

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Earthworks and Remains at Olveston Court

by P. J. Ellis
1983, Vol. 101, 185-187

© The Society and the Author(s)

base has a double half-round moulding on the arris below a stopped-chamfer. Such mouldings are usually considered to be of the late 12th or early 13th century. The width of the narrower chancel is the same as the narrower nave. If they are contemporary, this may indicate a unitary plan, a scheme that appears to have been retained in the widened church.

Earlier observations, by Dr Warwick Rodwell, during trenching around the outside of the church showed that the north transept was straight-jointed onto the wall of the widened nave; the transept has a contemporary window with geometric tracery (mid 13th/early 14th century) in its north wall, thus dating the widening of the church to the mid 13th century or earlier, and, since the chancel quoin incorporates the 12th/13th-century architectural fragment, the most likely date is early in the 13th century. This means that the narrower church must belong to the 12th century or earlier.

Because of the wall scar, the west wall (F1) must be contemporary with the robbed north wall (F4) of the 12th-century church. The foundations for F1 cut a dark, sticky loam (8) and a layer of orange-brown sandy mortar (6). These layers therefore belong to an earlier building phase, of the early 12th century or before.

The south doorway of the nave, with its semi-circular head and heavy-roll moulding, seems to be of Norman date, adapted or rebuilt during the Georgian remodelling of the church. Observations inside the nave have shown that the threshold has been raised by approximately 0.35 m to the present floor level of the nave and south porch. Since the floor level of the porch is correct in relation to the bases of the porch arch, the lower threshold seems to be related to a lower, pre-porch ground surface.

The Council for Places of Worship has produced a full report on the standing structure of the church. A note in that report suggests that in the 18th century there would have been box-pews along both sides of the nave and the north transept. The discovery of pew cavities in the nave and against the transept's west wall confirms this.

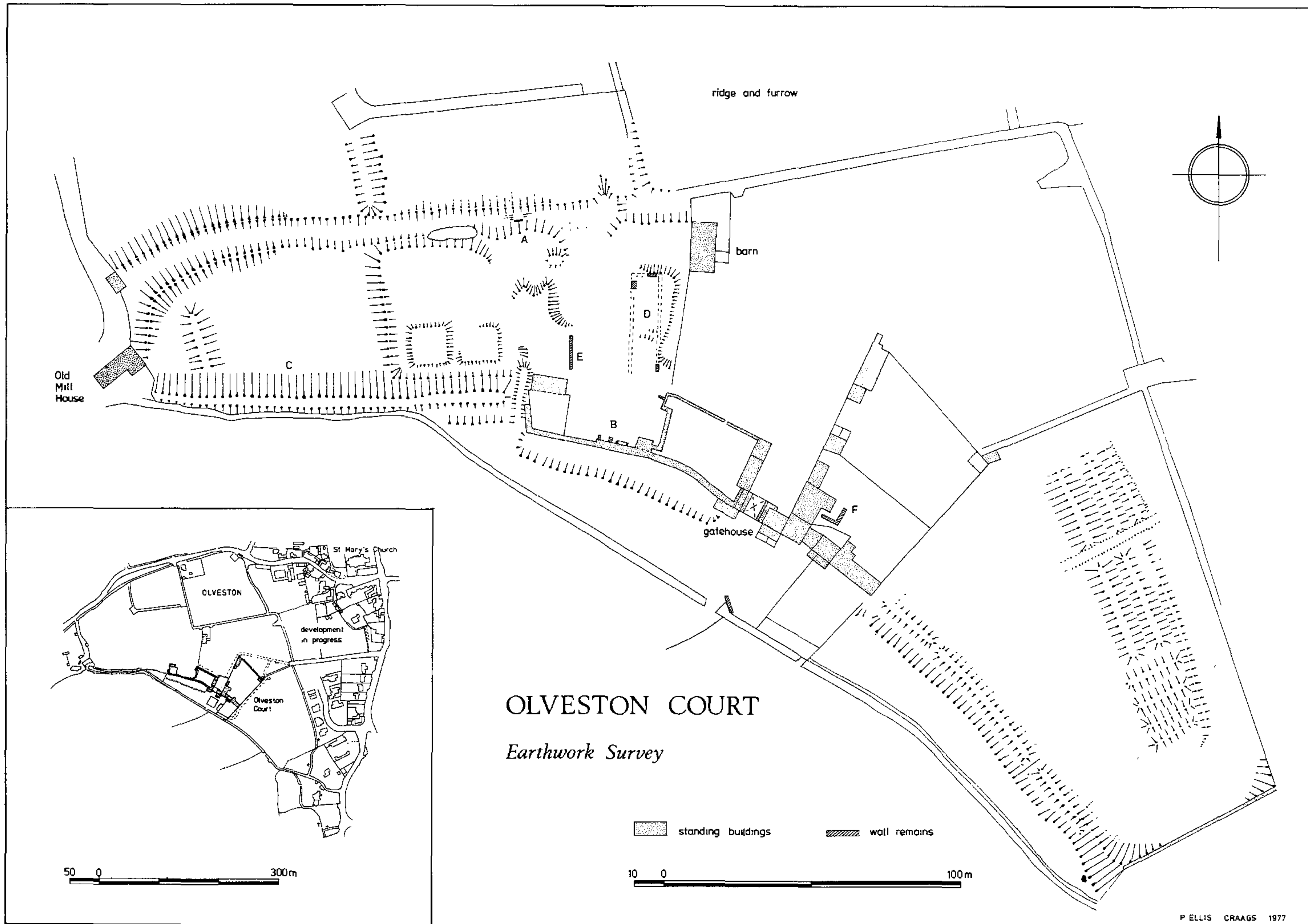
I am grateful to the architect and to the builders who cheerfully put up with a certain amount of disturbance; to Carolyn Heighway and Dr W. J. Rodwell for comments on this report; and to Michael Hare for providing reference material and historical information. The plans and drawing are by Cecily Haines. In 1981 the writer was on the staff of the Western Archaeological Trust (formerly C.R.A.A.G.S.).

RICHARD BRYANT

EARTHWORKS AND REMAINS AT OLVESTON COURT

In June 1977 a survey was made by the writer of the earthworks and building remains at Olveston Court (ST 598811), relating them to the standing buildings. Conversion of a 15th-century barn to domestic use, involving drainage and levelling works, the prospect of further similar works, and the development for housing of land to the north-east of Olveston Court provided the impetus for the survey. Between 1977 and 1979 watching briefs were undertaken on those works.

Olveston Court occupies the north-east slopes of a hill to the south-west of Olveston village, with marshy ground between the Court and village. The present standing buildings include a massive embattled curtain wall, a gatehouse at its eastern end, and a further stretch of wall east of



the gatehouse incorporated in later buildings. The curtain wall turns north for 10 m at the west end, and earthworks to the north indicate that it may have continued further. Sixty metres to the north, wall remains are visible in the side of a rhyne (at A on FIG.). The standing buildings to the north of the wall are two barns and an L-shaped range of buildings, including a hall, while at B building remains, fireplaces and wall foundations are visible on the interior of the curtain wall.

Earthwork remains at C indicate that a bank, 2 m high, served as the north side of a leat carrying water along the hillside to the medieval mill to the west. The curtain wall, gatehouse, and the south wall of the buildings appear to overlie a section of this leat, displacing part of it to the south in the form of a moat. A leat now carries water across the hillside to the mill further to the south. Two sections of wall foundation, cut across by drainage works, to the south-west of the northern barn at D, if associated with wall foundations visible on the ground to the south, indicate a range of buildings 9 m by 46 m. Further wall foundations visible on the ground are shown at E and F. Two earthwork platforms to the west, about 0.3 m high, are cut into the leat bank. To the north and east of the Court, ridge-and-furrow and deep rhyne show no indication of buildings, and a trench to the east of the northern barn showed a uniform featureless clay.

There is documentary evidence for a manor house at Olveston from the early 14th century.¹ In 1475 the manor passed to John Walshe, a prominent administrator of royal and baronial interests,² and it remained with the Walshe family until 1600,³ though the heirs of John Walshe preferred to live at Little Sodbury Manor.

No finds were made during the watching briefs but medieval tiles and a section of lead pipe have been unearthed in works around the manorial complex. No indications of occupation were noted during the watching brief on the housing development to the north-east of the Court.

The survey shows that the hall range of the present 15th-century buildings overlies earlier buildings; that a complex of buildings existed within the western part of the curtain wall; and that there may have been a wall on the west of the complex. The plan of the 15th-century buildings is now established, and the nature of the ground precludes any defensive works to the north. The defensive parts of the Court, therefore, would seem to have been for display only.

I am grateful to the owner of Olveston Court, Mr A. P. Carn, for giving me permission to survey the site; to Roger Leech for his advice; and to John Ainslie for historical research. The writer is on the staff of the Western Archaeological Trust.

PETER ELLIS

1. *Inquisitiones post mortem for Glos.* (Brit. Rec. Soc., Index Libr. xl), V, p. 201.
2. *Cal. of Patent Rolls, 1467-77*, pp. 320, 380, 575.
3. *Trans. B.G.A.S.* XVII (1892), 194.

THE CULT OF PRINCE EDWARD AT TEWKESBURY

The manifestations of devotion to King Henry VI have been well documented, most notably by Grosjean,¹ but no attention has been paid hitherto to the evidence, admittedly somewhat slight, of a cult of Henry's son Edward, Prince of Wales, killed at the battle of Tewkesbury on 4 May

1. P. Grosjean, *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma* (Brussels, 1935).