

DISCUSSION OF THE EXCAVATION

Trench Two was the only one of the three trenches to illuminate the site's medieval past. The exterior stone wall of a building constructed on the sloping natural ground surface came to light (phase two) which may date to the late 14th or 15th centuries. The environmental evidence points to a damp interior with stable manure present on the floor or trampled into the building. The fact that the wall was mortar bonded and was built on a rudimentary clay raft suggests it was a fairly substantial structure and that care was taken to provide it with solid foundations. Later activity in the vicinity may have included fish processing given the well preserved fish remains found in layer 205 which overlay the stone foundations. In phase three the stone wall was partially replaced by much less substantial foundations comprising a row of small stones set in clay. They suggest a building with only a light timber superstructure, such as an outhouse.

How the phase two and three structures related to the natural cliff line to the north and the harbour front to the south remains a matter for conjecture. The pottery evidence suggests the buildings date to the later medieval period which is one or two centuries after this part of the waterfront is believed to have been first developed with the construction of a waterfront along the line of modern Quay Street (9). One possibility is that initially buildings only stood at the front of the site along the newly constructed waterfront and that structures such as the one discovered in Trench Two only came to be built further back when land had become more scarce in the later middle ages.

The subsequent burial of the remains in Trench Two beneath probable domestic refuse points to the site being open ground in the 15th or 16th centuries (phase four). The deposit may extend as far south as Trench One since the layer of humic clayey soil exposed at the northern end of that trench (layer 103) was very similar to that which buries the building remains in Trench Two.

The deposition of domestic refuse may have been motivated by the need to raise the level of the site as protection against flooding during heavy seas and high tides. Similar dumps of domestic refuse were found at another foreshore site excavated in 1990 at 24-26 The Bolts (10) whilst the excavation at 30 Quay Street in 1978 found that clay had been dumped presumably for a similar purpose (11).

The concrete slab which covers the site directly overlies the late medieval deposit of domestic refuse. All trace has disappeared in Trench Two of the building one suspects would have been erected on the newly elevated site. One possibility is that the stone wall revealed in Trench One along the street frontage may be part of a structure erected after the site level had been raised. However this is pure conjecture as the date of the wall was not established. The brick wall found in this trench and in Trench Two running along the boundary with Bakehouse Steps is presumably a remnant of the last building to stand on the site.

The sequence of development of the site up the cliff slope became clearer from the excavation of Trench Three. Before the creation of the upper terrace level the northern part of the site appears to have been surfaced with cobbles and sloped uphill following the natural gradient. The upper terrace was then formed by dumping over a metre of soil onto the cobble surface. The date at which this occurred is not clear from the pottery evidence. The backfilled soil contained predominantly medieval and 16th century sherds but this could be residual and the age of the deposit may be much more recent. The first edition OS map shows the upper terrace level was in existence by 1852 (see Figure 3).

(4) Assessment of Stonework (Figure 8)

A photographic and drawn record at 1:20 scale was made of stonework in the east-facing exterior wall of No. 22A Quay Street and in a free-standing wall which abutts it at right angles and runs along the south side of the middle terrace. Twelve separate elements of stonework were identified (A-L) and these are described below in sequence from south to north followed by a discussion of their possible significance.

The east facing exterior wall of No 22A Quay Street is constructed mainly of a dark red brick of 18th to 19th century appearance with some areas patched in a more recent orange brick. Stonework occurs as isolated elements either at the base of the brick wall or set into the brickwork. A plaster render obscures some stones as shown on figure 8.

ELEMENT A

A single course of stonework is visible at the southern end of the exterior wall of 22A Quay Street 3m from the street frontage at a height of 1m above ground level. The stonework is two courses thick, the outer course protruding some 25cm from the exterior face of 22A Quay Street. Further north the stonework thickens to three courses with an outer face 40cm from the exterior wall of No 22A. This outer face is constructed of well-coursed squared blocks and extends down to ground level. The inner of the three courses which is flush with the exterior wall of 22A Quay Street rises to a height of 2.75m and is also constructed of well-coursed squared stones. The stones are generally mortar bonded though in places this has all but disappeared leaving voids around some of the stones.

ELEMENT B

The lowest part of this area of stonework protrudes some 40cm from the outer face of 22A Quay Street and was made from squared stones, poorly coursed and patched with bricks. Further stonework appears higher up flush with the exterior wall resting on coursed bricks. At the junction between this stonework and that of Element A there is a substantial void which can be traced down to ground level as a straight joint. Similarly a straight joint is detectable on the north side at the junction with Element C.

Together the stonework and brickwork in Element B give the appearance of having infilled a gap in the exterior wall of 22A Quay Street. Above the highest course of stones are a row of bricks set on edge which could have been detailing above an opening whilst the void and straight edges along the sides of the element suggest it has been inserted into a pre-existing gap.

ELEMENT C

This stonework is formed of squared and coursed stones protruding some 40cm from the exterior wall of 22A Quay Street. The lower part of the wall is extensively obscured by render. The stonework disappears behind brickwork which protrudes up to 1m from the outer face of 22A Quay Street.

ELEMENT D

Two small areas of stonework are set into the outer face of 22A Quay Street between 1.75m and 3m above ground level. The stones were probably used to patch the brickwork.

ELEMENT E

A single course of stones caps a face of brickwork 1m above ground level and 1m away from the outer face of 22A Quay Street. A single stone is set into the brickwork lower down. These stones were probably reused during the construction of the brick wall.

ELEMENT F

A substantial area of roughly squared but quite evenly coursed stonework is set into the brick outer face of 22A Quay Street at a height of between 2m and 3m above ground level. The outer face of the stones is 25cm proud of the surrounding brickwork. At this point there is a right angle junction between the outer face of 22A Quay Street and an east-west aligned brick wall which partially overlies the retaining wall on the south side of the middle terrace. The stones may have been inserted close to this junction to reinforce a critical load-bearing junction.

ELEMENT G

A few stones survive at the base of the retaining wall on the south side of the middle level. These were not recorded because they were obscured by vegetation at the time of the survey. From those that were visible, they seem to be quite loosely set and may have been placed to make a garden rockery in the quite recent past.

ELEMENT H

Three courses of stonework are visible at the base of the free-standing east-west wall which rests on top of the lower of the two terracing walls. The stones are squared and neatly coursed and may extend below the level of the middle terrace to form the inner face of the retaining wall. The stonework also continues behind the outer face of 22A Quay Street which makes a straight joint with the stonework. This means that the outer face of 22A Quay Street post-dates this particular element of stonework.

ELEMENT I

An isolated stone is visible at the eastern end of the free-standing brick wall which rests on the top of the lower of the two terracing walls. If this is part of the same construction as Element H described above then it would make element H a sizeable stone wall at least 60cm thick.

ELEMENT J

Above Element H are a group of single stones set one on top of the other to a height of 2.5m at the junction of the free-standing east-west wall and the outer face of 22A Quay Street. The junction appears to have been a point of weakness as there is a crack in the east-west wall and this higher area of stonework may have been an attempt to strengthen this instability.

ELEMENT K

The east facing wall of 22A Quay Street incorporates a substantial area of roughly squared but neatly coursed stonework at the northern end of the middle terrace. The stones disappear to the north behind the retaining wall between the middle and upper levels.

ELEMENT L

In the upper terrace there is an area of stonework at the base of the exterior wall of 22A Quay Street. Many of the stones are quite loosely set as they have all but lost their mortar bonding.

DISCUSSION OF STONEWORK

Stonework has been employed on the site either to patch up brickwork (Elements D and E) or to strengthen areas of structural weakness (Elements F and J) and these elements are therefore contemporary or later than the brickwork which surrounds them. Element G is probably a modern rockery and can therefore be discounted.

Elements A and C in the east facing wall of 22A Quay Street are so substantially and well constructed that they are probably much earlier than the brickwork which overlies them. They are far thicker than necessary to support the overlying brick wall to the extent that their outer faces are 40cm proud of the outer face of the brick wall. Elements A and C could therefore belong to an earlier building with stone walls which either stood on the present site or occupied the neighbouring plot now occupied by 22A Quay Street.

The north side of Element A forms one side of a possible opening now blocked by Element B. This opening may have been an original part of the stone building conjectured above. Alternatively the opening may have been made to facilitate access between the building on 22A Quay Street and that which formerly stood on the present site. A third alternative is that the opening was for a fireplace as the chimney stack on the roof of 22A Quay Street lies almost directly above element B.

On the middle terrace Element H may be the top of a stone retaining wall between the lowest and middle levels of the site. The outer face of this retaining wall is constructed of brick and this would need to be removed to establish if it has stonework at its core. The single stone (Element I) could be a visible part of this possible stone core. The junction between Element H and the outer face of 22A Quay Street suggests the former is the earlier of the two. Therefore like Elements A and C, Element H could predate the construction of the brick warehouse and like them might be the survivor of an earlier stone building.

(5) Summary and Recommendations

On the south of the site at the level of Quay Street, the excavation of Trench Two uncovered the remains of a medieval structure at a depth of 70-80cm below the present ground surface. The building remains, which include floor surfaces and wall foundations, are preserved beneath a deposit of damp, humic soil containing a rich assemblage of faunal and ceramic material probably dating to the 15th or 16th centuries. The analysis of two environmental samples associated with the structure has concluded that the deposits merit further research (see appendix two).

Elsewhere on the site, Trench One brought to light a stone wall along the boundary with Quay Street, but its date remains a matter for speculation. The excavation of Trench Three on the upper terrace at the north of the site discovered that a cobbled surface is preserved below soil brought onto the site to level the terrace. The date of this feature is also unclear.

The analysis of stonework visible in the east facing exterior wall of 22A Quay Street and elsewhere on the site has concluded that most has probably been reused to patch and strengthen brickwork. Two elements surrounding a blocked opening could be more significant as belonging to a stone-walled structure pre-dating the existing warehouse. The retaining wall between the lower and middle terraces is possibly constructed of stone with only an outer facing of brick masking its antiquity.

Evidence came to light that the site has been disturbed in a number of ways. The fact that the concrete surface of the site rests directly on 15th or 16th century deposits strongly suggests that the site has been levelled in the more recent past and that post-16th century deposits have consequently been destroyed. At the extreme western end of Trench Two evidence came to light that the humic soil which overlies the medieval building has been dug into by what are possibly a series of pits lying to the west of the trench. The discovery of a foul water pipe in Trench One along the boundary with Bakehouse Steps and of a deep cut in the same position in Trench Two indicates that the eastern edge of the site is also disturbed ground.

The lowest part of the site adjacent to 22A Quay St preserves a combination of structural, faunal, ceramic and environmental evidence relating to the development of the harbour area in the middle ages. Such a range of information on one site is uncommon in Scarborough. To ensure its preservation, the ground level of this part of the site should not be lowered or significantly disturbed since late medieval deposits survive just below the concrete. This recommendation must influence the design of new foundations and where disturbance or destruction is unavoidable then opportunity should be made for the recovery of archaeological information, including sampling for environmental evidence. The eastern margin of this part of the site is not so archaeologically sensitive due to the existence of a pipe trench along the boundary with Bakehouse Steps.

The middle terrace was not investigated and therefore any proposals which will disturb this area should be preceded by an archaeological assessment. Archaeological remains in the upper terrace are protected by over a metre of overburden and therefore will only be threatened if development proposals exceed this depth.

No assessment was made of the archaeological potential of 22A Quay Street because at the time of the excavation this property was still occupied. However, in the light of the discoveries described in this report, it is imperative that a similar assessment should be made of that property when it becomes vacant. This should include further investigation of the stonework preserved in the east facing exterior wall to conclusively determine those elements worthy of preservation.

Finally, any new development should preserve the outline of 22A Quay Street and the vacant site to its east as these probably perpetuate the layout of medieval properties.

(6) Acknowledgements

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*Appendix 1: Table of animal bone identifications from Trench Two,
22A Quay Street, Scarborough (site code: QS96)*

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<i>CONTEXT</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>LIMBS</i>	<i>VERT</i>	<i>SKULL</i>	<i>TORSO</i>	<i>UNIDENT</i>	<i>MNI</i>	<i>CM</i>
200	57	37% (21)	9% (5)	20% (12)	28% (16)	5% (3)	3	5
201	125	32% (40)	4% (5)	34% (42)	26% (32)	4% (6)	17	4
202	95	33% (31)	7% (7)	44% (42)	15% (14)	1% (1)	15	1
203	40	23% (9)	10% (4)	55% (22)	12% (5)	--- (-)	14	---
204	110	48% (53)	10% (11)	24% (26)	16% (18)	2% (2)	8	3
205	30	27% (8)	3% (1)	37% (11)	33% (10)	--- (-)	9	---
206	20	20% (4)	15% (3)	40% (8)	25% (5)	--- (-)	4	---
208	NO BONES							
209	10	40% (4)	10% (1)	30% (3)	20% (2)	--- (-)	1	---
210	35	11% (4)	11% (4)	26% (9)	51% (18)	--- (-)	4	1
211	4	25% (1)	--- (-)	25% (1)	50% (2)	--- (-)	1	---
212	3	100% (3)	--- (-)	--- (-)	--- (-)	--- (-)	1	---
213	18	6% (1)	33% (6)	28% (5)	33% (6)	--- (-)	1	2
214	21	24% (5)	29% (6)	--- (-)	47% (10)	--- (-)	1	-
219	NO BONES							
568		32% (184)	9% (53)	32% (181)	24% (138)	2% (12)	79	16

LIMBS = Arms, legs, toes

UNIDENT = Unidentified

VERT = Vertebrae, sacrum, pelvis

*M.N.I. = Minimum Number of Individuals (estimated from
the number of different mandibles)*

SKULL = Cranium, mandible, maxilla, teeth

C.M. = Distinguishable butchery cut marks

TORSO = Ribs, shoulder blades

Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at 22A Quay Street, Scarborough (site code: QS96)

by Allan Hall, Michael Issitt, Deborah Jaques and Frances Large

Summary

Two samples of sediment from medieval deposits revealed by excavations at Quay Street, Scarborough, were submitted for an evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential. Context 205 produced a small quantity of well-preserved fish remains, and a small assemblage of mostly synanthropic insects was recovered from Context 212. The few plant remains were of little interpretative value.

Well-preserved fish remains of Medieval date are rare from this area and it is highly likely that further excavation would recover a larger collection of useful material.

It is recommended that any deposits remaining at the site should not be destroyed without appropriate excavation and sampling.

Keywords: Quay Street; Scarborough; evaluation; medieval; plant remains; charred plant remains; insects; vertebrate remains; fish remains

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Introduction

Excavations were carried out by Scarborough Archaeological Society at 22A Quay Street, Scarborough, during 1996. Two General Biological Analysis samples ('GBAs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) were submitted for an evaluation of their biological potential; one sample came from a putative floor deposit and the other was from a layer interpreted as a domestic dump. Both deposits were of medieval date.

Methods

The material was initially inspected in the laboratory. A 3 kg subsample was taken from each of the GBAs for extraction of macrofossil remains, following procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986). The remaining material was retained as vouchers.

The washovers and residues resulting from processing were examined for their content of plant and invertebrate macrofossils, and animal bone. Notes were made on the quantity of fossils and principal taxa.

Results and discussion

The results are presented in context number order. Context information provided by the excavator is given in square brackets.

Sample 2051/T, Context 205

[?domestic refuse]

3 kg processed

Moist, moderately heterogeneous; mid-dark slightly orange grey/brown clay sand; light-mid orange brown sandy, stony clay (?till) - mottled grey in places; a little grey clay silt. Overall texture was plastic. Charcoal was present.

The small flot consisted mostly of charcoal (to 8 mm), with a few fragments of plant debris, a mite (*Acarina* sp.), and two fragments of fish bone.

The moderate-sized residue consisted largely of quartz sand and gravel with fish bone to 50 mm, coal to 20 mm and cinder to 30 mm. There were a few stones to 50 mm and traces of crustacean (?crab) and marine mollusc (winkle, *Littorina* sp.) shell, together with a few fragments of charcoal to 10 mm.

The residue produced a small number of well preserved fish remains. These were mostly gadid fragments, including the remains of haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus* (L.)), a very large ?cod (cf. *Gadus morhua* L.) articular, and a few vertebrae from both large and small individuals. Fifty-nine fish teeth were also recovered of which one was identified as thornback ray (*Raja clavata* L.). The rest remain unidentified to species but represent other cartilaginous fish (*Elasmobranchii*). Additionally, two fragments of reptile bone were recorded, one possibly being a lizard (*Lacerta* spp.) mandible.

Sample 2121/T, Context 212

[?floor layers]

Moist to wet, varicoloured (light-mid grey/brown to dark grey), crumbly (working plastic), ?slightly humic, clay sand. Occasional lumps had internal lamination. Charcoal and fragments of marine mollusc were present.

The small flot, which contained mostly plant detritus and a little charcoal (to 7 mm), yielded a few seeds and a small assemblage of insects. Most of the beetle remains were of synanthropic species, such as *Tipnus unicolor* (Piller & Mitterpacher), *Oryzaephilus surinamensis* (Linnaeus), *Mycetaea hirta* (Marsham), and *Xylodromus concinnus* (Marsham). Other insect remains included an abdominal segment of a flea (Siphonaptera) and several dipterous puparia. The assemblage suggested a range of conditions, rather damp and with at least some organic detritus. There were hints of foul matter and a single newly emerged ?*Apion* sp.. If the identification of the latter is correct, it (together with other elements of the fauna) offer a very slight hint that stable manure was present, or perhaps had been trampled into the building.

The rather small residue was mostly quartz sand, gravel, coal (to 15 mm) and charcoal (also to 15 mm). There were small numbers of fish scales and bones and a few charred and uncharred plant remains, mostly weeds of disturbed places or cultivated land and of little interpretative value. A charred shoot tip and an uncharred leaf of heather or ling (*Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull) may point to the use of this plant as fuel, although the evidence is scant!

Fish remains from this residue were not as numerous as those for Context 205, but again included gadid fragments, together with a single pleuronectid (flatfish) vertebra and a herring (*Clupea harengus* L.) otic bulla.

Statement of potential

The presence of well preserved fish remains, particularly from Context 205, suggests that a moderate to large assemblage would be recovered should further excavation and systematic sampling (including bulk-sieving, *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) be undertaken in this area. Few assemblages of medieval date have been recovered from this region and systematically recovered fish bone assemblages of this date are rare.

General comparisons could be made with material from sites in Hull (Scott 1993a, 1993b; Spencer 1993) and Grimsby (unpublished data), the inland sites at Lurk Lane and Eastgate, both in Beverley (Scott 1991, 1992) and sites in York such as Fishergate (O'Connor 1991).

Analysis of insect and plant remains would contribute to a reconstruction of living conditions at this site, and to a wider synthesis.

In view of the small number of excavations that have taken place in Scarborough during the past decade (Pearson 1995) all emphasis should be placed on the additional information about the waterfront of Scarborough which the present site can contribute.

Recommendations

If further excavations take place on this site then every effort should be made to investigate any revealed deposits including an intensive regime of sampling. The deposits certainly should not be damaged by development without proper excavation and sampling, and commensurate funding for post-excavation analysis should be made available.

Retention and disposal

Any sediment remaining from these samples should be retained for future research. All washovers and residues should be retained in the longer term.

Archive

All extracted fossils and flots are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

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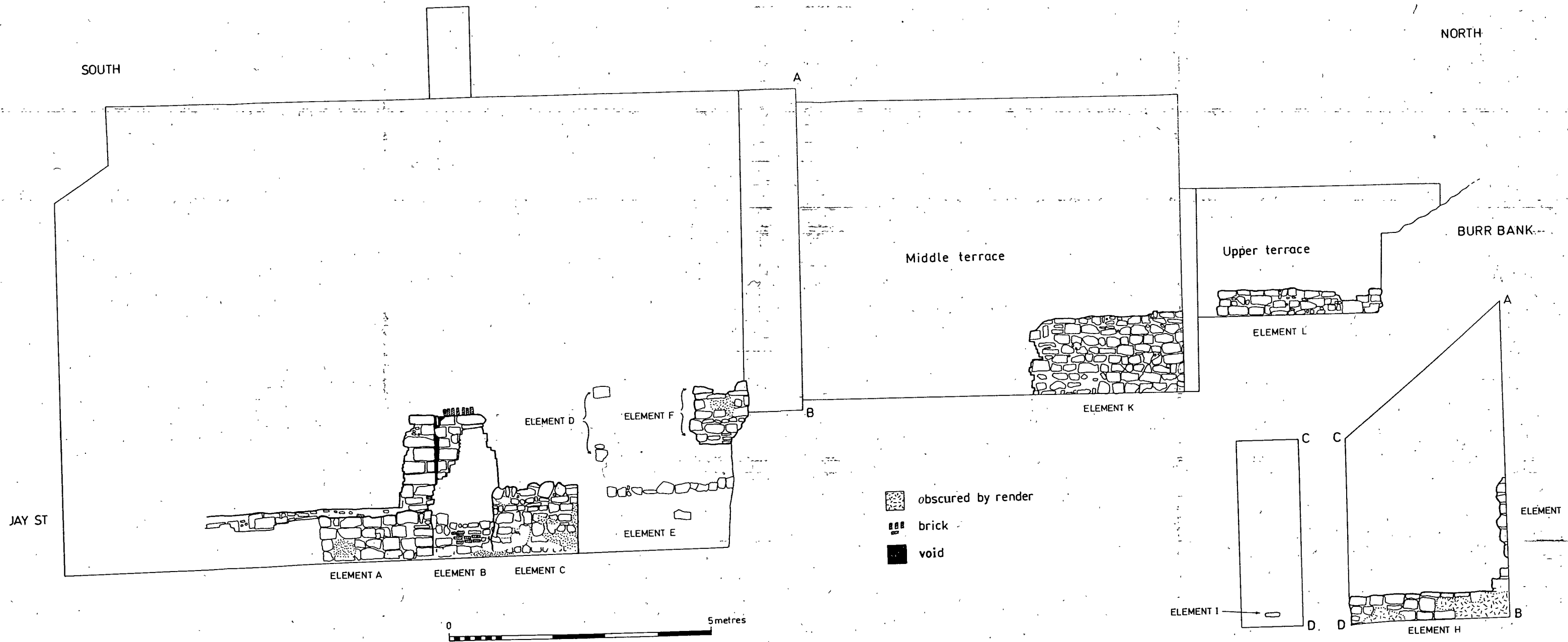


Figure 8 Elevation drawings of stonework visible in east-facing exterior wall of 22A Quay Street and in the wall on the south side of the middle terrace. (Outline of warehouse elevation used by kind permission of the site architect, Barry Denton.)