contextual information about the growth of the town and its economic *raison d'etre*. The rise of the settlement was largely due to the promotion of the cult of the Saint and Martyr, Edmund, King of East Anglia, who was killed in battle in AD 869. Edmund was promoted as a cult figure within a generation of his death, and, after a translation to the place formerly called *Beodericesworth*, his shrine was increasingly bestowed with privileges and land, which soon formed a consolidated hinterland around the settlement (Hart 1966:248-9; Senecal 1999:97; Gransden 2007:xiii). The vast rural hinterland of the eight-and-a-half hundreds of the Liberty of St Edmund, confirmed by Edward the Confessor in the early 11th century, encompassed natural resources from the varied East Anglian landscape (as illustrated previously in Figure 1.2d).

In addition to these local resources, trade and pilgrimage were important to the economy of the medieval town and Abbey. The town came to be at the centre of a web of roadways: it lies at a distance of 30–40 miles/ 48-64km from the major centres of Cambridge, Colchester, Ipswich, King's Lynn and Norwich. It also lies within a reasonable distance of the navigable stretches of the rivers Lark, Blackbourne and Brett. The 14th-century 'Gough Map' shows that it lay on the main road between the major river port of Norwich (Norfolk), and the City of London (Lobel 1935:1; Scarfe 1972:43; Gottfried 1982:15, Plunkett 2005:105). It is worth noting that although today the relaxed pace of life in East Anglia is the butt of national humour, the region

was, at Domesday, the most precociously commercialised in England in terms of its urban infrastructure, and in the number of free peasants paying cash rents (Brodt 2000:643; Campbell 2005:160).

Although London was emerging as a mercantile, ecclesiastical, administrative and royal capital by the 12th century (Keene 1990:33, 41, Blondé *et al* 2006:13), economic historian Pamela Nightingale has suggested, citing wider demographic studies and analysis of export taxes, that other places were growing as fast as or even faster than London at this date (Nightingale 1996:90). English wool was essential to the economy of the Low Countries by the 12th century, and it remained so 'for two centuries of unrivalled ascendancy' (Bridbury 1982:ix). East Anglian towns, especially coastal ports with close links to Flanders and North Sea trade, drew almost as much commercial wealth from cloth, wool and corn as London did at the dawn of the 13th century. They offered alternative points of import that were not subject to such high customs and excise duties (Moore 1985: Chapter 5; Nightingale 1996:91-7; Dyer 2000:279-80). The cloth fairs of High-Medieval England were concentrated in towns on the Eastern side of the country, south of Boston: Bury St Edmunds hosted one of these great international fairs and it was an important and widely attended cultural and commercial event (Moore 1985:9, 11) (Figure 2.9). Sections 6.4 and 7.4 of this thesis offer insights into the way that the fair, held in association with St Edmund's day in November, took over the landscape of the town.

Within this context, Bury St Edmunds was a thriving pilgrimage centre and it enjoyed royal patronage, notably by William of Normandy. Immediately after the Conquest, during the Abbacy of Baldwin (1065-1081), a campaign of re-modelling of the town and the Abbey was undertaken to create what has been described as a giant shrine to St Edmund, fulfilling 'a vision to create one of the most privileged and pre-eminent Christian centres in England' (Gransden 2007:103). St Edmund's was one of the five wealthiest Benedictine Abbeys in England, one of the few centres which retained minting rights continuously from the Late-Saxon period, and one of only five English religious establishments which fell under the direct authority of the Pope and were thus

exempt from episcopal and royal control (Eaglen 2006:xii, 47; Gransden 2007:xiii). The influence and liberties of the Abbot of St Edmund's, as both the secular and spiritual lord of its extensive estates, meant that the community often played an important role in secular and ecclesiastical politics and economics, on local, national and international levels (Whittingham 1951:168; Rosenwein 1999:196; Gransden 2007:xiii, xv). The town and Abbey were therefore a focal point in the commercial, economic, religious, political, and social landscapes not only of Suffolk but also much further afield. As such, then, the town provides an ideal case-study to explore High-Medieval fluorescene as a European phenomenon of cultural interchange.

2.5.2 Government and society

Generally, it is the theme of feudal subjection that characterises the history of Bury St Edmunds: this is largely because of the increasingly tempestuous relations between the Abbey and town that developed through the 13th and 14th centuries: the disputes have been considered in depth elsewhere (Yates 1805:123-133; Page 1911:636-637; Lobel 1935; Rigby and Ewan 2000:297-8; Dinn 1992, 1995; Merry 2000; Bailey 2007:137-9; Gransden 2007:44). Ill feeling came to a head in 1264 when a 'Guild of Youths' initiated riots in the town (Gross 1890 II:30; Lobel 1935:129). The outfall of this was a forty-year legal dispute and eventually royal judgement favoured the Abbot's argument that the townspeople had no rights to operate as a Gild Merchant and had no legal powers: a political catastrophe which meant that the burgesses of Bury, although wealthy, had no right to operate as a corporation. This is a situation in contrasts to that in other wealthy towns where urban populations were incorporated in their own rights (e.g. see Tait 1936: 221-262). There has been much interest in the Late-Medieval town. Mark Merry's PhD thesis in particular draws on the testamentary information which survives from the mid-14th century. He argues that the civic elite, with limited administrative independence and few real powers, aspired to assume an identity that gave the impression that their society fulfilled the same role and was as privileged as that in other urban centres, but without similar foundations (Merry 2000:ii, 1-3). It is therefore worth emphasising that in the period under consideration for this thesis, the

mercantile community enjoyed the same privileges as other aspirant urban communities.

Firstly, however, the borough did belong to the Abbey and was administered by it. Beresford, in his study of *New Towns in England and Wales,* suggested that the *raison d'etre* of the urban community was to cater for the immediate needs of the Abbey (1967:333). In support, he cites the Domesday survey, which notes that before the conquest 'Abbot Baldwin held 118 men... to provide for the needs of the monks', and that after it, in 1086, the population of the settlement included nuns, priests, tailors, launderesses, bakers, clothiers and porters who were 'in daily attendance upon the Saint, the Abbot and the Brethren' (Williams and Martin 2002:1248-9). The pre-ordained role of the town, as a source of revenue to provide lights for the Abbey church, was confirmed by Pope Eugenius III (1145-1153) and it was emphasised in subsequent formal documents. There is at least one example of a late 12th-century plot where the annual rent payment consisted of a pound of Alexandrian incense destined for the main altar (Davis 1954:82). From at least the late 12th century, recorded by Jocelin of Brakelond and in the 13th-century *Customary* of the Abbey, the symbols of office were ceremonially presented to the town reeves in reiteration of the fact that the town belonged to the convent, namely for providing lights for the church. These artefacts were the moot horn (*cornu, quod dicitur mothorn)* and the *portkeys* (keys to the gates): the moot horn (see figure 2.10) was used for summoning the townspeople and it was sounded at times of crisis, for example, or to call people to the *portmanmoot* ('town-man meeting', see below) (Brakelond 1890:276-81; Gransden 2007:211).

The balance of power in the town was distributed between several institutions (1935:16-117). The town consisted of the area within the defences, and a wider privileged area, the *banleuca,* which included the suburb (Figure 2.11). The burgesses of the town were the free tenants of both the borough and its suburbs (Gransden 2007:44). The Abbot was effectively responsible for upholding defence, government, justice and order, and was answerable to the king and the pope (Brakelond 1989:66; Gransden 2007:44). Monastic officials, on behalf of the abbot, were responsible for

both secular and temporal administration, and the profits were essential to the financing of their offices (Gransden 2007:44). The Cellarer, responsible for provisioning the monastery, was lord of the manor in the suburbs of the town, and he held a manorial court in his Grange outside the East Gate (Gransden 2007:44-5). He also held rights and privileges in the market, where his agents could buy goods free of toll (Lobel 1935:24). The Cellarer and Sacrist between them held much of the land in the town. The Sacrist, responsible for the upkeep of the church, exercised the Abbot's authority and was effectively the temporal Lord of the borough. His office received rents and income from fairs, feasts, markets and tournaments as well as dues and fines. It was the Sacrist who held the right to nominate the reeves and bailiffs, laymen who were responsible for overseeing the day-to-day administration of justice, and for conducting such inspections as the assize of weights and measures (Lobel 1935:31, 33, 43-4, 37). The Sacrist also presided over the ancient *portmanmoot* where the judicial and administrative affairs of the town were carried out and its customs enforced (Lobel 1935:95; Gransden 2007:45).

Despite this apparently servile role, the merchant community thrived. Mary Lobel noted that the townspeople were, in fact, precociously privileged in some respects: for example, they had the rights to buy and sell land, exemption from pleading at courts beyond the walls of the town, they were granted, by Henry I, exemption from customs and toll through the land, and there were, at least in the 12th and 13th centuries, few competing markets or fairs within the Liberty of St Edmunds in West Suffolk (see Section 6.1.2 of this thesis, Lobel 1935:118-20, Scarfe 1972: Figure 13). Lobel's work demonstrated that as the increasingly prosperous merchant community sought economic and political autonomy, issues were negotiated between them and their monastic landlords (1935). In the late 12th century, under the Abbacy of Norfolk man Samson, who was portrayed by his contemporary, Brother Jocelin, as an able and far-sighted administrator (Brakelond 1989), the requests of the burgesses for certain privileges were often conceded, perhaps in the hope that the borough would maintain a competitive edge in relation to other towns (Bailey 2007:137-8). Samson was,

however, the last Abbot of St Edmunds to make concessions to the burgesses (Gransden 2007:47). Lobel notes that:

> 'The burgesses, indeed, were lacking in nothing that the wealth and influence of a great corporation could buy from the crown... but towards the end of the twelfth century it was becoming increasingly clearer to the[m]... that whatever advantages the town may have obtained from its dependence on the monastery in the past, its progress in the future was likely to be hampered more and more by monastic restrictions' (Lobel 1935:120).

The town did legally fall within the estates of the Convent (monks) of the Abbey rather than the Abbot's estates and a relationship of co-operation and occasional disputes flared into one of chronic tension and acute violence into the late 13th century as the Convent and Obedientiaries (officers) of the monastery were ever more conservative in their dealings with the townspeople. The officers of the Convent also often acted in their own interests. In the later 12th century, for example, the Sacrist tried to exact toll from Londoners coming to Bury market; these merchants were exempt from toll throughout the land but the Sacrist insisted that their exemption impeded on his older privileges. They boycotted the market at Bury for two years, and thus affected adversely the business of the burgesses (Lobel 1935:120).

In tandem with the feudal hierarchy, and of interest in this thesis, there is some evidence from the late 12th century for the existence of guilds and fraternities in the town; self regulating bodies which, as mentioned above, offered channels for the focussing of corporate ambition, and also for individual power, influence and identities to be created in the urban community. No guild documents survive from this date. A list of religious guilds made in 1389 (as part of a national survey) reveals that, of the 31 Late-Medieval guilds in the town, most were founded in the early 14th century (Redstone 1906; Morley 1926). The entry for the *Fraternity of Clerks of Glemsford,* however, states that it was founded in honour of Jesus, St Mary, St Peter and All Saints by Abbot Baldwin in 1065, and confirmed by Abbot Ording in the mid-12th century.

The fraternity consisted of a master and twelve clerks affiliated to the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who were to chant at the funerals of monks of Bury. This is probably the fraternity later known as the *Dusse guild*, who, as recorded in a 13th-century rental, held property around the Song School (Redstone 1906:27). Three other associations were recorded as being founded 'in time without memory'. The *Gild of St Botulph*, founded in honour of Jesus, St Mary and St Botolph, was associated with St James' Church: the members drank and ate bread and cheese together on the eve of the feast of St Botolph (17th June), and the guild was governed by the prior, with their assets curated by two chaplains and two merchants (Redstone 1906:25). The *Fraternity of Corpus Christi*, associated with the Abbey church of St Edmund of Bury, was founded 'time without memory' to provide lights for the altar and a play (*interludum*) for *Corpus Christi*, a feast in celebration of the body of Christ (Redstone 1906:25). Finally, the Fraternity of St Edmund of Bury was founded to attend mass in St. Edmunds and there elect officers (Redstone 1906:25-6). Whilst the dates of these foundations are not known, Jocelin's 12th-century chronicle mentions a seal kept in a sanctified spot on the shrine of St Edmund that was used for documents pertaining to guilds and fraternities (Brakelond 1989:2). Perhaps, in the period under consideration, these institutions were part of town life; they emphasise the importance of the expression of community, fraternity and belonging.

Moving from religious guilds, Abbot Hugh (1157-1180) confirmed a charter to the Guild of Bakers (Douglas 1932:149). There were 75 people of this profession listed in the Domesday book in the late 11th century (Williams and Martin 2002:1248-9), and by the time of Hugh's charter they were clearly organised according as a self-regulating body, whereby all persons selling bread had to be a member of the guild, and had to bake in accordance with the royal assize of corn: any transgressors owed fines to the guild and to the Sacrist (see text box, Figure 2.12). Interestingly, the Aldermanship of the Guild was granted to William the Son of Ingard and his heirs, which suggests that they may well have formed a baking dynasty. This resonates with some of the ideas expressed above concerning the concentrations of urban power in elite, familial groups. It is perhaps no coincidence that there are streets in the town called Baxter

(now High Baxter) and Old (now Lower) Baxter Street: perhaps their businesses were clustered in the landscape. Abbot Hugh also confirmed to the burgesses the customs of the borough. These customs, discussed more fully in Section 5.5.4 of this thesis, show the rights and responsibilities of the burgesses in respect of land transfers, justice and communal activity such as maintenance of the town defences.

Bury St Edmunds also had a Gild Merchant: the role of the Gild Merchant as a proto-town council in many English towns has been mentioned above. The Gild Merchant in Bury is mentioned by name – *gilda mercatorum* - in the Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond (Brakelond 1989:90-91) and again in the accounts of the riots in 1264 (Gross 1890 II:31). Little else is known about its activities. Tellingly, the burgesses also felt that suburban dwellers should not be free from municipal and feudal tax and toll unless they were members of the Gild Merchant (*gilda mercatorum*) (Brakelond 1989:89-91): this is the first reference to that institution and it shows the strength of feeling of the rights and defining characteristics of the Gild Merchant. There is further evidence that the burgesses of the town were acting as a corporate body, which shows that they had political impact and, significantly, their own finances. Mary Lobel has also argued that in the later 13th-century, the named Aldermen and other officers of the *Gild*, positions elected by the townspeople, were often synonymous with the aldermen and officials of the *borough*, positions which were in theory nominated by the Convent (1935:76-7). This suggests that the power dynamics in the town may have been more complex than simply a relationship of suppression and submission or rebellion.

Recurrent issues are disputes over market tolls; commutations of services for money; fixed rents in the face of inflating commercial values; rules and regulations governing sale; and the rights and responsibilities of the Gild merchant. Clearly, economic concerns were of paramount importance. Economic issues were a source of tension. The Convent were keen to extract maximum profit from the town by attempting to increase the price of the farm of the borough (Hilton 1992:130-131). In 1192, the Convent complained that the burgesses paid them £40 a year for it, but that the prosperity of the town was in fact growing. The reeves, it was argued, were leasing out

shops, stalls, booths and stalls in the market place without the consent of the monks. The Convent wanted the property confiscated, but the Abbot argued that this was against the customary rights that the burgesses held to retain any property occupied by them for a year and a day: the burgesses offered 100s to the convent as a placatory offering, but the monks refused, hoping perhaps for a less tolerant Abbot in the future, who might let them regain control of the market (Lobel 1935:122; Gransden 2007:47). In fact, then, the burgesses had already begun to collectively amass profit from the borough, and the built space of the market clearly represented and fuelled their investments. In 1198, the townsmen paid Samson 60 marks to confirm the charter of Abbot Hugh, reiterating their prescriptive right to their properties (Brakelond 1989:68-70).

In 1182-1200, during the Abbacy of Samson, the burgesses of Bury St Edmunds were granted permission to pay, communally, an annual sum of 24s to the monastery to replace the ancient dues of *repselver* (owed towards reaping corn) and *shorpenny* (towards herding cattle). These dues are indicative of the older institution and estates that existed at Bury, which is the subject of Chapter 4. Here, it is worth noting that by the late 12th century, they were unpopular: *repselver* was owed by every householder, although knights, chaplains and servants were exempt. The cellarer had, however, also excused payment from some of the richer burgesses and the burden therefore fell on poorer citizens who rented houses (Gransden 2007:48). Samson ordered that the citizens were to commute the due of *repselver* collectively for a sum of 20s per year, and the additional 4s to cover *schorpenny* was added by common consent (Brakelond 1989:88-89; Gransden 2007:48). Copies of a charter relating to this agreement survive:

> *'et ad istos xxiiij solidos reddendos pro iamdictis consuetudinibus emerunt ipsi burgenses de communi pecunia sua quandam terram in mercato que fuit Fredonis tannatoris et propriis sumptibus suis edifices lapidea in ea construxerunt et ea attornauerunt ad preposituram ville in perpetuum cum terra prenominata'* (Lobel 1935:171-2; Davis 1954:76-7).

This sum, then, was to be paid from the rent of a stone house in the market place built speculatively for this purpose. The house was to be built on land which had belonged to Frodo the tanner, and transferred, with the land, to the attorney of the 'stewards' of the town. The rent was to be paid on the first portmanmoot before the feast of St Peter-in-chains (*ad vincula*) on August 1st (Davis 1954:77). This feast celebrates the miraculous escape of St Peter from chained imprisonment, and the opening of gates for him. It is tempting to regard the choice of this date for the handing over of the money that replaced ancient dues as one that had slightly impertinent connotations, hinting at breaking free. Following this line of thought, Section 7.7 explores further the implications of this communal construction of a stone house in the market place which, it is argued, was a part of the landscape where the negotiations between the urban population and the monastic population were played out – both in terms of legal struggles for commercial rights, and as a place where architectural presence and control of space could have conveyed tangible messages.

Time And Relative Dimensions In Space

To return to the landscape and built environment, one of the themes in a relatively recent collection of papers on historic urban space, published in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, resonates particularly with the aims of this thesis. It was observed that urban history is often written without a spatial dimension: social networks are considered 'without material reference'; the urban landscape is reduced to a backdrop for events without a consideration of the fact that it was engaged with and formative of those events (Arnade *et al* 2002:516, 520-22). Space, architecture and landscape can be manipulated both explicitly and implicitly to convey social and cultural aspirations – from this perspective it is awarded a 'generative capacity' (Arnade *et al* 2002:516). Subscribing to this view, then, exploration of the houses, buildings and investments can 'spatialise' a study of the evolving urban community at Bury. Kate Giles has written, on the subject of public space, that it should not simply be seen 'as the backdrop against which social life was played out, but rather as part of the material culture actively used by the inhabitants' (2005:294). Further, as noted by John Moreland, written and verbal dialogues were not the only forms of expression of

power and negotiation (Moreland 2001). In particular, then, there is scope to explore space as a formative element in urban development.

2.6 Urban societies and urban landscapes

The general observations of Arnade *et al* (2002) can be applied to our understanding of the political and economic histories of the townspeople of Bury St Edmunds. Here, we arrive at the fundamental issue of this thesis: can the urban landscape of the town at this date be considered in terms of the drive to foster and control economic and political advantage? To return to the opening sections of this thesis, where were the shops and commercial buildings? How did individuals and institutions compete for selling space in the town and inscribe their identities and their achievements? Were the aspirations and increasing social and political differentiations of the burgesses expressed in the landscape? We are fortunate, in this case, that we have evidence of changing social dynamics such that intentions which underlay changes to urban space and buildings, whether political, commercial or social, can, potentially, be appraised. The antiquarian Lilian Redstone suggested that the sources for the social and economic history of the borough are meagre (1909:209): can an archaeological approach open new avenues of enquiry? To reiterate from Chapter 1, can we explore the social topography from archaeological and documentary data? Clearly, the success of the burgesses of Bury in the 12th-century was engendered in the urban context and the existence of the Guild of Bakers is an indication that, as for other places, the community was self regulating and oligarchic in nature: by default, their wealth must have been made possible by the use and manipulation of the built environment within which they lived. Were different topographies, identities and narratives of power inscribed on the evolving landscape of the town? Is there evidence of new commercial building types and investments, in line with a more general portrayal of High-Medieval urban architectural development? Where were the elements of continuity, change and reinvestment in the landscape as the 'High-Medieval' was made a reality? Can we elucidate patterns of investment by different individuals, institutions and groups in response to, and propagation of, local, national and international commercial changes?

Some studies of High-Medieval urban societies have hinted at the connections between space and society. In a study of the importance of the political topography of the curia and city of Rome in the 12th century, it has been demonstrated using deeds, chronicles and charters, that family groups came to dominate the city politically and topographically, with the creation of fortified family houses, *casetorri,* and family quarters. The Frangipani family, for example, deliberately accumulated, from the 11th century, extensive property holdings that, although fragmented, were linked by client or kin tenants: they held 31 tower houses, and 26 of these were in two roads framing the Forum area (Ellis 1998:61-2). Ellis did not ask more archaeological inspired questions of this landscape, however, asking about the setting of the buildings, architectural attributes, inter-visibilities, commercial roles or otherwise, and their possible association with processional routes. It is to the archaeological consideration of urban society and urban landscapes that this Chapter now finally turns, to frame the evolving built High-Medieval urban landscape as something created, contested, invested and understood.

As a cautionary note, there are many facets of identity and many ways that these can be expressed. Religious, political, commercial, ethnic, economic, social and familial associations, for example, are conveyed through actions, address, conspicuous consumption of food, dress, gesture, housing, language, material culture, religious deeds, ritual, routine or wealth. This thesis is concerned with landscape and it offers the observation that shops and buildings, such as those identified by Harris and described at the beginning of this chapter, were not constructed in a cultural, social or political vacuum. It is argued, particularly in Chapter 7 of this thesis, that any particular building can be considered in terms of its impact in a number of different contexts. For this reason, the discussion of the landscape of Bury St Edmunds has been divided into an appraisal of commercial/economic, sacred, social, processional and political topographies. These frames of analysis have been chosen as contributory factors to the form and experience of the overall landscape, as well as facets of urban life and identity to which individuals and institutions would have subscribed. These topographies are

overlapping, and it is appropriate here to outline a little further what is meant by them, as a vital piece of a conceptual toolkit:

- ***Commercial/economic topography:*** under this heading, various questions are asked of business in the town. What activities took place in different parts of the town? Were some in more prominent locations than others? Is there evidence of a deliberate fostering and attraction of business? How was commerce and industry controlled in the landscape? Were there fringe developments which demonstrated opportunistic and speculative development?

- ***Sacred:*** According to Keith Lilley's concept of 'sacred geometry', coined in his work and considered in Section 1.3.3 above (e.g. Lilley 2004a, 2004b), and his proposed underlying philosophical basis of urban social geography, are there parts of the town which are more 'important' than others according to symbolic and metaphysical schemes?

- ***Social:*** Are there parts of the town which, from archaeological, architectural or historical evidence, seem to be particularly rich? Poor? Associated with different classes, perhaps merchants or landed gentry? Where were the larger and smaller households? Clusters of stone buildings?

- ***Political:*** Whilst acknowledging that a particular philosophy of historical archaeology is that it can open windows into the obscure history of non-elite people who may have been written out of history (see, for example, essays in Orser 1996), it is suggested that a fruitful line of enquiry is in fact to explore the connections between urban written history and landscape. Given the history of Bury St Edmunds, for example, is the political topography bound up with other topographies? Is there evidence for enclaves of elites in the landscape, and their formation? Are they connected to commercial wealth? Are there any monumental buildings?

- ***Processional:*** Finally, and to anticipate a little from the next section of this chapter, attention is drawn to less tangible elements of the urban landscape: in particular how messages about the status of individuals and institutions status could have been read from it (in accordance with other topographies described above), and how these messages could have been periodically affirmed through actions in the streets such as civic processions which wove through particular parts of the landscape, rendering them more visible, more at the forefront and consciousness, and, perhaps, more important. The experience and understanding of a landscape of a town was as much about mental geography as physical zoning. People would have perhaps judged and understood the status or activities of others on the basis of where they lived, worked, and owned property. However, historian Peter Borsay's work prompts exploration of other factors contributing to how a landscape was inscribed. He has argued that important public events and ceremonies such as rituals of inauguration, celebrations of national events, commemorations of the past, funerary processions and religious observances were an integral part of urban life that formed 'theatre which appealed to all senses'. Interestingly he has suggested that they would have left, perhaps, lasting memories and associations even after they were over (1984:234). The role of processions as a direct means to enforce, replicate and remind people of the significance of aspects of the landscape for example, the reification of boundaries through perambulations at Rogationtide, is well atteasted, (e.g. Hutton 1996:277-86). Section 6.2 touches upon how even those processions not primarily intended to emphasise landscape traditions could still have formed associations that could, perhaps, be manipulated in the construction of urban identities. Is there, then, in Bury St Edmunds, any monumental or written evidence for civic or liturgical processions in the landscape which might have made certain streets and routes especially significant at certain times? Keith Lilley has argued for the textual capacity of towns as ceremonial arenas and cites the case of the procession and festival of the assumption of the virgin, held from the 12th century in Siena (2002:243): there is scope to follow this up with more subtle analysis. Does the processional landscape correlate to the other topographies under study? Who lived and worked along these routes and would this positioning have affected their social standing?

It becomes apparent in Chapter 7 that in Bury St Edmunds, as predicted (see below), these topographies were intertwined, and it is argued that this interlinking is also bound up with the economic base and livelihood of the urban population and the increasingly articulated identity and culture of the civic elite. The social and economic zoning of an urban landscape is not an unfamiliar concept and today, certain addresses and postcodes convey much about the businesses or residents in an area. The game of *Monopoly*®, for example, with the coveted or dreaded Mayfair only two blocks on the board from the much cheaper Old Kent Road, provides a case in point. Can the past topographies of places be revealed and understood archaeologically? The inspirations for this interpretative scheme are considered below.

2.6.1 Historical-Archaeological Case-studies

Studies which have explored the broad interconnections between the urban societies and landscapes of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern communities in Bristol, Newcastle and Norwich have indicated that there is a general coincidence between enclaves of urban elites, and the most important commercial, economic, political, religious, ritual and social places in urban topographies – and that these were mutable and contested (Leech 1999; Graves 2003b; King 2006). They highlight the importance of the manipulation of economic, political and social space and capital to urban populations through assessment of archaeological, historical and architectural evidence for where the merchant houses were; the form and function of domestic and commercial properties; relationships to the street; relationships to routes taken by processions; and where individual and communal investments were made. The social geographies of urban populations and the elite places in these landscape are likely to have had long origins, and it is therefore worth considering the High-Medieval period through this lens, as it is one which saw, as outlined above, the increasing enfranchisement of mercantile urban elites. The landscape, as an arena in which communities lived and worked, would have been important to shaping their social, economic and political relationships, and it can be re-interpreted and re-captured as such.

19th-century Melbourne

Studies of modern cities are intimately bound up with the philosophy that they are 'crucibles of social change' and 'physical expressions of the complexity of the world': In studying the archaeology of Australian cities, historical archaeologists Tim Murray and Penny Crook have argued for several scales of analysis, ranging from individual sites or households to an appraisal of the character of streets and areas (2005). In particular, in their analysis of Little Lon, Melbourne, they sought to create an approach which would bridge history and archaeology by exploring urban society and its embedded material culture, to read the cityscape as a cultural landscape, managing databases of detailed archaeological, architectural, artefactual and documentary evidence for tenement and building histories. This study demonstrated the difficulty of tying archaeological artefacts and excavated data to particular people who might have been recorded as living in a house, or even to a particular date, but it did reveal that particular social classes demonstrated loyalty to particular areas, allowing broader social comment on patterns in the environment in terms of housing and material culture (Murray and Crook 2005:93-98). This study affirms the idea of social zoning in a city, and in it, archaeology is drawn out to play its part: buildings and material culture are a non-written cultural indicator which would have been inherently recognisable to others in the community as signs of perhaps aspiration, equality, occupation, poverty, pretension, success...

Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Norwich

In Norwich, too, spatial and social differentiations in urban neighbourhoods have been studied archaeologically (King 2006 Ch 2, p.82). Chris King, in a study of housing in the city in the Late-Medieval and Early-Modern periods, has argued that the archaeology of urban elites is distinctive, manifest in investment in houses, churches and public buildings as they manipulated these to conduct daily business, to express and maintain their authority, and to negotiate social status (King 2006:69). On the one hand, the landscape was an arena for the expression of civic unity: the city wall in Norwich was conceived as a symbol of independence; civic buildings were constructed in the market place; and through civic processions which connected monuments in the

landscape, political and social hierarchies were publicly enacted. On the other hand, the landscape was where contested social and political identities of the inhabitants - public spaces and buildings as well as private houses could be made to ally with prevailing political power. The use of insignia and the controlled access through contrived spaces in buildings reveals the individuality of merchant identities, whilst, within an overall subscription to an elite urban culture, they sought to achieve elevation by proclaiming their positions in commercial and political society (2006).

18th-century Bristol

In particular, the role of civic processions, which actively engaged with and inscribed these topographical differences, has been considered by historical archaeologists. The order of participants in a procession was often determined by hierarchical precedent, and the role that parades played in reinforcing and reifying power balances within a civic society is a recurring theme: they served as reminders of the social order (Borsay 1984:234). The point of significance here, however, is the route of the processions themselves. Roger Leech has argued that the deeply layered structure of society in 18th-century Bristol was legitimised in hierarchically organised parades, and that the processions wove through those parts of the town that also reflected this social order (Leech 1999:19-20). At the heart of the processional landscape were the houses and commercial base of the mercantile elite – the procession was drawn through an architectural world with 'overt symbols and less obvious meanings of wealth, taste and authority' (Leech 1999:23). Derek Keene has noted that depictions of processions through Cheapside in the 16th-century show that the houses were often decorated with hanging cloths, and windows that were lined with spectators (1990).

Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Newcastle

Pam Graves has provided a more detailed case-study of the processional landscapes of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Newcastle in a particularly inspired paper based on the idea that 'there is a recursive relationship between economic and civic power, the location of people's livelihoods and the practices by which social identities were reproduced': that the townscape was both a product of invested social identities, and

was formative of them (Graves 2003b:30- 31). Graves has explored the relationship between civic processions, the distribution of 17th-century merchant houses in Newcastle, and the pre-eminence of the merchants in urban society. From historical documents, she has charted the changing routes of the processions and plays: the pre-reformation *Corpus Christi* processions (see below, Section 2.6.2) formed a circuit of the central and upper parts of the town which coincided with the more exclusive addresses in the Late-Medieval topography (2003b:35). In the 17th-century, the Hostmen emerged as a new elite, with wealth generated through their monopolies over the Tyne coal trade. At the same time, a new ceremonial topography was formed, centred on civic events such as the election of mayor, alderman and other officials: the new urban rituals understandably involved a different processional route between churches and the Guildhall on the waterfront. This new ritual focus on the lower parts of the town and Quayside occurred at the same time as a new investment in it as the domestic arena of the political elite. Graves has suggested that the 17th-century houses, with uniquely long ranges of windows, were essential to participation in civic life, with a mutual inter-visibility between the rooms and the street (2003b:41, 52). Buildings on streets which lined customary processional routes could have been made to stand out. This case-study illustrates that urban topographies were adapted over time, and also highlights the interlinking of built, social, economic and processional landscapes.

2.6.2 Medieval social topographies

Such patterns and processes would have been manifest in medieval landscapes and here the discussion returns back to the idea that social, economic and commercial status was made possible, proclaimed and sought in the landscape. There is scope to consider processional topographies of High-Medieval towns and what they may have meant to the urban communities. Although *Corpus Christi* ceremonies became more common in the early 14th-century, James' analysis of them is informative. After a mass, the host was carried through the principal thoroughfares of the town, accompanied by the clergy, laymen, civic officers and guildsmen, according to a carefully defined order of precedence, with the wealthiest and most important of the guilds at the front (1983:4-5). James has argued that in this procession, the structure and order of precedence in

> the urban society is made physically and visually present (1983:5). His analysis of the drama associated with the Late-Medieval *Corpus Christi* processions has emphasised the role of the ritual in defining and legitimising Late-Medieval urban societies, playing on the metaphor of society as a body, with the procession emphasising social wholeness, *whilst also legitimising that its elements were of different orders of importance compared to the heart and soul (1983).*

Drawing in Lilley's perception of sacred geometries (2004a,b), it would seem that these distinctions were simultaneously articulated in topographical differences in the landscape. Derek Keene in particular has described the medieval urban landscape as 'rich and legible', with distinctive social, political and economic topographies (2000:93). For certain places, detailed documentary evidence in the form of lists of rented properties or deeds has enabled detailed reconstructions of medieval property holdings: for example in Canterbury (Urry 1967), Cheapside in London (Keene and Harding 1985), Newark-upon-Trent (Barley *et al* 1955) and Oxford (Salter 1960, 1969). Late-Medieval cities, it has been demonstrated, were hierarchically organised, with central areas and thoroughfares attracting elites and prosperous citizens, whilst peripheral areas were more generally associated with the lower and middle classes (Stabel 2006:82-3). Shops of particular trades were often close together for practical reasons, in propagation of craft-based fraternities and to make them easily supervised. However, social topography was intertwined with other factors which contributed to individuals' positions in the urban hierarchy: merchant properties, for example, were often to be found away from industrial areas, the poor were out of the way, street fronts were often lined with the shops of retailers and artisans. There is an observed general coincidence between prime commercial spaces and the shops of purveyors of high value and luxury goods such as spicers, textile sellers and goldsmiths. To refer back to Keith Lilley's perception of the cosmological significance of urban social geography as a representation of the hierarchies of the cosmos (2004b, Section 1.3.3 of this thesis), these spaces were often also those that were politically central (Keene 2000:93).

How did these Late-Medieval topographies arise? In the High-Medieval period, is there evidence for the deliberate and aggressive fostering of and inscription on key places in the landscape? It would be logical to assume that, in the formative years of a town, people did precisely this, even within the parameters of lordship and planning. Was there even longer term continuity from the Late-Saxon period and before? Certainly, there could have been an element of planning and institutional control over the landscape: in the 1180s in Paris, there was a royal decree that butchers should hold their shops in a quarter near the Eglise de St Jacques de la Boucherie (Holmes 1966:64). However, the argument has already been put forward that there is likely to have been smaller scale investments in urban landscapes which would have contributed to a creation of its topographies not as a result of imposition, but as a result of subscription and maintenance of cultural patterns.

13th-century New Winchelsea

Perpetuation and reinforcement of the different characters of parts of a landscape depended on control, legislation, and a continuing subscription and adherence to them. It is rare to see direct evidence of how an urban community sought to define themselves in the landscape, beyond inference based on a reconstruction of varied topographies but the foundation rental from New Winchelsea, Sussex, provides a singular case where it is possible to explore how a medieval urban community *actually* and explicitly thought they should be placed. The town is an unusual case in that, atypically, an existing population was re-located to a newly planned town, but as such it provides a case which may inform more on the ideals underlying the norm than the norm itself does. The town, on the coast, was founded as a royal port in the 1280s by Edward I, to replace a settlement that was gradually being lost to coastal erosion. By 1252, Old Winchelsea, governed by a royal bailiff, was ministered by a semi-independent self governing community and in the 1280s when the town was re-founded on its new site, the allocation of properties was done on behalf of the king by the mayor and 24 *jurats,* councillors drawn from the townspeople (Martin and Martin 2004:67). The first rental, drawn up in 1292, has been analysed by the authors of the report (2004:95-104). Rural magnates held large plots on the quayside (quarter 17) of

the new town: prominent, but *not*, perhaps, at the symbolic heart of urban life. By contrast, the fifteen members of the population who held half an acre or more all resided or held principal properties in quarters of the town flanking St Thomas' church (Figure 2.13a). These individuals also held harbour-front properties, indicating that they were a mercantile elite (*ibid*). Their plots in the town were differentiated from others in that they spanned whole blocks in the grid plan, and were therefore larger, with two street frontages (*ibid*).

Although not emphasised in the Martin's report, it would seem from this allocation of properties that in the new landscape, an enclave of the urban elite, in close social and physical proximity, was created. Further, the location of it, fronting onto a street which ran from the market place to the west door of the large parish church, would undoubtedly have related to the processional topography of the town (Figure 2.13b); when such ritual events occurred, the landscape would have been associated implicitly and explicitly with ideals of urban society and hierarchy. Not surprisingly, a large 13th-century house directly opposite the church was held by Gervase Alard, an early mayor and member of a wealthy New Winchelsea dynasty (Martin and Martin 2004:69). New Winchelsea is something of a special case, given the fact that an older urban community was transposed to a new site, but it indicates the way that observed social hierarchies are likely to have been embedded in the landscape. Published surveys of any medieval town could be considered with these patterns in mind. Here, through, the question that is asked is whether there are distinct zones of High-Medieval Bury St Edmunds revealed through archaeological information, and whether there are patterns and connections in the landscape which reflect the fact that, within it, the communal identity of an urban elite group, noted in section 2.5.2, was being created. Is there potential to find out?

2.7 Conclusion

All of the studies of historic towns cited have utilised a multidisciplinary, contextual approach to the built environment of a town, using architectural, archaeological and historical sources to ask questions of social topography, social status and its creation in

the built environment. Clearly, advocation of this framework is based on a theoretical ideal. It is unlikely that whole streets of buildings will survive (although what we might call gem towns with exemplary surviving historic buildings such as Cluny, France, *do* have large numbers of Romanesque and Early Gothic structures) and it is even less likely that there will be swathes of supporting archaeological evidence for activity, or specific documentary evidence which outlines the intentions and aspirations of people living and working in the houses to answer the questions of *what* people were doing, *why,* and *where* they were doing it. For the slightly earlier 12th and 13th centuries, the surviving evidence is considerably more fragmentary but it is not completely elusive, and a partial dataset can certainly be better appreciated in the light of recent work into urban buildings and activities that have been outlined in this chapter.

To return to the themes from the beginning of this chapter, there was a notable boom in the construction of stone buildings in towns across Europe. In many places, they were built by affluent classes, and, found near quays, markets and ports, they served non-domestic, storage, commercial and administrative purposes (Ayers 2000:70). At the same time, there emerged an increasingly affluent and influential urban elite class, with an economic base in trade and commerce. To return to the idea, noted in Section 2.2, that the new stone buildings expressed a degree of *savoir-fair,* was a merchant identity constructed with the stone and mortar of these buildings? Did they convey aspirations for wealth and a new, rock-solid future? Whilst such an approach favours elite urban communities, in fact it is based on an appraisal of visible patterns in an entire landscape: differentiations in the physical space, buildings and activity correlate to the social composition of a medieval town. Stone buildings were not the only ones in towns and they can be interpreted in terms of their significance in relation to the rest of the topography. Roland Harris was concerned with formulating a typology to explore the chronology of change in 12th- and 13th-century stone architecture: this thesis builds on these foundations to explore further the landscape context and the social, political and economic impact of such buildings within an evolving urban landscape. Are there *emerging* and changing topographical connections between landscape, commerce and society? The town was an arena in which were manifest the

actions and responses in the landscape of different groups and individuals, and the negotiations between them, as they reacted to the possibilities presented by wider socio-economic changes. By exploring a town as it was developed (through both lordship and the activities of its population), from a proto-urban centre to one in which these evolving dialogues can partially be revealed through historical study, a window is opened on the process of decision making, development and negotiation which shaped the High-Medieval town. Chapter 3 therefore turns to the fundamental issue of the dataset that is available from Bury St Edmunds.

3

SOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF BURY ST EDMUNDS TO *C.*1220

> 'I was only in time to see a small portion of it still standing, but quite enough to show the period to which it had belonged. The massive masonry, composed of undressed flints irregularly placed and held together with a great thickness of mortar, spoke of the rude but enduring workmanship of mediæval times' - Miss Nina F. Layard, a local antiquarian, describing the remains of the Carmelite Convent at Ipswich (1900:184).

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 advocated an approach to the study of medieval Bury St Edmunds which requires multi-disciplinary analysis to explore the built and lived-in urban landscape in terms of commercial, political, processional, sacred and social topographies. To fulfil this aim, and the overriding one of the thesis to re-assess the development of the landscape of Bury, diverse sources of archaeological, architectural and historical information have been collated. Section 1.3.3 noted that an observed dearth of evidence has been a barrier to studies of this type, and it will become apparent from this chapter that the evidence pertaining to the development of the town before the mid-13th century *is* indeed fragmentary. However, the strength of the investigation lies in the use of a combination of these sources.

The value of exploiting a range of sources in urban research has long been recognised, with handbooks on method detailing the benefits of combining archaeological, architectural, documentary and topographical evidence to reveal the history of any particular place (Palliser 1976; Aston and Rowley 1974:90-116; Carver 1987:112-139). The programme of Urban Archaeological Databases (UADs) supported by English Heritage (see Section 1.3.1), based on this philosophy, means that for many

towns, formal, systematic and proactive projects have been established to assimilate these types of information. The strengths and weaknesses of individual urban database projects is not an issue which is pertinent for discussion here: undeniably, they are useful ports of call for information. However, the Urban Archaeological Assessment for Bury, begun as a pilot project, contains just two entries: one with a brief note on the probable extent of the Saxon town, and the other outlining the extent of the medieval town (SHER BSE 241). Without a UAD, then, it has been necessary to isolate information pertaining to the earlier history of the town from disparate datasets. The chapter describes, in turn: published studies of the town, including antiquarian research; the earliest map evidence; archaeological evidence for monumental change, buildings and activities; published and unpublished architectural analyses; new building survey; published medieval documentary evidence; and manuscript information about aspects of the town. As an aside, it is worth noting that whilst the primary stages of data collation undertaken for this thesis were inspired by the UAD format, with data sorted geographically and chronologically, the exercise is an interpretative one rather than a project intended to qualify all of the heritage environment information: importantly, then, this chapter explains which sources are used in this study of the life and times in the High-Medieval town, and how they were identified and selected. It also appraises the potential of the dataset in terms of realising the aims and objectives of the thesis.

3.2 Published studies

There are published sources from which to draw information about Bury St Edmunds before the early 13th-century, and a brief literature review was provided in Section 1.1.1. Excepting Mary Lobel's study on the political and constitutional development of the borough (1935), scholarship on the medieval town from the earliest days of blossoming antiquarian endeavour has, generally, been subsidiary to works on the massive archives of the great Abbey and other related institutions (e.g. Gillingwater 1804; Yates 1805; Arnold 1896; Gransden 1973-2007; Harper-Bill 1994; Eaglen 2006): whilst the physical remains of this institution are scant and still poorly understood, much material survives from the library. Over 270 books are known

(Gransden 2007:xiii), and Rodney M. Thompson's *Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (1980) is a catalogue of the surviving manuscript collections relating to the Abbey's administration: it lists 176 charters (with many more copied into the registers), 1083 manorial and obedientiary rolls, and 41 complete and fragmentary registers and cartularies – a greater number than from any other abbey (Thompson 1980:3-4). As considered below, a great deal of this material is unpublished. Pertinently for this thesis, the archive has supported studies of the origins of the Abbey and the development of its landholdings and administrative privileges. Dr. Antonia Gransden has devoted much of her career to the study of aspects of the origins, history and development of the Abbey and her most recent book includes a bibliographic summary (1973; 1981; 1985; 2004; 2007),

The general imbalance in favour of the Abbey is not wholly surprising, given the relative scarcity of evidence pertaining to the town. The town was administered by the Abbey and the borough was not a corporation that generated and curated, for itself, a large volume of archive material. What material there is amongst the abbey archives. Further, the borough was exempt from royal taxation and jurisdiction, which means that central government records also prove to be a relatively poor source of information about the town: again, tax and court records are amongst the abbey archives. Sources published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission – pipe rolls, feet of fines, patent rolls, close rolls – were therefore not consulted as a primary source for this thesis. A significant port of call in urban research is often the volumes of the *Victoria County History* series but only 2 volumes of an intended 6 were ever published for Suffolk (Page 1907; 1911); of relevance to this study, these contain information about the earthworks of the town, the Domesday entries and ecclesiastical institutions, but there is little other information about the town in the High-Medieval period. A dearth of contemporary municipal documentation therefore precluded the production of detailed civic histories which are often available as a result of antiquarian interest in other towns (Lobel 1935:x). Mary Lobel's study of the borough (1935) was based on her systematic extraction of fragmentary and scattered documentary material from

amongst the Abbey's vast archives. As has been noted in Section 2.5.2, her political history of the town is invaluable to this thesis.

Having said this, three antiquarian studies provide useful information about the physical environment of the town. Edmund Gillingwater (1736-1813) was an aspiring topographer from Lowestoft who took to writing in the late 1780s after he met and married a widow of sufficient means to support him whilst he pursued his interests. His *Historical and Descriptive Account of St Edmunds' Bury* (1804) is unfairly dismissed in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies* as a work which contributes nothing new (Blatchly 2004a). In fact, Gillingwater took pains to describe medieval buildings on the Angel Hill outside the Abbeygate, under the misapprehension that he had hit upon proof that the monastic precinct was formerly much larger. Some of his observations have supported analysis in Section 6.5.3. Another useful volume is the *Suffolk Traveller*. The first edition of this touring atlas was written in 1735 by John Kirby, a local topographer, and it was updated in several editions by his sons (Kirby 1829; Blatchly 2004b): it describes some of the medieval hospitals of Bury. Finally, the illustrated works of Revered Richard Yates (1769-1834) also provide insights into former monuments. Yates' father served as custodian of the Abbey ruins for 37 years and made extensive notes; the *History and Antiquities of the Abbey of St Edmundsbury,* published in 1805, pulled together and expanded upon this legacy. In 1843, a revised edition of Yates' work was published posthumously including new illustrations and notes but it did not incorporate all of the material that he himself had gathered for an intended 2nd volume (Blatchly 2004c). A manuscript version of some of this information is, fortunately, held in the Suffolk Records Office (SROB P755/33).

It is worth noting that there have been several works on the *Late*-Medieval urban society of Bury St Edmunds. These studies have built particularly on the surviving volume of testamentary material which survives from after 1351 (Tymms 1850; Gottfried 1980, 1982; Merry 2000; Dinn 1992, 1995; Statham 2003). Inspired by Lobel's work, which charted the unsuccessful bid of the townspeople to gain economic and political autonomy even into the 17th-century, these studies have suggested that

investment in civic life in Bury St Edmunds was particularly pronounced as the elite of the town attempted to formulate a corporate identity without a basis in financial and political autonomy. This general focussing of the canon of literature on Late-Medieval urban society in Bury St Edmunds leaves a niche for a study which revisits the period in the years up to the 13th-century, and one which is expressly concerned with the evolving landscape.

3.3 Map regression

An important task in unravelling the history of the landscape of a town is to disaggregate the phases of its development. The plan of a town is a result of successive occupation and development through the centuries, and a study of urban morphology involves the conceptual 'peeling off' of different layers of the town plan. The most obvious sources with which to begin this endeavour are, therefore, early maps which, as mentioned in Section 1.3.2, show the street plan of settlements before modern development (Aston and Rowley 1974:102): it was not until the later 19th-century that many towns broke their medieval bounds (Conzen 1981 [1962]:28). The earliest OS maps are often used as the basis for picking out patterns in plots that may relate to phases of development, and recent works have exploited digital data sources which make for relatively rapid characterisation of these maps using GIS programmes (Lilley *et al* 2007). However, the earliest OS map for Bury St Edmunds was produced in 1886, after the construction of the railway and the infilling of much of the north part of the town. A more informative source, albeit one which is slightly harder to exploit in that it requires rectification, was a map produced in 1776, before these nineteenth-century changes which are present in the modern townscape occurred. At that date, Thomas Warren was commissioned to survey the town by its civic leaders, a body known since the reformation as the 'Guildhall Feoffees'. Warren's map shows the 18th-century extent of the town (Figure 3.1). Redevelopment has been additive rather than destructive, and the streets shown on the 18th-century map can still be seen in the modern town plan. This 18th-century layout in turn almost certainly respected the medieval street pattern. Mary Lobel, for her study of the town, demonstrated that the streets could be tied into a town rental of 1433 (see Figure 3.2), and names from an

earlier rental of 1295 (published by Redstone in 1909) can also be matched to those on Warren's Map. The base-map used throughout this thesis, then, has been created by the simple process of translating the street pattern from Warren's map onto a digital version of the modern OS map, using the geographical information systems (GIS) package *ArcGIS 3.9* and *Adobe Illustrator 10.* An alternative approach would have been to transfer the information from Warren's map onto a copy of the first edition OS map, but this was not available across the University in digital format at the time of production and so the modern map was used. The information has been supplemented with street names from the 1295 rental and the base-map, Figure 3.3, also includes medieval monuments that were beyond the extent of Warren's plan but which are shown on the 1886 (1st edition) OS map. All OS maps were acquired through the digital service, *Edina Digimap*. The map shown in Figure 3.3 is used as a basis for figures throughout the thesis: monuments, features under discussion and distributions of evidence have been variously added to it. The fact that the streets from the 1295 rental can be equated to those on the 18th century map suggests that the medieval town plan survived more or less intact into the 18th-century, and that Figure 3.3 is reliable as an assessment of the medieval town, at least as it was at the end of the 13th century.

Further, and to anticipate a little, the base-map represents property boundaries in the town that existed in the 18th century and which are still present today. These were transferred onto the modern map to provide a sample of some of the earlier property boundaries. Tracing these boundaries onto the map proved to be a slightly subjective activity. Although Warren's measurements of length are generally proportionally correct, his triangulation was not: it is therefore not appropriate to simply overlay the maps and trace properties across. For the purposes of this thesis, Warren's map was reproduced at approximately the same scale as a copy of the OS map, and lines and shapes were transferred across by hand (in consultation with the 19th century OS map). The resultant plans were then digitised: the depiction of property boundaries is incomplete in that it represents *only* those boundaries depicted by Warren which are identifiable on the modern map but, as an exercise, the task proved invaluable: to anticipate a little, it becomes apparent, for example, that blocks of the medieval grid

were divided laterally, and that the properties on the very westernmost part of the grid of streets were probably part of a separate planning event (Section 5.4.3). As a basis for formal analysis, this approach might leave something to be desired but as a schematic map, it serves its purpose. A future project could be the production of a measured survey of property boundaries to see whether any original standard units can be ascertained: only qualitative analysis was carried out here on the basis that the degree of error in map based measurement was too large to support quantitative investigation, and that a measured survey was beyond the scope of this thesis (in part because it is the rear of properties that are perhaps the most informative when it comes to exploring relict boundaries).

To understand the phases of development of a town it is essential, as was noted in Chapter 1.3.3, to pay attention to the streets, buildings and plot layouts that characterise different areas. Further, the distribution of archaeological evidence also provides a guide to the date of occupation in different places. Plotting archaeological evidence against this map shows distributions of features of different date which are highly illuminative of the order in which different elements of the plan were developed. This is revealed throughout the thesis and is presented as a phased map of the urban morphology in Chapter 7.

3.4 Archaeological information

Why has this exercise not been carried out before? As noted in Section 1.1.1, the agendas for archaeological management have been geared towards preservation. Bury St Edmunds is a historic town, and an active approach to conservation since the 1950s has ensured the survival of historic buildings and the historic street pattern. Many of the buildings in Bury St Edmunds are visibly of Late-Medieval date, and roof lines and exposed beams betray the antiquity of other buildings beneath Georgian facades. By way of illustration, a search for historic buildings in Bury St Edmunds using the online version of the Listed Buildings catalogue yields 728 hits (www.imagesofengland.co.uk) and of these listed buildings, 61 fall into the catalogue date range of 1154-1485, with a further 205 dated to the period 1485-1603.

3.4.1 Heritage management in Bury St Edmunds

In 1947, Bury St Edmunds was designated a London overspill town. New estates were built and plans were afoot to demolish and redevelop swathes of the town centre. However, the development proposals caused consternation on a national level, and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (S.P.A.B.) were commissioned to produce an objective, external report on the architecture of the town, in accordance with the guidelines of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 (MacGregor and Sissons 1948:1). In their recommendations, MacGregor and Sissons advocated an inspection of, remarkably, every building in the town (1948:1) and in 1952, approximately 300 buildings were listed.

In the 1960s, re-development proposals again loomed, but active conservation policies and campaigning by the Suffolk and Bury Preservation Societies safeguarded the future of much of the town centre, apart from the demolition of some corner buildings and the construction of what Marcus Binney, an architectural historian with an interest in the politics of conservation, called 'rash and clumsy development' on the west side of the market place (1981:1460-1). The result is that development has tended towards the small-scale infill of spaces rather than mass demolition (Binney 1981:1460-1). Although archaeological information has inevitably been lost on some of these smaller sites, the historic environment agenda in Bury St Edmunds is an early example of a successful dialogue between conservationists and planners.

The Suffolk Archaeology Unit was created in 1974, as a subdivision of the Suffolk County Council Planning Department (Carr 1991:184) and funds were allocated to identify areas of archaeological interest in the town. Before the 1970s, sporadic archaeological activity in Bury had been mainly focussed on revealing the Abbey remains, an activity which has, incidentally, still only touched the surface of the deposits (Carr 1991:182). In 1975, shortly after the inception of the Suffolk Archaeological Service, Bob Carr, Senior Archaeologist, wrote an assessment of the archaeological potential of the town. In an attempt to balance the information potential with the limited government finances available he announced that:

> 'It is felt that as money for archaeological work is so restricted, problems which may be elucidated by conventional historical methods should be left untouched by the archaeologist' (Carr 1975:51).

The research priorities for the town were, then, to concentrate on places which were threatened, were most likely to offer evidence on the earliest origins of the town, or which might offer evidence for social and economic life through the ages (Carr 1975:51). Published excavations in particular record campaigns to explore the town defences (West 1973), the stratigraphy underneath the Norman Tower (Drewett and Stuart 1973), and the Anglo-Saxon cemetery found at Westgarth Gardens (West 1988). By 1990, there had been twenty-one excavations in Bury, although over half of these had been within the Abbey precincts (Carr 1991:182). The general research agenda has not been updated in print in the intervening decades but since the introduction of PPG16 in 1990 archaeological interventions have been carried out across the town on the premise that generally, any site is likely to yield archaeological data. Whilst there have been some excavations, the archaeological briefs have been, generally, to mitigate the damage to archaeological deposits and restrict intrusions into them. Approximately 100 interventions have been carried out in the medieval town and suburbs, and nearly half of these have been small-scale monitoring projects during the excavation of footing trenches (Table 3.1). Data collection, in line with national practice, has been reactive rather than proactive, and the medieval archaeology in the town has therefore been sampled on this random basis, with very little potential in many cases for interpretation of the form or function of features. This offers inevitable frustrations, but there is mileage in exploring the results of these interventions. To date, there has not been a serious attempt to sort and catalogue the data, and with no pressure to do so, there may not be finances to do so in the foreseeable future. This thesis, then, makes some inroads into the task of appraising and synthesising the available data and it exploits some of this untapped resource, with gratitude to the generosity of the authors of unpublished reports.

3.4.2 The archaeological dataset

The Suffolk Heritage Environment Record (SHER) serves as the first port of call for information about interventions that have been carried out in the town. Additional information is held in the Suffolk Records Office. Before the Heritage Environment Record (formerly the Sites and Monuments Record) was established, a Local History Recording Scheme (SROB LHR) was set up: it contains some information on architectural and archaeological observations made in the 1950s and 1960s, which is not incorporated into the SHER. Conrad Ritblat, a property developer, also kept a book of 'Archaeological Notes' (SROB HD 1345/1). The *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* and *Medieval Archaeology* are also sources of information on earlier discoveries, as well as the results of recent campaigns. The HER is a working database, and although it was searched exhaustively (most recently in January 2008) for site reports that were interrogated for information pertaining to the period before the 13th century, new information is continually added to the system as it is continually updated with reports that are finally completed (summaries of the most recent ones are available online: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis). For this reason, a list of sites consulted (by site code) is provided in Table 3.1. Generally, the archaeological deposits in the town are between 1m and 2.5m deep, depending on where the sites are in relation to the sloping ground. The underlying subsoil is varied chalk, sand and gravel.

Table 3.1 shows that the dataset which supports this thesis is largely drawn from monitoring of smaller projects: there are 19 excavations of different sizes on the list (19% of sample of interventions), 32 evaluations (32%), and 48 monitorings (48%). These are mapped in Figure 3.6, but firstly, it is useful to clarify the nature of the archaeological works. Interventions in the town have taken three forms according to the requirement of the project, and these have different information potentials:

***Excavations*:** an excavation carried out in an area where archaeology is going to be destroyed in theory offers the potential to reveal stratified deposits, or to record and explore archaeological features in relation to one another to say meaningful things about the use of space and activity on a site. In reality, the extent of the area to be

excavated often depends on the size of the development project, and later reworking of the site may have caused disturbance to earlier archaeology. In Bury St Edmunds, two open area excavations were carried out on High Baxter Street (Figure 3.4a), for example, with another at East Close at the extreme end of Eastgate Street. As a general comment, in many cases the depth of the excavation was not determined by the depth of the archaeological deposits, but by the extent of planned building work. Behind the Angel Hotel on Angel Hill, for example, medieval archaeology was seen but not dug (Duffy 2005a:6)).

Evaluations: trenches or parts of a site are sampled to reveal the nature of underlying archaeology and to decide on the best strategy to deal with it. For example, Figure 3.4b shows the results of an evaluation within the grounds of St Edmund's Hospital, Maynewater Lane. Three trenches 1.5m wide were dug behind houses on Southgate Street, to a total length of 133m that represented 6% of a development site. The trenches were dug to the surface of the subsoil, and pits were identified these were not bottomed at a depth of 2.2m although they were sampled: the sample 'was too small to meaningfully hypothesise about the type of structure' (SHER BSE 117). It is apparent that there is still potential to identify features, but that the technique really reveals more information about the depth and character of deposits rather than the scope for spatial analysis and interpretation.

Monitoring: this is carried out where it is felt that there is likely to be no archaeology, or where the intrusion of development is likely to be small. In Bury St Edmunds, monitoring has been routinely carried out on small-scale projects such as plot in-fill and house extensions. This key-hole sample of archaeology is limited in terms of identifying and interpreting archaeological features, and often the narrow trenches have made recording difficult: for example, follow up monitoring work at BSE 117 revealed post-holes which were deep and difficult to record (Figure 3.4c). The sample of a site is often very small, however.

Clearly, then, much of the dataset is more informative of the depths of deposits and general character of an area than spatial or large scale analysis and interpretation. Finds assemblages are particularly small. Urban archaeological deposits are often complex, much reworked, fragile and expensive to deal with (Carver 1987, see Figure 3.5) and frustration is often expressed in monitoring reports that little interpretation can be made to explain deposits. However, the results are of some use if they are synthesised, because they add more information to our understanding of the nature and spread of archaeology of different dates.

From all the site reports in Table 3.1, information pertaining to the period before the mid-13th century was extracted: details of activities, buildings and or even just the presence or absence of material culture from deposits. Chronological and spatial synthesis is presented in the succeeding chapters. Table 3.1 also, then, provides the basic data from which distribution maps of archaeological interventions in the town have been produced, and Figure 3.6 is the base-map which conveys this information. It shows the type of intervention and whether or not investigation was carried out to the level of natural subsoil. The exercise of phasing the town plan requires information about different dates of activity in different parts of it, and distributions do need to be considered in terms of the overall sample in order to assess whether or not patterns are 'real' or a creation of the sample. Phasing is, of course, not an exact science but the opinions of specialists and excavators have been adhered to here. In sum, it is clear that the archaeological work has been reactive, favouring preservation *in situ* rather than research questions: despite this, however, and the fragmentary nature of the 'keyhole' interventions and limited excavations, there have been a large enough number carried out now to add something to the story of development of the town. With a consultation on changes to PPG 16 proposed from January 2009, the timing of this thesis is perhaps appropriate.

3.5 Architectural evidence

Can we – from the archaeological, historical and standing building evidence – identify the presence of buildings such as those houses, shops and warehouses outlined in

Chapter 2? Generally, the survival of the High-Medieval building stock, as anticipated, is poor. This is due to the building materials and construction techniques that were employed in the Anglo-Saxon, post-Conquest and High-Medieval periods, and the subsequent centuries of changing fashions and urban renewal. Excavated material and documentary evidence reveals that the medieval building stock, in addition to higher-status flint and freestone buildings (see below, Section 3.5.2), comprised timber-built structures and earthen buildings walled with clay, with roofing of perhaps reeds or straw, as the house of the brethren of St Peter's Hospital was in 1186/7 (Davies 1954:87). On the site of 47 Raingate Street, an 11th-12th-century building with walls supported by earth fast posts was replaced with a structure built on a sill beam, which had a life span into the 15th century (Caruth and Anderson 1996a). Clay, daub and plaster are recurrent finds from excavations across the town (e.g. Tester and Anderson 2000:17). Further, the underlying chalk was exploited: subterranean building features were cut down into it and tamped chalk was used to create floors. A plank lined cellar, backfilled in the 12th-century, was excavated on Churchgate Street and fragments of a chalky lime plaster were found in the backfill (Gill and Anderson 1998:8). The chances of timber, chalk or earthen, clay structures surviving are undoubtedly slim. In fact, Section 6.5.14 also notes that, contrary to expectations, in general many High-Medieval stone buildings also failed to survive.

The most distinctive monument of the High-Medieval period in Bury is the St Edmund's Abbey complex, and it testifies to a stone building tradition in the settlement. In the absence of abundant building stone, limestone was imported to the Abbey from Caen (France), and from the quarries at Barnack (Lincolnshire), a share of which the abbey held rights to (Hervey 1929:53, Alexander 1996:115). Limestone was used for finishing buildings but the main walling is generally constructed from flint rubble, faced with either dressed stones or neatly-coursed, sorted, rounded flints. Flints are a product of the geology of the East Anglian Breckland and of the glacial clays of High Suffolk and Eric Sandon's *Suffolk Houses* (1977) draws attention to the fact that in the 19th-century the practice of stone picking, carried out across the arable clay land to prepare the ground for crops, provided a ready source of building materials (1977:

73). Presumably, the extensive estates of St Edmund's Abbey would have held vast tracts of flinty land and a deeper search of the archives may well, in the future, reveal further information about sources of building materials. Moyse's Hall, which stands in the market place of the town, was also constructed from flint and freestone. Were there other urban secular stone buildings in the town built in a similar tradition, reflecting the wider 'petrification' of Europe, to use again that phrase coined by Franz Verhaege that was introduced in Section 2.2 (1994:153)? What was the nature of the building stock and is there evidence for its evolution in terms of form, function and location? Are there fragments surviving within the modern day buildings?

Very little has been published on the secular medieval architecture of Bury St Edmunds, excepting a paper on Late-medieval buildings in Abbeygate Street (Corder 1891), the Guildhall (Statham 1967) and the crowning glory of this study, the 12th-century Moyse's Hall, which is explored further in Section 6.5.1 (Jennings 1900; Wood and Maltby 1951). However, in 1997 a project was undertaken to re-list buildings in those parts of Suffolk that were first recorded in 1952 and it was intended that the re-examination of buildings in Bury would culminate in a publication. Unfortunately, funding was not forthcoming, but the planned project means that a more rigorous analysis of buildings was carried out than might otherwise have been the case, and internal as well as external features were recorded where possible (Philip Aitkens and Sylvia Coleman pers comm.). The Department of Environment List of Buildings is therefore a sensible place to start to appraise the historic building stock of the medieval town. The list is available in a published volume or online at www.imagesofengland.co.uk: this latter was last updated in 2002 (David Hilton, NMR, *pers. comm.* 2007).

Much of the building stock, as noted in Section 3.4, is of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern date. However, there are some references to earlier fragments. Moyse's Hall is a rare, extant 12th-century two storey flint built structure and the list includes three other buildings with 12th-century features: a Norman door within 79 Guildhall Street; a stone-based chimney stack at 21 Hatter Street, and a window within 63 Whiting Street

(DoE 1997 639-1/14/402-3,-429, 15/718). These are described and illustrated in Chapter 6. Is there scope, from the primary evidence, to add further examples? Has anything new been found in the town since 1997? The information pertaining to historic buildings in Bury St Edmunds is curated by St Edmundsbury Borough Council and is scheduled to be added to the Heritage Environment Record, but at present there is no equivalent database to the HER which makes 'grey literature' available for public search and information. I am therefore indebted to the generosity of independent architectural historian Philip Aitkens, to Sylvia Coleman, who was a conservation officer for many years, and Claire Johnson of Suffolk County Council for comments on some of the buildings.

3.5.1 Cellar survey

The 12th-century buildings noted above were all visited for this project. Further, a broader campaign of fieldwork was executed, intended to explore the possibility that older fragments might be concealed within buildings in the town. Given the semi-subterranean nature of many of the buildings noted in Harris's study of 12th and 13th century architecture, and the likelihood that there has been a rise in ground level, it was hoped that older material might survive or be evident in the un-rendered walls of cellars. The walling of the houses, where visible, was considered for the re-listing campaign of 1997. However, often the descriptions only noted whether or not flint rubble walling was present or absent. Similarly, much of the potentially diagnostic worked stone was hypothesised to be re-used material. The cellar survey was conducted as part of an initially more ambitious project to look at architecture in the town across a broader time period (which will be written up and lodged with the HER) and a sampling strategy was devised whereby 200 letters were written to owners and occupiers of listed buildings which for one reason or another had not been examined internally, or where the descriptions included tantalising references to stone rubble. In the end, 66 buildings were visited in the Autumn of 2006. These are mapped in Figure 3.7.

Two issues emerged as a priority for fieldwork: to establish whether or not any diagnostic material can be reinterpreted as being *in situ* older work, and to make a more detailed analysis of flint rubble. The identification of genuine medieval work in the town is hampered by the prolific re-use of ecclesiastical stonework that took place after the Dissolution. Fragments of re-used columns, ashlar blocks, decorated stonework and flint rubble are a familiar sight in the walls of houses in Bury St Edmunds (Young (2006) gives an overview of the post-Reformation fate of the Abbey buildings). However, it is more often than not relatively easy to identify re-used stone work, based on the overall character of the walling and the appearance of decorative elements: re-used architectural features are, more often than not, much maligned (Figure 3.8).

In some cases, however, the task is harder. For example, 7 Athenaeum Lane, presented in Section 6.5.3, has a cellar that seems to the author to be authentically medieval, although no comment was made in the listed building description, and the fact that it has a niche which incorporates a re-used pillar was highlighted (639/1/8/190) (Chapter 6.5.3). It is emphasised here that alternative explanations for the presence of re-used fragments must be entertained before a building or feature is automatically ascribed a post-reformation date. The Dissolution of the Abbey was indeed the event which created the most obvious and most major source of building stone; but it was not the only one which involved the destruction of ecclesiastical buildings, and, further, ecclesiastical buildings were not the only stone built ones in the town. Earlier and/or alternative sources of stone may well, in some cases, be the underlying reason for the presence of re-used fragments. For example, waste or rough fragments may have been generated by building projects, and it must also be borne in mind that the monastic buildings were continually remodelled which may well have released material for re-use. In the mid 12th-century, for example, a fire damaged the Abbot's Hall, refectory, dormitory, chapter house and the old house of the infirm (Whittingham 2006:6). Excavated examples of pieces of stone show conclusively that the cycles of re-use of building material in the urban context spanned back into at least the 12th century: the 12th-century backfill of a cellar excavated on Churchgate Street yielded fragments of

burnt chalk and faced limestone (Gill and Anderson 1998:9). Not every re-used architectural fragment, then, will have been made available after the dissolution, and a deeper scrutiny of the buildings is advocated.

Secondly, it is possible to produce a more refined approach to flint rubble, as pointed out by Philip Aitkens, and Dave Gill from the Suffolk Archaeological Unit (pers. comm.). This is based on the overall character of the walling – for example, the size of the flints and whether they were coursed, and on the nature of ceramic building materials used as inclusions, made possible by Sue Anderson's recently developed, unpublished typology of brick and tile in the town that makes this refined approach feasible (Anderson 2001a:24, 2005:38; see Dury 1993:167-8 for an essentially similar typology of material from Norwich). Post-medieval rubble walling is often comprised of brick and kidney flint. Late-Medieval brick and tile inclusions, identified from Anderson's typology, also indicated that the wall was later than the period under scrutiny for this thesis. Known examples of 12th and 13th-century architecture in the monastic precinct show that in this period, small, coursed flints were used, set into thick yellowish or pinkish course mortar (Figure 3.9). Tile courses also appear. Sue Anderson's identification of medieval tiles – from excavations and scrutiny of parts of the Abbey walling where construction is documented – includes specimens that are:

1) a coarse, sandy red fabric with flint and chalk inclusions and reduced cores
2) fabrics made from yellow, pink of purple firing estuarine clay fabric - often with a purplish tinge and yellowish surfaces, fine calcareous or ferrous inclusions
3) A coarse, sandy pinkish red estuarine clay fabric with dark grey/black cores, calcareous and ferrous unmixed clay inclusions (2001a).

There is also documentary evidence for the use of tile in the 12th-century: Jocelin of Brakelond notes that buildings in the courtyard of the Abbey were tiled to reduce the risk of fire (Brakelond 1989:85). Roof tiles are also found in archaeological assemblages, and that associated with the 12th-century flint and mortar built chapel at St Saviour's Hospital included many tiles that had been fashioned from yellow and pink

clays, with glazes of green and brown (Caruth and Anderson 1997:107-9). The tile type is therefore a helpful diagnostic guide.

The use of coursed flint continued into the mid-13th century at least, and the Guildhall, for example, which has a mid-13th-century door, is a long building constructed from un-buttressed flint walls. Similarly, the Angel Hotel, which has a 13th-century undercroft, has walling of similarly coursed flint rubble. The High-Medieval material generally does seem to be distinctive, however: in the cellar of 9 Hatter Street, later-medieval tiles were present and clunch blocks were incorporated into the walling. These were also used in the early-14th-century Abbeygate. Further, 14th-century parts of the abbey are constructed from less regularly laid, large flint stones. The suite of buildings in Section 6.5.5 therefore includes those where walling of distinctively coursed flint was noted. Any typology of this sort is of course only a rough guide to date.

3.5.2 Corpus of buildings

From this sampling strategy, 13 buildings with flint walling of this character, or with ashlared or other stone work were identified, ranging from the extant Moyse's Hall to a glimpse of ashlared stone in the depths of the electricity meter cupboard in the basement of 4, The Traverse. These examples are discussed in Section 6.5. Those buildings of interest were drawn and photographed as appropriate: measured drawings were produced of the Cellar beneath 7 Athenaeum Lane, and of Moyse's Hall. The plans and elevations were digitised in *Adobe Illustrator* according to English Heritage recording guidelines. Further information on buildings comes from archive research. Some recording of buildings has been carried out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments for England (RCHME) and there are files on 41 buildings in the town lodged in the National Monuments Record (NMR). Pertinent information was extracted from this source, and they contain useful photographs of features revealed briefly during restoration work. Suffolk Records Office also holds files on streets in the town. Further, the Spanton Jarman collection of photographs in the Suffolk Records Office includes views of buildings in the town taken in the 19th and early 20th centuries,

and some of them have been used as figures (www.spantonjarman.co.uk). In sum, then, as with the archaeological record, the architectural sample, drawn from a non-invasive survey, represents a small and fragmentary portion of the building stock of the town for the period under scrutiny. To reiterate again, it is the consideration of spatial patterns and historical context which enables the evidence to be more fully appreciated. However, as considered in Chapter 2 of this thesis, recent work in the field of buildings archaeology (Harris 1994; 2002) has highlighted the diversity in forms of High-Medieval urban architecture which, by its illumination of what we *might* find, provides a framework within which fragmentary remains and isolated pieces of evidence can be re-considered: new ideas are offered in Section 6.5 and Chapter 7.

3.6 Documentary evidence

Historical evidence is used in this study to reveal information about life and times in High-Medieval Bury St Edmunds (beyond Lobel's analysis, see Section 6.5.5), to see if it is possible to explore who lived where, and to seek evidence for uses and rituals in the landscape: in short, to provide more contextual evidence for the reconstruction of commercial, political, processional, sacred and social topographies.

The lack of municipal documentation has already been noted. The Suffolk Records Office holds medieval manuscripts in the form of accounts, wills and deeds but none of these are earlier than the late 13th century. Primary documentation relating to the town in the period under consideration therefore comes from the monastic archives. This resource is so vast that - to date - no attempt has been made to systematically transcribe and publish it (Whittingham 1951:169; Gransden 1973:xi-xiii). As well as being large, the archive is also dispersed: as for any other monastic institution, at the Reformation the archives were spread between those who had inherited its estates on the one hand and private collectors on the other (Thomson 1980:2). Rodney Thomson's *Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, printed in 1980, is an invaluable guide to the surviving manuscript collections, providing folio by folio summaries of the contents of the manuscripts and registers.

It supersedes the information in G. R. C. Davis' *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain* published in 1958 (Thomson 1980:2). The registers are books that were used by monastic officials on a daily basis and they contain, amongst a wealth of miscellaneous information, items of significance to a study of the politics and management of the town, as well as information which relates to property portfolios held by different officers of the Abbey. Charters relate to transfers of property, often giving some description of its form and location as well as the people involved in the transaction. Rentals take the form of long lists of income received from properties, often arranged by street and sometimes offering notes on the types of houses or properties in that street, as well insights into the types of people who were renting them. There are surveys of Winchester, for example, dating to 1110 and 1148 (Keene 1985), and a late 12th-century one of Newark-upon-Trent (Barley *et al* 1955).

A scrutiny of Thomson's catalogue reveals that there are no obvious sources pertaining to the 12th and early 13th centuries in the form of rentals or tracts beyond those that are published (see below). However, with masses of data still un-transcribed and, of more immediate frustration, un-indexed, the archives clearly have more secrets to reveal: an idle moment spent admiring the White Cellarer's Register (PRO DL/42/5) yielded a charter of early 13th-century date, identified as relevant by the author on the basis of the individuals involved (see Chapter 6.4.2). In 1994, the Suffolk Records Society published transcripts of the cartularies of the 6 medieval hospitals of the town, in an exercise that was something of a 'preliminary excursus into the mass of charter material': at the time of publication, there were plans for a group of editors to take on the task of transcribing charters from the borough (Harper Bill 1994:ix).

3.6.1 Published sources

Within the date range under consideration in this thesis useful information *has* previously been transcribed and published. The 331 known abbatial charters from before AD 1211 have been collated in two volumes: *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (Douglas, 1932) and the *Kalendar of Abbot Samson* (Davies 1954). Most of these charters relate to the life and privileges of the Abbey. However, the first

includes a charter granted to the mid 12th-century Guild of Bakers, and the second includes 14 charters that reveal information about people and buildings in the town in the late 12th-century: Section 6.4 is based on a new consideration of the evidence in these published charters, in the context of the broader social and archaeological analysis of this thesis. Translation from the Latin would not have been possible without Capelli's *Dizionario di Abbreviature latine ed italiane* (1990) and Latham's *Revised Medieval Latin Wordlist* (1980).

A published source of fundamental importance to this thesis is the *Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond,* written in St Edmunds Abbey *c.*1173-1202. The most recent edition of this text, in the *Oxford World Classics* series (Brakelond 1989) demonstrates its importance as a piece of medieval writing. Jocelin was an educated man, an official within the Abbey who dealt with aspects of its administration, and whilst his work is fundamentally a biography of Abbot Samson his observational writing style also conveys insights into life within the Abbey in the late 12th-century, into the disputes between the convent and town (see Section 2.5.2), life beyond the cloister, and a commentary on the daily affairs of the monks, written from memory and oral testimony (Brakelond 1989). There are four published versions of the text: a Latin transcript by John Gage Rokewode (Brakelond 1840), another by Thomas Arnold (1896), a transcript and translation by H. E. Butler (Brakelond 1949), and a modernised translation by Greenwood and Sayers (Brakelond 1989). It is worth comparing texts as the translations differ in subtle ways of nuance and emphasis.

Of further relevance is Thomas Arnold's *Memorials of St Edmunds Abbey,* published in 1896, which collates primary material from the monastic library and archives connecting 'the age of our great Alfred with the times of Luther' (Arnold 1896:iv, xii). These include printed transcriptions of the Passion of St Edmund by Abbo of Fleury (c.1000) and Archdeacon Hermann's 'The miracles of St Edmund' (1095). Volume 2 contains a copy of a tract entitled '*Gesta Sacristarum*' which details building projects executed by the Sacrists 1065-1200 and which has been exploited is an invaluable

source of information about the development of the monastic precinct (Morant 1869; James 1895; Whittingham 1951).

Finally, Antonia Gransden's transcripts of the 13th century *Customary* of the Abbey and other documents (1973) has also proved useful for information about houses in the town, and about processions and religious life in the Abbey: as appendices, she includes a list of houses from which, in 1121-1148, pittances were owed to the Sacrist (Gransden 1973:xvi-xvii), and a tract recording the dedications of chapels, altars and churches within the area of the Abbot's spiritual authority in Bury (1963:xl): it seems that none of these were in the town.

3.6.2 Manuscript sources

As part of the foundation work for a project that was initially more ambitious and which was intended to cover a wider date range to consider the development and evolution of the town into the mid-14th century instead of into the early 13th, rentals from the town were isolated from Thomson's catalogue and transcribed. It was intended that the detailed 15th-century rentals, with lists of tenants spanning back into the 14th century, would provide a framework for the reconstruction of tenement histories form more fragmentary earlier material. Partial success was met with, and these data will be used in future projects: in this thesis, topographical information provided by the rentals has been exploited, as well as any data they can provide on selected tenement histories. A general theme in historical analysis is that the unravelling of tenement histories is done 'backwards' (Palliser 1976:3) and analysis in Chapter 6 demonstrates the value of considering Later-Medieval evidence for parts of the landscape, both from rentals and from testamentary evidence (Tymms 1850), where there is likely to have been continuity from an earlier period. Published rentals pertaining to streets in the town include the 1295 rental published by Lillian Redstone (1909) and those dating to 1526 and 1547 published by Anthony Breen (2000). Unpublished rentals which have been transcribed (again with reliance on Latham (1980) and Capelli (1990)) are listed (Figures 3.10 a and b):

- Infirmirer's rentals of 1319/1320 and 1338/9 (BL Lansdowne 416 f.29r-33v, Thompson 1980:37).
- Pittancer's rental of properties in Bury which date to the 14th-century (BL Harley 27, f55v-62v) (Thomson 1980:157).
- 14th-century stallage dues in the market place (Lobel 1935:48; Thomson 1981:127-9; BM Harley 645 g.215v-216v).
- Sacrist's rental of 1386/7 (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f.150r-154r).
- Hadgoval rentals (an ancient land tax) and payments of *relevia* (relief, paid when taking up a property) from 1354 to 1539 (BM Harley 0058).
- Sacrist's rental of 1433. (BM Harley 0058; SROB Acc. 1055 is a photostat copy).

Clearly, the contemporary medieval documentation (14 charters (Davis 1954), references in a Chronicle and a list of houses) do not allow a detailed recreation of a townscape: but they do provide specific illuminative examples of aspiration and action in the landscape which is combined with the other sources of evidence already considered above to fulfil the aims of this thesis. Again, it is the combination of sources which supports a framing of different topographies in the High-Medieval landscape and the ways that the identity and aspirations of the burgesses were increasingly built in the landscape into the 12th-century.

3.7 Conclusion

In an ideal world, abundantly available sources would fit together like a jigsaw puzzle to reveal the development of the town from its origins, and the spatial relationships between its inhabitants. Yet even in studies of 19th-century townscapes, there are issues of fragmentation, truncation, attrition and differing resolutions of source data which means that correlations between historical and archaeological data are not always easy to make (Murray and Crook 2005). Certainly for medieval town studies it is not possible, in many cases, to correlate documentary with archaeological data (Gerrard 2003:136). In this review it has been noted that the evidence in each category represents only a small, fragmentary sample of what existed in the past: a fact which is undeniable and not unexpected. However, the sources that *are* available have been

combed, in the spirit of microhistorical analysis, for tell-tale details (Ginzberg 1989:viii). The strength of the investigation lies in the fact that, as succeeding chapters demonstrate, inferences into spatial and chronological patterns can be drawn from the data, forming an overall picture that is worth more than the sum of its parts. By exploring the subject with renewed optimism, this thesis demonstrates the potential of combining the information from fragmentary archaeological, architectural and documentary material from Bury St Edmunds to add a richer understanding and appreciation of the space and landscape of a town in its formative years. This chapter has outlined the evidence base from which this line of enquiry can proceed. The next chapter considers the town from its origins.

4

Beodericesworth and *Sanctæ Eædmunde's Stowe* AD 650-1065

4.1 Introduction

This chapter re-evaluates previous ideas on the origins and development of the town, for the first time incorporating them with map analysis, street name evidence and a plot of the distribution of recent archaeological evidence. This exercise has resulted in a deeper understanding of the phases of the town layout that existed before the Saxo-Norman additions. It is suggested that the earliest part of the town is that land enclosed by Maynewater Lane to the south of the gridiron of streets, and that this is likely to be a relict enclosure of the Middle-Saxon period (see Figure 4.1). The observation is significant, given references to a monastery founded at *Beodericesworth* by King Sigeberht in the mid 7th-century.[5] By the reign of Edward the Confessor in the mid 11th century, *St Edmund's Stowe* had a mint, a market and a resident population occupied in diverse trades. By this time, the settlement consisted of an early suburb to the south of the enclosure, and an expansion comprising an elongated set of streets further to the north, towards the site of the monastic precinct (mapped below in Figure 4.14). It is argued that whilst Bury was not perhaps an early urbanised centre amongst the ranks of Ipswich (Wade 1993), London (Thomas 2002), Norwich (Ayers 1993), Winchester (Biddle 1976a) or York (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002), the settlement did fulfil religious, administrative and/or economic roles for a sizeable hinterland throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. Further, there exists a charter dated to 945 in the reign of Edmund II which includes a boundary clause (Hart 1966:55-6). This is here, for the first time, properly understood and it provides an insight into how the settlement was defined in the 10th century (see also Appendix 1).

[5] I am indebted to Professor Mick Aston for a conversation which opened my mind to these possibilities.

Importantly, then, this chapter forms the first instalment of the detailed consideration of the *longue-durée* of urbanisation of the settlement. Fundamentally, analysis in later chapters relies on a reconstruction of the medieval townscape and the time depth of activities associated with different parts of it, to explore the embedded *historical* topography of the evolving landscape. High-Medieval growth this has already been framed as a process of change which saw changes to the urban social structure: an investigation of whether this was manifest in the landscape can only be qualified in relation to what went before. What changed and what stayed the same through into the 13th century? Was there a formalisation of the role of the town at the Conquest, in line with the general hypothesis presented in Section 1.2.2 of this study? It is worth noting that at the Conquest, features of the Late-Saxon settlement were retained, along with earlier market places and meeting places (*Thing How* and *Moot Stow*) and we might ask, for example, whether the commercial, political, sacred or social topographies of the High-Medieval town were shaped or influenced by the layout and landholding patterns of the earlier settlement.

4.2 Historiography – *how* urban was the early 'town'?

For many major towns, as noted in Section 1.2.1, deeply stratified or extensively excavated archaeological deposits provide tangible evidence of long histories of occupation. However, the build up of very deep archaeological deposits at Bury St Edmunds has been precluded by its situation on a chalky slope (see below, Section 4.3.2). As for many places, knowledge of the town's early development has been drawn from fragmentary information. In 1998 Margaret Statham, in her discussion of the origins of the town, was only able to draw on two locales where 7th – 9th century pottery had been found (1998:98). A parallel dearth of evidence for the early church is found in historical studies, and the elusive origins have long been the subject of scholarly debate (e.g. Hervey 1891; Arnold 1896; Douglas 1932:xxii; Lobel 1935: Chapter One; Hart 1966: Chapter 13; Gransden 1985, 2004; Eaglen 2006:1; Licence 2006). The early Anglo-Saxon history of East Anglia, particularly ecclesiastical history, is poorly attested in comparison to other regions (Hoggett 2007), and the earliest surviving wills chronicles, charters (royal, papal, private), registers, notices and other

pieces relating to *St Edmund's Stow at Beodericesworth* date to the 10th century (Arnold 1896:vi). Of *Beodericesworth* before the 10th century, there is no contemporary historical record. An additional complication arises in that facts of its early history are bound up with propaganda and myths produced in the 11th century, in resistance to attempts by the Bishops of East Anglia to appropriate the wealth and prestige of the, by this date, well endowed monastery, by relocating the See to Bury St Edmunds (see Antonia Gransden's changing ideas: 1973, 1985, 2004; Pestell 1999:320; Licence 2006:53-61; Eaglen 2006).

Writing especially about the town, Mary Lobel (1935) and Robert Eaglen (2006) have produced slightly different assessments of the size and importance of the settlement of *Beodericesworth* and *St Edmund's Stow:* a window into how not only changing historical opinion about points of fact but also scholarly traditions and a particular agenda can affect an interpretation of essentially similar sources. Mary Lobel, exploring political development, was generous in her assessment of the long-term importance of the settlement. She reports that King Sigeberht was said to have founded a monastery there *c.*633 at a site that was, presumably, a royal *vill* (a royal administrative centre and taxation point), as it was described in the late 10th century by Abbo of Fleury in his *Life of St Edmund* (Lobel 1935:1). At the time Lobel was writing, it was believed that there was a mint at Bury that was the source of coinage produced in memory of St Edmund in the 9th century (see below, Section 4.4.2). She also subscribed to an opinion, then current, that Edward the Martyr (975-9) established a mint at *Beodericesworth* and that it is therefore 'more likely to have been a populous place engaged in commerce, where there was a demand for money, rather than somewhere where there was no demand'. She saw the development of the town as a story of continuing prosperity, and noted that it paid a high geld assessment under Ethelred II (Lobel 1935:4).

Throughout the 10th century, there is a gradual but notable eclipse of the name *Beodericesworth* in documentary references. For example, the will of Bishop Theodred (941x951) refers to '*Santcae Eadmundes stowe at Bydericesworth*' but only '*Eadmundes byrig*' is used by the time of the Abbacy of Leofstan (1044-1065) (Eaglen 2006:9-10). The

place name element *–stow*, by the mid-10th century, was a common term for a religious place with some association to saints or holy people (Blair 2002:469 and 2005:217n), and in this case, it must pertain to the church which came to house the relics of St Edmund. What is the significance of the *–burh* element? For Lobel, this *–burh*, *–bury* or *byrig* element of the place-name that appears in the early 11th century referred to a fortified settlement that was founded – or at least confirmed – during the reign of King Cnut at the same time as the monastery was [re]formed as a Benedictine House in the 1020s. In 1327, the burgesses of the town demanded their rights as enfranchised '*en le temps le Roy Knout*' (Lobel 1935:4). Lobel perceives the early 11th-century town as a fortified *burh* and administrative settlement serving a wide hinterland, with new colonists fulfilling the needs of the monastery that was 'without doubt' the centre of the sake and soke of the 8½ hundreds granted to the monastery by Edward the Confessor, centred on the meeting place of the mound, the Thing How, which stood to the north-west of the town. Lobel's view was that whilst there is no real proof that St Edmundsbury was anything but an 'official headquarters inhabited by peasants, men of religion and soldiers', the market, mint and borough customs suggest that there was a nascent merchant community by the time of Edward the Confessor, revealing 'an advanced state of borough development'. The townsmen had the rights to buy and sell tenements, to attend only the borough court, and to recoup debts through established mechanisms (Lobel 1935:10-13). In fact, the –bury or –byrig place name element is one that is often a vernacular alternative to minster, perhaps referring to an enclosure (see Blair 2005: 250 for references), and it is likely that in this case the *burh* element is testimony to the religious significance of the settlement over and above the fortifications that Lobel understood to be indicated by the term.

Robin Eaglen, in seeking to contextualise the numismatic output of the Bury mint, is less convinced of the importance of the settlement before the early 11th century, as argued in Chapter 2 of his recent book (2006). He was more critical of the historical sources, suggesting that the reference to Sigeberht's minster is derived from a much later source than the period to which it refers (see below, Section 4.3). Eaglen is of the opinion that Bury was not an important settlement in the 9th or 10th centuries and

argues that the change of name from *Beodericesworth* to *St Eadmundes Stowe,* finally achieved in the early 11th-century, shows that *Beodericesworth* was susceptible to this eclipse and therefore can not have been a major centre (Eaglen 2006:5-6). However, this is in fact a tenuous argument, because even if the town were an important centre, the rising prestige of the cult could still have brought about a name change: in other places, changing names have been argued to indicate a change in function rather than necessarily a change in size or significance. To give one example, the established *Medhamstede* became Peterborough in the 10th century, incorporating a *–bury* or *burh* element often associated with minster sites (see Blair 2005: 217n). Both the

Finally, in Eaglen's assessment of the town, consideration is given to the integrity of a boundary charter of Edmund II. The authenticity of this document has been much debated, and Eaglen, from the perspective that Bury was not a significant settlement at the time, comes down heavily in favour of the argument that it is spurious. I believe, however, that it is genuine, as argued in Appendix 1. Importantly, though, Eaglen reveals that there was not in fact a mint at Bury during the reign of Edward the Martyr, on the basis that, upon reanalysis, there are actual no coins with a suitable *Beodericesworth* mint signature. This enforces his general view that there was not - until the first quarter of the 11th century - anything significant happening at the settlement (2006: Chapter 2).

Clearly, the early 11th century was a turning point in the history of the settlement, with the monastery [re-]founded by King Cnut. Why, then, if the site was less than important, as Eaglen argues, was the body of St Edmund moved to *Beodericesworth* at all in the 10th century? Was the site important in other ways? As will be revealed, a consideration of the landscape evidence, inspired by recent debate on the nature and role of minster sites (see Blair 2005), serves to clarify some of the uncertainties in these accounts and in fact reinforces Mary Lobel's general impression that the origins of an 'urban' or at least proto-urban settlement at Bury probably have long roots in its role as a religious and administrative centre.

4.3 Where was King Sigeberht's monastery?

The 7th-century was a time of political upheaval in East Anglia, and one affected by the religious and social impact of the introduction of Christianity into the region. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* completed in AD 731, records that Sigeberht, King of East Anglia (AD 630/1 – mid 7th-century), converted to the Christian faith in Gaul, whither he had fled to escape the enmity of King Rædwald. During his reign, Sigeberht promulgated a Christian mission and in his later years, he abdicated and retired to a coenobitic community of his own foundation. He was, however, forced from his retirement to lead forces against an attack by Penda of Mercia and, taking no weapons into the fray as an indication of his commitment to peace, he was killed (Colgrave and Mynors 1969:267-9). This attack happened *c.* 640 AD (Scarfe 1986:41). Bede does not mention the whereabouts of the community at the centre of these events: a connection to *Betrichesworde* is made in a later addition to a mid 12th-century copy of Bede's text in the *Liber Eliensis,* the chronicle of the Benedictine monastery at Ely (Cambs.) (Gransden 2004:629; Eaglen 2006:4). This is noted by Blake (1962) and Whitelock (1972:22) but not by Janet Fairweather in her recent translation of the *Liber Eliensis,* which, in citing version E of the manuscript for this passage, ignores this later addition (2005:13).

The integrity of this reference has been called into question by recent scholars of the conversion in East Anglia who have particularly entered into consideration of the region in the context of wider debate about the mechanisms and manifestations of religious change as collated recently by John Blair (2005). In two detailed critiques, Tim Pestell notes that the reference to Beodericesworth as the site of Siegebert's minster is 'weak evidence at best' and Rik Hoggett agrees, adding that it is not corroborated in any other sources (Pestell 2004:81 *n.*90; Hoggett 2007:91). Eaglen too noted that it is a tradition of uncertain origin (2006:4). Perhaps the reference was politically motivated, in the context of attempts to establish deep historical royal connections for the community at Bury, although why it then appears in a book from Ely and not from Bury itself is an interesting point. Before dismissing outright the possibility that Sigeberht did found a monastery at *Beodericesworth*, it is worth

emphasising the role that memory and oral history played in medieval society. John Moreland (2001) in particular has explored the alternative ways that communities 'construct history', and as a case in point, Rik Hoggett's critique of Bede's sources reveals that Bede used and accepted oral information, acquired through chains of witnesses (Hoggett 2007:80-83). However, in the case of this reference to Sigeberht's monastery, the record was made almost half a millennium after the event. The veracity of the assertion is therefore one that may never be determined.

In fact, given the later history of the settlement as an ecclesiastical and administrative centre, it is worth considering the possibility that there was a religious site here, even if it was not one associated with the retirement of Sigeberht. The early church generally is understood to have been based around minsters, secular or monastic 'mother churches' that had pastoral responsibility for a large *parochiae* which later fragmented into areas around smaller, local churches in the Later-Saxon period. Middle-Saxon minsters, like the monastery at Whitby, were often places in the landscape that were defined by natural or man-made boundaries, and they were centres of literacy, culture and, by implication, consumption (Pestell 2004:31-3). Current observation is that many medieval and modern towns began as minster sites, and it is suggested that, as consumption centres in the landscape to which occasionally large numbers of people would have flocked, they could have been 'proto-towns' and would have been involved with trade networks (Pestell 2004:33).

John Blair's recent work (2005) conveys the current perception of minster sites – ecclesiastical institutions without, necessarily, connotations of cloistered monasticism – as places which were founded at or which became historical and geographical spiritual, economic and administrative centres. In considering Bury, it is worth bearing in mind that minsters were often established places of political, defensive and religious importance and hence, albeit sometimes occasional, centres of consumption, commerce, trade and service (e.g. Blair 2000:246, 251). Within the context of the Conversion, then, a better understanding of the origins of Bury is of regional interest.

Further, a possible monastery or minster might well be expected to have been formative of the early topography of the town.

4.3.1 Was St Edmund moved to an existing church at *Beodericesworth*?

Projecting back from what is known about the development of the site may create a false impression of its origins. However, Bob Carr, one of Suffolk County Council's Senior Archaeologists, has pointed out that, as St Edmund was a major cult figure, '*Beodericesworth* must have had some hidden importance to explain its acquisition of the Saint's body' (Carr 1975:48). The logical suggestion would be that the body was moved to a pre-existing church. Antonia Gransden has written, based on 13th-century references compiled from earlier sources, that there was already a minster dedicated to St Mary at *Beodericesworth* before the translation in the 10th century, and that the description given in later documents that the shrine was administered by a secular body of priests may reflect the pre-10th century situation (2004:627-30). Certainly the earliest known dedication of the conventual church was to Ss Mary and Edmund. Gransden noted that there was 'no good reason' to doubt the entry in the *Liber Eliensis* (*ibid*) that there was a religious foundation here in the 7th century: but whether St Mary's was a Middle-Saxon institution that had survived the political upheavals of the Viking incursions or whether it was a new foundation is obscured by a historical blind-spot.

Tantalising pieces of evidence do indeed seem to suggest that *Beodericesworth* may have played some role as a religious and a secular base. The name of the settlement, *Beodericesworth*, is of Old English derivation, and means *Beoderic's enclosure,* or *Beoderice's homestead* (Ekwall 1960:78, 535; Room 1988:64; Watts 2004:105). Abbo of Fleury in the 10th-century *Passion of St Edmund*, described *Beodericesworth* as a *villa regia* (Arnold 1896:iv), although Gransden has pointed out that, as the references are found only in 11th-century copies of Abbot's text, it is hard to ignore the possibility that the description may have been added during campaigns of that date to reinforce royal and ancient connections, patronage and liberty (Eaglen 2006:4). Stephen Plunkett has suggested that the pre-fix *Beo* (meaning 'mighty' or 'chief') - a common name element

in the royal houses of Mercia and East Anglia – may provide circumstantial support to the existence of a royal connection (2005:106). He extends this idea to suggest that, in a period of conquest and re-conquest, Sigeberht may have 'asserted the example of royal Christian power in his own person at the heart of his former kingdom' (*ibid* 206). Whilst this is a noble story, it is beyond the safe realms of the extent of the evidence. However, a hypothesis inspired by these references to a vill and a monastery is that the site was fulfilling a role as a focal point in royal, religious, economic and administrative life. Presented below is an exploration and synthesis of the archaeology, landscape and environs of Bury St Edmunds in the light of these ideas of its origins.

4.3.2 Antecedent landscapes

The town by the 13th century occupied the whole of the eastern end of a chalky spit of land that slopes gently west to east over approximately 0.75km (0.5 miles) down from a height of 60m OD to a height of 40m OD. This plateau is bordered by marshy land on three sides: Tay Fen and Babwell Fen Meadows to the north, the water-meadows in the floodplain of the River Lark to the east, and water-meadows of its tributary, the river Linnet to the south (Figure 4.1 shows a contour map of this terrain). Prehistoric artefacts are found in interventions in the town, but hardly any Roman material has been unearthed, apart from occasional pieces of pottery and a Roman ditch running parallel to the River Linnet (Tester and Tester 2001:90).

On the slopes overlooking the watery places, over the valleys from the town, several Early-Saxon cemeteries have been found, and their presence suggests that there was a landscape focus in the vicinity of Bury. Early Saxon cemeteries and settlements in East Anglia, and indeed further afield, are often identified in association with rivers (Plunkett 2005:34). There is not scope here to explore the breadth of scholarship on social and political structures of early polities. However, my suggestion here is that perhaps there was a topographical significance to the site which was to become Bury St Edmunds. In the absence, to date, of evidence for intense activity, the suggestion that it fulfilled some role in the early medieval ideological landscape, within the context of Early Saxon Suffolk and in particular related to settlement and communal activity along

the Lark Valley, can at least be entertained. Figure 4.4 shows these wider contexts within which Bury St Edmunds must be viewed as a potentially early 'central place'.

The cemeteries around Bury St Edmunds, mapped in Figure 4.2, are of varying sizes or have been excavated to different degrees: 63 inhumations were unearthed at Westgarth Gardens (West 1988); 6 at Baron's Road (BSE 028) and four at Hardwick Lane (BSE 007) (West 1998:15); a cemetery of at least 50 individuals was excavated at Tollgate Lane/Northumberland Avenue (BSE 005). They appear to ring the site of the earliest parts of the town, with one probable cemetery located in the heart of it on land now enclosed by St Mary's Square (see below): whilst this might be a superficial distribution created by the lack of opportunity to explore under the later medieval town, it may also, I suggest, be a pattern of some significance (Figure 4.2). Other Early-Saxon finds from across the town, mapped in Figure 4.3, are sparsely distributed ceramic sherds that are probably re-deposited. During a watching brief on footing trenches behind 6, Cannon Street, fragments of a rough handmade pottery were recovered from a pit. Apart from the fabric, however, there were no diagnostic features. Andrew Tester commented that the pit fill was similar to that from high-medieval cess pits seen in the town, and Sue Anderson was admirably cautious when estimating a date: it was concluded that they were either made in the 5th–7th centuries, or the 11th–12th centuries (Tester 2004a). Two fragments of a similarly hard-to-date grey, shelly fabric were found in a pit containing later medieval pottery on High Baxter Street (BSE 202) (Anderson 2003a:11). Fragments of Early-Saxon pottery were also found in the remains of the medieval town bank, in an assemblage with Bronze-Age, Roman and Late-Saxon pottery (Tester 2000a) and three fragments of 'possibly Saxon pottery similar to that found at BSE 181' were found as residual elements in later features on the Cattle Market site, in conjunction with prehistoric and Roman pottery (Duffy 2007a:9). On High Baxter Street, an Early-Saxon (6th-century) buckle plate was retrieved from a later feature, spot-dated to the 12th – 13th centuries (Tester 2001a).

These finds, however, are not enough to identify a settlement associated with the 100 or so individuals within these cemeteries. It is significant that the cemeteries are

grouped so closely: this might demonstrate a population centre or at least a focus of activity from an early date, even though an actual settlement has not been located (Pestell 1999:323; West 1988:4). Bob Carr originally suggested that as the cemeteries are all outside the boundaries of the later town, it seems unlikely that they are related to a predecessor of Bury (Carr 1975:51). However, the relationships that existed between cemetery and settlement in Early-Saxon society were perhaps more complex, with a distinction often maintained between the living and the dead. All of these cemetery sites are on ground rising from the river valleys and those excavated at Hardwick Lane and Baron's Road occupy a ridge over-looking the meadows of the Lark and the Linnet (West 1988:2). In effect, they define the area of the modern town, and it is possible that they do, in fact, relate to an early settlement on this site. Further analysis could potentially reveal more about the relationships between them and a possible settlement centre. One of the grave goods from Westgarth gardens (which was in use from the 5th to the mid-late 7th centuries) was a vessel of Mediterranean blue glass, which is indicative of connections for the people beyond the immediate hinterland (SHER BSE 030; Pestell 2004:43; Plunkett 2005:65). Further, it is possible that rather than one large centre, the individuals in the cemeteries may have come from smaller settlements.

Finally, during an excavation in the gardens of St Edmund's Hospital on St Mary's Square (BSE 127), remains were encountered which may well indicate the presence of Early-Saxon burials, although they were heavily truncated by later features. There was an un-stratified human ulna, bones of at least two individuals in a later-Saxon ditch, and un-stratified or residual objects which, as an assemblage, were suggestive of funerary goods (Anderson 1996b:8). These included a 6th-century wrist clasp, a triangular hooked tag (possibly Early-Saxon or late Medieval), a copper alloy pin, and a possible Early-Saxon tanged leaf-shaped knife (Anderson 1996b:20-2). One of the possible graves yielded animal bone, oyster shell, and pieces of worked and also burnt flint (Anderson 1996b:32). The suggested cemetery site was located on a small plateau that is higher than land sloping to the south and west, a feature which can be seen on the contour map, Figure 4.1, overlooking the flood plains of the rivers Lark and Linnet. A

prehistoric ditch, along with scatters of both Mesolithic flint and later Neolithic flint and pottery, are evidence that this site was prominent in the valley in which it sits, and that the spur of land was chosen as a fitting site for a cemetery (Anderson 1996b:48). As a personal comment, I think that this is one of the most significant observations within the grey literature on the town. The occasional morning mists over the low lying water meadows would have added a subtle drama to protruding areas of higher ground at certain times. It is perhaps not a coincidence that this site, as explored below, was also a focus for Middle-Saxon activity.

As a final point, it is perhaps significant that the latest of the Early-Saxon cemeteries, Westgarth Gardens, went out of use in the mid-7th century (as far as can be inferred from the sample of the cemetery excavated). The cessation of internment *might* in fact indicate a change in practice in the conversion period. Rik Hoggett has summarised the evidence for a discernible change in burial practices during the conversion in East Anglia (2007). Whilst the change from furnished to unfurnished burial and from burial in a liminal location is not clear cut, the cessation of use of this 'pagan Saxon' cemetery is one contributory form of circumstantial evidence that indicates that there might have been a change in the nature of settlement at Bury in the Middle-Saxon period, possibly related to the conversion.

4.3.3 Middle-Saxon archaeology (*c.* 650 – 850 AD) from Bury St Edmunds

It is fortunate that communities in Middle-Saxon East Anglia were users of ceramics, in comparison to other parts of the country where cultures were largely aceramic. Ipswich ware is the most widely distributed product of any Middle-Saxon pottery industry and it is prevalent across East Anglia – the region of its production (Hoggett 2007:8). The pottery is a robust, wheel-thrown, kiln-fired grey ware. The volume of material found on excavated kiln sites shows that production was carried out on an industrial scale in the *wic* of Ipswich, *c.*650 - 850 (Hurst 1976:284, 300). In 1998, Margaret Statham's account of the history of the town included only two find spots of Middle-Saxon material: pottery from excavations within the cathedral precinct, and sherds from the grounds of St Edmund's Hospital, to the south of St Mary's Square

(1998:98). Since then, further excavation has, interestingly revealed Middle-Saxon features on this land. At the time of excavation, the nature of the archaeological evidence was considered to be too sparse to represent the 'earliest town' and it is generally assumed that the earliest occupation was to the north, in the vicinity of the later monastic precinct. However, as explained further below, this thesis suggests that there is no reason to assume that the Middle-Saxon occupation at the settlement would have been of a type that would be represented by 'urban' deposits as we might find for later towns, and that there may well have been a degree of settlement relocation over the centuries. There is scope, then, to ascribe a new significance to the known archaeological information, particularly given the fact that St Edmund's Hospital is enclosed by the curvilinear Maynewater Lane. This section looks anew at the evidence and, paying particular attention to the street pattern and the topographical setting, argues that there are several convincing factors which indicate that this might be an earlier enclosure. The hypothesis that this is the earliest part of the settlement is tested by a critical consideration of the distribution of all of the known Middle-Saxon archaeology in the town, mapped here for the first time. Whilst the evidence can not be stretched to a conclusion as to the use of the enclosure - whether it was ecclesiastical, secular, or both - it certainly supports the idea that Middle-Saxon *Beodericesworth* was a defined place in the landscape.

Middle-Saxon activity on land enclosed by Maynewater Lane

On site BSE 117 in the grounds of St Edmund's Hospital, a few sherds of Ipswich ware were found in a pit with Iron Age pottery and sherds of a 12th/13th-century date (Caruth 1997a). Figure 4.5 shows the trenches that have been opened, to date, on the site of the modern hospital. The evidence for an Early-Saxon cemetery unearthed at this site has been outlined above. The next phase at BSE 127 comprises Middle-Saxon ditches and pits (Anderson 1996b:18). The lower fills of the ditch contained Ipswich ware and earlier handmade pottery, and also animal bone, horn, fragments of probably Roman tile, worked and burnt flint, fragments of imported lava quern, pieces of smithing slag, tweezers and pins. Post holes on the north side contained Ipswich ware and earlier Saxon handmade ware (Anderson 1996b:10, 28). Two bone combs and a

piece of worked bone were also found: one of the combs came from the same pit as a long copper alloy pin. There was also a large pin with a biconical head, and a bone needle. It is suggested from this assemblage that there was evidence of bone, horn and iron working in the vicinity (Anderson 1996b:48). Further, Sue Anderson observed that the Ipswich ware sherds, including jar rims and fragments of spouted pictures, were large and un-abraded, and so had probably not moved far before deposition, which suggests occupation on or near the site (Anderson 1996b:22). The ditch was located towards the southern part of the excavation area, and the pits lay to the south of it. On this basis, Anderson has hypothesised that the site may only have encountered the northern part of Middle-Saxon archaeological remains in the area. In confirmation, when the site was revisited in 2005 in advance of construction of a store associated with the hospital, an open area excavation 40m^2 , to the north, yielded sherds of residual Ipswich ware but no other Middle-Saxon archaeology was reported (Goffin 2006:8-9). This evidence for a site with proven craft activity is significant as confirmation of a possible settlement site. To turn to the topographical setting, and to return to Figure 4.4, Middle-Saxon settlement in East Anglia tended to occupy valley floor meadowland (Carr 1975:50 figure 28; Pestell 2004:16). However, the immediate topographical location is more significant than merely a correspondence to this general pattern. This core is within the curve of Mainwater Lane. An aspect of Teresa Hall's work in Dorset has revealed the potential for survival in streets and earthworks of early minster enclosures (2000). It is possible that this is a relict early enclosure that seems to have been truncated by later streets to the north. In fact, Bob Carr and Sue Anderson pointed out in the site report that the area is delineated, with Mainwater and Baker Lanes apparently following the natural contours of the small escarpment upon which the Early-Saxon cemetery was situated (see Figure 4.1, contour map). They noted that it forms a boundary between the marshy land and the higher ground, and Carr also noted that the boundary might have continued along the line of what is now Baker's Lane (Anderson 1996b:48). The obvious and significant extrapolation, given the presence of Middle-Saxon archaeology, is that this is possibly the earliest element in the street plan, perhaps part of a former enclosure.

Is it possible that this was the site of an early minster or church site? Recent work on minster sites has provided a body of literature which highlights the possible significance of a Middle-Saxon enclosure. John Blair's work (2005), drawing on broader scholarly debates, has explored, with reference to known secular sites, the characteristics of known Early-, Middle- and Late-Saxon ecclesiastical sites in Britain and Ireland, in particular the landscape context, consumption patterns and layouts of minster complexes. It was one of his express intentions to explore a set of criteria by which an undocumented site might possibly be recognised as a minster: in addition to any Christian material culture, sites are often bounded, perhaps with multiple churches, and there is often material evidence that they were artistic and cultural centres. As a caveat, Tim Pestell has argued from the East Anglian material that, with frequently fragmentary evidence from sites often making an assessment of all of these categories an impossibility, it is difficult to differentiate between ecclesiastical sites and other elite enclosures: these too may also yield evidence of literate inhabitants, and rich metal work and dress accessories (2004:18, 38, 45). He has warned against 'seeing an emerging Anglo-Saxon landscape governed at all its key, nodal points by the church, rather than the aristocracy and secular rulers' (Pestell 2004:59).

Nonetheless, wide study has pointed to the boundedness of early Christian sites that are often situated on peninsulae, flood plain islands or near confluences and tributaries of rivers: liminal locations inspired by theological and ideological concepts of boundedness and sanctity as defined with reference to perhaps wild and unholy elements in the natural or the antecedent, pagan landscape (Blair 2005:193-4). Many are further delineated by a natural boundary, ditch or enclosure. The identification of a strong correlation between the locations of known Early- and Middle-Saxon minsters and sites in the natural landscape which give them a natural definition resonates strongly with observations on the landscape of Bury St Edmunds, with the land defined by the curvilinear Maynewater Lane forming a high point at the south east corner of a spit of land at the confluence of the Lark and the Linnet, overlooking water meadows. The presence of an Early-Saxon cemetery on a plateau of higher ground and a scatter of Mesolithic and late Neolithic pottery supports the argument that this was a prominent

place. It was on the edge of the higher ground which would have stood out from the lower lying valleys (Anderson 1996b:48).

In cases with an identifiable *vallum monasterii* or a relict street pattern, the enclosures have been rectilinear, sub-circular or circular in shape and on average 150 – 300m (490-984ft) across, with ditches approximately 4m/13ft wide (Blair 2005:196-8). The sub-rectangular area enclosed by Maynewater Lane and Baker Street measures *c* 200m from east to west, with a north south measurement of *c.* 180m It is safe to say, then, that this Middle-Saxon site in Bury has features in common with identified Middle-Saxon minster sites, although, even with the tenuous connections of the monastery of King Sigeberht, it would be pushing the evidence to identify this as an ecclesiastical enclosure. Ignoring for a moment this caveat, the fact that the enclosure incorporates an earlier Saxon (6th-century) cemetery is potentially of interest, because it might suggest that there was an appropriation (and Christianisation?) of an earlier monument and/or continuity in the use of the site into the 7th century. This idea fits well with Norman Scarfe's (1986) and Stephen Plunkett's (2005) visualisations of *Beodericesworth* as a dynastic centre. Beyond these speculations, however, the point can not be laboured.

Having established that this is probably an early part of the town plan, it is worth considering whether or not it might in fact be the earliest part of it. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.6 show the distribution of Ipswich ware finds extracted from sites listed in Table 3.1. Firstly, distinction is made between, on the one hand, finds from secure Middle-Saxon contexts, and, on the other hand, un-stratified pottery and residual finds from later contexts. Secondly, the distribution is shown in comparison with all of the interventions that have taken place in the town, to give a better indication of how representative the sample is. Finally, differentiation is made between those interventions which reached natural soil, and those where the depth was determined by the depth of excavations required for development, or a deliberate policy to leave medieval archaeology *in situ*. Many of the interventions did not in fact reach the earliest

levels of occupation: as shown, the nature of the archaeological interventions often doesn't favour the discovery of earlier archaeological evidence.

Both *in situ* and residual pottery may represent areas in the town where there has been Middle-Saxon occupation. Where the lowest deposits have not been reached, residual pottery is the only form of evidence. However, in the urban context complex taphonomic processes can affect pottery distributions. Brian Ayers has commented that in Norwich, the movement of soil has given rise to surface assemblages which do not necessarily represent underlying archaeological remains (Ayers 1993:130). Sites and soils may have been truncated, terraced, and reworked. From the open area excavations on East Close, Mesolithic flints, pre-historic, Roman and Middle-Saxon pottery fragments were residual in later features and it was suggested that whilst they could represent low levels of activity on the site, it was also possible that the finds were re-deposited as a result of manuring or the re-deposition of middens (Anderson 1996a:73). As a case in point, underlying the medieval archaeology at an excavation on High Baxter Street was a disturbed burial of a probable male skeleton, radiocarbon dated to AD 615-745 at 90% confidence, and truncated to such an extent that a grave cut could not be identified and the skull was missing (Anderson 2001a:31-2; Tester 2001a:3).

Bearing these factors in mind, what can be said about the distribution? These find spots – apart from the skeleton from High-Baxter Street - are distributed on the eastern side of the town: a pattern that confirms the general hypothesis that the streets to the south and south-east are older. Further, the only certain *in situ* pottery found in Middle-Saxon features to date is that found from excavations in St Mary's Square. Middle-Saxon occupation has not been found in other larger excavations in the town.

The only other site that yielded anything potentially more than residual finds was the excavation under the Queen's Chamber site in the Abbey. There has never been a systematic campaign of excavation over the area of the monastery, with campaigns of fieldwork intended to reveal parts of the floors and structure rather than explore the

origins and development of the complex (Gillyard-Beer 1970). Those excavations that have taken place, however, enable some assessment of the likely distribution of earlier archaeology. Excavations by Martin Biddle on the site of the 13th-century Bradefield Hall, towards the south east of the precinct, found that it was built on made up ground over silty river deposits, with no trace of earlier structures (Wilson 1964:244). In the north-west part of the precinct, excavations under the Cloister (Gill 2005a) and the Norman Tower (Drewett and Stuart 1973) revealed sequences of *Late-Saxon* occupation. However, in the middle of the precinct an early sequence cut by a northern extension of the dorter revealed features cut into the natural gravel that were overlain by a cultivated soil and then an occupation layer incorporating Ipswich and Thetford wares (Owles 1977:74). These excavations also revealed an Iron Age finds scatter, as recorded in a personal communication from Robert Carr: possibly, then, the buried features were prehistoric rather than Saxon (SHER BSE 010).

Was the Middle-Saxon pottery residual? Excavations on the site of the Queen's House and an area to the west were carried out by H. Wood and A. Fleming for the Department of Environment and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission between 1976-80 revealed, it is reported, traces of Middle- and Late-Saxon timber framed buildings, Ipswich and Thetford-ware type potteries and, from an artefact scatter, an iron stylus 11cm long tentatively dated as Middle-Saxon (Martin 1980:294; West 1998:16). The site has never been published, and there is a degree of confusion over the actual nature of the Saxon remains. The entry in the SHER (BSE 010), citing a personal communication from Bob Carr, suggests that there was evidence of Middle-Saxon and Late-Saxon buildings. However, Carr is less sure of the nature of the evidence, and suggests that it might have been scarce, perhaps a few post holes, although he himself does remember a small amount of Ipswich ware. The NMR holds about forty plans from this site, but the rest of the archives are either held in the English Heritage Regional Office, or by the excavators (NMR Activity Report 647232 and Monument Report 382532). Attempts to contact them are ongoing as this might be the only clue to the antiquity or otherwise of the Abbey site.

Further, in 1994, five fragments of pale blue glass were extracted from an eroding bank between the tennis courts and Abbey crypt, and were thought to have come from a vessel, probably of Middle-Saxon date. Tantalisingly, the SHER entry notes that analysis is to follow and that the glass was sent to Rose Clark at Cambridge (SHER BSE 120). If these observations are deconstructed, however, the evidence for Middle-Saxon building and artefacts are to date un-corroborated, and there are no available finds reports on the stylus or the glass. The absence of the excavation report is therefore frustrating. As Tim Pestell has commented, such an assemblage with evidence for literacy and consumption of goods such as the blue glass vessel could indicate a wealthy site, although it is not equivocal proof that it was a *monasterium,* even less that it was the place to which Sigeberht retired (1999:322). This case highlights the necessity for archiving and sorting backlog material. Also, it suggests that, with increasingly dispersed units and changing archaeological companies and contracting units, there is a need to think hard about dispersed primary information: if the remit of archaeology is to preserve by record, it is not helpful if unpublished information is lost. It is therefore not possible to accept the reports of 7th-century occupation for this site uncritically.

In acknowledgement of the sparse and fragile nature of the archaeology already considered, then, the area to the north under the medieval monastic precinct, where Middle-Saxon features were potentially found, may well have been part of a settlement pattern that has now been obliterated. Further, Jocelin of Brakelond in his 12th-century *Chronicle* noted that the Cellarer had a messuage and barns near Scurun's Well (*fons Scuruni*) where he used to hold his court, and that this messuage and the adjoining garden was on the site of the original manor of *Beoderic,* whose demesne lands made up the cellarer's original estate of 900 acres in the town fields (Brakelond 1989:90-1). This has been interpreted by some to mean the cellarer's grange on Eastgate Street. Eastgate (*alias* Holderness *alias* Grange) Barns stood to the north of Eastgate Street, abutting Cotton Lane and there is a late 13th-century entry in the White Cellarer's Register that makes passing reference to the 'Old Cellarer's Hall' on the east part of the town (PRO DL 42/5 f.23v) (see Figure 4.7). Support is given to this interpretation by its proximity to Cotton Lane, which was formerly called Scurffe Lane, by which

name it is shown on Warren's 18th-century map of the town. The Sacrist's rental of 1433 includes references under 'Skurfflane'. Redstone transcribes the street name as 'Skoron' lane in her edition of the 1295 rental (1909). Jocelin seems to imply that the manor was a discrete estate. If the location is correct, the manor was located to the north side of the current town. Little evidence of it has been found, and excavations at Eastgate Barns have not been deep enough to ascertain the antiquity of occupation on the site (Duffy 2008:6). However, if we assumed for a moment that the land within Maynewater Lane represented an ecclesiastical site and this tenuously attested manor a royal site, then a twinning of related but spatially distinct elements to the centre is hypothesised: it appears that a twinning of ecclesiastical and royal centre is not uncommon (Campbell 1979:121; Morris 1989:130-1; Pestell 2004:59-60; Blair 2005:49). Perhaps Bury was a settlement of multiple enclosures, of the type of settlement seen, for example, at Wharram Percy, where survey has revealed a set of curvilinear enclosures thought to represent a settlement of dispersed farmsteads replaced by the foundation of a planned village sometime after the 10th-century (Beresford and Hurst 1990:73). More pertinent examples of similar larger and also ecclesiastical sites, are Lewes, North Elmham, Staines, and Worcester (Mick Aston *pers. comm.)*.

This causes a reassessment of the likely manifestation in the archaeological record of earlier settlement by changing the emphasis of what we might be looking for. Sue Anderson noted that the pre-Conquest archaeological evidence for occupation is not dense anywhere in the town, even in St Mary's Square which is considered to have been the heart of it (Anderson 1996b:48). Bob Carr's use of a small budget for exploratory work in April 1978 to open trial trenches in the area found small features, including Thetford ware, but in general it was 'not indicative of intense pre-medieval activity' (SHER BSE 044). An absence of plentiful evidence has been taken as an indication that the site has not been found yet, and that the 'town' is probably under the monastic precinct. Keith Wade, County Archaeologist, was particularly gloomy about the prospects of new understandings of any Middle-Saxon settlement at Bury, suggesting that it was undoubtedly obliterated by the Abbey (1993:145).

Certainly there were earlier, larger centres, particularly round ecclesiastical sites, at this date and it may well be that much of earlier Bury St Edmunds lies undiscovered. However, rather than uncritically searching for a *Beodericesworth* that was an early 'town', it is possible that the central role of the site may well have been determined by activities that happened at certain times rather than by trade and dense occupation: such sporadic activities could and have been construed as occasions which gave rise to 'urban moments' – perhaps certain times when larger groups of people, and their requirements, converged on a place. Peter Sawyer, for example, has argued for the royal vills of peripatetic kings as places of occasional intense activity (1983). As an administrative and religious centre, Bury may have fulfilled such a role.

If the evidence we *do* have is considered, however, it seems that there *is* archaeological evidence for activity in Bury St Edmunds in the Middle-Saxon period. It is not particularly extensive or monumental: sparsely distributed Ipswich ware pottery, some small finds, and a few features from an excavation on St Mary's Square (SHER BSE 117). Recent work on urban origins has suggested that centres may well not have been densely populated or archaeologically visible at this date. Places that are known to have served functions as trade, production, administrative and religious centres, for example, North Elmham (Wade Martins 1980:124), Colchester (Hedges 1983:4) and Worcester (Baker and Holt 2004:128), have often yielded low density assemblages. Christopher Gerrard, contextualising a similar lack of material from Cirencester, has suggested that a general dearth of monumental structure and archaeology from estate centres might be due to their survival as administrative centres rather than to more archaeologically visible commercial or demographic growth (Gerrard 1994:90). Within the enclosures of early ecclesiastical centres, too, evidence for occupation is often sparse with areas around the churches surmised to be areas of low level, open activity (Blair 2005:199). Although there is evidence of substantial settlement at some places, such as Middle-Saxon Ely (Blair 2005:255-6), pre-urban centres can have fulfilled various roles without large populations, and without settled activities, generating 'urban moments' as and when: perhaps at major festivals, time of trade or times of instability (Blair 2005:68). The settlement might have fulfilled administrative,

religious, social or ritual roles as well as an economic centre for its hinterland. I suggest, then, the Middle-Saxon *Beodericesworth* consisted of one or more enclosure (Figure 4.8), and that its 'hidden importance' is more than likely to have been the existence of a minster and manor.

4.4 Vikings

A suggestion that there was a minster already at *Beodericesworth* when St Edmund was translated to a new church there in the 10th century carries the implicit assumption that there was some form of continuity through the upheavals of the 9th-century Viking incursions, or at least sufficient continuity for a church to have been re-established. The main source for the impact of the Viking invasions is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which records that Scandinavian forces overran East Anglia in 865, before returning in 869 to suppress a bid to restore political independence. It was in this latter campaign that Edmund was slain. Client rule was then exercised. Viking forces returned again in 880, leaving East Anglia as a political entity under the rule of Guthrum, who converted to Christianity and changed his name to Aethelstan. In 917, the West Saxons conquered the Danelaw and union was sworn under Edward the Elder (see Pestell 2004:66). East Anglia under the Danelaw is poorly understood and the general dearth of evidence means that there is not enough evidence to frame a dislocation and disruption in settlement as a result of political instability (*ibid* 72-3).

With a dearth of Viking Age archaeology and place-name evidence, the general concensus is that, under political rather than colonial reign of vassal rulers, there was general continuity (Scarfe 1986:28; Martin 2007:132). Tim Pestell has concluded that 'in discussions of its pre-Viking Age Anglo-Saxon history, East Anglia is always likely to remain something of a black hole... the first Viking Age did not constitute a crushing blow to the spiritual life of the East Anglian population – it points to a measure of continuity and an awareness of local religious heritage and political identity, perhaps with a maintenance of aristocratic and estate centres within which monasteries were located' (Pestell 2004:98-9). Nevertheless, detailed study reveals that there is archaeological and topographical evidence that can be drawn into the debate. There is

apparent Scandinavian settlement in the region, but the evidence is localised: place-names of probable Scandinavian origin occur in liminal locations rather than the already occupied arable land, suggesting something of an augmentation to an existing settlement pattern. In Norfolk, this occurs on marshier land on the coast, most distinctively the *–by* names on the Isle of Flegg (Pestell 2004:67). Related to this general point, Edward Martin, in the Historic Field Systems of East Anglia project, has revealed that in parts of Suffolk where there was relatively less arable land, there are traces of a field system that was similar to that in operation in parts of the Danelaw, suggesting an impact on organisation but not necessarily upheaval (Martin 2007:132).

It is my conviction that, whether there was upheaval or continuity, certain main centres would have retained their importance, although the nature of the settlement hierarchy at the time is admittedly poorly understood and would be an ideal subject for part of a regional urban survey, should one ever be initiated. There is nothing like the defensive *burhs* of Wessex (Wilson 1977:438-441): but then that was a frontier, and this was occupied territory. Pestell has noted that Vikings fought at or near royal vills (Pestell 2004:73). This is significant, if Bury St Edmunds was such a place.

4.4.1 *Beodericesworth* in the Viking Age

There is a tradition that Aethelstan, counteracting Danish influence, founded the College of Secular priests at *Beodericeworth* that was mentioned above, but the source of this is not known (Arnold 1896i:30, Lobel 1935:2). This is the only reference to Viking Age history that can be connected with *Beodericesworth,* although Mary Lobel noted that there are field-names and Scandinavian names in 11th and 12th-century charters from St Edmund's Abbey (1935:6). Was there occupation at Bury in the Viking Age? Occupation seems to have continued in the vicinity of St Mary's Square, with Thetford type ware (9th-11th century) from monitoring at 3 St Mary's Square (Tester 2003b), and from the St Edmund's Hospital site (BSE 044 by Bob Carr, Caruth 1997). A coin of Burgred, King of Mercia, 852-874 was also found here with some later Saxon pottery (Anderson 1996b:iv). Andrew Tester in March 2005 conducted an evaluation behind 130 Southgate Street and suggested from a drop in the level of 0.33

to 0.5m in a short trench the possibility that the road may once have been a sunken lane (SHER BSE 239). By implication, Southgate Street and Raingate Street to the south of the Linnet and Mainwater Lane (shown on Figure 4.9) – ignored by Bernard Gauthiez in his study of the town plan (See Section 1.1.1) - might be an earlier suburb, as suggested by Margaret Statham (1998:98) and Stanley West (1973:17), although they did not ask more detailed questions as to what form the settlement that it was a suburb *to* might have taken. At the top of Raingate Street/Schoolhall Street, Late-Saxon pottery was found when work was carried out behind the Records Office (BSE 084, Statham 1998:99). At 47 Raingate Street, ditches incorporating fragments of Ipswich ware and Thetford ware (*c.* 850 – 1150) were found, although street front occupation seemed to be 11th-century and later (Caruth and Anderson 1996a). Whilst the street was demonstrably occupied in the Saxon period, it is not at this point possible to find out *when* it developed.

Without archaeological evidence, this part of the town plan cannot be dated with any confidence, but I have chosen to discuss it here on the basis that the *–gate* element of Raingate Street may be of Scandinavian origin (see Figure 4.9). To anticipate a little, the 'holegate' mentioned in a 10th century charter bound (see 4.5.1) is likely to be what is now Hollow Road – again an instance of the *–gate* element, and again on the east side of the town. Margaret Statham noted that all other streets with a –gate element in them lead to the later town gates (e.g. Southgate Street, Risbygate Street). The name 'Raingate' is first recorded in the 13th century, however, and the name could, perhaps, refer to a flood gate or some kind of device for water management connected with the ford and the confluence of the river. Alternatively, it is interesting to note that in Yarmouth (Norfolk), *rengata* or *rengiate* was a term used for an original borough tenement, a strip of land of fixed dimension, first recorded in the 12th century (Ayers and Smith 1992:347-9; Latham 1980:391): perhaps here it meant older land holdings that were deliberately laid out and worth identifying as such? The possibility that the name refers to properties is perhaps compelling, if it is considered in conjunction with the suggestion that this was an early suburb.

Baker Lane joins Southgate Street to Raingate Street. It was called *Yoxforelane* in the 1295 rental, Redstone 1909:212), and it has been suggested that the name refers to a fording point of the river, perhaps one wide enough for a yoke of Oxen (Birch 2004:436): a ford is marked at the end of this lane on Payne's map of 1843. At some point in the medieval period, a chapel dedicated to the late 7th-century St Botolph was erected in the vicinity. In the 13th-century, Botolph was associated with travellers, and it might be that in this area, the connection with the ford and a liminal crossing place might be older, drawing perhaps on the nature of the boundary that defined the Middle-Saxon core. My point here is that the ford may have been significant as a boundary on the extreme edge of a settlement which has since been expanded, perhaps undermining its former liminality. By way of further exploration on the liminal and divisive nature of streams and bridges, Julie Lund, writing on contemporary sites in Denmark, has argued that bridges, fords and crossings were important elements in the Viking Age cultural landscape in both pagan and Christian cosmologies of the relationship between physical and symbolic crossings, and that they are often the focus of ritualised deposition in Scandinavia, England and on the continent (Lund 2005:109-115, 119). David Stocker and Paul Everson have also highlighted the longevity of deposits in significant places in the Witham Valley, from pre-history through the medieval period: these two example, although perhaps indirectly relevant, open our eyes to medieval ritual practices, albeit with changing symbolic meanings and intentions (Stocker and Everson 2003:280-1). Any work on the River Linnet might therefore be worthy of monitoring, in the hope of recovering archaeological finds of this date.

Raingate Street itself is curvilinear, and the rounded baulk at the south end of it is raised, partly related to the natural topography of the gravel terraces of the river, partly to quarrying and terracing and partly, perhaps, a relic of deliberate earth-working. The street seems to have formed the western boundary of occupation, although excavations have been too limited to prove this point. To the east of Raingate Street, at St Botolph's Lane, BSE 179, monitoring revealed only pits dated from the 16th- to the 20th-centuries (Boulter 1999:366) and two trenches at D. J. Evans' store on the east

side of Raingate Street were not deep enough to encounter more than made-up ground (Gill 2002). The end of the street, however, lies just to the north of earthworks on the Haberdon, now open space landscaped as two rugby pitches, and it is my contention that they may, possibly, once have formed an early defensive system which predates the 11th-century town defences (see Section 5.4.4). In the early 20th-century, these earthworks were of sufficient note to be recorded in the Victoria County History as an intact rampart and fosse (Wall 1911:623). They were heavily exploited for gravel, however and the site is marked as a quarry on the 1886 OS map (Figure 4.10) (comments by A. R. Edwardson in the *Bury Free Press* 21/9/1962; Statham 1998:100). Excavations behind 64 Southgate Street revealed an uneven disturbance at the east end of the plot, backing onto the Haberdon, which was filled with grey sand and sealed by topsoil that was tentatively interpreted as a medieval quarry pit (Tester 2005a). The description in the *VCH* is worth quoting in full:

> 'An escarpment facing south-east by south is 14ft in depth, with a fosse having a counterscarp of 6ft.; the outer scarp is 5ft. 8 in., and is a very gentle slope. Branching from the fosse and facing due south is another entrenchment with a scarp of 2 ft. 4 in., and a counterscarp of 1ft 6 in, with an outer bank 1 ft. high. Towards the east it has been mutilated by field draining and to the north by digging for gravel' (Wall 1911:623).

The earthworks are listed under the 'unclassified' heading in the *VCH*, and have been the subject of 'violent dispute' amongst antiquarians (Wodderspoon 1839:171). J. Denny Gedge, a late 19th-century writer on the town, pronounced that they were solid evidence of a 'Keltic' past, a great fortified enclosure or water *(aber)* fort *(don)* '*perhaps the Raingate...may have been the Arraign gate through which combatants emerged for bloody contest*'. (Denny Gedge 19th-century:7). Antiquarian Richard Yates, Wodderspoon notes, saw the earthworks in the Haberdon as 'Roman aggera and ancient entrenchments' whereas Wodderspoon himself favoured the idea that they were related to the monastery (Wodderspoon 1839:172-3). Little now remains of the ditches that are mentioned. The line of the embankment is continued to the east in a

footpath and it might be that these earthworks marked the southern boundary of settlement, perhaps enhancing the natural river terraces. The earthworks may, of course, be of any date in the earlier history of the town, although I have discussed them here because of the apparent relationship to Raingate Street. Figure 4.9, mentioned above, shows these possible additions to the town.

The manor of Haberdon was a unit of land holding which may be of some antiquity. In the rental of 1295, a tenement in *Yoxforelane* (Baker Lane) is listed as previously belonging to Henry fitz Nichol, and he also had previously held fifty-one and a half acres and a mill which 'belongs to the Haberdon and was formerly Henry fitz Nichol's, John Warde's and several others' (Redstone 1909:214). There was a strange custom associated with this land. In 1281, Henry fitz Nichol de St Edmund's granted to the Abbey the land on the Haberdon 'to which the privilege of supplying the white bull pertained' (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f.81r). In 1492, it was recorded that the Sacrist twice supplied as an oblation a white bull, and received 11s 8d (Redstone 1909:207). Later documents shed a little more light on these strange references, particularly a lease from the Abbot in 1533, to John Wright and John Anable, of the manor of Haberdon and four acres, with the proviso that the tenants are to find a suitable animal as often as is needed when a gentlewoman should visit the shrine and wish to make the oblation of a white bull. It is clear in other references that this was intended as a fertility ritual. The animal was paraded through the town, garlanded with flowers, and ladies could touch his flanks as he came by. The route lead up to the Abbey gates, and a financial offering was then made to the saint in commutation for sacrifice of the animal, who was lead back to his pasture (McMurray Gibson 1989:44-5). It seems that white cattle were often used as conciliatory gifts (Kirby 1829:376), and the offering of a bull as an oblation to St Edmund is unusual, although not unique. In Kirkcudbright in the 12th century, bulls were slain as an 'alms and oblation to St Cuthbert' (Wallace 1899:353). Whilst the origins of the White Bull procession are not known, the associations with the Haberdon, as the place in the landscape in which he might be found, are interesting. For example, would any White Bull have done? What is the date of the origin of this semi-pagan practice? McMurray Gibson has argued that there is a need to

look beyond the echoes of pagan fertility and consider the later medieval white bull procession as a communal drama which encapsulated shared fears and desires (1989:44-5). This does not explain its origins: in the context of this thesis it is the association of the practice with potentially older earthworks in the landscape that is significant. In a transfer of land in Bury St Edmunds to the Abbey by John, son of Henry Aurifaber (meaning Goldsmith), the plot in question was said to be bounded by '*Wlnothe's riparum*' (BM Harley 27 f.48r), another seemingly archaic place name. The White Bull procession is considered further in Section 7.6.

4.4.2 The death of Edmund and the memorial coinage

Still at this date, the settlement was not associated with St Edmund, but it is to his fate that we now turn. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in an account that is, as Eaglen points out, almost contemporary to the events it narrates, records that Edmund died in winter AD 869, in battle with a Danish army quartered at Thetford (Eaglen 2006:xv). This is the only contemporary record of the circumstances of his death. Within a generation, the St Edmund memorial coinage was issued. These silver pennies, of which there are more than 2,000 specimens, bear the legend SCE EADMUND REX (Saint Edmund, King) and, struck until AD 917, they were first minted within 20 years of his death by up to 70 moneyers. Most examples of the St Edmund memorial coinage were found in a hoard from Cuerdale, Lancashire and the rest are found mainly in parts of the Danelaw (Scarfe 1986:48; Pestell 2004:77; Eaglen 2006:13). The provenance of this coinage, then, is not known, but it suggests that St Edmund was a cult figure who, for some reason, was promoted throughout the Danelaw. A letter 'A' sometimes appears on the centre of the coins which might stand for Aethelstan, the Christian name of Guthrum, a vassal ruler who converted to Christianity (Blunt 1969:234; Eaglen 2006:13,). The coinage has been interpreted variously as: an attempt at spiritual and political legitimisation of Danish rule, particularly as Edmund died without an heir; as a mechanism for integrating the Danelaw with the West Saxon economy; or as a symbol of a cult that formed a spiritual focus for resistance (Pestell 2004:77-8). Whatever the story, the fact is that Edmund was a cult figure before his remains were translated to the settlement at *Beodericesworth* in the early 10th century.

4.5 The translation of Edmund in the 10th-century

The exact date of the translation of the remains of Edmund, King and Martyr to *Beodericesworth* is not known, although it occurred early in the 10th-century, soon after the growth of the cult. I have already explored the possibility that the translation might have occurred to Bury because it was already a political, religious and perhaps a dynastic centre. Hermann's *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi (*1095-1100) written probably in Bury, says that the translation occurred in 924-39 in the reign of Aethelstan of Wessex (Pestell 2004:79). The account that is closest in date to the events it narrates, however, is that of Abbo of Fleury, whose *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* (985-7) was written for Ramsey Abbey (Pestell 2004:79). Abbo records the translation of Edmund's remains to 'a very large church of wonderful wooden plankwork' at the royal vill at *Beodericesworth*, where the body was looked after by secular priests but he does not date the translation (Gem and Keene 1984:1). Hermann adds the detail that the date was 20th November, which was later the date of St Edmund's fair, and that the body was consigned to the care of a priest and two deacons (Arnold 1896:xxii).

Around the time of the translation, the legend of the Saint was written down, probably as part of the promotion of the cult: the story includes what Antonia Gransden has called a 'hotch potch of hagiographical commonplaces' (1985:4). Some of the details, though, provide clues as to the geographical setting of the events. Abbo writes that Edmund died as a Christian martyr, refusing to rule as a vassal king unless Hingwar, the Danish leader, would convert. He was tied to a tree and shot full of arrows. Apparently his head was then chopped off and flung into a thicket of brambles in *Hæglisdun* Wood. Soon after, when his allies began a search for the disembodied head, it began calling 'here, here, here' and they found it, between the sentinel paws of a large but benevolent wolf. The head and body were buried, and a wooden chapel built on the site. Hermann of Bury, writing in the mid-11th century, adds that the first resting place of Edmund was *Suthtune*, close to where he was killed (Arnold 1896:341-2; Hervey 1929; 17, 25; Eaglen 2006:2).

Hæglisdun was traditionally thought to refer to Hellesdon on the outskirts of Norwich or Hoxne in Suffolk (see West 1984:225; Gransden 1985:9; Carey Evans 1987). In 1984, Stanley West, former County Archaeologist for Suffolk, published a re-appraisal of the story, drawing attention to the fact that in the parish of Bradfield St Claire, six miles south of Bury, there is a field called Hellesdon, a mile north of a Sutton (*Suthtone?*) Hall. He suggested that this might have, in fact, been the site of the battle in AD 869 and hence the original resting place of the saint (West 1984:223-5). Tim Pestell's observation that Viking battles tended to be fought near royal vills might be pertinent here (2004:73). The significance of West's renewed topographical assessment in relation to Gransden's theory that there was a pre-existing minster of St Edmund has not really been considered but, if in the 10th century, the relics apparently of St Edmund were moved from a chapel to this larger centre six miles away, it might suggest that *Suthtune* was a subsidiary chapel to this larger centre.

I have suggested that there is little evidence for Middle-Saxon occupation underneath the site of the monastic precinct. There is, however, ample evidence for Later-Saxon occupation between the 9th and 11th centuries. Sometime around the year 1850, a Lord Londesborough was in possession of a 10th-century lead tablet from Bury Abbey that read in runes '*The Book of Aelfric says*' (West 1998:16). This is illustrated in Figure 4.11. With little contextual information, it is not possible to draw any real conclusions about the monastic centre at this time: but it is mentioned here as the only item that is known from the monastic site. Was there, then, a shift towards the north and a possible relocation of the monastic centre? In addition to monastic reforms of the 10th century, at this time generally, too, there was an observable shift from dispersed to nucleated settlement, related in part to religious and social changes and the development of the parish system, which might further explain a settlement shift such as is hinted at here (Wade 1999:23; Palliser 2006:II p5-6).

Manuscripts from the 10th-century show the rise of the fame and prosperity of St Edmund's Stow at *Beodericesworth*, where the *-stow* suffix probably meant holy place (Hoggett 2007:102). Both the *St Edmund* and the *stow* element are therefore indicative

that the translation of the saint had occurred by this date. Blair (2002a) has pointed out that the –stow element in many earlier English place names was often associated with local saints, although only in a few examples can it be demonstrated that they were the resting places of saints (for example, he cites the case of Hibaldstow in Lincolnshire, the burial place of Abbot Hygebald, mentioned by Bede in the 8th century) (p469). In this case it is likely that the *stow* element does refer to the actual resting place of the saint, and the earlier name was gradually eclipsed. For example, the will of Bishop Theodred (941x951) refers to '*Santcae Eadmundes stowe at Bydericesworth*' but only '*Eadmundes byrig*' is used by the time of the Abbacy of Leofstan (1044-1065) (Eaglen 2006:9-10). It also may or may not be significant that the *-stow* element becomes a *byrig* element: Lobel argues that it was an 11th- century fortification of the site that gave it this name, although -bury doesn't necessarily mean a fortified *burh* in the sense of the foundations under Alfred in Wessex: *burg* is often used as a vernacular alternative for minster (Blair 2005:250). The saint attracted rich gifts and the patronage of local families, and the probable collegiate church of St Edmund began to acquire a portfolio of land holdings and rights that helped to build a consolidated, legally protected territory in the countryside around the church (Hart 1966, see Senecal 1999:101). Amongst the growing body of documentary evidence, there is one piece that is particularly informative on the settlement of St Edmund's in the 10th century.

4.5.1 Boundaries of the *Banleuca*

In the Abbey registers there are several 14th century copies of a charter dated to the year 945 by which Edmund, 'king of the English, ruler of the other peoples round about' (936 – 946), granted to St Edmund's privileges of exemption from common dues, and the right to keep any income from within a prescribed area whenever a royal tax was levied (Arnold 1896:xxii, lxi: listing MS Bod 297, CUL Mm iv 19 and Bod. Gough Cambs 22; Hart 1966:54-56). The charter bounds describe the physical extent of the medieval and modern *banleuca* of the town which means that, if it is genuine, this area of jurisdiction was defined at least by the 10th century. It is clear that the borough boundary incorporates several ancient monuments, and the fact that some of these are referred to in the 10th-century document provides an insight into the way that the

landscape was used to articulate the extent of the area on or before this date. As will be seen, the church and associated settlement are at the centre of the radius. It is equally significant, however, that the Thing How, meeting place for the Hundred of Thinghoe and later the 8 ½ Hundreds of the Liberty of St Edmund's, is included within the physical area over which the church was granted jurisdiction, because it confirms suspicions that St Edmund's was the long established administrative centre of a larger hinterland.

The land around St Edmund's to which the privilege pertained is described in a set of charter bounds entitled '*thys synden tha landgemæro, the Ædmund kyng gebocade into Sce. Ædmunde*' ('these are the boundaries that king Edmund gave to St Edmund)':

> *thonne is theer ærest suth be eahte treowan; and thonne up be Ealhmundes treowan; and swa forth to Osulf's lea; and swa forth on gerichte be manige hyllan; and thannan up to Hamarlunda; and swa forth to fower hogas; and swa æfter them wege to Litlandtune; and thonan ofer tha ea; æfter tham wege to Bertunedene; and swa on gerihte east to Holegate; and swa forth an furlong be easten Bromleaga; and thanon suth to Niwantune meadwe* (Arnold 1896:I 340-1).

First south by the eight trees; and then up by Eahlmund's trees, and so forth to Osulf's Lea; and so forth on the right by many hills; and then up to *Hamarlunda*; and so forth to four hills; and so after the way to *Litlandtune*; and then over the river; following the way to *Bertondene*; and so eastwards to *Holegate*; a furlong eastwards by *Bromleaga* then south to *Niwantune* meadow (see Hart 1966:55-6).

Many of the features named are not immediately recognisable as modern landmarks, but some of them are clearly places on the edge of the borough. Barton (*Berton)* and Nowton *(Niwantune)* are parishes adjacent to Bury St Edmunds, and *Bromleaga* is identifiable as Broomley Wood, which is situated to the southwest of the town. Figure

4.12 shows the correlation between modern topographical features and those mentioned in the charter bounds. Further, on the 1837 tithe map of Westley, just to the west of Bury, there is a 'Hemland Hill' and a 'Hemland plantation' (SROB T/9/2) which correlates to the *hamarlunda* given in the boundary clause. The 19th-century borough boundaries were the same as those of the medieval *banleuca,* and the apparent correlation between the high-medieval area of jurisdiction and the bounds in the 10th-century charter has engendered suspicion in some scholars, who have expressed doubts as to the authenticity of the document: Appendix 1 reveals that it is, in fact, genuine and that the bounds describe a complete circuit round the town, referring to these landmarks. When the physical character of the circuit is considered other elements of the landscape, not necessarily described in the route, become important. The modern, and medieval, *banleuca* boundary were defined by older monuments in the landscape which sheds, perhaps, a little light on the definition and role of the settlement in the 10th century.

An identifiable monument on the edge of the *banleuca* was in the vicinity of what is now Eldo House Farm. '*Eldo*' is derived from *Old Haugh,* and it appears variously in charters as *Elde-* and *Old* Hall as well as *Eldhawe, Oldhawe, Oldhaugh, Aldhhage, Holdhowe* and *Le Hoo* (Redstone 1909:196). The earliest documented reference is a charter of 1182x6: Ailward the Baker is granted six acres in the fields of Bury, one of which is between the woods of *Aldehaghe/Haldehaghe*. Davies noted that this was probably eponymous for Eldo House Farm (1954:86). Excavations on the site of the farm revealed occupation from the 12th-century (Gill 2003a) but the place-name is indicative of there having been a hill or barrow here, an observation made by Redstone in 1909 (p196). In a charter of 1337, land on *Le Processionwaeye* leading to Rushbrooke Mill mentions two acres and one rood at *Oldhaweheth* and *Le Southlee* (Harper-Bill 1994:89). This pairing is replicated, albeit tenuously, in a reference in the 1295 rental, where under the fourth *went* (of the south field) the sacrist holds 12 acres of land between the *Lees* and five acres of land lying alongside the *Heldalheth* which is called *Galyonsland*. On Warren's 1791 map, *Lay Hill* is to the west of Eldohouse Farm. We can therefore reconstruct it as a site in heathland, with woods nearby.

There is no dating evidence for the *how* sites, although Wesgarth Gardens Cemetery and its possible *manige hyllan,* was Early-Saxon. Were they, perhaps, older monuments appropriated for their visibility and distinctiveness and were they were associated with liminality? Further, did they delineate an older area? Hints of an earlier rather than later centre at *Beodericesworth* have been considered throughout this chapter. These points are raised speculatively, although it is germane to add that more overtly Christian indications of the lands of St Edmund were in place by 1020, when it is recorded that the area was defined by crosses: perhaps because they were on old liminal and religious sites. Apparently, by the time of the charter of Cnut, the boundaries were marked with four crosses. In the late 13th century, a concession to Abbot John of Bury by Henry fitz Nichol of Bury St Edmunds refers to the '*crucem lapideam apud Holdehawe*' (CUL Mm FF ii 33 f.84r). In another charter of 1182-1200, Stephen son of Godfrey was granted seven acres of land at Botolf's Cross and another at Le Lehee (Davies 1954:90). The pairing of *Eldo* with *Le Lee* was explored above, and may be taken in support of Lillian Redstone's suggestion that the cross of St Botolph was probably erected at *Eldhawe* (Redstone 1909:196). It seems that in the 10th century, the landscape was defined by natural features but that later, crosses supplanted them. A papal bull of Gregory IX (1227-1241), reiterating one from Alexander II (1061-1073) and other predecessors, clarifies that the extent of freedom was 'in the town of St Edmund's or within the four crosses distant one mile from the four extremities of the town' (Morant 1869:381). I suggest that this is bound up with the 'urbanisation' of the settlement into the High-Medieval period, and an increasing desire to mark and define it as a town. However, this is the subject of subsequent chapters.

At Domesday, the 'town' is described as being 1 ½ leagues in length and breadth (Hervey 1911:508). This can only refer to the banleuca. A league as a unit of measurement is usually about three miles (OED) and so the town itself is not big enough to be this described unit. It does, however, refer to the *banleuca*. Warren's plan of the town lands in 1791 describes many stretches of the boundary as 'procession way', and the total distance is nine miles, five furlongs and four perches (approximately 15.55 km) (SROB Misc). This, loosely, gives a circle with a diameter of 4.5 km, or 2.8

miles. The word *banleuca* is another variant of the Norman or Anglo-Norman *banlieu, leugata* or *leucata* used for privileged circuits of ostensibly a league or 1 ½ leagues around towns, castles and monasteries (Lobel 1934:122). Whilst the word appears in the 11th century, the area of the *banleuca* is most likely 10th –century in origin and it is perhaps the whole area that was seen as the 'town'. In fact, the administrative unit could be as old as the features which define it, which might be an avenue of further research.

I wish to turn now to consideration of the Thing How, which stands to the north west of the town overlooking Tay Fen and which is demonstrably within the charter bounds. Bury St Edmunds now is the hub of west Suffolk, but in the past it was not the town alone but the meeting place to the north of its boundaries which formed the focus of administration as the centre of the Hundred of Thingoe (Arnold 1896). North-west of the town, above Tay Fen, formerly stood a barrow called Thing How. The name, 'assembly hill' is derived from Old Norse (*thing-haugr*) (Eaglen 2006:23).

Thinghoe

The Thinghoe was an assembly place, probably with some juridical significance (Hills 1865:33; Eaglen 2006:22-3). It is named as the *Dinghowe* of St Edmund's in four Anglo Saxon charters (see Kemble's *codex diplomaticus* 832, 915, 1342, 1346) (Wall 1911:626), and appears in land charters: one from 1182-1200 mentions rent from lands in the town and fields to the 'hundredi de Tingowe' (Davies 1954:117). In 1207, John de Constantin held 10 acres in the fields '*ad Tinghoe*'. In 1042, Edward the Confessor granted to the monastery 8 ½ hundreds of West Suffolk which became the Liberty of St Edmund. It has been suggested that they were an earlier estate held by Queen Emma and they were said to pertain to Thingoe (Scarfe 1972:39). Douglas has argued that this estate may pre-date the hundredal system, which he considered to be a late imposition on the East Anglian administrative system, and that the granting of whole 'shires' to major churches preserves an old system of land administration, which resonates with ideas covered earlier in this chapter (1932:cli). The land was held as a territorial unit by Queen Emma, Edward the Confessor's mother, and, like other

ancient estates, is bounded by landscape features: the Devil's Dyke on the west, the Stour on the south, the Waveney on the north, and somewhat more weakly, 'ancient hedgerows' on the east (Scarfe 1972:39). Scarfe does not go as far as to suggest that it might have been the administrative area associated with a possibly twinned royal centre and church, but that is clearly perhaps his intention in suggesting that there was an overlap between ecclesiastical and administrative boundaries. The suggestion compares favourably with Teresa Hall's suggestion that Dorset minsters are focal points in large estates of demesne holdings of the aristocracy (Hall 2000:47) and this is further evidence in support of Bury as a minster site.

Thing How itself was a mound or barrow that stood on the higher ground to the north of the town, and overlooking the wetlands of Tayfen to the slopes of the town to the south. The area is now industrial, and archaeological intervention has shown that much of it was terraced prior to the construction of the Old Maltings in the 19th-century, with build up to the east and truncation to the west (Caruth 1997b, Duffy 2006a:245). In 1996, a small evaluation *c.* 80 m back from Northgate Street (BSE 129) by Jo Caruth uncovered a small area of archaeology at the top of Thinghoe Hill, comprising four post holes and a steep sided feature: the subsoil was truncated, and there might have been formerly more archaeological features (Caruth 1997b). On the site of Newman House, Northgate Street, one post hole and one sherd of 12th century pottery were recovered. On the 1886 OS map, the site of the Thing is marked, with human remains, urns and horns (see SHER BSE 004). Excavations in the 19th-century showed it to be a tumulus of three internments 'in the ring of a chalk dyke', although the heart of the Thing was not found (Denny Gedge 19th-century:9; Wall 1911:626). The East Anglian School occupied part of the reduced summit (Wall 1911:626). Executions were carried out at Thing How until 1766 and it was also known as Bessie Burrough's Hill (Barker 1907:86).

We know little about the archaeology of the area, although an indenture from 1338 records, in a list of lands scattered throughout the town fields, a field called 'Theneshalle' abutting on the road leading from the Wooden Cross to Babwell

(Harper-Bill 1994:67). Saxhampath is the road leading from the wooden cross to Saxham, slightly north-west of the town and the implication that the Thing How might be associated with a *Theneshalle* is an interesting one. The impression is created of an administrative complex over to the north, separated from the settlement and the minster by Tay Fen, but overlooking them both.

Gordon Hills in 1865 considered that the assembly at *Thing-hoe* seems to have had nothing to do with the existence of the town (p.34). In the same vein, Robin Eaglen suggests that the relationship of the Thing to Bury is a mere accident of proximity and that it is 'bolstered by a misconceived impression of Bury's importance at that time'. He suggests that the names of the hundreds are linked to the fact that physical features were selected as significant but possibly neutral rallying points and that the choice of 'Thingoe' as meeting point for the Hundred of Thingoe was related to its position at the centre of the hundred (Eaglen 2006:24). However, reanalysis of the charter bounds show that Thing How was included in the area of land that was granted to the monastery. I think that the relationship is critical, as defined by the probable intervisibility between the town and the Thinghoe. The site of Thing How is separate from the monastery in that it is located on the high ground over the Tay Fen, but to all intents and purposes, the meeting place is at St Edmund's: the mound is approximately half a mile from the Abbey. Ipswich's Thingstead, possibly the centre of the 5 ½ hundreds of Wicklaw, was outside the town defences, but it too was close to the settlement (Fairclough 2003:269). Bury itself was extra-hundredal; Eaglen argues that it is improbable that a settlement not forming part of the 8 ½ hundreds would have served as the administrative area and extends his argument to suggest that, as it is unlikely that the Hundred would be attached simply to Thingoe, 'somewhere other than Bury may have been important in the hundredal structure' (2006:24). This perception of the Thing How as a discrete, isolated landscape element is rendered non-sensical if its actual landscape setting and proximity to Bury is considered, as well as the further evidence of the boundary clause which places it within the same circle as the settlement and the church. It is possible that there was a symbolic separation created by Tay Fen that lay between them, representing the entirely separate realms of

jurisdiction, but to all intents and purposes, they are related. Perhaps, then, rather than undermining the importance of the settlement in the 10th century, this is evidence that the sites within the *banleuca* formed the twin administrative and the religious centre of a wide area: an extra-hundredal entity at the apex of the settlement hierarchy, where people came for assembly and pilgrimage. Assembly site places are often in places that were common to all, particular to none (Blair 2005:475): this is perhaps true of the Thing How at St Edmund's in relation to the 8 ½ hundreds, a fact marked by its situation on a slope overlooking the lower ground.

There is more scope, perhaps, to consider developing towns as a result of the coalescence of various roles from their immediate hinterland. Unless this is a special case, it highlights the geographical extent to which we should perhaps be looking, rather than seeking a defined area within the later medieval core. At Domesday, the extent of the *banleuca* is given as a statement of the size of the settlement at Bury, which to me indicates that the definition of the town was not just that place within the streets, but the broader landscape around it. This confirms a general idea that High-Medieval towns were much more closely knit, defined centres where those roles that were the hall marks of urbanism were fulfilled (social, commercial, economic, judicial). Earlier, perhaps, the boundary is more fluid. 10th century Winchester, for example, was surrounded by a suburb (*suburbana*) which was next to the *civitas* and which extended for up to 5 miles (8km) (Keene 1990 [1976]:98).

4.6 King Cnut

There is no written evidence for a reformation of a community at *Beodericesworth* in the 10th-century during widespread monastic reform. However, reforms in the 1020s could have been a later implementation of the *Regularis Concordia* which boosted the organisation of the institution and the promotion of the cult. During the reign of Cnut (1020-1040), there was a change in the character and number of sites that might have been called towns in East Anglia: the origins to the precocity of the region at Domesday (West and Carter 1979:14). It is generally accepted, on the basis of a note inserted into the 12th century Bury Psalter, that during the reign of King Cnut, the secular church at

St Edmund's was re-founded as a monastic institution, although the role of Cnut himself is uncertain (Licence 2006). There are charters granting liberties to the Abbey and its vill that purport to be copies of the originals issued by Cnut, although their authenticity has been debated. What is thought to be an 11th century copy of the original charter was preserved among the muniments of King's Lynn (Hervey 1929:v). If it is genuine, the monastery was founded or re-founded *c.*1020 and was granted privileges (1021x23) (Gransden 1985:10, 2004:637; Eaglen 2006:7). However, the charter has been treated with suspicion because it grants monks at Bury an area with freedom from episcopal jurisdiction and from any taxes payable for war or ships (Hart 1966:63). A charter of Henry I (1102-3) refers back to the liberty of the town and monastery from the time of Edward the Confessor and King Cnut and an earlier charter of Edward the Confessor (1042-1065) confirms freedom granted by King Cnut and Harthacnut in the area of the town marked by four crosses (Hart 1966:69). It is likely that at this point, then, the community and shrine were proactively maintained and promoted, establishing the legal precedent to ensure that it survived and grew. The townspeople were exempt from payment of the geld and from attendance at shire and hundred courts as the monastery was given absolute power over the *banleuca*, and the whole was exempt from episcopal control (Lobel 1935:5).

The first mention of an Abbot of Bury St Edmunds is Abbot Ufi (Uvius), recorded in the year 1042 in Hermann's *De Miraculis* as being the first to hold the office appointed there under a monastic regime (Licence 2006:54). Medieval sources, including the 13th century *Lesser Chronicle* of St Benet Holme (Norfolk), note that monks came from Ely and from St Benet Holme (Gransden 1985:14-20, 2004:630; Eaglen 2006:7-8; see Licence 2006:52-3 for a contrary view). The memorial coinage was possibly driven by a political legitimisation of new regimes and, given the context of the martyrdom of St Edmund during conflict with Viking forces, perhaps patronage by Cnut, in the context of later waves of Scandinavian incursion, might have been an action in a similar vein (Arnold 1896:xxvii; Eaglen 2006:8). Hermann implies that a stone basilica was built to replace the wooden church and in 1032, Bishop Aethelnoth dedicated a church here to Ss. Mary and Edmund (Gem and Keene 1984:1).

It is suggested that part of this church was still standing when the relics of the saint were translated into the new Romanesque church in 1095. Hermann's account of the translation of St Edmund describes how he was carried from the south door of the old church into the choir of the new building. The older structure is therefore thought to have stood on the site of the Lady Chapel, which was erected in 1275 and which involved the demolition of a chapel of St Mary from the eastern side of the north transept, and the centre of the old rotunda (Baker 1907:59; Hills 1865:52, 112-3; Whittingham 2006:8). In 1946, excavations were carried out under the Lady Chapel of the Abbey by borough officials. A Mr Dickinson reported that they found the walls of a previous building, which was not round but octagonal/diagonal in plan. The records of the excavations can no longer be traced (LHRS 61/30, 25/8/61).

It is also worth noting here, however, that perhaps the earthworks on the Haberdon might be of 11th-century rather than the earlier date assumed above (Section 4.4). Without further fieldwork, this might remain forever a mystery. William of Malmesbury's *gesta pontificum anglorum* says that Cnut ordered the lands of the saint to be bounded by a great dyke, '*terram illius fossa magna circumduxit.*' Lord Hervey suggested that the execution of this work converted the 'worth' of Beudric into a *burh* (Wall 1911:623; Hervey 1929:35, West 1973:21), and Mary Lobel also favoured this interpretation, as we have seen. I argue in Chapter 5.4.4, however, that the town defences are essentially a 12th century scheme. Further, it is not clear whether the reference to the lands of the saint refers to the town, or wider monastic estates.

4.7 St Edmund's Stowe in the reign of Edward the Confessor

By the time of the Norman Conquest, more is known about the settlement at Bury St Edmunds. In 1043-4, Edward the Confessor granted to the Abbey sake and soke of (jurisdiction over) the 8 ½ hundreds of the liberty of St Edmund's. This established the legal rights and responsibilities of the Abbey over that large, consolidated hinterland which was being developed in the 10th century. Edward the Confessor also granted minting rights to the Abbot (Eaglen 2006:26). Eaglen's analysis of the surviving coinage suggests that the mint was small, and perhaps may have been at this time

intended more to serve the monetary needs of the Abbot, although it is undeniable that the borough was thriving (Eaglen 2006:39). The Doomsday survey records a community of 118 men in the settlement working for the provision of the monks with, under them, 52 bordars, 54 poorer freemen and 43 almsmen each with one bordar (Hervey 1911:508). Bury is not called a *burh* in Doomsday but the Doomsday survey is not consistent in its terminology and a charter dating to the reign of Edward the Confessor shows that the town was called *Seint Edmundes byrig* by this date (Lobel 1935:7). Certainly later charters (e.g. the charter of Abbot Anselm 1121-1148) confirm the rights of the townspeople from the time of Edward the Confessor, which suggests that they may have implicitly understood their status as an urban community: Lobel suggests that the acreage given at Domesday is, on average, a small amount per household which would suggest that their subsistence basis was not agricultural (1935:10-11). Aspects of the administration of the town also suggest a pre-Conquest date for its urban identity. Firstly, the borough was administered by a reeve. This was probably a position developed from the Anglo-Saxon office of *gerefa*, which had come to denote an estate administrator (Cane 1955:148; Faith 1997:159). Secondly, the main tax on tenements in the town was a penny *hadgoval,* or head tax, complemented by *landmol* pertaining to the town fields. Finally, the men could buy and sell land; they had their own courts, and could collect debts (Lobel 1935:7-10).

This population lived and worked in a settlement that can be recreated as a linear one. Bernard Gauthiez has made a strong argument for the presence of an Anglo-Saxon *burh* in the town that pre-dates an 11th-century grid associated with the construction of the Romanesque church (1998:95). His reconstruction, reproduced in Figure 4.13, is based on irregularities in the street pattern, particularly in the curvilinear streets, and identifies Angel Lane as the western boundary of an earlier *burh*. This road, of all those in the medieval rentals, is the one with the most names: it was known as Baxter Street, Welle Street and Bolaxtstreet and it is possible that this ambiguity may arise from the fact that it is the junction point between the older and added parts of the town. Parallel to Angel Lane, Gauthiez suggested that a road ran through what in the 12th century became the walled-in monastic precinct: this road linked Northgate and Southgate

streets, and was identified during excavations in advance of the construction of the Cathedral cloister and treasury. On these sites, successive layers and re-cut ditches suggest that it had several phases of repair, and the pottery in its ditches was Late-Saxon, with the latest sherds dating to the mid 11th century (Statham 1998:99). In support of Gauthiez's model, all of the oldest identifiable street names in the town pertain to the part of the town that he suggested pre-dated the Conquest, although he did not consider this evidence (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14). In the 18th-century, there was a campaign to gentrify the town (hence the names Lark and Linnet for the river, instead of Common River). Cotton Lane was previously Skurffe Lane, Angel Hill was Mustow, or 'meeting place' (Statham 1998:101). Further, in the Pittancer's rental of 1318-1319, St Mary's Square was called Eld Market and Northgate Street 'Old Street', or *alto vico* (BL Lansdowne 416 f.29r). *Goval* is an archaic word for rent or holding: Crown Street was previously Churchgoval. The *-goval* element also appears in Brent Goval, which could mean 'burnt land'. Brentgoval may have been an ancient route into the town from the west. The land to the north, Brackland, was not densely occupied until the 13th century and 'bracklond' may mean 'broken' in the sense of hard to cultivate, from the old English *brœc* (Room 1988:54). This contributes to the impression of it being an inhospitable area. Generally, then, the older names that are known give an idea of the nature of parts of the town: a market to the south, meeting place by the Abbey bordering church land, an old high road leading in from the north, flanked by undeveloped land. This illustrates that certain key features of the town's grid - practical, ceremonial and social spaces at Mustow, the meeting place to the west of the Abbey, and the Old Market – were important *before* the town as we know it today was laid out. To Gauthiez's reconstruction (1998:95), the earlier streets of St Mary's Square and Raingate Street need to be added too, as a reminder of the earlier origins of these parts of the town, and the east-west running road, Holegate, included as a reminder of the other, older routes into the centre.

The deepest Late-Saxon deposits have been those excavated on the cathedral site. David Gill's report (2005) presents information from excavations in 1998 and 1999 on the site of the new transept and cloister of the cathedral, and summarises excavations

from several seasons on the site of the 'Old Bowling Green': now the cathedral centre and new cloister. The report includes excavations carried out in the 1950s by C. Raleigh Redford and R. Duffy before the extensions to St James' Cathedral were built (Gill 2005:3). The first phase of evidence unearthed during these excavations can be reasonably confidently ascribed to the period immediately before the changes associated with the commencement of the Romanesque church, and the span of the pottery evidence suggests that this could be the site of longer occupation. Thetford ware and St Neot's ware generally indicate a 10th-11th-century date. Underneath the Late-Saxon road noted above, there was a gravel layer which was thought to be an earlier version of it, a few finds, and a build up of Late-Saxon soil. A row of post-holes was interpreted as a possible fence line, although the trench was too small to determine much else (Gill 2005a:8-9, 39). A longer build-up was also noted in excavations underneath the Norman Tower (Drewett and Stuart 1973); on the Old Bowling Green, BSE 052 (Gill 2005, Filmer-Sankey 1984:327); and on an extension to the dorter (Owles 1977:74). These layers cannot be dated to pre-and post-Conquest on the basis of the finds, but it was suggested that the 0.4m of build up under the Norman Tower which yielded pottery and animal bones and heavily crusted green glass 'had presumably built up over a very long period' (Drewett and Stuart 1973:242).

As a final note, outside the monastery, St Botolph's Chapel stood on the east side of Southgate Street behind the Abbey Hotel, formerly the White Hart, which has a 15th-century core. An etching of the building produced in 1801 appears amongst the unpublished manuscript notes for Rev. Yates' second edition of his history of Bury St Edmunds (Figure 4.15) (SROB P755/33, see f. 78, 178). The building was pulled down in 1804 (Fuller 1852:79) and there is no trace of it now. Yates noted that 'in the White Hart Yard on Southgate Street are the remains of an old religious house, now called the Chapel, said to have been dedicated to St Botolph (f.78)'. In the 14th-century Pittancer's receipt list, collated after 1427, there is an entry for a tenement in 'Reingatestreete' held by Alice Coterall '*iuxta fontem Sancti Botolph*' (BM Harl 27 f.61r). There must have been a holy well near the chapel. The detail from this print seems to show a building of stone construction, aligned west-east, with ashlared quoins, a round

headed door and a window that may be Late-Saxon or Norman in date. Rik Hoggett has noted that, of the canon of extant buildings with Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Saxon style features in East Anglia, most are 11th-century in date or later (2007). It is possible that this building might have been pre-Conquest?

Without the fabric of the building, it is hard to make any definite conclusions about its age or purpose. This foundation was outside the possible 7th century enclosure, and within what might be the earliest suburb of the town. Was it a private chapel or under the patronage of the monastery? There is no documentary evidence. Given its context, is it possible that it was a parish church? If Raingate *does* mean landholding in the sense that it does at Yarmouth, then there is possibly a convincing case for a chapel or church, laid out plots and an early suburb here. There are no recorded later medieval parish churches outside the monastic precinct. Botolph was an East Anglian religious figure who founded a minster at Iken (*Icanho) c.* 670 (Scarfe 1986:45). By the 13th century, there were a large number of chapels dedicated to Botolph at city gates, and he was a patron saint of travellers (Pestell 2004:97). The association is interesting, given the apparent suburban context of this chapel. Finally, as a matter of speculation, the cult of St Botolph saw a resurgence in the thirteenth century, and at this date, a new chapel to St Botolph was built in the eastern complex of the Abbey church: it is perhaps not unreasonably to suggest that if this was an earlier chapel dedicated to that saint, it might have gone out of use when the new chapel was built?

4.7.1 Relict manors?

A further observation which contributes to an attempt at appraising the nature of the pre-conquest town is that later manors mentioned in Bury St Edmunds might be relicts of defined blocks of earlier land that represent a different, more aristocratic way of urban living. Interestingly, the four complexes that have been encountered in the course of this research are all in the southern part of the town, or at least on the older axis (Figure 4.16). The manor of Haberdon has been mentioned. In the 1295 rental, it was listed as a 'tenement called Haberdon' formerly Henry fitz Nichol's (Redstone 1909:213). Additionally, the manor of Maydewater was held as part of the possessions

of David de Strobolgy, Earl of Athol, Seneschall of Scotland, who gave it to Sir Roger Gower, Knight, who bequeathed it to his daughter Joan, wife of John Spenynthorn (Redstone 1909:207). Where the manor was is not known to the present author as it does not appear in the Abbey documents, but it must have formed land near the river and Maynewater Lane, close to the manor of the Haberdon.

Further, moving slightly northwards, Redstone noted that the 'residences of men of importance' were to be found on Sparhawk Street – Sir Thomas le Bigot, Thomas de Verdon and John de Cove (1909:201). Covehall was a tenement on a corner of Sparhawk Street and Westgate Street in the 1295 rental (Redstone 1909:213). In the rental of 1386, the heirs of ---de Catishal paid rent for a 'vacant place' before built with a grange upon 'Coneshallezerd' (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f.150v) and in 1361-1383, William Ruston, Fuller, paid relevia for a tenement in Coneshalleyerd (BM Harley 0058 f. 53r). In these later rentals, it is listed variously as being at the Gable of St Mary, and it might have been a sizable property within this curvilinear part of the town-plan.

Finally, an interesting insight from the rental data is in fact relevant to the piece of land between St Mary's Square and Maynewater Lane, where St Edmunds Hospital now stands and which has yielded Middle-Saxon archaeology. There is at least one major property amongst the smaller tenements listed in the 15th century, as reconstruction from the rental data reveals: Bluntes Hall (see Figure 4.17). In the 1433 Hadgoval Rental, the corner between Southgate Street and St Mary's Square is held by a William Kecher – on it are 4 rents lately of John Poshals and Walter Garden, previously of William Hore and Edward Vauncy. The capital tenement of William Baker is to the south, Horsemarket to the north (BM Harl 0058 f. 25r). The capital tenements of William Baker, documented in the same source, were formerly held by the same previous tenants as those given for the plots held by William Kecher next to it, which suggests that perhaps the whole plot was once a large corner. Further, listed under '*le Horsemarkett'* William Kecher, draper, is recorded as holding a tenement called *Blountshall,* lately of John Peshale, Walter Gardon and before William Hore and Edward Vauncy, between the tenement of William Kecher on the east (mentioned

above) and a lane leading to *Maidewatyr* on the west, abutting on the north on the Horsemarket (BM Harley 0058 f. 25r). In 1361-1383, Henry de Lakford paid 3s relevia for a tenement called *Bloundeshalle* in the Horsmarkett, before held by William Cryketot (BM Harley 0058 f. 48v). A lane led to it: under Westgate Street in the 1433 hadgoval rental a Thomas Ladde held a tenement between *Blunteslane* on the east and the tenement of John Bode on the west (BM Harley 0058 f. 27r). It is possible, then, that the corner properties and Blounteshall were formerly a large plot on the corner, fronting the market, centred on a complex based around a hall.

These larger properties are distinctive in the documentary evidence, and it is perhaps significant that they are apparently concentrated in the southern, older part of the town. The suggestion that St Botolph's *might* have been a pre-Conquest religious building adds a new significance to this area, given the later absence of any parish churches in the town apart from the two in the monastic precinct. Considering this possibility 'fleshes out' our understanding of the nature of the pre-conquest town.

4.8 Conclusion

> 'The mint at Ipswich and the comparatively dense population may have given it something of an urban character, but here and in other Suffolk towns the rural element was still very strong, and there was a 'smack of the farmyard' even about the *burgus*' (Page 1911:410).

Previous comment on the pre-Conquest town plan noted that it was linear in form, that Southgate Street looks like an early suburb and that St Mary's Square was an old market. In part, the scant archaeological evidence has been seen as an indication that the earliest town has not been found. I have suggested that perhaps the archaeology that we have *is* representative of the manifestations of the earliest settlement, although it is not large scale or monumental. This chapter, then, inspired by more recent thinking in scholarship of urban archaeology, has used landscape evidence, archaeological evidence and historical data to reveal in new detail the evolving settlement of medieval Bury. At the Conquest Bury was, in common with many other larger places in Late-

Saxon England, a settlement with a market, a mint and a population with established rights and responsibilities. The Thing How stood to the north of the settlement. There were at least three ecclesiastical buildings on the monastic site which stood to the east of a settlement of parallel streets. These two distinct topographic places were a testimony to the longer history of the settlement as both a religious and an administrative centre: roles which may only have been united fully under the jurisdiction of the Abbey in the 11th-century. I suggest that this example supports arguments that we need to look beyond this later image of an urban ideal when considering the landscapes of early centres and it adds the insight that unless this is a particularly special case, we need to look beyond the walled area of a settlement to fully understand an earlier administrative or religious landscape of a place. Landscape monuments – including Early-Saxon cemeteries - were important in defining both the real and symbolic boundaries of the Christian lands of St Edmund. Into the 11th-century, crosses were placed on key boundary points. However, the town was, in the 12th-century, re-defined within this circuit through the construction of the defences. Was this a formalisation of the image of the town, as outlined in Section 1.2.2?

The evidence from excavations under the Norman Tower and modern parts of the cathedral suggests that Late-Saxon occupation layers had been building up for some time. To the south, the older settlement core comprised St Mary's Square and Raingate Street. I have emphasised the likely nature of Maynewater Lane as a Middle-Saxon enclosure on higher ground overlooking the valleys, and it is therefore likely that St Mary's Square marks the oldest part of the settlement. Such a topographical setting resonates with the landscape setting of early minster sites, an observation which is interesting, given the history of Bury St Edmunds and which may support the idea that there was an early church here, and that it was on this site. Whether or not this was a minster site cannot be said with any certainty, but the remains of St Edmund were moved to *Beodericesworth* for a reason. There is little evidence for the history of the town in the following centuries, although there is a smattering of probable Scandinavian place-names elements: not least *Holeegate* and *lundr* in the 10th century boundary clause. It has been suggested that Viking and West-Saxon rulers perhaps

adapted to local familial and religious communities and their administration systems, which may have preserved older units (Pestell 2004:99). The Edmund memorial coinage is a possible product of this political legitimisation and appropriation, and it possibly set a precedent for later conquering kings to find patronage for St Edmund.

The evidence is inconclusive, then, that St Mary's Square is the only earliest part of the settlement although a later-Saxon settlement shift or expansion (perhaps associated with the translation of the saint) is not outside the realms of possibility. Such a suggestion, whilst not before entertained for Bury, is in line with an observed religious and economic revival elsewhere. Certainly, the archaeological evidence does not suggest an abandonment of the Maynewater Lane site. Further excavations under the ruins of the Abbey and in St Mary's Square would prove or disprove this hypothesis. Evaluations and excavations across the St Mary's Square area have shown varied preservation of archaeological material and in parts the site is heavily truncated or landscaped. However, archaeology does survive and could potentially support further research. Ideally, it could be a site of targeted excavation, but it should certainly be flagged in future project briefs.

The translation may have occurred at the same time as a shift in settlement to the north in the 10th century; perhaps it even incurred it. However, whilst we have no evidence for the nature of the buildings and occupation on these streets, it is my contention that they remained a focus for older manors into the 14th century in comparison to the 'commercialisation' of the north and west. Older urban estates were often called *hagas*, derived from Old English 'enclosure': at Reading, blocks of land, or *hagas* were found in the hands of wealthier citizens at Domesday and at Ipswich, too, Bishop Theodred's will of AD 951 refers to land that he had bought at Ipswich as a *haga* (Fairclough 2003:266). In London, in the 9th century, the term was used to describe large urban estates or compounds of individuals and communities who may have been based outside the city (Schofield 2003:28). Aristocratic urban manors of Thegns who had urban offices and connections were often large plots with buildings at the centre. In 10th-century Oxford, these perhaps had churches on the edge (Astill 2006:246). The

apparent concentration of older manors in the southern part suggests, perhaps, an element of social continuity. The medieval 'white bull' ceremony, whatever its origins, serve as a reminder that this was once part of the processional landscape of the settlement and one which may have been maintained after the Conquest. These insights establish a time depth in the settlement which adds new understanding to patterns and information drawn from later charters about the High-Medieval landscape and the aspirations of urban populations, and it provides a framework within which to assess the social impact of the Norman Conquest.

5

VILLA DE S. EDMUND: A POST-CONQUEST REMODELLING

5.1 Introduction

Political events of the later 11th-century provoked major changes to the church and settlement of St Edmund as, after the Conquest, the late-Saxon religious and administrative hub at St Edmund's Stow was moulded, like a number of others such as Battle, Durham, Glastonbury and Peterborough into a major Anglo-Norman power centre. The new foundations and remodelling at Bury St Edmunds fits into the wider phenomenon of town expansion and creation in the 11th-13th centuries (Beresford 1967; Slater 1996 and Bond 2004: Chapter 14 for examples of ecclesiastical foundation). At Bury in particular, the new Romanesque church was one of the largest of its time, and changes to the town were intended to create both a model commercial centre and an extended shrine for St Edmund in order to advertise, protect and promote the privileges and cult of the martyr king. This chapter reveals the details of the changes made to the medieval landscape of the town of Bury St Edmunds through separate campaigns of development in the late 11th- and the early 12th-centuries, adding a new, detailed case study for consideration on urban development at this time. It suggests a new interpretation of the geometry of these phases of development, arguing that a primary, symmetrical grid of streets was followed by a secondary phase which involved the creation of the Great Market. The rapidity of these changes shows, perhaps, a reaction to the commercial success of the town as the emerging religious, spiritual and political importance of the church brought in pilgrims, visitors and trade from further afield. In many ways, the story is one of ecclesiastical lordship, and it is the schemes of monumental planning which are most evident in the architectural, archaeological, documentary and topographical evidence for these earlier Anglo-Norman years.

The second part of this chapter picks up on the premise of this thesis that consideration of urban populations can be brought in to studies of urban formation and, as far as the fragmentary evidence permits, seeks to explore the fortunes of the people of St Edmunds. The preservation of public, commercial and administrative elements of the pre-Conquest town such as the old market place, the Moot Stow and, presumably, the Thing How, suggests that these monuments were initially appropriated rather than replaced in the 11th century and it was suggested in Section 4.7 that whilst there is little evidence for the social topography of the settlement of this period, the observable correlation between documented manors from the 13th century and the south-west part of the town may represent continuity from the pre-Conquest period. We can assume that their lives changed as a result of the changes occurring around them: is there, then, any evidence to support this assumption and explore the reactions or at least the daily life of the populace? Against this background, some rare snapshots of the occupations of the population in the 11th and 12th centuries show, against the general picture of urbanisation fostered by lordship - the increasing diversity and privileges of the urban community – their buildings, houses and livelihoods.

5.2 St Edmund's Abbey at Domesday

In 1065, a year before the Norman Conquest, Edward the Confessor appointed Baldwin to the Abbacy of St Edmunds. Baldwin was a Frenchman, a native of Chartres, and he had entered monastic life at St-Denis on the outskirts of Paris. As his career progressed, he had become a renowned healer and served Edward the Confessor as Royal Physician. Baldwin was sympathetic to Norman rule, and continued to enjoy royal patronage and his medical position under William the Conqueror (Gransden 1981). The Liberty of St Edmunds was a major landholding and administrative unit, and its support must have been desirable during the political upheaval after the Conquest, particularly given its relative proximity to both Ely, stronghold of Hereward the Wake and focus of the resistance, and the North Sea coast, which was potentially vulnerable to counter-invasions (Eaglen 2006:42). Appropriation of major shrines was essential to Norman lordship (Webb 2000:17). In return, St Edmunds enjoyed royal patronage and its exemptions, jurisdiction and financial privileges were re-confirmed.

Amongst monastic houses, David Hill has ranked the abbey at Bury St Edmunds as having the fourth highest monetary income in England at Domesday, after Glastonbury, Ely and Canterbury respectively (Hill 1981:154). Further, St Edmund's was one of the pre-eminently wealthiest landholders in the Eastern region, holding large estates here (Page 1911:391). The Abbey's estates included a dense concentration of properties in West Suffolk in the hundreds which adjoined the *banleuca* of the town, as well as landholdings which made it a tenant in chief in the six counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire (Page 1911:391; Eaglen 2006:48). The Abbey was certainly the wealthiest ecclesiastical institution in the region, followed by Ely and then the See of North Elmham (Senecal 1999: table 1). This order of precedence, and the preservation of the liberties of St Edmund, were not achieved without political contest and throughout the 1070s, the Bishops of East Anglia attempted to move the See to St Edmunds, and thus appropriate its wealth, standing, liberties and revenues: increasingly more mystical tales were written about the powers of St Edmund in an attempt to propagate, promote and legitimise the cult and the Saint's independence. The details of the dispute are beyond the scope of this thesis but they have been well explored elsewhere, most recently in terms of the contest for the patronage of wealthy East Anglian families (Galbraith 1925; Gransden 1981; 1985; Senecal 1999; Gransden 2004; Licence 2006). Ultimately, it was the royal intervention of William I that settled the dispute and the See was located first at Thetford and then, in 1094, was finally settled at Norwich (Hervey 1929:48). Within this context the size and scale of the Anglo-Norman developments of the church can be considered as a testimony to the patronage, wealth, privilege and fame of the cult. Monumental building work was carried out to both demonstrate and promulgate its material and spiritual prosperity. Whilst the intention was clearly to invest in a pilgrimage centre which would ultimately finance itself (by promoting visitors, traders, tolls and rents), it is no surprise that Abbot Baldwin, according to the chronicler Herman, devoted many hours to the problem of how to finance this ambitious project. Hermann's *De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi* was produced in the 11th century, probably in Bury St Edmunds (Gransden 1981:65), and Baldwin's *Feudal Book* is also a rare piece of documentary

evidence for the streamlining of the administration of the monastic estates that accompanied the work (Douglas 1932).

It is generally accepted that work was begun on the Conventual church in 1081, when King William confirmed that the Liberty of St Edmunds should be free from Episcopal control. The number of monks was increased from 20 to 80, and the new church was conceived to grand designs (Figures 5.1 and 2). Documentary evidence reveals that the church was built sequentially from east to west, and the west front was completed in the 1180s (Whittingham 2006). The original design was inevitably adapted as the building work progressed. Eric Fernie, a leading historian of medieval architecture, has pointed out that the wall between the nave and the northern aisle is set at a slightly obtuse angle which means that the northern aisle is narrower at the east end than the west end. The south aisle is built to the same width as the west end of the north aisle: it seems that perhaps the design of the church was changed to make it both longer and wider than the cathedral church which was begun in 1096 at Norwich (Fernie 1998:1). Whilst there might have been liturgical or practical explanations for change in the size, Stephen Heywood, a local historic buildings expert, confirms that the resultant church was bigger than that under construction at Norwich, which is perhaps significant given the rivalry between the Abbey on the one hand and the Bishop of Norwich on the other (Heywood 1998:19). In addition, the revised plan for the west front necessitated the demolition in 1120-40 of the parish church of St Denis, which had only been built in the 1080s (Gransden 1973:xli, 123). This reactive strategy shows how important pre-eminence was to the community at St Edmunds. To quote Fernie, their church was a 'giant of a building': the nave, at 485 ft/148m long, was the third longest in Europe of all known extant buildings in the 11th-century (including early Christian basilicas such as St Peter's in Rome), and the size of the eastern structure was unprecedented at the time (1998:5).

Fernie has placed the building within a European tradition of pilgrimage churches (Fernie 1998:1). The apsidal east end, which housed the shrine of St Edmund as well as relics of two other East Anglian saints, Botolph and Jurmin, consisted of a crypt of four

bays with an ambulatory and three radiating chapels. Each transept had an eastern aisle from which projected two apsidal chapels, and these aisles and the ambulatory are an indication that the east end of this church was intended to accommodate and allow the movement of large numbers of pilgrims (Fernie 1998:5). The legend of St Edmund was displayed on a *tabula*, and, in an early example of the practice, indulgences were granted to all who visited the shrine (Gransden 1981:75). The miracles of the Saint were promoted in Europe – particularly in England, Normandy, France and Italy – and connections and shrines were established with and at other centres through a sharing of relics (Gransden 1981:76; Thompson 2001:14). In 1071, when in Rome, Baldwin received a favour from Pope Alexander II, which allowed the celebration of mass at the church of Ss Mary and Edmund even if England should ever fall under excommunication or interdict (Arnold 1896:xxxii): this would have allowed business to go on as usual, and it highlights the international standing of the church. In 1095 the vaulted choir of the new church was complete and the body of St Edmund was translated from the old rotunda. Incidentally, it seems that the most of this earlier building was left intact until it was, most likely, demolished when the 13th-century Lady Chapel was built. Hermann writes that crowds attended the translation ceremony and this incidental observation highlights that at certain times, Bury would have been thronging with people (Arnold 1896:xxxiv; Gransden 1981:75).

Throughout the late 11th and early 12th centuries, building work continued under the financial management of Godfrey the Sacrist and Abbot Robert (1102-1107). A new parish church was constructed, St Denis, which, as mentioned, was demolished after only a short lifespan when the designs for the west front were upgraded in the early 12th century. What was probably the west wall of this church was identified in excavations by A. R. Dufty and C. A. Ralegh Redford in 1958 when the modern cathedral extension was built (Wilson and Hurst 1961:305) (see Figure 5.3). In the first half of the 12th-century, a refectory, chapter house, infirmary, abbot's hall, dormitory, camera and claustral buildings were constructed (although the latter were rebuilt in the 14th-century) as well as the transepts, central tower to roof height, two bays of the nave and the crypt entrance (Whittingham 2006 [1951]:6, 18). It is hard to

appreciate the scale of the building from the remains of today: mainly formations of flint rubble core work stripped of its ashlared facing stone.

5.3 11th-century planned streets

The Domesday entry for Bury St Edmunds, as indicated in previous chapters, notes that between the death of Edward the Confessor in 1066 and the Domesday survey in 1086, the settlement at St Edmunds had been 'expanded in a greater circle', with 342 houses constructed on land which had before been arable (Williams and Martin 2002:1248-9). Section 1.1.1 appraised previous opinions on the town plan, noting the consensus that the grid of streets is in all probability the product of this documented expansion but that without empirical proof of the date at which they were laid out definite statements cannot be made for certain. The resolution of artefactual evidence is not sufficient to provide a simple index of pre- and post-Conquest settlement. However, the streets to the west are clearly an expansion of the probable extent of the later Saxon town that was considered in the previous chapter, on the sloping land to the west that was the only dry land suitable for expansion. This chapter adds more evidence to support the general model. Firstly, two excavations in the monastic precinct offer a possible sequence of road layouts between the church and town. Secondly, to recap from Section 1.1.1 Eric Fernie has drawn links between the geometry of the church and parts of the town grid, suggesting that they are contemporaneous. This section therefore further explores Fernie's arguments: I do not fully agree with his reconstructions of the original scheme but take inspiration from his approach to offer an alternative interpretation of the layout of the new part of the town which makes this oft-cited example in all likelihood an even more elegant piece of medieval town planning than has previously been recognised.

5.3.1 Road surfaces on the Cathedral Cloister site and under St James's Tower

Churchgate Street is the main road in the town grid: it runs west-east on a line that links the Norman (St James's) Tower (the main ceremonial gate of the monastic precinct), the central arch of the west front of the Romanesque church, and,

ultimately, the shrine of St Edmund. These alignments suggest that they are of one conception and it is fortunate that excavations under the tower give some indication of the date of the route. The tower was erected 1121-1148 when the monastic precinct was walled in. In the 1960s, Peter Drewett and Ian Stuart (1973) carried out exploratory excavations underneath it and revealed that the early 12th century foundation trenches for the tower cut through a gravelled surface which was itself over a 10th-11th century occupation layer. This layer is approximately 8ft/2.5m below the modern ground level. It would seem that a gravelled road predated the construction of the tower, further confirmed by a pale grey silt layer over the surface which was an apparent flood deposit that was also cut by the foundation trenches (Drewett and Stuart 1973:243). This suggests that there was flooding of a road sometime before the 1120s, and as an aside, this area was susceptible to flooding in the later medieval period. They did not explore the implications of this earlier road layer in great depth, but it is worth re-enforcing that it may well represent an initial phase of planning of Churchgate Street, a major axial road in the grid system of the town, on an axis with the Romanesque church. Significantly, it aligns with the centre of the new church, not the earlier rotunda. This stood slightly to the north of the new building (Hills 1865:52). The fact that it was laid over Late Saxon occupation layers makes feasible the scenario that a gravelled road was laid across the older street block to forge new links between the new church and a new set of streets, creating a whole new ceremonial topography.

To continue this argument, there are apparent similarities between the stratigraphy of this road and with layers noted during excavations carried out on the site dug in advance of the building of modern additions to the cathedral of St James. This excavation revealed a stratified sequence of Late Saxon occupation, with a layer and ditches containing 10th/11th-century Thetford and St Neot's ware pottery fragments. It was suggested that parallel ditches, also with 10th/11th century pottery in the upper fills, marked a forerunner of a metalled road running north-south. This route was considered in Chapter 4 as a possible axial street in the Late Saxon settlement, linking Northgate Street and Southgate Street. The road seems to have been in use until the monastic precinct was enclosed in the first half of the 12th-century. Sometime, then, in

a period with a *terminus post quem* of 10th/11th centuries, it was metalled with graded small pebbles and pea grits over orange sand. Sue Anderson's pottery report suggests that the finds in the closure levels of the ditches are indicative of a mid 10th – mid 11th century date rather than one earlier in the period, and Dave Gill has therefore hypothesised that the road may have been formalised when the church was begun. Although there is no definite proof of the date of the road, within the stratified sequence it is perfectly feasible that it could have been gravelled some time after the Conquest (2005). A pale grey silt layer was also observed (Gill 2005:11). This may be the same as that seen under the tower.

These probable excavated roads ran perpendicular to each other: one was interpreted as an older north-south route-way that was re-laid, and the other, in line with the nave of the conventual church, was a gravel surface laid out over occupation layers. Both gravelled surfaces lay over later-Saxon occupation layers, and the similarity of the stratified layers shown by the flood deposit means that the *terminus post quem* of the north-south road may well be applicable to the one under the Norman tower. The evidence is not conclusive, in that the estimated date from the pottery is a range from *c.*950 to *c.*1050, but the likelihood is that the surfaces do indicate a road system conceived when the Romanesque church was begun. With this in mind, exploration of the geometry of the town on the basis of this axial line can be explored with new confidence.

5.3.2 Proportional relationships

Eric Fernie has observed that the monastic church, in common with others of its type, was laid out using the proportion of 1 to $\sqrt{2}$: in other words, the relationship between the side of a square and its diagonal, *c.*1.414 to 3 decimal places (1998:6-8). This proportion is commonly identified in Romanesque and Gothic architecture, and it is a simple one to achieve using squares and compasses (Hiscock 2000:6-13). It seems that the grid of streets that forms the western part of the town plan was also created using this geometrical proportion. Figure 5.4a, reproduced here from Fernie's paper, shows his measurements of the main blocks of the town plan. Whilst Churchgate Street

survives today as a major east-west thoroughfare, College Lane to the south is less obvious: it is much smaller and its eastern end, Tuns Lane, was dog-legged (at some point before the 18th century, because it is shown in its present form on Warren's 18th-century map). It is worth noting that within the measurements given, there is no north-south symmetry (Fernie 1998:13). Fernie shows major units of 221ft (67.5m), 313ft (95.5m) and 221ft (67.5m) from east to west, and 535ft (163m), 367ft (111.5m), 535ft (163m) and 535ft (163m) from north to south. He has demonstrated that these are related by ratios of $\sqrt{2}$: for example, 221 ft multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$ gives 313 ft (Fernie 1998:13). Generally, then, the grid of streets, it can be argued, was laid out in an orthogonal design achieved through $\sqrt{2}$ geometry. Philip Crummy suggested that the divisions might be based on poles but Eric Fernie has countered that lengths in poles fit less well into the subdivision of the blocks than his suggested proportional scheme (Fernie 1998:15).

This observation of a geometrical scheme is convincing. However, further analysis is possible. Figure 5.4a shows that the measurements cited above are taken using the Norman Tower as a base point. In fact, the Norman Tower was not built until the early 12th century, 1121-1148. The monastic precinct is an encroachment on the earlier Saxon streets, and the continued use of the road under the modern Cathedral transept into the 12th century suggests that it was a thoroughfare until the precinct was enclosed: in other words, the land was probably not part of an enclosed precinct until the early 12th century. I therefore suggest that the 11th century town grid was unlikely to have been laid out in relation to this benchmark. As outlined below, the tower appears to be an integral part of the geometrical scheme because the 12th century modifications to the town plan were executed along the same underlying principles: what Eric Fernie was considering is actually the geometry of the 12th century town. I suggest that it is far more likely that the 11th century addition will have abutted the late-Saxon street of Angel Lane.

A reconsideration of the geometry is presented here, (Figure 5.4b) focusing on Churchgate Street, the main axial route. The measurement of 221ft (67.5m) from the

Norman tower to Angel Lane can be discounted as a later part of the town plan. The first true 'leg' of the new part of Churchgate Street is the 313ft (95.5m) stretch between Angel Lane and, to the west, the junction where it meets College Street/Hatter Street. The next block of streets is also 313ft. The next section was measured by Eric Fernie to be 221ft (67.5 m), measured to the edge of the west side of Guildhall Street, which is the same distance as that between the Norman Tower and Angel Lane. However, if Guildhall Street is considered more closely, the properties on its western side do not appear to fit into the grid of streets and Figure 3.3 shows clearly that the properties are divided into smaller widths than the town grid. It would appear that this block was created at a different time and I suggest that it was when the town wall was built in the 12th century, particularly as the block runs along the entire western extent of the town wall. Eric Fernie and Bernard Gauthiez identified the town wall and the west side of Guildhall Street as a later element of the street plan and measured only as far as its eastern edge (1998:95). However, what if this part was not *added* in the 12th century but was *re-modelled* from the original streets? If there were two phases in the streets, as indicated at the east end by the encroachment of the precinct, the western extremity of Guildhall Street, previously ignored, may well be part of the original scheme. If we assume, then, that the 12th-century town wall ran along the extent of the earlier town boundary, then a measurement of 67.5m (221ft) falls short. The new measurement, to the near side of what is now St Andrew's Street, is feasibly a third east-west measurement of 95.5m, i.e. a distance that is the same as the other east-west measurements in the grid. By this reasoning, a new, three part east-west geometry is revealed, comprising three blocks of equal width.

Turning to the north-south geometry, I suggest that this, too, is a product of 12th century modification. The town wall runs along the west side of the town, and the block of properties associated with it runs along the west side of the market place. This suggests that the west side of the market place may have been created when the wall was laid out. By inference, then, perhaps the whole market place was added on at this time? If this were to be the case, the 163m length of High Baxter Street, measured by Eric Fernie and demonstrated to be consistent with other north-south measurements,

might be a later addition to an earlier layout, but one that is planned according to the same $\sqrt{2}$ geometrical scheme. If this argument is pursued, it becomes apparent that the southern part of the grid of streets is also then of three blocks north-south: a narrower unit of 115.5m flanked by two units of 163m to the south and the north. As shown in Figure 5.4b, this gives an interpretation of the original plan as a nine-part grid. If this interpretation is correct, then some consideration needs to be given to Risbygate Street, which enters the town from the north-west. Today, it is the main approach into the town, but it passes further to the north of the proposed extent of the grid. On Payne's map of 1823, however, a lane is shown called 'Field Lane' which approaches the town and is almost on an alignment with Abbeygate Street (this is shown on Figure 3.3). Perhaps Risbygate Street/Brentgoval led to the Saxon settlement, and 'Field Lane' was a short-lived road leading to the north western extent of the late 11th-century gridiron. In fact, Hospital Road looks like a counterpart to Field Lane, converging with Westgate Street outside the Westgate and forming an equivalent entrance to the West Gate.

It might seem that it is naïve to seek to reduce the plan to such a pattern: there is no reason, after all, why the north –south dimension should be symmetrical. Many new towns with grid plans have blocks of different sizes, particularly if there were earlier landscape features to which they adhered (e.g. see, for example, Coste and de Roux 2007 for the diversity of layouts of the orthogonally-inspired French *bastides* of the 13th century). Spiro Kostof's wide-ranging survey of city plans from across the world has revealed the diversity of hidden numerical schemes that might underly seemingly irregular or asymmetrical urban layouts: for example, the use of the Fibonnacci sequence, where each unit is the sum of the two others before it, or a system where the lengths of units are related to the diagonals of preceding blocks (1991). Also, Keith Lilley in particular has argued that the underlying topography of the site needs to be considered: what might look irregular on a two dimensional plan might in fact be something laid out according to equal lengths, rendered different in appearance in plan by a topography that slopes up or down (Lilley *et al* 2005:3). There are therefore valid reasons why a town plan might look less than perfectly geometric. In this context,

though, the Guildhall Street block *is,* to my mind, clearly a product of remodelling. The possible nine-part grid at Bury is a more elegant design than has previously been thought, and it is one which accords with Romanesque spiritual and practical aesthetics. How many other towns, perhaps, if phased in detail, could be shown to have been more idealistic when they were first conceived? It might be difficult to find out, given the palimpsest that is the landscape of most medieval towns, especially if the phases are as close together in time as the changes in Bury, separated by only 50 years or so.

5.3.3 Distribution of pottery

The suggestion that the southern part of the town is earlier than the north is lent some credence by the distribution of pottery recovered to date. The Norman Conquest had no real impact on pottery manufacture with a transition from late Saxon to medieval pottery not effected until the 12th century (Hurst 1976:343). Although pre- and post-Conquest sites in Bury cannot be easily distinguished, there is some potential to shed light on Late Saxon and immediate post-Conquest development in comparison to later occupation. Saxo-Norman (AD *c.*850-1150) wheel thrown wares typical of East Anglia have been found in assemblages from the town. Thetford ware or Thetford-type pottery was also made in Ipswich and Norwich. It is a wheelmade, medium-sandy, reduced blue-grey ware that was used for cooking pots, jars, bowls, pitchers, storage jars and lamps (Hurst 1976:314-320). Fabrics of Ipswich-type Thetford ware are generally dated from the mid-9th to the 11th centuries, and Thetford-type ware to the 10th-11th centuries, with rural potteries at Langhale and Grimston operating later in the period (Hurst 1976:314). St Neot's ware is a shelly ware fabric made in Cambridgeshire and in the 12th century its forms were gradually developed into medieval wares (Hurst 1975:323). Stamford Wares are fine, oxidised white-wares similar to late Saxon imports, and are often glazed with a thin yellow, orangey or pale-green lead glaze (Hurst 1976:323).

For some reason in the mid 12th century, the Saxo-Norman pottery industry apparently collapsed or was radically reorganised, perhaps as a result of socio-economic changes and the emergence of industry in towns. Some industrially produced finewares

continued to be made but there was a general resurgence in the use of local handmade, clamp fired wares (Hurst 1976:284, 318). It is suggested in Bury that the prevalence of St Neot's ware represents perhaps a lack of local pottery production in the later Saxon period, with the gradual introduction of handmade Bury ware (Sue Anderson pers. comm.). These wares are described as 'early medieval'. 'Bury ware' fabrics are not found outside Bury (apart from in Thetford, where there were dependent houses of the Abbey) and in particular, they do not appear on rural sites in the vicinity. In the absence of a kiln site, Anderson has suggested that there was perhaps a production site close to the town that catered for an urban market: the wares reached nearby towns but was not supplied to nearby settlements. As yet, nothing has been published on the ware and a detailed form series has not been produced, although Sue Anderson's work over the years has given her a familiarity with the fabric that makes her reports invaluable. An assemblage from the backfill of a cellar, dated to the 12th century, added some insights to Sue Anderson's typology of Bury ware fabrics: it included local pottery, Thetford and St Neot's Ware of the 10th/11th century, and glazed Grimston (Norfolk) and Stamford (Lincolnshire) Ware pottery assigned a 12th century date. Anderson has suggested that there is a possible evolution in the Bury ware fabrics which might match the date range presented by the imported wares, with later examples in a similar fabric but wheel-made and with more developed rims. Her hypothesis is that there was a burgeoning industry supplying the town into the 12th-century. There are several types of Bury ware fabric: one of these is a shelly ware which has a light dusting of powdered shell on the outer margin to give a sparkly effect. Pieces are often decorated with combed and applied thumb decoration (Gill and Anderson 1998:7-8).

Figure 5.5 shows the distribution of Saxo-Norman pottery from the town, tabulated in Table 5.1a and 5.1b, which present those sites where pottery dates were bracketed 11th- 12th centuries in the site reports. As explained in Section 4.3.3, which considered the distribution of Middle Saxon pottery, not all features have been dug to depth: this means that the retrieval of the earlier medieval material has not been favoured. This distribution shows that there is *ex situ* Late Saxon (10th – 11th) century pottery scattered over most of the town. There is, as expected, a concentration of *in situ* Late Saxon

archaeology – mainly ditches and pits – in the supposed area of the pre-Conquest town, in ditches at East Close, and - significantly - in the southern part of the town grid. Although the dataset is small, and the sites that are shown on the map were not all dug to depth, the lack of 10th-11th century features in the northern part of the town seems to confirm the suggestion that the southern part of the grid is earlier, and that the northern part is a 12th century extension.

Significantly, the results from excavations on High Baxter Street do not contradict this hypothesis. Two open area sites have been dug on the street, BSE 183 (Tester 2001a) and BSE 202 (Tester 2003a) and they revealed stratified evidence for medieval and post-medieval occupation along the street front. Pottery dating to the 10th and 11th centuries was residual across the site (Tester 2001a: appendix – context descriptions) but the earliest excavated feature on site BSE 183 was a pit containing Thetford ware with 11th-12th-century 'Early Medieval' ware. The finds evidence indicates more significant activity from the 12th-13th centuries. Generally, it is concluded that activity on this site was 'unlikely to predate the 11th century' and was more intense from the 12th century (Anderson 2001a:45). Over the road on, site BSE 202, the earliest excavated features seemed to date to the 13th/14th centuries, although there were fragments of earlier pottery in them (Tester 2003a:4). Although the ceramic evidence is not resolved enough to differentiate conclusively between late 11th and early 12th-century occupation, the absence of late-Saxon ware which is apparent in sites to the south is marked. Arguably, given the truncation of the site and possible ephemeral nature of the remains, it might be that 11th century occupation may not show up significantly in the archaeological record. Yet in general, this site does not disprove the hypothesis that this part of the town might be later than the immediate post-Conquest period: further excavations in the town might prove or disprove the whole model of development. It is without contradictory evidence to date, however, that the scheme of post-Conquest development, under Baldwin's abbacy, is argued to be a nine part grid. This is shown in Figure 5.6.

5.3.4 Traditions in town planning

This chapter has so far argued that, to the later Saxon settlement at *St Edmund's Stowe* early in Baldwin's abbacy, a planned, orthogonal geometric grid of streets was added. It has suggested that the market place, which is bordered by the town wall and the run of properties which form the west side of Guildhall Street, is probably a later addition to the town, created when the wall was built in the early 12th century. This argument supports the general hypothesis presented by Bernard Gauthiez, in which he marked the Long Brackland area to the north of the market place, and the market place itself, as a result of a more organic later development (Gauthiez 1998:95) (to anticipate a little, see Figure 5.8). An odd element from the town plan is removed in that we are no longer looking at a set of four blocks with dimensions 534 ft (163m), 378 ft (115.5m), 534 ft (163m), 534 ft (163m) but a tripartite scheme with a smaller central block. The plan of the town therefore appears as a block of nine units added to the existing streets. Is it possible that the smaller block in the centre was intended, originally, to be a market place? This suggestion is inspired particularly by the arrangement in some of the 13th-century French *bastides,* which have provision for a market in an empty street block, often smaller and centrally placed within a grid plan, although it is not to suggest that the designs are related to Bury St Edmunds (Coste and de Roux 2007). This addition was made at the same time as the monastic church was re-designed on a massive scale, and, in a country-wide context, it is part of a broader increase in town plantation or extension in the 11th century town as administration and trade were formalised and fostered, particularly at monasteries and castles (for example, in East Anglia at Norwich and Peterborough) (see Beresford 1967, Rowley 1999:94-5). At Bury, within this context, the particular intention was to create a shrine and a town. Here, some consideration is given to the form of the town and the concepts that may have informed the layout.

The foundation of Bury St Edmunds must be viewed within the context of contemporary urban foundations, particularly towns that developed as a result of ecclesiastical planning at the time. Figure 5.7, reproduced from James Bond's study of monastic landscapes (2004, Figures 90 and 94), shows a selection of ecclesiastical

towns: St Albans (Herfordshire); Bury itself; Burton-upon-Trent (Staffordshire); Evesham (Worcestershire); Eynesham (Oxfordshire) and Pershore (Worcestershire). The figure serves to show the size of Bury St Edmunds in relation to these other towns, but of more pertinence to this paragraph is the comment that the towns are all different. Attention is here drawn to Terence Slater's study of town foundations on English Benedictine estates, which concluded that they were all differently laid out and not inspired by a uniform scheme. Each town can therefore be seen as a product of its topography and historical development. Bury was not designed according to a model. Exploration and understanding of the form (as a means to understanding whether there were inbuilt ideological topographies, for example, or whether the design was more functionally inspired) can be led by a more generic consideration of urban planning.

In the case of a town that was most likely speculative such as Bury St Edmunds, for example, there are clear practical benefits to a grid pattern. Colin Platt has argued that a grid pattern was probably created with a sound expectation of growth, which could be extended and the plots allocated and subdivided (1976a:33), and Spiro Kostof, an urban geographer, has pointed out that a gridded city will work and is a form that has been adopted across time and space (1991). Blocks are not the only form that could be chosen for a planned town: Mick Aston and James Bond noted that the more ambitious new towns employed a grid plan, although a true grid is found in less than 10% of all medieval new town foundations, which are more variable in shape and size than earlier examples (Aston and Bond 2000:21).

Bernard Gauthiez sought to draw what might be obvious comparison, in the light of the Conquest, between the newly laid out town at Bury St Edmunds and Norman towns such as Rouen, planned out in a tradition extending back into the 10th century (Fernie 1998:14). Given the education and cultural connections of the new Abbot Baldwin, a French monk closely connected to the royal court, it is logical to seek inspiration in this part of Europe. However, the chequerboard suggested in this chapter is radically different to that interpretation published by Bernard Gauthiez (1998), reproduced here in Figure 5.8. Gauthiez, a French medievalist, compared the outline of Bury with his

pioneering work on particular Norman *bourgs* that were formed from very elongated, rectangular blocks of streets. He suggested that the design of Bury St Edmunds can be matched to this French tradition (Figure 5.9). Following this line of argument, he ignored the east-west divisions of the blocks and perceived Bury as originally created from long strips, with an unsupported suggestion that Abbeygate Street might have been driven through in the 12th century. However, he was moved to comment that Churchgate Street, an undeniable transverse axis and point of symmetry, was not a feature of his French examples (1998:90).

With hindsight, this difference is due to the fact that Bury is perhaps *not* built in the same tradition as these towns and I believe that his downplaying of the chequerboard element of the street plan compromises the likely correctness of his interpretation. To place the town plan within a Norman French tradition is to overlook the possibility that there were more subtle cultural interactions after the Norman Conquest. A framing of Anglo-Norman town plantation as a possible result of the export of towns in a Norman style carries connotations of a deliberate Norman urban policy of colonisation and urban implants dictated from some overall masterplan. As a background, at least 12 *bourgs* had been created in Normandy before 1066 as new towns or as extensions (Rowley 1999:94), but this does not mean that town plantation was an imposed royal policy: the role of individual aspiring lordly and ecclesiastical landowners is equally important in the spread of town plantations after the Conquest (see Beresford 1967).

To return to the point, there was a long history of urbanism and town planning in England before the Conquest: Roman towns, towns inspired by a seeking of *Romanitas,* planned *wic* trading sites such as the streets excavated at Southampton (Hamwic), and the rectangular *burh* sites established by Alfred in Saxon Wessex (Aston and Bond 2000). The plan conceived at Bury St Edmunds therefore might be inspired by more than just one tradition. Scholarship of the Abbey has tended towards the interpretation that it was an Anglo-Norman institution, and the Anglo- prefix is important. Eric Fernie, for example, has observed that whilst that group of large Benedictine abbey churches to which St Edmund's belonged were undeniably related to political power,

taste and the French Norman order, they also display a distinctive Anglo-Norman architectural style (Fernie 1998:4; 2000:33). At Bury, too, it has been argued that the artistic, intellectual, literary and cultural life of the monastery continued to cleave to an Anglo-Saxon tradition, with no real major watershed created by the Conquest (Gransden 1981:74; Thompson 2001:14). There is, then, at least in the monastic community, an apparent fusion of Norman and Anglo-Saxon ideals in art and architecture. This point is reinforced when it is considered that, as for many other pilgrimage churches, the main dedication was to a local saint, Edmund, king and martyr. Edmund shared the apsidal end of the Romanesque church with St Jurmin of Blythburgh (Suffolk coast), and pieces of St Botolph, a 7th century missionary also associated with East Suffolk. Both of these sets of remains were translated to Bury in the mid 11th century (Blair 2002b 518; 538).

This is collection of local saints is perhaps significant in the political legitimisation of the Norman regime locally, but Edmunds was also a more widely renown figure: just as Cnut may have sought the patronage of St Edmund, so the saint may have become associated with the sanctity of English kingship and it was certainly a favoured later medieval royal pilgrimage destination. In this context, then, it might be argued that the newer town at St Edmunds could have been born out of a meeting of French and English tradition. Significantly, in the 11th century at least, the new town was *added* to the older burh, and some of the older monastic buildings were retained, for example the centre of the old round church, and the basilica of St Benedict which stood to the east of the new conventual church (as considered in Section 4.7).

The character of Abbot Baldwin is most probably at the centre of the inspiration for the town plan. His role as physician meant that he was involved with the Royal Court and he was also an active and eminent ecclesiastical politician. He was frequently with the court at Windsor, Westminster and in Normandy, as shown by the charters he witnessed (Gransden 1981:66). In 1065, then, Baldwin, a political player, assumed leadership of this wealthy and privileged institution: a shrine with royal patronage and a widespread cult, and an associated monastery and settlement that served a wide local

hinterland. He maintained his connections with the Abbey during his absence by means of messenger knights. As a politician and royal physician, he linked (or, perhaps, continued to link) the community at St Edmunds with ideas on fashion, politics, royalty, ruler-ship, and the exercise of the Norman feudal system, with its reliance on written administration. As an individual, he was most likely educated in politics, science, theology, philosophy, architecture, geometry and the arts. The Romanesque masterpiece of the Abbey church is testimony to these links. It is highly likely that he had considerable input into the changes to the settlement wrought under his abbacy, a point made by Antonia Gransden (1981). Lobel notes that his development work and reorganisation of the administration of the monastic estates showed him to be a man of 'great enterprise and exceptional ability' (1935:14). She comments that:

> [Baldwin] had had the advantages of a wide experience both in England and on the continent, and it would be surprising if his conceptions of urban life had not been of an advanced nature. The customs of London and the cities of France can hardly have failed to make an impression on so intelligent an observer' (Lobel 1935:14).

It is reasonable to assume, then, that Bury would have been laid out within the context of intellectual life and learning. Keith Lilley's recent work, as noted in Section 1.3.3, has sought to move beyond narrative description in town plan analysis by exploring the possible underlying symbolism of medieval planned towns and this theme will be explored in Chapter 7.

5.4 Early 12th-century changes to the town and Abbey

By the early 12th-century, the post-Conquest developments at Bury had been successful enough to support and necessitate, forty years later, a change in scale of the town. At the same time, construction of the formal ceremonial entrance to the church was begun. It is documented in the *gesta sacristarum* that the wall around the monastic precinct was built under the financial directive of the Sacrists Hervey and Godfrey (1121-1148) (Arnold 1896 II:290). I have indicated above (Section 5.4.5) that the town wall was also built at this time, and that the town was augmented according to a

scheme that was in keeping with the original geometric proportions of the town. This section outlines these changes, leading into consideration of the fortunes of the townspeople during this period of rapid development.

5.4.1 St Edmund's Abbey

Under Anselm, Abbot from 1121-1148, the Abbey continued as a centre for politics, art, religion and language: he had been Abbot of St Saba in Rome and his appointment reflected the European connections of this Benedictine house (Thompson 2001:14; 22). Historical concensus is that he was a man with continental connections and a 'love of the flamboyant and dramatic' (Parker McClachlan 1980:256). Work on the Abbey church continued under the financial direction of Sacrists Hervey and Godfrey.

West front

The west front was built at least as far as clerestory level in this period and it was constructed on a scale that was larger than that originally intended in the 11th-century, as shown by the demolition of the church of St Denis that had only been built in the 1080s (McAleer 1998:145; transcript of 12th century account in Gransden 1963:118). The ruins of the West front stand up to 12 m high in places and houses were built into it in the 17th-century. These have recently been restored, allowing some investigation of the medieval fabric, albeit analysis restricted by the policy of preservation and investigation of the post-Reformation elements. The true monumentality of the structure cannot easily be appreciated from the ruins alone. J. P. McAleer, who carried out examination in advance of restoration of the houses within it, said that it is:

> 'more than just a façade structure as in the case of the many medieval churches with two western towers... the structure found at the west end of Bury is the most monumental, the most complex, the most extraordinary, seemingly without parallels... [W]estern structures at Ely and Lincoln cathedrals and, perhaps, Peterborough Abbey (as it was then) could be considered lesser rivals' (1998:127).

This shower of superlatives conveys, perhaps, the investment in the West front that reflected the fame and wealth of St Edmund and which would have been an important liturgical backdrop for processionals and entrances to the church, especially on Palm Sunday. It is justified by further comparisons made by Eric Fernie, who notes that there are only five churches with such a large western structure: Winchester and then, in East Anglia and the Midlands, Lincoln, Ely, Bury and Peterborough. The west fronts may have been constructed with specific liturgical functions in mind, although the only clear indications that this might be the case are chapels within the structure at Bury, and those built off the facade at Ely (2000:128). The west front included chapels on several levels: for example, in 1142, the porticus of St Faith over the porticus of St Denis was dedicated (McAleer 1998:132-3). The western massif at Bury, at 73 m/240 ft, was twice the length of the west front at Winchester (Fernie 2000:262).

Traces of massive arches that allowed access to the nave and the aisles can be identified in the patchwork of building fabrics (Figure 5.10). Philip McAleer has produced hypothetical reconstruction drawings of the form of the west front (1998, see Figure 5.11). Test pits have shown that the medieval floor level was more than 2.7m below the modern ground level, buried under demolition rubble and subsequent build up (Martin *et al* 1989:71). A small cellar below one of the houses, Number 2, reaches down to the original level (DoE 639-1/8/3). The arches were therefore taller than they appear today. They were set into barrel vaults that, with their ashlared facing, would have been of greater depth than the 2.1m thick rubble which survives in places today (McAleer 1998:132-3). Whittingham adds that a particular stone in Moyse's Hall museum may have come from the west front: it depicts, on two of its sides, Matthew's Angel and two devils pushing a man into hell (2006:16). There is documentary evidence that the central doors were made of bronze by the craftsman Master Hugo (Fernie 1998:4). Pieces of his intricate work with designs of people and animals survive in the 12th century Bury Bible, and in the walrus ivory Bury Cross that is held in the New York Metropolitan Museum (Figure 2.12). The three entrances are, in the spirit of Romanesque architecture, reminiscent of a Roman triumphal arch, a point worth emphasising because the town was part of the setting for the processional landscape

focussed on the church. The imagery of the early 12th century ecclesiastical buildings on the approach to the shrine will be considered further in Section 7.6, as will the houses and identities of people who sought spatial connection with the most prominent parts of the landscape

5.4.2 Monastic precinct

The monastic precinct was walled in at a similar date to the construction of the west front. A flint rubble wall with ashlared stone dressings enclosed an area of 23 acres (9.3 hectares). The land of the vineyard was purchased and walled c.1211 (Arnold 1896 :II 293). Parts of the wall survive around much of the circuit, although it has mainly been robbed of its dressed stone. A section of the wall excavated next to the Norman Tower was constructed from a flint rubble core with a facing of well cut blocks (Drewett and Stuart 1973:247) although around the vineyard, the facing was of coursed flints. Incorporated within Number 3, Honey Hill, is a surviving section that is 1.1m thick.

The Eastgate and the Abbot's Bridge were built as part of the precinct wall. This bridge had a footpath on the inside and a plank bridge on the outside. There were also a number of other gates. The South Gate of the cemetery, St Margaret's, was pulled down in 1737 (Figure 5.13) (Morley 1926:176-7). The large stone atop it apparently had four angels on its faces (Tymms 1864:88). The original Abbeygate, the gate to the court of the Abbey, was destroyed during riots in the late 13th-century. The current gate stands slightly to the south of Abbeygate Street and it is assumed that it was built to replace the ruined original, which may have been still standing to the north.

St James' tower

St James' Gate forms the main entrance to the monastic cemetery and it forms a portal in the approach to the church. The tower was restored in 1846-7 in response to a campaign to save it from imminent collapse and the Victorian work is well disguised – Gordon Hills was critical of the removal of the remains of the precinct walls which gave the tower a false isolation (Anon 1846; Hills 1865:120; Drewett and Stuart 1973:243). The tower is of Barnack Stone: it has already been noted that the abbey had shares in

the Barnack quarries (Yates 1843:II 11-20). The west face is the most ornate, with fish-scale mouldings, a gable over the arch, and carved capitals (see DoE 1997 639-1/8/104) (Figure 5.14). The tower is un-vaulted and the tympanum, which depicted Christ in Majesty, was removed to allow easier access for carts (Gillingwater 1804). The view down Churchgate Street to the tower epitomises the processional potential of the town. This building is the earliest extant structure in the town.

Encroachment on the town

The monastic precinct was extended over part of the earlier town, as illustrated in Figure 5.3. The north-south road that seems to have joined Northgate and Southgate Streets went out of use at around the time that the enclosure was created. The parish churches of St James and St Mary were built at this date, to replace the Church of St Denis. St James' was allegedly funded from money that would 'otherwise have been used for an abbatial pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, hence the dedication (Drewett and Stuart 1973:242). There are, apparently, some traces of long and short Late Saxon stone work in both churches (SHER BSE 058). It is possible that the growth of the settlement either necessitated, or was expected to necessitate, the provision of larger parish churches.

In this modification of the processional and the geometric townscape, what aspects of the existing town were sacrificed? The only excavated site that can shed any light on the issue was that dug underneath the modern Cathedral cloister, where the western edge of a Late Saxon road was revealed. There was an occupation layer associated with 11th-century pottery on the west side of this road and in the 11th-12th centuries – possibly post-Conquest - two large post-in-trench timber buildings were constructed, cutting through this layer but still associated with Thetford and St Neot's ware (Gill 2005:12). The first was oriented long wall to the street, evidenced by four substantial rectangular post holes in a footing trench. Later in the stratigraphic sequence, another building was added, probably at right angles to this one, which measured more than 14 m north-south. Whether these large timber buildings, which could have gone out of use when the road did, were secular of monastic can not be resolved. However, their

abandonment highlights the change in use of the site, relating to the enclosure of the precinct and the construction of the predecessor to the current St James' church, a buttress of which was found. A ditch ran over the top of the later of the buildings, and Gill has suggested this was dug to remove the posts (2005:17). A stone building with an undercroft was erected, with associated hearth and aisled building. Gill has suggested that they may relate to the construction of the church – more post holes and pits were sealed under occupational loam (Gill 2005:6). This change in use seems to relate to the enclosure of the precinct and they show that the area was built up before this occurred.

A monumental re-shaping and encroachment is a typical story in the context of the re-modelling and redevelopment of medieval towns, where lordship came with the power to displace. The modifications to the church design shows that the agenda was to create a giant monument to St Edmund. As an illustrative example, Alexander Neckham on his visit to Paris in the mid-late 12th century commented on the building site at Notre Dame. In this scheme, the entrance to Le Petit Pont was widened in 1153-4, a new street created, Rue Neuve Notre Dame, and, in preparation for the building of the choir of the cathedral, a Roman wall and houses that had nestled against it on the south side of the Isle-de-Seine were cleared (Holmes 1966:66).

St James' gate was erected 67.5m (221ft) from the junction of Churchgate Street and Angel Lane (as seen in Figure 5.4a), and this was paralleled by the creation of the eastern side of a block of properties which were probably re-modelled from the earlier final block of the town at a distance of 67.5m (221ft) from the junction between Churchgate Street and Whiting Street. This gave a new bipartite symmetry of 163m, instead of the former three units of 95.5m (313ft). The choice of 67.5m for the distance is related to the pre-existing scheme: 67.5 multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$ is 95.46m. These considerations must have affected the position of the town defences. The town wall was created at this date, defining the settlement in much the same way as the monastic precinct was defined, and it is my suggestion that the land within it, which was formerly part of the original grid, was subdivided into smaller properties – perhaps

with the intention of generating more rent. This block of land ran further north than the original town, creating the market place, which was bordered on the north by Brentgoval, which may have been an older road. These actions created the geometry in the town grid that Eric Fernie investigated, and which is illustrated as a coherent scheme in Figure 5.2a. This shows that there was a deliberate preservation of a geometrical scheme (replicated in the $\sqrt{2}$ geometry of the tower) which suggests that the developments of the early 12th century were perhaps intended to maintain some cosmological, theological or symbolic significance. The developments will be explored in more detail below: the creation of the market place is significant for what it suggests about the evolving commercial life of the town and the creation of the town defences show the projected image of the town as a model medieval town. Both of these campaigns are still evidence of the power of urban lordship, but they are tied up with the identity and the fortunes of the urban population.

5.4.3 Market place

The hypothesised re-planning and extension northwards of the properties on the western part of the town was accompanied by an extension northwards of the town grid (Figure 5.15). The implication is that the Great Market in the north-west corner of the town was created in the early 12th century, perhaps as a speculative development, and as a reflection of the commercial success of the town (see Figure 5.16). The east side of the market place is characterised by long plots similar to those on the west side, which confirms this view. This suggests that there was an increased need for market and commercial space beyond the old market and the space outside the abbey. Certainly in the reign of Henry I, there was increasing mint activity and Henry I also confirmed the rights to hold a fair. Chapters 6 and 7 will explore the earliest evidence that we have for the physical layout of the market place: from the late 12th-century at least, there were stalls, booths, and shops on it and fronting it. The organisation of stalls and booths into rows and the implicit regulation of market space is a well attested phenomenon in the later medieval literature, but may be earlier: excavations at Saffron Walden (Essex) have revealed that the market was laid out on a

grid plan with a metalled surface, with the first evidence of activity from the 12th century (Andrews and Mundy 2002).

The change in the plan to Bury is just one example of modification and addition to a town plan in the medieval period. Significantly, the fact that it happened only c.50 years after an 11th century layout is testimony, perhaps, to the rate of commercial growth and the changing size and scope of Bury St Edmunds, which already served a large area: its economic and religious hinterland grew. The addition of secondary market places to existing town plans can, in the words of Mick Aston and James Bond, be 'repeatedly demonstrated', both with additions or remodelling of pre-conquest towns (such as the new market which grew up outside Hereford (Herefordshire) or the clearing of a space in Wallingford (Oxfordshire)) or, as for Bury St Edmunds, changes in designs made to new foundations: at Pontefract (Yorkshire) for example, a wide street served as a market place in the Anglo-Norman borough which was supplemented by an extramural market place that received a charter in 1255-8 (Aston and Bond 2000:86). The development at Bury, if the proposed model is accepted, occurred within a relatively period of time from the original foundation, in the early 12th century, and the East Anglian context of this chronology must be considered.

Economic historian James Masschaele, in a paper on the public role of market places, has devoted some attention to market investment from the 12th century, exploring the size and scale of new market places as an index of actual and speculative trade at this period (2002:388-9). He argued that a large market may have been incorporated in a design to say as much about the hopes and aspirations of the planner as much as the actuality of marketing (Masschaele 2002:390). James Campbell, meanwhile, has commented that the 12th century market places of East Anglia are worthy of especial note, commenting on the similarly monumental size of the rectangular spaces at Norwich and Great Yarmouth. It is generally acknowledged that East Anglia was the most urbanised region at Domesday, and these market places are a physical testament to the commercial nature of its towns (Masschaele 2004:40). It is also possible that the

size of the market places represent a continuing degree of competition between the monastery at St Edmunds and the See at Norwich.

5.4.4 Town defences

The extent of the market, then, was defined by the new town wall and ditch on the west side of the town and it is worth exploring the character of the defences, because they defined the town and its community. Under Anselm, it was the Sacrist's responsibility to ensure that the '*fossatum quo villa circumdatur*' was maintained. At this date a wall was constructed around the town (*murorum etiam ambitum circa villam*) under the Sacrist Harvey, as noted in the *Gesta Sacristarum* (Arnold 1896:II p.290; West 1973:19). It is possible to reconstruct the defences from traces in streets and earthworks which reveal a sweeping curve that links the north and south gates, running along the western part of the town (noted in appendix to Gill 1998a) (see Figure 5.15). On the east side, the Abbey precincts form a boundary to the town. The southern flank appears to be preserved in partial earthworks, and much of the land enclosed by them is water meadow.

The curve of the northern part of the defences are preserved in the modern Long Brackland and St John's Street, which I believe developed as intramural streets: a reasonable explanation for the lack of regularity in this northern part of the town. In support, an excavation behind 44-7 St Andrew's Street south (BSE 219) unearthed gravel which may have represented an intramural track (Gill 2003b) and the build up of a loamy soil suggests that occupation or cultivation began here only in 13th/14th centuries (Gill 2003b). On Sergeant's Walk, there was evidence that this build up had begun in the 13th century (Tester 1999). Excavations in Church Row (BSE 175) showed a layer of sand 0.2m deep over subsoil, and Jo Caruth suggested that there was small scale activity here in the medieval period, but with evidence of later medieval quarrying for sand (1999b). Excavations on Short Brackland showed the sloping nature of the terrain down to the river, and the increasing depth of overburden. The name Brackland may well come from 'broken land' (similar to the etymology of the East Anglian sandy Breckland) (Room 1988:54). The land slopes down towards Tay Fen.

The name 'Pease Porridge Green' for the triangular space within this block, at the end of Cannon Street suggests that it may have been wet and muddy (Room 1992:45). There was a well on Well Street, noted in the medieval rentals.

In the late 12th century, Roger the Clerk of Fressingfield and his wife Agnes of Beauchamp (*bello campo)* were granted tofts in Bury in what is either the 'north side of the great place' or the 'great place to the north in the town of St Edmunds': *magna platea versus aquilonem in villa S. Edmundi* (Davies 1954: 81-2 for a transcript). The second is perhaps more likely because the rent was payable to the cellarer rather than the sacrist. The former was responsible for the suburbs and land around the town, whilst the estates of the latter were more concentrated in the centre. If this interpretation is correct, then the 'great place' was not overly built up in the late 12th century, which fits the archaeological evidence. The evidence indicates, then, that a defensive line ran along the west of the town, situated at a distance to maintain a vertical line of symmetry in the town plan. The defences were then designed to sweep to the North and South Gates in arcs that were more or less symmetrical, enclosing wet and empty land which was only suitable for later medieval infilling on the north side. The presence of the earlier settlement, particularly down Southgate Street, may be part of the reason why the North and South gates were so far out (Statham 1998:100).

Town wall and ditch

The street pattern preserves the line of the town ditch and bank on the north and west of the town. The soil levels are distinctively higher on the east side of St Andrew's Street and the north side of Tayfen road, suggesting a build up of about 1.2m (4 ft) within the enclosed area (West 1973:16, 19). In 1357-8, the property of Robert de Lester atte Northgate was described as being situated between the tenement of William de Deniston, wheelwright, and the stone wall of the town (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f. 89r). Andrew Tester has carried out many of the archaeological interventions which have had the potential to reveal information about the town defences. On the site of Pickford's Depot on Tayfen Road, in the part of the defences that span east west across the northern part of the town, the bank was recorded at 11m wide and 0.8m high, and had

clearly been levelled (Tester 1997). The bank had been constructed directly over the subsoil, with the topsoil cleared. The ditch may have been up to 10m wide and 3m deep at this point, cut to exploit a natural watercourse. A sherd of pottery from the outer slope of the bank/upper fill of the ditch suggested an 'Early Medieval', 11th – 13th century date, which is in accord with the date of the defences suggested here. On this site, two large blocks of flint and mortar walling were exposed within the backfill of the ditch. The walling, coursed flints with a yellowish mortar, was similar to other 12th century walling in the town, notably that of the monastic precinct. The fragments show that the wall would have stood at least 2.2m high. They were smooth on one face and rough on the other, which shows that they were built against the bank. Tester has suggested that they were pushed into the ditch when the wall was demolished (Tester 1997:4)

On the northern flank, the wall divided the town from the low lying wetter land of Tay Fen. In 1968, a flint rubble wall coursed with bands of thin red bricks/tiles and with some dressed limestone blocks was removed from a development site Northgate Street and Long Brackland They were examined by Stanley West. There is a circular tower marked on Warren's 18th-century map. It was concluded that this stone wall itself was not medieval, but that it was constructed over and against an earlier rampart which may have been at least 4.3m wide (14ft) (1973:19-21). A small sherd of 'indeterminate' medieval grey ware was found under the bank. The ditch section shows that it had an almost vertical edge (West 1973 Figure 10): this must have been revetted; otherwise it is unlikely to have filled in such a manner. The evidence from this excavation suggests that not all of the circuit was defined by a medieval wall. It was noted that whilst the gates were of stone and there were sections of wall present, it is possible that the circuit around the town was incomplete. This is not uncharacteristic of town defences and in many places, gates stood without walls – their meaning clear enough, perhaps - and walls were built in piecemeal or *ad hoc* campaigns (Creighton 2007:45).

The western flank of the town was the only one that was not naturally wet, and a ditch was dug here. It has already been suggested that the tenements on the eastern side of the wall were re-planned when it was created along the former extent of the grid. By the time of the *hadgoval* rental of 1358-1383, properties along Guildhall Street and the Market place were described as having one head abutting on the stone wall of the town (BM Harley 58 f. 46r, 47r). The ditch is also documented as the '*wych dych*' in 1295 (Redstone 1909) and in the 1433 rental as '*Dyche weye*' (under Westgate Street, BM Harley 58 f.9v). Various sections down St Andrew's Street have shown that the ditch was at least 12m wide and 4m deep, and that the bank was formed from upcast material, particularly chalk (Tester 1996b; Tester 1999; Tester 2000c; Gill 2003b). On Warren's map, a 'double' frontage is observable on properties at the back of Guildhall Street, where post-medieval yard and rear buildings are the result of encroachment beyond the old wall line and over the in-filled ditch (see Figure 3.1 – Guildhall Street is the one at the bottom of the map, running horizontally across the page). Samples of soil under the bank on St Andrew's street revealed Bronze Age pottery and a struck flint, Roman, Early Saxon, Late Saxon and 'Early Medieval' pottery (11^{th} – 12^{th} century), confirming the date.

The Grindle, Friar's Lane and Sexton's Meadow

This part of the town is often omitted from reconstruction maps (see, for example, SHER BSE 241, 'the medieval town'), which means that the defensive system is not always shown. However, in this wetland area, the defences seem to have been formed from earthworks. An arc similar to that preserved in the street pattern that frames the northern 'wing' of the town can be traced in extant landscape features. Ditches were noted by Dave Gill in Sexton's Meadows (1998a, 1999: see below) and it is the author's contention that 'The Grindle' is part of the 12^{th} century defensive circuit. From the South Gate, the earthwork bank known as 'The Grindle' lies on the northern flank of a footpath that runs towards the water meadows along a low valley (if the word can be applied to such gently rolling terrain) between two areas of higher ground. The bank was called the Grindle on Thomas Warren's map of 1776, and the earliest recorded reference to *Le Grendyll* dates to 1399 (SROB IOBS). The word *grindle* is

widely found in Anglo-Saxon charter bounds and often occurs associated with boundary features, particularly drains and dikes (Toller 1921:485). The 1886 OS map clearly marks a further set of earthworks in the vicinity, although they could be post-medieval, similar to quarry pits on the Haberdon. Older illustrations show that the Grindle was formerly a larger monument (see Figure 5.17). Most of the bank is concealed beneath scrub vegetation, fences and hedges. The most significant section that remains today is extant to a height of 3m (10ft), and is 10m (33ft) long (Birch 2004:67). In 1962, A. R. Edwardson, curator of the museum, dug trenches in the bank to try to understand its purpose and antiquity. Disappointed to find no evidence of either a palisade at the top or a ditch at the bottom, he reportedly concluded that it was a natural spur (BFP 21/9/1962). However, I am convinced that it is part of the defensive circuit of the town, because of its contribution to a symmetrical arc (Figure 5.15).

Continuing the line of the Grindle, a footpath now runs along a causeway flanked by two ditches. This causeway curves round to form Friar's Lane, Payne's 1823 map shows that the outer ditch at least formerly swept up to the West Gate. A detailed earthwork survey has not been carried out of the water-meadows but in the course of archaeological assessments, Dave Gill has observed that there is a double bank in the field at the west end of the meadows which may form the 'missing' section of the defences (Gill 1999:367).

A section was cut through the causeway, which is now 2m wide (Figure 5.18). The eastern of the ditches was noted to be 3.5m wide and 1.5m deep but the section was unstable and it was shuttered off. In the section, the reworking and maintenance of the feature is apparent. 0.5m below the footpath level, an earlier surface was revealed over layers of gravel, gravel and sand, and silt. This latter may have been from an earlier cut of the ditch. A possibly late medieval horseshoe was found beneath this silt, on top of a layer of peat. A band of chalk was visible between the ditch and bank. Radiocarbon dates for the peat below the path gave dates for its accumulation between AD 230-440 and AD 750- 990. This gives a *terminus post quem* of the 10th century for the earthworks although one date is not enough to pass confident judgement on the age of the feature.

Either they were in fact created in the 10th century, or it is possible that the peat was truncated before the footpath was laid (Tester 2004b). A 10th century date is not unreasonable, given the changes that occurred to the town at this time, and this leg of the causeway does replicate the curves of Maynewater Lane – which, it has been suggested, are of some antiquity - and are in turn replicated by Hardwickweye and the *banleuca* boundary (see Figure 4.12, which shows these roads towards the south-east). However, I prefer the interpretation that the defensive scheme is later and that this leg is perhaps an access route over wetland to the 11th century defences, a hypothesis with the potential to be proven or disproven by further research. It could also have been an access created for the Friary which was located down Friar's Lane in the 13th century, or for the almoner's barns which were also in the vicinity. Further survey might reveal more patterns in this area. However, there has been much post-medieval modification and embankment to raise the level of the land (Gill 1998a, Tester 1998a).

Town gates

Despite this, the defensive circuit can be fairly confidently reconstructed. It links the five town gates that are shown on Thomas Warren's map from 1776 (Figure 3.1). This shows that they were large structures with ancillary rooms – probably incorporating chapels and guard houses. These gates were all pulled down between 1761 and 1765, by order of the Town Corporation, to make the entrances to the town safer and more convenient. The Northgate was already being used as a quarry for materials, which suggests that it was tumbling down (Tymms 1864:76). There is no trace of the gates today but it is clear that they were probably invested in throughout the medieval period. The will of civic dignitary John Baret in 1463 referred to the Risby Gate as the 'most ruinous' of them all, and he left a bequest to rebuild the top part in brick, directing prudently that the old stone sides should be left: '*God forbede and they be steryd for summe might fortune to make avers fundacion than that is*' (Tymms 1850:38). This piece of information indicates that the old gate was a substantial stone structure. The same can be said of the Northgate. A section of masonry was observed near the site of this gate during replacement of storm drains on Northgate Street (BSE 069). It comprised a sand-and-gravel filled footing trench with a section of ashlared walling 1.4 x 0.6m

high set against un-coursed rubble. Coursed flint rubble overlay this fragment, truncated by the hardcore of the road (Tester 1994:211-2). It is not known whether this is a fragment of the gate or the wall but an 18th century print of the Northgate exists which shows that it was constructed of flint with quoined corners of ashlared blocks, a central arch and projecting angular bays or turrets (Statham 1988:17). This description suggests that it would have looked different to the St James Gate/The Norman Tower, with considerably less investment, reinforcing the importance of the Norman Tower as the direct portal to the church and cemetery.

Summary

The defensive circuit was not a complete encircling wall. Whilst there was a wall on the western side, and possible evidence of a wall on the north, much of the circuit seems to have been defined by earthworks. As for many places, there were later, successive, murage grants, a fact which implies that parts of a wall could have been built at different dates. Such a situation is not at all atypical for medieval towns. Oliver Creighton's survey (2007) of town walls reveals that they were often erected on an *ad hoc* basis, and that it was common for gates to be constructed independently. His argument is that many post-Conquest wall circuits are – as in this case – secondary features intended to mark and define the town and that the gates, as points of entry and exit, were far more important to the symbolism of definition than an entire enclosing wall (2007:44-6). He believes that there was a subscription to a powerful image of urban cosmology (see above), and definition of the town as a social, privileged community, but that the ideal was not always realised in actuality. He also makes the point that the image and emblem of a united community, defended in the landscape and in privilege, can often mask the reality of a community, where the topographies were confused and contested between different groups in the urban community (2007:54).

However the construction of the defensive circuit, at the same time as the definition of the monastic precinct, seems to have been part of an overall act of lordship intended to expand and define within separate circuits the twin aspects of the settlement at St Edmunds – town and gown – within a geometrical scheme that maintained the

integrity of the wider landscape as a shrine for St Edmund. The separation of different parts of the settlement may be a reaction to the increasing commercial success of the town, and the need to separate the worldly from the Godly. These deliberate acts of definition also served to emphasise the urban nature of the town, in comparison to the broader landscape context of the *banleuca* considered in Section 4.5.1, suggesting a subscription to a different fashionable idea as to what a town should be: a centre in its own right, perhaps, rather than defined by its hinterland, perhaps marking a shift from consumption centre to commercial and service centre. Further, it might have been driven by a necessity to distinguish freehold tenants in the borough rather than tenants who held land by right of service (Slater 2004:20). It is the changing nature of the settlement in seventy years or so after the laying out of the grid – changes that culminated in this grand scheme - that is the subject of the rest of this chapter.

5.5 The urban population at Domesday and beyond

The monumental changes to the plan in the 11th and 12th centuries have been considered. It was suggested that these campaigns, separated by only 40 years, were driven partly as a response to the success of the speculative developments in promoting the shrine and cult of St Edmunds, as well as being related to wider socio-economic shifts. What can be said of the population of the town at this time? Fortunately, the Domesday entry for Bury St Edmunds is uniquely informative and unusual. It is the most detailed for any urban centre, giving a rare insight into the growth, workings and urban diversity in one of the great post-Conquest ecclesiastical urban centres (Darby 1971:99; Miller and Hatcher 1995:8). The reason for this fortunate circumstance is unclear. It might be an accident of survival. St Edmunds appears on folio 372 of the Little Domesday Book, a survey which covers Suffolk, Norfolk and parts of Essex which was never entered into final form in the Great Domesday volumes and which is less tightly abbreviated (Williams and Martin 2002:vii). The Little Domesday Book is a collection of entries by different scribes, and, as it is less heavily abbreviated, it has been argued that it represents an earlier stage in the production of the document (Hinde 1985:12). This lesser degree of abstraction might partly explain why the Bury entry is longer. It is worth quoting in full and is reproduced here from the *Victoria*

County History (Hervey 1911:508) (for a recent edition, see Williams and Martin 2002:1248-9: the only difference is that 'agents' is rendered as 'bursars'):

> 'In the town where rests enshrined Saint Edmund King and Martyr of glorious memory, Abbot Baldwin held, in the time of King Edward, towards the provision of the monks 118 men; and they could give and sell their land; and under them 52 bordars from whom the Abbot can have some little aid, 54 freemen poor enough, 43 almsmen; each of them has one border. Now there are 2 mills and 2 stews of fish ponds. This town was then worth 10 li, now 20 li. It is 1 ½ leagues in length, and as much in breadth. And when a pound is levied on the hundred for geld, then there go from the town 60d towards the sustenance of the monks. But this refers to the town as it was in the time of King Edward as if it was still so; for now the town is contained in a greater circle, including land which then used to be ploughed and sown; whereon there are 30 priests, deacons, and clerks together; 28 nuns and poor persons who daily utter prayers for the King and for all Christian people, 80 less 5 bakers, ale brewers, tailors, washerwomen, shoemakers, robe makers, cooks, porters, agents together. And all these daily wait on the Saint, and the Abbot, and the Brethren. Besides whom there are 13 reeves over the land who have their houses in the said town and under them 5 bordars. Now 34 knights, French and English together, and under them 22 bordars. Now altogether (there are) 342 houses on the demesne on land of Saint Edmund's which was under the plough in the time of King Edward'.

This has been interpreted as a description of a servile community, as considered in Chapter 2.5.2. Page's imagined reconstruction from the Domesday reference is of a 'community, a little world in itself, where the abbot and the brethren formed the nucleus round which gathered a population of clerks, nuns and poor bedesman,

servants and artisans, bailiffs and soldiers' (1911:392). Mary Lobel pointed out, however, that certainly by the 12th century the borough in the hands of the sacrist did not literally provide food for the monks: the town was the place where the estates were administered, and where revenue was generated to support the office of the sacrist (1935:12). Clearly, there was a symbiotic relationship between them, but the commercial and political development of the town introduced new issues of negotiation. The perception of this as a servile community dedicated to the service of the new church needs to be set into the longer term role and development of the town.

There are 342 new houses listed in the Domesday survey, and not enough people to fill them. Opinion is divided as to whether the new town was a replacement of part of the old town (Gauthiez 1998:93; Eaglen 2006), or an addition to it (Gransden 1981:74). An argument in favour of the new houses as a replacement is based on the observation that a doubling in value of the town between 1066 and 1086 was not, in context and in relation to other places, enough perhaps to suggest that the new town had been fully taken up but that there might have been a degree of relocation and resettlement (Eaglen 2006; Gauthiez 1998:93). However, the landscape evidence suggests that the new town was generally an addition. Clearly, the Domesday figures are not a complete enumeration of the population, and Mary Lobel was moved to wonder whether perhaps the only people listed were the retainers of the abbey (1935:13). She notes that there is no evidence here that the town was populated by people other than peasants, priests, servants, the religious and soldiers attached to a religious and administrative head quarters (Lobel 1935:9). The survey does not mention a market, mint or burgesses at St Edmunds. The previous chapter has explored the charter evidence for these institutions (1935:13). Certainly, the Domesday survey suggests that after the Conquest, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich were the main county towns of Suffolk, with market centres at Clare, Beccles, Sudbury and Dunwich. With a total of somewhere in the region of 500 houses, the number recorded is greater than that for Ipswich (Lobel 1935:15). Chapter 4 suggested that the town was already a regional centre, and that the community in the town had certain privileges and practices – such as their own court, the right to buy and sell tenements, and ways to recoup debts (Lobel 1935:15).

Although I have argued elsewhere that the relative importance of the pre-Conquest town should be seen in its own terms, Robin Eaglen's (2006) critique of trade in the 11th-century is useful. He suggests that it was a prestigious shrine, a monastery, judicial and administrative centre and it had a mint and a market, favourable to secular economic growth. But there is nothing to suggest that the market served a wider area than the abbey, town and hinterland and that the mint was inactive. His perception is that the Domesday population comprised those people who could make a living from serving the Abbey, and that there is no real evidence for economic activity dissociated from it, though the rising pilgrimage church must have brought extra commerce, trade and population (2006:47). Beresford suggested that the *raison d'etre* of the town was to cater for the immediate needs of the Abbey, and that it then began to cater for pilgrims and tenants from the hinterland too when they came to the court, feast day, or market (Beresford 1967:130; 333-4).

5.5.1 Beyond Domesday: a belfry and houses in the town

The perception, perhaps, is that in the late 11th and early 12th century, trade, commerce and urban life, as intended, began to flourish and gain a wider sphere of influence drawn from further afield. The landscape can be considered, then, in terms of continuity and change. In fact, the population of the town was diverse. Later documents show that there was a French and a Jewish population (see examples in Davies 1954), and the medieval street name 'Frenchman's Street' for the east end of Abbeygate Street, may suggest that there were French settlers in a similar manner to the French colonies at, for example, Hereford, Norwich, Nottingham, Ludlow, Richmond, Shrewsbury and Stamford (Rowley 1999:97).

However, what can be explored further is the role of those people connected with rural estates. In addition to nuns, priests, bakers, paupers, tailors, washerwomen and shoemakers, Domesday also lists 13 reeves (*praepositi)* who had houses in the vill, and 34 knights (Hervey 1911:508). Page suggested that the reeves may have administered the demesne and outlying estates (Page 1911:392). In line with recent work on the relationship between towns and their hinterlands, then, it is clear that the town society

was intricately linked with the needs, administration and social hierarchy of the lands around it and here it is worth reiterating that this role of the town predated the commercial role. This is reasonable if it is considered that much of the Abbey's estate building was done pre-Conquest: perhaps it might be logical that wealthy tenants and holders of estates might be established in the town before the Conquest. This shows some insight into the way that land was held by local magnate families. It may be that Bury St Edmunds in the Late Saxon period had been no different to other places in that it may have incorporated thegnly residences and courts (*hagae*) of local landowners that held urban properties in conjunction with rural manors (see Blair 2005:402). The fact that there was, in the 14th century, a field-name *Theneshall* to the north of the town is perhaps significant (charter in Harper-Bill 1994:67).

As discussed in Chapter 4.8.1, circumstantial evidence of later manors in the southern part of the town and titled tenants in the west and south - such as Maydewater and Haberdon – suggests that *perhaps* main urban estates could have been in the older part of the town. For example, of the hypothesised town holdings of knights and landlords, the manor of Maydewater was held of the Honour of Clare: in 1327, it was held by David de Strobolgi, seneschal of Scotland, and they also held other portions in the town and its fields. The de Hastings family as part of manor of Lidgate held land in the town which generated rent (Lobel 1935:17). Some of these, then, would have been rented out. But others were perhaps built with large residences and as references to later manors *seem* to be concentrated to the south and west, it would appear that may have been in the older part of the town. Identities would have been inscribed on the landscape in comparison to the newer streets.

Estates of Adam I of Cockfield

A rare insight into the urban property holdings in the town of a local landholder is provided by the late 12th century *Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond,* which describes a controversy over the estates of Adam II of Cockfield who died at the time of his writing. Some of Adam's estates were hereditary, and some were argued to have been held from the Abbey only during his lifetime: on his death, the abbey sold the wardship

of the estates, and the purchaser challenged the retention by St Edmunds of two of the three manors (Brakelond 1989:109). An appendix to Jocelin's chronicle added in 1200 by William of Diss includes details of the case. Before Adam, the lands were held by Adam I of Cockfield who died in the mid 1150s, and by his father Lemmer, who died in the 1120s. The hereditary land included the manor of Lindsey (Suffolk) and land that 'Wulfric of Lindsey held in the town of St Edmunds' including the 'land of Humphrey Criketot, where the houses of the Lady Adelicie were once situated,' held for 12d a year, and the 'large messuage, consisting of the land where the manor house (*aulam)* of Adam I of Cockfield formerly stood, with its wooden belfry (*berefrido ligneo)* for 2s annually' (Brakelond 1989:122-3).

The reference to a manor and belfry that has a *terminus ante quem* of the 1120s is interesting. The height of the belfry in the transcript of Jocelin's chronicle is written as 140 feet (1989:122-3). In Butler's 1949 translation and transcription, this is noted as seven score, or *septies xx pedem* (Brakelond 1949:132). Perhaps this should be 27ft? As a further complication, an earlier Latin transcript provided by John Rokewode Gage in 1840 describes the belfry as *senties (*or *centies) xx pedum in altitudine* (p.103). The interpretation therefore centres upon the meaning of *senties*. A height of between 120 and 140ft (36.5 – 42.7 m) seems inconceivably tall. For example, the Norman Tower is 86ft (26.21m) high. Round church towers in East Anglia tend to be between 35 and 54ft (10.7-16.5m) tall (Christie 2004:23). It might be that *senties* means 'standing' rather and 100, in which case the tower is 20ft, or 6.1m high and this interpretation is perhaps more in line with what extant examples tell us of the timber building tradition of the time. There is an increasing body of examples of extant timber framed buildings with dendrochronological dates that span back into the late 12th century. A paper by John Walker discusses the corpus of early buildings identified in 1999: seven aisled halls, an aisled barn and a timber arcade within the walls of the Bishop's Palace at Hereford dating from *c.*1160 - 1220. As a rough comparison, the apexes of the roofs of these buildings were between 23 - 26.5ft, 24ft, 27ft and 32ft in height, with The Bishop's Palace at 34 ft (10.4m) (Walker 1999). The dated structures are all elements of aisled buildings. This building type has a large footprint and supporting structure. A

timber-framed tower 140ft (42.7m) in height would presumably require a very large base indeed. The earliest timber belfry in Britain is the detached campanile at St Mary's church, Pembridge, (Herefordshire) which serves as a parallel, perhaps, for the belfry that might have stood on Adam I of Cockfield's manor in St Edmunds (Figure 5.19). A programme of dendrochronological dating was carried out by Ian Tyers on 53 timbers of the structure, and it was concluded that the first phase of construction was in the early 13th century (1207 – 1223) (Herefordshire HER 1566).

The hanging of multiple bells in specially built belfries is documented in Gaul from the 8th century, and there are several extant examples of Anglo-Saxon stone belfries (Taylor 1968). Neil Christie's paper on belfries cites an early 9th-century letter whereby Archbishop Eanbald II of York is informed by Alcuin that 100lb of tin has arrived for casing his church's bell-house 'to help give the place distinction' (2004:15). This establishes the image of the belfry as a point of architectural investment beyond its obvious impact on the skyline and the 'soundscape' of the town. The construction of secular belfries, particularly in the urban context, has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. Christie (2004) has suggested that turriform churches of the mid-10th century date, where the tower forms a major structural element, could be interpreted as symbols of thegnly status, in the light of the 'Promotion Laws' produced and promulgated under Aethelstan in 937. By this, to qualify for elevation to thegnly status, it was necessary to hold five hides of land, a chapel, a bell tower and a *burhgeat* (probably a formal, status entrance to a public or private fortified residence or enclosure in the form of a gate tower). It is suggested that the thegnly church, a source of income and focal point for the community who were dependant on the lord, may have served as a sub-parish, a private enclosed *burh* within a wider minster parish (Christie 2004:21). The belfry on the Cockfield messuage could therefore be seen, in a cultural frame of reference, as an architectural statement of standing and status. It may also indicate that there was an element of lay, private spirituality in Bury in the earlier period. Certainly, the number of churches and eventual parishes in pre-Conquest Norwich is attributed to the prevalence of early merchant communities (Finch 2004). Mention of St Botolph's chapel on Southgate Street was made above (Chapter 4.7).

The only evidence that we have for the building is an etching of a structure that appears to have Saxo-Norman features (SROB P755/33 f. 78). This may be further evidence, perhaps, of other religious buildings in the town beyond the monastery and gate chapels.

To return to the theme, bells were rung for the hours, for services, for commemoration, for signalling the curfew, assemblies and warnings. John Schofield and Alan Vince make a passing reference to the erection of belfries on public buildings in the later medieval period to help regularise the working day (2003:63). The belfry on the Cockfield manor, then, may have been a private statement of power, and a service in the urban community, with, perhaps, similar motivations to the famed competitive tower building of medieval Italy. It is worth speculating that, given the increasing power and monumental changes to the town in the 1120s, this may be a direct architectural assertion by other elements in the urban hierarchy: the lay population, and wealthier landlords from the rural estates surrounding the settlement. In this context, it is worth mentioning Jon Finch's suggestion that the number of round towers in Norwich from both before and after the Conquest perhaps represents a deliberate employment of antiquated styles as a landscape statement of indigenous identity and a well developed ecclesiastical and social hierarchy (Finch 2004:50-58). The continuing presence in Bury of pre-Conquest elements of society was emphasised above and may well have resulted in displays of architecture in the urban environment. Unfortunately, it is not possible to locate the places mentioned in the Cockfield charter, although 'Criketot', the holder of the plot on which the houses of the Lady Adelicie once stood, is a name that emerges with reference to *Blunteshall* to the south of St Mary's Square which, as discussed in Section 4.8.1, was held by William Cryketot before Henry de Lakford in 1361-1383 (BM Harley 0058 f. 48v). Various members of the Cockfield family also held land on Guildhall Street and Churchgate Street through the 14th-century. Nonetheless, the hint that there was at least one structure like this in the town demonstrates that the potential exists for archaeological evidence. It also shows that the skyline was in use as a media for the expression of social and urban identity and that there were, in the town, distinctly defined familial spaces.

Tenants contributing to the Office of Sacrist 1121-1148

In comparison, there were clearly other, contemporary houses in the town that were probably very different. Antonia Gransden included, as an appendix to her transcript of the Customary of Bury Abbey, a tract relating to pittances in St Edmunds Abbey. This was written in the mid 12th-century on the flyleaves of the *Miracula Sancti Edmundi*, MS 736 in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York (Gransden 1973:xxxix) and it is a list of houses in the town from which, in the time of Abbot Anselm (1121-1148), moneys were due to the Sacrist Hervey (Gransden 1973:97-99). The *gesta sacristarum* records that Hervey *comparavit* them (Arnold 1896 II:290). This list therefore details a sector of the population who lived in 45 houses (*mansurae*) from which money had been bequeathed (e.g. from clerks, monks and Gilbert the Moneyer (*monetario)*) to the office of the sacrist and it offers an insights into the types of individuals renting properties in the town (Gransden 1973:96-7). Turbert, for example, held a property next to the oven/furnace (*clibanum)* of the monastery. The piece of land of Harwin was 33ft long (twice the width of a burgage plot of 16 ½ft). Priests are mentioned: a house was held by Clement, son of Iunwin *presbiter* (old man, or priest) and another by Leofstan the priest. Robert the priest owed for a house held in turn by Suien, priest. Baldwin the cleric held two houses, Herbert the clerk had a house, and Edmund, clerk, held half a house tenanted by Suein. In the building trade, a house was held by the son of Drui the stone cutter (*lapidum incisoris)* and another by Godwin *incisoris*. Eadric *vitriartificis* owed dues for part of a house. Osbert smith *(fabri)* held one. Hereward the Carpenter bequeathed the rent from two houses: one was held by Rodbert the Goldsmith (*aurifabri)* and another by Leofgifu the goldsmith. Wluardi (priest) had a house next to Gilbert the Moneyer. Rodbert, the son of Leofstan the tailor (*sartiner)* held a house as did Almari *parmentarii* (robe trimmer, furrier). Women are mentioned: Alfilda, wife of Aielric son of Goding; Aldried the sister of Ordmar the singer *(cantori);* the sister of Leofstan the priest; and Matildis the niece of Alfri de Gipeswic; Other names include Ealwin the man *(viri)* of Ealfled; Godbold, who held a house before the gate (*ante portam*); Osbert the son of Sparnail, and his nephew, who shared a house. Britmeri the baker *(pistoris)* had a property. Robert Baldwin held a house next to Henry son of Toce. This list shows a mixture of names and occupations. It is similar in many ways to that of

the service personnel listed in the Domesday book (there is, for example, no reference to any merchants) but it shows in particular that houses were being sublet and also shared, and it is more than likely that they included workshops. One house was shared by the son of Leofric the toll collector *(telonearii)*, Aldred and Norman; another one by Stanard, Albold goldsmith *(aurifabri)* and Robert the son of Frodo. This, and the fact that rents were bequeathed back to the Abbey suggests that the hierarchy of tenancy in the town was quite complex by the 1120s.

5.5.2 Archaeological evidence for activity

With some of the people of the borough named, and two snapshots of the activities and people living in the town in the late 11th and early 12th century, it is pertinent to turn to the archaeological evidence for occupation from the town. This is, unfortunately, sparse. Assemblages from other places provide a tangible link with early populations, but in Bury there is nothing like the assemblages pertaining to 12th century houses in Norwich: a bone pen, die, gaming pieces, a flute, handles, spoon, comb and a bone skate (Rogerson 1994:77-8). This means that some avenues of research, such as social lives, are closed.

In fact, there is very little evidence, as yet, for the original plot layout and uptake. Philip Crummy's paper from 1979 suggested a four pole unit may have been used, but his error limits were a pole and more detailed, measured survey would have to be carried out to see whether the proposed $\sqrt{2}$ geometrical scheme was based on a widely used imperial base unit. It probably was: as an aside, the base unit of 95.5m, or 313ft, is approximately 19 poles (based on a pole of 16½ft, which is a common unit in medieval town planning (see Conzen 1981 [1962]). If three poles (15m) are assumed for the street, this means that there are 16 poles in each block, or 4 chains (see below for further details): a chain is a four pole unit and an acre of 160 square poles is therefore a 10 or 20 pole multiple of a chain (see Crummy 1979:149). The properties running south from Abbeygate Street on the west side of Angel Hill are based on units of 16½ft wide: the 13th-century undercroft of this hotel is 33ft from north to south, if the thickness of the walls is considered. More detailed comment would require a far

more intensive programme of investigation, although the relict boundaries shown on Figure 3.3 would suggest that the long blocks were bisected north south at least down the centre.

Two properties that appear to date from this period have been excavated: a cellared building on Churchgate Street and a post-built structure on Raingate Street. At 51 – 52 Churchgate Street, an excavation along the street frontage revealed several phases of a cellared building, the earliest of which seems to have been backfilled no later than the late 12th-century. The fill contained Late Saxon material and pottery that ranged from Thetford and St Neot's ware to glazed 12th-century Grimston and Stamford Ware. Given the later phases of building, the earliest archaeological remains have been heavily truncated, but there was enough evidence to reveal that it had comprised a sunken building of a type found in towns in the 9th century and which has been identified in Ipswich (Gill and Anderson 1998:11). A chalk edged pit *c.* 1.8m deep was located with the rear edge 9m back from the south side of the current frontage of Churchgate Street. The front edge was probably 5m back from it: the full dimensions of the cellar could not be reconstructed, but it was assumed to be at least *c*3.6m from north to south on the basis of shallow post holes in the floor, parallel with the back edge which were thought to represent supports of a roof running parallel to the street. The building was greater than 6m from east to west. The floor consisted of the natural chalk that had been cut and worn, trodden or rubbed into a smooth surface. It appears that the cellar originally had a plank lining that was held in place by posts, with evidence preserved up to a height of 0.7m by slumping of material into the cellar in the early stages of its infilling. The cavity (up to 0.4m in places) between the lining and the chalk was packed with flints set into chalk (Gill and Anderson 1998:5).

At the top of the pit, which was slightly truncated, two depressions were hypothesised to be the settings for floor joists, or post positions but it was suggested that the building had stood on a timber sill beam. There were shallow post holes in the centre aligned with the southern edge and 1.8m in from it (Gill and Anderson 1998:11), and these have been interpreted as representing a central roof line. It is worth considering,

though, that the building might have been gable end on to the street, larger, and with a more complex framing structure: without further evidence, it is impossible to know. There was no evidence of roofing material, so perhaps it was thatch, but there were traces of plaster and daub (Gill and Anderson 1998:11). Other possible building materials included tile fragments, pieces of ashlared limestone and chalk (*ibid).* There were also nails with circular sheet heads, some with plaster on the shafts, and a latch bolt fragment (Gill and Anderson 1998:8). It is poignant what a household or a workshop can be reduced to. Was it the house of someone from the list cited above? Perhaps Alman the Furrier, who appears in the list above, kept his furs down here.

The building was in-filled in the 12th century but some of the infilling material might attest to its earlier life and form. The primary fill included charcoal, clay, chalk and flint rubble. It was divided from a more organic upper fill by a sandy sterile layer but both contained similar finds – the upper layer showed that the depression had been possibly used for smithing, and it contained an ashy material with fragments of hearth lining and slag. Other finds included oyster shell, cow, sheep, goat, pig, bird, fish and deer bones, lava quern fragments, iron blades, a hook, iron fragments, lead fragments and a piece of copper sheet. The fills contained Late Saxon material and pottery that ranged from Thetford and St Neot's ware to glazed 12th-century Grimston and Stamford Ware. The assemblage was dominated by local coarseware bowls, cooking pots and jars, including 'shelly ware' which has a light dusting of powdered shell on the outer margin to give an iridescent effect (Gill and Anderson 1998:7-8). The cellar was therefore in-filled in the late 12th century. It offers a brief snapshot of the physicality of a household at this time, with imported lava quern for grinding, and a range of foods including venison. Perhaps Osbert Smith did business here?

The evaluation that occurred prior to the work revealed medieval material (in the form of a rammed chalk surface, wells, pits and postholes 'contemporary to the earliest cellar') underneath re-worked material to the west. It was considered too deep to be affected by development and was left *in situ* underneath pile driven foundations (Gill

and Anderson 1998:2-3). This is frustrating, as it may well have yielded important information about the uses of this plot in the earlier period.

In contrast to the cellared building, an early post-built structure was observed during excavations near 47 Raingate Street (BSE 144). A sill beam building of 12th – 14th century date post-dated another, slightly earlier structure which was clay and post-hole built, with 11-12th-century pottery in an associated property boundary ditch (Caruth and Anderson 1996a). Seven sherds of 11-12th-century pottery were found in the post holes of the 12th-century building, and a piece of Thetford ware was recovered from a pit, in agreement with a speculated longer history for the site, as mentioned in Section 4.4.1 (Caruth and Anderson 1996a:5, 2).

5.5.3 Borough customs

The insights into the development of urban life within this community, beyond the monumental re-planning, are augmented by the borough customs, reiterated in a charter by Abbot Anselm which recognised the rights of the burgesses of St Edmunds (transcription in Douglas 1932:114-5).[7] Anselm's charter was addressed to 'all his barons and men, French and English' and it confirms customs which the burgesses of St Edmunds held from the time of Edward the Confessor (Douglas 1932:114-5). By Anselm's descriptions of rights and responsibilities of 1130, the burgesses, knights and sokemen were all required to work on any repairs required by the ditch surrounding the town (Douglas 1932:114-5). Mary Lobel observes that there are notes of the rights as they were in the 11th-century in the Pinchbeck and Cellarer's registers and in this version, the burgesses are not burdened with the maintenance of the ditch (Lobel 1935:10 & fn). This perhaps offers circumstantial support for the hypothesis that the defences are 12th century in date. The men of the town by Anselm's charter were required to provide eight men for the night-watches to guard the town, and four gatekeepers for the gates with, on the feast of St Edmunds and the twelve days of Christmas, two men to guard each gate during the day and two others to guard it

[7] I am indebted to a translation made publicly available by medievalist Stephen Alsford on his website of historical documents (www.trytel.com/~tristan/towns/florilegium/government/gvcons13.html. This website is searchable by subject, fully referenced and a valuable resource.

during the night. The fifth gate, the east gate, was under the direct control of the abbot (Douglas 1932:114-5). This incidentally shows that these major feasts in the year would have drawn large numbers of people to the town (*ibid*).

By Anselm's descriptions of rights and responsibilities of 1130, holders of burgage land in the town were to pay the reeve a halfpenny, at Whitsun and Martinmas. Anyone acquiring land held by burgage was liable to pay the customary dues. Land in the town could be sold to anyone from within the fief of St Edmunds, unless a close relative was willing to pay the same price for the land. This means that the property market was relatively open, adding to the observation that it might have been quite complex. A clause in the borough customs said that if burgesses held land in the town or market place by inheritance, by purchase or other legal gain and held it for a year and a day without challenge, proven by testimony of the burgesses, 'afterwards he need not answer to anyone who makes a claim against the property' (Douglas 1932:114-5) became a contentious issue in the 1180s, as seen in Section 2.5.2 of this thesis.

In Anselm's description of their rights, the burgesses were not required to attend the hundred court, the county court or to hear pleas, except at the portmanmoot (Douglas 1932:114-5). They were therefore exempt from royal justice, even if they were answerable to the monastery (Lobel 1935:118). They could also recover debts by established procedures. We see rising privilege and rising commerce. For example, Henry I chartered a fair of St James (seven days) and the market, as it was enjoyed under William I. He also issued a market charter, and confirmed that the church could hold a market and take toll from it and the town as they had in the time of Baldwin and before (Lobel 1935:10). Lobel suggests, on the basis of the borough customs said to have been proved in court by the burgesses as dating to the time of at least King Edward outlined in Anselm's charter of between 1121 and 1148, that the town had a flourishing merchant community prior to the Conquest (1935:10). This charter shows that they were freed from manorial service and were distinguished from tenants in the suburb – maybe they did have customs before and we are seeing the transition of

memory to written record which was associated with Baldwin's administrative reform (Lobel 1935:10, for more information on reform in general see Clanchy 1993).

5.6 Conclusion

By Domesday, the Abbey of St Edmund was one of the wealthiest landholders in Eastern England with a dense concentration of properties in the hinterland of West Suffolk and properties in the six counties round about (Page 1911:391). Although, as considered in Chapter 6, the Abbot exercised a degree of peripatetic lordship, St Edmunds itself was the operational centre of the Abbey's estates and as noted in Chapter 4, this central place role as a religious centre was of long standing. In 1065-6, a new Abbot and a new regime saw the promotion of the saint further afield, through the speculative creation of a mighty pilgrimage church and a town at the centre of an expanding religious and commercial hinterland. The Romanesque conventual church dedicated to Ss Mary and Edmund was begun in the 1070s, and the scale of the building and unique features of its design were féted as a 'giant of a building'. Concomitant to the expansion of the church was the development of the town, as revealed in the *Little Domesday Book* of 1086. This chapter has argued strongly that the gridiron of streets is contemporary to this documented expansion, and that there were two major phases of investment. It has revealed a hitherto unsuspected, simple elegance in the original layout as a geometric 'giant shrine' for St Edmund laid out on orthogonal principles.

In the early 12th century, the design of the nascent church was enlarged and the monastic precinct was enclosed to take in a wider area. At the same time, the town wall was built and the town expanded. Within the *banleuca* that was established in the 10th century, the town itself was defined, effectively physically differentiating between the suburbs and the town. Outside the walls stood the gallows: in the early 12th century list of payments received by the Sacrist, money was due from the gallows (*galhou*) (Gransden 1973:967). A hospital was also founded some distance outside Risby Gate in the 1130s to house aged, sick, infirm and leprous priests (Harper-Bill 1994:1). Henry I reiterated the grant of jurisdication within the Liberty, made several devotions to St Edmund, and granted a charter for a St Edmunds fair (Eaglen 2006:84).

Within the town, the foundation of the Great Market is significant as an index of commercial change. The change in scale in the layout of the town arguably shows a direct response to an increased volume of pilgrimage and administrative business related to the church, and also increasing commercial opportunities. Robin Eaglen argued that when the town was first laid out, although it had a mint and a market place 'there is nothing to suggest its market served wider interests than the abbey, the town and the immediately surrounding countryside' (2006). Richard Britnell, in a paper on the foundation of boroughs in the north of England, warned against ignoring 'hidden trade', suggesting that, to avoid confusing the onset of literacy for the start of commercial activity, studies of post-Conquest trade need to show positive evidence of associated commercial expansion (Britnell 1996b:58). Here, it does seem that by the early 12th century, the commercial importance of the town escalated as the speculative development came to fruition. In line with wider socio-economic changes, the town perhaps outgrew the late 11th century design.

In general, this detailed study is another contribution to urban morphology, which is revealing rapid change in investment in urban growth, and answering more questions about processes of planning and design (Lilley *et al* 2005, Slater 2007), reflecting the strengths of the evidence. However, questions *have* been raised about continuity and investment as well as the development of the mercantile community. In the 70 years after the Conquest, the town plan of Bury St Edmunds was laid out in the form that it was to retain until the 18th century: the most rapid expansions and modifications to the town plan were in the 11th and 12th centuries. Throughout the medieval period, though, that landscape was not static: the Long Brackland area was built in, suburbs built up, and new buildings and infrastructures reinvested. The interrelationship between the developing landscape and evolving social, economic and political scenes are explored in the next chapters, contributing to wider scholarship a detailed case study in urban evolution.

6
BURY ST EDMUNDS
c.1150 – c.1220

'Mès pur ço furent venuz, pur aver guain e guerre; Kar n'ad meillur viandier de Saint-Edmund en terre'[8] Jordan de Fantosme, '*Chronicle of the war between the English and the Scotch*, 1173-4 (Howlett 1886:288-9; Scarfe 1973:36).

6.1 Introduction

A general survey and synthesis of work from Britain 'strongly suggests a particular period of increased prosperity and urban growth after 1180' (Schofield and Vince 2003:26), and Bury St Edmunds was no exception. Chapter 5 presented a synthesis of the available evidence for the activities and aspirations of the population of Bury St Edmunds in the years after the conquest, moving beyond an account of the 'planning moments' that shaped the town: this chapter explores evidence for investment and development in the town and suburbs through the later 12th century. By this time, as discussed in Section 2.2, there is evidence that the European urban property market was well developed. Recent papers on the urban property market, on urban building types, and in the field of retail history have suggested that further evidence for the complexity of the urban environment in the 12th century in many English towns may well still lie buried in local archives (Keene 2006; Britnell 2006). This chapter presents specific examples from Bury St Edmunds which prove that this is the case. The available fragments of archaeological, historical and architectural evidence for activity, in combination, are a rich resource from which to explore hidden aspects of the evolution of the built landscape of Bury St Edmunds and the urban lives that were lived in it at the dawn of the 13th century.

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[8] 'But they [Flemish mercenaries] came for loot, for there is no better-provisioned place on earth than Bury St Edmunds'.

One of the main themes of this thesis is that a consideration of contest, challenge, aspiration and conservatism, as factors which also played a part in shaping the medieval built environment, can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the medieval urban archaeology of this formative period. The chapter presents the evidence for the changing urban environment in the late 12th-century as a prelude to Chapter 7, which argues that social, commercial, religious and political topographies of the town were intimately bound up with the changing built landscape as people acted and negotiated their way through new situations beyond the realms of historical precedent.

6.1.2 Business in Bury St Edmunds

When Hugh, the new Abbot of St Edmund's, was elected in 1157, Henry II issued a charter confirming the Liberty of eight and a half hundreds to the Abbey, and at the same time acknowledged its rights to hold a market, fair and to employ a moneyer: this latter was a prestigious privilege (Eaglen 2006:106). The fact that the town had a mint introduces one of the main themes of this chapter: the town as a commercial centre. Bury also had a Jewish population, until their expulsion in 1190. This is another indication that the town was a financial centre. The next Abbot, Samson, further promoted the town as a business centre. After several years of travelling round his estates, he arranged affairs such that much of his business was conducted from the Abbey itself. This is important, because it undoubtedly augmented the role of the Abbey and town as the centre of a large hinterland, and it reinforced Bury St Edmunds as a significant place in wider affairs. Samson, like other Abbot's before him, was a politician with a close connection to the royal court, and the shrine of St. Edmund was a destination for royal pilgrimages (Eaglen 2006:131; Gransden 2007:xv). Investment was made in the buildings and facilities around the court of the Abbey to provide surroundings as befitted the operational base of an Abbot of his status. It was at this date, too, that the last monumental change to the town plan was effected: the creation of the Abbot's fish pond (Appendix 2).

In line with an investment in the day-to-day parts of the complex, the *gesta sacristarum* details work that was carried out on the church: the central tower and spire were

completed in 1200-1211, and the west front was augmented with the addition of two octagonal flanking towers at the north and south ends. By the time of its completion, the West Front, at 246ft (75m) was the widest in Britain. For some further indication of scale, the surviving rubble core of the walls of the southern octagon is 3.3m thick (McAleer 1998:127-9). The Abbey flourished as a major pilgrimage and administrative centre, and, by implication, the town was an economic and commercial centre.

This point is further illustrated by the distribution of fairs and markets in Suffolk: the recorded medieval fairs and markets in Suffolk show that those in Bury St Edmunds sit in an isolation that is suggestive of a commercial monopoly that was not uncommon around medieval towns. Central-place theory is based on the observation that larger centres have larger hinterlands, and that these are competitively distributed (e.g. papers in Grant 1986). No markets are recorded within 6 miles, a hinterland perhaps defined by a days walking and within which any other market could be seen as competition (Scarfe 1989:60,62). In fact, this monopoly was jealously guarded. In 1201, the monks of Ely obtained a royal charter granting them permission to hold a market on their land at Lakenheath 17 miles north-west of Bury St Edmunds. The monks of St Edmunds sent letters and petitions to stop the enterprise on the grounds that it would be detrimental to their 'neighbouring' market in the town: after failed attempts to peaceably prohibit the market, six-hundred armed men of St Edmund gathered by night and rode to Lakenheath to ambush the market in the morning, throwing down the poles of the meat market and the tables of the market stalls (Brakelond 1989:118). This anecdote gives a useful description of a market at this date, but it also serves to illustrate the lengths that were taken to ensure commercial pre-eminence for Bury St Edmunds.

Through the late 12th- and early 13th- century, then, the management policy employed at St Edmunds was one which cultivated profit. Some of the mechanisms by which this was achieved are obvious, such as the draw of the market, shrine and fair. Others are more subtle, for example the re-focussing of the Abbot's business, and the commercial restrictions and monopolies which demonstrate the foresight that people had to actively

prevent development elsewhere. In addition to the town gates, the Tollgate at Babwell was clearly in existence in the later 12th century: Jocelin notes that the Abbot's pond extended from the 'gate', and archaeological evidence suggests that the damn for the pond was near the Tollgate (see Appendix 2). There was also a bridge here: perhaps it was a toll bridge. As an aside, the officials of the abbey used the tolls to their advantage: for example, anyone buying grain or anything else from the Cellarer was free from toll at the town gate on the way out (which meant that the Cellarer sold his produce at a higher price) (Brakelond 1989:91). It is not surprising, then, that the burgesses, collectively, felt strongly about economic issues in the town.

Jocelin's work offers incidental details which conjure up the business of the town in the late 12th century. For example, the monk makes passing reference to horses and carts coming into the town bearing foodstuffs, particularly barrels of herring, and he describes how, in a conflict over the rights to collect the valuable commodity of dung from the streets, the cellarer tried to seize wagons full of it from some of the burgesses. This suggests that there were many horses and other animals passing through the town (Brakelond 1989:68, 92-93). Certainly one could have enjoyed an evening in Bury St Edmunds at the dawn of the 13th century: in 1195, eighty young men leaving a tournament lodged at the Abbey and, becoming rowdy after a meal, they 'sent out to the town for wine' (Brakelond 1989:50). This chapter, then, presents and interprets the physical and landscape evidence of the town in the light of it being a vibrant and busy centre at a time of more widespread commercial growth.

6.2 Development of the suburbs

The development of the suburbs, revealed below, shows that Bury was flourishing. There is documentary evidence for the carving of suburban tenements from town fields in the 12th century from Bristol and Canterbury (Palliser 1976:6): Bury too offers some insight into the mechanisms of suburban growth. The overriding perception of the medieval suburb is that it was 'a fringe development, inhabited by people who were marginal in more than one sense of the word' (Keene 1990 [1976]:97). Suburbs were frequently populated by the poor, and by noxious and pyrotechnic industries that were

not suitable for a town centre location. Hospitals and religious institutions were also situated on the edge of towns: a location of spiritual liminality. The idea of marginalisation is one that Keith Lilley has prioritised in his model of urban moral topographies. The edges of towns, away from a spiritual heart, were, he argues, on the edge of the represented and the actual cosmos. In his view, a person's place in society was defined by their place in the landscape, and the suburbs were on the edge, where people liminal to society were banished: the right place for undesirable people, such as prostitutes and lepers, to live, in conjunction with the fumes from unpleasant and smelly trades (2002:244-9). Leprosy in particular was considered to be a disease brought about by sin and *leprosaria* were often placed on the social margins, generally assumed to be isolation hospitals (Gilchrist 2005:3). This section does not seek to overthrow these ideas, which are important to our understanding of medieval urban geographies. However, rather than focussing on the symbolic perceptions of the suburb, it is concerned instead with the economically profitable attributes of suburban locations, on major and busy roads heading into an urban centre. Considering the development of Bury suburbs from this perspective introduces the theme of speculative investment and negotiation that is a thread which runs through this chapter. This change in focus prompts questions of the evidence which would not otherwise, perhaps, have been considered significant and it highlights the benefit of detailed study to provide a commentary on the processes of medieval suburban growth.

Medieval suburbs were often long 'ribbon developments' which developed along major roads. Derek Keene has emphasised commerce as a formative element of suburban development, highlighting the presence of funnelling points at town gates or road junctions that would have made opportune trade possible: these wider places outside gates would have been necessary to allow for a slowing of traffic as it was stopped at the town gates, and Keene has argued that there would have been potential for casual trading on the spot, before the toll was exacted (Keene 1990 [1976]:110). Further, Jane Grenville has outlined that these extramural markets may well have been unofficial, in contrast to those which were obviously developed and controlled through the exercise of lordly or civic power (Grenville 1997:159). The location of hospitals on

the edges of towns was perhaps symbolic of the liminality of the sick, but at the same time, the decisions to situate them in these places were also pragmatic: suburban locations meant that there was space for the creation of precincts that were within a reasonable distance of civic amenities (Keene 1990 [1976]:117). Roberta Gilchrist has suggested that these locations, close to roads, served as reminders of the consequences of sin, and that charitable works could be prompted, thus reaping alms and bequests (Gilchrist 2005:13). Carole Rawcliffe highlighted the way that hospitals 'subverted the economic restrictions enforced in towns by engaging in unregulated trade and commerce': there was often space for them to host fairs, and they may also have provided hospitality and received alms from travellers who arrived after town gates had been barred for the night (2005). There was scope, for example, in these spaces, for 'forestalling' to take place: the practice of selling goods before reaching the official market place or time.

In Bury St Edmunds, it appears that the distinctive 'ribbon development' along main approach roads to the town had its origins, as for many places, in the 12th century (Keene 1990 [1976]:112). It is clear that the four or five newly founded urban hospitals were an incentive for development. Derek Keene noted that institutions might encourage a suburban growth (1990 [1976:117]) and certainly the evidence from Bury St Edmunds suggests that, from the late 12th century, the hospitals were actively consolidating and developing their suburban estates, perhaps with the intention of erecting tenements and attracting rents in competition to the dominance of the Abbey in the town. The hospitals and related suburban developments are described here according to the chronological order of their foundation.

6.2.1 St Peter's Hospital, Risbygate Street

Under the auspices of Abbot Anselm, St Peter's Hospital was founded outside the Risbygate in the 1130s to house aged, sick, infirm and leprous priests. Figure 6.1 shows the location of this suburb and hospital. It stood on the south side of the road (Morley 1926:176). The description of the hospital in 1186-97 shows that it was a stone house where the brethren lived, with a chamber attached. There was also a kitchen, three

other houses, a hen house, a privy and an orchard, all within a precinct wall (Davies 1954:87; Harper-Bill 1994:94). In the late 12th/early 13th century, before the full *portmanmoot* (court of the borough), Isabelle, daughter of Walter Gochep, granted the brethren of St Peter's, in perpetuity, an acre of arable land in the field opposite the hospital in exchange for an acre of land outside the south gate (Harper-Bill 1994:97). It is tempting to interpret this exchange, which would have helped to consolidate the lands of the brethren in the vicinity of the hospital, as one of the primary moves in the development of the hospital's suburban estates. This idea of the possible collecting and consolidating of land as a precursor or foundation to suburban development is made stronger by other examples. For example, in 1200-11, Richard de Gosefeld rented several tofts outside the Risbygate, including: half a toft held by William Wuderne; half previously held by Ailmer the Priest; half held by Robert Carter *(bercarius)* and three quarters held by Norman Bedell (transcript in Davies 1954:85). Was he collecting land, perhaps, for speculative development along what was to become Risbygate Street? A few archaeological finds in the Risbygate Street area suggest occupation from the 12th century but it is, unfortunately, not possible to ascertain the nature of the street at this date.

6.2.2 St Saviour's Hospital, Out Northgate

St Saviour's Hospital on Out Northgate (see Figure 6.2) was founded in 1184-5 by Abbot Samson, and the brethren were granted further endowments in 1186-7 (Davies 1954:88-9; Harper-Bill 1994:120-1). The hospital complex stood 150m northwards of the North Gate, and was founded, on what seems to have been wasteland, as a home for elderly monks and nuns (Caruth and Anderson 1997, BSE 013). Today, only part of the façade of the west end of a long, flint-built range survives. The central doorway has a pointed stone-dressed chamfered arch (DoE 1997 639-1/1/353). The structure was revealed by excavation in 1989, and it was suggested that the range comprised a hall with a chapel at the east end, where eight burials and the base of an altar were uncovered. There were further buildings to the north and south (Tester 1990:158-9). Gilchrist has suggested that this chapel may have possibly been a subsidiary gate chapel to a larger complex, a chapel by the gate for passing travellers (2005:30). In addition,

St Thomas's chapel stood opposite St Saviour's and this may have been an associated institution (OS map 1886; Morley 1926:176). St Thomas's and St Saviour's were founded on the main road north out of the town, and they were also placed near the confluence of two roads, at a wide triangular open space that mirrors the one outside the Northgate.

It was speculated above that Richard de Gosefeld may have been collecting tofts on Risbygate Street, and the observation was made that the brethren of St Peter's were consolidating their estate around the hospital. Here on Northgate Street, a similar process can be inferred from an exchange of property between two religious institutions. In 1205, during the Abbacy of Samson, Mr Osbert, Rector of West Stow, transferred to the brethren of St Saviour's hospital five perches of freely held land pertaining to his Church, in return for two blocks of land in East Field, one of five and one of seven acres (Harper Bill 1994:124). Such an exchange is worthy of further consideration because whilst a perch as a measure of area is 30 ¼ square yards, an acre is 4,840 square yards. Clearly, the Church of West Stow was gaining more land from the transfer. What, then, was the advantage for St Saviour's hospital? Three perches of the land previously held by the church are described as abutting the middle court (*mediam curie)* of the hospital, and two others were said to be abutting on '*bec*' on one part, and *Bramberwe* on the other (*ibid)*. This is evidence that at least one of the plots was adjacent to the hospital, and it is likely that the Brethren would have considered this valuable land whose acquisition would consolidate their estate around the Hospital. The implication is that it was land into which the precinct could expand, or, perhaps, it would have been suitable for speculative commercial development.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that in 1235, the hospital was confirmed the right to hold a fair on the Feast of the Transfiguration (6th August). This fair was to be held in the suburbs of the town, outside the north gate at the hospital of St Saviour (Letters *et al* 2003:326). The topography of the hospital site would indicate that this triangular area was probably the site of the fair. This also suggests that it may have operated as an unofficial market place, and with this insight, the consolidation of estates

along the roads and around the hospitals – and hence these trading places – makes a great deal of economic sense. Plots could be let and rents set according to their commercial value. The hospital was on a prime site to attract alms and charity, but by investing in property in the vicinity, it could also raise other revenues for the economy of salvation.

6.2.3 St Petronilla's Hospital, Out Southgate

St Petronilla's Hospital was founded outside the Southgate *c.*1200, ostensibly to care for female lepers (Morley 1926:176). Out Southgate is highlighted in Figure 6.3. Little remains of the complex, although some stonework is possibly incorporated into the 19th-century structure of Numbers 5 and 6, Southgate Green (DoE 1997 639-1/12/548). The relics of the complex were in use as a malt-house, as described in the most recent edition, from 1829, of Kirby's *Suffolk Traveller* (p.389). St Petronilla's hospital flanked Southgate Green, a large open space where a fair was held. In 1235, Henry III confirmed to the Abbot and Convent a licence to hold a fair on the feast of the Translation of St Edmund (29th April), outside the Southgate 'in the suburbs of the town' (Letters *et al* 2003:326). This is another example of an association between an institution, a fair, an open space and a major town gate: an indication of traffic, commerce and an empathy with the past purposes.

6.2.4 St Nicholas' Hospital, Out Eastgate

St Nicholas' hospital was founded before 1215 (Letters *et al* 2003:325). It stood at the end of Eastgate Street on the high ground between two approach roads into the town, again with a triangular space outside it which would have had a funnelling effect on the traffic (see Figure 6.4). One of these highways, Hollow Road, may well be the *Holegate* mentioned in the boundary clause of the 10th-century charter (Hart 1966:55-6). The Decorated-style window that today dominates the remains of the hospital precinct wall is reputed to have come from St Petronilla's (see above) (DoE 1997 639-1/5/436). There is therefore very little visible *in situ* fabric left. St Nicholas' House is a later building, but it contains some of the medieval fabric of the hospital, particularly on the west side. The 1829 edition of Kirby's *Suffolk Traveller* describes how the complex was

used as a farm: a building with an 'old window' was the farm-house and the chapel, a building with seven buttresses on each side was in use as a barn (p.389). The only visible remnant of the hospital, according to the listed building description, 'is a buttressed stretch [of wall] along Hollow Road adjoining the house: this has a moulded stone base, stone facings to the end buttress and stone jambs outlining a former large west window' (DoE 1997 639-1/5/436). Kirby also noted that St Stephen's Hospital stood on the north side of Eastgate Street between the bridge and St Nicholas, and that a few wall fragments survived (Kirby 1829:389).

It is likely that Eastgate Street began to develop as a suburb in the 12th century. The earliest datable reference to property in the vicinity is a late 12th-century grant of land at Sparrowhill, whereby Hugh, son of Roger the Cook, and his heirs were granted eight acres outside the town and a toft outside the Eastgate next to Sparrowhill (Douglas 1932:80). The properties on either side of the road have a common boundary, and, as is common with such 'ribbon development' along major roads, the suburb may well have been planned (Anderson 1996a:82). On the north side of the street, one of the properties in 1460 was 110 ft (33.6m) long, 36 ft 3 on the north and 23 ft 7 on the south (Harper Bill 1994:92), and some regularity of measurement may be observed. In open area excavations that were carried out on East Close at the northern extremity of the street, a medieval ditch which defined this rear boundary yielded 13th/14th-century pottery, which gives a *terminus ante quem* for the feature (Anderson 1996a:1).

In 1224, Henry III granted the rights to an annual fair to the master of the hospital of St Nicholas, to be held at the hospital for two days on the vigil and the feast of the translation of St Nicholas (8-9 May). In 1226, a further charter granted to the Prior the right to hold a fair on the vigil and feast of St Matthew the Apostle (20-21 Sept) (Harper-Bill 1994:84-5, Letters *et al* 2003:325). This suggests that the triangular space outside St Nicholas was also promoted as another religious and commercial gathering space. Finally, by this date, the hospital is described as being 'in the suburb' rather than at Babwell which *might* indicate that Out Eastgate was by now more fully developed as a built street.

There has been just one excavation on a site fronting one of these suburban 'market' places: at East Close at the end of Eastgate Street. The first significant phase of archaeological material on this site was phased to the late 12th -mid 13th-century, and this is broadly contemporary to the foundation of the hospital before 1215. Excavation trenches in advance of development sampled what was probably three medieval plots and revealed ephemeral traces of early buildings and back yards characterised by pitting. There was a flint and mortar lined well associated with 12th-13th-century pottery (BSE 026, Anderson 1996a:1, 24). One pit, 0029, yielded three unglazed jugs (one sooted on the base), a jar, pieces of 13th-century Hedingham fineware (from Essex), and a gilded annular brooch, 22mm in diameter (13-14th-century type) (Anderson 1996a:46). Evidence from the pits indicated that small scale industrial activity had occurred in the vicinity, including metal working and bone working. Possible ovens or kilns were also encountered (Anderson 1996a:40). From pit 1500, dating to the late C12th-early C13th pit, there was a stud, a round headed punch, and a large deposit of slag fragments analysed by Jane Cowgill, who ascertained that they were from forging rather than smelting iron: there were both hearth bottom and tuyere fragments (in Anderson 1996a:68-70). Perhaps this was craft activity associated with visitors to the hospital: perhaps related to blacksmithing. The excavations give a small insight into activity and craft in the suburb and the presence of fineware potteries suggests an element of affluence. This site was probably not a poor hovel.

6.2.5 Summary

The fragmentary evidence for changing property portfolios of St Peter's on Risbygate and St Nicholas' on Eastgate shows that land near these points of assembly and contact was desirable. Passing traffic would have been intensified at certain times in the church year as pilgrims congregated at Bury to attend masses and fairs. The fossilised spaces in the urban landscape, apparent in Figures 6.1-6.5, are evidence of the funnelling of traffic and the unofficial market spaces around which houses would have been built. Within this context, then, the Bury material provides an insight into the processes of acquiring cultivated land in desirable spots prior to suburban development. These

themes – of speculative development, and catching passing trade – are returned to in Section 7.4.

Tellingly, the suburbs seem to have developed in favour over 'Bracklond', the area enclosed by the northern flank of the town walls (Figure 6.5). Although Jocelin of Bracklond's name would imply that this part of the town was inhabited, the archaeological evidence for occupation in the area is thin. There have been traces of 12th-century pits and ditches (Tester 2003f; Duffy 2004b) but it is likely that it was essentially land of a more rural character. In the late 12th century, Roger the Clerk of Fressingfield and his wife Agnes of Beauchamp *(bello campo)* were granted tofts in Bury that had formerly been held by Tecie and Alfwin: these were in the great place on the north in the town of St Edmunds *(magna platea versus aquilonem in villa S. Edmundi)* (see Davies 1954:81-2 for a transcript) and I suggest that this was a 'great place' within the walls. The street pattern in this part of the town is more 'organic'. The suburbs, with passing trade, were probably more favourable as locales for development by institutions and individuals. Certainly, the development of urban property portfolios by institutions is well attested (for example, as demonstrated by Nigel Baker and Richard Holt's study of the role of the holdings of religious institutions in Gloucester and Worcester (2004). There is perhaps more scope generally to consider the detailed charter evidence – if it exists – for the role and aspirations of different individuals and institutions in the early formation of suburbs which, as Keene states, had often reached their maximum extent in the 11th and 12th centuries (Keene 1990 [1976]:114). By this time, the town had taken the form that was to survive into the 18th century, as shown in Figures 6.6 and 6.7. In particular, the greatest 12th century monumental change to the town was the creation of the Abbot's fish pond, and this is discussed in Appendix 2.

6.3 Archaeological evidence for urban activities

Section 6.2 has conveyed the commercial nature of the town of Bury St Edmunds in the later-12th century, and, by exploring the evolution of the suburbs, has set up an investigation which draws out speculation and investment as major themes driving negotiations in the landscape. The rest of this chapter presents the evidence for life in

the town centre, exploring archaeological, historical and architectural evidence for the diversity of buildings and practices. Given the obvious commercial importance and size of the town, it is disappointing that there is little archaeological evidence for trade and production. What the archaeological evidence does reveal, however, are some insights which contribute to broader spatial consideration of activities in the town. Evidence for the types of building is also revealed which enables surviving architectural fragments, particularly stone buildings, to be considered in context as something distinctive.

As for the earlier periods, the medieval archaeology from Bury is often truncated and fragmentary, or it has not been affected by development projects. Table 6.1 gives archaeological evidence from the town that has been phased to the 12th-13th centuries on the basis of spot-dated artefacts, mapped in Figure 6.6. Again, the spatial information about medieval occupation is restricted by the fact that the size and depth of the site is determined by the development. Whilst most of the information is too fragmentary to reveal more than the presence of medieval archaeology, some sites are worthy of consideration in more detail for the information that they provide about buildings, activities, and the use of the plots, as well as revealing the limitations of the evidence for enquiries of this type.

6.3.1 Angel Hotel

In recent years, the Angel Hotel was extended into its courtyards (see Figure 6.8 for location). Site BSE 168 was excavated in the courtyard behind the original Angel and site BSE 231 was dug in the courtyard of the former St Edmund's Hotel. These excavations yielded evidence of medieval occupation on the west side of Mustow. The medieval archaeology on these sites was difficult to interpret because the trenches were small, and the features had been disturbed, buried or truncated by activity in succeeding centuries (Duffy 2005:5). At BSE 168, archaeology had been lost and at BSE 231 it was buried too deeply to be affected by development and was left *in situ*.

At site BSE 168, the medieval archaeology consisted of pits along the Angel Lane frontage, and it was noted that this may well have been a back yard area (Caruth

2005:114). On this site, a large curvilinear feature with clay and loam fills (0195) seemed to bound a large rectangular pit which was partly cut into it: a large rectangular pit with steep sides (0218), this was interpreted as a possible cellar of 12th- 14th century date. A pit (0196), dated to the 12th- 13th century on the basis of pottery, yielded an assemblage that included pig, sheep, goat, fowl, duck, goose and fish bones, and oyster shell.

At site BSE 231, a broad, shallow pit cut 1m into the natural chalk was identified and it yielded pottery of a mid 12th-13th-century date, including Hedingham ware jugs. To the east of this feature, towards the street front, fine occupation layers of clay and charcoal (0027 and 0064) yielded sherds of 12th and 13th-century pottery. They were cut by a later wall (Tester and Anderson 2000:6). To the north, a feature (0061) may well have been a sunken building. It was 4.5m long and 2m deep into the chalk, possibly with a clay lining against the chalk edge. It yielded two fragments of 12th-13th-century Hedingham ware pottery as well as a 12th – 13th century bone pin (Tester and Anderson 2000:6, 9). It was again suggested that pitting is indicative of a backyard area.

6.3.2 Angel Lane

In an excavation on the site of the former Cinema Garage on Angel Lane (see Figure 6.8), features of a 12th to 13th-century date survived to the rear of the plot (west end), although, particularly along the street frontage, the medieval archaeology was truncated by later features. On the front of the property, there was a shallow hollow filled with greenish sand, covered with layers of chalk. The sand incorporated 12th-13th century pottery fragments and the layers were interpreted as possible floors, suggesting a building on the street front. A rubbish pit behind the floors (west) contained 12th-13th century pottery and the green/brown loam layers were interleaved with deposits of chalk. A clay-built oven cut into the pit (and overlain by a feature of 12th-14th century date) showed evidence for at least two phases of burning. Deeper into the plot, there was a pit or sunken building: this pit was not fully revealed in the excavations but it was at least 3.75m x 3.25m, and the smoothness of its edges suggested that it had been open for some time. The backfill included 12th-13th century pottery, and fragments of

wall plaster in the base were hypothesised to have come from a superstructure (Caruth and Anderson 1996b). The pottery assemblage from this site comprised mainly course, unglazed pottery bowls, pots and storage vessels, similar to the small 12th-13th century assemblage retrieved from the fill of the construction trench of a flint and mortar lined well from site BSE 133 to the north (Caruth and Anderson 1996b, Tester 1996c). Of the activity that took place, little else can be said. The archaeological evidence gives an insight into a 12th-13th century back yard in Bury St Edmunds. Evidence for street front activity is now underneath pavements and houses. This fact, and the 'keyhole' nature of the excavations, means that it is very difficult to answer questions about industry and production in the town. As will be seen, however, the evidence for the buildings and activities on the back of these plots is markedly different to the evidence for stone structures in some of the main streets.

6.3.3 Churchgate Street

The possible late Saxon cellar on the site of 51-52 Churchgate Street (Figure 6.9) was described in Section 5.5.2. Finds of glazed Grimston-ware pottery from Norfolk and Stamford ware from Lincolnshire pottery within the fill suggest that the building continued in use until the late 12th century, when it was backfilled. Post-built, plank-lined, sunken floored buildings might therefore have been a feature of the urban landscape in the 12th-century. Bone, pottery – particularly local coarseware - charcoal, ash and burnt flint were found in the upper loamy fill, and the lower fill comprised charcoal, clay, chalk and flint rubble. Fragments of ashy material, hearth lining and slag suggest that the site was used for some sort of metalworking some point around the late 12th-century (Gill and Anderson 1998:4, 11). It was suggested in the site report that it might have been filled with hardcore: the fill included pieces of dressed Barnack limestone (with chiselling of pre *c*1200), pieces of tile, pieces of stone and pieces of plaster (Gill and Anderson 1998:9-10). A deliberate infilling suggests that there might have been a rebuilding project on the plot in the late 12th century: this resonates with arguments presented in Chapter 1.2.2 for the replacement of Late-Saxon cellars with alternative buildings.

6.3.4 High Baxter Street

Two open area excavations (BSE 124, BSE 202) have been carried out on High Baxter Street (Figure 6.10). Chapter 5.4.3 argued that High Baxter Street was part of an addition to the town plan made in the early 12th-century. The most common ceramic types from site BSE 183 (east side of the road) were 12th-13th century coarse-wares (Anderson 2001a). It was tentatively suggested, from fragmentary evidence, that the earliest structures on the site were clay-walled buildings on the street front. Two buildings were identified from post holes with a green clay fill that was preserved in later wall lines, and they were thought to be precursors to buildings 0055 and 0024, which seem to have been wattle and daub built structures (Anderson 2001a:45). A small section of clay walling with a plastered face survived (0283). There was a partition: postholes 0178-0148 were shallow and not thought to have accommodated earth fast posts. Adam Longcroft, an architectural historian from the University of East Anglia, has recently highlighted the prevalence of clay walled housing in the medieval urban and rural building stock (Longcroft 2006). Longcroft has emphasised the importance of clay and daub walling, in a region without a great deal of stone and where timber was not readily available due the cultivation of the land: timber was in short supply and prices were high (Longcroft 2006:65). He has also emphasised that the material was not necessarily inferior: a building excavated on Oak Street in Norwich was of clay walling built in the 1330s by the Abbot of Creake Abbey and let to a series of tenants, including merchants (Longcroft 2006:67). Clay was readily available, cost-effective and warm (Longcroft 2006:70). It might well be that many of the buildings in Bury at this time were timber framed or clay walled. The associated post holes were wide and shallow, with pads of clay, millstone (Rhenish lava, hand and machine mills) and mortar to take the weight of the buildings (Tester 2001a:46). The building(s) measured 7.25m (*c.* 24ft) along the street front. The rear of the building was unclear, but there were post holes between the distances of 3.75m and 6.5m back from the frontage. Perhaps it was an aisled building (Tester 2001a:3-4). The clay walled houses on this site seem to have been short-lived and they were replaced by houses built on dwarf walls. Charcoal analysis from samples from the pits showed the use of oak

heartwood fuel, as well as round-woods from coppicing, which was argued to be domestic fuel debris by the analyst of the material, Rowena Gale (Tester 2001a:42).

In comparison to the frontage, where buildings precluded the digging of pits, the rear of the plot was characterised by holes. Several of the pits behind the property were filled no later than the 13th century (Tester 2001a:29). A clay oven was excavated with a rectangular stoke pit attached (Tester 2001a:5). The animal bone assemblage from this phase of the site, assessed by Alexis Willett, comprised primarily food waste: meat, birds, sea fish and over ninety oyster shells (Tester 2001a:33-4). This site is a valuable window into the smaller building type that would have been present in medieval Bury (Tester 2001a:45).Tester has argued that it is hard to arrive at any estimate of occupation from this limited sample of re-worked archaeology and it certainly seems that physical evidence for occupation and activity may well be archaeologically invisible (2001a:48). Most of the pottery on the site is a local Bury-ware. In the 12th-13th century fabric one bowl, four jugs and twenty-nine jars were identified, including five jars in the shell dusted Bury ware fabric. There was also Grimston ware, Hedingham ware, Bury glazed ware and some 12th-13th century Saintonge and Rouen pottery. There were imported lava quern fragments, and also pieces of Flemish pottery, including a blue-grey Paffrath-ware ladle (Anderson 2001a:23, 16). Sue Anderson compared the assemblage to others in the town. On a simple percentage by weight, the 17% glazed ware in this assemblage is less than other High Medieval sites in the town (42% from St Saviour's Hospital, 29% from the Angel Hotel, 22% from East Close, 12% Raingate Street). However, Anderson has commented that the assemblage is earlier in the bracketing period of 12th-14th centuries rather than later. Here, it is important to note that there is evidence of imported of pottery which functioned either as containers, wares, or equipment for different practices of eating and dining, or as personal possessions (Gutierrez 2000; Brown 2002). The presence of the imports fits the general idea of the market at that time.

6.3.5 Raingate Street

Behind 47 Raingate Street, BSE 144 (Figure 6.11), a building constructed on a sill beam with a clay floor was built over an 11th-12th-century post-built structure. There was pitting in the yard behind this building containing pottery of the 12th-15th-century date, which was assumed to be the lifespan of the building. Medieval peg tiles were found: perhaps it had a tiled roof (Caruth and Anderson 1996a).

6.3.6 St Mary's Square

In St Mary's Square (BSE 127, Figure 6.12), within the proposed Middle Saxon enclosure, several 12th-13th century features were excavated: rubbish pits; a clay-floored, wooden or wattle walled building; and an oven – possibly a grain dryer (Anderson 1996b:iv, 32, 48). This latter was clay lined and had a stoke pit, and grain was retrieved from environmental samples (Anderson 1996b:18). A second one was found during a return to the site in 2005 (Craven 2006:5). Most of the pottery was 12th- 13th century in date.

6.3.7 Summary

It is, from this limited dataset, extremely difficult to make inferences about craft, commerce, and domestic production. The truncation and the keyhole nature of the sample make spatial interpretation especially difficult. There is nothing, for example, like the 13th-century workshop which contained over fifty hearths – thought to be dye vats - excavated on Swan Lane in London (Milne 2003:75-9, 93). However, the archaeological evidence, as for any place, does give insights into the range of buildings in the town, and back yard activity. It shows that people used their plots for their own business, much as they do today. The value of the fragments of evidence is best revealed when the 12th-13th-century landscape of the town as a whole is considered (to anticipate a little, see Figure 6.49). The distribution of smaller buildings in comparison to probable stone buildings will be considered further below. Again, to anticipate, as for many places, the distribution of stone buildings is distinctive: can we explore the aspirations that lead to these investments?

6.4 Historical evidence for the built environment

Section 2.2 explored recent work on buildings and shopping practices at the turn of the 13th century, revealing the richness and diversity of urban life through some key examples. The *Chronicle* of Jocelin of Brakelond, published charter evidence from the *Kalendar* of Abbot Samson, and copies of contemporary charters in the unpublished archives of the Abbey (Section 3.6.1) mean that aspects of urban life in Bury St Edmunds in the later 12th-century can also be brought to life. The archaeological evidence revealed evidence for the smaller houses: the documentary evidence reveals more about stone houses, shops, market stalls and booths. The evidence is presented here, and new interpretations and insights, inspired by recent work on urban buildings and retail history, can be drawn from it. The evidence is ultimately synthesised, in Figure 6.49, with the archaeological and architectural evidence to consider the spatial distribution of property, buildings and investment.

6.4.1 Oven on Lower Baxter Street

The subject of spatial patterning leads into presentation of a charter which concerns an oven on Lower Baxter Street. Baxter means baker, or more specifically, a bakeress. In 1182-1200, Richard, son of William of St Edmunds, was granted land, buildings and an oven *(furno)* that had been formerly held by Ralph Brian in *Bachesteresstrete* for a rent of 8s a year (transcript in Davies 1954:81). It is possible that this is an indication of an element of trade organisation in the town, with baking concentrated on Baxter Street and Old Baxter Street. A clay oven of 12th-13th-century date was excavated on High Baxter Street, but it is impossible to know whether it was used for domestic or commercial baking, particularly as ovens are often found on rear plots (Tester 2001a:5). One documentary reference and one excavated example is, of course, insufficient to make such a case but, to follow the line of thought, if baking *was* concentrated in these streets, it would have formed a physical enclave in the town that may well have reflected the fellowship that once existed amongst the bakers. There were 75 individuals of this profession recorded at Domesday, and the foundation charter of the Fellowship of Bakers is, as mentioned in Section 2.5.2, one of the few pieces of evidence for the various medieval craft guilds that existed in the town. This

guild was chartered by Abbot Hugh (1157-1180). By the charter, the permission of the guild was needed by anyone proposing to bake bread, and the corn and bread had to be of a certain standard. The Aldermanship of the Guild was a hereditary position, held by William, son of Ingard (Yates SROB P755/33 f.151). Further excavations on Baxter Street might reveal more evidence of commercial baking.

6.4.2 A stone house and 'rents' on Abbeygate Street (then Frenchman's Street)

Baxter Street runs perpendicular to the east end of Abbeygate Street, which was called *Frenchmannestrete* into the 13th-century (e.g. in two charters, one of 1242 (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f.85) and one of 1258-72 (Harper Bill 1994:100)). This was an axial street, linking the market place to the Mustow, and it is no surprise to find descriptions in the charters of buildings that can only reflect a commercial role. In one of the monastic registers, the *Liber Albus*, folios collated in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) contain copies of undated charters relating to transfers made by the sons of Richard, son of Drogo, which seem to relate to their respective portions of what must have been his urban property. Fortunately, some information is available about Richard, son of Drogo, who witnessed a charter in 1198-1200 (Davies 1954:83). Jocelin of Brakelond recounts how, c.1190, a son of the said Richard was accused of rape by a beggar girl, who complained to the Abbot, Samson. Clearly Richard was an influential man able to negotiate a compromise, because a settlement was reached whereby the girl was awarded a mark in compensation. Richard paid the Abbot an additional four marks for making the settlement, and then the whole sum of 5 marks was awarded to 'a merchant' in return for his agreeing to marry the 'little beggar girl' (Jocelin of Brakelond 1989:41). The following case study of the properties of the sons of Richard son of Drogo (and the connection that can be made with the account in Jocelin's Chronicle) shows the potentially useful information that still lies un-transcribed in the Abbey registers.

By one charter, Robert, son of Richard, son of Drogo, transferred to William Russe[?], son of Peter Blunt, that part of Robert's land between the gate of his (Robert's) stone

house in *Vico Francorum* and the land that Norman *pintari* (butler? – see Latham 1980) had held of Robert (PRO DL 42/5 f. 20r). The charter is in a collection compiled in the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). This suggests that a stone house was set back from the street. In another charter, Walter, son of Richard son of Drogo of Bury, granted to Peter, son of John Wood (*Silvestris*) a property between his [Walter's?] 'rent' (*redditum*) and the 'rent' held by Bartholomew, son of Normann (*sic*). The term 'rent' has no satisfactory modern equivalent, but in studies of Late Medieval urban buildings, it is often taken to mean units (often on the street front) that are rented out, perhaps small runs of shops or small houses (Keene 2000:90), and there is no reason why that interpretation should not be valid here. There is evidence from mainland Europe for continuous ranges of shops by the mid- to later 12th-century, and closer to home, there is documentary evidence from Winchester for runs of small timber shops (Harris 2002:49). Further, in the customs of Hereford in 1154, rows of houses were identified as a fire hazard (Kowaleski 2006:354).

At the turn of the 13th-century, then, this man of financial means and influence held properties on Frenchman's Street in the form of a stone house with a gate from the street front. This was flanked by at least two units of commercial street front property that were sublet, one of them to a *pintari*, which might mean butler: perhaps it was a tavern. To anticipate a little, this arrangement of properties is precisely that inferred from the architectural evidence for a set of properties on a corner tenement of this street in the late 13th-early 14th-century (see below, 25-26 Hatter Street). In Bury too there is documentary evidence which indicates that there were shops in front of stone buildings in other parts of the town (see below), and, as revealed, stone buildings in the town are often set back from the street. Roland Harris, in his national survey of surviving 12th-13th century commercial architecture, observed that apparently residential stone or substantial halls set back from the street may well have been fronted by timber buildings which could have been shops (2002:49) Keene too notes that rows were, by 1300, a dominant feature of the urban scene either accommodating shops, or cottages in less commercial areas. He also notes the common occurrence in medieval towns of gates on frontages which opened onto alleys leading to larger houses

which might have a yard or garden (Keene 2000:90). In the later medieval period, these gates were often highly ornate (*ibid*). In London, it is likely that some 12th century stone houses lay to the rear of yards off of Cheapside (Schofield 2003:61). It is rewarding that a detailed study reveals concrete examples in Bury St Edmunds and, given the evidence for the commercial prosperity of the town, it is interesting to be able to make inferences about the 12th-century streets, explore where this commercial activity took place, and consider how people set about promulgating it by building small, relatively speculative row shops. Richard son of Drogo may well have sought to increase his fortunes by subletting street front properties, whilst maintaining a presence on that street with a gateway to his house. At the turn of the 13th-century, then, this man of financial means and influence held properties on Frenchman's Street in the form of a stone house with a gate from the street front, and at least two units of commercial properties on the street frontage.

The charter also reveals further features of the property which support the interpretation that Richard son of Drogo's property was fronted with small commercial 'rents': it includes the proviso that Walter and his heirs should retain the use of a window for the duration of the fair (PRO DL 42/5 f. 22r, 19v). This suggests strongly that this early 13th –century 'rent' had a shop front in the medieval form, with open windows. Lillian Redstone cited a variant of this charter, unfortunately without reference, which differs in that it says that Walter and his heirs retained the right to use three windows during the fair, with a fourth to be retained as a common thoroughfare for the goods of both parties (1909:203). This reveals many things that will be addressed in Chapter 7.4: the importance of the street front, particularly during the time of the fair, the sharing and control of commercial space, and the form of the buildings.

As outlined in Chapter 2.5.1, fairs formed an international distribution and credit network and those which took place in Eastern England were an important part of this European system. The accomodation of visiting merchants and their stock was imperative. An example from the late 13th century shows that the retention of street

front buildings for separate lets at certain times was not an uncommon practice. In the French town of Bar-sur-Aube in 1275, Theobald de Bayel and his wife, Adeta, rented a house from the Nunnery of Foissy: they were required to vacate it for the duration of a fair which started on the Tuesday after the third Sunday in Lent, taking all of their moveable goods with them (Kowaleski 2006:123). Bury fair clearly extended along Frenchman's Street, into the Market place, and presumably, onto Mustow outside the Abbeygate.

6.4.3 Tofts, buildings, shops, booths and stalls in the market

Richard son of Drogo also held land on *Cordwainer's Street*, which unfortunately cannot be located in the modern landscape, although it seems to have faced the market, on the basis of the description of properties on it. He was mentioned as a neighbour in one of several charters pertaining to properties here at this date. In 1182-1198, Adam the Cordwainer of Berton rented from Hugh the Sacrist for 11s a year a toft with a house in the market (*unam toftam cum domibus in foro)* in Cordwainer's Street (*vico cordawanorum).* It was situated next to the land of Hubert the Lorimer (*lorimarii);* a 'lorimer' is a maker of horse bits and other such equipment. The Sacrist was to retain the house nearest the street and square to lease during the St Edmund's fair, which suggests again that it was a workshop or shop, with access arrangements made for the tenants. The clause says that, at this time, Adam the Cordwainer and Richard de Bradefeld are to '*habebunt quemdam communem viam per mediam dom(um) in feria sancti Eadmundi ad latitudinem unius fenestre* (Davies 1954:78). Another charter introduces the said Richard of Bradefeld, who also leased a toft on *Cordwainer's Street*, next to the land of Richard son of Drogo for 12s per year, with the same condition that the sacrist retains the front part during the fair. Richard of Bradefeld and Richard Winebuc are to have access during the fair (Davies 1954:79).

Yet another similar charter survives from 1182-1200, whereby Serlo the tanner obtained a lease for himself and his heirs from Hugh the Sacrist for a toft with buildings in the market for bi-annual payments of seven shillings at Easter and the feast of St Michael. The toft lay between the land of the Pittancer and that stone house which the

burgesses of St Edmunds had built to finance their combined payment of the customary dues of *repsilver* and *schorpenny* (Section 2.5.2). The Sacrist, however, retained the right to let the ground floor front of the house next to the street and square to merchants during St Edmunds' fair, whilst Serlo retained the upper room (*solar*) and an access to the rest of the breadth of the house (Davies 1954:77). This indicates that there were multi-storey properties, and that the lower front part was probably a shop or workshop, communicating with the street. However, the use of the words 'toft' and 'land' also suggest that they were large plots (as, in fact, the map analysis would suggest). Keene has noted that the rear of plots in the busiest areas may well have been built with smaller properties (2000:90). These charters from the town add to the canon of evidence for the diversity of properties at the turn of the 13th-century, and include terms in leases by which parts of a building on the street front were retained for use by the landlord at fair time.

Other buildings in the market were more directly referred to as 'shops', 'selds' and 'booths' and may well have been smaller structures that were either permanent or semi-permanent. Certainly, the rents are much less than for the tofts. In 1182-6, Walter the Merchant, son of Gilbert, rented a shop (*sopa)* in the market which had formerly belonged to Henry the Moneyer. The rent of 20d at Easter and the feast of St Michael was payable to the Cellarer, (PRO DL 42/5 f. 23v; Davies 1954:78 for a Latin transcription). In the late 12th-century, Jocelin's *Chronicle* reveals that the monks of St Edmund's began to complain that the burgesses of the town had made inappropriate encroachments on the market place in the form of shops, booths and stalls. H. E. Butler emphasised that these were probably sizeable encroachments and permanent buildings that would have been worth more than the stallage which the tenants probably paid to the Convent for the plot (Brakelond 1949:77n). Jocelin's Latin text, '*sopis et seldis et stallagiis*' has been translated by Butler as 'encroachment with respect to shops, booths and stallage' (1949:77) and by Greenway and Sayers as 'encroachments in shops, booth and stalls' (1989:68). The use of the word *seld* may here define a single booth or a set of windows or booths provided in an insubstantial building (such as at Winchester St Giles fair), or it could feasibly mean the larger buildings which perhaps

evolved from the practice of erecting structures around smaller, sublet units: permanent *selds* like St Martin's in London (Morrison 2003:23) (Chapter 2.2.2). The fact that there had been encroachments on the market by the late 12th-century shows the possible antiquity of 'island' sites in market places which have developed from fossilised market plots. In Bury, it is possible that the buildings of the Traverse (referring back to Figure 5.16), long acknowledged to have their origins in late medieval market stalls that evolved into permanent structures – may have a longer history (see below, Section 6.5.12). The monks' grievance was that they only received forty shillings a year from the reeves for rents in the market whilst clearly there was potential for much greater profits. The burgesses claimed that it was an ancient custom for the reeves to be able to grant the site of shops and booths in the market place for an annual rent payable to them, and that as they themselves had held the properties for longer than a year and a day, it would be against the liberty of their charter to dispossess them (Brakelond 1989:68). Clearly, the buildings on the markets could have yielded much higher rents to the monks. Chapter 7.7 will consider the destination of this profit, in the light of evidence for communal building projects undertaken by the burgesses.

6.4.4 Stone houses in the town

One continuing element of the scenery of the market place was Moyse's Hall. This building, the only extant example of a secular Romanesque building in the town still standing in recognisable form, will be discussed below. Other documentary evidence and stone fragments, however, suggest that there were other stone buildings in the town owned by the monastery and burgesses which means that it should not be considered in isolation. Around the year 1190, Abbot Samson bought or built some stone houses in the town which he gave to the school master for use as lodgings for poor clerks, freeing them from rent which had cost them a penny or half penny twice a year (Jocelin of Brakelond 1989:41, 84). In 1196-7, when the Reeves of the town charged merchants from London merchants 15d on a convoy of carts passing through the town carrying herrings from Great Yarmouth to London, the merchants claimed that it was an infringement of their rights and threatened to pull down 'the stone

houses that the abbot had built that year' (Brakelond 1989:68). The use of the plural is significant.

In 1200-11, Alan Mader and his wife Alice, and their heirs, were granted the land and stone houses with all the pertinences formerly belonging to John the Mason (*cementarii*) near (*prope*) the West Gate of the cemetery. The rent was 3s a year, payable to the Sacrist at Easter and the Feast of St Michael, with 2d payable to the town reeve for all services. The land lay between the land of Ralph de Stowe and Adam, Priest (*presbiteri*) de Pakenham (transcript in Davies 1954:81).

Richard of Horringer's stone house stood on land in front of the gate door of the church, mentioned in a deed of 1182x 1200, and in the mid 13th-century, Henry of Horringer *(de Hornynggesherth*) transferred the whole of his stone house to Ranulf the Moneyer for a sum of one hundred shillings and rent of 20 shillings per year – a worthy sum. This house stood between the shop which Ranulph had lately purchased from Joice de Bernewell and William del Hyl de Rougham (Davies 1954:79-80, Harper Bill 1994:130). Henry also quitclaimed 20s from a 'toft with buildings in *kyrkegatestrete* opposite (*contra*) St James' church, between the toft of Ranulph and the toft of William del Hyl de Rougham' (BL Lansdowne 416 f. 20r-v). In a deed dated 1200 x 1211, Thomas Goldsmith son of Ralph was granted a shop (*sopam*) in *feodo libere* by the sacrist for 9s a year. The grant also included land which abutted onto the stone house once of Richard of Horringer, and all the land behind the wall built by the said Richard (*retro de muro lapideo qui fuit euisdem Richard)* (see 7, Athenaeum Lane, below) and the deed also mentions the house of Ralph Valensis 'in the place once known as Paddockpole' (Davies 1954:79-80). These examples are further evidence of shops and rents in front of larger stone houses, as the properties of Richard, son of Drogo, seem to have been.

6.4.5 Commercial properties at the gates of the precinct

As a further demonstration of the complexity of the property market, in 1182-1200, John the Cook and his heirs were granted a plot of land in front of the Great Gate for 6d a year, payable to the Sacrist at Easter and at the feast of St Michael. This land was

20ft (*pedes*) (6.10m) in length and 15ft wide (4.60m) and it is likely that this may have been a plot upon which a stall or shop could be set up near to St James' tower, the main ceremonial entrance to the precinct and in an ideal situation for passing trade (Davies 1954:80). Certainly this was the case in 1319. Peter Pugilis was also granted a building plot at Paddockpole (now Chequer Square): his plot was 90 ft x 23 ft (27.4m x 7.0m) (Davies 1954:82). It would seem that this area, by the main gate of the Abbey, was something of a focus for development – a point which will be drawn out in Chapter 7.

In 1182-1200, Master Adam of St Edmund, clerk, was granted for his fealty a messuage which had formerly been held by Ralph the Painter (*pictoris*) in front of St Margaret's Gate for 12d per year (Davies 1954:80). Perhaps Ralph the Painter had a workshop similar to that of the 12th-13th century priest and painter Olisei Grechin, excavated in Novgorod, Russia, in the 1970s: there, a piece of birch bark detailing a commission gave the artist's name and his tenement had on it a wooden building that had been used as a workshop. It contained paints, mineral dyes, crucibles, pottery cups, pieces of amber, amphorae for olive oil as well as wood prepared to receive icons. A small lean-to had apparently been used for storage, and pieces of ochre were found (Yanin 1992:100-3). This adds to an appreciation of the commercial topography.

6.4.6 Summary

The documentary evidence therefore reveals stone buildings, rented units, shops, stalls, booths and houses. It is silent, apart from the oven on Baxter Street, upon the subject of activity in the plots, but fortunately, as discussed already, the archaeological evidence from the town gives some insight into this issue. What remains in the built environment? Asking and attempting to answer this question is important to add another layer of material and spatial analysis, fill in further, non-documented examples, provide evidence on the size and appearance of houses and plot layout, and to reveal the hidden secrets of the urban landscape.

6.5 Architectural survivals

This section explores some of the architectural evidence from the period in the town, identifying and collating it for the first time and including some new surveys. In most cases, apart from the extant structure of Moyse's Hall, only a tiny fragment of a building survives or is accessible. The sampling strategy and criteria for identifying buildings of this era were outlined in Section 3.5. The surviving examples add to the archaeological data discussed in Section 6.1.1, revealing further ways that the landscape was built up, and providing evidence of the size and scale of some of the buildings in the town at the time. The value of understanding the form and location of buildings beyond an archaeology of the everyday is considered further in Chapter 7.

6.5.1 Moyse's Hall

Moyse's Hall, shown in Figures 6.13-6.14b, is the *piece-de-resistance* of this chapter: the only standing building of the period under consideration left in the town (DoE 1997 639-1/7/295). As Harris points out, there are only approximately 100 known examples of Romanesque houses in England, including excavated examples (compared to a corpus from France of more than 2000) (2002). Although it has been altered and adapted the building is therefore celebrated nationally as a rare example of an extant, two-storey, Romanesque building in an urban, secular context (Wood 1965, 1974; Harris 1994, 2002). Moyse's Hall overlooks the north-eastern corner of the market place (which, as we saw above, was an arena of shops, stalls and gossip). Its structure comprises two rooms over two undercrofts (Figures 6.15-6.16b). The vaulting and the original first floor windows have been ascribed a stylistic date of *c.*1180 by architectural historians Margaret Wood (1974:50) and Roland Harris (2002:51). The windows, beneath roll moulded arches, are rectangular with roll moulded jambs: these colonnettes have crocketed capitals (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1974:152). The hall is built from flint rubble with ashlared stone buttresses, windows, quoins and vaulting. In this respect, it is similar to monastic buildings constructed in the 12th-century and the flints are small, rounded, well-sorted and neatly coursed (as illustrated in Figure 3.9).

Moyse's Hall has long excited comment from antiquarians. In 1865, Gordon Hills wrote that 'Moyse's Hall, which has also been called the Jew's House, [is] one of the most ancient specimens of a citizen's house in the kingdom' (p. 35), and at an earlier date, Edmund Gillingwater commented that:

> 'On the Hog Hill, or Beast Market, stands the common Bridewell, formerly a Jewish synagogue, built of flint and freestone, in old writings it is called Moyse Hall *(sic)*... the walls of this building are of great solidity, they are faced with stone and the whole structure is erected on strong arches. Its circular windows bespeak its antiquity' (Gillingwater 1804:268-9).

Moyse's Hall has been variously characterised as a former synagogue (Gillingwater 1804:268-9), a Jew's house (Hills 1865:35), a single private house (Wood 1974:50), or two separate houses or apartments over commercial undercrofts (Harris 2002:51). This thesis adds to the debate and, on the basis of the physical form of the building, raises the possibility that it *might* have been intended for public use – perhaps a toll house or communal hall. The possible political significance of the construction of Moyse's Hall is considered in Chapter 7.7.

There is no known documentary evidence relating to the early years of the life of the building. The earliest reference dates to 1327, when it was recorded that on 18th August, Thomas de Thornham and a band of rebels invaded the town and had breakfast at Moyse's Hall (Arnold 1896 II:349). Where the name came from is not known, although Mosse, Moose or Moyse is a local surname: amongst the rioters in 1327, there was a William Mose, chaplain (Redstone 1909:70). A widespread tendency in the past to associate stone houses with Jewish communities has lead to the supposition that Moyse's Hall was a building constructed by the Jewish population of the town, and that 'Moyse' is a corruption of 'Moses' (Gillingwater 1804:268-9; Wood 1974:14-15; critiqued in Grenville 1997:175-7). Samuel reaches the conclusion that there is no definite evidence for this association (Samuel 1977:43). Nonetheless, it was a widely held view and, in the 1890s, when there was a proposal to demolish the building,

considerable financial support was given by the Rothschild family to the campaign, mounted by the author John Ruskin and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for its rescue. The bequest gave money to open the Hall as a museum (Jennings 1900; Spanton 1929:64).

Of the original fabric, the south and west walls survive to the top of the first floor, and the undercrofts and the first floor windows on the west side are largely intact. In 1858, the roof was raised (SROB EE 500/21/1). The west wall came down in 1804 and was rebuilt with brick and flint rubble. The building is rectangular and measures 15.1m x 11.9m (49 ½ft x 39 ft). It is divided into two parts, separated by a wall that is 1.14m (3ft 9in) thick. The western part measures 16 ft (4.9m) wide internally, and it has a semi-circular groined vault with diagonal ribs. The eastern part measures 24 ft (7.3m) wide, and the undercroft is divided into two aisles and six bays by cylindrical piers (Figure 6.17). The quadripartite vaulting is formed from slightly pointed, chamfered arches. The piers have moulded bases, simple cushion capitals and square abaci (Wood 1974:50). Above these undercrofts are two chambers: the western one is smaller than the eastern and Wood argued that these were a first floor solar and hall respectively. In the western side, where the front windows survive, there are original window seats (Figure 6.18). Margaret Wood's interpretation was that the building was a 'large dwelling house of hall and solar type' (*ibid*).

Roland Harris has argued that the probable commercial role of the building has not been emphasised (1994:64). He makes the point that the eastern undercroft at Moyse's Hall is uniquely large in scale, being of a size which presages later undercrofts. He suggested that it could have been designed for storage and/or retail of bulk goods (Harris 2002:51). Given the context of the market and fair, where goods might need to be stored, it is likely that this structure did indeed serve some commercial function but whether it was divided into shops, was a form of *seld* or was more of a warehouse is something that can only be speculated upon. It is unfortunate that, unlike, for example, the Jew's House in Lincoln, very little of the original frontage survives to inform conclusions as to access and lighting.

The 19th-century ground floor front windows and door were installed in 1858 and traces of former openings, if they were there, were concealed by restoration of the flint work, which involved the 'clearing away of the loose rubble and making it good' (SROB EE/500/211). In 2000, the south façade was repaired after a piece of the west gable fell into the market place and archaeological monitoring carried out by Dave Gill during the work revealed that, although medieval material survives beneath, much of the current frontage is formed from Victorian repair work, with flints set in mortar mixed with ash. Gill recorded putlog holes and building lifts related to the original construction (Gill 2004b:302 and pers. comm.). Nonetheless, inferences about access can be made from the internal fabric, and from old sketches and prints of the building.

There are arched openings behind the later windows in the interior, and Roland Harris has suggested that they do in fact form the back of the original window openings or door heads, a point also made by Wood (1974:50), although she was less convinced of the authenticity of the eastern of the two, where the stonework appears to butt up against the pillar of the vaulting. The reveals of both arches go right down to the ground, which suggests that they were entrances or perhaps windows with timber sills (Harris 1994:63-4). Certainly, there is a rubbed depression in the street front pillar which might indicate that something was routinely slotted into place- perhaps a stall board? There is a print of 1748 which depicts rounded openings into both the western undercroft and the western side of the eastern undercroft, which correspond to the stonework inside (Figure 6.19). This suggests, then, that there were separate entrances to the parts of the undercroft. Harris has also suggested that a drawing from before the collapse of the east wall shows a narrow doorway to one side of an arched opening, which may have opened onto a stair to the first floor (Harris 1994:62). The arched opening is offset, and it might be that there was always a door in the location of the modern entry. He counters this proposal with the observation that the groin vaults are intact and there is therefore no evidence of communication between the undercrofts and the first floor. In fact, the preservation of the fabric is an illusion: Chris Mycock, the curator of the museum, has said that in parts it is patched up with chicken-wire (pers. comm.). Still, it is entirely feasible that the undercrofts may have been separate

from the rest of the structure and further work may one day reveal the presence or absence of communication between the ground and upper floors.

Whilst Wood considered Moyse's Hall to be one building, then, she did not critically explore the original access patterns. Roland Harris continued his argument that there were separate entrances to the parts of the undercroft by suggesting that the undercrofts in fact related to two separate properties and that there was no original communication between them (Harris 1994:66). Clearly, they were built at the same time but his suggestion is that they were built as separate units. Although they are different in form, the decorative finishes to the pillars of the vaulting and the stops on the chamfer are exactly the same on each side, the undercrofts are of matching lengths, the stones are of consistent size and shape, and the springings of the vaults are at the same height – 'undeniable evidence of simultaneous construction under a single patron or developer' (Harris 1994:64). Such a scenario would imply a commercial role. This lack of evidence of former communication is not conclusive because the undercrofts are now linked by a wide, 16th-century arch which may well have obliterated any trace of a former opening. However, the separate entrances to the undercrofts is convincing enough.

Harris also considered there to be no access between the rooms on the upper floor, on the basis that the communicating door between the two parts of the building was created in the 15th-century when the internal stair was put in - a development noted by Jennings in 1900 (p. 236). He concluded that the construction of two properties over self-contained undercrofts was a more likely scenario than Wood's 'odd suggestion of a vast solar abutting a hall' (1994:66). However I believe that in fact, there was communication between the two first floor rooms. On the first floor, Chris Mycock, the Curator of Moyse's Hall Museum, has noted faint traces of a possible doorway visible on the western side of the party wall. Under the thick paint, ashlar work is visible which terminates at a neat edge. In the process of production of the section drawing of the original fabric of the building, it became clear to the author that this doorway would have lined up exactly with a Romanesque doorway on the other side of

the room (see below). It must be assumed that this door was blocked when the stair was added. Instead of a two properties split by a vertical division, it is therefore more likely that there was a horizontal division between the upper and ground floors, the latter of which was split into separate units.

Given this communication, then, it is clear that there was a differentiation between the two rooms. Apart from the size, there is every possibility that the 'hall' on the west was heated with a large fireplace, again an observation made by Chris Mycock. Norman stone fire-hoods were substantial structures, and there is a diagonal scar running down the wall at an angle reminiscent of the structures that survive in other places, terminating near to the fireplace. The fireplace itself has stone jambs that are decorating with a moulding similar to that of the windows (DoE 1997 639-1/7/295). The one on the left is possibly *in situ*, that on the right has been moved inwards to create a narrower opening. The lintel is a plain beam (Jennings 1900:236). The presence of this possible fireplace in the middle of the wall suggests that this building was a large, heated hall. Whether it was domestic, commercial, public or private is not known – and these different functions are not mutually exclusive.

Two Romanesque doorways in the western wall of the proposed solar were revealed in 1900 when plaster was removed from the walls (Jennings 1900:233). One of them, to the north, is blocked, the other was modified with a Perpendicular door head (Figure 6.20). Whether they were external doors or whether the 12th-century complex continued to the west is not known. In the 16th century, this western portion of the building was annexed to the Castle Inn, and it might be that the door was remodelled at this date. Jennings thought that the doors may have communicated with another house, but it has more recently been conjectured that they were both originally external features. The northernmost door, now hidden in a cupboard, is smaller than the one to the south, and it has been suggested that it led to a garderobe chute (Chris Mycock, curator, *pers. comm.)*. P.A. Faulkner, in one of the first papers on medieval commercial architecture, suggested that the southern of these two doors may have

been at the head of an external staircase leading to the market place and that the room might have been a 'counting house' (Faulkner 1966:134).

If it was a counting house, what was the hall for? The windows are an impressive feature of this larger, eastern room. The south windows survive, and antiquarian prints show that there were also ranges of windows along the east wall – a point worth emphasising, because it is clear that the first floor hall would have been well lit. The south windows face onto the market place, and stone window seats are built into the thickness of the wall. The jambs and arch are decorated with a continuous roll moulding (DoE 1997 639-1/7/295). These windows were repaired in 1858. The specifications for the work ordained that workmen were to make the window jambs and sills good, to fashion a new lintel head, make new mullions to each window 'moulded to match the old work', and repair the string course under the sills. However, as for repairs to the Norman Tower carried out ten years earlier, the new work was to be identifiable from the old (SROB EE/500/21/1). The defective joints were to be pointed with dark mortar (perhaps this was the mortar mixed with ash noted in the re-pointed frontage) and the replaced stonework consists of harder, machine-cut stone: a 'good quality corn grit from the Corsham Down quarry'.

The original windows and window seats overlook the market (Figure 6.21). The window in the eastern chamber dates to the 16th-century. Harris noted that English Romanesque houses, like French ones, often have the first floor front as the principal room, writing that: 'it is ironic that Moyse's Hall, which departs to some degree from the archetypal ground-level townhouse in its ground floor arrangements, should provide the best surviving counterpart to the French first-floor window.' The pre-eminence of the first floor room is perhaps based on the grammar of the architecture: it is a room that overlooks the street, but is more private in that it does not open directly onto it – rather like the *piano nobile* in classical buildings. In French buildings, the solar and the first floor windows over workshops and cellars are often distinguished by decorated windows or galleries (Garrigou-Grandchamp 1992:80, 25; Laleman and Raveschot 1994:203).

It has been argued that 12th-century ideology and architecture were interlinked, and particularly in the religious context, concepts of order and hierarchy were articulated in the built environment, framing people, action and the heavens both in terms of decoration and the control of space (Panofsky 1957:24; Meyer 2003). The window seats would have provided a person with an elevated view of the market and its proceedings and – conversely – the window may well have served to frame those observers. Was it, then, a building which articulated a particular set of relationships between a group of people and the market? Or was it a well-lit place in a domestic room? Without further evidence for buildings around the market place, the distinctiveness or otherwise of Moyse's Hall can not be truly appreciated. My suggestion is that if this was, perhaps, a public building, then the presence of a vast solar (or counting house) abutting a hall is not so strange as Harris thought (1994:66). It would seem that the structure comprises two undercrofts – perhaps separately let – underneath two rooms, one of which at least was heated and well fenestrated, with window seats facing the market place. Certainly a combination of a commercial ground floor and a hall and chamber above is not dissimilar to suites of rooms found in Later Medieval guildhalls (Giles 2000). Clearly, Faulkner, in suggesting that the stair lead to a counting house, was thinking along the lines of this being a commercial or even a public building. The relationship between Moyse's Hall, the market place, and the evidence for communal investment by the burgesses of the town are further considered in Section 7.7. Such a structure might be important to the administration of the market and the fair but whether Moyse's Hall was unique or not is something that will only ever be revealed by a major campaign of excavation.

6.5.2 'The Norman House', 79-80 Guildhall Street

79 Guildhall Street, the location of which is shown in Figure 6.22, is called 'The Norman House' because the fabric of a large stone structure lies within it. A mid-late 12th-century doorway is set into a thick stone wall faced with ashlared stone blocks (see DoE 1997 639-1/14/402-3). The wall is 6.10m/20ft from the street front. The doorway, 1.43m wide and 2.03m high, has a roll moulded arch and voluted capitals (Figure 6.23). It is decorated on the west side only: the other side is flat with a 60mm

rebate (Harris 1994:300). This suggests that the eastern face was on the inside, and that the building stood on the street front – in fact, the wall continues northwards into Number 80 next door, and can be seen to return towards the east. The listed building description notes that there is a narrow 12th-century door at the south end of the wall which has a chamfered pointed arch and that, halfway between the two doors is a round headed window, also with a chamfered arch (DoE 1997 639-1/14/402). It was not possible to view these features because the house is subdivided into separate units, and it was not possible to gain access to each of them. It was thanks to the generosity of Louise Walsh from Temple's Property Agency that I was able to explore the vestibule.

Roland Harris considered the building in his thesis and suggested that it could have been a town house that fronted and ran parallel to Guildhall Street, with a courtyard to the rear (west, see Figure 6.22). He has also argued that the ornate form of the doorway implies that it was the main door to the building, perhaps opening onto a stair (Harris 1994:300). Alternatively, the building stands at the top of Churchgate Street, the main road that aligns with the Norman tower and the axis of the Abbey church, and it may have had some liturgical or processional function. However, that the building is apparently aligned north-south rather than east-west might indicate that it was a secular building rather than a chapel. There is no traceable contemporary documentation. An entry in the 1433 Sacrist's rental refers to a stone house (*messuagium lapideam)* on the west side of Guildhall Street: John Berdewell, 'fyscher', who was described as a 'cornloder' in the Hadgoval rental of the same date, paid 9d rent. The tenement had been held previously by Simon Prosete and before by Jacob Bowyer, the Rector of Gyslingham, who held the plot in 1386-7 (BM Harley 58 f. 47r, 29r; CUL Mm Ff ii 33 f.151v). At least in the late 14th century, then, this was probably not a chapel. It is possible that it was one of the first buildings erected when the plots were newly laid out and the possibility that this was a key point in the processional landscape of the town is considered further in Chapter 7.6. In terms of the evolving townscape, it contributes to an increasingly visible pattern (outlined below) that key parts of the town were monumentalised in stone.

Recently, monitoring of footing trenches for an extension behind Number 80, Guildhall Street, was carried out by John Duffy (2007b, BSE 224). It is the only intervention in the vicinity of this building, and its results are tantalising. An evaluation had shown that despite later terracing and truncation, medieval archaeology survived, including a pit which contained Thetford ware and Grimston ware dating to the 10th-11th century (probably evidence of occupation before Guildhall Street was re-planned when the town wall was laid out), a pit with pottery phased to the 12th-14th century, and – interestingly, given Harris's hypothesis that this might the doorway in Number 79 might have opened from a courtyard – a possible yard surface formed from several layers: an orange gravel over a chalk bed which in turn covered a dark grey silty sand that lay over the natural chalk. Duffy observed that he had seen similar gravel surfaces bedded on chalk at other medieval sites in the town – for example, in a road at Eastgate Barns, one of the Abbey granges (Duffy 2007b:5). There is possible buried potential to find out more about this building, and the archaeology seems to support rather than contradict Harris' idea that it might have opened onto a courtyard.

6.5.3 Barrel vault beneath 7, Athenaeum Lane

Underneath the Athenaeum is a small barrel vault that is argued here to date to *c.*1200. In the 18th-century, the Athenaeum housed subscription rooms and it stands on the south end of Angel Hill (Figure 6.24): a prime location in the social and economic life of the town. In the medieval period, the plot of land upon which it stands was known as *Paddockpole* and, as will be discussed below, the area was prime development land in the 12th-century, with charters referring to stone houses (Breen 2002). Despite its classical façade, the *Athenaeum* is formed from a complex of older buildings (Rowntree 2002:2-3). It encloses the yard of the former *Hert of the Hoop* Inn (Breen 2002). The remains of the jettied eastern side of 7, Athenaeum Lane, which formerly faced this yard, were revealed during recent restoration works. The building was recorded by architectural historian Chris North, and Dave Gill from the Suffolk Archaeological Services (North 2002; Gill *forthcoming*). This 16th-century timber framed frontage is preserved as an unusual backdrop to the Ladies' lavatories.

There is a possible connection between the 15th-century *Hert of the Hoop Inn,* and the 13th-century shop of Thomas the Goldsmith, son of Ralph. In 1200-1211, recorded in the *Kalendar of Abbot Samson,* Thomas was granted a shop and land in front of the Great Gate of the monastery *libere et quiete in feodo*. This shop abutted on one head on the stone house formerly of Richard of Horringer, and the land was behind the stone wall of the same. It extended to the street leading to *Lemotstowe*, in front of the house of Ralph Valensis held in the place known as *Paddockpole* and *perante domum Radulphi Ualensis et attingente usque ad terram quam idem Radulfus tenet de sacrista in loco* (Davies 1954:79-80). Although this cannot be matched with any confidence to the modern tenement layout, it is interesting that in this island site there was a plot of land granted freely in the early 13th-century because the will of wealthy merchant John Baret, proved in 1467, refers to land on '*Punchyslane*' (Athenaeum Lane, leading to *Paddockpole*) associated with the '*Hert of the Hop*' that stood on Mustow that included a 'long tylid house' and was held '*fysimpil*' (Tymms 1850:31-2, 43). This can be translated as 'fee simple', an observation for which I am obliged to Pam Graves. Could this be the same piece of land? If so, it means the *Hert of the Hop* might be the land upon which Thomas the Goldsmith had his shop, and it might also mean that the traces of a stone building here under consideration, underneath a building fronting the *Hert of the hop* yard, could be part of the house of Ralph Valensis, or of that of Richard of Horringer noted in the deed – or, even, perhaps, Thomas's shop.

The concern here, then, is with the cellar underneath Number 7, Athenaeum Lane (Figure 6.25 a and b, 6.26). This was listed in 1952 as 'a cellar of limestone blocks, partly tunnelled and partly roofed in heavy timber joists... there is a niche containing part of a re-used medieval pillar' (DoE 1997 639/1/8/190). This part of the structure was not threatened when restoration work was carried out and so it was not recorded but it merits inclusion in this thesis because it appears to be a medieval stone barrel vault that stratigraphically pre-dates the 16th-century timber-framed building. In addition, whilst there are no stylistically datable features, the tooling on the stonework is not incompatible with a date of *c.* 1200.

The cellar was surveyed by the author using hand tapes and a laser distance measurer. The task was hampered by that fact that the cellar is cramped, dark, awkwardly shaped and criss-crossed with pipes and other features that render some areas inaccessible. The plan shows a small space with, to the west, a recessed segmental barrel vault measuring 3.4m wide north-south and 2.25m in depth east-west. The two side walls of the vault both project out 1.3m to the east. The southern one then returns to the south, and there are traces of robbed out stone in the northern wall which suggest that it also turned to the south. Both of these walls incorporate, at the same height from the ground, stone built niches or cupboards. The wall to the east is of mixed fabric; the rest of the structure is constructed from coursed, ashlared stone blocks, although the courses are not of uniform height. This suggests that there are two phases of construction: one in stone, and one in rubble. The pinkish colour of some of the stones, a feature usually attributed to burning, might be an indication that the building has at various points been subject to damage, also suggested by the large crack in the south wall. In the north-east corner, there are the remains of a staircase, with a stone step surviving at a height of 1.30m above the ground. The modern features within the cellar are shown in grey on the plan.

This is most likely the cellar described by the antiquarian Edmund Gillingwater in his *Historical and Descriptive Account of St Edmundsbury* (1804). To reiterate from Chapter 3.2, Gillingwater's theory that the monastic precinct formerly extended onto Angel Hill meant that he was interested in the historic buildings there (Gillingwater 1804:93). He records that during the conversion of Anderson's Coffee House into an Assembly Room, workmen:

> 'struck an iron bar through the floor, in making a small wine cellar... the place below was very spacious, had a plain arch and was more than 20ft long and there appeared to be a subterranean passage from it to the abbey.'

He also mentions that part of a freestone staircase was discovered (Gillingwater 1804:92). The description fits this cellar perfectly: there is the arch, the southern arm

of the cellar is 5.80m (*c*18½ft) long, and the top step of the staircase is shown on the plan. The east wall was not accessible and so I am not in a position to comment on whether there might have been any more openings into the space, although there is a line of ashlar in the mixed rubble of the east wall which may have been an opening that give rise to the tale of the passage to the abbey. Gillingwater includes in his account speculations that this was the 'hiding place of the last abbot', and that a man playing a violin was sent down the passage, never to be seen again 'probably instantly suffocated by some unwholesome vapours' (*ibid*).

Violinists aside, the vault is demonstrably earlier than the 16th century timber framed buildings which stand above it. The timber frame rests on the cellar walls. The east wall is directly under the sill beam of the frontage of the building. This wall is constructed from rubble that includes Tudor bricks, and it is therefore a reasonable conclusion that the wall was built up as a foundation for the eastern front of the timber framed building, the rest of which rested on earlier stone walls. The floor beams of the building abut the stone walls of the vault and are not keyed into them, which also indicates that the stone is earlier. Photographs that were taken during renovation show that a brick chimney (probably of 16th/17th-century date) is built on the vault. There is the possibility that the stone vault was built purposefully as a foundation to the chimney, but the fact that the east wall is contemporary to the timber frame means that this vault would then have represented considerable investment in a space that was cramped and dark: this seems an unlikely scenario. The presence of the chimney and the ceiling beams (chamfered in a style typical of the 16th-century) therefore provide a *terminus ante quem* for the stone vault. In the north east corner of the cellar, there are the remains of a stair. This corresponds with an original door head in the timber frame, and may well have been used in the 16th-century to enter the vault.

The rounded arch of the barrel vault is non-diagnostic in terms of date, although it is not incompatible with medieval work. There are no known parallels in the town. The tooling, however, is more informative. Despite the overall accretions of render, mildew and crystalline fluorescence on the structure, there are some areas where the

finish on the stones is clearly visible as parallel, diagonal striations, executed with a straight (bolster) chisel rather than a claw chisel (Figures 6.27a and b) and it is similar, for example, to the finish of the stones of the Norman tower. Although typologically dating material by the nature of the tooling is tentative, David Stocker in particular has suggested that the widespread preference for the use of ornamented blades is a phenomena that had generally occurred, in English masonry building, by the turn of the 13th-century. Generally, a finish of diagonal striations executed with a plain chisel can be tentatively accepted as a characteristic of stonework of pre-*c.*1200 (Stocker 1999:347-8). In York, this change between the late 12th and early-13th-centuries has been proven dramatic enough to serve as a rough dating method (*ibid*). The tooling therefore could indicate that the vault is of a similar date to the documentary evidence for buildings on this site: for example, the charter granting to Peter Pugilis a building site *c.*1200 was cited above. There is also a trace of chamfered decoration, which is not anachronistic with this period. Finally, the yellowish orange, sandy, thick mortar is similar to that seen in other medieval buildings in the town (Section 3.5.2). The listed building description noted the there is a re-used stone in one of the niches – a fragment of cylindrical pillar - but this does not necessarily compromise the assessment of this as a pre-Reformation building: Chapter 3.5.2 considered the likely supply of recycled materials in the town throughout the medieval period, as buildings in the town and Abbey were remodelled from the 11th century onwards.

The stone walls can therefore be considered as the remains of an earlier structure. All that is left is this recessed vault, with stone walls extending equidistantly beyond it, and with a return to the south. The depth of the vault is undetermined: there are clearly successive deposits on the floor. There are some marks of uncertain origin on stones 14 and 15 on the section, which might have been made by a partition for closing the vault. The rear wall of the vault is not keyed into it the stonework at the edges and it bends slightly into the room. The hole at the top to Athenaeum Lane is probably a coal chute and it is made of later brick. However, that the wall is a separate structure does not mean that it is not contemporary to the vault: 13th-century cellars in New Winchelsea also are constructed in this manner, in that the side walls and barrel were built first,

and then the end wall constructed with a straight joint (Martin and Martin 2004:112). Beyond this, little more can be said of the form of the building.

Was this an indoor or outdoor feature? Was it subterranean or semi-subterranean, or at street level? *Perhaps* the original building was a timber framed structure over the vault, and this staircase lead up to the rest of the building, with the line of ashlar in the east wall as an access from a street that was much lower down than today. The remains of the staircase in the north east corner may be contemporary to the 16th-century frame, or may be earlier: the rubble is made from mortar, gravel, stones, flints and some occasional large round quartzite stones without traces of ceramic building material. Where the ashlar work of the north wall meets the rubble of the stair, there are traces of a robbed out return which once turned to the south (Figure 6.28). It might be that the side walls, which extend to a point 1.3m beyond the edge of the barrel vault, supported a superstructure over and above it. Such an arrangement, with the vault recessed behind a projecting storey, is similar to that proposed for both the 13th - century house on St Michael's Passage, Southampton, and that at 38, French Street, Southampton, which also dates to the thirteenth century (Faulkner 1975:112) and I am grateful to Alejandra Gutiérrez for further references. Other houses of this type with segmental barrel vaults include the 13th century example 63 High Street, Winchester, and Setreton's, formerly in the Cornmarket, Oxford, which is an example of a Romanesque semi-subterranean barrel vault in an urban townhouse, dating to the 12th century. However, these undercrofts are larger than this Bury example: at Setreton's, it measured 3.66m wide and 7.62m long (Harris 1994:, 87-92, 409). Then again, the width of this cellar, if the north and south walls are assumed to be the same width as the west wall, is 5m or 16½ ft, which is a perch, or equivalent to one unit of the land divisions seen on the north side of Angel Hill and it might be a single bay of a larger property. Harper-Bill notes, on the combination of bailiffs and aldermen, that the transfer dates to the mid-13th century, and that it is almost certainly a building described in a rental of 13 Edward II as 'opposite the goldsmith's', and in the Infirmarer's rental as 'outside the gate of St James' (1994:130, citing BL Lansdowne 416 f. 31r.). Goldsmith Row was the medieval name for Crown Street.

Without any real idea as to access, street levels and the building above, definite assertions cannot be made about the original form and use of the vault or tunnel. G. M. Hills was of the opinion that the building described by Gillingwater – hence this vault - could have been a sewer or water conduit (1865:127). It is interesting that the *gesta sacristarum* records that under the Sacrist Walter de Banham, c. 1200, an aqueduct was built with lead pipes to bring fresh spring water into the precinct from 'land to the west' (Arnold 1896 II:292). However, the use of arches tunnels, accesses, entries and projections over and off of the street is common in both French and English Romanesque architecture which show a diversity and variety of building forms with commercial and domestic functions. With so many unknowns, all that can be said is that this cellar formed part of a larger structure. This observation, though, is important to an overall investigation of the townscape.

6.5.4 12th-century roof trusses at 7-8, Hatter Street.

The 19th-century frontage of 7-8 Hatter Street, located on Figure 6.29, conceals a building of many phases. The roof of the property was raised in 1788 but several years ago, architectural historians Philip Aitkens and Chris North identified, in the roof space of the house, intact roof trusses and re-used timbers with attributes of late 12th-century carpentry: lap dovetail joints with housed shoulders for the collars, braces and struts, illustrated in Figures 6.30a and b (pers. comm., published notes in Walker 2006:4). The structure was considered unsuitable for dendrochronological dating, perhaps because of the material and the slenderness of the pieces of wood, which means that are not enough growth rings present for an accurate match (Martin Bridge pers. comm.). The rafters are 18ft/5.5m long. The collars are of pine, which may well have been imported from overseas (Chris North, noted in Barnard 2007:7). This was by no means unusual: Oliver Rackham has argued that whilst woodlands on the monastic estates of St Edmunds were carefully managed, East Anglia was not a densely wooded region. There would probably not have been enough timber in West Suffolk to support medieval urban, ecclesiastical and rural building, and at Ely, for example, pine boards and poles were used (1998:146). It is another example, if another is needed, of the extent of the commercial hinterland and activities of St Edmund's.

The superstructure below this roof has either vanished or is hidden within the building. Was it an aisled hall? Or a stone house? The house has been successively re-modelled from the Late Medieval period onwards, and throughout the structure there is abundant flint and limestone rubble which may have been re-used material from an earlier structure. This building is marked as a 'chantry' on Warren's map. Number 6, to the north, is listed as having a flint and stone cross wall in the cellar, with a small re-set arched stone doorway (DoE 1997 639-1/14/417). The survival of this roof shows that fragments of the earlier past are hidden in structures in the town. Further, the height of the roof, *c.* 1.10m below the apex of the modern roof of this three storey building, is a reminder of the height to which the High-Medieval street front would have been built up to (see also 25 Hatter Street).

6.5.5 Rear wall and fireplace at 25-6 Hatter Street

The rear wall of the 19th-century building that is now 25-26 Hatter Street (see Figure 6.29) is medieval – possibly 12th-century (DoE 1997 639-1/14/432). It is 8m back from the street front. This wall is of coursed, rounded flint clasts and stone rubble, set into a creamy yellow mortar, where it is visible under a later mortar that is hard and grey. The walling incorporates courses of tile, similar to walls of a late 12th-century date within the monastic precinct (Figure 6.31). The tiles are between 17 and 20mm thick, and >180mm long and they are of a fabric fired purple, poorly mixed with coarse, calcareous and gritty inclusions. Occasional glazed tiles are visible. The fabric of the tiles is consistent with the proposed date of the wall (Chapter 3.5). There are also very occasional lumps of pinkish-red burnt clay material visible. A line of tile at the top of the flint shows a wall lift, and it is likely that this line of tiles represents the original top of the wall, at a height of 5.20m (17 ft). It was likely to have been a two storey building. If the roof was as steeply pitched as that at 7-8 Hatter Street, the building would have been quite tall.

An upper-storey window or possible door has square, chamfered, stone jambs and a wooden lintel. The window is blocked with rubble, stone and Post-medieval bricks. There are no earlier features visible within the building, but a 12th-century fireplace in

Moyse's Hall museum came from it (Figure 6.32). The accession details note that the jambs were removed from 'Mr Gedge's House' in 1848, and a different source reveals that a Mr Peter Gedge had 25/6 Hatter Street built as a print shop in the 19th century (SROB TEM/34/9). It is likely that, apart from the surviving wall, most of the building was demolished and that the fireplace was removed during this phase of work. Where the name 'St Robert's' came from is not known but it does not necessarily mean that this was a house pertaining to a religious institution. For example, just one explanation could be that the building was decorated with an image or symbol of St Robert: it was a common practice for pilgrim badges to be attached to house doors or walls as a protective device (Murray Jones 2006:21).

This house was owned by the merchant John of Nottyngham in the 15th-century: in his will, proved in 1437, John left to his daughter, Johanna Jerveys, all of his messuages and appurtenances apart from all 'that part of the messuage and pertinances called Seynt Robertes' which was bequeathed, with its appurtenances, to William Basse along with 'all the wax in that house.' 'St Robert's' was associated with a messuage on Spycer Row (modern Abbeygate Street), between a tenement held by John Baret on the west and the tenement of the Convent on the east, and was described further down Notyngham's will as being on Hatter Street (Tymms 1850:8-12). This suggests that St Robert's was on the Hatter Street portion of the corner plot between Hatter Street and Abbeygate Street and, in confirmation, a note in the 1433 *hadgoval* rental states that Notyngham's land on Hatter Street included a stone house. The property boundaries suggest that it was a large corner plot and that the tenement of the convent was a corner subdivided from the main tenement. Mapping out the rental data shows that John Notyngham's holdings formed an L shape around it. In the Sacrist's rental, John of Nottingham is recorded as holding two tenements on Spicer Row, one 'in the gate of his [capital] messuage next the shop of the sacrist'. In 1386, when the tenement was held by Roger Potter, the arrangement was described as 'the shop within the gate/door of the said Roger next to the gate/door of the sacrist' and Roger Potter also held a stone house on Hatter Street, which had formerly been tenanted by Adam Somenour (CUL Mm Ff ii 33 152v and r).

That these front properties were of some antiquity (like the rear stone hall), was revealed during restoration works in 1988. Although the front range is 19th-century in appearance, the party wall between 47 and 48 Abbeygate Street was described as being of 'medieval' flint construction, and in the cellar of number 46, which it was not possible to visit as permission was not forthcoming from the manager of the shop for health and safety reasons, the front (north) wall of the cellar is noted to comprise stone blocks with coursed flint above it (DoE 1997 639-1/14/147 and 145). No earlier features are now visible, but the eastern half of the building, Number 47, was recorded by Philip Aitkens as a timber framed shop of *c.*1300, dated by the passing- and scissor-braces examined in the east wall. It has a wide passage leading through to the rear and holes had been drilled at regular intervals in the frame at the front of the building– perhaps as part of the structure of shelving, counter or a shop front. Aitkens also commented that the frame is very sparsely built, and one of the scissor trusses has a pine collar - he suggests that it was an economically built structure for commercial purposes (pers comm.).

The rental from 1386/7 lists the holder of the tenement before Roger Potter as Adam Somenour. Beyond this, the tenement history reaches a dead end. However, what is most interesting about this complex, given the ancient structural evidence, is the parallel between the layout of the tenements in the 15th-century (fossilised in the modern building footprints) and that suggested above about the property of the influential Richard, son of Drogo, in the late 12th-century: property also on Abbeygate Street, although it was then called *Frenchman's Street*. This, too, comprised rented properties on the front of a plot, next to a gate that led to a stone house. Perhaps 'St Robert's' was the original messuage of Richard, son of Drogo. Further, we saw that the two sons of Richard separately let their 'rents', with one of them holding the capital tenement and the other holding one rent. This subdivision of the property coincides neatly with the fact that in the 15th century, the corner of John of Nottygham's property, or the capital tenement, was subdivided. This could have had its origins in the 13th century division of property between brothers. Also, the sparse nature of the frame from *c.*1300 might suggest that it replaced an earlier economically built 'rent'.

Harris noted that in many cases, all that survives of buildings subdivided into shops, selds, booths and lock ups is a stone boundary wall (2002:55), and it seems that this is the case here. It shows an insight into the world of the medieval commercial revolution and one of the ways in which the street fronts would have appeared: perhaps cheaply built plain buildings that were rented out for the purposes of commerce, contrasting to other buildings invested with social and economic capital. The choice of timber for these buildings perhaps represents a cheaper construction (although not, perhaps, as cheap as the clay walling of the smaller buildings). There was also more scope for flexible arrangements in timber framing, and - an important point raised by Harris – they could be made much lighter (2002:55). This would, of course, be of importance to buyers and consumers. Whilst it is likely that Richard son of Drogo's property took this form, and possible that 25/6 Hatter Street was in fact his house, without further proof, however, the most that can be said is that this complex certainly provides a parallel for it. That John of Notyngham in the 15th century used the stone hall for the storage of wax suggests a change in the relative importance of parts of the complex, a change in attitude that explains the demolition of earlier stone buildings in many towns by the Late-Medieval period (see below).

6.5.6 21 Stone feature at 21 Hatter Street

Projecting from the north wall of Number 21, Hatter Street (see Figure 6.29) is an *in situ* section of 12th-century stonework with moulded corners (Figure 6.33). This has been used to form the side of a partially external chimney stack that serves the 18th/19th-century house. The three hearths built as part of this stack are at right angles to the earlier stonework. There is no further evidence of ancient features within the house (DoE 1997 639-1/14/429). Was the construction originally a chimney, or might it have been a buttress, stair turret, latrine shaft, arcade or a gate?

6.5.7 Stone feature at 87 Whiting Street

A similarly isolated fragment exists at 87 Whiting Street (Figure 6.34). The cellar walls of this building are formed from a patchwork of materials (DoE 1997 639-1/14/732). There is a possible buttress or fragment of earlier stonework standing to a

height of 1.44m in the east wall of the cellar. This is chamfered on one side to what appears to be an original base, and it might be a sole trace of an earlier stone building or one that included stone-built elements. For example, is it, perhaps, a stone pier that stood between a pair of arches, in a similar manner to the façade of the Jew's House, Lincoln? (Figure 6.35).

6.5.8 Corner of a flint-built building within 33-34, Churchgate Street

33-4 Churchgate Street, on the corner of Angel Lane and Churchgate Street (Figure 6.36), share a 16th-century timber-framed core. These buildings are listed, and the description says that there are 'extensive cellars with flint rubble walling, heavy timber ceilings and a timber-framed partition wall; an arched recess at the rear has the remains of a well' (DoE 1997 639-1/14/246&7). This building justifies the sampling strategy outlined in Chapter 3.5.2: an examination of the rubble walling reveals that there are several phases of building represented in the cellar and that at least one of these is highly likely to be medieval – and not Late-Medieval. With no dating evidence, the age of this building can not be ascertained but it is included – with a cautionary note - because of the documentary evidence for stone houses in the vicinity of Chequer Square and *Paddockpole* at the turn of the 13th century, and because the walling is comprised of rounded, sorted flints laid in regular courses with no ceramic building material, which is similar to other buildings of this date. It is, of course, possible that the building is slightly later than the period immediately under consideration: the Guildhall and the Angel Hotel, both built in the mid-13th century, are also constructed from un-buttressed expanses of neatly coursed flint walling.

The back wall of Number 34, Churchgate Street, running parallel to the street, is built of stone, overbuilt in brick and rubble to first floor height. In the basement, where visible under render, there are clear sections of earlier flint built walling (Figure 6.37a-e). This continues eastwards into the basement of Number 33, where it terminates in a corner quoined in brick at the entrance to an alcove which contains a well, recently backfilled but recorded as being 35ft (10.7m) deep. This quoining in brick represents either the creation of a later doorway, or perhaps the re-modelling of an old entrance:

the wall continues a short distance beyond this entry and returns to the north. A later wall runs southwards from the corner, abutting the rubble wall, but there are a few limestone blocks visible which suggest that the corner might originally have been quoined with stone blocks). A schematic plan of the cellar is shown in Figure 6.38.

It is the opinion of this author that the well is a later feature, cut through more than 2m of backfill in the corner of an older building. Whilst the south and east walls are formed from rubble walls, the western side of the alcove comprises soil layers which are clearly archaeological deposits – perhaps floor or even courtyard layers - underneath a deep layer of what can only be re-deposited chalk. Pieces of bone, tile in an estuarine fabric, a copper alloy object and pottery are visible in the section. The northern side shows a continuation of the deposits, as well as large patches of chalk and orange gravel. It may well be that the building was deliberately filled in with chalk and gravel that had been mined from elsewhere: the owner of Number 33 reported that behind the flint rear wall of their house when work was carried out, there was 'nothing but dirt' (?????? pers comm.). From the eastern side, however, it appears that the wall continues. Although rendered, the fabric of coursed flints can be seen. These are *c.*5cm in diameter, and are smaller than the stones used in other phases of the cellar. There is no visible ceramic building material included in the walling.

The ceiling of the alcove appears to be formed on the east side by barrel vault made of compressed chalk and rubble, reminiscent of that structure observed in a relict of a former 11th-century vault probably forming part of St Benedict's basilica (Whittingham 1951). The curved feature is perhaps contemporary with the flint walling, and might have been cut to a neat edge when the well was put in. The western 'wall' of the alcove is dominated by the remains of a sloping structure – perhaps a stair – but a vertical line between natural, geological chalk and gravel and the archaeological deposits may well be the remains of the inner face of the wall. It is possible that a construction technique was employed here that can be seen in at least one Late-Medieval cellar in the town, whereby the core of a semi-subterranean wall is formed from solid geological deposits that are left in place, and stone work is added as a skin (Corder 1891). It might also be

that the edge is the side of a pit or other feature. The depth underground can be compared to the depth of the slightly earlier Norman Tower, which was 2.4m/8ft below the modern surface and it might be that this is only slightly below the medieval ground surface.

Sampling some of the deposits might help to ascertain the date of backfilling. As for the other buildings discussed in this section, little is known of its original form and function. The presence of a possible section of ceiling would suggest that the infilling represents the *inside* of the building, and it is therefore a stone building set back from the street. The documentary evidence has revealed that this is entirely plausible, and in the case of the stone houses of Richard son of Drogo and Richard of Horringer, there were shops and 'rents' in front of them. Again, the most that can be said is that there was a medieval stone house here that may well have had a barrel vaulted room. This building stands on the junction between Angel Lane and Churchgate Street, and is therefore one of the plots on the join between the old and new town. The ground floor at least was of stone, and the front wall as *c.* 5m back from the modern street front.

6.5.9 Stone wall within 16-18 Bridewell Lane

16 and 18 Bridewell Lane (Master Andrew's Lane until the 18th century) are the southern and northern halves respectively of a former 15th-century timber-framed hall-house which had a cross-wing at either end (see Figure 6.39 for location). The trusses of the hall abut the southern cross-wing, suggesting that this is the earliest part of the timber-framed complex (DoE 1997 639-1/11/205). However, between the hall and the northern cross-wing there stands, to roof height, a medieval stone wall that predates the extant building (Figure 6.40a and b). This was revealed during restoration work in May 1989 (NMR Building file 88203). At the east end (street front) it has been cut back and finished in brick. The wall projects beyond the hall to the west, as does the structure of the cross wing, and at the west end it is quoined with limestone, which perhaps indicates the presence of a doorway. A photograph of the masonry taken within the roof-space shows that the wall stands at least to the height of the main beam upon which the crown post stands. The presence of the wall means that although

the northern cross-wing might be contemporary to the hall, it is structurally independent (*ibid)*. The visible section of walling shows that it comprises small, rounded regularly laid flints in a manner typologically similar to 12th/13th -century fabric in the abbey. The house has now been refurbished and is a private residence. With no further evidence, there is little interpretation that can be made of this building, although it shows that on this site there stood a substantial structure either wholly or partially of stone.

6.5.10 Wall and 'window' in 63 Whiting Street

The corner between 63 Whiting Street and 30 College Lane is marked as a 'chantry' on Thomas Warren's map (see Figure 6.41 for location). Numbers 61, 62 and 63 Whiting Street were created as a result of the subdivision of an open hall house and its two cross-wings. The building was restored in 1994/5 and examined by Philip Aitkens. The southern cross-wing, now Number 61, was built in the 14th century, and the 15th-century hall (now Number 62) abuts this cross-wing (DoE 1997 639-1/15/718). Of interest in this chapter, however, is the rear wall of Number 63 (the northern cross-wing) which forms the party wall with 30, College Street. Within this wall is a feature listed as a 'three light Norman window with two column mullions, cushion capitals and moulded bases'. This was discovered during restoration in the 1960s, when the mullions were reversed (DoE 1997 639-1/15/719). On closer examination, it is clear that the stone work is *ex situ* (see Figure 6.42). On the right hand side, the capital is at the base of the column. However, it is likely that the stones did come from this wall, which has been much disturbed. The wall is at least 1m/3ft thick, as shown on the OS map, and is faced with ashlared blocks. It is possible that an arched window head is missing (or heads, if it *was* a three light window). The wall seems to relate to 30 College Lane, which, although a 19th-century building, clearly has older origins. It stands on a plinth of ashlared blocks, visible in the rear (south) wall, and it has a 13th-century door that leads in from the south directly in front of the ashlar wall in Number 63. There is also a kneeler for the gable end of the earlier building visible in the brickwork of the wall, a detail that was included in the new listed building description kindly supplied by Claire Johnson of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Again, little

more can be said on form or function, although it is interesting to note that this is a corner building, and the placing of it is such that it is directly visible in the approach from Tuns Lane. The placing of buildings in the landscape will be explored more fully in Chapter 7. The earliest tenant identified for this tenement is Walter Clopton, who held it before Richard Whight, who paid the Sacrist rent in 1386/7 (CUL Mm Ff ii 33).

6.5.11 Pastiche or original? The basement of 111, Northgate Street

111, Northgate Street (Manson House, see Figure 4.43) is a large house comprising an 18th-century frontage, later rear wings and a 16th-17th-century core (DoE 1997 639-1/4/499). Part of the cellar is lined with flint and stone. The listed building description of 1957 described the features within it as re-used Abbey stone: there are two round columns against the front and back walls, and three roll-moulded arched openings in a Norman style. There is a wide arch in the front wall which has a possible 14th-century moulding. This arch is clearly reset (DoE 1997 639-1/4/499). However, are the other features re-used or pastiche, or is this cellar the fragmentary remains of a genuine Norman building? A detailed examination would have been desirable, but unfortunately, only brief visual analysis and a quick photographic survey were possible (Figure 6.44). This is because the cellar accommodates the boilers for the house, which is a residential care home for the elderly. At the time of the author's visit, old asbestos lagging had been removed from the heating system and the un-lagged boilers were radiating to such a degree that made the cellar was unsafe as a working environment. The re-lagging was unscheduled at the time of my visit, although it was anticipated that a new boiler house would be constructed and removal of the old system might give an opportunity to study the building.

The general scheme of the building is indeed suggestive of re-use: the stonework is irregular and the mortared joins on the decorative features are large rather than finely executed. The walling is covered with whitewash and with thick layers of render which make it hard to see the fabric. However, there are apparently two phases of walling in the cellar. It is clear that the southern half is constructed from rubble and a

thick, coarse, sandy mortar and there is some regularly laid rubble visible to the south of the pillar in the east wall. On the east wall, there is a clear junction between the rubble fabric and brickwork running diagonally downwards and northwards from a round headed arch or niche, which could in fact be a junction between original fabric and a rebuild. The top half of the column is made of brick. The extent of the rubble construction is delineated by two round columns with late 12th-century water-holding bases that are just visible in the cement flooring. In the east wall, there is a round headed niche, and in the south wall a niche with a 'Caernarvon arch' and another round headed niche (see sketch plan). The 'Caernarvon arch' is a technical term for a raised lintel supported by curved springers with short vertical extensions, and, whilst most are usually late 13th-early 14th-century in date, it is similar in design to some Romanesque squint doorheads in churches (information from the *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*.[9] There is a Caernarvon arch in the base of the Norman tower (1121x1148) which was revealed during restoration in the 1840s (Hills 1865: page).

Critical consideration of the various features is necessary. The western-most Romanesque column is set into stonework which finishes at an ashlared edge, indicative perhaps of a former doorway. The arch over this doorway, 14th-century in style, is probably of re-used material, or the feature has at some point collapsed and been rebuilt. The roll-mouldings do not match, and the stones are irregularly set. The column in the west wall has a curved indentation in it. This is continuous across the stones, so it must post-date the construction of the column and it is worth mentioning in the context of a similar depression noted in one of the columns on the southern façade of Moyse's Hall. It may relate to some feature associated with ingress or egress. There is also a possible bolt hole on the northern side of this pillar. Was this a structure that formerly opened onto the street?

The round headed niches are roll moulded, but with particularly thick 'rolls' that are not very pronounced. This looks unusual, but such substantial rolls are seemingly

[9] See www.crsbi.ac.uk for the online gazetteer.

authentic Romanesque features in a few churches in the region, particularly in the vicinity of Bury St Edmunds: for example, at Pakenham, Little Saxham and West Stow. The question remains as to whether this is pastiche, related to some stage of construction of the building – perhaps the 16th-century after the Reformation, or the 18th-century. It is not unusual for niches and cupboards to be built into the walls of Romanesque buildings (Crummy 1981:58-9). In conclusion, the 14th-century arch is certainly re-used, which might indicate that the Norman style features are also not *in situ* but, given the apparent phases in the rubble walling, even though the fabric of this building looks unpromising it certainly warrants further investigation.

6.5.12 Stonework in buildings in the Traverse – market encroachments?

A similar uncertainty over whether or not material is *in situ* emerges through consideration of buildings in the Traverse (Figure 6.45). These are 'island' properties in the market place and they are tall, narrow, back to back rows – classic examples of properties on land designed for market stalls or semi-permanent buildings. Numbers 4 and 4A, the Traverse are listed as having a thick wall in the cellar including, where visible coursed ashlar blocks (DoE 1997 639-1/14/632). The manager of *Mr Shoes* (Number 4) was not happy for the author to inspect the cellar. However, a section of stonework is visible behind the electricity meter in the basement of *Scott's Opticians* (Number 4A). The west wall, facing the market place, comprises ashlared blocks that are neatly coursed and set into a thick, pinkish mortar. The rest of the cellar is 17th-century and later in date. There are also pieces of Norman stonework in the cellar of *Scarlett Shoes*, 9B the Traverse. In this building, most of the walling is covered in old render, but there is a nook shaft in the walling, and one supporting a ceiling beam (DoE 1997 639-1/14/637). These flank what is now a niche in the front wall but it might have formerly been a street level or subterranean entrance. These are likely to be re-used pieces because in one case, the capital is at the base rather than the top of the pillar. However, it is not unknown for capitals to be used as bases in medieval buildings[10] and a section of the rear wall of the cellar is of stone, and of a different alignment, which might suggest that there is something interesting here (Figure 6.46).

[10] Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland online gazetteer, www.crsbi.ac.uk

The date of these structures is not definitely established, but the tantalising glimpses of ashlared stonework might be significant in the context of the accusations of the monks that, in the later 12th-century, the burgesses had made 'great encroachments' on the market place.

6.5.13. 3 Chequer Square

This house, in Chequer Square (see Figure 6.47), is opposite the monastic cemetery. It belonged to the 15th-century merchant, John Baret, whose lengthy will reveals much about his life in the town (Tymms 1850:). The house is now elegantly classical in appearance but the structure has been recently renovated and Late-Medieval features revealed. A stone wall stands inside the building: it is rendered and so the fabric is not visible. This wall incorporates a doorway which dates to the 15th century or later. The cellar is also stone walled, and is mainly of a later date: the front wall is constructed from brick rubble, and the rear and the south walls are built from coursed but re-laid ashlared blocks. However, the base and east end of the west wall seem to be built from coursed, neatly finished ashlared blocks showing diagonal tooling similar to that at 7 Athenaeum Lane (Figure 4.48). The east end seems to have been remodelled to form a corner opening: there is a feature finished with a stop executed in a stone of a different, smoother grade – perhaps even clunch/chalk. It is the author's belief that this wall perhaps represents the surviving remnant of an earlier building on the site, and that the other walls of the cellar show a rebuilding and enlargement at a later date. The wall incorporates a niche similar to those seen in the cellar of Number 7, Athenaeum Lane. The base of the Norman Tower is at least 1.8m below the modern street level, and a 'window' in the front wall of this building offers a rare view of the road below: successive levels of paving and hardcore can be made out. There are documented stone houses in the vicinity at the turn of the 13th century, and it might be that this is a fragment of one of them. The foundations of a garage were monitored on the Bridewell Lane frontage behind this plot, revealing floor layers and flint and mortar walls of unknown date: the pottery assemblage dated from the 12th-18th centuries (Tester 2006b). Tantalisingly little has therefore been revealed.

6.5.14 Summary

The standing buildings evidence reveals one extant medieval building, a timber framed roof, and several fragments of earlier stone houses in the town: a small sample of the medieval building fabric, but one that, as a collected dataset, is informative. At this date, in common with the rest of Europe, stone houses were present in the landscape in Bury where previously they may well have not been, and stone had to be brought in to build them. The attrition of stone structures might seem surprising, given the propensity of masonry to last for years but in fact many stone structures were deliberately demolished and substantially remodelled. Jane Grenville notes that, whist the demolition of a durable, fireproof stone structure might be illogical, time consuming and expensive, the replacement of stone by timber framing was a process that occurred in many towns in the 14th-century (1997:179).

Robustness, then, was not necessarily the most prized attribute of buildings in the later medieval period. Chris Currie, in an essay on the survival of vernacular buildings, has suggested that it was perhaps even a negative attribute, arguing that a factor which favoured survival is far more likely to have been judged on whether or not it offered the propensity to be changeable in line with changing fashions and ways of living (1988). As a case in point pertinent to the particular context of high-medieval urbanism, at Cam Hall, Goodramgate, York, a stone house belonging to the Vicar's Choral was demolished to make way for smaller, timber framed 'rents' (Grenville 1997:179).

As an aside, many of these buildings are on the site of 'chantries' mapped by Thomas Warren in 1776 (see Figure 3.1). Little is known about the role that chantries played in medieval Bury: were these buildings chantry chapels, or were they buildings that had been dedicated to the support of chantry priests as part of the chantry establishment rather than actually being chapels themselves? It is perhaps significant that they are marked on maps commissioned by the Feoffment trust: perhaps they were houses appropriated after the Reformation for charitable purposes. Such a speculation might also explain the survival of fragments: whilst the Feoffees did maintain and adapt

buildings, the changes were more often than not modifications to appearance rather than expensive rebuilds and such a conservative approach to property management might explain why older buildings coincide with the chantries on Warren's map. However, it is worth noting that one of these 'chantry' sites has been excavated. At BSE 197, monitoring was carried out on the corner behind 50 Churchgate Street and 61-63 College Street. There were late medieval timber framed buildings on the street front, and evidence in the yard for a stone built structure. The archaeological evidence was sterile. Pits and domestic rubbish dumps were of 16th-century date or later and it has been suggested that the site changed use at the Reformation. This has lead to the possible inference that it was a chapel (Tester 2001b).

6.6 Synthesis

The evidence reveals, from a synthesis of fragments, the diversity in the building stock and in the activities of the people of Bury St Edmunds at the turn of the 13th-century, and the distribution of these are mapped in Figure 6.49. As a methodology, plotting all of the available evidence promotes a 'spatial resolution' of the historical evidence for the social and political history of the town. The development of the surburbs in the late 12th- and early 13thcenturies shows that the town was flourishing, and it has been suggested that there was a deliberate policy of consolidation and acquisition of land along the roads by individuals and institutions. Individual cases and examples were cited to illustrate this argument – a rare insight. The town centre confirms this general view, and it is clear that in parts of the street front, there were rows of smaller shops and booths that illustrate the physical reality of the commercialisation of the economy at this date.

The surviving evidence for the built environment in the town centre is only a tiny fraction of the medieval town, but there are hidden gems in the architecture and documentary evidence from the town, as well as Moyse's Hall, which may well have been an early public building. Figure 6.49 shows the distribution of known building types and activities in the 12th-13th centuries, drawn from archaeological, architectural and documentary evidence. It also includes further trace evidence for stone structures,

although these are undated, as noted in Table 6.2 which tabulates excavated remains. The evidence is extremely fragmentary but there is a noteworthy distribution of stone buildings or traces of stone buildings along the main commercial streets, at key points in the town grid, and on Hatter Street. Of course, the sampling strategy only reveals *surviving* fragments, and the amount of evidence lost through changes wrought by the succeeding eight centuries is unquantifiable. Nonetheless, the coincidence of examples of stone buildings from the separate sources of the documentary information and from a cellar survey does reveal certain patterns. There is a cluster of stone buildings around *Paddockpole* and Chequer Square, at the main gate of the Abbey, another example at the head of Churchgate Street, the main ceremonial road of the town, and there are stone buildings in the market place and on Hatter Street. These stand out clearly from the archaeological evidence for the smaller buildings and structures in the more peripheral parts of the town, although, to repeat the old adage, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and there may well have been larger buildings elsewhere that have simply not been discovered. Little is known, for example, about the buildings in the older part of the town, although, as explored in the next chapter, evidence from the later medieval period can be used retrospectively to infer continuity of occupation.

Interestingly, there are several fragmentary architectural remains on Hatter Street. In the context of the debates as to the connection between Jewish communities and stone houses (e.g. Grenville 1997:178), it is interesting that Hatter Street was called *Heathenmannestrete* in the later medieval period (for example, a charter of 1316 refers to buildings and a shop on the corner of Churchgate Street and '*le Heathenmannestrete*' (SROB 449/2/10)). This may well be a reference to that fact that Jewish families lived here: the Jewish population was expelled from the town in the 1190s at a time of chronic anti-Semitism relating to the perception of 'heathens' perpetuated by the crusades (Gransden 2007:29). In 1173-4, fifty-seven Jews were killed during troubles in Bury and others – women and children - were given sanctuary in the pittancery of the Abbey, a room devoted to the charitable works of the monks (Brakelond 1989:10). In the 1190s, Abbot Samson sought written permission from the king to expel the Jewish population of the town, on the grounds that everything within the town

belonged to St Edmund and they should be St Edmund's men or be banished, that they would have to be housed in the abbey during troubles, and that it was his duty to ensure peace in the Liberty of St Edmunds. In the event, they were ordered to convert to Christianity or to leave the town. If they did the latter, they were to take all their moveable property, and they would be given the value of their houses and lands (Brakelond 1989:42). Given that *Heathenmannestreet* has been equated to the medieval Jewry, it is interesting that there are traces of at least two, perhaps three, stone structures on this street. Whilst it is simplistic to draw a correlation between Jewish communities and stone houses, there are undoubtedly connections between stone houses, commerce and social and economic capital in the urban environment and undeniably, the livelihoods of some Jewish financiers were rooted in commerce. In other towns the Jewry was often in a commercial location, and associated with the investment in stone houses: Carfax in Oxford, the Chepe in London, and the Cornmarket in Norwich (Samuel 1977:44-5).

Such a distribution of property types is not, perhaps, surprising. Backyard activity might be expected to show small scale buildings, and stalls, shops and booths are a logical element of a market place. The distribution of stone buildings can logically be explained by the clear relationship between commercial streets, commercial properties. Norwich City Archaeologist Brian Ayers makes the general observation that stone buildings, less susceptible to fire damage, were the investment of affluent classes and often served non-domestic, storage, retails and administrative purposes, found near quays, markets, in port towns and in major centres. His conclusion is that the building forms found by the later 12th-century represent the 'emergence of a truly urban building stock' (2002:70). In Norwich, they are aligned down King Street (Rutledge 2002). In London, the earliest excavated and documented stone buildings of the 11th and 12th centuries are found in the waterfront, the Jewry and the commercial areas such as Cheapside. Schofield has commented that this distribution is similar to the distribution of the first appearance of stone houses in other towns: the concentration within two block of the High Street in Colchester, or twenty-seven known stone

houses in the central part of Canterbury dating from 1180 to the early 13th century (Schofield 2003:32).

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the later 12th century is a time from which most of the earliest stone buildings related to trade and commerce in towns in western Europe are preserved, related to broader socio-economic changes and in particular to an intensification of organised bulk trade. This apparent threshold represents a macro-scale change in aspects of urban life.

People with urban livelihoods in Bury St Edmunds, with demonstrable connections to merchants from London, and, at fair time, further afield, may well have had requirements and aspirations to subscribe to these architectural forms. As is evident from this chapter, however, there were other equally important arenas of urban life. What is of interest, then, and what is drawn out in the next chapter, is the specific evidence for different parties and types of people who might have been negotiating land transfers and building plots and where they were. The pattern of development is not 'natural' or inevitable, and neither was it necessarily prescribed by the initial layout of the town plan. Negotiation, aspiration and contest were formative of urban society, and Chapter 7 explores how power was created and expressed in the landscape and in urban architecture. For example, it is demonstrable that *Paddockpole* was under development *c*1200, – that area at the east end of Churchgate Street and in what is now Chequer Square, outside the gate of the monastery. The charter evidence reveals that a fighter, (*pugilis)* was granted a building plot, and that Thomas the Goldsmith had a shop there. The charter to Peter Pugilis was witnessed by a body of ecclesiastics (prior, sub-prior, cellarer, sacrist, precentor, and chaplains), leading citizens, and many others (*multi alii*). The citizens included Thomas Gurnon, Lucas Merchant *(mercator*) (whose family in the fourteenth century held land at *Paddockpole*), Richard *fitz* Drogo (who had shops and a stone house in Frenchman's street), John Cook (who had a plot at St James' gate), Richard Walensis (who also had a house at *Paddockpole*) (Davies 1954:82). It appears that the grant of a building plot was agreed by at least some of his immediate neighbours and it is the author's contention that, as a plot at the gate of the monastery,

and in an important part of the town on Mustow, this was a planning proposal of some concern to much of the population.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the available archaeological, architectural and historical evidence from Bury St Edmunds in the later 12th century. A focussing of activity on the town was achieved through careful monopolies throughout the Liberty of St Edmund's. Documentary evidence shows that people and institutions were investing in building plots in key parts of the town which were important both commercially and in the processional and religious landscape. Chapter 7 suggests an evolution in the townscape that is bound up with the emerging politics of the merchant class. It shows that negotiations over commercial power and rights were matched or manifest – not necessarily consciously – in the urban space. The erection and construction of the built environment went hand in hand with the creation of social, economic and political identities which continued to shape the later medieval topographies of the town. Within an increasingly monetary economy, the speculative plans for Abbot Baldwin's commercial and religious venture were fulfilled and the story, after the formative changes of the mid 12th century is, in general, one of remodelling and appropriation of space through architecture.

7

DISCUSSION: URBANISATION, URBAN LANDSCAPE AND URBAN SOCIETY

7.1 Chapter introduction

The thesis began with an outline of the rapid changes in medieval urban development, particularly in the 12th century. Chapter 1 suggested that a consideration of a town as it developed, from its origins to a fully fledged High-Medieval landscape, could potentially shed light on the process of 'urbanism in action': that any one place can be explored in terms of how the urban phenomenon was manifest: how civic life was shaped, promoted, lived and made possible both through major acts of lordship and, more generally, through the actions and aspirations of those living in the town. The aims of the thesis were stated to be twofold. Firstly, it set out to explore the development of Bury St Edmunds from its origins to the early 13th-century, appraising and collating the disparate and fragmentary sources of archaeological, architectural, archival and topographical evidence for the development of the town as a means to reconstruct aspects of the material landscape. The detailed evidence presented in the preceding chapters, summarised in this chapter, has fulfilled this primary aim, charting the growth of the town from its apparent embryo as a focus in an Early-Saxon funerary landscape, through to the reinvestment in spaces, infill and suburban growth of the early 13th century. This has fulfilled some of the aims of the East Anglian research agenda for specific towns.

The second aim, inspired again by the East Anglian research agenda and recent work in the fields of Urban archaeology and history was to explore in more detail the uses of the town, and to produce a workable approach by which, using the data, these theoretical aims can be realised. Chapter 2 suggested that the developing medieval townscape was constituted by overlapping topographies, and that these were intertwined and could be changed by both monumental acts and by the actions of aspiring populations. This chapter describes these topographies, and considers how

they overlapped to make a defining whole. Comment was made in Chapter 2, for example, on the role of civic processions: in this chapter, then, rituals and processional routes through the town are explored as a way of understanding how, periodically, the landscape was the stage-set to urban rituals, and, how, as a consequence of this, parts of the town were prominent at certain times and were therefore perhaps essential to the formation of civic elites. Further, the chapter begins to explore the manifestations of the communal organisation and its unfolding inscription on the landscape. The theme of this chapter is on the one hand lordship and design, planning, investment and subscription to urban ideals; on the other hand, competition and reinvestment and development. It has been revealed that High Medieval Bury St Edmunds was a busy, prosperous commercial and religious centre, and that parts of its diverse property market, comprising large houses, shops, booths, stalls, oven and workshops, were, by the 12th-century, let and sublet in complex arrangements that are common in urban life today.

Section 2.7 suggested that we might begin to not only chart the evolution of a settlement, but that we could also ask a little more about the processes of urban growth. These processes ranged from monumental action by urban lords to the decision by a stall-holder to set up shop. The Chapter argued that there were arenas in which particularly urban elite groups developed at this time and called for an appreciation of the interconnectedness between evolving urban society, commerce and changing urban space – all canonical themes in historical study. In Bury St Edmunds, for example, the stone buildings, where evident, are concentrated in the commercial streets of the town which *is* one that is in agreement with that noted in other places and *is* arguably related to the functional requirements of a mercantile, urban community. However, Section 2.5.2 revealed the increasingly communal actions and identity of the townspeople of Bury St Edmunds as made apparent in Mary Lobel's work (1935): the fundamental question, then, is was this also created architecturally and spatially within the landscape, built up with and fundamentally rooted in activities that took place in the built space of the town? It was argued in Chapter 2 that deeper understandings can be drawn of patterns in the urban space if different activities within it are considered.

This chapter presents a brief summary of the development of the town before moving on to consider its evolving social, commercial/economic, sacred, processional and political topographies, paying particular attention to the historical topographies which underlay them. It then provides a statement on the strengths and limitations of the evidence which have supported the study, and outlines subjects for future research which employ and develop the approach advocated in this thesis.

7.2 Overview of the development of Bury St Edmunds

This thesis has, as promised in Section 3.3, sought evidence to enable phased maps of hypotheses concerning the development of the town plan to be produced. Figures 7.1a and b combine the fruits of this research: Figure 7.1a shows an interpretation of the streets surviving today in terms of the hypothesised relative dates of its constituent parts and Figure 7.1b shows the same information but presented as a progressive set of changes. In brief, these suggest several phases of urban growth before the early 13th century: cemeteries seem to define a site which was later to be defined by an enclosure, possibly Middle Saxon and just possibly an early ecclesiastical site, although the evidence is inconclusive; by the late Saxon period, there has been a settlement shift and then there are successive monumental and commercial developments through the High Medieval period.

The thesis began with the assertion that there is potential to explore more nuanced development in the pre- and post-Conquest periods. Firstly, then, it has suggested that attention should be paid to the relict landscape surrounding St Mary's Square, arguing that this enclosure, which surrounds a natural plateau of land, might be the oldest part of the settlement that still survives in the street pattern today: although the archaeological evidence is sparse, the presence of Middle-Saxon archaeology, within this enclosure, at a settlement where there are wisps of historical evidence for its importance as an ecclesiastical and administrative centre, should not perhaps be overlooked (Section 4.3). Was there a minster within this curving boundary? The answer to this question can not, at present, be given.

Following on from the logical assessment of the development of the streets, Raingate Street is reappraised as a potentially early suburb (Section 4.4), and suggestion has been made that the name may be connected to the word *rengata,* used in Yarmouth to mean burgage tenement. St Botolph's chapel may have been linked to a suburban religious place. 10th-century charter bounds show how the religious and political centre at *Beodericesworth* were encapsulated within a privileged area marked out in the landscape (Section 4.5.1). By the Late Saxon period, settlement had either shifted northwards, or the north was considerably redeveloped, vanquishing earlier traces: there is convincing evidence for parallel, curvilinear streets of a Late Saxon urban form (Section 4.7).

At the conquest, a grid of nine blocks was added to the west of this town, in conjunction with the monumental remodelling of the monastic complex (Section 5.3). The population at Domesday was described as a community whose purpose was to serve the monks. However, less than half a century after this foundation, the Great Market was, it would seem, added to the town, suggesting that it was successful as a speculative commercial development (Section 5.4). At this time, the town defences, as fossilised in the street plan and earthworks, were created (Section 5.4.5). Through into the 12th century, within the European context of burgeoning commercialisation and a more local thriving economy in East Anglia, there is evidence that the trading monopolies of St Edmund were carefully fostered. The suburbs of the town grew, and, more broadly, both its individuals and institutions were fostering economic growth, erecting shops in front of larger houses, exchanging land for speculative profit from approaches to the town, setting up stalls in front of the Church gate... (Section 6.4).

The benefit of producing this *longue durée* account is that the historical elements of the High-Medieval urban landscape can be expressly considered. The High-Medieval topography (a predecessor to Late-Medieval topographies seen in Chapter 2.6) did not just come into being, but was created through a subtle interplay of action, reaction, continuity and change. This theme can be drawn out in a consideration of all the different facets of urban landscape that this discussion centres upon.

7.3 Social topography

A particular contribution of this thesis has been a consideration of the social topography of the Late-Saxon town as a continuing element through the Conquest. The advent of the Romanesque plan is not treated as a watershed. Keith Lilley has made a particularly angled study of landscapes of lordship laid out after the Norman Conquest. He has argued that the changes wrought at this time were the contrivances of powerful urban lords to put themselves at the symbolic centre of a town, thus marginalising other groups by sending them to the edge: re-ordering space and legitimising political dominance through a re-ordering of social boundaries. He reads changes at Norwich, for example, where a castle, new market and the French borough were built, as an attempt to marginalise people who had previously been at the centre. Lilley develops his argument and cites examples of places with French boroughs that had demonstrably French customs - for example, Norwich and Bristol – and suggests that a deliberate switch of commercial activity meant that there was a switch in the core parts of the town, and other parts were marginalized to the edge of the commercial city (2004b:693-4). At Norwich, the castle was built on the space created by the demolition of 198 houses of the Anglo-Saxon town by Earl Ralph de Gael. Castles are a particular context of political dominance (Lilley 2004b:690-1). At Durham, houses were cleared on the peninsula and tenements below the castle were also altered (Graves 2003a:178) – alterations to familiar topographies that would have been apparent symbols of new lordship (ibid). At Hereford, he argues that the imposition of a castle had the same effect. But I would suggest that there are other interpretations. At Hereford, the Norman town extension is away from the castle and the river. The market place is at the junction between the old and the new town, and the church and castle are in the older part. Whilst construction of a castle is perhaps an aggressive military gesture and its construction might have been perceived as a dramatic gesture of subjection, the situation of the castle at Hereford could, for the sake of argument, be read as a placement representative of integration and formalisation. To dismiss these older urban cores is perhaps to mis-represent the sophistication of the pre-Conquest urban system.

Given the clear fostering of commerce that was occurring in towns a switch in focus is perhaps a sign of a new era, but it is worth considering the other activities that also went on in the larger centre. To return to Bury St Edmunds, for example, the Norman townscape created a new ceremonial focus and a new part of the town – perhaps with a more speculatively commercial function. But other parts of the town were retained, particularly in the years before the precinct was walled in, and, if such spatial inscriptions are sought, it could be suggested in this case that the town had two axes: a north-south one along which the older town ranged, and a new Anglo-Norman east-west axis.

More can be said of the earlier topography and its social significance, and it is through this lens that the investment in parts of the new town that might be related to a fledgling mercantile population can be more fully appreciated. In 12th century Bury St Edmunds the coincidence between references to urban manors, which places them in the southern part of the town, even though it is from a very limited set of references, could imply that the older topography was not erased at the conquest, but that parts of the older landscape were important to a thegnly and landowning class: as for Norwich, perhaps, a deliberate subscription to older cultural identities (Section 5.5.1). If this simple, generalising statement is acceptable, it would seem to frame a contrast between this part of the town and the evolving landscape in the commercially important newer part of the town. The only way to gain a highly resolved set of data to address the question of changing identities and arenas would be to knock the whole town down and see what is underneath, but this is an appalling suggestion. Considering this older legacy perhaps helps to frame the building of urban life in the High-Medieval period as something new and exciting, but with longer origins (to return to themes from Section 1.2).

It is my contention that the new town was appropriated by urban elites. The stone houses, particularly round Chequer Square, contrast with the smaller houses excavated at the rear of plots and in more peripheral parts of the town (Section 6.6). Stone was expensive. Eric Sandon's *Suffolk Houses* (1977) draws attention to the fact that the

practice of stone picking, carried out across the stony arable clay land to prepare the ground for crops, provided a ready source of building materials: in the 19th century, teams of people collected stones in buckets which were emptied into tumbrels (p. 73). Presumably, St Edmund's Abbey would have held vast tracts of flinty land in their extensive estates. Adam Longcroft, from the University of East Anglia, has added that the observable use of flint in the construction of higher status buildings only probably reflects the command of resources required to collect them, in addition to the fact that lime mortar and the specialist masonry skills were also relatively expensive (2006:64, 70). This is bound up with mercantile success. It is perhaps significant that it was goldsmiths and moneyers who were building and occupying property here: this was to set the landscape of luxury trade and elite citizens that lived and worked here in the Late and High medieval period, as revealed in the rentals.

7.4 Commercial/Economic topography

Fostering of trade in the landscape can be interpreted in terms of both the actions of lordship, and of institutions and individuals at a level below the monumental and official. Trade in the town was clearly controlled, and Chapter 5 in particular revealed the numbers of men required to man the gates, where toll was exacted. Chapter 6 revealed the classic 'funnelling' effect of the perhaps unofficial extra-mural markets which arose as a result of the need to control traffic, the stopping of traffic and perhaps the practice of forestalling (often forbidden), where goods were sold outside the areas of the intramural markets. Within this, as expected, the economic/commercial topography of Bury St Edmunds was clearly manipulated and invested, most spectacularly by the creation of the Great Market in the mid-12th century. This was a replacement, perhaps, or an augmentation to, St Mary's Square, which appears to be a relict earlier market place and The Moot Stow, now Angel Hill, at the gates of the monastery, which was also likely to have served as an arena for trade and commerce, particularly during the time of the fair which undoubtedly would have involved the erection of booths and stalls (as it does today with the recent resurrection of the St Edmunds fair on 20th November as a tradition in the town). It may have served to provide an official arena for marketing, over and above sale and stalls in the street.

Within this overall scheme which conveys the prosperity of the town, it is clear that elements of the commercial topography were both invested and contested.

Firstly, there is potential to explore cause and effect in more detail. Abbot Samson in the 1180s in the second part of his Abbacy, after years of peripatetic lordship, refocused his affairs and invested in the Abbot's Palace. Presumably, then, more business would have been directed into the town. It is clear that, by charter, St Edmund's had a monopoly on marketing in the Liberty, and the suppression of the rival market at Lakenheath in 1201 illustrates this point. There were no documented rival medieval markets within a diameter of approximately 6 miles from St Edmunds: clearly any markets within this distance were considered unreasonably close competition (as discussed in Section 6.1.2). Clearly, then, the Great Market, monumental in scale, perhaps saw an intensification of activity in the later 12th century, in line too with a more general commercialisation, which, perhaps, to return to the ideas of agencies of culture change, was driven by hundreds of strategies just like this, and fuelled by their success. Within this context, the value of the market increased, and this led to the tensions that we saw in Chapter 2, when the convent tried to raise the fee paid for the farm of the borough. The flourishing of urban life here was bound up with contested space, which reiterates the point made in Chapter 2 that it is valid to consider intention to sell as a framework for analysis of urban space. More subtle evidence for contest is apparent through investment –for example, by Richard fitz Drogo in shops or the hospitals in the suburbs - which conveys aspiration. Finally, stone buildings show the greatest areas of investment, and it is clear, then, that the commercial topography coincides with the other topographies that are under consideration here, illustrating how social, economic and political capital were bound up in the High-Medieval town.

7.5 Sacred geometry

In two papers entitled '*Mapping Cosmoplis*' and '*Cities of God?*' Lilley argues that presentations of the ideal city were not necessarily as abstract, detached or artistic as they might seem, but that the underlying rationale behind these images is also related to how actual medieval cities were conceived, constructed, perceived and experienced.

He explores examples from the 9th to the 15th centuries (2004a and b). His argument is that textual and visual allegorical images show an urban ideal related to the heavenly Jerusalem, that urban landscapes were inscribed with elements of symbolic form which was re-iterated and reinforced, made conscious, through processions and performances, and that belief in this form and the spiritual world were intertwined. Did the city stand as a map of Christian belief and meaning, and conversely, a construction of it? Lilley has argued that cities were living maps of the concept of microcosm (Lilley *et al* 2005:3). By extension, then, there is a clear understanding of the symbolism of core and periphery, centre and edge, heart and limbs: a hierarchy in the landscape that was often at the forefront of consciousness: later medieval processions frequently linked the periphery of a settlement to the core, down a symbolic axis – a journey with a beginning and an end at a real centre, that would have been symbolic, through the lens of microcosm, of the upper echelons of heaven (Lilley 2004a:306). The evidence presented in this study of Bury St Edmunds shows that this line of approach can only be followed so far: the geometry certainly suggests and intellectual and perhaps a philosophically and ideologically inspired design scheme, but this perhaps only offers insight into the minds of those designing the town. Were people negotiating for land and commercial success mindful of their spiritual placement? The overlapping of the commercial and religious, social and political topographies are inextricably linked to the extent that different intentions can not, perhaps, be drawn from landscape study, although comment can be made on the formation of urban civic identities.

To expand further on this consideration of 'sacred geometry', the landscape of Bury St Edmunds, as for many places, shows a mix of 'organically' evolved settlement, and planned creation. Was the landscape inscribed with a deliberate hierarchical significance? Did the designer of the town impose moral and social geographies of the population? Did evolving populations serve to perpetuate any underlying organisation plan, or was there mutation and challenge present within the landscape?

To address these issues, the underlying purposes and scheme of the town needs first to be assessed. Firstly, the ideal of the town may have been shaped in the settlement. A 10th-century boundary clause demonstrably describes the bounds of the medieval and the modern *banleuca*. The charter reveals how landscape monuments were used to define an area that included not only the church of St Edmund but also the administrative meeting place of the Thing Howe. At Domesday, this was given as the area of the *vill* of St Edmunds. Section 1.2 framed the High-Medieval period as a time of transition, arguing that a characteristic of urbanism at this date was the *formalisation* and centralisation of religious, commerce and government and it is possible to view the creation of the town defences in the mid-12th century in this light. The town defences were created at the same time as the monastic precinct was walled in, demonstrating a preoccupation with the definition of distinct spaces and entities in monumental terms.

Within this scheme, the Romanesque addition was a deliberate and planned creation, and in the 12th century, it was extended through a scheme that subscribed to the geometrical design. A Dan Brown *Da Vinci Code* style interpretation would require more work on the significance of numbers in geometry. Here, however, perhaps a simple correlation is that elite places are closer to the monastery.

Aspects of the plan of Bury St Edmunds certainly suggest that it was a stage set for a processional landscape: a 'gigantic shrine' for St Edmund (Gauthiez 1998:81). As for many pilgrimage centres, the shrine lay at the heart of concentric markers through the landscape on the approach to the settlement and the presence of the Saint and his powers would have been a physical reality, a corporeal presence at the heart of the area. A case in point, illustrating the reality of the presence of the saint, is provided by an account made by Jocelin of Brakelond in 1192-4 concerning the question of whether or not the silver canopy from the shrine should be taken as part of King Richard's ransom. The Abbot did not agree to its removal, but offered to leave the church doors open so that it could be taken: the response of the Barons of the Exchequer was that 'St Edmund vents his rage on the distant and the absent; much greater will his fury be on those close at hand who seek to rob him of his clothing' (Brakelond 1989:86). The

crosses on the edge of the *banleuca*, then, defined the holy space and the approach to the shrine and saint at its epicentre, and the continuous prayers and offerings to God would have generated and maintained a constant, intangible area of spirituality (perhaps an electro-magnet generating a field whilst a current is applied is a good metaphor). At the approach to the core of the sacred land, the axial route of Churchgate Street which lead directly to the shrine provided a ceremonial route that linked the town to the church: the town was also not merely an economic addition to the settlement, but built in an ideal form that was perhaps intended to shape and guide the lives of a Christian community.

As demonstrated in this chapter, this is also a result of other topographies – for example, that the monastery gates were a busy and prime commercial spot – but given that the symbolism of the church is geared towards the shrine at its centre, relative spiritual proximities to the saint may well have been something that was fundamental to medieval understandings of the perceived and mental geography of Bury St Edmunds and a new investment in Chequer Square, or Paddockpole, at the gates of the church, would perhaps have been significant in this light.

7.6 Processional topography

Section 2.6 explored the connections between the physical presence of urban elite enclaves in towns and processional routes. It is suggested, firstly, that processions would have served to represent and at the same time reinforce and create the hierarchy of the community involved, and secondly that the streets and houses through which processions wove can be drawn into the foreground of enquiry. Keith Lilley has argued that underlying 'sacred topographies' would have been brought to the fore by a processional route that worked from the synonymously occurring symbolic and actual periphery to the core of a settlement. It was suggested then, that the social and other hierarchical topographies in the landscape would have been re-inscribed by the event of the procession.

There is no specific, documentary evidence for processions in High-Medieval Bury St Edmunds. However, the layout of Churchgate Street, in line with the centre of the West Front and ultimately with the shrine of St Edmund is clearly a theatrical and probably a processional approach to the monastic precinct (Figure 7.2a and b). Simon Esmonde Cleary has suggested that there is scope to recognise the processional topography of Roman towns by drawing inferences from their layout and from the location of, perhaps, gates, monuments, buildings, wide streets, and, significantly, different forms of private house. Following this scheme, he has argued that renewed attention should be paid to axial routes, axes and intersections in a landscape (2005:2-10). In the absence of detailed written evidence for this Romanesque town, it is not unreasonable to apply the same logic. During the Abbacy of Anselm, the precinct was enclosed and the Norman Tower built: his love of the 'flamboyant and dramatic' was noted in section 5.1.

There is a documented account of a ceremony, described by Jocelin of Brakelond (1989:23). It serves to confirm the elements of the processional topography of the town, reveals actions and gestures, and populates the town with crowds of people. On Palm Sunday, 1182, Samson, the new Abbot of St Edmunds and a delegation from St Edmunds returned from Hampshire. The brethren of the abbey went out to meet their new Abbot at the cemetery gate [Norman Tower], to the ringing of bells and the playing of an organ:

> 'it was with due ceremony, including a procession, that the lord abbot was received by his convent... he arrived with a great throng of people pressed round him, but when he saw the convent he dismounted from his horse outside the gate and had his shoes removed. Then he was brought barefoot through the gate, with the prior and the sacrist conducting him on either side. As we led the abbot to the high altar, we chanted the responses' (Brakelond 1989:23).

In contemporary, 12th century literature, the west door of a church is most commonly referred to in accounts of Palm Sunday processions. In this procession, the clergy and celebrant entered the west door of the church. The procession was meant to represent Christ's entry into Jerusalem from Galilee, with the church representing Jerusalem. Stocker and Everson have also noted that this resonated with symbolism of the resurrection: the host, representing the resurrected body, was carried first into the church (2006:80).

The town, it has been suggested, formed a giant shrine for St Edmund. Although it is only fragmentary, the symbolism on the gateways and doors of the Abbey church serve as a reminder that an approach to the shrine was a symbolic journey, above and beyond interpretations made of the holy geometry. The tympanum of the Norman Tower depicted Christ in Majesty- with the figure elevated over people passing through the gate, the hierarchies of the heavens would have been enforced. In 1433, when King Henry VI made a visit to St Edmunds, the writer of an account in the *registrum Curteys* felt it of sufficient importance to note that the procession met the king in the way between the gate and the south door of the church rather than the west door because of the recent collapse of the central campanile, before processing to the altar singing anthems (latin transcript in Ord 1806:67). This is one of the few references to approaches and processions that is available.

Concrete evidence for the performance of liturgical dramas and mystery plays is sparse in comparison to the evidence for Later Medieval more popular secular plays. However, Parker McLachlan has argued that an illuminated letter in a manuscript copy of 'St Gregory the Great's sermons on the gospels' of *c.*1140 which, in a section on the epiphany story in Matthew's gospel, depicts the virgin and child and magi, may possibly be influenced by a scene from an Epiphany drama. In the figure, the magi are framed by the lower part of the figure 'S', with the virgin and child in the top part (1980:256). She has suggested that the virgin and child is similar in form to those of statues that were known to have been used in majesty plays in France rather than real actors, and that, with the kneeling figures, the scene could be inspired by the composition of

figures in a play: the *Officium Stellae*. In the performance in Romanesque France, this would have been performed by three priests (and the figures in the image are portayed in tunics). She has also noted that there is discourse on the possible relationships between Romanesque art and religious drama (Parker McLachlan 1980:256). Of course, this does not mean that the plays would have been performed in Bury, or that the statue would have been paraded through the town, but it introduces the importance of procession and drama: in Latin countries, statues and icons are paraded through the town. Paddockpole, or Chequer Square, at the cemetery gate, again emerges as a focal point in this topography, part of the secular landscape bound up with the religious processions.

7.7 Political topography

In Section 2.5.2, it was demonstrated that increasingly through the 12th-century, the burgesses of Bury St Edmunds were negotiating, communally, for rights and privileges. This thesis obviates a gap in our knowledge of this town by providing a synthesis of the information for its changing commercial role and landscape. However, acknowledgement is due to the unique foundation provided by Lobel's work on the political development of the borough and the tensions and negotiations inherent in the fostering of an urban way of life, which facilitates the fulfilment of the second aim of the study. The fact that Lobel's work was produced in the 1930s should not engender bias against the reliability and thoroughness of her investigations: drawn from the available charters, chronicles, tracts and records of disputes in the monastic archives, her conclusions have not, for example, been challenged or augmented by Antonia Gransden's recent chapter in her book on the Abbey on 'relations with the town' (2007:44-50): although Lobel may have had an agenda shaped by a wider interest at the time in constitutional history, which in itself is a discipline that is seen as elitist, the work provides a useful background against which the archaeological evidence can be set. Lobel's analysis suggests a community that was increasingly affluent and confident.

Their functioning as a political body, associated with the Gild Merchant, was outlined in Chapter 2, which revealed in particular their shared sense of economic aspiration. In

part, their cultural identity would have been a product of the other topographies listed above which arose from the fact that they were an urban population, living in a place: a sense of inscribed, communal identity engendered through proximity and a shared understanding of what were significant and lucrative places in each of these topographies. Elite status would have been associated with prominence in other spheres.

In particular, though, I wish to return here to the evidence that the burgesses built a stone house in Bury St Edmunds market place. The Colchester Moot Hall was demolished in 1843: however, it was a Romanesque building of *c.* 1160. Although the plan can not be reconstructed, the building comprised a raised hall 1.8m (6ft) over the street, above ground floor that was possibly sunken. It stood overlooking the market place on the High Street: this street frontage had a doorway that was flanked by two equidistant windows. The decoration, *c.* 1160, is the most lavish for any recorded urban secular building (Zarnecki 1981:67). Colchester received its first charter in 1189 but a charter of the reign of Henry I, confirming to the burgesses the profits from the fisheries and wharves of the Colne, suggests that they had held communal finances before this date (Crummy 1981:61). Crummy has suggested that, with no documentary records of a merchant guild, it is unlikely to have originally been built as a Guild Hall, although in the 14th-century it was documented as a building that had long been occupied and venerated by their fathers (1981:62). Did the burgesses at Bury make such a similar statement?

The market place was a contested arena (Section 2.5.2). Moyses's Hall, if, as suggested, it was a public building (with the caveat that we can not make a full reconstruction of the complex) could have been erected by the Abbot, in the context of his investment and refocusing of his business in the domestic sphere, or the burgesses. Did the burgesses build Moyse's Hall?

The market, as a contested arena, was an ideal space to invest in a symbol of collective identity, particularly given the direct conflicts that had arisen between the monks and

the burgesses about profits from their buildings in this location. The building was related to a successful negotiation whereby they commuted an ancient due for a monetary payment: the fact that payment was due on the feast of St Peter-ad-vincula, associated with the breaking of bonds and chains, was noted in Chapter 2. The subscription and recognition of the commercial and monetary economy is evidence in this arrangement, and the construction of a stone house was a material, practical and architectural symbol of this mindset. To return, whether or not the burgesses built Moyse's Hall, they did invest in the market place. Politically, this shows their inscription on the town that was the centre of their livelihood, and it is paralleled with an investment in stone houses in another significant arena, opposite the Churchgate, at a similar date with particular reference to building plots and houses lately built. Within the town plan, then, these arenas show a re-inscription and a growing significance, bound up with the building in stone of urban life and aspirations that is bound up with the character of the 12th century merchants.

7.8 Conclusion

In particular, it has been hypothesised that elements of the Late-Saxon social topography were enduringly important through the 11th and early 12th centuries. This observation can be set against changes that occurred as the town prospered through the 12th century, in the context of more widespread commercialisation of the European economy and a particularly advanced state of economic development in East Anglia (Section 2.5.1). Against the background of the earlier social topography and the monumental layout of the town plan, a detailed scrutiny of the available historical, architectural and archaeological evidence has revealed that in particular, into the late 12th century, individuals and institutions were seeking to exploit commercial space in the suburbs, maximise the potential of street fronts, and that there was a marked reinvestment, by members of the urban community, in the space of Paddockpole opposite the main, liturgical gate to the monastery.

Clearly, then, the different topographies in the town overlap. This is a predictable outcome, if a functional approach is taken, and it seems obvious. However, exploring

the more subtle 'geographies' of the town enables an appreciation of *how* these apparently elite places in the landscape offered the potential for building social, economic and political capital, and it is this approach which builds bridges between the observed enfranchisement of the burgesses, particularly in the later 12th century, and the landscape of the town. Clearly such an assessment is based on a poor and sparsely distributed archaeological and historical record of life in the town, but it is based on striking coincidences in the data that we do have. It would seem from the pattern of stone houses at the same time, for example, as the particular investment and movement of the goldsmiths to Paddockpole, and the increasingly evident bargaining power of the burgesses in the 12th century (particularly the financial ability that they had to erect a stone house and commute fines) that the late 12th century was a significant time in Bury St Edmunds. Any further data from fieldwork – which either supports or challenges the ideas in this thesis – will be a welcome contribution to the history of the town.

7.8.1 Limitations of the evidence

The evidence that supports this thesis is drawn from a fragmentary corpus, as anticipated in Chapter 1 and as catalogued in Chapter 3. However, the themes which have emerged and which are discussed in this thesis are inspired by the evidence that *is* available and a contribution has been made. In particular, combining different sources of evidence has supported a narrative which offers new insight into phases of growth of the town, and it has highlighted individually interesting examples.

There are many unanswered questions about life and times in medieval Bury St Edmunds that will perhaps only ever be answered in the future by more fieldwork and building recording work. The spatial distributions of evidence in particular would be enhanced by further examples. On this note, the pursuit of more sophisticated questions about urban life and identity as manifest in material culture and in the use of space in plots and houses are precluded because of the nature of the dataset. The information from watching briefs and evaluations, whilst useful in that they provide a series of test-pits to explore presence and absence of archaeology of different dates, do

not reveal enough evidence to interpret the activities on a site. Jane Grenville has recently (2004) highlighted the potential of the archaeology of workshops to add to our knowledge of urban working lives and production: what took place where in the landscape, how plots and spaces were used commercially and privately. In the context of increasingly commercialised, dislocated economy it would be interesting to study changing patterns in urban life and work – but the evidence would be a difficult and truncated dataset.

A case in point is provided by the excavation of the cellared building on Churchgate Street (Section 6.3). A logical question would be to ask what took place on the plot behind this house, but the area was only stripped and planned. More funds might have allowed an excavation which would have provided more significant information about this unprecedented discovery in the town.

Secondly, an evaluation and monitoring project on St Mary's Square, illustrated in Figure 3.5b and c, is again highlighted. *If* this is an early ecclesiastical site, how would it be manifest in the archaeological evidence? This evaluation revealed undated post-holes that do not form an understandable pattern. As a single project, this is not a problem but increasingly this area is filled with buildings that have only been subject to small scale analysis, and taken as a whole, they do not contribute to our understanding of this potentially fragile site. Proactive fieldwork is perhaps needed to re-assess whether there is anything more ephemeral here, and this can only be achieved by a larger scale plotting of the open area. With a general lack of open-area excavation, unless there is a large scale development plan, the prospects for commercially-driven urban archaeological fieldwork in the future to provide new data that will promote these agendas are bleak. How will things change with the proposed changes to PPG 16, planned as a topic of debate at the upcoming Institute for Archaeologists conference in March 2009? This may offer lessons for the implementation of PPG 16 and the synthesis of grey literature in other places.

7.8.2 Future work

Several strands of further work can be drawn out from the analysis presented in this thesis. Brian Ayers advocates that the time is ripe to consider the subtlety of urban development in 12th and 13th century East Anglia. Bury St Edmunds has shown the potential, and it would be interesting to consider its impact and relationship to a more widely developing regional urban system. In fact, however, there is a pressing need for a proactive and defined campaign of urban archaeology in East Anglia more generally, recognised in successive bids and proposals that have been made to initiate intensive and extensive urban surveys such as those that have been produced elsewhere. Funding is, as ever, the issue. Much more work could be done on the town of Bury St Edmunds: this thesis, for example, has prioritised the development of the streets and buildings of the town at the expense of an account of the archaeology, architecture and historical evidence for the religious institutions of the Abbey, monastic granges, hospitals and the friary. Importantly, however, with some deeper thought and time devoted to developing the ideas in this discussion, the potential to extend the framework advocated in Chapter 2 could be convincingly argued on the basis of the evidence from Bury St Edmunds and proposals to study well preserved towns on a similar line could be established, or perhaps projects looking at spatial patterns in deserted towns.

7.8.3 Concluding thoughts

This thesis makes a contribution to medieval urban landscape studies by illustrating the potential to combine fragments of evidence in an interpretation that frames the development of the landscape of a High Medieval town in terms of 'urbanism in action': as an arena in which different institutions and individuals sought to secure their fortunes according to an urban way of life, investing and building, asserting and contesting identities and power. In many ways, these themes appeal to the intuitive and empathetic aspects of history and heritage. It is with all seriousness then, that, historical fiction is drawn into this concluding statement. Ken Follett's internationally best-selling, epic novels about the fictional town of 'Kingsbridge' in the 12th and 14th centuries (*Pillars of the Earth* 1989, William Morrow, New York; *World Without End*

2007, Macmillan, London) are tales throughout which the themes that are interweaved in this thesis are instinctively conveyed. The novels describe the changing infrastructures of that imagined town in terms of the motivations of members of the competing institutions of Cathedral, Priory, and Civic Guild, and the social, political and economic relationships and conflicts between them, as they sought to control industry, taxation, tolls, the market, the town bridge and, in particular, the increasingly prosperous wool trade:

> 'In a time of civil war, famine and religious strife, there rises a magnificent cathedral in Kingsbridge. Against this backdrop, lives intertwine' [*Pillars of the Earth,* blurb]... 'lives braided together by ambition, love, greed and revenge' [*World Without End,* blurb].

The archaeological study of Bury St Edmunds presented in this thesis promotes an appreciation of a *real* place, inhabited by people about whom we know a little, who lived in the same streets that form the town today, but in a time when those streets were not so very old. The fragments of historical, archaeological, architectural and topographical evidence for their built landscape have been collated, and some of their experiences, perceptions and aspirations drawn out. The thesis presents this case study as one which may add something to studies of urban origins, Norman town planning, High-Medieval urban life and the detailed exploration of archaeological evidence for the processes which underlay these themes.

APPENDIX 1: MAKING SENSE OF THE 10TH-CENTURY CHARTER BOUNDS.

This appendix relates to the interpretation of the bounds of a charter discussed in Section 4.5.1. To reiterate, the land around St Edmund's to which the privilege pertained is described in a set of charter bounds entitled '*thys synden tha landgemæro, the Ædmund kyng gebocade into Sce. Ædmunde*' ('these are the boundaries that king Edmund gave to St Edmund)'. The text (Arnold 1896:I 340-1; Hart 1966:55-6) is presented in section 4.5.1. For analysis here it has been broken into numbered steps. Some of these, as shown on Figure 4.12, can be correlated to places in the modern and recent historical landscape.

1) *thonne is theer ærest suth be eahte treowan;* (first south by the eight trees)
2) *and thonne up be Ealhmundes treowan;* (and then up by Eahlmund's trees)
3) *and swa forth to Osulf's lea;* (and so forth to Osulf's Lea)
4) *and swa forth on gerichte be manige hyllan*; (and so forth on the right by many hills)
5) *and thannan up to Hamarlunda;* (and then up to *Hamarlunda*)
6) *and swa forth to fower hogas; (*and so forth to four hills)
7) *and swa æfter them wege to Litlandtune;* (and so after the way to *Litlandtune)*
8) *and thonan ofer tha ea; (*and then over the river)
9) *æfter tham wege to Bertunedene; (*following the way to *Bertondene)*
10) *and swa on gerihte east to Holegate; (*and so eastwards to *Holegate)*
11) *and swa forth an furlong be easten Bromleaga; (*a furlong eastwards by *Bromleaga)*
12) *and thanon suth to Niwantune meadwe (*then south to *Niwantune* meadow)

Many of these places, as shown on Figure 4.12, are clearly places on the edge of the borough. Barton *(Berton)* and Nowton *(Niwantune)* are parishes adjacent to Bury St Edmunds, and *Bromleaga* is identifiable as Broomley Wood, which is situated to the southwest of the town. The apparent correlation between the high-medieval area of jurisdiction and the bounds in the 10th-century charter has engendered suspicion in some scholars, who have expressed doubts as to the authenticity of the document. This suspicion has been compounded by that fact that to date, there is no published account which successfully makes sense of the directions. Lillian Redstone, writing in 1909, saw them as the jumbled attempts by a later scribe to name the procession ways in pretence of a false definition of the 'earliest limits of the ancient demesne bounds of the lords of *Beodericesworth*' (p. 196). Hart (1966) was convinced that

> 'whoever drew up the bounds had only the haziest notion of where the points of the compass lay in relation to the territory; he consistently repeats a 90° error clockwise... this is highly unusual in an OE boundary description, but no other explanation will fit the facts' (1966:55).

Mary Lobel, on the grounds that the landmarks cited were on or near the borough boundary but in an apparently random order, was of the opinion that the charter was spurious. She cited a 13th-/ 14th-century annotation to a copy of the charter on f.190v of the *Kempe Register* that read '*a paucis vel nullis intellegi possunt*' which, loosely translated, means 'this makes little or no sense'. Robin Eaglen has been the most recent to dismiss the charter. He argues that it is probably the product of a later attempt by St Edmund's to reinforce the antiquity of their freedom from Episcopal concerns during the protracted struggles in the 11th century between the Abbey and Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of East Anglia. During this dispute, the monks placed much emphasis on an apparent foundation charter granted by King Cnut (Eaglen 2006:6) - a charter which, incidentally, included the phrase 'the monastery shall always be... free from domination by the bishops of that shire' (Hart 1966:63). Robin Eaglen suggests that, had they had authentic, older proof of the extent of their privileges, they surely would have referred to it rather than pressing a case with decidedly more spurious evidence.

This argument is flawed in that – as he acknowledges - there is no indication in Edmund II's charter that it was meant to be a grant of exemption from episcopal authority. It is a grant of freedom from the secular burdens of dues and royal taxation, in a defined area of land around St Edmunds, in perpetuity, (Hervey 1929:17,25). There is, I argue, no reason why citation of it would have helped the monks argue their cause.

In support of the authenticity of the contents of the grant, Cyril Hart in his volume *Early Charters of Eastern England* expressed the opinion that dismissing the charter on the basis of its content is unsatisfactory. He considered the wording and the witness list to be compatible with the ascribed date (1966:54). Further, I do not believe that the contents of the charter are nonsensical at all, which in some ways undermines the argument that they are a poor attempt at forgery. The boundary clause *can* be related to the landscape. John Fairclough has recently published an interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon boundaries of Stoke, a suburb of Ipswich that was sold by King Edgar to Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester in 970, and in it he demonstrated the value of walking the charter bounds and appraising the landscape (2003:262).

The easiest way to explain the sources of confusion in critiques of the Bury document is to imagine a scenario, although it involves taking slanderous liberties. Pretend for a moment that antiquarians from different eras have been issued with a copy of the charter bounds and any supplementary material of their choice, and have been released into the countryside to find their way. Contenders were: Mary Lobel (1935) who in the event decided to stay at home; C. R. Hart (1966), who decided to take a modern map and antiquarian knowledge of old charters; Lillian Redstone (1909), who opted for a 13th century rental, and local and antiquarian knowledge; and myself, who opted for a 6ft high 18th century survey of the borough showing the *banleuca* boundary as a procession way, and a tithe map (SROB Misc, SROB T9/2).

C.F. Hart unwittingly misidentified the first direction, *suth be eahte treowan,* assuming with confidence that it referred to the medieval '*Eyghtcros*' or *'excetros'* which, in 1330, was described as 'outside the Westgate', and in 1530 as 'standing on the way to

Saxham', on the west side of the town (Hart 1966:56). The river runs into the town from this side, which served to convince Hart he was right because the second instruction is to go to Osulf's Lea, which he understood to be a water meadow (*ibid*:55). He therefore confidently set off to the south from the site of Eight Cross. Meanwhile, deciding that the reference to Eight Cross was much later, and convinced by Lillian Redstone's arguments that '*lea*' is also a term that can mean woodland, I decided to join her and opt for a start on the *banleuca* boundary to the south of the town. She added that Hardwick Wood, and East and South Lees, named in the 13th century Sacrist's rental, may have been the ancient trees mentioned – *Eahte treowan, Eahlmunde's treowan* and *Osulf's Lea* (1909:196).

The next instruction is to go to the right of many hills. Hart walked south from *Eightcross* to the water meadow and some hills but he passed them on the east. Muttering that the instructions were wrong and that the 10th century scribe was obviously confused by the cardinal points, Hart returned to *Eight Cross* and proceeded along the *banleuca* boundary in the other direction, proceeding northwards up a hill. He got to the modern water tower and saw several hills (by Suffolk standards), albeit now built upon, and so congratulated himself for correcting the directions, unaware that he was looking at the wrong hills (see Hart 1966:55). Meanwhile, in the woods, Redstone was flicking through the paperwork and beginning to worry that from this start point, we would reach 'Holoweye' outside Westgate, which she thought was probably *holegate*, before we got within the vicinity of Barton (*Berton)* over to the north east (see Redstone 1909:207-8). I left her in the woods looking at the 13th century rental and decided to follow the boundary path south by the trees. I then had no choice but to follow the *banleuca* boundary west for a bit before walking northwards. On my right, I saw a modern estate, but from the map of the borough produced by Warren in the 18th-century, I could see that the landscape used to be rolling. I was also aware that the *banleuca* boundary passes close to the Westgarth gardens and the Baron's road Early-Saxon cemeteries which are 1.2 km apart. Stanley West argued that the *banleuca* was defined by features in the landscape and that there may well have been upstanding visible monuments and associations (perhaps with liminality) that made this a significant

boundary place (Statham 1998:11; West 1998:2). Given this suggestion that the cemetery might have been a visible monument, it is possible that it was partly a barrow cemetery – and *manige hyllan* (many hills) may take on a new significance. I passed from the south the site of these hills which, had I but known it, Hart had turned back from when his approach from the north had seemed wrong.

The next instruction is to go up to *Hamarlunda*. Hart was on his way along the northern stint of the *banleuca* boundary, pondering on the origin of the name. He noted that Hamarlound appears in a deed of 1260-70 as the name of a field divided into strips that was to the west of Tayfen Meadows. He considered that the name is derived from Old Norse for smithy (*hamarr*) and small wood (*lundr*), and chuckled about the coincidental location of, in 1960, the Northgate Iron Works. But it is not really coincidental after all, because *Hamarlunda* is probably almost directly west of the town: as I was walking up the west side of the borough boundary, I was pleased to note that on the 1837 tithe map of Westley, there is a 'Hemland Hill' and a 'Hemland plantation' (SROB T/9/2). At 60 m/200 ft OD, this would have been a distinctively high point in relation to the town which lies closer to 40 m OD. My route took me past Tayfen and up to the north side of the town.

The next instruction is to continue forth to four hills, *fower hogas*. Thing How, named for the Norse meeting *haugr*, or mound, was a landmark on the north side of the town. It was one of at least two mounds in the vicinity, the other being Hen How which was used as the site of a medieval windmill, and although spaced apart, they may well have been visible on the sloping land to the water-meadows. Hen How is on the *banleuca* boundary: the Black Cross stood on it (Redstone 1909:206). I set off along the boundary towards the site of Hen How and found Hart having his lunch and wondering where I'd been, which triggered an argument about starting points. We agreed, however, that the site of the mound was at a turning point in the banleuca boundary. I noted that whilst the 'four hills' might now have been obliterated by modern development, we had accounted for two and if by *hogas* barrows were meant, there had

been Early-Saxon cemeteries at Tollgate Lane/Northumberland Avenue, both on the edge of the banleuca: again, might there have been upstanding monuments?

The next set of instructions is to go the way to *Litlandtune*, which Hart suggested was Little Fornham. We followed a stretch of the *banleuca* boundary that in the 18th century was called 'Long Spong' to reach the road to Fornham at Babwell, where we walked by the river and then headed towards Barton. Hart recalled a reference to Barton *dala* in the 14th century register, and on Thomas Warren's map, the next part of the boundary on the 1791 map travels along 'Barton Green Way'. *Dene* is a word for a wooded valley and this fits with 'green way'. The next instruction was to go on the right east to Holegate. Hart was convinced that Eldo, also *Holdhage* or *Aldhaw*, was probably *Holegate*, although admitted that he couldn't quite see how it fitted, and that once again, the direction in the bounds were wrong – after all, Eldo was located to the south, not east. I suggested that, as we were in fact facing south after we'd left *Bertunedene* there was nothing wrong with the instructions, which would take us east towards what is now called Hollow Road – a far more convincing identification of Holegate, if the use of the ON *gata* is accepted. The next instruction is to go a furlong (c. 200 m) eastwards by Bromleage. Redstone's summary of the 1295 rental notes that Broom Hill was listed under the heading of 'South field' (1909). It is some distance away but Hart and I continued to Broom Plantation. Hart insisted again that the scribe was wrong because the plantation lies on the south of the road. But I pointed out that maybe we were meant to pass with it to the east of us, following the parish boundary. The final instruction was to go south to Niwantune Meadow, following the *banleuca* boundary on its westward run over the river. A charter of 1337 makes reference to 'Le Processionweye' which leads to *Reschebrokmelle* (Rushbrook Mill) (Harper-Bill 1994:89). Hart pointed out that Nowton was a considerable way to the south and west of us, but on Warren's map, Nowton meadow is not in Nowton at all but on the south side of the town. Hart then pronounced that the charter bounds were incomplete. They did not return to their starting point, and a passage must have 'dropped off the text' (1966:56). I then pointed out that in fact, I could see the trees from which I had started. I suggested that perhaps there was no need to complete the circuit verbally,

because it could be completed in the landscape. I also pointed out that his starting point was so very far away that he wouldn't be able to see it at all, so could be forgiven for not thinking of it in these terms.

The result of this re-analysis is that it is possible to identify a complete circuit around the town from the charter bounds, relating the landmarks – albeit loosely – to points on the modern *banleuca* boundary. The 10th-century instructions *are* based on an awareness of the direction of the bounds, and were also tied to visible points in the landscape. What is important to bear in mind is that they instruct a visual and physical journey – serving as a guide and a mnemonic rather than a detailed itinerary. David Palliser, for example, has highlighted that 'beating the bounds' ceremonies often relied on memory (1976:6). With a secure knowledge of the boundary of the town in the 10th century, further comment can be made on the nature of that boundary and what it enclosed by considering the archaeological evidence.

APPENDIX 2:
BABWELL MILL AND FISH-POND:
AN ACT OF LORDSHIP

In augmentation of the topic of contest and negotiation in the landscape, the controversy that surrounded the creation of the new mill and the Abbot's fish pond at Babwell in the late 12th-century is worthy of note. This represents perhaps the most monumental change to the environs of the town since the defences had been built, and Jocelin of Brakelond's account of the ill feeling that it caused shows that the neighbours took note of the imposition (1989 : 116). Jocelin writes, in the late 12th century, that Samson had ordered the creation of a new mill at Babwell. That this was a watermill is shown by the concomitant creation (or perhaps expansion) of a fish pond which caused the water level to rise to such a degree that 'there is not one man, rich or poor, who has land next to the river between the town [toll] gate and the east gate who has not lost his garden and orchards as a result of the flooding'. The dissatisfied included the Cellarer, the Infirmarer and 'all the neighbours complaining about it' (Brakelond 1989:116).

Leats and ditches cover this marshy land, which has long been managed, but archaeological evidence for the earthworks and engineering of the mill and pond has shown that the water probably did cover an area as large as Jocelin asserted (Caruth and Anderson 1997: 106). The pond was fed by the river, but it is also possible that the system of ditches shown in Babwell Fen Meadow on the 19th-century OS map may have been intended to drain into it as well. Soil profiles in trial trenches by Jo Caruth at Tollgate (BSE 164) revealed circumstantial evidence for the mill dam and pond: upstream, silty layers were thought to be evidence for a new body of standing water, whilst downstream peat was overlain by gravel surfaces, indicating drier conditions (Caruth 1998). At St Saviour's, further down Northgate Street, consolidated mud that was assumed to be the bottom of the medieval mill pond was found across much of the land between the river and the standing chapel of the hospital. Sections through what was the west bank of the pond, behind the chapel, revealed that it was formerly revetted

with timber wattles and clay, and that there were sequences of collapse and repair which included dumps of domestic rubbish (Tester 1990: 158-9; Caruth 1995: 350; Gransden 2007: 296).

The extent of the pond eastwards is less well attested. However, there is an entry in the 1295 rental under the heading of 'East Field' for an acre held by Elene Holmer: this was said to be abutting on *ffyshehowseland*. (Redstone 1909: 210-220). On site BSE 204, in advance of redevelopment of an old factory off Cotton Lane, evaluation trenches and an excavation revealed the corner and a buttress of a coursed-flint and mortar building that formerly stood on the sloping land on the edge of the floodplain. Pieces of tile were also found. The features were considered to be evidence of a substantial medieval building, and Andrew Tester noted that, as it was built over the edge of the flood plain and not the street, it may have been related to industrial activity or water management. He observed that the lower floodplain contained deep layers of silt. Given the evidence from the 1295 rental, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this may have been the monastic fish house, perhaps a stone structure like the extant Fish House of Glastonbury Abbey at Meare (Somerset). This is a stone structure with 14th century features: it has two storeys, interpreted as domestic rooms over storage and processing rooms (Rippon 2004: 122). Most of the assemblage recovered from the vicinity of the building excavated in Bury was formed from local medieval coarsewares, although there were 12th-14th-century glazed wares from Norfolk and Essex up to the 14th century: the assemblage was considered to be evidence of intense activity and of higher rather than low status. It was remarked that the finds were relatively un-abraded and could have related to activity on the site (Tester 2002a). The finds evidence suggests that it was a building in regular use, and does not preclude the possibility that it might have been a monastic offshoot. Interpreting this building as the possible remains of the fish house suggests that the edge of the pond was nearby, perhaps even represented in the silty deposits. Subsequent excavations in the vicinity revealed ditches for water management, some of them revetted with wood (Duffy 2004).The pond therefore extended a considerable way south from Babwell Mill (see the maps presented in Figures 3.3 and 6.7).

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CUL Mm Ff ii 33	Sacrist's Register (*Registrum Sacristae*)
PRO DL 42/5	White Cellarer's Register (*Registrum album cellerarii*)
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