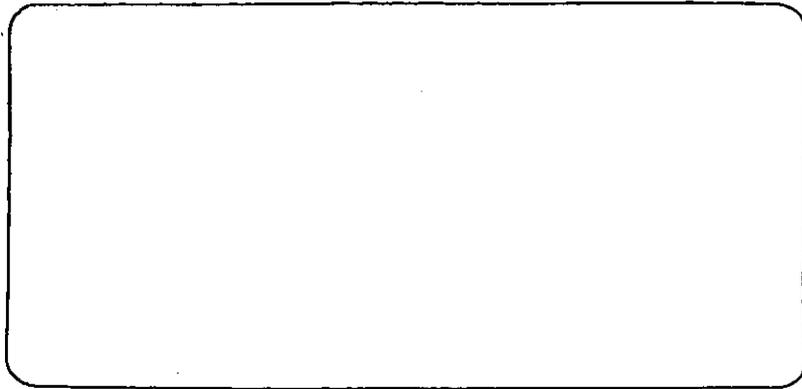


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**CANONS ASHBY, Northamptonshire**  
**An archaeological survey by the RCHME**  
**December 1992**

01 SP 55 SE  
02 25  
04 SP 55 SE 1  
07 162  
08 The Orchard; miscellaneous earthworks  
10 NORTHANTS  
11 DAVENTRY  
12 CANONS ASHBY  
13 BUILDING PLATFORM, TRACKS, WELLS  
14 PM/M  
17 EARTHWORKS  
18 SP  
19 5783  
20 5065  
21 GCE  
23 5750033  
24 NORTHANTS  
30 CA/NTL  
32 WATCHING BRIEF  
33 1992  
34 1992  
35 CADMAN G  
32 SURVEY  
33 1992  
34 1992  
35 RCHME  
38 1.5  
39 C  
40 8-DEC-92  
41 1000  
42 Surveyed  
43 Y  
45 Earthworks (NR)  
46 Grassland, heathland 2

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SP 5783 5063 The Orchard. See SP 55 SE 1 plan I for location. The capital letters in the following text refer to the detailed survey, Plan II. Plan III shows the location of the surviving tree species, stumps and tree-holes.

The Orchard, to the east of the B4525 opposite Canons Ashby House, was surveyed following a request from the National Trust who propose to replant with fruit trees: it was not surveyed in detail by the RCHME for the Northamptonshire vol. III Inventory. It is currently under close pasture but there are still some old fruit trees, mostly pears. There are two wells in the field: one with a flat cover and surrounded by a fence; the other, known as the Norwell, with a stone well-house of post-Medieval date. These wells, however, are of earlier origin because the Orchard can be identified with the Well House Close mentioned in fifteenth century records of the nearby Augustinian priory (1a, 1b).

The Orchard is fairly flat, although the ground slopes gently away towards the southern part of the field. Its eastern boundary has been altered, possibly several times. A parallel bank and ditch, A, the bank no more than 0.3m high, follow the line of a boundary shown on OS maps of 1884 and 1900, although A extends further to the north (1c, 1d). The northern side of this earlier enclosure may be represented by B, a scarp up to 0.7m high, which heads eastward from the northern end of A to the present fence. The hollow immediately to the north of B could be a ditch associated with this boundary. A broad scarp C, no more than 0.4m high, in the far south west corner of the Orchard, may be the western end of a small dam associated with the pond, K, immediately to its east, or perhaps indicate where livestock were brought to drink at the stream; it appears to be earlier than boundary ditch A. Boundary A continues south into the churchyard, the ditch switching to the eastern side of the bank.

The Orchard's western boundary seems to have been more stable, and it is possible that the location of the gate in the south west corner of the field may be original. A shallow scarp D, up to 0.4m high, leads from the northern side of the gate towards the Norwell, probably indicating the edge of a track from the gate to the well. Near the centre of the field D meets two well-defined ditch-like features E and F, 4.4m and 5.9m wide respectively, and up to 0.5m deep. F continues the line of the track, D, towards the Norwell, but now ends abruptly some 35m short: the gap has probably been infilled but 8m south of the well-house a small depression, Q, up to 0.85m deep, may be a continuation.

Feature E diverges from track D north westwards to join G, a square sunken feature defined by steep sides, up to 0.5m deep, rising from a broad flat bottom. OS maps show a structure standing on this site: in 1883 (1c); 1899 (1d); and in 1978 when an electricity substation existed here (1e). Aerial photographs record that the building was still standing in 1977 and 1982, and illustrate its relationship to feature E. It had been demolished by January 1984 (1i). Features E and G are almost certainly contemporary, E representing a branch of the track D to the front of the former building at G. No other source indicates an alternative route.

A small drainage ditch runs into the western side of E, and a more substantial ditch joins F from the east.

Leading west from the Norwell is a steep-sided trench H, up to 5.5m wide and 1.0m deep at its eastern end. It becomes less well defined towards the west and fades before reaching the fence. Dryden's plans of 1864 show a water pipe running westwards from the Norwell to Canons Ashby House; H appears to be the trench for this pipe (1f). The building platform G distorts the line of H, suggesting that G is more recent. However, as H can only be loosely dated to a period following the Dryden family's acquisition of Canons Ashby House in the mid-sixteenth century (1b), this relationship is not useful for closely dating G.

The low-lying area, I, to the east of the Norwell, defined by gentle scarps up to 0.6m high, is probably subsidence associated with the underground reservoirs which extend east of the well-house (1f).

The present drainage system takes water from the Norwell east to the stream through a short culvert J which is less than 0.2m deep. The stream joins a field drain and flows south along the edge of the orchard into a pond K. The previous RCHME

plan (2) shows a pond considerably larger than it is today; unusually the pond does not appear on any edition of the OS maps (1c, 1d, 1e).

The north end of the orchard has two main elements. The first, L, a sharply-defined ditch-like feature up to 1.0m deep, has a rounded southern terminal but is truncated on the north by the fence. A low mound, some 0.6m high, spread along its eastern side may be material deposited following re-cutting. L may have been the continuation of a track between medieval crofts originating north of the Adstone road (see plan I), although it is considerably deeper. Its well-defined southern terminal suggests that it never continued beyond its present southern end point; there is no apparent relationship with the water pipe trench H. The second feature, M, is an almost flat enclosure 18.6m wide and 0.6m high, defined by ditches 0.3m deep on the south and east but truncated on the north by the construction of the Adstone Road. The southern ditch cuts through upcast material on the eastern side of L, implying that the enclosure is the later feature. A slight hollow lies near the southern edge of M. Both ditches run into the hollow surrounding the Norwell, perhaps suggesting that they acted as drains. Enclosure M is possibly a small field or close associated with part of the deserted medieval settlement north of the Adstone Road but any clear relationship cannot be demonstrated.

The remainder of the orchard is scattered with less well-defined features. N, a low bank up to 0.5m high, is apparently truncated by M but too little survives to determine its original form. O, a slight ditch no more than 0.2m deep, feeds into the present field drain and may have cut across N: it may simply be a drain but its alignment hints at a possible association with the DMV. Various ditches and scarps, P, up to 0.3m high, although broken and confused by trees, appear to form a line turning a right angle and meeting F at its southern end. They may represent a field boundary, possibly associated with short sections of ditch to the west and the eastern ditch of M to the north.

A slight rectilinear raised area, R, near the western edge of the orchard, measures 19m by 12m and up to 0.5m high. Although possibly a building platform, it is not particularly level or well-defined. Another platform, S, near the gate, is even more irregular: it is no more than 0.25m high.

The remaining hollows, some up to 10m in diameter, seem to be tree holes. At some time there appears to have been a line of trees near the eastern side of the field and there are some random lines of tree holes and stumps, but little now survives of a regularly laid out orchard plan (see plan III).

In January 1992 a cable trench 0.35m wide and 0.95m deep was excavated along the southern edge of the orchard but during RCHME fieldwork in December 1992 no evidence of this was visible. A watching brief on the trench by the Northants Archaeological Unit recorded the stratigraphy, which comprised two silty clay layers over a clay subsoil. The subsoil was cut by a feature adjacent to the end of Church Cottage; three unstratified medieval pot sherds were also recovered (1g).

Church Cottage, built in 1868 (3), has a garden containing numerous low earthworks, probably old flower beds relating to the period when the cottage belonged to the head gardener and was kept well stocked (1h). These minor features were not recorded by the RCHME, but a scarp 0.25m high, lying roughly parallel with the north fence of the

cottage, was surveyed. It lies at a slight angle to the present fence and probably represents the original garden boundary.

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- 47 1
- 51 Kenney J and Struth P 08-DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation
- 47 1
- 48 a
- 51 National Trust Archaeological Record Card No. 60611
- 47 1
- 48 b
- 51 Foard, GR 1982 Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire: an archaeological report.  
Northamptonshire Record Office 2B 294
- 47 1
- 48 c
- 51 OS County series first edition LV.2; 1884 (surveyed 1883)
- 47 1
- 48 d
- 51 OS County Series second edition LV.2; 1900 (revised 1899)
- 47 1
- 48 e
- 51 OS 1:2500 SP 5650-5750; 1979 (surveyed 1978)
- 47 1
- 48 f
- 51 Dryden Collection, Northamptonshire Record Office D(CA) 476: notes and plans  
of the Norwell 1864
- 47 1
- 48 g
- 51 SMR Archive Report Form, SMR no. 5750033
- 47 1
- 48 h
- 51 Mr C Smith, NT head gardener, pers. comm.
- 47 1
- 48 i
- 51 Aerial photographs NMR SP5750/2,3,5, 23-AUG-77; 6-9, 13-OCT-77; 12-17,19,20  
29-MAY-82; 22,23,25,06-JAN-84; 28, 04-JAN-84; 29-39,41,43,17-AUG-88; 44, 29-  
JUN-85; all held in the RCHME National Library of Aerial Photographs, Swindon).
- 47 2
- 49 34-7, fig 34
- 51 RCHME 1981 Northamptonshire Inventory, Vol III. London: HMSO.
- 47 3
- 49 5
- 51 Jackson-Stops H 1989 Canons Ashby. Cirencester: National Trust.
- 52 F1
- 53 Kenney J
- 54 12-JAN-93
- 55 3

- 01 SP 55 SE
- 02 26
- 04 SP 55 SE 1
- 05 II
- 07 162
- 08 The Norwell, spring with well-house
- 10 NORTHANTS
- 11 DAVENTRY
- 12 CANONS ASHBY
- 13 WELL-HOUSE
- 14 PM
- 17 ROOFED BUILDING
- 18 SP
- 19 5785
- 20 5070
- 21 FCE
- 23 575007
- 24 NORTHANTS
- 30 CA/NTL
- 32 SURVEY
- 33 1864
- 34 1864
- 35 DRYDEN H
- 32 SURVEY
- 33 1992
- 34 1992
- 35 RCHME
- 39 B
- 40 8-DEC-92
- 41 1000
- 42 Resurveyed
- 45 Well (NR)
- 43 Y
- 46 Grassland, heathland 2

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See SP 55 SE 25 plan II for location, associated features and positions of capital letters used in the following text.

The well-house over the spring known as the Norwell is located in the Orchard (SP 55 SE 25), roughly 250m north of St Mary's Church. It is a small square structure of coursed ironstone, with a steeply pitched roof, barrel vaulted internally. A plank-built door allows access through a small, chamfered doorway featuring a round arch head (1a, 2). The well-house is probably 16th-century, with alterations in the 18th-century, and repairs recorded in 1864 (1b) and since 1980 (1c). Below ground are two reservoirs with vaulted roofs, and a smaller square structure. These were entered by manholes made by Henry Dryden in 1864, the holes being covered over in 1921. In 1864 Dryden also made extensive repairs to the well, draining the reservoirs to do so. In the south wall of the reservoir under the well-house he discovered a lead pipe, which he was able to follow at various points as it ran southwards under the Orchard and the churchyard (1b).

Dryden assumed it had served the Augustinian priory (see SP 55 SE 13), but it may equally have supplied the house built on the site of the priory by John Cope in the 16th-century (2). A license to enclose the well was issued in 1253 (1b, 1c, 3), so Dryden could have been right.

Latterly the Norwell supplied Canons Ashby House through a hollow oak pipe leading to the water-house or pump-room in the east wing of the house (1a, 1b, 3). The prominent trench H heading south-west across the Orchard towards the house carried this water pipe from the Norwell (see SP 55 SE 25 plan II).

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- 47 1
- 51 Kenney J and Struth P 8-DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation
- 47 1
- 48 a
- 51 NMR National Buildings Record 19\40
- 47 1
- 48 b
- 51 Dryden Collection, Northamptonshire Record Office D(CA) 476, notes and plans of the Norwell 1864
- 47 1
- 48 c
- 51 National Trust Archaeological Record card No. 60611
- 47 2
- 49 133-136
- 51 Pevsner N 1973 (2nd edition) Northamptonshire. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books
- 47 3
- 49 6,8,41
- 51 Jackson-Stops H 1989 Canons Ashby. Cirencester, National Trust
- 52 F1
- 53 Kenney J
- 54 12-JAN-93
- 55 3

- 01 SP 55 SE
- 02 13
- 04 SP 55 SE 1
- 05 I
- 07 156
- 08 St. Mary's Churchyard and remains of Augustinian priory
- 10 NORTHANTS
- 11 DAVENTRY
- 12 CANONS ASHBY
- 13 PRIORY, CEMETERY, COUNTRY HOUSE AND GARDENS
- 14 M, PM
- 17 EARTHWORKS
- 18 SP
- 19 5784
- 20 5054
- 21 GCE
- 23 5750003/4/8/15
- 24 NORTHANTS
- 25 154
- 27 NORTHANTS
- 30 CA/NTL
- 31 17852/3/4/5
- 32 EXCAV, SURVEY, GEOPH SURVEY
- 33 1828, 19th century, 1970, 1981, 1982, 1992
- 34 1828, 19th century, 1970, 1981, 1983, 1992
- 35 BAKER G, DRYDEN Rev. H, TAYLOR SJ, RCHME, AUDOVY M, DIX B ,  
RCHME
- 38 0.7
- 39 C
- 40 14-DEC-92
- 41 1000
- 42 Surveyed
- 45 Remains of (NAT) Priory (NR) (Augustinian); Garden Earthworks (NR)
- 46 Grassland, heathland 2

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See SP 55 SE 1 plan I for site location and lower case letters and SP 55 SE 25 plan II for details of earthworks and capital letters used in the following text.

St. Mary's churchyard was surveyed by the RCHME in December 1992 as an extension to the survey of the Orchard which was undertaken following a request from the National Trust. Only major features have been included on SP 55 SE 25 plan II: details of graves, trees etc. can be found on the plan by the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit (9a).

The graveyard appears at some time to have been smaller than the present enclosed area. All surviving graves are located on a roughly rectangular platform which covers approximately three-quarters of the area of the modern graveyard and which is separated from the church by a gravel path and a dilapidated retaining wall. The platform, particularly well defined along parts of its eastern and southern sides, stands

up to 1.2m above the level of the footings of the church. The platform is almost level, except on the east where it slopes away, and is disturbed on the north-east by a large chestnut tree and surrounding hollow, T. The south-western corner of the platform, U, has been almost obliterated, possibly the result of soil being removed in constructing the Dryden family burial enclosure, V.

There are other irregular earthworks, W and W2, no more than 0.6m high, in the centre of the platform. During the mid-19th century Henry Dryden recorded remains underlying the graveyard which he attributed to the priory (9a, 5). The visible earthworks, W and W2, do not correlate well with his records, and may be associated with the earlier excavations of George Baker and Henry Dryden Snr (9a, 10). The regularity of the rectilinear hollow W2, measuring 10m by 7m and lying towards the southern edge of the platform, is particularly suggestive of an excavation. A resistivity survey carried out by the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit demonstrated the existence of rubble and suggested the presence of walls buried beneath the graveyard, but the survey was unable to reveal a clear ground plan (9a).

The original northern boundary of the graveyard may be represented by scarps, X1 and X2, lying roughly parallel to the modern fence on its southern side. Although these features are at present separate it seems probable that they did form part of a single boundary. X1 could not be traced for more than 12m due to dense undergrowth but the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit were able to record this scarp for approximately 30m (9a). X2 survives to a maximum height of 0.5m, and extends east of the graveyard platform towards the stream, curving slightly southwards near its end.

Immediately north of the fence in the Church Cottage paddock, a bank may be associated with feature X. It is most prominent at its eastern end, surviving up to 0.5m high, but fading away to the west after some 14m. If associated with X, this bank may indicate that a hollow-way ran along the northern boundary of the graveyard.

At the eastern end of the graveyard, Y, probably a small pond with straight sides and a rounded southern terminal, is 8.2m wide with sides between 0.35m high on the east and up to 1.0m on the west. At present it forms a soak-away for the stream which runs into its northern end but it may once have held standing water. The relationship between X1/X2 and Y has now been destroyed by field boundary A, which here appears as a slight bank between the two features. A further scarp, no more than 0.4m high, running along the western side of Y represents the continuation of boundary A.

A broad scarp, Z, up to 0.9m high, continues the line of the western side of Y on a north-south alignment. OS maps published in 1884 and 1900 (9b, 9c) record that boundary A did not cross this area, but turned east to allow access to the fields, which is confirmed by what appear to be vehicle ruts running across this area.

The area to the south of the church was briefly investigated; SP 55 SE 1 plan I depicts the surviving features. The southern and western sides of the trapezoidal enclosure referred to as the Canons' Walk in the RCHME Inventory (7) have been destroyed or reduced by ploughing. However, part of the western side was recorded as crop and soil marks, both from the ground and on aerial photographs. The crop marks suggest that the enclosure bank had ditches on both sides, contrary to the Inventory account which suggested that there was only an inner ditch. Where the bank survives,

at a height of 1.5m, a ditch 0.7m deep can be seen on both sides of the bank, though the outer ditches have been incorporated in the field boundaries.

The original shape of the small ponds in the southern part of the enclosure can still be seen on aerial photographs, despite now being heavily silted. A low sub-circular mound, 18.5m across and 0.5m to 0.8m high, to the north of these ponds may have been a prospect mound, an interpretation which would lend weight to the suggestion that the Canons' Walk and related features were incorporated into the mid-sixteenth century garden associated with Sir John Cope's house (9d). The RCHME Inventory (7) suggests that the Canons' Walk is sixteenth century on the strength of the fact that it overlies ridge-and-furrow, but as most of the land surrounding the village was enclosed before the Dissolution (9e), this stratigraphic relationship cannot exclude the enclosure from association with the priory. Cope may simply have adapted existing features for his garden.

The association of the L-shaped "moat", a, east of the Canons' Walk, with the priory complex may be more certain. At present the moat is largely infilled, surviving more as a terraced feature than a ditch. Its outer bank is still visible, notably along the south where it is up to 5m broad and 0.6m to 1.1m high, but the ditch is reduced by infilling to a normal field drain. Although it is likely Cope adapted the moat as a garden feature, the western bank of the Canons' Walk appears to have been built up against the moat, confirming the latter's association with an earlier phase.

Foard (9e, p4) has suggested that a group of earthworks forming a slightly distorted square around the church may indicate the boundary of the priory precincts. This perimeter is defined by the moat, features X, Y and Z on the margins of the churchyard, and the scarps in the paddock west of the church (9d). This hypothetical precinct corresponds closely to the location of the north gate of the priory, would enclose all of the known priory buildings, and is surrounded on three sides by ridge-and-furrow (9e), lending some weight to Foard's suggestion.

### *Summary of Archaeological history*

Excavations were carried out in the churchyard by Baker and the Rev Henry Dryden in the early nineteenth century, the results being summarised by Dryden's son, Henry, in 1909 (9a, 9d, 5, 10). In 1970 Taylor excavated to the south of the church finding floors and structures dating to the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, probably associated with the priory and John Cope's House respectively (5). The graveyard and Canons' Walk were surveyed by RCHME for the Northamptonshire Inventory (7). Small trenches were excavated intermittently throughout 1982 and 1983 along the line of pipe trenches to the south of the church, and cloister walls were identified (9d). In June 1992 the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit surveyed the churchyard, recorded the graves, and carried out a resistivity survey on the churchyard (9a). A 1:1000 survey was carried out by the RCHME on 14th December 1992.

St. Mary's Church has recently been renovated by the National Trust following acquisition of the Canons Ashby estate in 1981 (10).

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47 5  
 49 57-67  
 51 Taylor SJ 1974 Northamptonshire Archaeology 9  
 47 7  
 49 34-37 fig 34  
 51 RCHME 1981 Northamptonshire Inventory, Vol III. London: HMSO  
 47 9  
 51 Kenney J and Struth P 14-DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation  
 47 9  
 48 a  
 51 Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit 1992 Archaeological investigations at S t  
 Mary's Priory Church, Canons Ashby Northamptonshire.  
 47 9  
 48 b  
 51 OS 1:2500 1st edition LV.2; 1884 (surveyed 1883)  
 47 9  
 48 c  
 51 OS 1:2500 2nd edition LV.2; 1900 (revised 1899)  
 47 9  
 48 d  
 51 National Trust Archaeological Record Card No. 60601  
 47 9  
 48 e  
 51 Foard GR 1982 Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire: an archaeological report.  
 Northamptonshire Record Office 2B 294  
 47 9  
 48 f  
 51 Aerial photographs of:- the Churchyard SP5750/ 5 23-AUG-77; 7-9 13-OCT-77; 12-  
 16,19 29-MAY-82; 28 04-JAN-84; 29,31-34,39 17-AUG-88; the Canons' Walk  
 SP5750/6-9 13-OCT-77; 12-16 29-MAY-82; 23 06-JAN-84; 28 04-JAN-84; 36-41 17-  
 AUG-88;44 29-JUN-85; all held in the RCHME National Library of Aerial  
 Photographs, Swindon).  
 47 10  
 49 48,54  
 51 Jackson-Stops H 1989 Canons Ashby. Cirencester: National Trust  
 52 F1  
 53 Kenney J  
 54 12-JAN-93  
 55 10

- 01 SP 55 SE
- 02 1
- 08 Canons Ashby, deserted Medieval village remains
- 10 NORTHANTS
- 11 DAVENTRY
- 12 CANONS ASHBY
- 13 DESERTED VILLAGE
- 14 M
- 17 EARTHWORKS
- 18 SP
- 19 577
- 20 507
- 21 GCE
- 30 CA/NTL
- 32 SURVEY
- 33 1981
- 34 1981
- 35 RCHME
- 32 SURVEY
- 33 1992
- 34 1992
- 35 RCHME
- 39 C
- 40 DEC-92
- 41 2500
- 42 4
- 45 Deserted Medieval village of Canons Ashby (NR)(site of)(NAT)
- 46 Grassland, heathland 2

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See plan I.

The deserted village remains at Canons Ashby are situated to the north of Canons Ashby House on Northampton Sand at 157m OD (12). The surviving earthworks comprise a linear settlement of numerous domestic enclosures (crofts), some with associated house platforms (tofts), all ranged along a system of medieval hollow-ways. The village is surrounded by ridge-and-furrow cultivation. The site was originally surveyed by the RCHME in 1981 for the Northamptonshire Inventory (12), the present account is derived from a brief re-examination by RCHME in December 1992 for management purposes.

The plan of the medieval village, which was largely deserted following enclosure for sheep in the sixteenth century (11a), can still be reconstructed from the earthwork remains. The village was arranged around a cross-roads with most surviving remains laid out along the north sides of the north-western and north-eastern arms of the cross, the Preston Capes and Adstone roads respectively. The southern arm leads to the Church and priory while the south-western arm followed a route now partially under Canon's Ashby House but visible as a hollow-way, c, west of the formal gardens.

The north-western thoroughfare of the village lay along the line of the Preston Capes road and is visible as a hollow-way, 6m wide and up to 0.8m deep, on the wide verge along the eastern side of the present road. The majority of surviving crofts are laid out along its eastern side up to a second, parallel hollow-way, b, surviving up to 7.0m wide and 0.5m deep, and identifiable as a back lane.

A second row of crofts survive along the northern side of the Adstone Road, ending similarly against a second, parallel hollow-way, d, 5.5m wide and almost 1.0m deep.

At some point, the village may have expanded over former open fields at the northern end of the site. This is suggested by the existence of crofts, g, which apparently overlie very degraded ridge-and-furrow, no more than 0.2m high (12). This expansion is enclosed by a bank and ditch, best preserved on the north where it is 8.0m wide and up to 1.2m high. The size and shape of this enclosure bears a strong similarity, perhaps fortuitously, to the Canons' Walk, a rectangular enclosure associated with the gardens of the post-Dissolution house (see SP 55 SE 13). This northern enclosure appears to disregard and overlie the broad ditches, elsewhere suggested to form part of the castle defences (see SP 55 SE 14). However, it is unclear whether the northern enclosure is contemporary with or later than the village remains in the area.

The crofts, or the individual properties of the medieval village, were rectangular in plan and aligned at right angles between the two principal hollow-ways. The divisions between the crofts were marked by low banks, spread between 2m and 5m in width and now less than 0.3m high, and/or ditches, up to 4.5m wide and up to 0.5m deep. The banks may have supported hedges or fences and in some cases the ditches are wide and deep enough to have formed minor trackways between properties; the southern end of h, for example, appears to splay allowing access in both directions along the Adstone road.

The crofts vary in size ranging from 35m by 25m up to 60m by 22m (0.08 ha to 0.13 ha), the largest properties fronting onto the Preston Capes road. Dwellings would have occupied a small area within the crofts, although the actual crofts are seldom evident. One of the few surviving examples, i, is a levelled area measuring some 20m by 12m, or approximately 25% of the area of its croft.

Taken together, and even including the later crofts in the northern enclosure, the surviving earthworks seem scarcely sufficient to account for the 41 houses listed in 1343 (12), and it is possible that some crofts have been destroyed or are no longer recognisable as earthworks. Documentary evidence suggests that Canons Ashby House may stand on the site of a medieval farm (11a), and there may have been further dwellings on the western side of the Preston Capes road. To the south of the Adstone Road the RCHME survey of the orchard identified an enclosure which may be associated with the settlement (see SP 55 SE 25 plan II, M). Beyond the village cluster in the area of the later parkland no medieval earthworks now survive except for ridge-and-furrow cultivation.

The village was completely surrounded by arable arranged into three large fields, the North, West and East Fields (11a). Ridge-and-furrow is still well-defined to the east of the former village and in the western part of the park where it extends down to the fishponds (SP 55 SE 15). Where best preserved the ridges are 7.0m wide and up to

0.6m high above the base of the furrows. Cultivation may have extended eastward to the Preston Capes road before landscaping for the park obliterated the ridges. Aerial photographs (11b; SP5750/25,26,28) show traces of ridge-and-furrow around Park Cottage (SP 5755 5075), e, which were too faint to be recorded on the ground.

Elsewhere the ridge-and-furrow has been levelled by ploughing. In the fields east of the Orchard and the Canons' Walk, f, there is now no trace of ridge-and-furrow visible on aerial photographs taken in 1946 and 1947, and recorded on the RCHME Inventory plan (12). Ridge-and-furrow recorded by the RCHME in 1981 in the paddock west of the church is now buried beneath the National Trust car park.

The furrows shown on plan I are conventionalised and have been sketch plotted.

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- 47 11
- 51 Struth P and Kenney J DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation
- 47 11
- 48 a
- 51 Foard GR 1982 Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire: an archaeological report.  
Northamptonshire Record Office 2B 294
- 47 11
- 48 b
- 51 Aerial photographs of:- the DMV (SP5750/ 2,3,523-AUG-77; 6,9,1013-OCT-77; 16-20 29-MAY-82; 21 08-OCT-70; 22,24-27 06-JAN-84; 28 04-JAN-84; 33,38 17-AUG-88); the western fields (SP5750/ 1,2,4 23-AUG-77; 6-8,10 13-OCT-77; 17,19 29-MAY-82; 21 08-OCT-70; 22-28 06-JAN-84; 40,42,43 17-AUG-88); the eastern fields (SP5750/3 23-AUG-77; 6,7,9,1013-OCT-77; 13,14,17-19 29-MAY-82; 22,25-28 06-JAN-84; 40,42,43 17-AUG-88); the northern enclosure (SP5750/ 6,10 13-OCT-77; 18 29-MAY-82; 22,24,27,28 06-JAN-84.  
General views: RAF 106G/UK/1698 449 frame 1251, 27-AUG-46; RAF CPE/UK/1994 596 frames 2091-2092, 4095-4096, 13-APR-47; RAF 106G/UK/1361 3356 frames 3091-3092; 3-APR-46; all held in the RCHME National Library of Aerial Photographs, Swindon).
- 47 12
- 49 34-37 fig 34
- 51 RCHME 1981 Northamptonshire Inventory Vol III. London: HMSO
- 52 F3
- 53 Kenney J
- 54 12-JAN-93
- 55 12

- 01 SP 55 SE
- 02 14
- 08 Mound, possible Motte and/or Garden feature
- 10 NORTHANTS
- 11 DAVENTRY
- 12 CANONS ASHBY
- 13 MOTTE
- 14 M
- 13 PROSPECT MOUND
- 14 PM
- 17 EARTHWORK
- 18 SP
- 19 5749
- 20 5091
- 21 FCE
- 40 DEC-92
- 41 2500
- 42 Resurveyed
- 45 Motte (NR)
- 46 Grassland, heathland 2

\*\*\*\*

See SP 55 SE 1 plan I.

A large, tree-covered mound approximately 50m in diameter and up to 3m high, stands within the parkland of Canons Ashby House, some 125m NW of Park Cottage. Although the summit is uneven, pitted with tree-holes, the general appearance is that of a flat-topped mound with steep sides. There is a prominent raised area on the north-eastern part of the summit. A shallow ditch, up to 0.5m in depth, encircles the base.

The size of the mound is equivalent to that of the motte of an earthwork castle, a view perhaps strengthened by an antiquarian observation that it was "anciently a fortification" which "still retains the name of Castle-hill" (2c). The outworks of a bailey survive in the form of broad hollows, some 20 metres wide and 1.7m deep, on the north, south and south-eastern sides of the site and a short length of bank immediately south-east of the mound. The south-eastern ditch has been converted partially into a pond, although it still preserves the angle of the putative defences. It is interesting to note that what would have been the area of the bailey was later colonized by the crofts and fields of the medieval village, and the defences subsequently slighted by a rectangular enclosure of probable later medieval date (see SP 55 SE 1).

The motte was probably adapted as a post-medieval garden feature (2), occupying a prominent position, but off-centre, at the end of a former tree-lined avenue leading from the north-western front of Canons Ashby House.

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- 47 2
- 49 34-37 fig 34
- 51 RCHME 1981 Northamptonshire Inventory Vol III. London: HMSO
- 47 2

48 c  
49 223  
51 Bridges, J 1791 History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire 1  
47 4  
51 Struth P and Kenney J DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation  
47 4  
48 a  
51 Aerial photographs SP5750/ 4 23-AUG-77; 6,7,10 13-OCT-77; 18,20 29-MAY-82;  
22,24-26 06-JAN-84; 28 04-JAN-84; all held in the RCHME National Library of  
Aerial Photographs, Swindon).  
52 F1  
53 Kenney J  
54 12-JAN-93  
55 4

01 SP 55 SE  
02 16  
04 SP 55 SE 1  
08 Canons Ashby, Garden Remains  
10 NORTHANTS  
11 DAVENTRY  
12 CANONS ASHBY  
13 GARDEN  
14 PM  
17 EARTHWORKS  
18 SP  
19 576  
20 507  
21 GCE  
30 CA/NTL  
32 SURVEY  
33 1992  
34 1992  
35 RCHME  
39 C  
40 DEC-92  
41 2500  
42 Surveyed  
45 Garden Earthworks (NR)  
46 Grassland, heathland 2

\*\*\*\*

For location and lower case letters used in the following text see SP 55 SE 1 plan I.

Garden remains in the area north-west of Canons Ashby House were recorded by RCHME in December 1992 (2), comprising a landscaped park between a prominent mound (SP 55 SE 14) and the formal gardens.

The view north-westwards from the house was formerly framed by a triple avenue of trees, the outer two splaying gently but symmetrically away from Canons Ashby House. The eastern avenue ran for some 80m alongside the Preston Capes road and is defined by a broad earthen bank, j, 0.6m high and up to 8m wide, which probably served to screen the house from the road: the central avenue, k, is not marked by an earthwork but young saplings have been re-planted on the earlier alignment which is still marked by tree mounds and decaying stumps. The third, westernmost avenue, n, leads north-westwards from the walled garden of the house and takes the form of a terrace 8m wide, formed between a low scarp, up to 0.3m high, on the north east, and the headland of the adjoining fields on the south-west. At the north-western end of this avenue, where the ground falls away towards a natural hollow, the terrace begins to take on the appearance of a hollow-way but shortly afterwards its line is lost. On the eastern side at this end, a small square platform, p, measuring roughly 8m square, is the site of a former building. It is shown to the south-west of Park House on OS maps of 1884 and 1900 (3, 2a, 2b).

The existence of this western avenue is supported by early OS map depictions (2a, 2b) and by Inigo Triggs' garden plan of 1901 (reproduced in 3) which describes the existence of an avenue of lime trees at this location.

At the house end of avenues j and k a sharply-defined transverse scarp, l, 0.3m high, falls towards the house, marking the edge of a level area in front of the formal gardens. As this area is entered by an imposing gateway from the Preston Capes road and seeing that it marks the south-eastern end of the avenues, it may be a lost element of the formal gardens.

A low earthen bank, m, 4.5m wide and 0.3m high, lies across the north-western end of avenues j and k, running SW-NE between Park Cottage (SP 5755 5075) and the Preston Capes Road. The function of this bank is unclear, although it could mark a boundary associated with the cottage.

Ridge-and-furrow cultivation extends westwards from the western avenue down to the ponds in the valley below (see SP 55 SE 15 and SP 55 SE 1).

A sharply defined rectangular platform, q, measuring 40m by 20m and oriented NW-SE, is located between avenues k and n. Two broken iron posts, 1.3m high, at the southern and eastern corners of the court, appear to be remains of supports for a fence which had originally enclosed the platform. This feature has been identified as a former tennis court (2c).

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- 47 2
- 51 Struth P and Kenney J DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation
- 47 2
- 48 a
- 51 OS 1:2500 1st edition LV.2; 1884 (surveyed 1883)
- 47 2
- 48 b
- 51 OS 1:2500 2nd edition LV.2; 1900 (revised 1899)
- 47 2
- 48 c
- 51 National Trust Archaeological Record Card 60613
- 47 2
- 48 d
- 51 Aerial photographs SP5750/ 2,3,5 23-AUG-77; 6-10 13-OCT-77; 16,19 29-MAY-82; 21 08-OCT-70; 22-23,25-2706-JAN-84; 28 04-JAN-84; 42,43 17-AUG-88; all held in the RCHME National Library of Aerial Photographs, Swindon).
- 47 3
- 49 48,54
- 51 Jackson-Stops H 1989 Canons Ashby. Cirencester: National Trust.
- 52 F1
- 53 Kenney J
- 54 12-JAN-93
- 55 3

- 01 SP 55 SE
- 02 15
- 07 150
- 08 Poss Md fishponds or post-Md ornamental lakes or mill ponds
- 10 NORTHANTS
- 11 DAVENTRY
- 12 CANONS ASHBY
- 13 POSS FISHPONDS
- 14 M/PM
- 17 EARTHWORKS
- 18 SP
- 19 569
- 20 507
- 21 GCE
- 30 CA/NTL
- 32 SURVEY
- 33 1981
- 34 1981
- 35 RCHME
- 33 1992
- 34 1992
- 35 RCHME
- 40 DEC-92
- 46 Fresh water 2; wetlands

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See SP 55 SE plan I.

Four ponds (only two of which are shown on plan I) lie in a shallow valley west of Canons Ashby House and are probably those documented in the mid-twelfth century foundation charter for the priory (4a). Each pond covers roughly 3 ha, and are formed by the construction of simple dams. The southernmost pond has a larger dam with a dressed stone revetment, which may be eighteenth or nineteenth century in date (2). The ponds form two pairs, separated by a 200m-long stretch of woodland. The lower pair still hold water, and were modified as landscape features by the Dryden family (2). A mill associated with the priory may have stood at the head of the lowest pond, on the Eydon road; a mill was recorded here in the nineteenth century (4b).

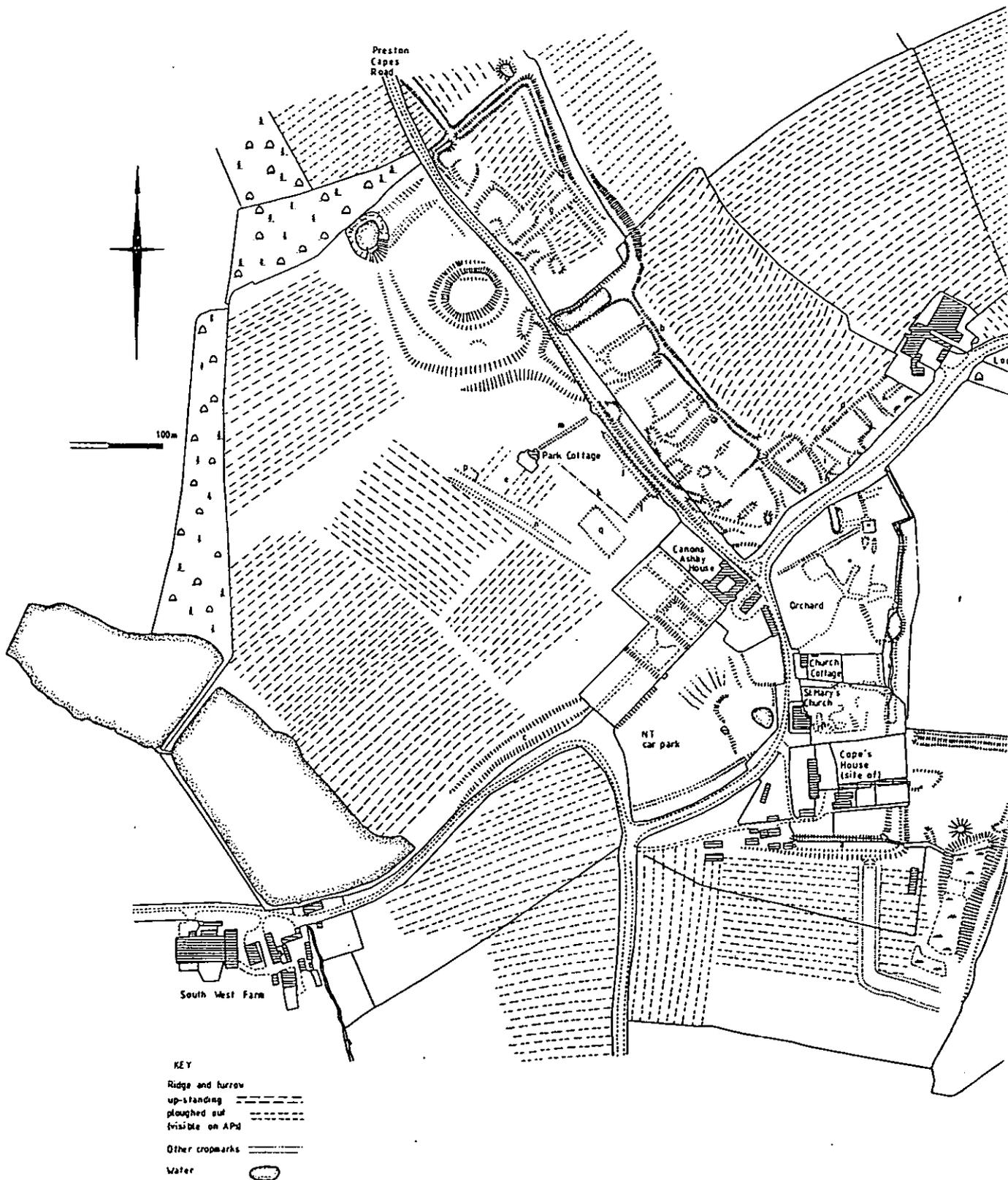
Although the RCHME Inventory (2) recorded that ridge-and-furrow respected the edge of the lower pond, recent aerial photographs and field inspection show that the edge of the pond actually truncates this cultivation, suggesting that the current edge of the pond is a later enlargement. The upper pair of ponds are now completely silted, surviving only as marshy areas with some tree cover. A farm track crosses the dam of the third pond and a stream still meanders through the upper ponds and into the lower pair.

\*\*\*\*

- 47 4
- 51 Kenney J and Struth P 8-DEC-92 RCHME Field Investigation
- 47 4

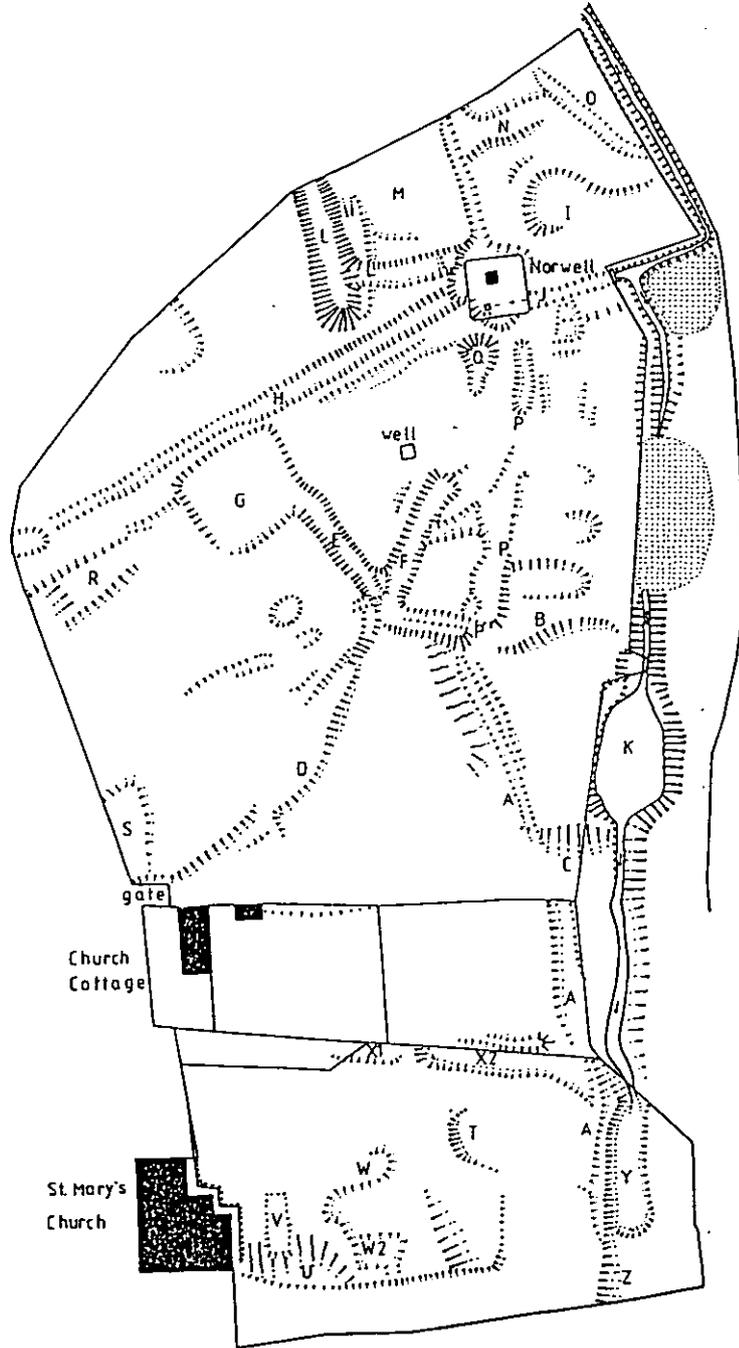
- 48 a  
51 Foard GR 1982 Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire: an archaeological report.  
Northamptonshire Record Office 2B 294  
47 4  
48 b  
51 National Trust Archaeological Record Card No. 60616  
47 4  
48 c  
51 Aerial photographs SP5750/ 1,4 23-AUG-77; 6,8 13-OCT-77; 21 08-OCT-70; 27 06-  
JAN-84; 38,39,42,43 17-AUG-88. RAF 106G/UK/1698 449 frame 1251, 27-AUG-  
46; CPE/UK/1994 596 frames 2092,4095-4096, 13-APR-47; 106G/UK/1361 3356  
frame 3091 3-APR-46; all held in the RCHME National Library of Aerial  
Photographs, Swindon).  
47 2  
49 34-37 fig 34  
51 RCHME 1981 Northamptonshire Inventory Vol III. London: HMSO  
52 F1  
53 Kenney J  
54 12-JAN-93  
55 4

LAMBRIIDGE	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	17/2500	VARIUS	SP 22 JL
PROJECT NAME CANONS ASHBY	LOCALITY DAVENTRY	DATE OF SURVEY DEC 1992	ASSOCIATED PLANS ORCHARD 1:1000	MAP NO. SP 55 SE 1
SITE NAME CANONS ASHBY	PARISH CANONS ASHBY	SURVEYORS JK, PS	(Sheets II and III)	SCALE NO.
DOCUMENT STATUS ARCHIVE	MAP SP 577 506	© Crown Copyright	SHEET 1	CATALOGUE NO.

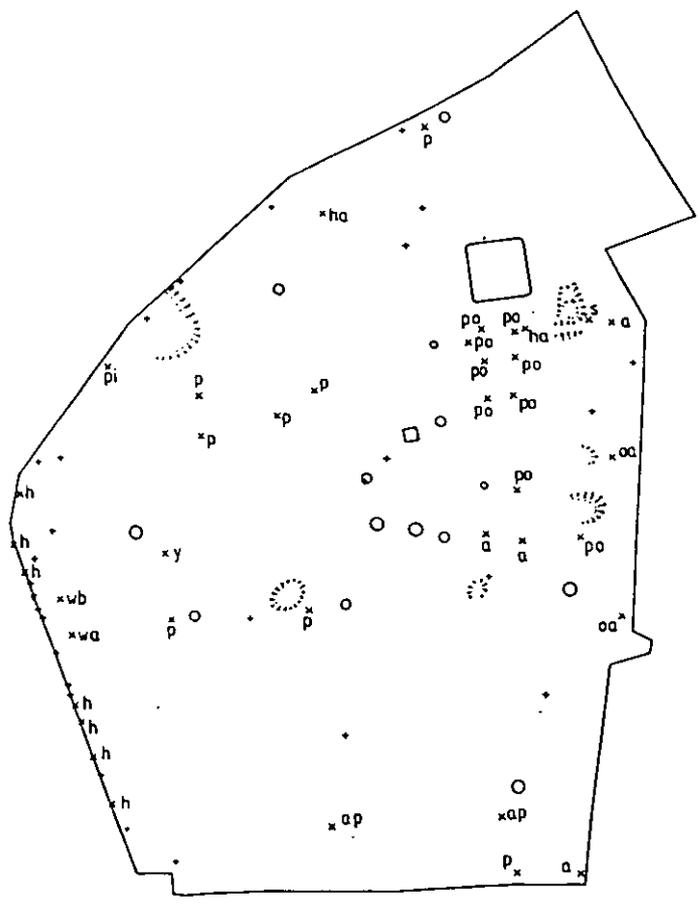


OFFICE OF ORIGIN CAMBRIDGE	COUNTY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	SCALE OF SURVEY 1:1000	METHOD GRAPHICS	OS MAP No SP 55 SE
PROJECT NAME CANONS ASHBY	DISTRICT DAVENTRY	DATE OF SURVEY DECEMBER 1992	ASSOCIATED PLANS sheets I and III	NAR No SP 55 SE 25
SITE NAME THE ORCHARD	PARISH CANONS ASHBY	SURVEYORS JK, PS		SAM No.
DOCUMENT STATUS ARCHIVE	NGR SP 578 506	© Crown Copyright	SHEET II	CATALOGUE No

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OFFICE OF ORIGIN CAMBRIDGE	COUNTY NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	SCALE OF SURVEY 1:1000	METHOD TC 1610	OS MAP No. SP 55 SE
PROJECT NAME CANONS ASHBY	DISTRICT DAVENTRY	DATE OF SURVEY DEC 1992	ASSOCIATED PLANS sheets I and II	NAR No.
SITE NAME ORCHARD	PARISH CANONS ASHBY	SURVEYOR(S) JK, PS		SAM No.
DOCUMENT STATUS ARCHIVE	NGR SP 578 506	© Crown Copyright	SHEET III	CATALOGUE No.



- + stump
- x tree
- tree hole
- ⊙ hollow possibly caused by a fallen tree

- Species
- a ash
  - ap apple
  - h holly
  - ha hawthorn
  - oa oak
  - p pear
  - pi pine
  - po poplar
  - s sycamore
  - va weeping ash
  - wb weeping beech