

98/10

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND NORTH OF 14 BATH ROW,
STAMFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE**

P. I. S. A.

Archaeological Contractors & Consultancy Services

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND NORTH OF 14 BATH ROW,
STAMFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: BRS98

Lincoln City & County Museum Accession Number: 91.98

NGR: centring on TF 0276 0695

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June 1998

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COMMISSIONED BY

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Archaeology Section*

1 4. JUL 98

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Lincolnshire County Council
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1.0: SUMMARY

In April 1998, Professional Independent Services for Archaeology Limited (PISA) conducted a watching brief on land to the north of 14 Bath Row, Stamford, Lincolnshire.

Prior to the watching brief taking place, the site had already been excavated to a depth of some 2.50m in order to alleviate a problem with damp caused by soil abutting the north wall of the rear of the property. The site's location, adjacent to the southern side of the medieval Motte (i.e. mound) of the Norman castle at Stamford brought about the requirement for the watching brief. Archaeological remains were found to be present in the excavation and these were recorded. Subsequent to the watching brief, a retaining wall will be built parallel to the north wall of the property and the soil back-filled, thereby preserving the archaeological remains discovered.

The remains revealed by the excavation were of portions of a robbed ashlar-faced wall some 2.20m thick which had a rubble core. This was interpreted as being the original curtain wall of the Norman stone castle (which could also have served as part of Stamford's Town Wall system). It is apparent from documentary sources that the castle had fallen into disrepair by the end of the 13th/early 14th century AD and was progressively obliterated by later building works. In this respect, the present properties that comprise 13-14 Bath Row were converted from a Baptist Chapel. The Chapel itself was constructed at the beginning of the last century and this probably brought about the demolition of a substantial length of the wall revealed in the watching brief.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

On April 1st 1998, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land to the rear of 14 Bath Row, Stamford, South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire. An earlier visit to the site was made in order to assess any potential risks or hazards. The watching brief was completed in one working day.

The work was commissioned by Mr. Peter Messinger and carried out by PISA in accordance with the requirements specified in the project brief (Stevens 1997) set by

the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council (hereinafter SKDCCA).

3.0: PLANNING BACKGROUND

The proposed development of the site entails excavation works and the construction of a retaining wall as detailed in planning application No. SK97/1050/69/43 and in section 3 of the project brief (Stevens 1997).

Given the known archaeology in the vicinity of the site and hence the possibility of there being medieval remains present in the application area (Cf. Stevens 1997, sections 2.1 and 4.1), provision was made for a watching brief and archaeological recording of exposed features (*ibid.*, section 5.1).

4.0: SITE BACKGROUND

4.1: Site Location (Figs. 1 & 2)

The town of Stamford is situated in South Kesteven District, 63Km to the south of Lincoln and 17Km to the north-west of Peterborough, in the southwest corner of the County of Lincolnshire. The built-up area of the modern town covers land on both the north and south banks of the River Welland near to its confluence with the River Gwash in the east.

In relation to Stamford itself, Bath Row is situated in the south-western corner of the old medieval town (as defined by the circuit wall) and immediately to the north of the River Welland. The site, centred on NGR TF 0276 0695, is rectangular in shape and comprises an area some 7.0 x 4.5m. It is situated at the rear (i.e. to the north) of the adjoining properties that comprise 13-14 Bath Row and adjacent to the southern side of the medieval Motte and associated defensive structures that formed part of Stamford Castle.

The Motte, originally sited on a small hill overlooking the north bank of the River Welland, is presently occupied by the gardens and houses of Warrenne Keep. The construction of Nos. 13-14 Bath Row, originally a Baptist Chapel, dates from 1835. To the east of the building (and on the same alignment as the castle curtain-wall) is a doorway with two-centred head, single chamfered jambs and moulded hood

attributed to the 13th or early 14th century AD (RCHME 1977, 68 [109] and 113 fig. 138).

As with the former Baptist chapel, the construction of most of the present houses flanking the north side of Bath Row dates from the early 19th century onwards. The earliest structure is represented by the Bath House; a public bath complex which was first built in 1722 and later re-built in 1823.

4.2: Topography & Geology

Situated to the north of the River Welland, the proposed development site is at an elevation of 22.42m AOD. It is bounded on the south and west sides by the perimeter walls of the properties of 13-14 and 12 Bath Row respectively. To the east and north-east are the gardens associated with the Warrenne Keep housing estate.

Stamford is built on an outcrop of Jurassic Oolitic Limestone (Lower Lincolnshire Limestone) and alluvium of recent formation which fills the river valley bottom (Anderson 1982, 1). Local soils are represented by the Sutton 1 Association fine loamy argillic brown earths. These soils overlie calcareous river terrace gravels, flint, limestone and chalk (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 314).

4.3: Historical & Archaeological Background

The place-name Stamford, formerly 'Steanford' and 'Stanford', derives from the Old English *stan* and *ford*, meaning 'stony ford' (Ekwall 1974, 436-7).

Notwithstanding its location in an area where the prehistoric line of communication known as the Jurassic Way crosses the Welland Valley and where evidence for occupation has emerged nearby on the lower river gravels, to date, Stamford has not produced evidence for prehistoric activity. Likewise, little is known of settlement in the area in Roman times despite the location of modern Stamford just off the Roman Road known as Ermine Street. However, stray finds dating to the Roman period are known, such as cremation urns and a possible crematorium (located at TF030071 & TF027072 respectively) as well as a tessellated pavement (possibly located at TF 0310690); additionally, cropmarks visible from aerial photographs show a rectangular enclosure which could be associated with a Roman rural settlement (RCHME 1977, xxxv).

The history of Stamford, as described in documentary sources and from more substantiated archaeological remains, is essentially post-Roman in date when a

settlement nucleus developed on the northern bank of the River Welland to the east of the former Roman river crossing. Evidence suggests a substantial settlement, possibly as early as the late 9th century AD in date, at a time when Stamford represented one of the five *Burhs* of the Danelaw. However, it has been suggested that long before the Danish *burh* was founded in AD 877, that a Saxon settlement was already established (*ibid.*, xxxvii-xxxviii). The latter has been tentatively located to the west of the Danish *burh* and near to the George and Lammas Bridges, in an area which would have partially encompassed the site of the later Norman castle. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records King Edward's conquest of the Danish *burh* in AD 918 and the construction of a new Saxon *burh* to the south of the River Welland.

Between the end of the 10th and the 12th century AD, a mint of regional importance was established in the Saxon *burh* (*ibid.*, xix). In the same period, a major pottery industry developed in Stamford.

Following the Norman Conquest of England in AD 1066, a castle was built to the west of the Danish settlement in 1068 AD. It consisted of a ditched Motte (later enlarged to receive a keep) and a Bailey (i.e. enclosure) located to the south of the Motte. The Domesday book of AD 1086 records that five houses were demolished to make way for the castle. The castle was twice besieged and finally captured during the civil wars of the mid-12th century AD. In the following period of peace, the function of the castle became (and thereafter remained) primarily administrative. During the first half of the 13th century AD King John granted protection and land for the maintenance of the castle to one William de Warrenne. However, by the end of the same century, the centre of political autonomy began to move away from the castle towards the burgess although the Hall and the prison probably remained in use throughout the 13th century AD. A later survey of AD 1340 describes the castle as 'old and the walls decayed' (Cal. Inq. Misc. 2 no. 1703).

By AD 1600 the castle was completely derelict (Cf. Speed's map of Stamford) and by 1833 the whole site had been converted into gardens (Cf. Knipe's map). In 1936, part of the Motte was levelled to make provision for a bus station (RCHME 1977, 3) and development works during the 1970's culminated in the construction of the Warrenne Keep housing estate.

In the Domesday Book, Stamford is referred to as a Royal Borough comprising five wards with over four hundred messuages¹. A sixth ward was located to the south of

¹ A 'messuage' is a dwelling house with adjoining buildings and lands.

the River Welland in the former county of Northamptonshire (Stenton 1971, 329). Stamford remained in the Royal demesne (i.e. estate) until it was besieged in AD 1153. The town continued to expand during the 12th century AD reaching its peak in the 13th century as a centre specialising in the production and trade of pottery, wool, cloth, grain and livestock. The surviving churches are evidence of the prosperity of the town during the period.

The settlement of the time started to decline and contract at the beginning of the 15th century AD, although the sack of the town by the Lancastrian army in 1461 appears to have played only a minor role in this. During the course of the 17th century AD, improvements in communication systems and the revival of production and trade in wool, hemp, leather and the distribution of timber, coal and grain following the opening of a canal to the Deepings in AD 1600, brought a return to prosperity. The growth of Stamford continued during the 18th and into the 19th century AD with a progressive increase in her importance as a market town which was paralleled by an unprecedented building programme in the style which characterises and is still evident in modern Stamford (RCHME 1977, *passim*).

A major archaeological investigation took place on the site of the castle between 1971-1975 (Mahany 1978) and the area is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 128)². The archaeological remains encountered were essentially Saxon and Norman in date, the latter being associated with phases of construction of the Motte and Bailey complex and the Castle Hall (the east wall of which still survives). Service and domestic buildings as well as a corn-drying kiln were also uncovered, together with a pottery kiln (dating from as early as the late 9th-10th century AD) for firing coarse Stamford Ware pottery. Various features pre-dated the kiln; in particular, a late Saxon ditch of curvilinear shape with an internal and external concentric palisade which could have represented a ring work or defensive structure around a substantial residence. Further Saxon ditches to the west remain of uncertain function. Finally, evidence was discovered for the area of the Bailey having been repeatedly quarried from before the Norman Conquest to the middle of the 12th century AD.

² The excavation encompassed the area to the east of 13-14 Bath Row in the area surrounding the extant Bath House (which is now 10, Bath Row).

5.0: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Given both the known previous archaeological work and historical background of the area described above, the overall objective of the present watching brief was to determine the presence/absence and character of any archaeological remains within the proposed development site and to record any features exposed by the ground work.

Prior to the field work taking place, the soil had already been excavated from the back wall of the property (at 13 Bath Row) to a depth of 2.50m in order to alleviate a dampness problem and in advance of the construction of the retaining wall. In spite of the depth of the excavation, no shoring was required, however, for safety reasons, two members of staff undertook the watching brief. Care was taken not to disturb the exposed north section of the excavation in particular, in case of collapse.

The exposed features were cleaned and all relevant deposits were described using a single context recording system and each was assigned a unique context number. No further removal of soil was considered necessary. No artefacts (earlier than a post-medieval date) or ecofacts were discovered during the watching brief. Relevant sections through the mound that had already been exposed were stratigraphically recorded and drawn at scales of 1:10 and 1:20 and matrices were produced to assist in the interpretation of the archaeology. A general plan of the site was produced at a scale of 1:50.

Finally, a photographic record was compiled which comprises colour slides and colour prints (the latter were taken using a digital camera).

6.0: RESULTS

6.1 Introduction (see Fig. 3 & Plate 1)

The excavation of soil to a depth of 2.50m uncovered *in situ* portions of a medieval curtain wall on a west-east alignment and approximately parallel with the modern road frontage (i.e. Bath Row). On the basis of the evidence (in plan and elevation) it was possible to reconstruct and interpret phases of use, re-use and disuse of the excavated area in relation to the medieval castle and later events.

6.2: Post-medieval and modern (Fig. 4)

The section through the mound on the site's northern edge revealed a deposit of modern disturbance (context 001) to a depth of *c.* 600mm which relates to the development of the Warrenne Keep housing estate. Beneath the modern 'topsoil' a layer of dark humic soil (context 002) some 500mm thick was encountered which contained post-medieval pottery and glass. This was interpreted as being associated with the terracing of the southern slope of the castle mound in post-medieval times for the creation of garden 'allotments'.

6.3: The medieval castle mound (Figs. 4 & 5)

The post-medieval layer sealed a very thick deposit (context 003) *c.* 1.40m deep extending to the base of the excavation. It consisted of silty clay with frequent inclusions of limestone fragments and was interpreted as representing the original castle mound. The western section of the site, although disturbed by the construction of No. 12 Bath Row, showed the continuation of this deposit which butted against the core material (context 010) of the medieval wall (see below). The original depth of the surviving portion of the mound could not be established.

6.4: The medieval curtain wall (Fig. 3)

Only the extreme western (context 006) and eastern (context 007) portions of the wall were visible above ground. The middle section (context 008) of the wall had been removed previously; most likely during the construction of the Baptist Chapel (now Nos. 13-14 Bath Row) at the beginning of the last century. Indeed, the construction of the Chapel would account for the removal of a substantial length of the wall given the slight change in orientation of this building in relation to the original layout of the circuit wall. In consequence, the Chapel came to butt against the south face of the eastern portion (context 007) of the surviving wall but without affecting the western portion (context 006). The latter was therefore better preserved both in plan and in elevation.

6.4.1: The western portion of the medieval wall (006) & (010) (Fig. 5)

The surviving western portion of the medieval wall was found to be 0.5m thick, 1.40m long and 1.0m high. Between its southern face and the northern perimeter of the Baptist Chapel wall there was an infill of esturine (natural) clay (context 004) forming a buttress against the base of the building. The base of the wall of the Chapel appears to have been built from re-used stones which probably came from dismantling the medieval wall at the beginning of the last century. The southern face of the curtain wall was made of dressed fine-grained limestone blocks (average

size 250mm x 350 mm x 50mm) with cut flat surfaces of rectangular shape (i.e. ashlar; context 006) which had been laid in carefully fitted horizontal courses and later coated with plaster (a mixture of sand and lime c. 10mm thick). The core (context 010) of the wall itself was made of rubble and clay; the clay possibly deriving from the excavation of the foundation trenches for the construction of the wall. The northern face and a good portion of the core of the wall had been damaged and removed. However, based on stratigraphic evidence from the western section of the excavated area (see above) and the extent of the robber trench (context 008) visible in plan, the wall originally appears to have been about 2.20m thick. The depth of the wall down to the foundation trench could not be established. Small portions of the wall appear to have been restored with concrete (possibly to replace the original mortar). Where the original mortar survived it consisted of a mixture of compacted sand and lime. The date of this 'restoration' of the wall is uncertain. However, it may indicate that it was still visible and possibly used as a revetment at the time when the castle was terraced for garden allotments. This would be consistent with a drawing by Stukeley (of 1730) which shows the southern slope of the mound bounded by a stone wall, some portions of which had already been replaced, especially to the east. It would also be consistent with the layer of humic soil (context 002) exposed in the northern section (see above).

6.4.2: The eastern portion of the medieval wall (007) & (011) (Fig. 3)

Although thicker and higher (1.0m thick x 1.1 m long x 1.5m high) than its counterpart to the west, the surviving eastern portion of the medieval wall had been more severely disturbed by the construction of the Baptist Chapel. From Stukeley's drawing, it is difficult to establish whether a later addition (context 009) above the wall dates to the same period as the drawing itself. It clearly pre-dates the construction of the Chapel since it appears to have been demolished at the same time as the medieval wall. The eastern portion of the addition still survives and bounds the side courtyard of 13-14 Bath Row to the north. However, due to recent building in the area, it is uncertain whether the medieval wall continued to the east underneath the later addition or whether it had already been replaced (as Stukeley's drawing may suggest).

7.0: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The construction of Stamford Castle is assigned to the post-conquest (Norman) period. The site chosen was a small hill overlooking the River Welland and partly

coincident with the location of the early Saxon settlement to the west of the Danish *burh* (see above). According to the Domesday Book, five houses were demolished to make way for it.

Roffa has recently suggested a date of around AD 1068 for the construction of the Motte based on evidence for William the Conqueror's first campaign in Lincolnshire and the construction of Lincoln Castle [which is known to have been followed by others in Lincolnshire] (Roffa 1978). Stamford castle originally consisted of a ditched Motte and a Bailey enclosed by a timber stockade. The latter was gradually replaced by stone walls, probably during the 12th century AD.

The excavation at the rear of 14 Bath Row revealed portions of a west-east aligned wall which originally enclosed the castle Bailey to the south. The wall was ashlar faced with a rubble core and is consistent with the medieval technique of wall construction. A similar ashlar-faced wall was briefly observed during the 19th century AD and interpreted as representing a length of the original west (i.e. north-south aligned) boundary (Stamford Mercury, 30th May 1879). Immediately to the east of the excavated area there is a reset doorway in 'Barnack' stone dating to the 13th/early 14th century AD (see above). Although described as being of "no significance" (RCHME 1977, 3), it is nonetheless on the same alignment as the exposed portion of the medieval curtain wall discovered in the present watching brief. To the west of No. 10 Bath Row (the former Bath House) and east of Nos. 13-14, a further length of wall with buttress and *posterns* may represent (albeit subject to modifications in more recent times) the continuation of the medieval south boundary wall. Finally, the excavations of the 1970's revealed a further portion of the same wall; against its northern face and at a right angle with Castle Dyke the Hall complex was built (the east wall of which is still visible above ground). Formerly the east wall of the Court Leet (see Knipe's map of 1833), it consists of a three door opening, originally the service doorways of the hall, dating to the 13th century AD.

In the absence of dating evidence from the excavated area, uncertainty must remain as to the exact chronology of the length of wall exposed to the rear of 14 Bath Row. In Lincoln, later additions to the castle wall are assigned to the first half of the 13th century AD. It is known that in the same period King John granted land at Uffington (near Stamford) to William de Warrenne for the maintenance of Stamford castle (see above) and that he also subsidised the enclosing of the town. As the murage grants towards the town walls are known to be later in date [between AD 1261 and 1352] (RCHME 1977, 4), it has been suggested, although without conclusive

evidence, that Stamford was enclosed by an earlier (wooden?) circuit (Mahany 1982, 6) which could have incorporated the (newly restored or modified?) castle wall. That the later town defensive system came to include the pre-existing castle wall appears to be suggested by Speed's map of 1600.

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9.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PISA should like to thank the following individuals in respect of this project: Mr. Peter Messinger for commissioning and funding the work and Jenny Stevens (SKDCCA) for providing background information and advice.

Figure 1: General Location Plan

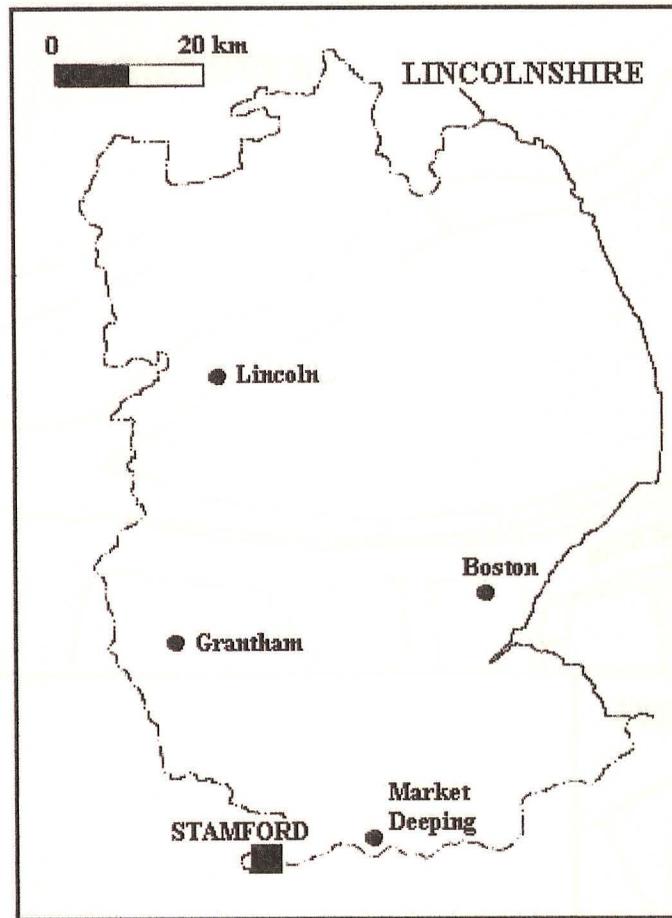
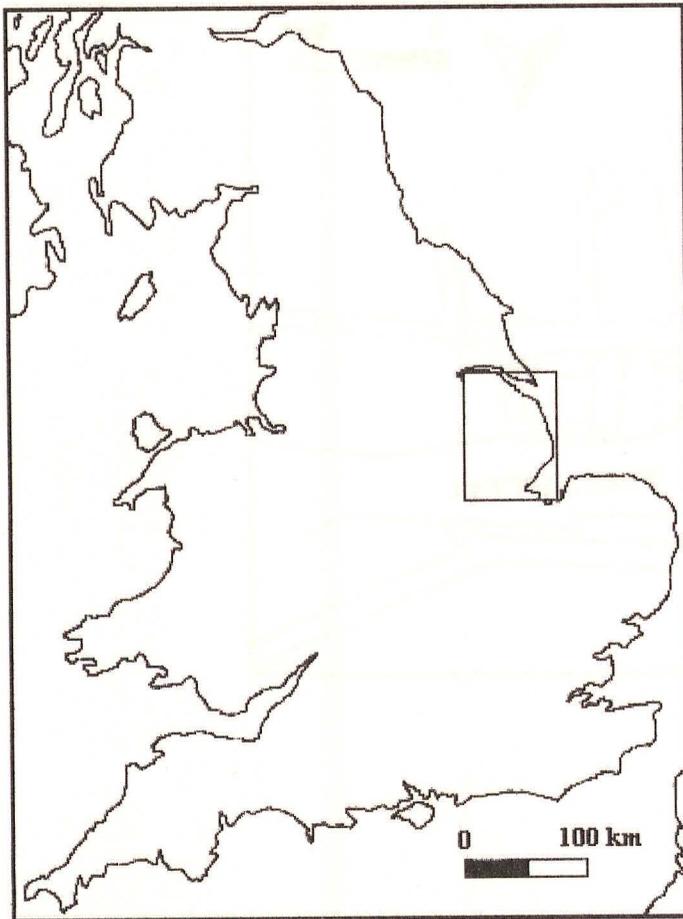
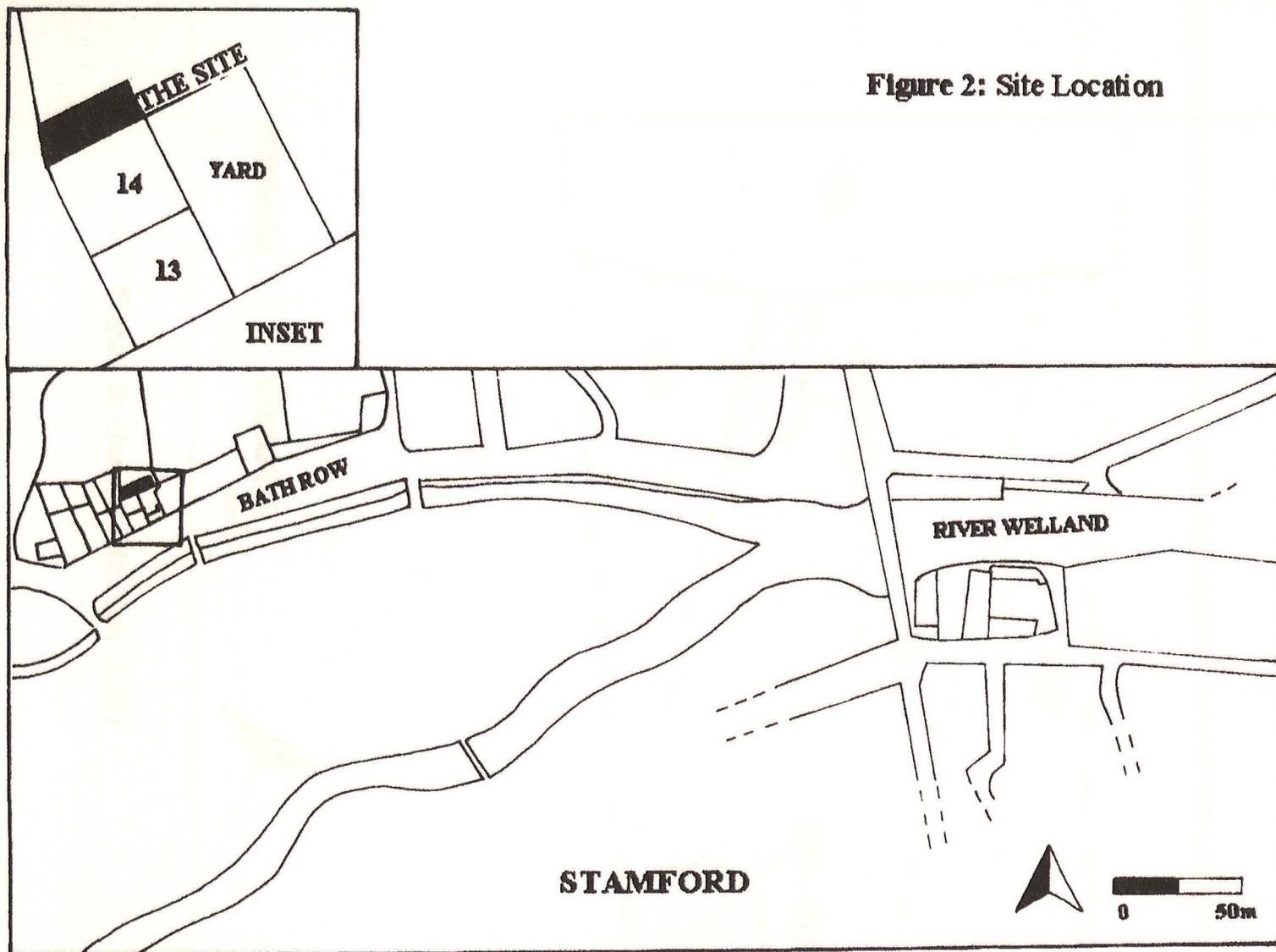


Figure 2: Site Location



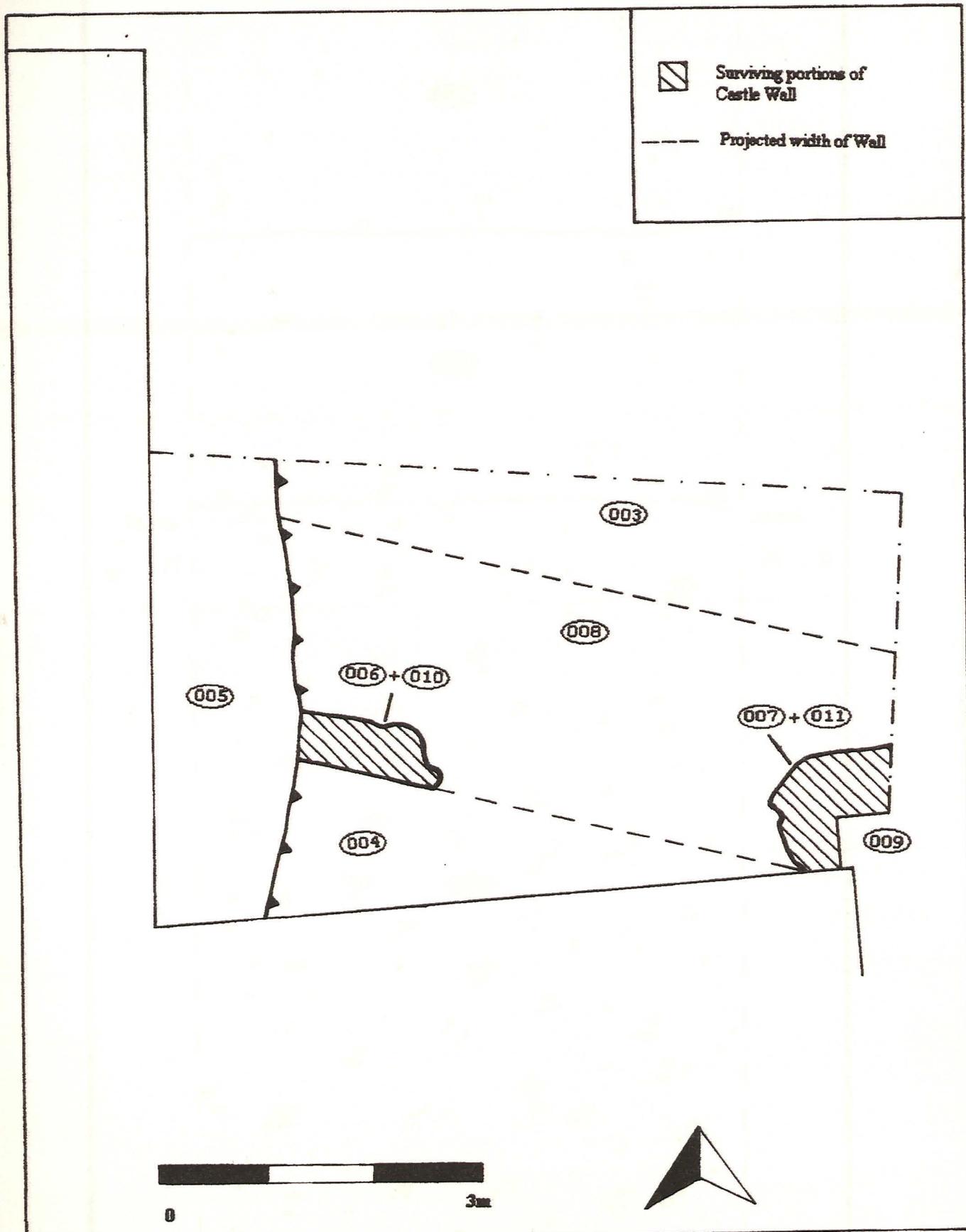


Figure 3: General Site Plan (1:50)

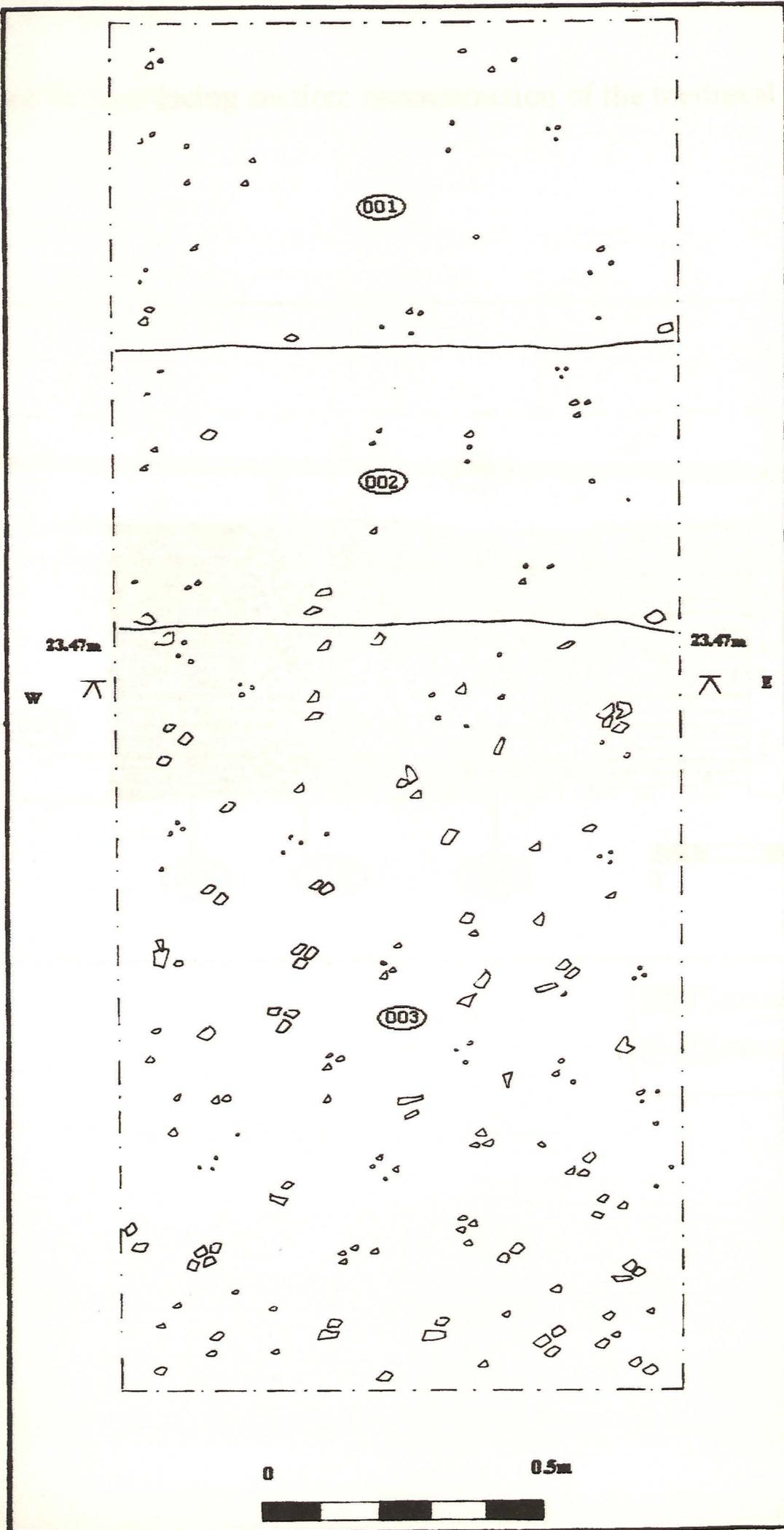


Figure 4: South-facing section: the castle mound (1:10)

Figure 5: East-facing section: reconstruction of the medieval wall (1:20)

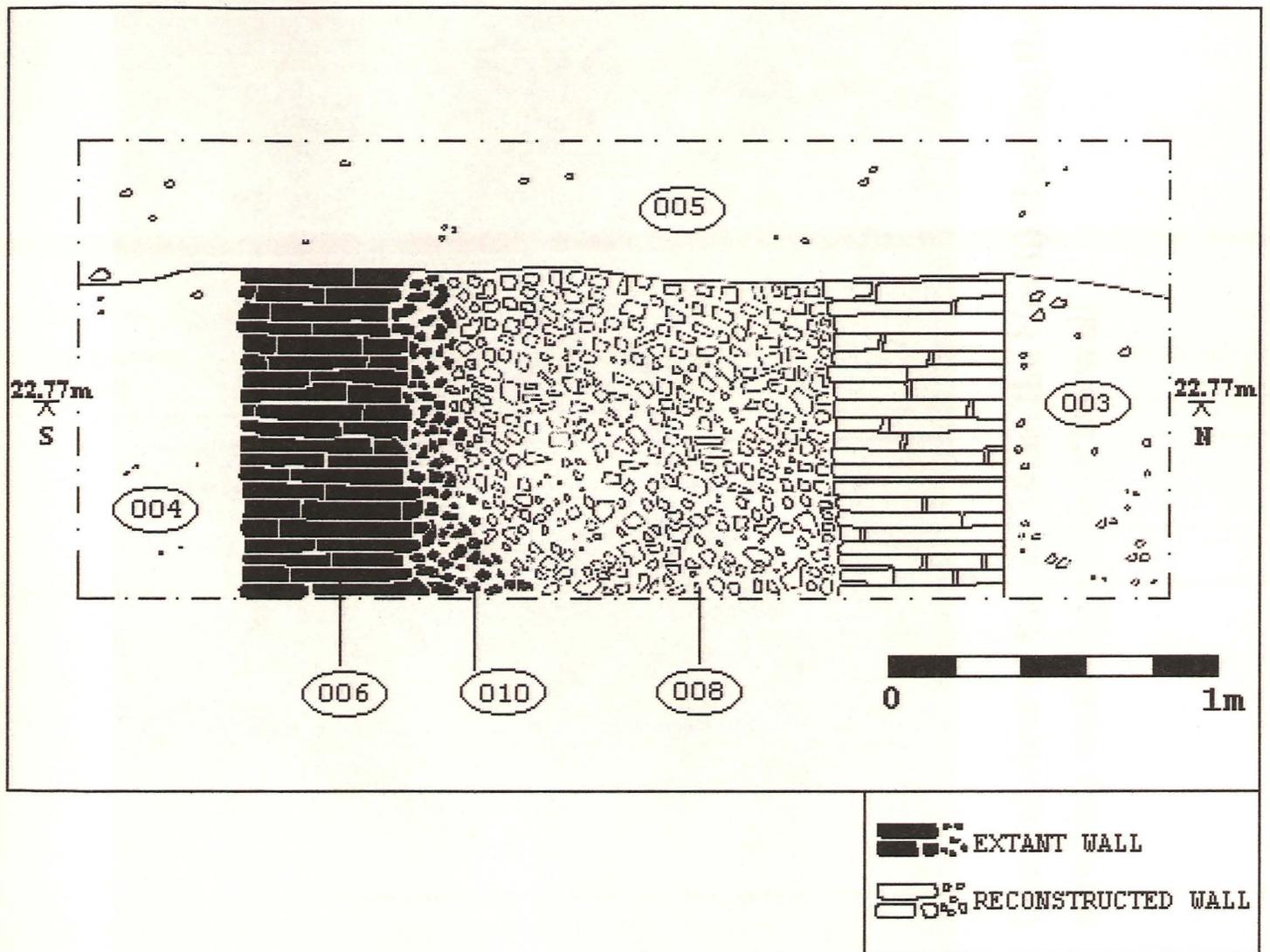




Plate 1: General view of the site (from the North) showing the surviving western portion of the wall

APPENDIX 1

Summary Description of Contexts

MEDIEVAL DEPOSITS AND FEATURES

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
(003)	Deposit (castle mound)	Firm sandy silty clay (brown); frequent limestone inclusions
(006)	Masonry wall (ashlar-faced)	Cut flat surfaces of rectangular shape in carefully fitted horizontal courses. Plaster coating (sand and lime mixture c. 10mm thick).
(007)	Masonry wall (ashlar-faced)	As (006).
(010)	Masonry wall (rubble core)	Frequent limestone rubble of variable size (and firm dark brown sandy clay)
(011)	Masonry wall (rubble core)	As (010).

POST-MEDIEVAL DEPOSIT

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
(002)	Deposit	Firm humic soil (dark greyish brown)

POST-MEDIEVAL - 19th CENTURY AD FEATURE

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
(009)	Masonry wall	Dressed limestone and plastering.

19th CENTURY AD DEPOSITS AND FEATURES

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
(004)	Deposit (infill)	Firm sandy clay (light yellowish brown)
(008)	Robber trench of Med. wall	Occasional limestone rubble (<i>in situ</i>) of variable size

MODERN DEPOSITS

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
(001)	'Topsoil'	Layer of modern disturbance
(005)	deposit	Spoil from recent ground works

APPENDIX 2

The Archive

The primary records will be deposited with the Lincoln City & County Museum in 1998 but are presently located at:

P.I.S.A. Ltd.,
8 Fountain Court,
Main Street,
Ufford,
Lincolnshire,
PE9 3BJ

The archive also consists of the following items:

- 3 Scale drawings (1:10 & 1:20 sections, 1:50 site plan).
- 1 Drawings register.
- 1 Context list.
- 11 Context records.
- 1 List with summary description of contexts (also inserted in the report).
- 1 Photographic record sheet (9 colour slides & 7 digital colour prints) .

Lincoln City & County Museum Accession No.91.98
PISA project code: BRS98