

SHORTER CONTRIBUTIONS

HAUGHLEY CASTLE

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The occasion of the excursion of the Suffolk Institute to Haughley in July 1976 caused me to look again at this familiar monument, the rampart of which is so obscured by the dense coverage of trees.

The best description of the existing earthworks is in the *Victoria County History*, vol. I, 598–600, which gives the following measurements: the motte is 210ft in diameter at the base, 80ft high and 80ft across the flat summit, which is not concentric to the base, giving a much steeper slope on the north side. The bailey, to the south of the motte, is 390ft wide by 300ft from north to south and is surrounded by a deep ditch and a massive bank rising to a maximum height of 16ft above the surface of the enclosure. The existing entrance to the bailey, on the west, appears to be an original feature. There is a further enclosure on the west side of the motte and the bailey, considered in *V.C.H.* to be a later moat. This incorporates the original stream which was led into the ditch of the motte by its northern arm. The parish church of St Mary, outside the south-east corner of the bailey, appears to preserve, in the north wall of the nave, part of the fabric of the Norman church, referred to in *Domesday Book*.

The earthworks must, however, be seen in relation to the topography and layout of the village itself and not in isolation (Fig. 15). It is then that one is struck by the shape of the area to the south of the east-west route past the church and the castle. The road approaching from the south divides to join the through way on the west and the wide, wedge-shaped green on the east to enclose a large semi-circular area adjoining the south side of the castle. An examination of the gardens on the west and south of this curving line shows a small scarp or rise of 2–3ft all the way round, set back from the road edge. The scarp is first noticeable in the garden of the aptly named Fosse House (Fig. 15, B) close to the west entrance, becoming more obvious along the southern stretch, but is lost to the east, where it has been obscured by the development of the market (1227/8) and the green with the accretion of houses and shops on the presumed line of the outwork. However, in the gardens immediately to the east of the churchyard (Fig. 15, C) there is a deep hollow which could well be the infilled ditch, although there is now no sign of this joining the existing moat. The church would thus lie within the outer ward or bailey as at Lidgate. The continuation of the western line to the north strongly suggests that the moated area to the west of the castle is in fact a surviving part of this outer work and therefore contemporary with the castle. The ditches to the north of the main site may also be connected, delineating the demesne of the castle, and including the land to the edge of the sunken way on the east, now the road to Bacton, making the castle area a more complex but unified whole.

The object of this short note is to suggest, therefore, that the whole of this area was originally encompassed within an outer bailey and that traces of the surrounding bank and ditch are still discernible.

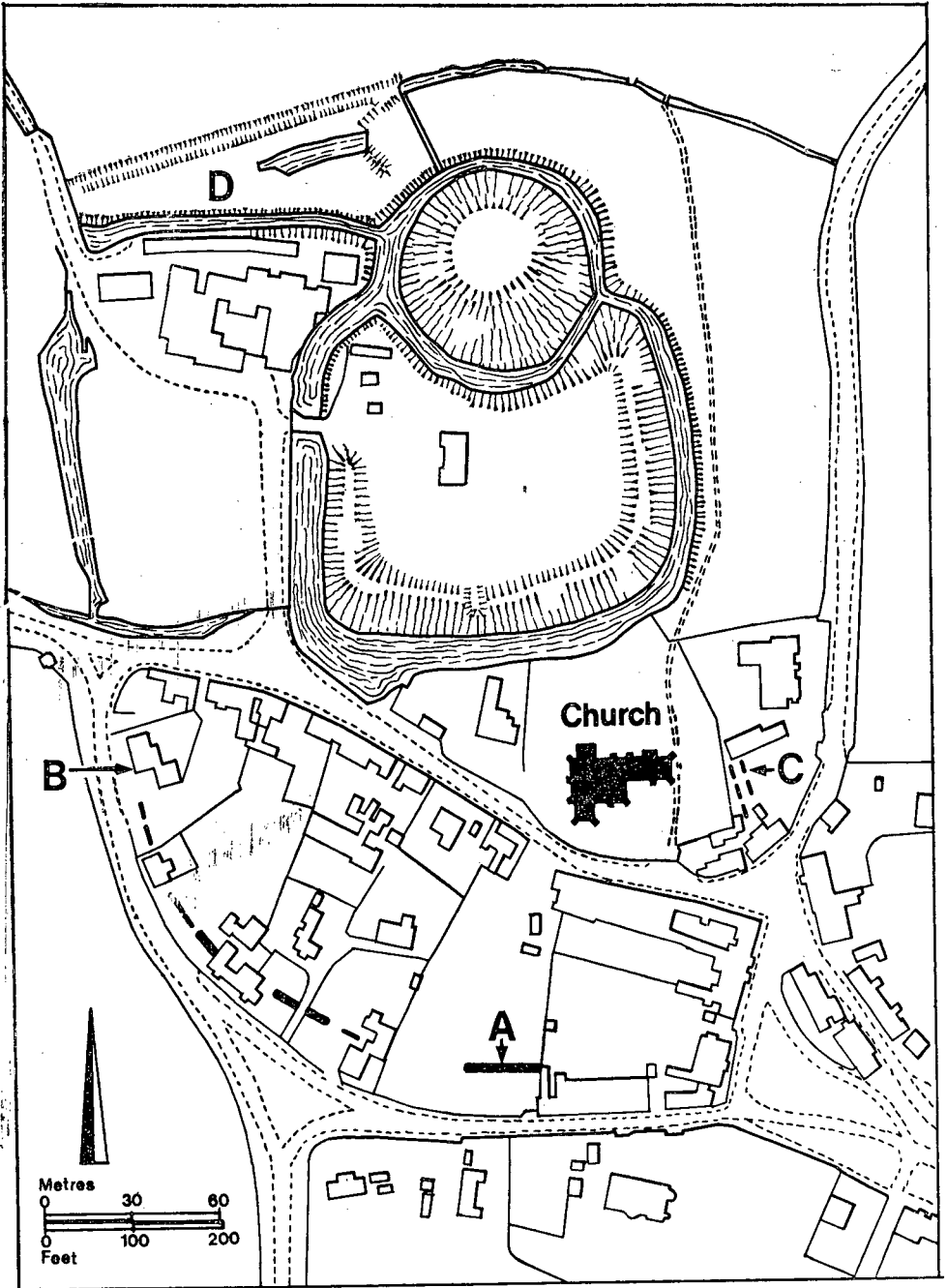


FIG. 15—Haughley Castle. A, dotted line indicates scarp of outer bailey; B, Fosse House; C, possible line of ditch; D, demesne enclosures.