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## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 25th June 1982.

### Report to Committee

#### 1. EXCAVATIONS

##### Paul Street site

Four trial trenches have been excavated in order to answer specific questions relating to the street system and defences of Exeter in the Roman and medieval periods and to establish the nature and depth of archaeological deposits in this area.

The main defensive ditch on the NW side of the Roman legionary fortress (AD c.55-75) and early town (c.80-180/200) was located close to the Paul Street frontage and also in a trench dug for a traffic-light cable outside the R.A.M. Museum in Queen Street. These sightings are important for two reasons. Firstly, this is the first time the defences have been seen on this side of the fortress, and the excavations have confirmed that the line followed by the ditch corresponds fairly closely with that predicted. Secondly, the observation made outside the Museum indicates that the NE fortress defences, which have not yet been sighted, almost certainly do not run on the line suggested in Roman Exeter: Fortress and Town and other publications. It would appear that the Roman fortress and early town could have been up to four acres larger than we previously believed. This has important implications for the plan of the fortress which will be explored in the next report.

A trench 4m wide has been excavated across the line of the fortress ditches next to the Paul Street frontage. This is intended to provide a full section through the sequence of fills in order to see whether the character and history of the ditches is the same as on the other two sides where excavation has taken place. Paul Bidwell has made a strong case for retrieving a large sample of pottery from the upper fill of the main ditch.

If this is found to contain large quantities of rubbish deposits (as elsewhere), it is hoped to open a further length of ditch in which only the upper levels will be excavated. The other principal reason for opening the trench next to Paul Street was to establish whether in the later Roman period there was a street running next to the outer edge of the main ditch. This appears to have been the case, but it will be necessary to open a further trench to prove the point since a post-medieval cess pit has removed most of the Roman deposits in the relevant area.

Two trenches have been dug at right angles to the City Wall where a ramp is to be cut for a walkway behind it. In the Roman period the ground sloped more steeply from modern Paul Street down into the Longbrook Valley than it does today. This is because deposits accumulated behind the City Wall (built c.180-200) in medieval and early modern times. The bank to the rear of the Roman wall still stands over 3m high but it has been entirely covered over by successive post-Roman layers and is no longer visible. Even in the trench next to Paul Street, the depth of medieval and early modern deposits amounts to almost a metre; behind the City Wall it is much more.

The extent of the build up of medieval deposits on the Paul Street site was not appreciated before excavation started. Medieval levels are not usually at all well preserved in central Exeter. In the Guildhall Shopping Centre most deposits of this period were found to have been terraced away, so that the extensive excavations in this area produced almost no medieval features except large numbers of rubbish pits.

It is hoped that funds will be found to continue the excavations for a further two months.

## 2. STANDING BUILDINGS

### St Peter's Cathedral (with J.P. Allan)

In recent years Exeter Cathedral has been undergoing a programme of cleaning and consolidation. Decayed medieval masonry is being replaced, much of the church's stonework cleaned, and floors and lead roofs relaid. Since 1974, the AFU has annually made records during much of this work. The work carried out inside the south tower and transept described in the last report to the Committee has now been published in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society for 1981 in a paper entitled 'Recent Observations in the South Tower of Exeter Cathedral' by John Allan and Barbara Jupp.

At the West Front, the removal of several portions of the 14th-century image screen in 1980-1 revealed parts of a hitherto unknown earlier 14th-century design of the front. It was apparently plainer than that seen today. Further details of the design may come to light as restoration work proceeds.

Scaffolding was erected throughout the quire and presbytery in the Spring and it was again possible to examine areas of masonry and vaulting which are normally inaccessible. The study of the cathedral fabric is greatly enriched by the preservation of so many of its 13th- and 14-century Fabric Rolls, which record, often in great detail, the expenditure of the cathedral authorities as work on the building progressed. The structural history of the eastern arm of the church is exceptionally well documented, and no major changes to the usually accepted interpretation of the fabric has been made. However a number of fresh discoveries have amplified the research of earlier generations.

For the first time it has been possible to make an accurate stone-by-stone drawing of the elevations of the quire and presbytery and draw a cross-section through the building. All the masons' marks of the vault were noted, completing the work of recording them which has taken place each year since 1974. Analysis and publication of the marks will be undertaken when the second part of The Accounts of the Fabric of Exeter Cathedral by Audrey Erskine has been published.



The study of the geology of all the bosses, ribs and corbels has been greatly assisted by the Chief Mason of the cathedral, Mr. Peter Dare, who identified the different varieties of stone used. Some of the payments for bosses recorded in the Fabric Rolls can be correlated with particular sets of stones (e.g. the Ham Hill bosses in the quire).

The precise position of the structural break between the quire and presbytery has been distinguished. It is possible to discern a number of changes in construction technique. There are differences in the stone-types used in the ribs of the two builds and also in the method of cutting the corbel stones.

The costly early 14th-century reredos has been destroyed but scars which probably mark the position of its superstructure can be seen on the presbytery arcade. The stubs of a variety of iron bars and fittings also survive, the most interesting being a pair of pulleys which may have served to raise or lower the Lenten veil over the altar.

An examination of the Bishop's Throne was made in conjunction with Michael Swanton and Marion Glasscoe of Exeter University. Payments for its construction were made in 1313-16. Evidence for a change in design was found between the lower portions of the structure and the internal 'tower', and further evidence of structural changes were seen in the crenellations, which are clearly a secondary feature. It was also apparent that some parts of the structure were never completed. The character of the jointing was recorded, and some medieval colouring was noted.

The east window was first built c.1300. It has previously been believed that it was entirely replaced in the late 14th century. However, examination of the window has shown that the lower parts of the original window of c.1300 survive, and enough is preserved to attempt a partial restoration drawing of its earlier form. An accurate drawing of the window tracery has been made, primarily for the use of the British Academy which hopes to publish a Corpus Vitrearum volume for Exeter.

Recording of the fabric in advance of restoration work at the West Front and South Tower continues. It has recently become apparent that the scale of the restoration programme currently in progress at the cathedral will necessitate a high level of recording activity for some years to come. It is hoped that the Dean and Chapter will be able to make financial provision for this work.

#### Dendrochronology

Dendrochronology is a method of dating wood which involves measuring the widths of successive annual tree-rings in a piece of timber so as to try and match the pattern of width variations observable over a period of at least 50 years with sets of measurements taken from timbers of known felling dates.

Waterlogged structural timbers from medieval pits in Goldsmith Street and Trichay Street have been dated by this method to the first half of the 11th century. The timbers were almost certainly derived from buildings erected at that time and are of great interest since they provide evidence for a kind of stave-walled construction technique unknown in surviving buildings, which are all considerably later in date.

Ruth Morgan and Jennifer Hillam of Sheffield University have been studying timbers from Exeter for a number of years, and the results of their work are now being published. A 418 year master curve for the period AD 799-1216 has been established for Exeter by J.H. based on timbers from Trichay Street and Exe Bridge, and this has been amalgamated with curves from London, York and five other sites to produce a master curve thought to be applicable to the whole of the British Isles for the period AD 404-1216. The publications detailing the results of this work are:-

J. Hillam 'A medieval oak tree-ring chronology from Southwest England,

Tree-Ring Bulletin 40 (1980), 13-22.

J. Hillam 'An English tree-ring chronology, AD 404-1216' Medieval Archaeology 25 (1981), 31-44.

J. Hillam 'Tree-ring analysis of Trichay Street timbers, Exeter', Exeter Archaeol. Reps. 3 (forthcoming).

R. A. Morgan 'Tree-ring analysis of Goldsmith Street timbers, Exeter',  
Exeter Archaeol. Reps. 3 (forthcoming).

In addition to the oak timbers from buried waterlogged contexts, over the last 8 years the AFU has also submitted to Sheffield samples from the Roman legionary fortress and a wide range of standing buildings. The latter are proving difficult to date at present since they tend to come from relatively young trees with too few rings for accurate dating or to have been 'fast grown' so that there is insufficient variation in the ring widths. These problems may eventually be overcome.

The Unit recently invited Martin Bridge, a research student in dendrochronology at Portsmouth Polytechnic, to take drilled samples from a number of buildings in Exeter. He has concentrated his research on the problems of dating timbers from buildings. On his two visits to Exeter so far he has obtained samples from the timber roofs over the 13th-/and 14-century high vaults in the cathedral; the Bishop's Throne; the Deanery; 9, The Close; the Guildhall and Polsloe Priory.

Some of the samples look promising but no results have reached us yet.



### 3. SAXON EXETER

The past decade of work by the AFU has produced an enormous growth in our knowledge of Roman Exeter, including the discovery of the fortress of the Second Augustan Legion which underlies the later towns. The main conclusions of research to the end of 1979 were summarised in Roman Exeter: Fortress and Town by Paul Bidwell, published in 1980 as a contribution to the 1900th anniversary celebrations prompted by the discoveries of the Unit. In many respects knowledge of Exeter in the late Saxon and Norman periods was as slight in 1971 as for the Roman period. Here too it has been possible to make considerable advances in our understanding of the history and topographical development of the town. The threads of information which are now available on the early medieval period have been drawn together in two papers to be published shortly:

J.P. Allan, C.G. Henderson & R.A. Higham 'Saxon Exeter' in Saxon Towns of Southern England edited by Jeremy Haslam, published by Phillimore Books.

C.G. Henderson and P.T. Bidwell 'The Saxon Minster at Exeter', in a collection of papers on the Early Church in Western Britain edited by Susan Pearce and published in British Archaeological Reports.

The latter contains a fairly detailed interim account of the important excavations which took place in the Cathedral Close in 1971-6. An illustrated summary of the main results of this work will appear in the next Committee report. The opportunity is taken in the present report to mention briefly some general conclusions on the development of the Saxon town (Figures 1-4).

#### Street system and early occupation

Contrary to the belief until a few years ago, and with one exception, it is now clear that none of the Roman streets survived into the medieval period (Fig. 1). Almost every one must have become covered over and lost when urban life collapsed in the late 4th or early 5th century. The sites of the Roman gates continued to be the main points of entry into the walled



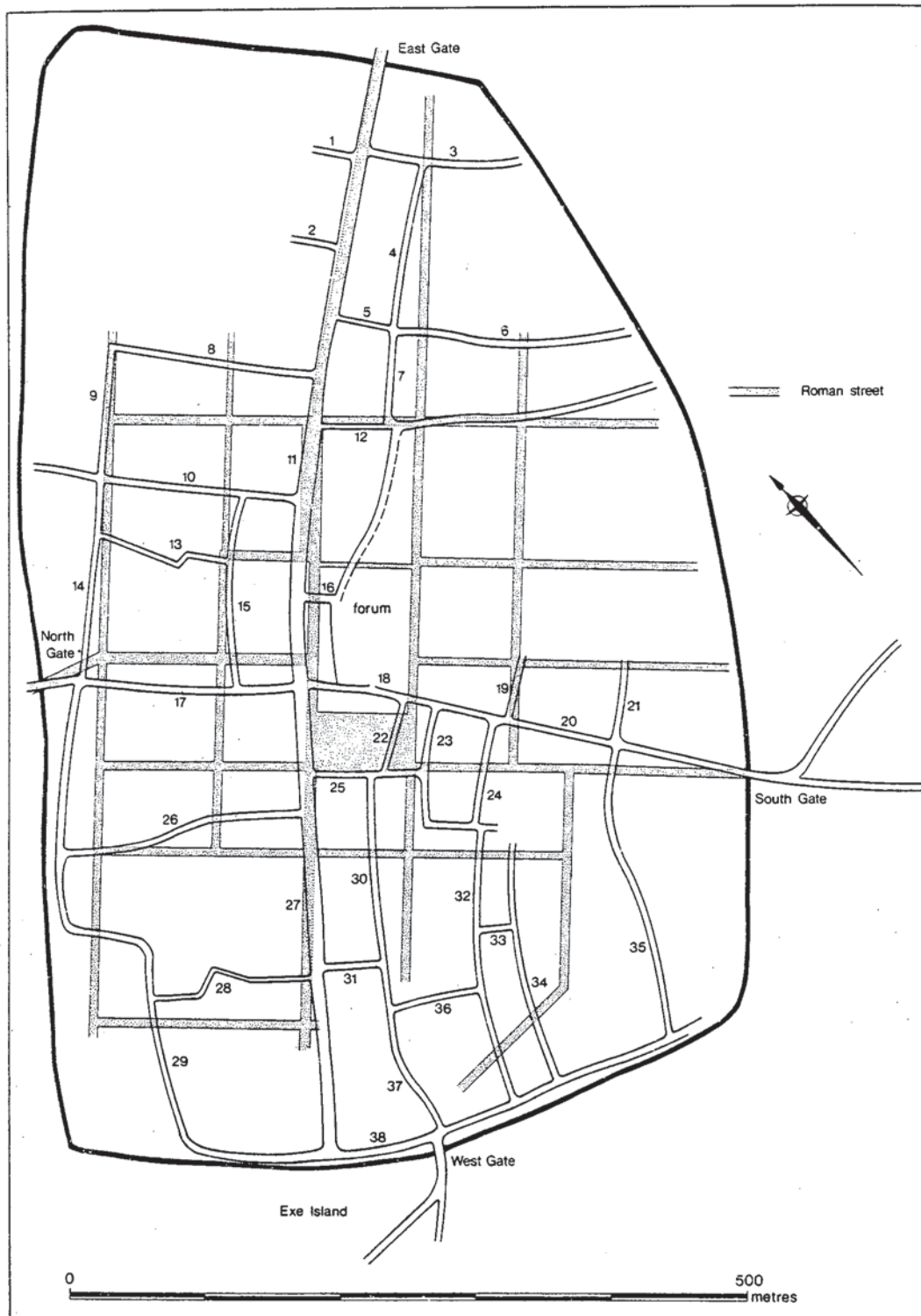


Figure 1: The Roman and medieval street systems of Exeter.

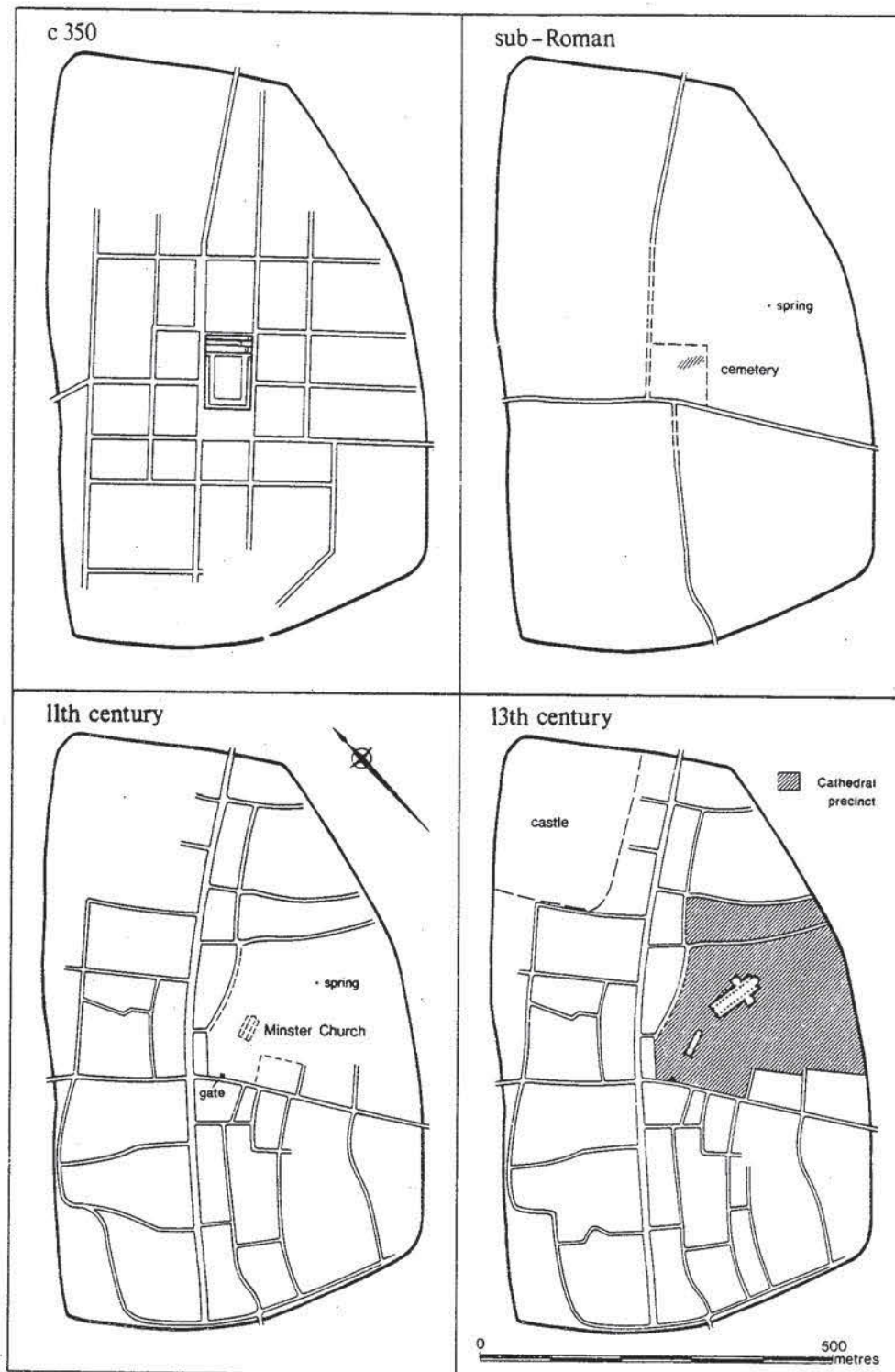


Figure 2: The development of the medieval street system of Exeter.

area, presumably since the Roman roads leading to them remained in existence as cross-country routes. South Street and North Street probably developed as a through route between the south and north gates in the 5th century (Fig.2). South Street cuts across the Roman forum, the NE part of which became a christian burial ground possibly dependent upon a late Roman congregational church in the forum-courtyard. The upper part of High Street survived from the Roman street grid, and Stepcote Hill-Smythen Street is also thought to have been in existence in the sub-Roman and middle Saxon periods.

The medieval street system may well have been laid out under Alfred in the late 9th century as suggested in 1972 by Martin Biddle and David Hill. The system shares features in common with those of Winchester and other burhs probably established by Alfred, e.g. back streets to the rear of the main streets, and traces of a circuit of 'intra-mural' streets immediately inside the City Wall. The partial deviation of High Street from the line of its Roman predecessor may be the result of a re-alignment made when the street system was laid out so as to allow space for burgage plots on the frontage adjoining the precinct of the minster church. Fore Street probably dates to the same period. It is sufficiently broad and straight to suggest that it was laid out in a regulated way as an extension to High Street. The existence of tenement plots of a standard length on High Street and Fore Street indicate (as might be expected) that properties here were laid out in an organised manner, probably on a single occasion. No clear evidence has yet emerged for standard tenement widths.

The identification in recent years of three classes of pottery which went out of use around 1100 has enabled some progress to be made in plotting the general distribution of late Saxon settlement within the town. The higher parts of the walled area next to High Street (outside the minster precinct) were undoubtedly more intensively occupied than the lower ground of the West Quarter and the area to the NW of Fore Street (Fig. 3). These

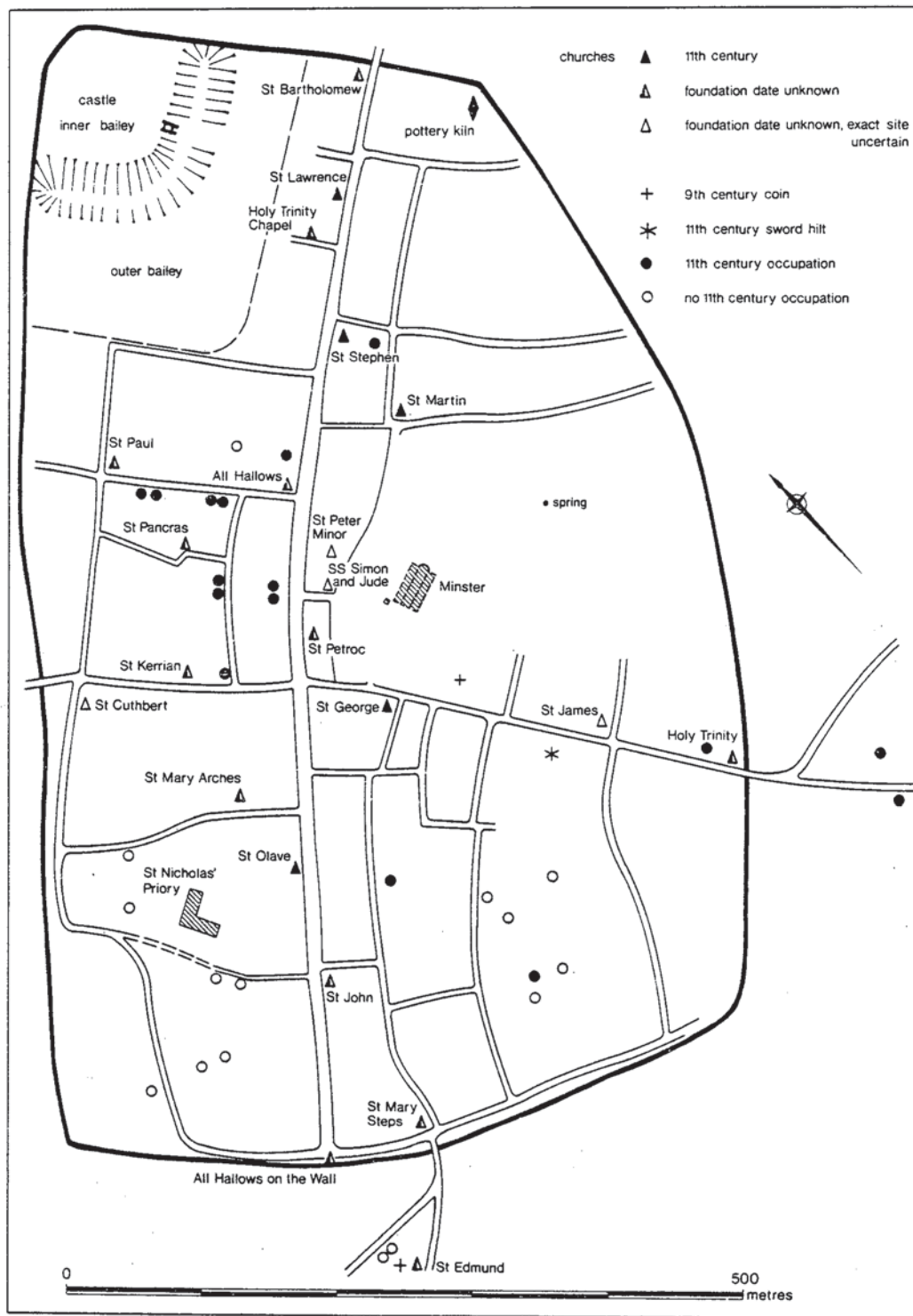


Figure 3: The extent of occupation in Exeter in the Saxo-Norman period.



areas were very thinly populated until the 13th century. On the other hand good evidence for 11th-century occupation has come from two sites in the suburb outside the South Gate. The eastern suburb is also likely to have developed in the Saxo-Norman period.

#### Parish churches

Almost all the surviving churches within the walls appear to post-date the laying-out of the streets. They occupy plots on the frontages and in most cases the orientation of the church corresponds more closely to the line of the adjacent street or property boundaries than to an east-west alignment. An exception is St Pancras which lies in a back area to the NW of High Street and is clearly earlier than Pancras Lane (Fig.4).

The parish churches had the status of parochial chapels dependant upon St Peter's cathedral. It is probable that nearly all of them were in existence by the time of William I. An entry in St Martin's Missal records that there were 29 chapels in Exeter and its immediate vicinity in his reign. By the beginning of the 13th century only three new ones had been added to this number. One of these must have been St Mary Major which until 1133 was the Old Minster church of St Peter's; another was probably St Edmund's on Exe Bridge, built c.1200. The intra-mural chapels whose sites are known are shown in Figure 4. Their distribution along the four main streets and within the upper part of the city corresponds closely with those areas which are believed to have been most intensively occupied in the 11th century.

The parish boundaries seem to have been rationalized and fixed by Bishop Simon of Apulia in 1222. Most of the boundaries ratified at that time must have been those of the chapelries carved out of the parochia of St Peter's minster in the late Saxon period. St Mary Major seems to have received as its parish those parts of the minster's original parochia which had not already become attached to one of the chapelries established by 1133.

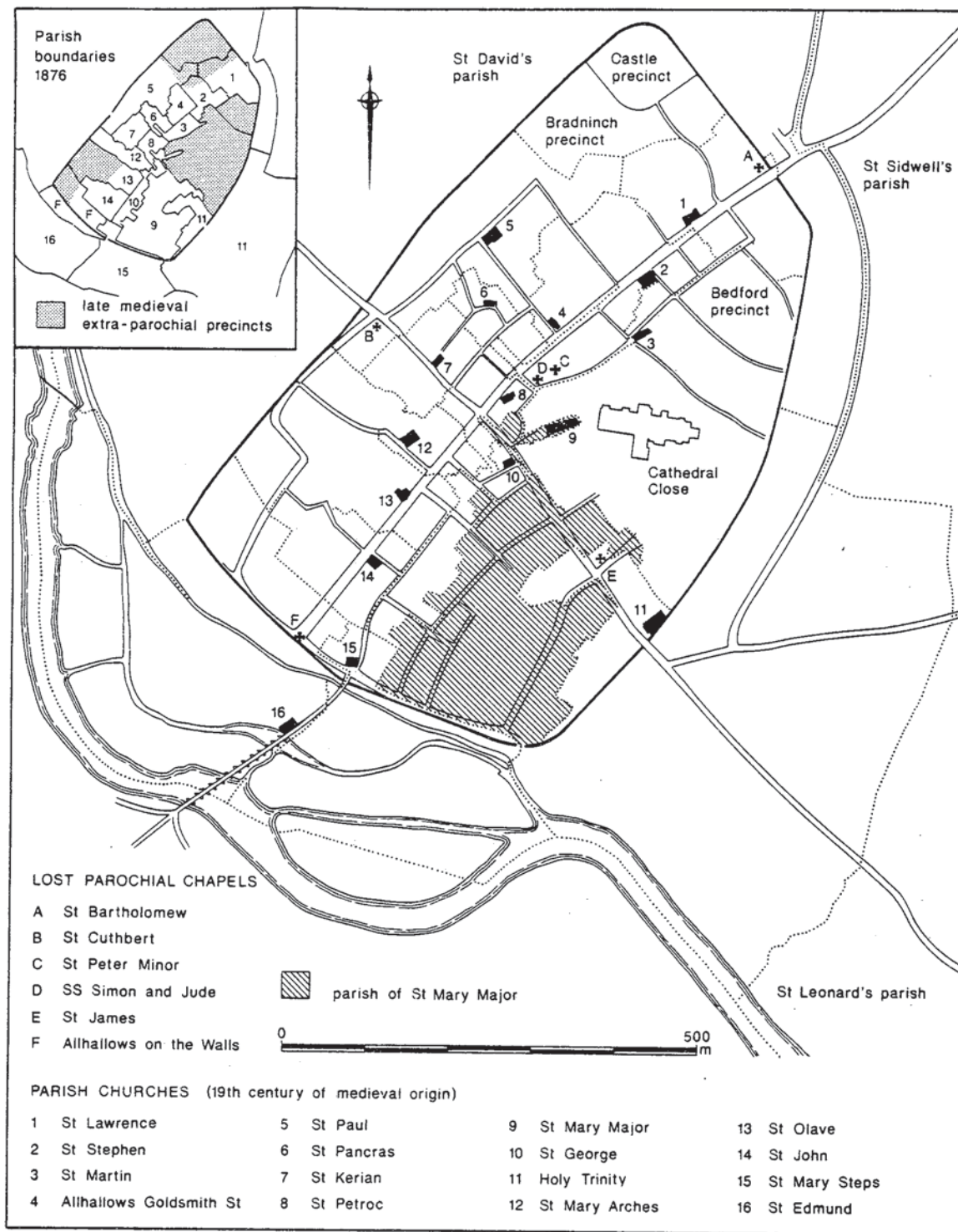


Figure 4: The intra-mural parishes of Exeter in 1876 with the sites of 'lost' parochial chapels.

The parish occupies a large part of the West Quarter (Fig.4). This is precisely that area which might be expected to have formed the unattached residual portion of the minster's parochia in the early 12th century, since excavation has shown it to have been only thinly populated. Until 1133 this area was probably directly dependant upon St Peter's.

## 5. ANCIENT MONUMENTS

### Larkbeare Bridge

This medieval bridge was discovered by the Unit when an inspection was made of the culvert beneath Larkbeare House in about 1978. It was probably built in the 13th century and carried the road between Exeter and Topsham across the Shutebrook stream. A note on the discovery appeared in a previous report to the Committee. In 1981 the bridge was scheduled by the DOE as an Ancient Monument (No. 1020, Devon). An illustrated description of the bridge appeared in the Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society for 1981: S.W. Brown 'The Medieval Larkbeare Bridge, Exeter'.

### Exe Bridge

A fairly large sum of money is currently being expended by the City Council on tidying up the remains of the bridge and improving the landscaping in its vicinity.

### City Wall

The restoration works at Northernhay Street were completed earlier in the year. In the autumn work is expected to commence <sup>work</sup> on repairing a section of wall at Cricklepit Street.

### Polsloe Priory

The renovation of the west range by the City Council has now been accomplished and the building will be opened once again by the Mayor (the last chairman of this Committee) on June 22. It will house the Stoke Hill Community Association and will be available for viewing by the public by appointment. It is hoped to maintain a small permanent display relating to the history and archaeology of the building and the rest of the priory on the upper floor.



## 6. POST EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION

The main emphasis of the Unit's work at present is on clearing the backlog of report-writing inherited from the 1970s when large sites were continuously being excavated. Considerable inroads have been made into the backlog despite reductions in staffing which have been made necessary by financial cuts.

Sites being worked on in the current financial year include Exe Bridge, St Edmund's Church and Frog Street 1975-9, for which Stewart Brown has almost completed the report - to be published as a monograph in Exeter Archaeological Reports. Rack Street and Mermaid Yard 1975-8 will be worked on at archive level this year, as will High Street 1972-3 and Bartholomew Street 1980.

Preliminary analysis of Cathedral Close 1971-6 (medieval) and Friernhay Street 1981 has largely been completed. It is hoped that Paul Bidwell will be available for several months at the end of the year to continue writing his volume on the Roman pottery (E.A.R. 4).

A report on the recording and excavation of Great Moor farmhouse, Sowton in 1978-9 is in preparation and will be submitted for inclusion in the 1983 Proceedings of the Devon Archaeol. Soc. An implications survey outlining future requirements for excavation and building recording in Exeter will be prepared by the end of the year. It is hoped to include it in the Towns of Devon volume to be published in the near future by the Devon Archaeol. Soc.

The Unit submits summaries of its work each year to the journals Brittania, Medieval Archaeology and Post-Medieval Archaeology and also to Archaeology in Devon and Archaeology in Britain.

Other publications which have appeared recently are:

C.J. Arnold and J.P. Allan 'Exeter: its clay tobacco-pipe industry and commercial relations', in Davey, P. (ed.) The Archaeology of the Clay Tobacco Pipe, B.A.R. 78 (1980), 305-24.

C.G. Henderson 'Exeter', in Schofield, J. and Palliser, D. (eds.) Recent Archaeological Research in English Towns (1981), 36-7.

C.G. Henderson 'Exeter', in Waterfront Archaeology in Britain and Northern Europe (1981), 119-23.

John Allan has two papers on the ceramics trade of the Port of Exeter in press.

Finally, Exeter Archaeological Reports 3, The Medieval and Post-medieval finds from Exeter, 1971-80 by J.P. Allan is now all but ready for press. It has been read on behalf of Exeter University (the joint publishers with Exeter City Council) by Professor Malcolm Todd, and is now with the DOE Publications Section.

The volume has a total of 29 subsidiary contributors and will form an A4 monograph of about 320 pages. The text runs to c.130,000 words and there are about 175 full pages of line drawings almost all prepared by Mr. Allan and members of the AFU staff. We anticipate that the book will go to the printers in the autumn.

Director, Archaeological Field Unit.

## Exeter City Council

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 3rd December 1982.

### Report to Committee

#### 1. EXCAVATION

##### Paul Street site

Excavation has continued on a limited scale throughout the summer and autumn owing to a number of unexpected discoveries, notably the 17th-century bell-foundry. It is anticipated that the investigation of the site will be concluded during December.

Roman: The main phases of activity in this part of the Roman fortress and town attested by the excavations at Paul Street and other sites nearby are illustrated in Fig. 1, A-D. Most of the evidence comes from trench 8, whose NE section face is depicted in Fig. 2 together with reconstructed profiles corresponding with the four periods represented in Fig. 1.

The two successive defensive ditches of the legionary fortress (A.D. c. 55-75) and early town (c. 80-180/200) were found to be similar in character to those excavated on the SE and SW sides. However the Paul Street ditch section has produced some very useful fresh observations which add to and clarify our understanding of the history of the defences.

The first fortress ditch was V-shaped and would have been about 5m wide and 2.3m deep when filled in. These dimensions are similar to those recorded at Friernhay Street, where there was no berm between the ditch and the front of the rampart. It has previously been supposed that this ditch was open for a short time only, perhaps a year or two, before its replacement by the second ditch. However the size of the ditch (not small by Roman military standards), and the absence of a berm, might be taken to suggest that it was open for several years and that an original berm was gradually eaten away over several seasons of erosion and clearance.

Thus the V-shaped ditch was probably filled in and replaced by the Punic one not for any tactical military reason but because it was about to undermine the rampart. An advantage of the Punic ditch was that it had a relatively slight slope on the inner face which would not be liable to rapid erosion. By contrast the steep outer side would have required repeated recutting, and this probably explains the exceptional width and depth of the second fortress ditch.

In the bottom of the first ditch was a layer of sandy silt sealed by clay slumped from the sides. A silt-filled rill had been cut into the clay

by the action of water running along the ditch, and over this was a layer of dirty mixed clay containing small worked offcuts of oak. The main ditch fill comprised a thick deposit of clay and/or turf derived from the rampart. This was overlain by a layer of loam containing pottery and capped off with clean gravel possibly obtained from digging the upper part of the Punic ditch. The rampart-derived component of the fill has been noted in every section through the first ditch and almost certainly indicates that modifications were made to the rampart when the ditch system was redesigned. <sup>Cancelled</sup> It is possible that it was heightened using material dug from the second ditch.

The lowest fill in the second ditch consisted of washed silts and layers of slumped clay overlain by a massive wedge of natural clay and gravel which had slipped down from the steep outer side of the ditch and probably represents the product of rapid weathering in the first winter after the departure of the legion around 75.

Once the ditch profile had stabilized, further deposition seems to have been fairly slow, with numerous thin discontinuous layers of washed sand and silty clay accumulating in banks and shallow channels. These deposits were examined closely by Martin Bell with a view to establishing their source. The most likely origin for them would seem to be the rampart, which may have been gradually eroding over a considerable period. This would suggest that the defences were not maintained as a functioning military feature in the late 1st and 2nd century but allowed to decay through natural agencies. There is no sign that the ditch was ever recut after the departure of the legion.

Some indication of the rate of deposition during the late 1st century is given by the position of a group of six oak posts driven into the bottom of post-holes which cut the ditch fill about 0.4 - 0.5 m above the base of the silting layers. Samples from four posts were submitted to Jennifer Hillam of the Sheffield University dendrochronology laboratory and found to have a combined annual ring sequence spanning 89 years. Since two samples retained their bark, it should be possible to establish an absolute felling date for the timbers. The Exeter samples appear to match the curve obtained from the London waterfront, and a provisional felling date in the winter or early spring of AD <sup>100/101</sup> 89/90 has been assigned to the timbers. The average rate of silting in the <sup>25</sup> 15 or so years between the departure of the legion and the insertion of the posts were therefore probably in the order of 2.5 - 3.5 cm per annum in the deepest part of the ditch.



EXETER: PAUL STREET 1982

ROMAN

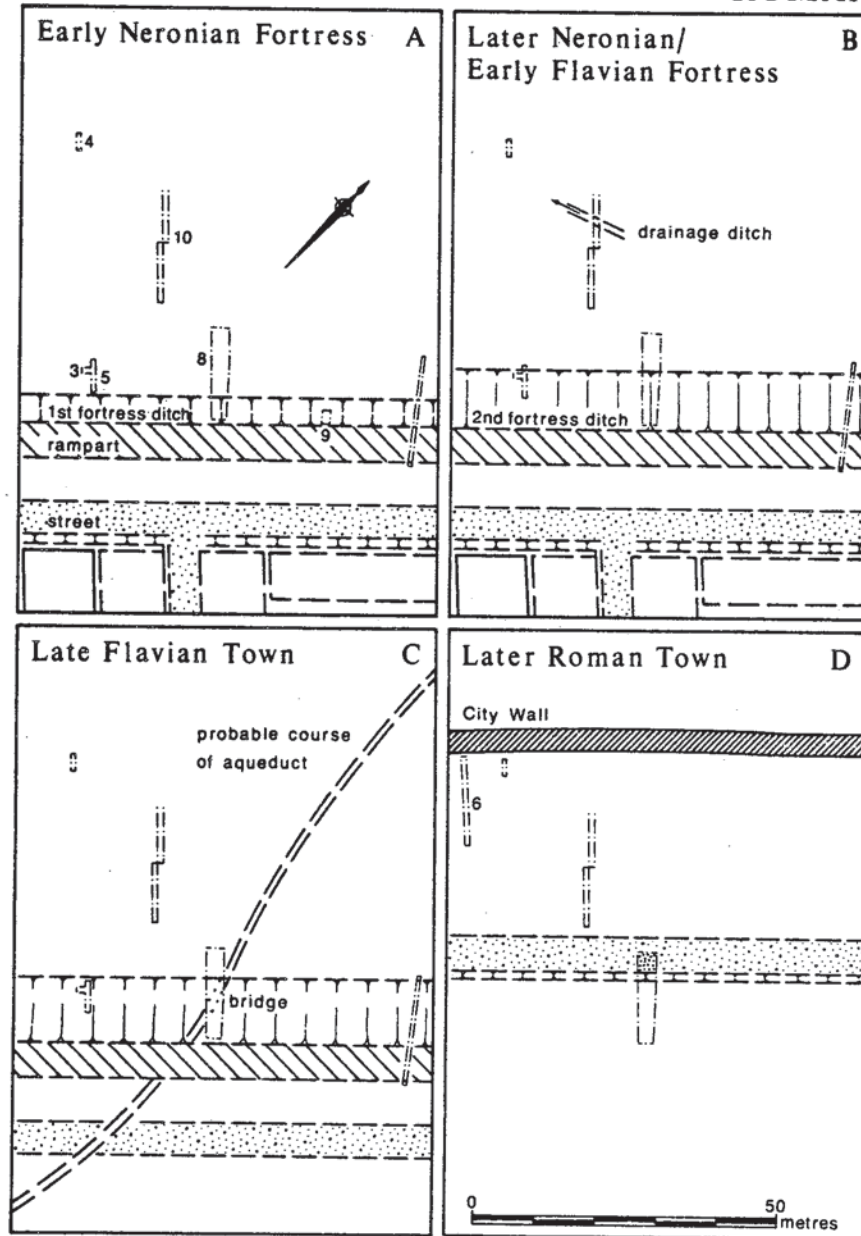
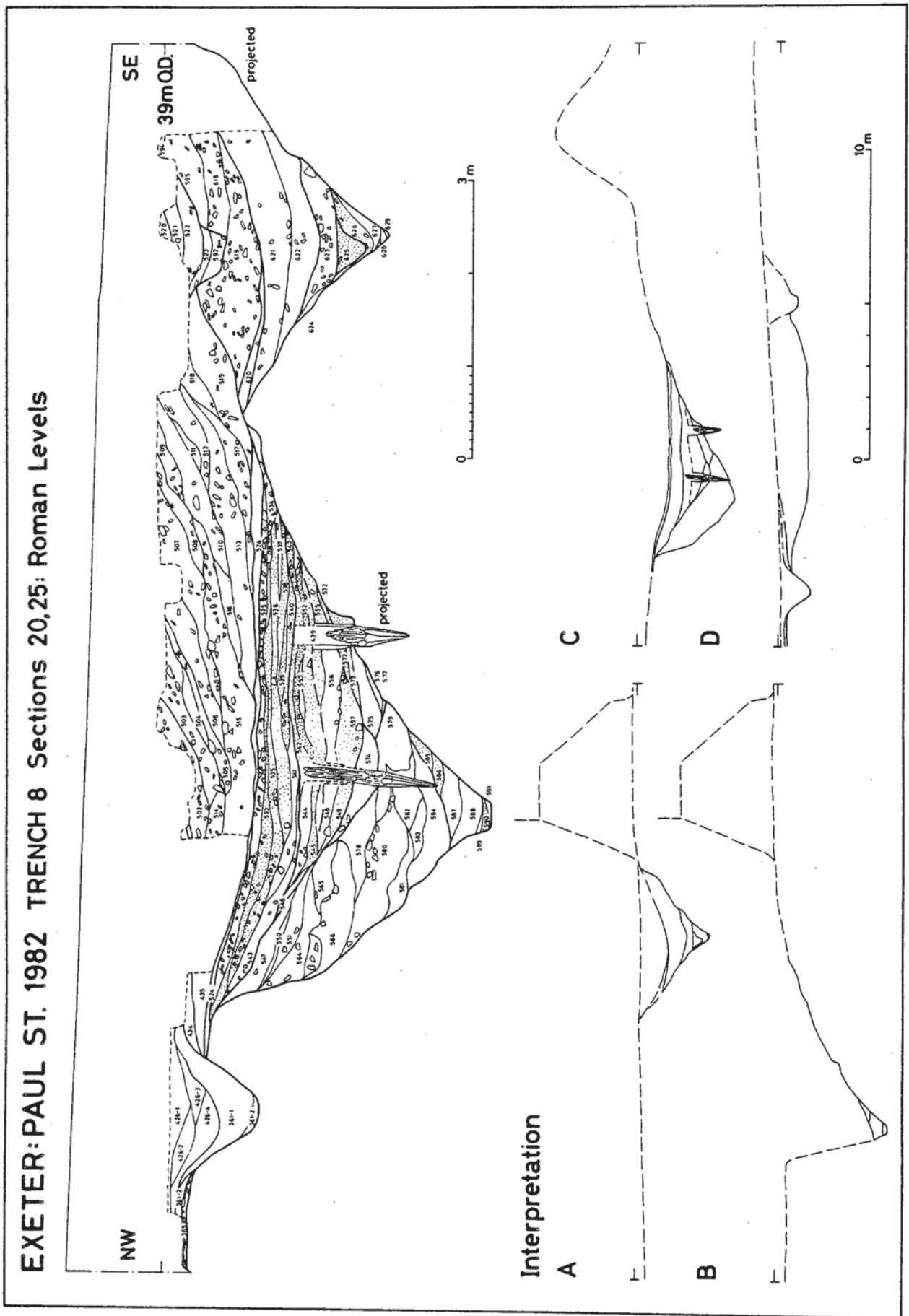


Fig. 1



In plan the six posts form two parallel rows 1.5 m apart which cross the line of the ditch obliquely. The most likely explanation of their purpose is that they represent the supports for a narrow timber bridge. It is possible to deduce with some confidence the reason why such a bridge was required at this point. In the excavations carried out in the early 1970s on the site of the Guildhall Shopping Centre a late 1st-century leat or open water channel was found which cut across the sites of the fortress buildings in this area and was traced for a distance of about 120 m (Fig. 3). This feature would have crossed the defences somewhere in the vicinity of Paul Street trench 8 on roughly the same alignment as the bridge. The latter can therefore be interpreted as having carried the leat across the town ditch.

The channel appears to have been an open contour leat of a type similar to the well-known Dorchester aqueduct, although it would have had a somewhat smaller carrying capacity. The gradient of the channel in the section excavated was less than 1/1000. Topographical considerations indicate a source in the Longbrook Valley no more than 1.2 km (0.7 miles) from the town at an altitude of 39-40 m O.D. The water might have been obtained from one of the springs in the Well Street area of St. Sidwells (cf. Dorchester) or by diverting the Longbrook itself (cf. ?Leicester). The latter seems the more likely source since the known springs in the post-medieval period were somewhat higher than 40 m and in any case are likely to have been tapped to feed the main aqueduct of the Roman town. This was presumably inherited from the legionary fortress, having originally supplied the military bath-house; it was probably diverted in the 80s to provide water for the new town baths. The aqueduct found in the Guildhall area must therefore have been subsidiary to the main supply. Why was it required? An industrial function seems improbable as there were small streams (the Longbrook and the 'Combe') close to the town which could have been utilized without difficulty for such purposes. The channel appears to have been aligned on the western corner of the forum, and so it is possible that the aqueduct was built to bring water to the market place in front of the forum. Another possibility is that it furnished an additional supply to the town baths, which lay on the south-east side of the market place. Whatever the case, it seems probable that construction of the aqueduct formed part of the programme of public works which commenced around 80 and saw the erection of the forum and the public baths. The subsidiary nature of the Guildhall aqueduct is further indicated by its short period of use. / <sup>On the</sup> Trichay Street site it



EXETER: EARLY ROMAN TOWN

AQUEDUCT c.90

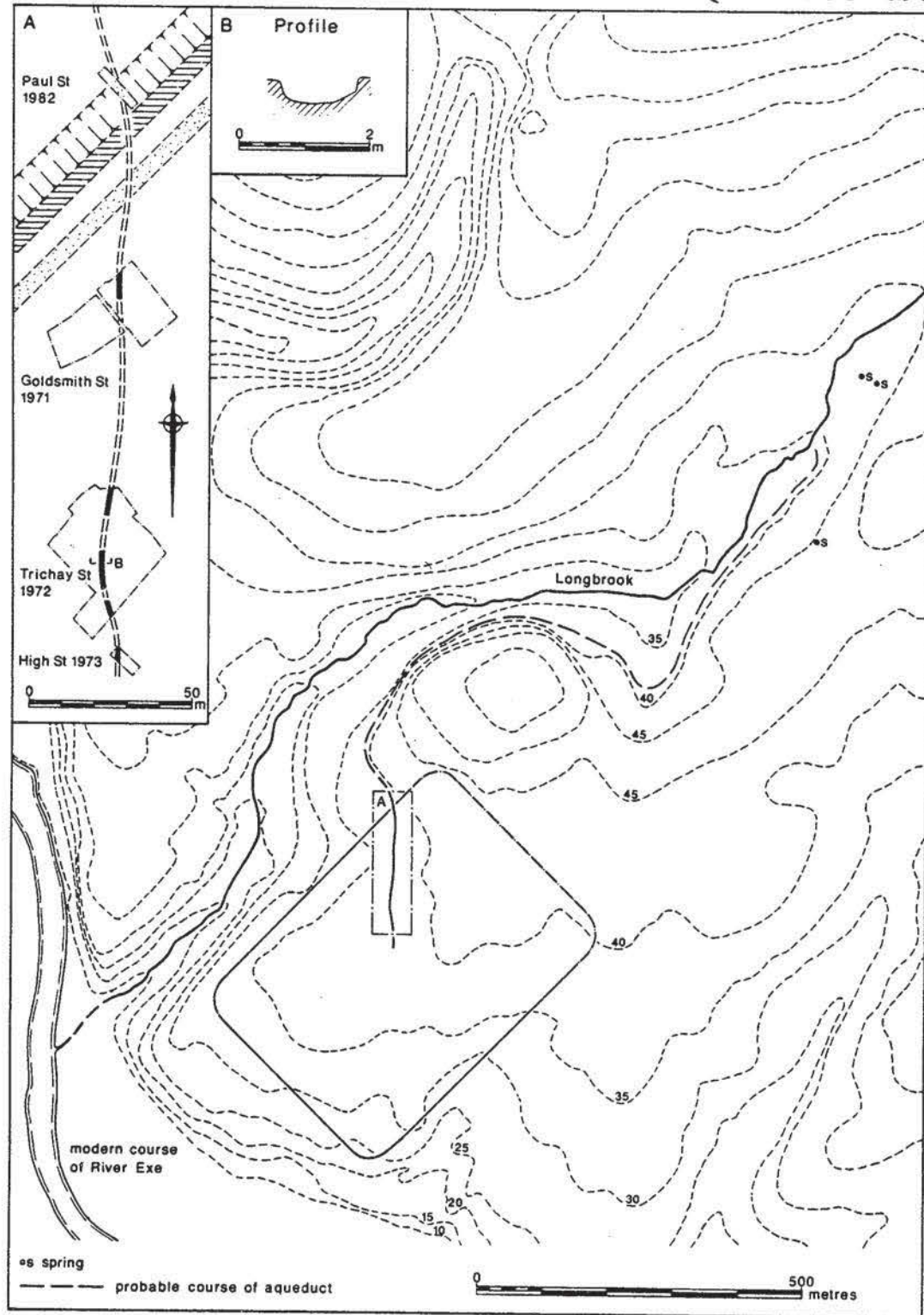


Fig. 3



seems to have been filled in by the second quarter of the 2nd century and subsequently had houses built over it.

Returning to the Paul Street site, sediments similar to those already described accumulated around the posts supporting the aqueduct bridge before their decayed tops eventually became covered over at a level 0.65 - 0.75 m above the base of the silting layers. However it is not worth attempting a calculation of the life of the bridge (and hence of the aqueduct) based on the rate of sedimentation suggested for the period between c. 75 and 90 (above), as there are too many imponderables to take into account. The sediments over the centre of the ditch finally reached a total thickness of about one metre. It is noteworthy that these deposits contained almost no pottery or other refuse, and this must indicate a lack of domestic occupation nearby during most of the second century. The sections of ditch examined at Rack Street, Mermaid Yard and Friernhay Street all produced very large Antonine rubbish deposits sealed beneath the layers of clay thrown down from the rampart around 180-200. But apart from a single thin layer, deposits of this type were absent at Paul Street, probably because the ditch was already largely silted up when the decision was taken to use it as the town rubbish dump prior to the demolition of the rampart.

Recent excavations have shown that in the 2nd or 3rd century new streets were created on the SE and SW sides of the town which ran parallel with the old defences just beyond the outer lip of the town ditch. One edge of a corresponding street on the NW side was found in trench 8 at Paul Street. The SE limit of the street was marked in the 4th century by a boundary ditch whose fill yielded colour-coated éponge ware from Aquitania and white-slipped amphora from North Africa.

City Wall and Post-Roman: At the time of writing a trench is being cut through the bank behind the City Wall to investigate its character and history. Although over a dozen sections have been dug into this feature during the past 50 years, the tail of the bank appears never to have been adequately recorded. The results are already proving most informative and it is clear that the Roman bank was considerably wider than was believed previously. A note on the results of this work will appear in the next report together with an account of the medieval history of the site and the important 17th-century bell-foundry. Fig. 4. shows the main phases of activity in the post-Roman centuries.

# EXETER: PAUL STREET 1982

# MEDIEVAL & POST-MEDIEVAL

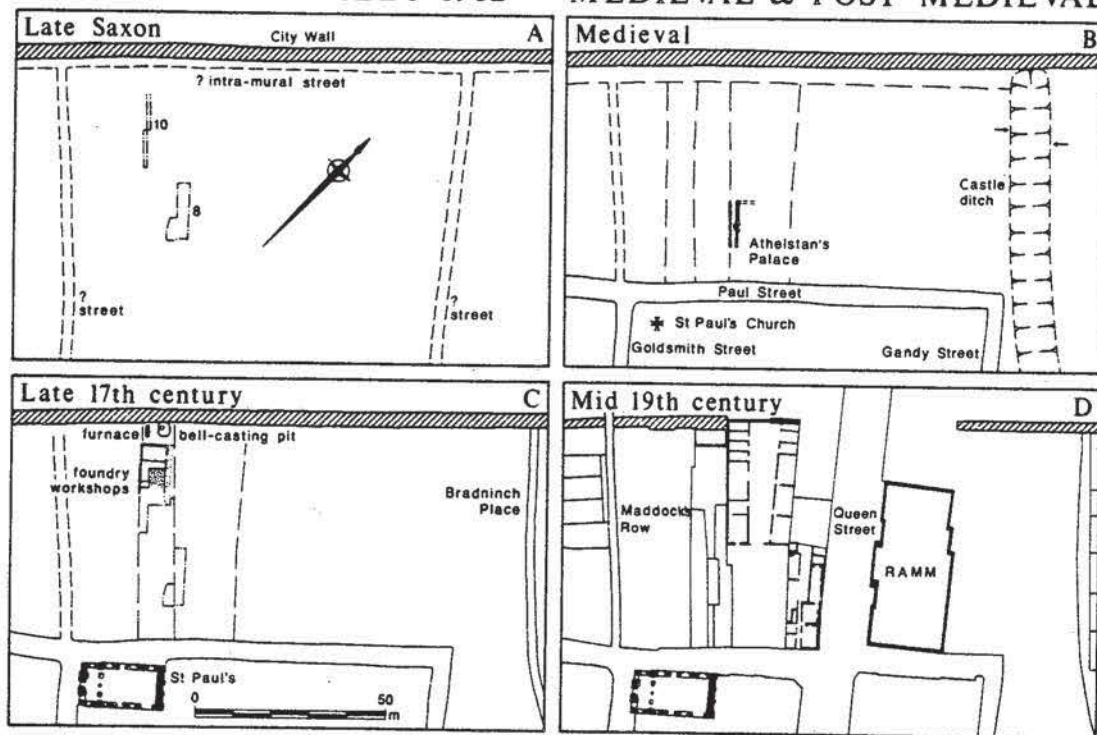


Fig. 4

## 2. WATCHING BRIEFS

### Bartholomew Street East

Observation of contractors' trenches at Bartholomew Street revealed the position of the drainage ditch on the inside of the NW via sagularis (inner perimeter street) of the Roman legionary fortress. When taken in conjunction with the results of the Paul Street excavation this is a very important sighting as it enables us to plot reasonably accurately the line of the defences and perimeter street on the NW side of the fortress and to estimate closely the length of the Guildhall barracks.

A new plan of the fortress at a scale of 1:500 is being prepared at the moment; it is hoped to include a note on the planning of the fortress in the next Committee report.

### City wall at Bradninch Place/Northernhay Gardens

Consolidation and repointing of the City Wall next to the AFU huts has taken place in recent weeks. The removal of undergrowth and rubbish from its rear and <sup>the</sup> demolition of a length of 19th-century walling have revealed Roman and medieval masonry of several periods in an excellent state of preservation. Detailed analysis of the stonework and stone-by-stone drawing of selected stretches of the rear face have demonstrated that at one point Roman ~~work~~ probably survives to a level almost as high as the wall-walk. In another area facework in three steps or scarcements represents late Roman or early medieval rebuilding after a collapse.



Whilst staff were working on the Wall, two long vertical sheer cracks were noticed in the wall of the R.A.M. Museum 'Baby' Gallery and Gallery Three. The cracks are about 10 m apart and it is clear that the brickwork between them has subsided at some time. There is good reason to believe that the feature causing this subsidence is the outer ditch of Rougemont Castle. The position of the cracks is shown by arrows in Fig. 4B. It has generally been assumed in the past that the ditch ran along the line of Gandy Street but it now seems that a course a little to the NE of the street is more likely.

#### New North Road

A gas pipe trench excavated in the SW pavement of New North Road (opposite nos. 36-41) exposed a section through made ground containing pottery dating from the second half of the 17th century. The context of the deposit is not known but one possibility is that it represents material dumped into a ditch of the Civil War period perhaps in the early 1660s. John Allan writes: the finds consist principally of three vessel types used in refining sugar. One of these - the tall cone - is well known in archaeological literature. The other two have hitherto remained unrecognised, but their functions may be deduced from a mid 18th-century French treatise on the subject. One type, a globular jar, was evidently placed under the cone and served to catch molasses draining from the sugar. The second, a tall open vessel with three feet, held the sugar during granulation. A much larger group of similar fragments, found in Goldsmith Street in 1971, illustrates the three vessel types. Their use may be seen in Fig. 5 nos. 2578-9. Like the clay tobacco pipes manufactured in the city at this period, these vessels provide an archaeological reflection of the boom in Exeter's Atlantic trade between c. 1670 and 1715. In these years small manufacturing and processing industries benefitted from the cheap carriage of goods made possible by the large volume of shipping engaged in carrying woollen cloth to overseas markets from the quays of Exeter and Topsham.

#### Lower North Street and Little Silver

In the 17th century Exeter ranked amongst the six largest industrial towns in England. The mainstay of the city's economy was the cloth finishing industry. The excavations of recent years have brought to light surprisingly little direct evidence of the various processes, such as fulling and dyeing, involved in the woollen industry. This is probably just a matter of chance and no doubt abundant evidence would be forthcoming were excavations ever to take place, for example, in the Cricklepit area next to the Higher and Lower leats.

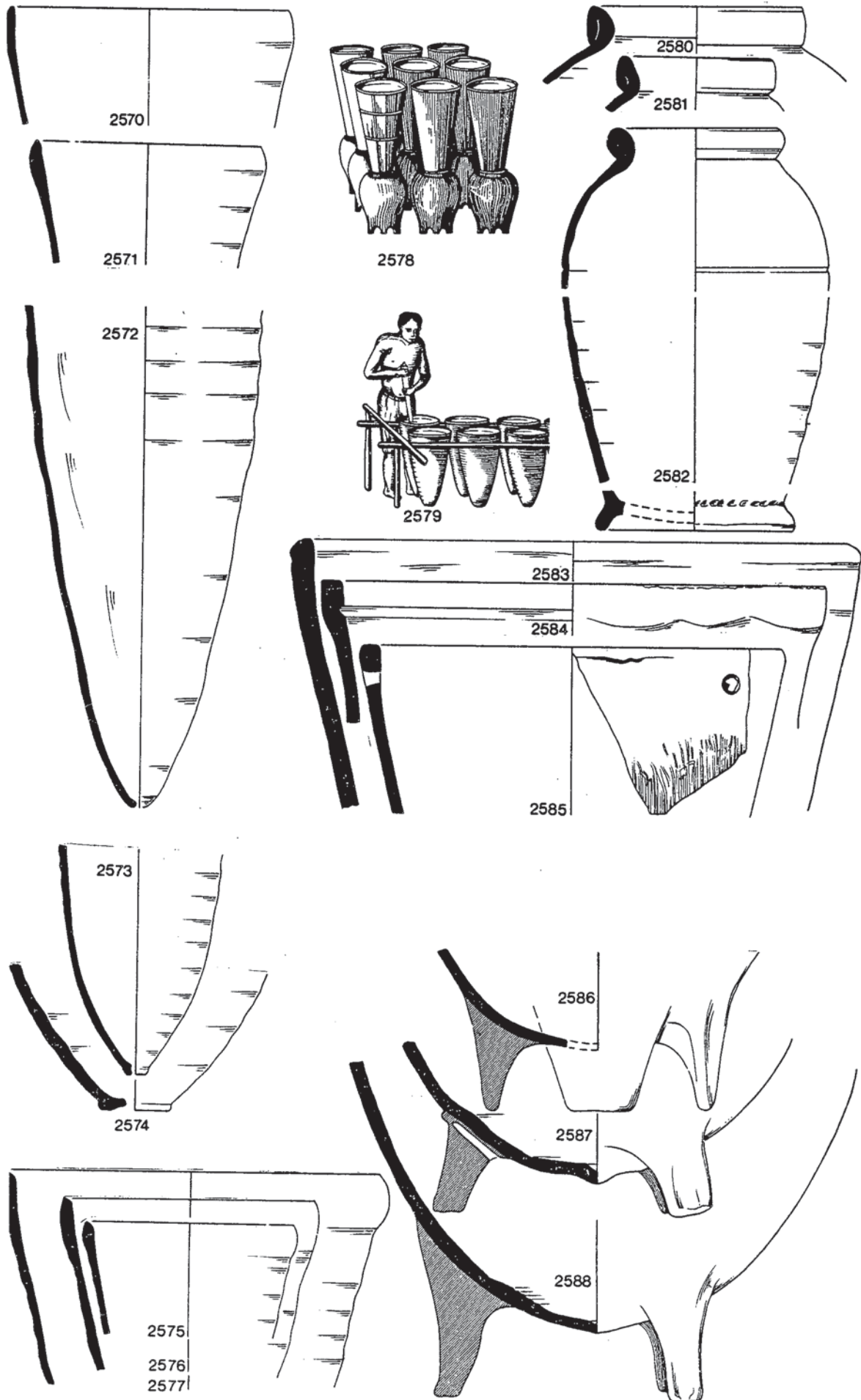


Fig. 5



# 30-33, LOWER NORTH STREET, EXETER

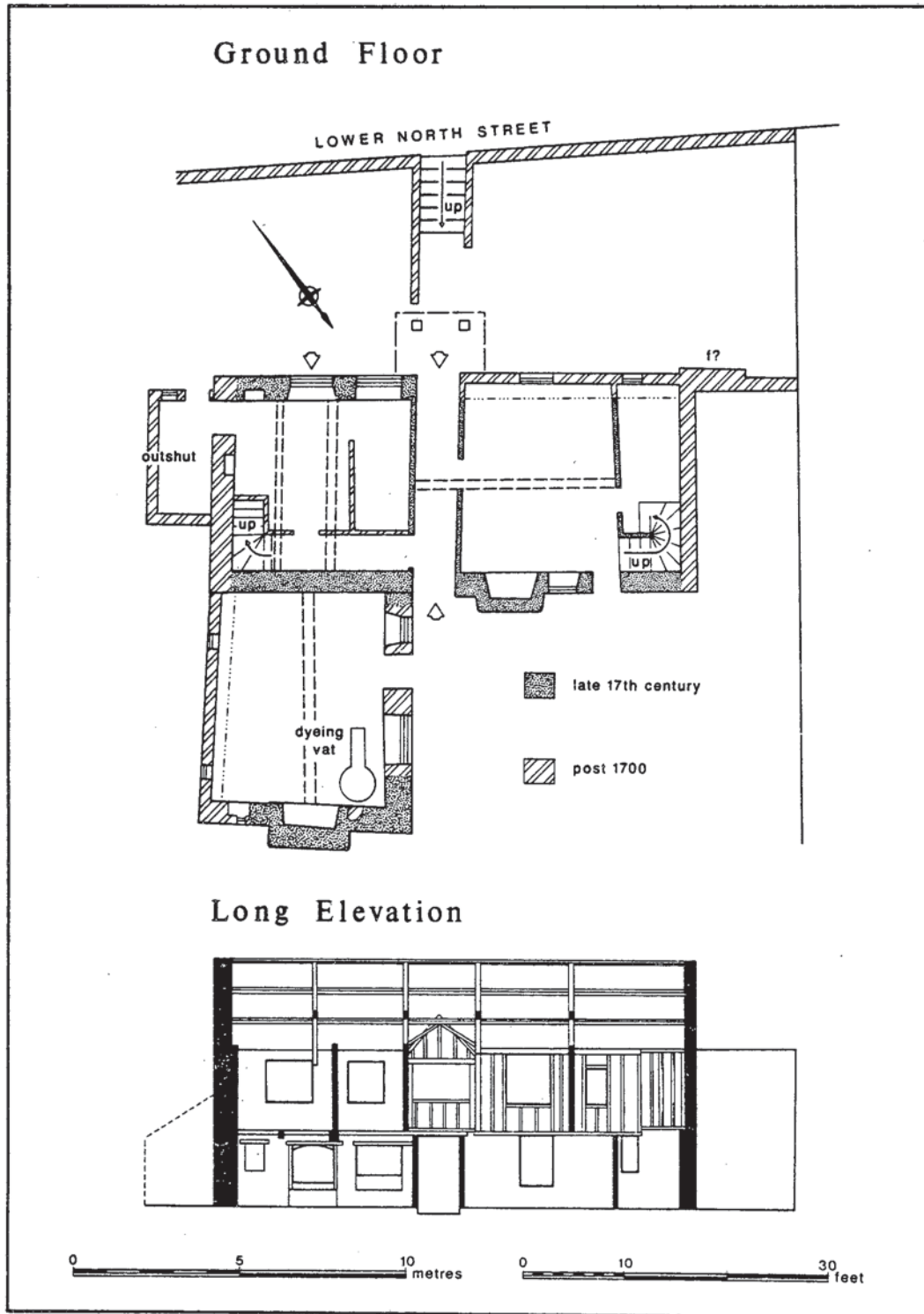


Fig. 6

31, LOWER NORTH STREET, EXETER

DYE-HOUSE c.1700

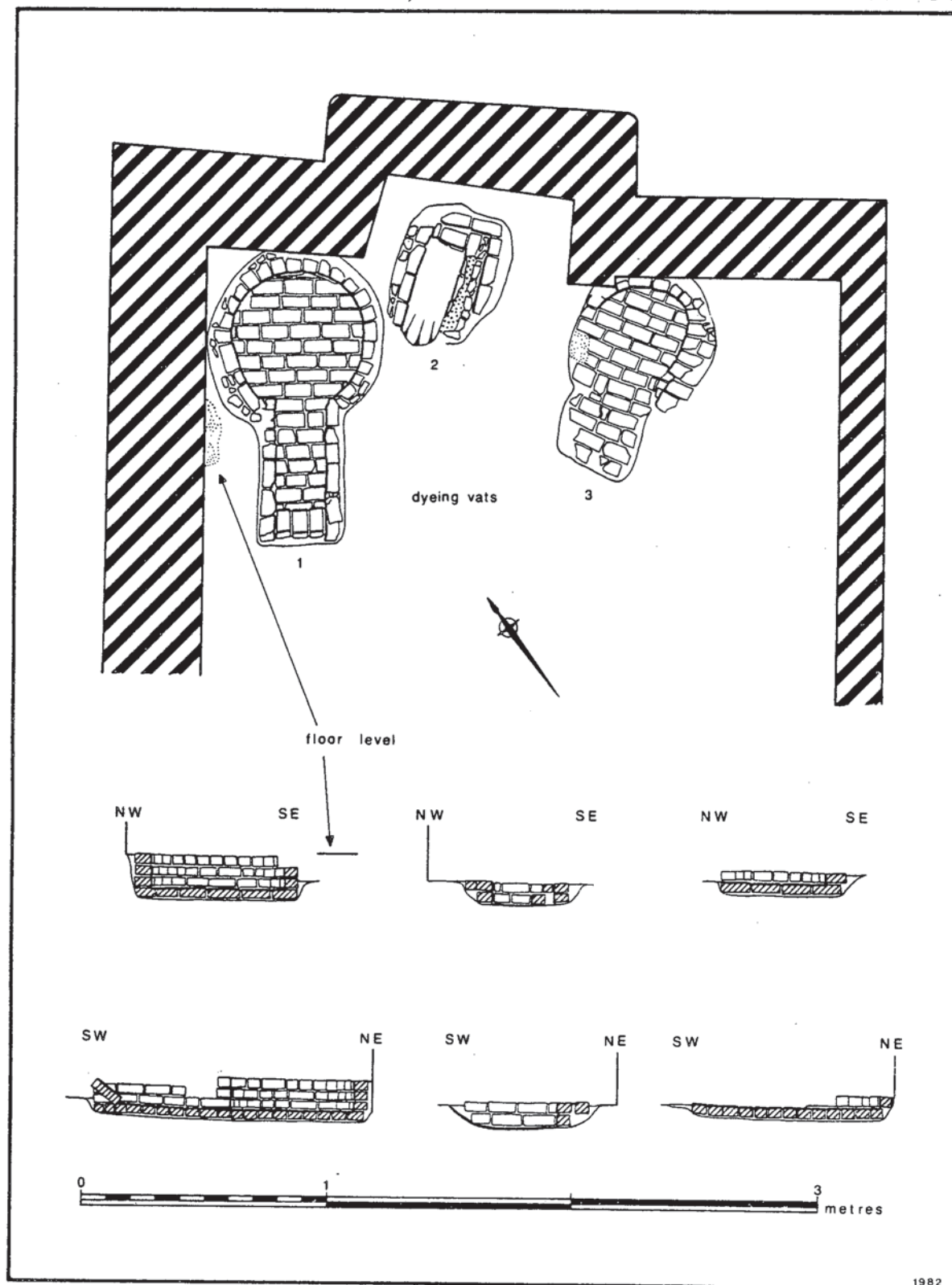


Fig. 7

Two chance discoveries made recently in the St. David's area contribute towards the elimination of this gap in the archaeology of Exeter. When the owner of no. 31 Lower North Street excavated the floor inside his cottage in order to provide increased head-room in accordance with building regulations, he uncovered the foundations of three brick-built structures. These were subsequently recorded by the Unit and a survey was also made of the cottage and those adjacent.

The cottages now known as nos. 30-33 Lower North Street once formed a single house comprising a front range containing three rooms and a cross passage and a rear block which did not communicate internally with the rest of the house. The front range can be ascribed on the basis of its structural features to the mid to late 17th century. The rear block should also belong in the 17th century although it clearly represents an addition to the plan.

The brick structures could be shown stratigraphically to belong to two distinct periods. Nos. 2 and 3 predate the construction of the rear block and must have occupied an earlier building on a slightly different alignment whose foundations have left no trace. No. 1 was built and used inside the existing walls of the rear block and appears to have been demolished some time during the first half of the 18th century. All three were baked internally and contained wood ash and charcoal. They are thus likely to have belonged to some kind of furnace or kiln. The two main candidates are dyeing vats or malting kilns. Further research will be required before any firm conclusion can be reached, but the location of a dyehouse in this vicinity would not be surprising as the Longbrook was fairly close to the house and dyers are known to have worked in the Exe Street/Lower North Street area in the 18th century.

A large group of finds was recovered from the back garden of no. 1 Little Silver earlier this year. The collection is unstratified but consists mainly of early 18th century material. Two objects of particular interest were iron tenter-hooks for attaching cloth to drying racks. These are the first examples to be identified from Exeter.

### 3. STANDING BUILDINGS

#### The Cathedral (John Allan)

During the last year it has become increasingly apparent that staff from the Unit could not devote the necessary time to recording work in the Cathedral without some financial assistance from the Dean and Chapter. The replacement of extensive areas of masonry on the South Tower and repairs and shelter-coating on the West Front made such work most urgent. The Dean and Chapter were therefore approached for the funding of an archaeological post during 12 of the next 24 months. This proposal received



support from the Exeter Cathedral Technical Advisory Committee and the Cathedral Archivist and Surveyor, and was favourably received by the Dean and Chapter, who approved the funding of the post in September. Mr. Stuart Blaylock was appointed to undertake rescue recording in the Cathedral in October.

The recording of the areas of masonry replaced on the South Tower in 1982 has been completed, and work is currently in progress on the West Front. The principal task has been to make detailed elevation drawings showing the present state of the fabric. The main discovery on the South Tower is the recognition that some of the details of the belfry stage and turrets suggest that they are rather later in date than has hitherto been believed: they were probably built after 1170. The towers therefore seem to have been under construction over a considerable period - perhaps 50 years or so - and this realisation suggests that several constructional phases should be visible in them.

The West Front has attracted our attention for many years, since it is obvious that many periods of medieval and later work are represented. A major surprise has been the recognition of a fragment of the Norman triforium surviving above the 14th-century aisle vaults. The remnants of a west front preceding any of the elements of the image screen was found last year, and it is clear that more is left of the early designs of the front than has hitherto been apparent. A total of at least six medieval phases of work and five periods of restoration can currently be distinguished.

#### Vernacular Buildings

Houses where recording has taken place this year include 41-2, High Street; Mol's Coffee House, The Close; 16-17, Cathedral Yard; The Turk's Head, High Street; 10, The Close (Bishop of Crediton); The Bishop's Palace; 30-33, Lower North Street; Houses in Paul Street/Queen Street; White House and Red House, Home of the Good Shepherd, Holloway Street; and 30, Fore Street, Topsham.

The most notable discovery has been of a wooden capital and arcade posts which formed part of the original Norman aisled hall of the Bishop's Palace. The Holloway Street houses have been recorded in considerable detail following total stripping during renovation. They have proved to be large suburban mansions dating from the late 17th and early 18th centuries.



#### 4. POST-EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION

##### Cathedral Close

Following the recent publication of an interim account of the Saxon and medieval remains excavated in the Close in 1971-6, the study of the human skeletal material recovered from this site and others in Exeter has recently been started by Gillian Stroud, an external post-graduate student of the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology in the University of Sheffield. Her work will fill a major gap in the study of the evidence from Exeter sites<sup>of</sup> which we have been conscious for many years. The Unit has undertaken to pay her University registration fees.

##### Faunal remains

Mark Maltby's study of the animal bones from Exeter sites excavated between 1971 and 1975, published by Sheffield University as volume 2 in the Exeter Archaeological Reports series, is a pioneer work in the field of urban archaeology which contains a wealth of information on aspects of diet in the Roman period and later. Unfortunately the bone collection used in his research was particularly poor for the later medieval period. Two large sites, Exe Bridge and Polsloe Priory, excavated since 1975 and due to be published shortly, have very good groups of bones dating between 1200 and 1500. In November Mr. Bruce Levitan was appointed by the DOE as regional bone analyst for the South-West. It is hoped that he will be able to work on the bones from these two Exeter sites in the next year.

##### E.A.R. volume 3

The manuscript of John Allan's long-awaited volume on the medieval and post-medieval finds from Exeter has been approved by the DOE but has still not gone to press owing to the late submission of contributions from three specialists: Ian and Alison Goodall, and Laurence Keen. It is now unlikely to go to the printers before January.

##### E.A.R. volume 4

It has been decided for a number of reasons to publish the reports on Exe Bridge and Polsloe Priory in one volume with the theme 'Medieval and post-medieval Exeter outside the Walls'. Reports on other extra-mural sites will also be included in the book together with a section on vernacular architecture. It is hoped that the book will be published about one year after volume 3.

##### Bell-foundry sites

The medieval and post-medieval foundry sites at Mermaid Yard, Albany Road and Paul Street will be prepared during the next year for publication in a local or national journal.

C.G. Henderson,  
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