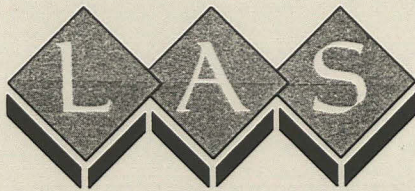


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G A I N S B O R O U G H O L D H A L L

Dais Window Excavations February 1990

March 1991

LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

Gainsborough Old Hall

Dais Window Excavations 1990

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GAINSBOROUGH OLD HALL
Dais Window Excavations February 1990

Introduction

Excavation took place in January and February 1990 in advance of repair work to the window and the insertion of a lightning conductor rod near its south-west corner. The aim of the small excavation was to elucidate the relationship between the foundations of the dais window and the Great Hall and to obtain dating evidence for the work. It was also hoped to find the remains of a chimney depicted by Terrot on a drawing of 1844.

The Excavation

All features encountered were recorded using a system of context numbering. A matrix for the site was prepared and is appended to this report. Pottery was identified by Bob Alvey, Dept of Archaeology, Nottingham University and the tabulated results are also appended. All finds and a copy of the archive will be deposited at Gainsborough Old Hall together with a copy of this report. Photographs accompanying this text (1-39) are referred to in the report with the prefix P.

An area c.3.40m x 2.50m was examined at the south-west junction of the dais window and the Great Hall. The ground was de-turfed and excavated by hand (P1). Excavation necessitated the removal of drain pipes which served the rainwater pipe. During back-filling they were replaced by a plastic pipe, connected to the same system (P38).

Later Features (Figs 1 and 3)

The latest feature on the site was the drainage duct which led from the rainwater pipe (2/3) in the south-west corner of the dais window (P2,6,7). The pipes had been repaired in at least two places and the area next to the Hall buttress (27) had been disturbed. Another context 17/18 was given because it was originally thought to be a separate feature (P10). The ducts were not functioning, due to a blocked and cracked down-pipe and an inadequate fall in the first three metres of duct. A row of bricks (7), which may have been an earlier drain (P4,5), was found heading north-west from a point close to the rainwater pipe and continuing through the northern limit of the excavation.

A north-south baulk was kept, dividing the excavation area into two parts. A general spread of clay with brick and limestone frags, (5) was the only layer, apart from the topsoil (1) which extended over the whole site. It contained 19-20th century pottery.

To the east of the central baulk were two post holes. 15/16 was rectangular in plan with a round post pipe on its west side. Its backfill contained 18th and 19th century pottery (P9). 13/14 lay beneath the brick drain 7, at the north side of the excavations and partly ran beneath the north baulk. It was backfilled with an ashy material and also contained 19th century pottery. These features were probably scaffold holes associated with repairs to the Hall and/or dais window.

A large pit (36) was dug into the side of the dais window foundations (4) (P25). The lowest fill (34) was a dark brown clayey soil containing building rubble, brick, mortar lumps and tile. Above it was a fill of brown clayey soil with coal fragments (20). P11 shows 36 partially excavated to a level which was erroneously considered to be the bottom of the pit ('21'). A small part of this pit was disturbed at a later date and the fill of this hole(11/12) mainly comprised dark brown topsoil (P 6,7,8).

It was in the area between the two window buttresses that it was hoped to find evidence for the remains of a chimney, shown on Terrot's drawing of 1844. The drawing shows an unusual arrangement at ground floor level where the chimney is supported on two piers with a central arched entrance. The chimney must, therefore have served a fireplace or, more probably, a stove above the door on an inserted first floor (Fig. 1a). Fig.1 is marked at two points (a) where, according to the Terrot drawing, the chimney base must have sat. Unfortunately, on the south side this area was disturbed by the later drain 2/3. On the north side there was nothing present above the window foundations, apart from the brick drain 7. Whether the pit 36, described above was associated in any way with the removal of the chimney is unclear. the only reason for making the association, being the presence of coal in its fill. A full description of the dais window fabric in this location and its disturbance by the chimney will be included

in the report on the photogrammetric survey.

A few layers survived on this side (10 (P7), 19 (P11), 29 (P20,21)) which comprised mixed clay with building rubble and 18th-19th century pottery. The post holes and pit described above were all dug through 10 and sealed by 5.

The west part of the excavations contained two Victorian pits which had obliterated almost all the evidence for any earlier activity. Close to the Hall wall and buttress foundations (40 and 27) was a pit 26, (P14) containing the remains of a metal cylindrical drum (Fig.1 'b') and backfilled with soil 25 and a layer of stone on top (24), (P13). This clipped the edge of a much larger pit to the north (22), which contained several layers, 30, 9 and 8 and extended both north and west beyond the edges of the excavation (Fig.3 and P13).

The lowest deposit was a solid mass of chalk/mortar (30) lying north of the buttress 27. Rather than lining the bottom of the pit it was heaped up, perhaps to support a strut to a raking shore, for the hall timber buttress (P12). The remainder of the pit was backfilled with mottled red/blue clay containing brick, tile and mortar, the uppermost layer containing more topsoil. The fill clearly comprised disturbed material through which the pit was dug and contained pottery ranging in date from the 13th-19th centuries.

These pits were sealed by layer 5 and had destroyed all the layers above the old ground surface (23) associated with the Hall

foundation wall, see below.

Dais Window Foundation

In the excavated area these foundations had been damaged by later activity (see above) but essentially comprised corbelled or oversailed courses of limestone bonded in red-brown mortar, beneath a mortared raft (4). The foundation beneath the north window buttress (43) was not corbelled and had near-vertical sides. The full depth of the foundation was not determined but was at least 0.60m and 1.14m beneath the buttress (P26,27 and Fig.4).

The south-west corner of the dais window overlay the foundations of a Great Hall buttress (33). These foundations were not quite wide enough for the window buttress and a scrappy course of limestone (28) was laid to the west of the Hall buttress to support the west edge of the window buttress (P28, 29, 30 and Fig.2).

A reconstruction of the Hall buttress and its foundations at this point is shown on Fig. 2 based on the dimensions of the next buttress to the west. It shows that some of its upper stonework must have been removed when the dais window was inserted. It is debatable whether there would have been sufficient space remaining to accommodate the dimensions of a standard timber buttress. The timber buttress which is now sandwiched between the Hall and the window is much smaller than a standard buttress. (The present timber looks modern). The infill between the Hall buttress and the window comprises a lead lining against the

timber with brick infill (P22,23). This is recent work (N.Taylor pers.comm; ?1972). It is not known what it replaced.

The Hall Foundations and Other Earlier Features

The timber framework of the Great Hall originally sat upon a limestone plinth wall and foundation. The later deterioration of the frame has led to the insertion of brickwork above the plinths on the north and south walls (P19).

On the external face of the north wall the limestone plinth wall comprises a chamfered plinth of dressed stones, c.0.25m high and of differing lengths, seated on cream-mortared, coursed stonework c.0.60m in height. The wall foundations comprise three courses, 0.32m high which are 0.25m wider than the wall, seated on two further course which step out by another 0.10m and are 0.20m high (P16-18, 31-35).

The foundation trench (42) was dug from the level of a mixed clay surface, 23, which is assumed to be an old ground surface. No finds were made in this layer to assist in its dating. The trench was 1.10m wide (measured from the plinth face) and c.1m deep with near vertical sides. The base was nearly flat, dipping slightly at the junction with the Hall foundations, 40 (P35). The trench was wide enough to accommodate the buttress foundations (27) which were integral with those of the Hall (P14,15). The foundation trench was disturbed in this area by the later pit 22/24/25 (see above) but a full profile was recorded to the east (P36,37). The photographs show the fill of the foundation trench

comprising a mottled red/grey clay which was virtually the same as the material through which it was dug and from which it was clearly derived (P31-34). A few sherds of 13th-14h century pottery were found in the backfill. This was the only feature on the site which was not contaminated with later finds.

The foundation trench cut through 23 and the layer beneath which was a clean, smooth, dark brown clay (38). This layer was 0.18m thick and overlay the natural red-brown clay (P16,17). The same sequence of deposits had been observed on the south side of the hall in 1984 (numbered 627 and 628 on Fig.6).

Dug into the top of the foundation trench fill was a single post-hole (35/37). It lay just east of the post-hole 15/16 but was stratigraphically much earlier (P24). It was c.0.36m deep and had contained a sharpened stake, triangular in cross-section. Like the later post-holes it may have held a scaffold post.

The internal face of the north wall foundations was observed in June 1984 when a small trial hole 1m² was dug in the bay east of the screens passage by the architect (N.Taylor) in advance of repairs to the wall. There were five courses of brickwork behind the chamfered limestone plinth all of which lay beneath the present tiled floor surface. Above these courses was the brick underpinning supporting the soleplate, which was removed in 1984. (It was too decayed to obtain a sample for tree-ring dating).

Beneath the brickwork was a coursed stone foundation off-set once

within the depth of the trial hole, which did not reach the bottom of the foundations. No floor surfaces were seen.

A conjectural reconstruction is shown on Fig. 6 based on levels O.D. However, the two sides of the wall were measured in different bays and the results should be treated with a little caution. (N.B. the Hall bays have not been numbered in this report because the frame numbers have not yet been found and the sequence of construction is not known.) The drawing also shows, for comparison, the profile of the Hall foundation on the south side of the Hall recorded in 1984. The bottom of the foundation trenches appear to be at about the same level as do the tops of the plinths. The profile on the south side is from the screens passage bay, showing the raised threshold as above the original plinth. On this side the chamfered plinth sits directly upon a stepped foundation whereas on the north side the plinth sits upon two deep courses of roughly faced stone above a stepped foundation. Perhaps these differences may be accounted for by the ground levels on either side of the building. Further levels need to be taken inside the Hall and related to the exterior.

Summary

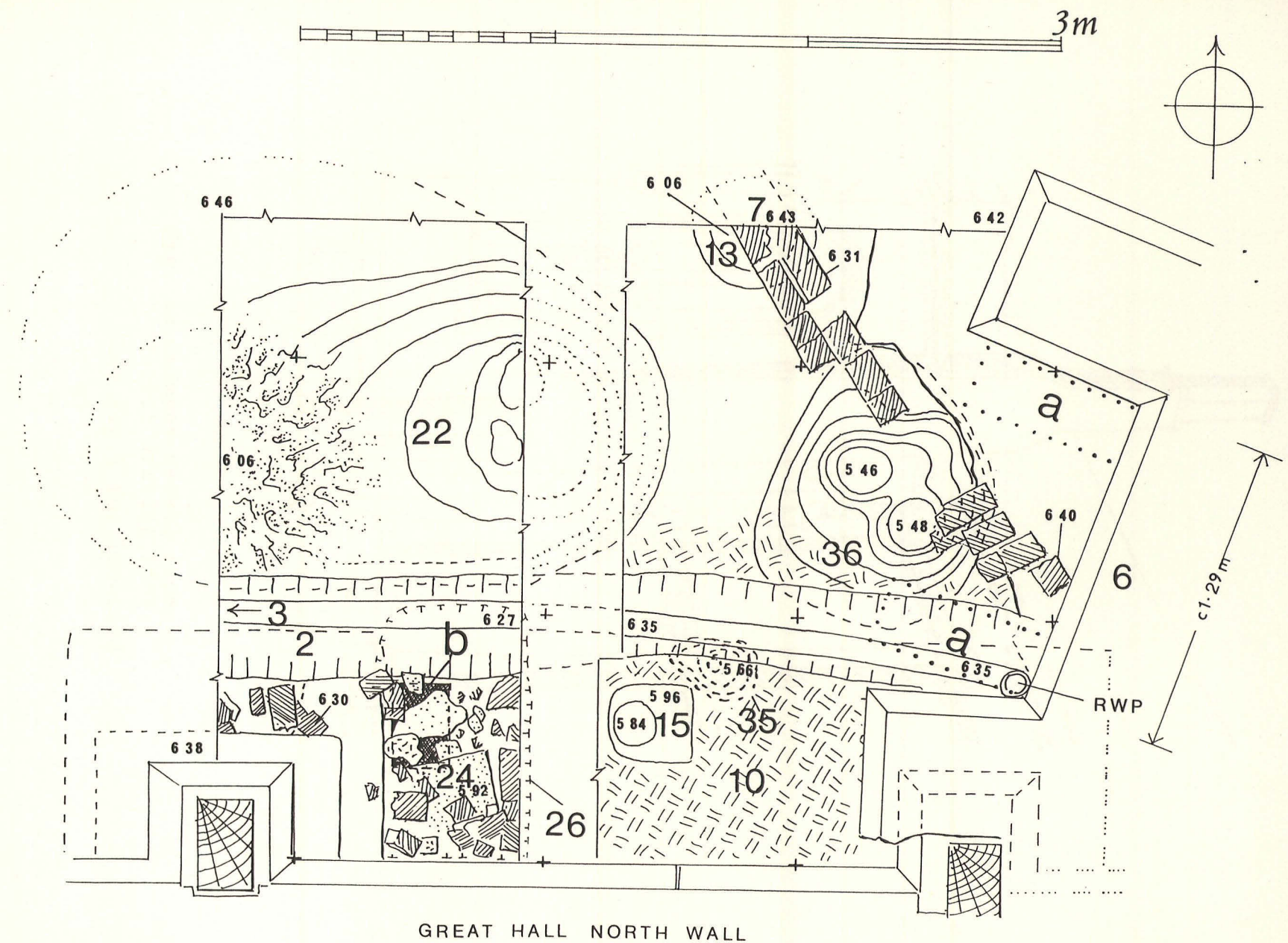
Although the excavated area was badly disturbed by 19th century features it nevertheless provided an opportunity to examine the foundations of the dais window and compare them with those beneath the Great Hall. The differences of construction and mortar type lend weight to the view that the window is not just stratigraphically later than the Hall foundations but was added

at a significantly later date.

The evidence obtained from these excavations has added to our knowledge of the Hall foundations and allowed comparison with the south side of the building.

The total lack of evidence for the chimney was a disappointment. It must have been a short-lived feature, perhaps associated with the use of the Hall as a theatre when the dais window was a green room. It does not appear on a photograph showing a building north of the Buttery wing which was removed in 1878. It was probably removed during the restoration programme undertaken by Ibbetson in 1849.

The presence of 13-14th century pottery indicates occupation of the site prior to the construction of the present Hall complex. Similar evidence was found in the courtyard in 1984 and inside the West Range in 1982.



GREAT HALL NORTH WALL

Fig 1
 Plan of excavation showing later
 features. a = conjectural
 position of chimney

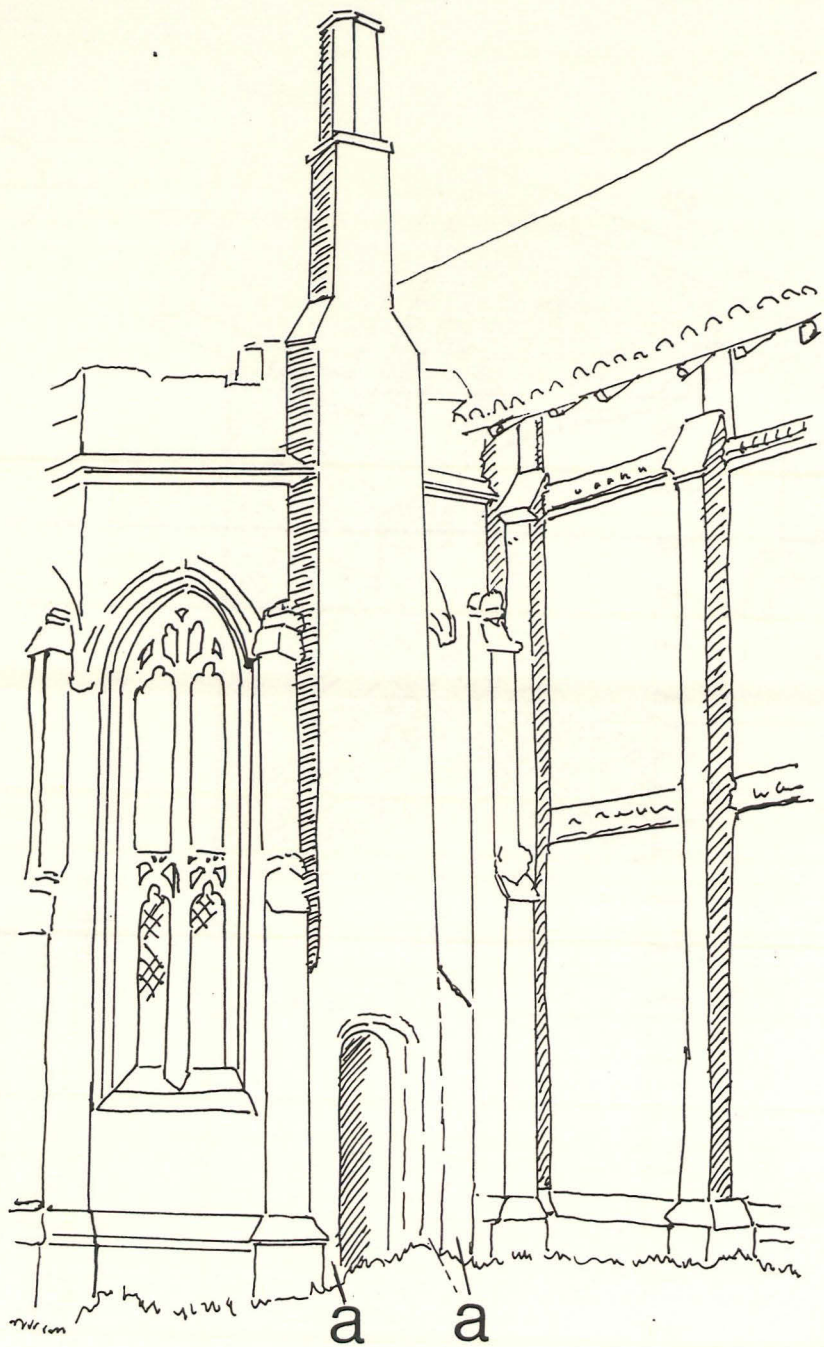


Fig. 1a Chimney detail from
Terrot drawing, 1844
See Fig. 1 for location
of a)

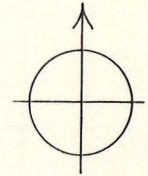
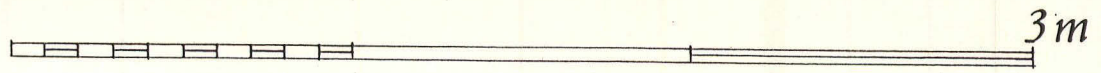
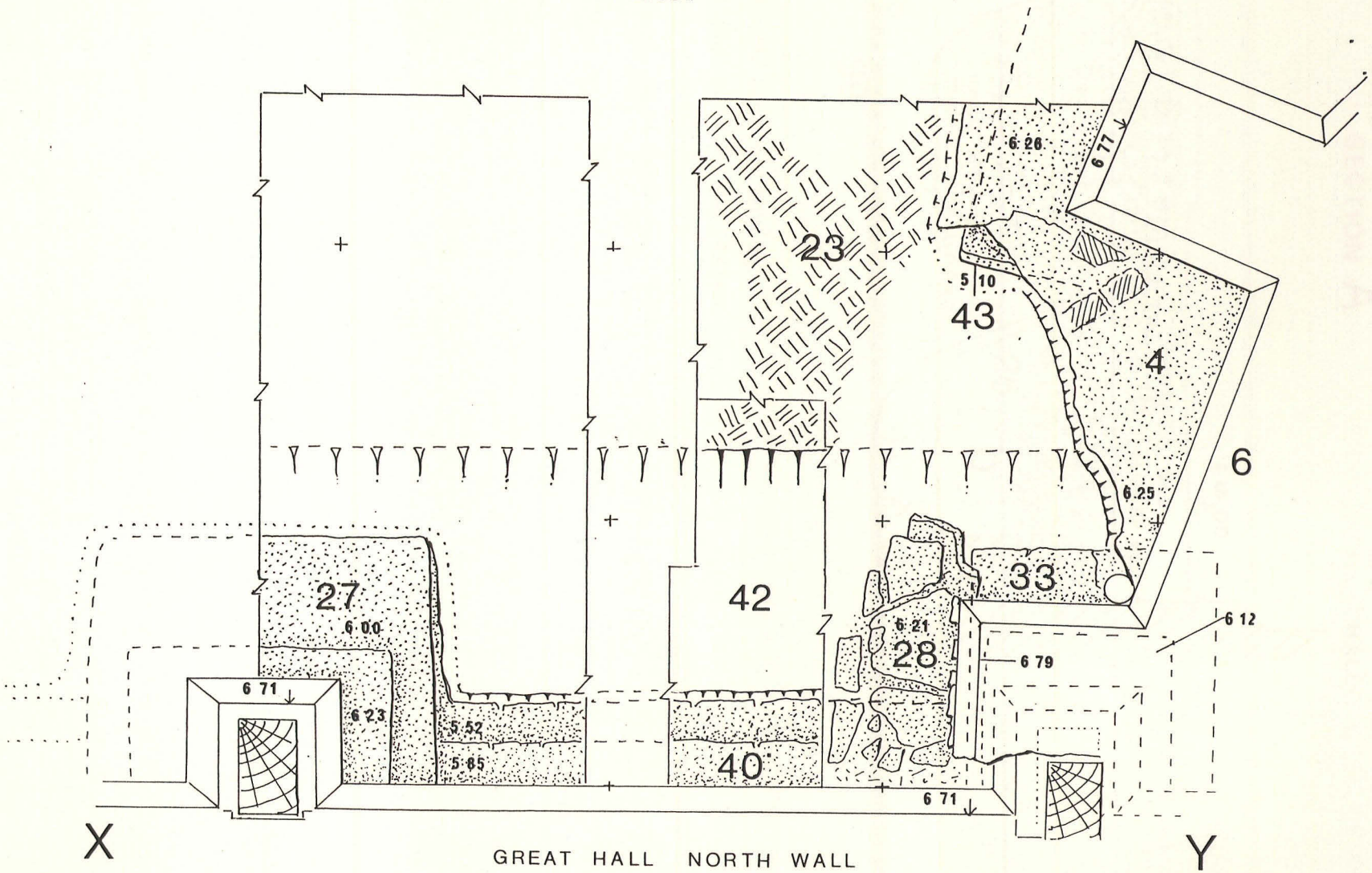


Fig 2
 Plan of excavations showing
 earlier ground surface and
 foundations of Hall and window



SECTION A

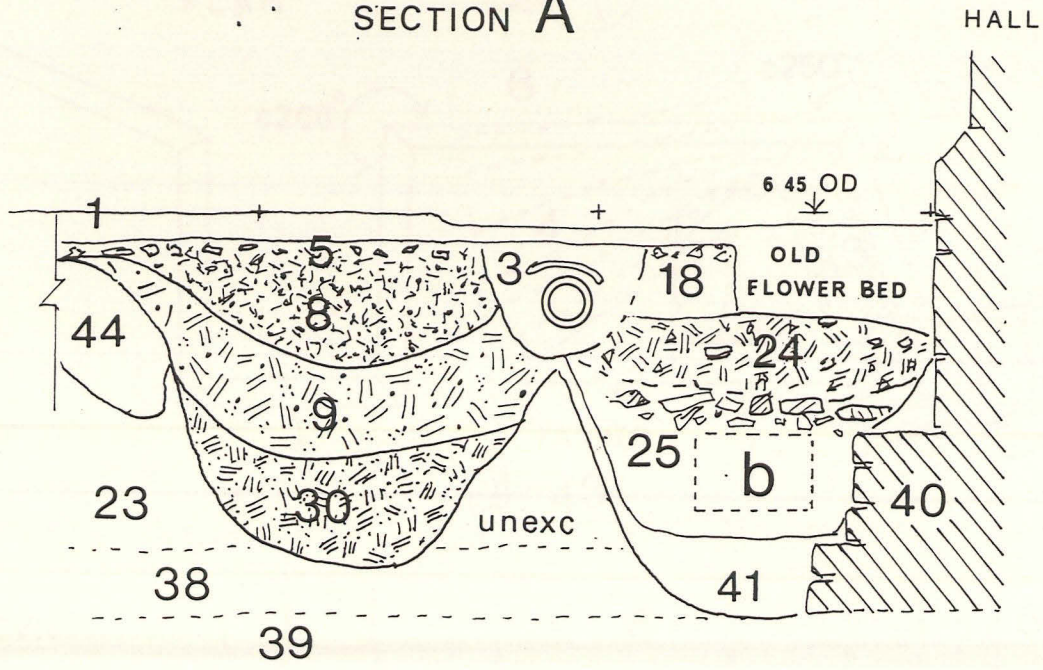


Fig 3
North-South section through
excavations showing Victorian
Pits

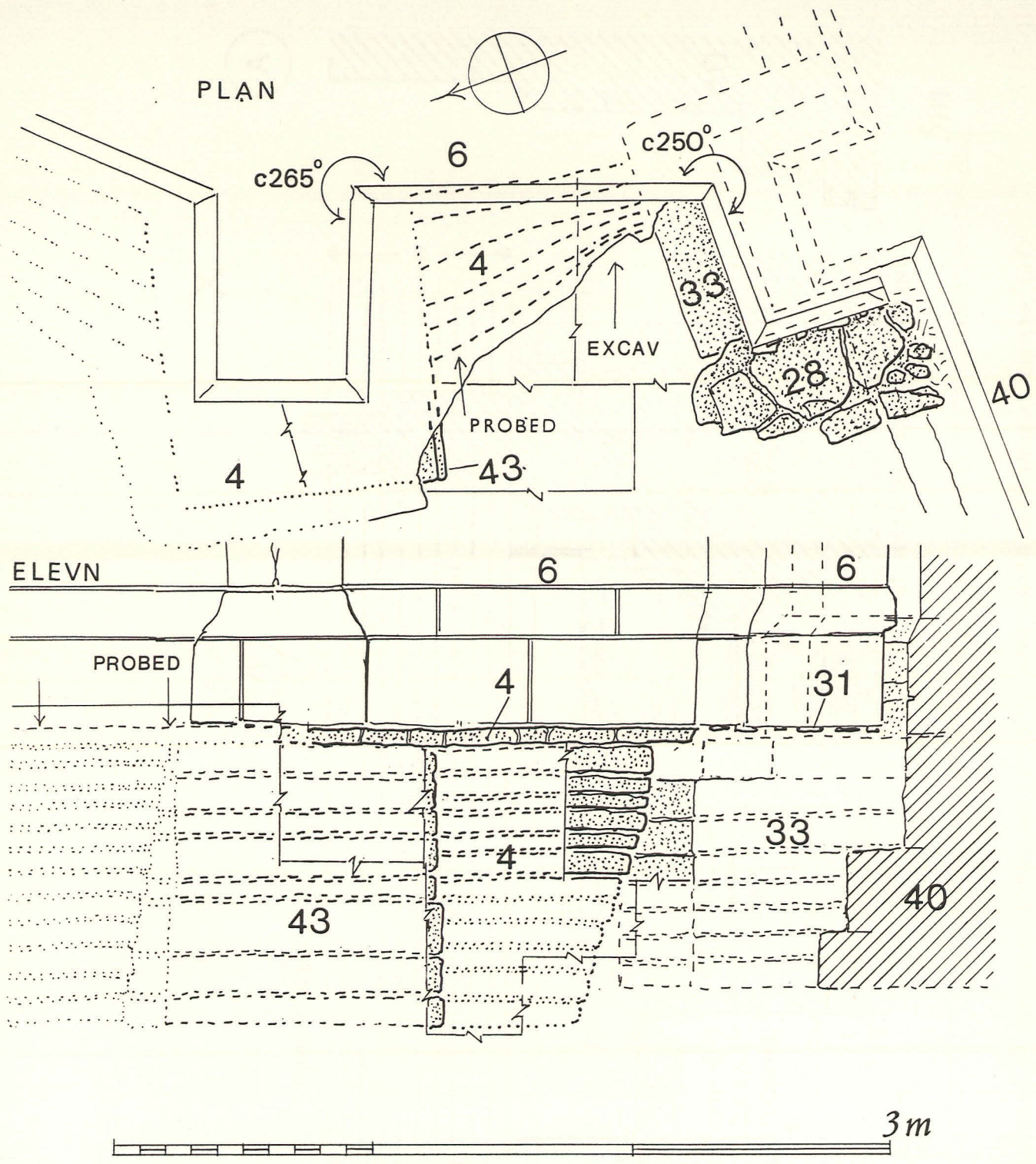


Fig 4
 Plan and elevation of dais window
 foundations (4 & 28) and
 relationship to Great Hall
 foundations 33, 40

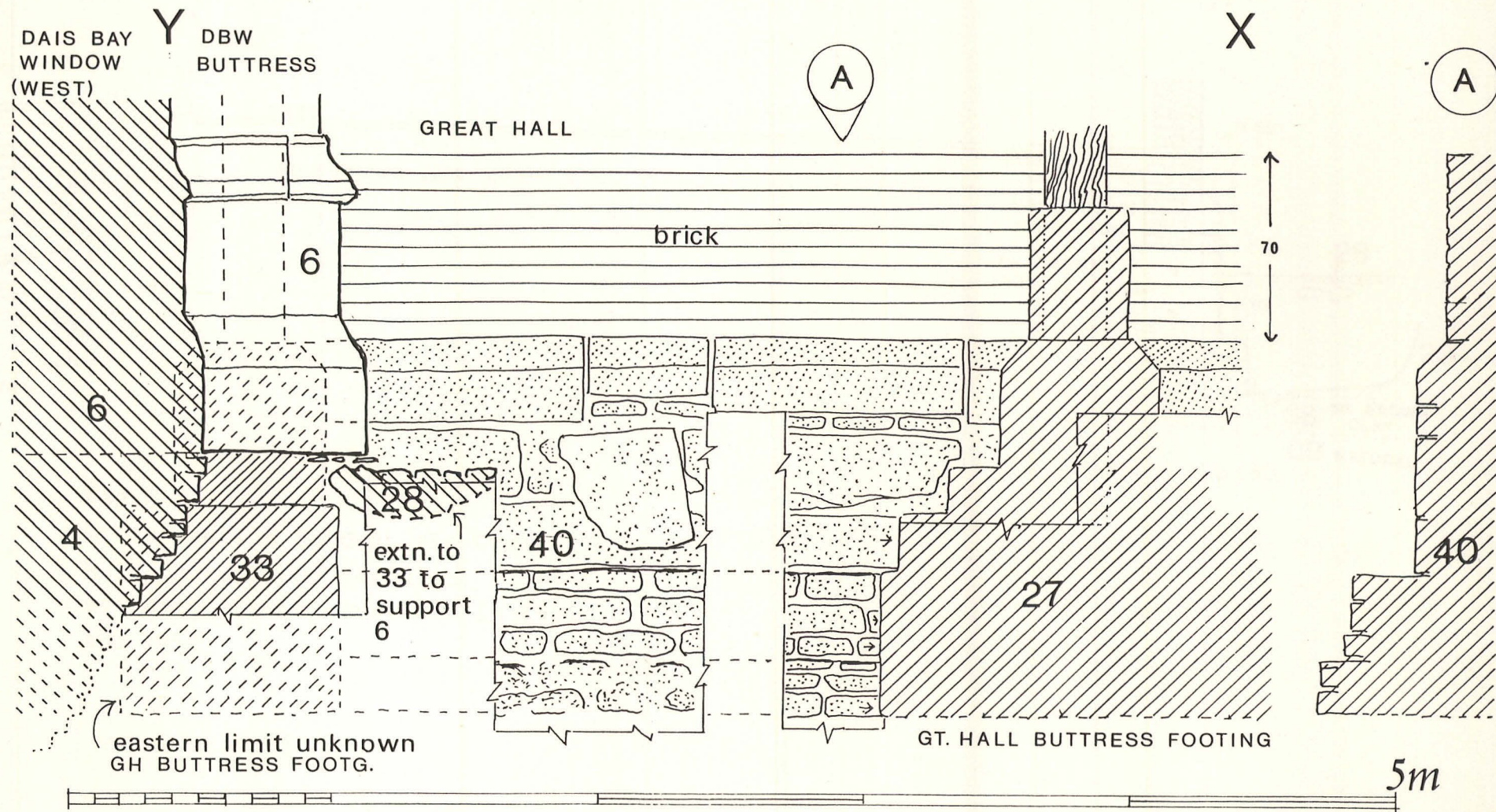
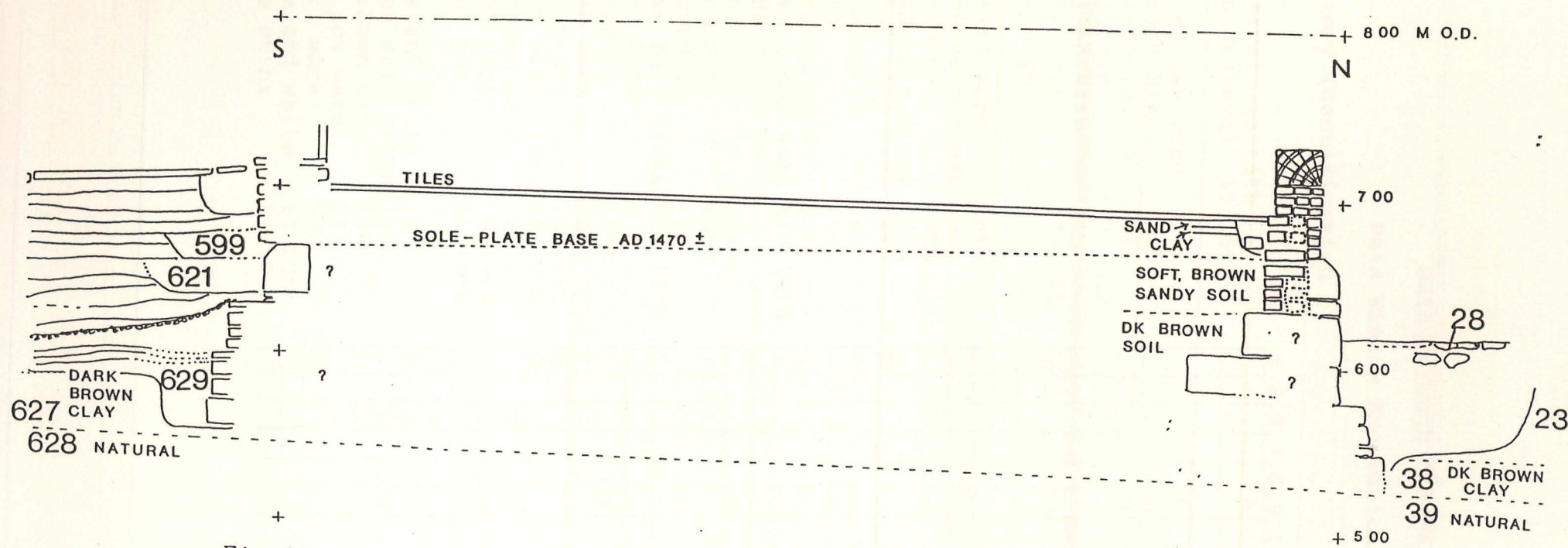


Fig 5

Elevation and section of Great Hall foundations (N. side) with dais window to the left



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 Fig 6
 Cross section through the Great
 Hall foundations based on
 evidence from excavations in 1984
 and 1990

Gainsborough Old Hall

Dais Window Excavations 1990

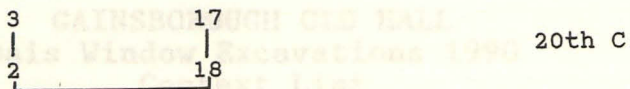
Pottery Identification

Contexts

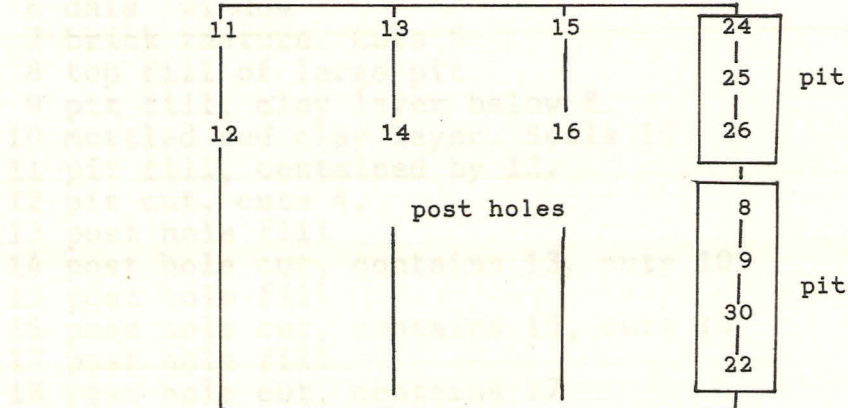
	x	3	5	7	8	9	11	13	15	17	20	26	30	34	41
Medieval 13-14th				4							28			14	38
Late Medieval 15-16th		19													
Cistercian Type 17th				5											
Midland Black 17th		36	254	158											
Midland Yellow 17th				4											
Bellarmino 17-18th		3													
Trailed Slip															
-Metro Type 17-18th	144		179	104						28	35				
Clay pipes 17-18th														10	
Mottled ware 18th															3
White salt glaze 18th															10
Blackware 18th								6							
Brown salt glaze 18th									5				10		
Combed Slip ware 18th	27										33		10		
Cream ware 18th	10				8			3							37
Delft 18th				4											1/2
Pantheon ware 18th										19					
Nottm Brown salt glaze Mid 18th		11													
Plant pot 18th				16											3
Porcelain 18th	4	2			1						1				1
Westerwalt 18th		3	1	5											
White salt glaze Mid 18th			76								68	20			
Yorks type															
Blackware 18th			16	15									52		
Cream ware Late 18th		42	428								7	7			
Butler pot ware 18-19th	174														
Brown salt glaze 18-19th	76		7	106	11			21				44		32	
Pantheon ware 18-19th		98	308	60							40	208		70	
Pearl ware 18-19th			18	14	9							8	3		
Plant pot 18-19th		43	130												
Blue and White 19th	3	4	2									5			
Brown salt glaze 19th		14		36		29					48				
Pantheon ware 19th						8	20							9	
Tea pot ware 19th		14										3			
Pearl ware 19th	60											1/2			
Blue and white 19-20th															
Bone china 19-20th											5				

grams weight

GAINSBOROUGH OLD HALL
 DAIS WINDOW EXCAVATIONS 1990 (GA90)
 Site Matrix



- 1 Turf and topsoil
- 2 cut for rainwater duct contains
- 3 rainwater duct
- 4 original window foundation, mortared steps
- 5 mixed clay layer with brick and mortar frags. Below 1
- 6 dais



- 7 brick
- 8 top fill of large pit
- 9 pit fill clay layer below
- 10 scattered clay layer
- 11 pit fill contained by 12
- 12 pit cut, cuts 4
- 13 post hole fill
- 14 post hole cut, contains 1 cut
- 15 post hole fill
- 16 post hole cut, contains 1 cut
- 17 post hole fill
- 18 post hole cut, contains 1 cut
- 19 red brown clay layer
- 20 pit fill
- 21 pit cut, contains 20, pits 19
- 22 pit cut, contains 19
- 23 clean red brick clay layer, below 22
- 24 brick end of wall above 23
- 25 pit fill containing 24
- 26 pit cut, contains 24, cuts 2
- 27 Hall buttress, part
- 28 original buttress base above 27
- 29 red brown clay layer in mortar blocks, walls 22
- 30 pit fill beneath 27
- 31 limestone layer beneath 27, levelling layer for foundation
- 32 red clay bed for 27
- 33 Hall buttress
- 34 pit fill
- 35 post hole fill
- 36 pit cut, contains 35
- 37 post hole cut, contains 35
- 38 clean dark brown clay below 37
- 39 red clay, natural
- 40 Hall north wall
- 41 foundation trench
- 42 foundation trench
- 43 dais window buttress
- 44 feature cut by pit

19th C

?16th C

timber frame 1470

natural

GAINSBOROUGH OLD HALL
Dais Window Excavations 1990
Context List

- 1 Turf and topsoil
- 2 cut for rainwater duct contains 3
- 3 rainwater duct
- 4 oriel window foundation, mortared stones
- 5 mixed clay layer with brick and mortar frags. Below 1
- 6 dais window
- 7 brick feature. Cuts 5
- 8 top fill of large pit
- 9 pit fill, clay layer below 8.
- 10 mottled red clay layer. Seals 19
- 11 pit fill, contained by 12.
- 12 pit cut, cuts 4.
- 13 post hole fill
- 14 post hole cut, contains 13, cuts 10.
- 15 post hole fill
- 16 post hole cut, contains 15, cuts 10
- 17 post hole fill
- 18 post hole cut, contains 17
- 19 red brown clay layer with limestone lumps. Below 10
- 20 pit fill
- 21 pit cut, contains 20, cuts 19.
- 22 pit cut, contains 8,9,30
- 23 clean red brown clay layer, below 29
- 24 brick and stone rubble spread, above 25
- 25 pit fill containing metal drum
- 26 pit cut, contains 24,25, cuts 9,
- 27 Hall buttress, part of 40
- 28 oriel buttress footings, above 29
- 29 red brown clay layer with mortar flecks, seals 23
- 30 pit fill beneath 9, mortar lump
- 31 limestone layer beneath 27, levelling layer for foundations
- 32 red clay bedding layer for 31
- 33 Hall buttress, part of 40
- 34 pit fill
- 35 post hole fill
- 36 pit cut, contains 34
- 37 post hole cut, contains 35
- 38 clean dark brown clay, below 23
- 39 red clay, natural below 38
- 40 Hall north wall
- 41 foundation trench fill
- 42 foundation trench cut, contains 40, 41, Cuts 23
- 43 dais window buttress foundation
- 44 feature cut by pit 22, seen only in section