

1994

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report to Committee 25 March 1994

#### 1. FIELD RECORDING PROJECTS

##### 1.1 South Gate

###### *Introduction*

Repaving of the footpath at the lower end of South Street is currently being carried out by the City Council. The scheme involves marking out in coloured brickwork those parts of the foundations of the Roman and medieval gate towers that fall within the limits of the pavement. The Roman tower was discovered in 1964-5 by Lady Fox and partially re-excavated by the AFU in 1989 during road widening by Devon County Council. Whilst the basal course of stonework in the upstanding walls of the tower still survived in the 1960s, only the broader rubble-filled foundation trenches were found to be preserved in the NE two-thirds of the tower re-exposed in 1989 – the higher levels having been destroyed in the intervening period by landscaping and other activities. For this reason a precise match between the plans compiled in the two excavations has proved difficult to achieve.

In February this year the SW third of the Roman tower interior was uncovered again for the first time since the 1960s. It too has suffered severely in the intervening years. A 1960s gas-pipe trench completely destroyed the SW side wall, and the interior has been much affected by other more superficial disturbances. There however remain a few stones belonging to the NW (rear) wall of the masonry recorded in 1964-5, which provide a vital link allowing the results of the two excavation episodes to be correlated fairly closely.

The SW wall of the late medieval gatehouse was located in the 1989 excavations at the point where it abutted the city wall. The remainder of its outline has been reconstructed from the c. 1758 Chamber Map Book survey held in the Devon Record Office. No trace of medieval fabric was noted in 1994. Most of the area has been disturbed by 19th-century cellars, although it is still possible that some foundations survive.

This is probably the last time the Roman tower foundations will be exposed to view for many years to come. An outline of the development of the South Gate was given in the October 1992 Advisory Committee report. This account now requires significant modification in the light of fresh observations on site and further analysis of excavation records. The sequence of development as it is now understood is as follows.

###### *Roman military period (c. 50-80)*

The road leading to Topsham from the SE gate of the legionary fortress appears to have been relatively lightly metalled with gravel. The 1964-5 military ditch on its SW side marks the NE boundary of the c. 4 acre military compound first recognised on the Lower Coombe Street site in 1989-90.

###### *Early Roman town (c. 80-160/180)*

Additional layers of metalling were added to the road surface on at least three occasions up to the middle of the second century to form a roadway with a marked camber. The silver-cupellation hearth found in 1964-5 probably lay within an extra-mural building on the SW side of the road.

###### *Later second-century rampart and gate (c. 160-180)*

In the period 160-180 a broad, low, wattle-fronted rampart was thrown up on the line later followed by the town wall. In the South Street area this followed the crest of the ridge between the Coombe and Shutebrook valleys. A timber gate built across the Topsham road probably possessed a pair of hollow towers flanking a single-passage gateway inset from the front of the rampart by about 7.5m. Two substantial ditches lay beyond the rampart.

###### *Later Roman wall and gate*

In the late second or earlier third century the timber gate was replaced by a larger stone gatehouse which likewise possessed two towers framing a single-portal gateway. This gate was formerly believed to have



had postern-gates flanking the main carriageway, but this interpretation is now rejected. The town wall abutted the sides of the new stone gatehouse so as to present a continuous face of masonry, there now being no recessed court in front of the gate. The material displaced from the front 3m of the rampart when the wall was inserted was piled up at the rear to form a broad bank whose top surface reached a height of 1.5m below the wall-walk. The outer defensive ditch was filled in during the third century.

#### *Early medieval period (400-1200)*

The road from Topsham continued to pass through the town wall at the site of the Roman gate throughout the post-Roman centuries. The Roman gatehouse, however, had disappeared by the time a new stone gate was erected in the late Saxon or early Norman period. The Saxo-Norman gate took the form of a stone tower standing over the roadway. The centre of the gate tower was positioned about 1.5m to the NE of the axis of the Roman gateway. The SW side wall of the Saxo-Norman gate was discovered in 1989, when it was interpreted as forming part of the Roman gate, but a number of considerations now make this interpretation untenable. Probably in the late 9th century (880s?) an intra-mural track or lane c. 5m in width was laid out along the top of the late Roman bank around the whole circuit of the wall. This would have facilitated access to the wall for defensive and maintenance purposes.

#### *Thirteenth-century developments*

As noted in the October 1992 report, there is clear evidence for the addition of a round projection tower on the SW side of the gate, probably in the late 13th century. It is uncertain whether this structure formed part of an external gatehouse (cf. Gloucester East Gate), or whether the gateway was simply flanked by individual half-round towers. There is documentary evidence from the mid 14th century for the existence of a postern next to the South Gate, which is thought to have been located on the NE side of the main entry.

#### *Late medieval barbican gatehouse*

This large projecting structure has been described in previous reports. Its precise date of construction is still a matter for conjecture, although there remains a distinct possibility that the date will be established from documentary sources. It may prove to be later than has sometimes been assumed, as is the case of the East Gate, which is now firmly dated on documentary evidence to around 1510.

## **1.2 Underground Passages and medieval aqueducts**

### *Introduction*

A continuing theme of the Unit's work over the past ten years has been research into the history of the Underground Passages and on Exeter's Roman and medieval aqueducts. Considerable progress has been made in the last year on bringing the fabric survey of the passages to a conclusion and on completing documentary research on the developments of the medieval and early modern aqueducts. We now know a great deal about the origins of Exeter's early water supply; the city has arguably the most fully understood and best documented medieval aqueduct system of any town in Britain. It possessed in fact a series of individual aqueducts which were developed to serve a number of different institutions, at first mainly religious, later increasingly secular.

### *First cathedral aqueduct*

The earliest piped water supply system in Exeter was built by the cathedral canons, probably in the third quarter of the 12th century, although no close date for its inception is known. The source for the first cathedral aqueduct was a spring on the SE side of Well Street, located close to its junction with modern York Road; this supplied water to a cistern standing in the middle of Well Street which was known as St Sidwell's Well. A pipeline ran from the cistern through fields towards East Gate, whence it followed the ~~other~~ <sup>outer</sup> edge of the town ditch as far as the Archdeacon of Totnes' tower, which stood on the city wall where The Close now enters Southernhay. Having passed across a pipe-bridge and through the base of the tower, the pipe ran along the north side of the Norman cathedral to St Peter's Conduit near the NW corner of the west front. The conduit probably provided water for use not only by the clergy but also by citizens living in the upper part of the town. There would have been numerous minor springs and wells scattered around the town at this period, including a number of long-established public wells such as Town Well



in lower Fore Street. The trench which contained the first cathedral pipeline has now been recognised in three excavation sites: at King William Street (1983), London Inn Square (1987) and 15 Cathedral Close (1991).

#### *Extension to St Nicholas Priory*

Some time in the 1070s or 80s the prior of St Nicholas obtained licence from the Dean and Chapter permitting a pipeline to be laid from St Peter's Conduit to the priory, in the western quarter of the lower city. This probably passed through Broadgate into High Street to run past Carfax and into the priory precinct via Mary Arches Street.

#### *Extension to Town Well*

The well-known tripartite agreement drawn up in 1226 between the cathedral authorities, the prior and the city council concerning the equal division of the water supply is now believed to have been occasioned by the construction of a further pipeline to bring water from St Nicholas Priory along Friernhay Street to Town Well, situated in Fore Street next to St John's Church.

#### *Extension from Headwell*

The final major development in the first cathedral system took place in the later 1260s when it appears that a pipe was laid down Well Street from a spring and cistern called Headwell in order to increase the volume of water feeding into the St Sidwell's Well cistern.

#### *Blackfriars aqueduct*

Both the source and the route of the aqueduct built c. 1248 by the Dominican Friars to bring water to their monastery in the Bedford Street area of the city have long remained a mystery. As a result of research by Mark Stoye it is now known that the springs feeding into their pipeline were located on the north side of modern Union Road fairly close to the Stoke Arms roundabout. The pipe would have run down Old Tiverton Road and Sidwell Street to East Gate and then along the outside of the town ditch to a point near the Bedford Postern Tower where a small lane (later known as Bickleigh Lane) ran up to the wall from High Street. The pipeline's point of entry through the city wall was discovered in 1954 when the late A.W. Everett recorded a medieval chamber within the wall which had been found by workmen. Everett recognised this feature as probably belonging to the Blackfriars' aqueduct. Although reported in the newspapers at the time, this discovery escaped our attention until recently.

#### *The earliest Underground Passage*

In 1346-9 the Cathedral authorities undertook a major upgrading of their water supply system, having first reached a new financial agreement with their two partners, the prior and the city council. The old pipeline from St Sidwell's Well was taken up, to be replaced by a new aqueduct which ran down from Headwell and across the Longbrook stream, before passing down Longbrook Street, crossing the stream again, and climbing up towards East Gate to run along the bottom of the town ditch in front of the gate, finally passing through the base of the city wall near modern Princesshay. Once within the walls the pipeline ran deep beneath the grounds of St John's Hospital, and it was here that the earliest length of stone passageway was constructed in order to permit the pipe to be repaired whenever necessary without the need for disruptive excavations. The pipeline then ran down Catherine Street and across the Cathedral Close to St Peter's Conduit.

#### *Grey Friars' Conduit*

At about the same time as the Cathedral aqueduct was being re-routed, the Franciscan friars were making arrangements to bring water to their monastery in 'a dry place' outside the South Gate. Initially they had obtained licence from the bishop to take water from a wellspring in one of his properties in South Street – via a pipeline passing through South Gate. This spring was perhaps on the NE side of the street close to St James' corner. The supply from this source must have proved inadequate because in 1347 Edward III granted the friars two adjoining springs in Southernhay ditch, from whence a pipeline brought water along the ditch bottom past the South Gate and across the top of Quay Lane. The position of Southernhay Well, as it was later known, has recently been established. By 1582 it too had been tapped for public use, providing water to the South Street Conduit via a pipeline which passed through the city wall in Trinity Green to run across the bishop's garden and into Palace Gate.



### *St Nicholas Priory aqueduct*

We may presume that for a time following the rebuilding of the cathedral aqueduct water continued to be supplied as before to the priory and to the city's public conduit at Town Well. However, this arrangement was not to last for much longer. In 1387 the priory engineered its own water supply, tapping a well in Paul Street lying within a tenement between Goldsmith Street and Pancras Lane. Whether water continued to be conveyed to Town Well from the priory after 1387 is uncertain. After the Dissolution the priory well supplied water to a conduit standing on the corner of North Street and Bartholomew Street East.

### *The New Conduit (c. 1420)*

The detailed chronology and developmental history of the city council's first water supply system have long been somewhat obscure. A relatively clear picture has now emerged from recent documentary research. Work on building the new aqueduct probably commenced in 1420, and the system was certainly functioning by 1425. The source was a well in Headwell Mead lying fairly close to the cathedral's Headwell. The pipeline followed a route similar to that taken by the Cathedral aqueduct as far as East Gate. At the gate it was carried across the ditch between the bridge abutments on a timber support. Service chambers, provided with doors (which are still visible today in the Underground Passages), were built within the masonry masses forming the internal and external bridge abutments. The outer chamber incorporated a gun port that covered the floor of the ditch looking towards the Castle. The aqueduct of the early 1420s terminated at a conduit next to St Stephen's Church.

### *Improvements and extensions to the New Conduit (c. 1429-1441)*

Within a few years of its construction, the city's aqueduct was extended further down the High Street to bring water to a 'stoup' outside the Guildhall before running on to a substantial cistern at Carfax. At the same time (1429-30) the supply of water to Headwell was augmented by the laying of 26 perches of pipe to tap the Higher Well. The financial records of the City Treasurer for 1441 show that large sums of money were laid out in that year on enlarging the Headwell cistern and in renewing the pipes (probably to a larger bore). It seems clear that the purpose of these improvements was to increase the volume of water carried by the aqueduct so that part of the supply could be conveyed to the Blackfriars, with whom the City had evidently entered into an agreement at this time. The Blackfriars' original aqueduct had presumably proved inadequate for their needs after almost two hundred years of service, and the system was probably now abandoned. The city supply was further enhanced c. 1450 when a spring lying close to Well Street on land now occupied by the St James' Park football ground was connected to the Headwell cistern.

### *The first city passage*

Detailed documentary research and fabric survey inside the Underground Passages have now revealed the complicated building history of this well-known monument, which proves to have grown piecemeal over a lengthy period, although much of the structure dates from the late 15th and early 16th century. The first stretch of service passage was built underneath the East Gate in the early 1490s, so that it would no longer be necessary to dig up the carriageway within the long gate passage in order to mend the pipes. Longer sections of underground passage were subsequently built over considerable lengths of the city and cathedral pipelines. The need for some provision of this kind became all too apparent as early as 1458/9, when the inner part of the East Gate – almost certainly a Saxo-Norman gate-tower similar to that found at the South Gate – collapsed as a result of the undermining of its foundations by deep excavations over the city pipe.

### *The second city aqueduct*

The demand for water must have risen steadily through the 15th century in parallel with the city's growth in population at this period. Around 1494 the city council and the Blackfriars decided to build a new aqueduct in a joint enterprise that would tap a spring known as Marpool which lay to the SE of Longbrook Street but nearer to the road than the wells in Headwell Mead. This new aqueduct system became known as the Little Conduit. Outside East Gate, its pipe was laid next to that of the city's first aqueduct, but in order to function properly it needed to pass beneath the gate at a lower level. The existing section of underground passage within East Gate was therefore lowered by about one metre in the late 1490s, and two new sections of passage constructed at this time, one inside and the other outside

the gate, were built to match this lower level. The aqueduct delivered water to a new conduit which stood at the upper end of High Street. Completed just after 1500, this was known variously as the Little Conduit or East Gate Conduit. The old St Stephen's Conduit seems to have been demolished at around this time. The Blackfriars branch of the new system was led along Bampfylde Street to cross over the cathedral pipe at the head of Catherine Street and so down the former Bickleigh Lane next to the Blackfriars precinct. A short stretch of passage at right angles to Catherine Street which was discovered in the 1930s and re-examined recently probably marks the position of the Bickleigh Gate which barred the head of Bickleigh Lane.

#### *Early 16th-century developments*

During the 1520s and 1530s several further lengths of aqueduct service passage were constructed in the High Street, so that a continuous passage eventually extended to a point a little to the SW of St Stephen's Church, a distance of over 250m from East Gate. The Great Conduit at Carfax was rebuilt and embellished at considerable expense in 1534/5 when it took on the form familiar from early prints. No further additions to the city passage were made in the 16th century after the Dissolution. It was probably only in the 18th and early 19th century that the passage in the High Street was extended in brickwork as far as the Carfax.

### **1.3 East Gate**

A detailed illustrated account of the results of additional survey and documentary research undertaken on the East Gate over the past year will be presented in the next report to the Committee. The medieval siege tunnel discovered recently in the Underground Passage immediately under the gate has now been surveyed. Contrary to initial impressions, the tunnel can clearly be seen to post-date the earliest section of passage. The tunnel was almost 2m high and can be traced for a length of about 9m. Only two possible occasions for the excavation of a siege tunnel in this location can be suggested from documentary sources. The best candidate is thought to be the action mounted by Perkin Warbeck and his followers in 1498, but the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549 cannot be ruled out.

A second tunnel has recently been recognised in the Underground Passage beneath the High Street at a point next to Castle Street. This is heading in the direction of the Castle, and so could perhaps date from the time of King Stephen's siege of 1136 (when Danes Castle was probably built). However, the tunnel seems to originate at some distance from the outer bailey, so for the time being its date and purpose must remain a mystery.

The new survey of the Underground Passages has led to the recognition of an earlier medieval (?13th-century) projecting gatehouse at East Gate, the position of whose front wall foundation can be discerned in the masonry of the passage beneath the gate.

Finally, as noted above, the date of the late medieval barbican gatehouse has now been firmly established as early 16th-century (c. 1510-11). Close examination of a late 18th-century painting of the gate has revealed that the embrasures recorded in the c. 1758 Chamber Map Book plan possessed inverted-keyhole style gun-ports.

### **1.4 Danes Castle**

Following completion of archaeological excavations on the site last June, the earthwork has now been covered over with synthetic fabric sheeting and sealed by a substantial thickness of subsoil. It is understood that superficial landscaping and planting will take place soon, with the site being opened to the public probably in the early summer. A notice-board incorporating an artist's reconstruction of the monument is being prepared by the AFU. South West Water will donate the site to the City which will administer it as a small public park. The primary project report on the detailed results of the excavations is almost complete. Radio-carbon dates are awaited for samples taken from a ditch, associated with a probable Anglo-Saxon field boundary, which was sealed by the 12th-century ridge and furrow underlying the Norman fort.



### 1.5 Digby Hospital Tesco site

The primary project report on the excavations described in the last report to the Committee is complete, although radio-carbon dates and certain specialist reports have not yet been received. A watching brief on groundworks produced little further information. Work on the construction of a new sewer is currently being monitored. A summary report will be submitted for publication in the *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society*.

### 1.6 Bowhill House

English Heritage have accelerated work on the restoration of the building over the past 18 months and hope to finish this long-running project during 1994. The increased pace of work has given rise to a requirement for a high level of archaeological monitoring involving fabric recording to augment the records made in earlier years, as well as additional excavations in the Tudor south range, kitchen block and northern car park. The excavations have revealed previously unknown elements in the layout of the 14th-century house which stood on the site before the erection of the present building following a fire around 1500 or slightly later. Work has continued on the preparation of primary reports and on the project archive. It is anticipated that the final publication on this site will appear in about three years time.

### 1.7 The Deanery

Fabric analysis and recording were carried out during recent alterations and refurbishment works in the building, and a watching brief was maintained on minor groundworks. The three-storied jettied cross-block containing the porch was found to have been introduced into the north-west bay of the early 13th-century open hall which forms the south-east end of the house. This probably occurred in the early 16th century when the Great Chamber and Parlour, adjoining to the north-west, were added to the building in the time of Bishop Veysey. The results of recording carried out in the Deanery since the early 1970s can now be synthesized. Fig. 5 shows a long elevation of the building compiled from observations and records made over the last 15 years or more.

### 1.8 Paradise Place

A watching brief on the site of the former College of Art premises, below Bartholomew Terrace, recovered evidence for aspects of Exeter's early Roman topography and Civil War defences. A mid 1st-century Roman ditch defined the SW side of a military compound lying between the legionary fortress and the steep slopes falling away to the edge of the Exe floodplain. Other sections of this ditch were noted in the early 1980s in watching briefs at Snayle Tower and Friernhay Street.

A large Civil War ditch which was traced for some distance across the site runs from the city wall down the steep hillside towards Bonhay on Exe Island. This represents a very useful and exciting discovery since it fills in a major gap in our knowledge of the layout of the Royalist earthworks thrown up probably in 1645. The ditch was 8m wide and would have been associated with a rampart lying on its SE side, which ran from the city wall at a point about 30m SE of Snayle Tower (which stood at the west corner of the walled circuit) to link with the so-called Bonhay Work, a sizeable unlocated earthwork fort that is likely to have lain between the Higher and Lower Leats. The line of defence formed by the rampart and ditch would have been set well back from the corner of the walls in order that enfilade fire could be directed along its front from Mount Truck, a large earthwork 'fort' which occupied the western corner of the city walls.

ditch seen c. 16m out from wall  
From Single tower corner c. 20m to end of section

### 1.9 Alphington Road site evaluation

A series of archaeological evaluation trenches were recently excavated on a site in Alphington Road which is to be developed for retail premises. The site lies to the SW of the GWR railway embankment, fairly close to the assumed position of the Domesday manor of Floyershayes. As expected, much of the area proved to have been quarried as a linear borrow pit in the mid 19th century when the railway was constructed. Further to the SW, however, alluvial deposits were encountered that suggest this area was quite marshy right up to the 19th century, in contrast to the drier conditions encountered in certain other areas investigated in St Thomas that are nearer to the main river channel of the Exe but contain thick alluvial sequences which have accumulated over very long periods.

### 1.10 Bradninch Place evaluation and watching brief

The construction of a disabled access ramp at the rear of the RAM Museum was preceded by an archaeological evaluation which has been followed up in recent weeks by a watching brief on contractor's excavations. This exercise has been extremely informative since for the first time it has afforded archaeologists a sight of the outer rampart of the Norman castle. It has been established that the rampart was at least 15m wide. It comprised successive layers of clay excavated from the associated ditch, itself found in earlier excavations to have been about 12m wide. Foundations belonging to the terrace of houses called Bradninch Place that was demolished on this site early this century were also examined in the excavations. Although the terrace is known to have been built in the early 17th century, the houses within the area explored dated only from the 19th century, when they must have been rebuilt.

### 1.11 Cathedral Lady Chapel recording

Recording funded by the Dean and Chapter was carried out recently in the course of selective replacement of 13th-century stonework in the ~~East Window~~. *west wall of Lady Chapel.*

### 1.12 Monmouth Street, Topsham watching brief

A watching brief on a site in Monmouth Street in Topsham resulted in the discovery and recording of the foundations of a late 17th-century house containing well-preserved floor levels incorporating green-glazed Normandy floor-tiles and floor-slabs of Purbeck and Rougemont stone.

### 1.13 City Wall survey

A comprehensive survey of the City Wall, funded jointly by English Heritage and Exeter City Council, was initiated in 1993 and will be completed in 1994. The main aims of the survey are:

- (i) to produce a descriptive account of the fabric of the wall and its history as it is now understood;
- (ii) to review the current treatment of the wall as a monument and make recommendations for its future management;
- (iii) to provide the groundwork for a formal adoption of procedures of maintenance and repair of the wall by Exeter City Council and by the other bodies who own or maintain sections of the wall;
- (iv) to further the longer-term aim of producing an academic study of the wall and of the city's defences.

It is anticipated that the project will result in the production of reports containing a fabric inventory and recommendations for the wall's future management.

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#### **1.14 Trews Weir Mill watching brief**

A watching brief on contractor's excavations within this large 18th/19th-century paper mill has located a substantial revetment wall marking one side of a leat channel dating from a period in the 17th or 18th century prior to the construction of the present structure. This site was occupied by a fulling mill in the 17th century whose operations were the subject of long-running litigation over water rights.

#### **1.15 High Street/Fore Street gas pipe trenches watching brief**

During recent excavations by British Gas a number of long sections of stratigraphy have been exposed and recorded by the AFU which have yielded important information on the Roman and early medieval town. In a trench next to Marks and Spencer's a sequence of clay floors lying within successive early Roman timber buildings was recorded. The earliest floor levels probably belong to the centurial quarters of a Roman barrack block lying next to the *via decumana* of the fortress. The late Roman levels in this area were sealed by a layer of dark loamy soil marking the period prior to the later 9th century when the town lay largely deserted. A thick gravel metalling layer overlying the 'post-Roman dark soil' may represent the initial laying out of a wide market street in the Alfredian period.

Roman walls, floors and sequences of street levels were revealed in other trenches which help to fill in details of the later Roman topography in the centre of the town. It is clear from these observations that the wide later Roman market street postulated by Paul Bidwell on the NW side of the forum did not in fact exist.

#### **1.16 Mint Tavern building recording**

A substantial block of 17th- and 18th-century timber-framed buildings on the corner of Mint Lane and Fore Street is currently undergoing refurbishment. These buildings represent a remarkable complex of early post-medieval houses which display a complicated structural history. The watching brief on this site continues. It is hoped to undertake documentary research on the history of these properties so that a reasonably comprehensive project report can be compiled.

#### **1.17 Redhills Hospital evaluation and recording**

Archaeological evaluation excavations were carried out in the grounds of this early 19th-century hospital prior to redevelopment and conversion works. The trenches provided information on the location of floodplain deposits in this area. One trench was laid out so as to intersect a putative Roman road that is thought to cross the floodplain at this point, but the road was not found.

The main hospital buildings were erected in the form of a hexagon in 1836-7. A full photographic record has been made together with selective drawn surveys.

#### **1.18 Palace Gate School survey**

An assessment report has been prepared outlining the results of a rapid archaeological survey of the school buildings and grounds supplemented by documentary research into the history of the properties. The assessment will probably lead on to more detailed survey in the near future. The site contains a number of important medieval and later structures, the earliest of which — the former Archdeacon of Exeter's house — probably dates from the early 13th century.

#### **1.19 Minor watching briefs and recording projects**

Watching briefs have been carried out on a variety of other development sites over the past year or so. These include sites in Marsh Barton, where alluvial sequences have been recorded; works on the Oddfellows Hall in Catherine Street (ongoing); further recording at the Vicars Choral Hall in advance of

vegetation clearance; a watching brief on the Sidwell Street Motors site; and additional survey work to complete an accurate ground plan at St Nicholas Priory.

## 2. PUBLICATIONS

Reports will be made at the meeting on progress made recently in the preparation of the following publications.

### A5 Booklets:

*Exeter in the Civil War*

*The Exeter Underground Passages*

### Historical Monographs:

*People and Places in Medieval Exeter*

*The Civil War Defences of Exeter*

### Archaeological Monograph (EAR series):

*Exeter Roman Fortress*

### Articles:

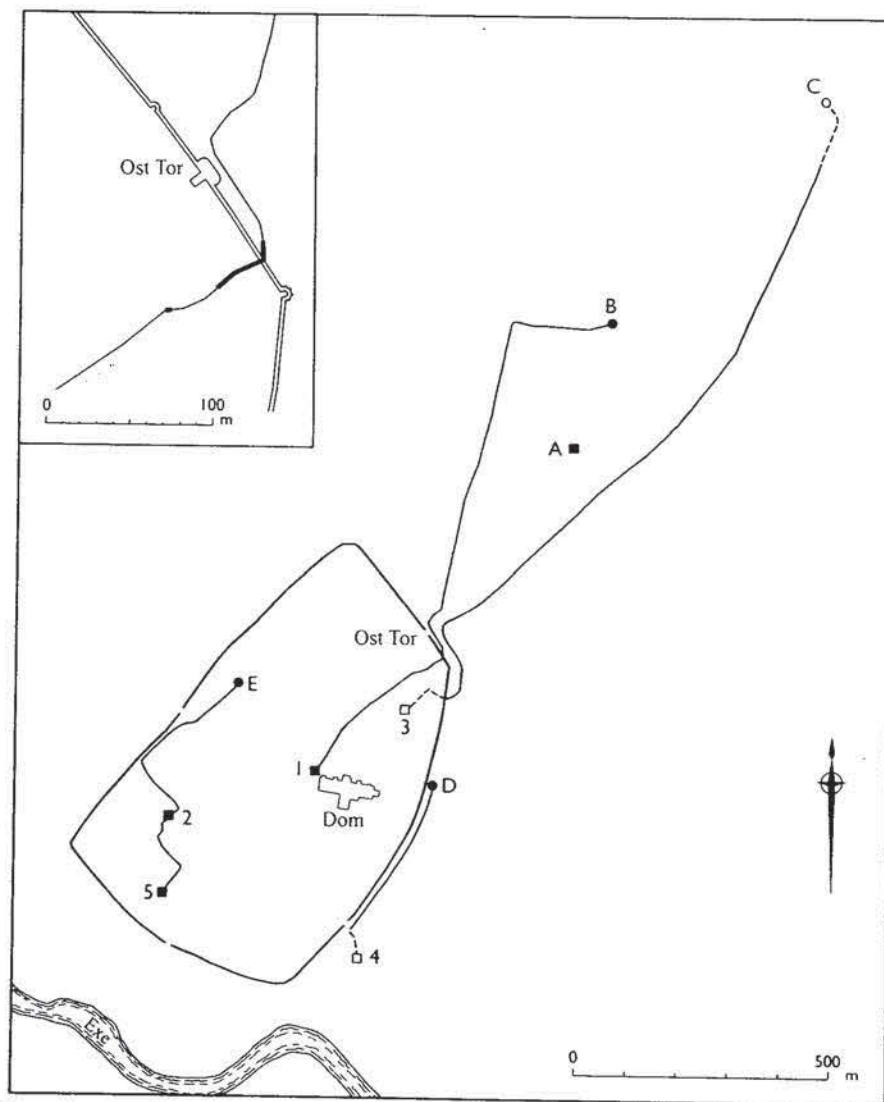
'The Underground Aqueduct Passages of Exeter' in *The History of Water Supply Vol 5* (Frontinus Society)

'Exeter' section in *Historical Atlas of South-West England* (Exeter University)

C.G. Henderson

Director, Archaeological Field Unit





*Figure 1: Exeter's aqueducts and underground service passages in 1400 (passages inset). (A) St Sidwell's Well; (B) Cathedral Headwell; (C) Blackfriars' Podwell; (D) Greyfriars' Southernhay Well; (E) St Nicholas' Paul Street Well. (1) St Peter's Conduit; (2) St Nicholas Priory; (3) Blackfriars; (4) Greyfriars; (5) Town Well.*

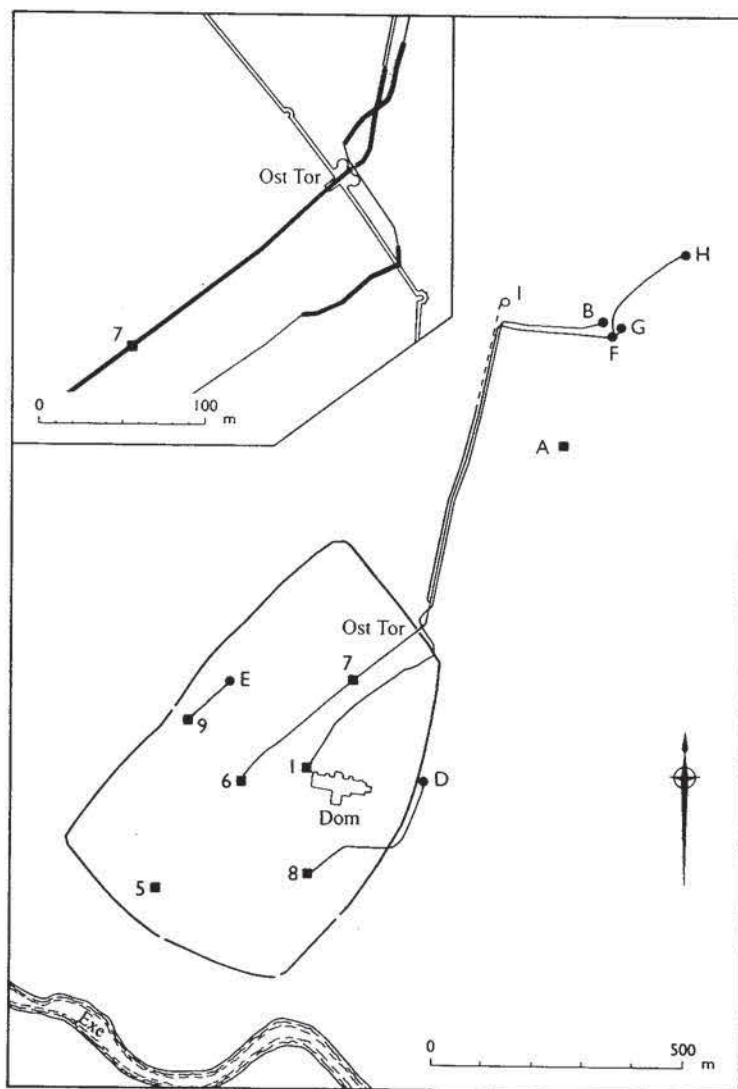
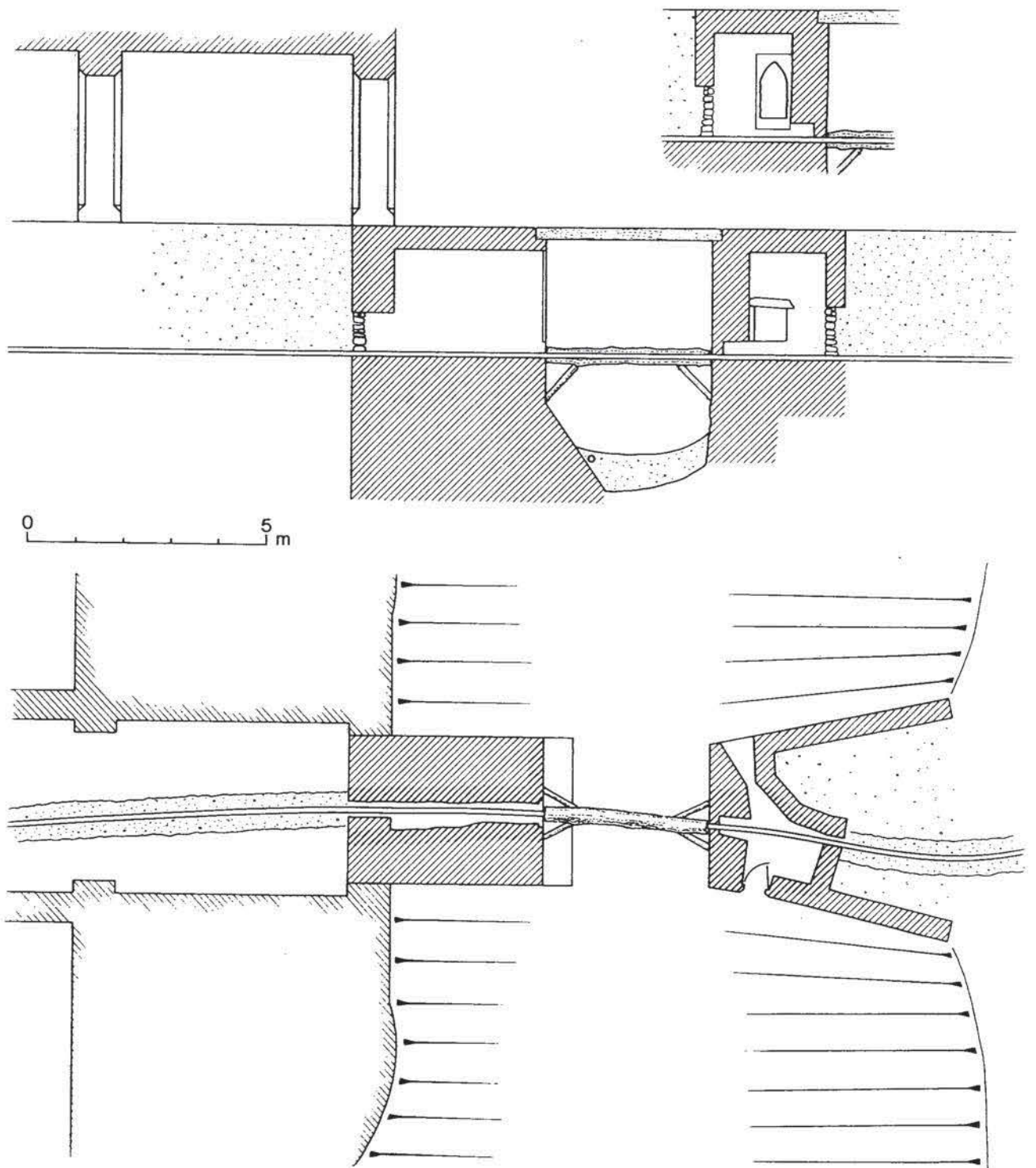
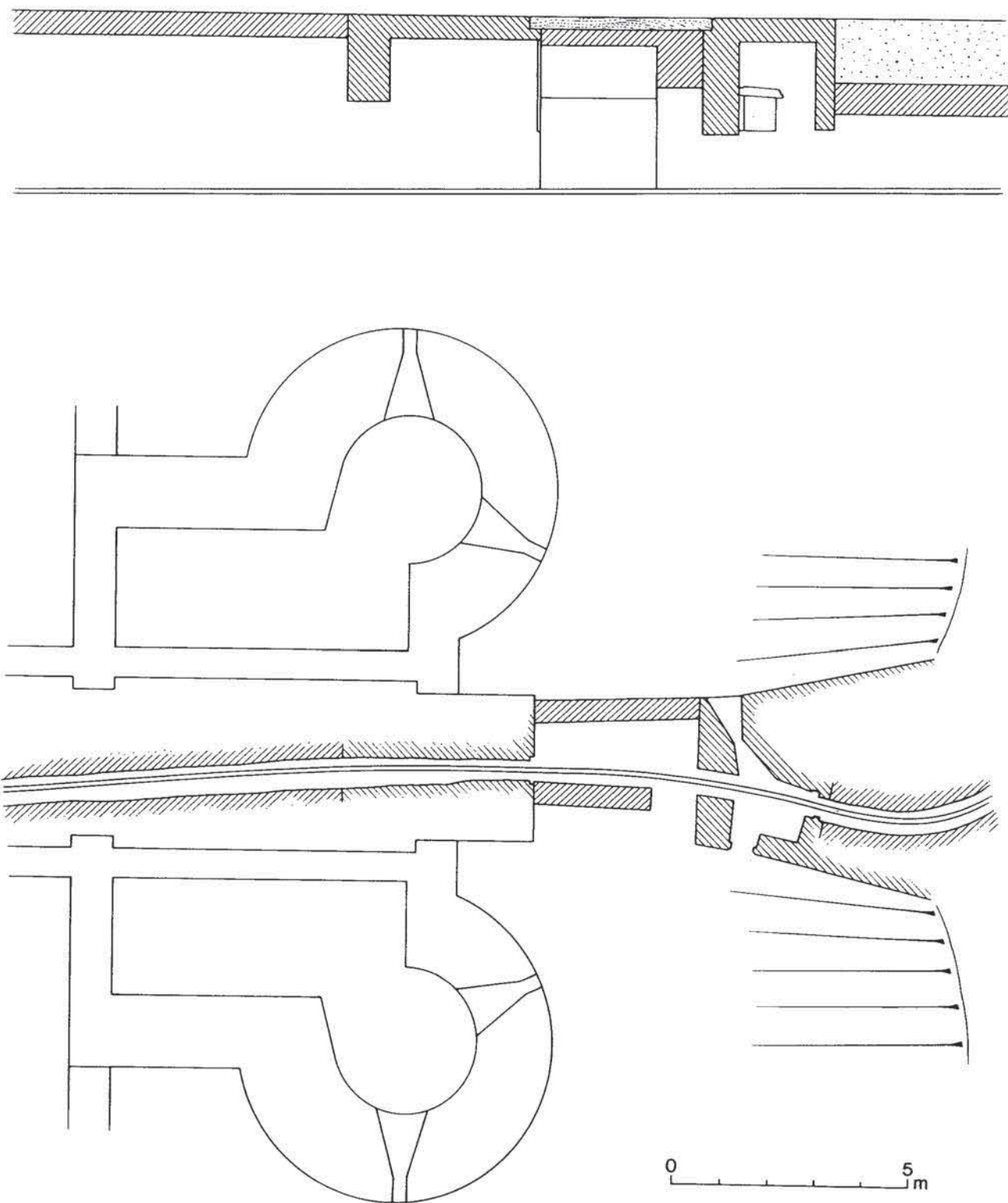


Figure 2: Exeter's aqueducts and underground service passages in 1590 (passages inset). (A) St Sidwell's Well; (B) Cathedral Headwell; (D) Southernhay Well; (E) St Paul's Well; (F) City Headwell; (G) Salter's Well; (H) Higher Well; (I) Marpool Well. (1) St Peter's Conduit; (5) Town Well; (6) Great Conduit; (7) Little Conduit; (8) South Street Conduit; (9) North Street Conduit.





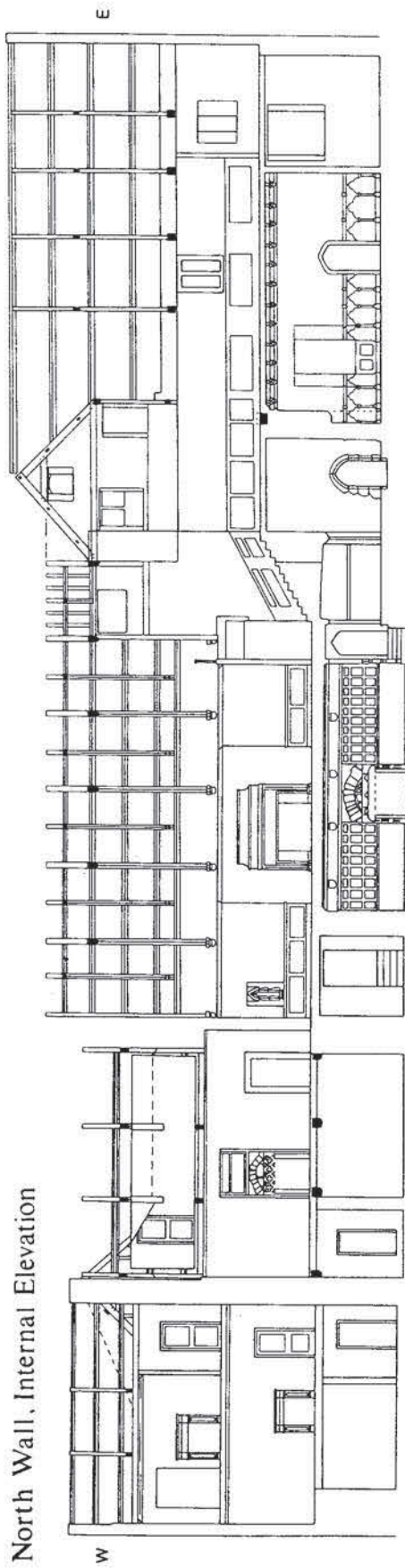
*Figure 3: The East Gate abutments and the city aqueduct pipeline c. 1425.*



*Figure 4: The East Gate abutments and the city aqueduct passage c. 1645.*



North Wall, Internal Elevation



South Wall, Internal Elevation

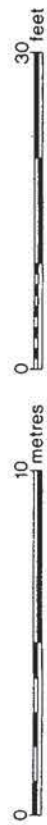
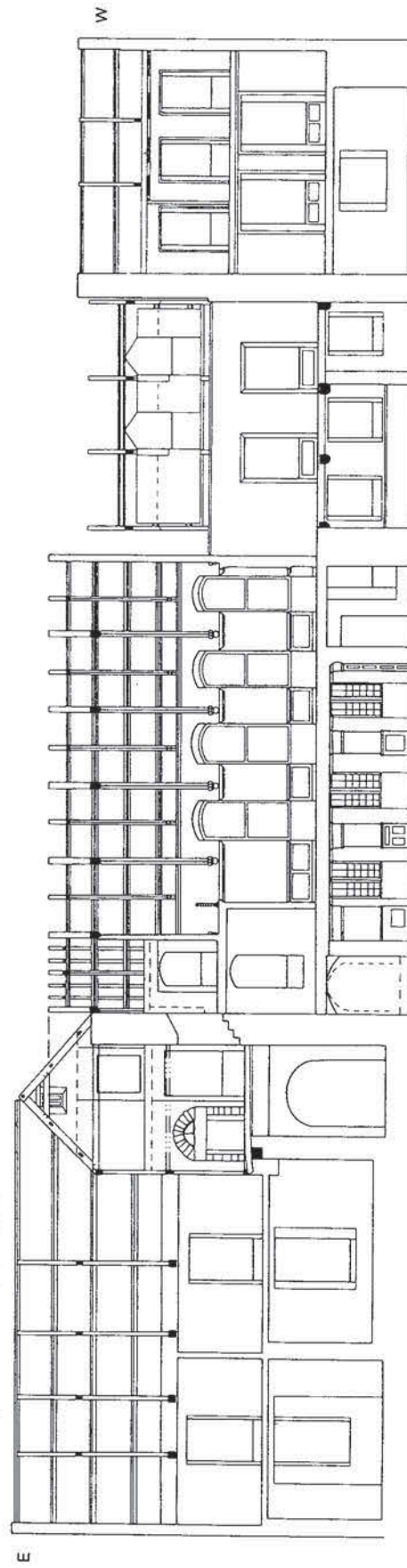


Figure 5: Survey elevations of Exeter Deanery.

EXETER CATHEDRAL : Lady Chapel 1993

West Elevation

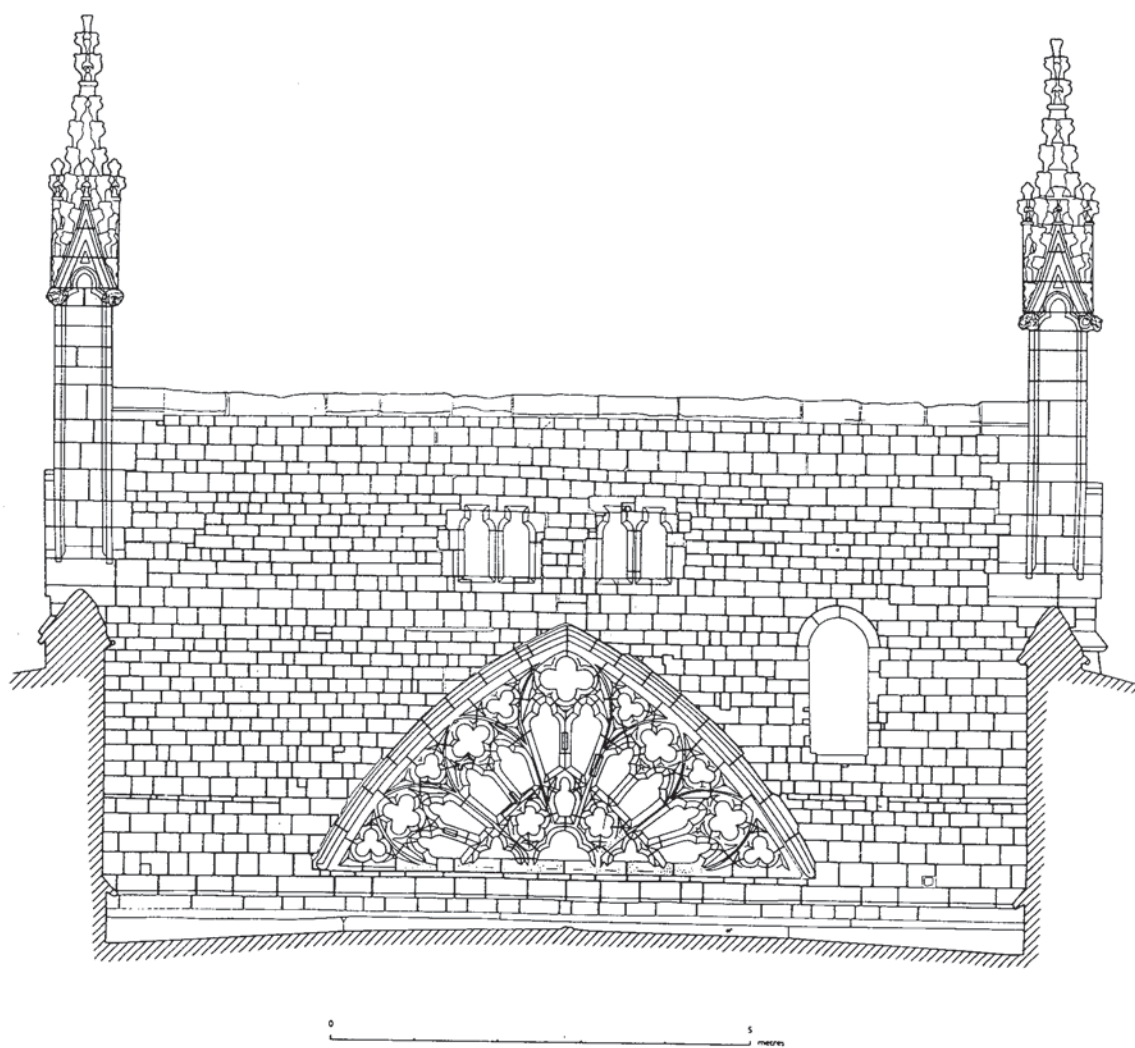


Figure 6: Survey elevation of the Cathedral Lady Chapel east wall.

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Notes for Committee, 7th October 1994**

## **1. FIELD RECORDING PROJECTS**

### **1.1 Excavations in the Cathedral Close**

Excavations in the lane on the east side of the Cathedral Close were carried out in April and May on behalf of South West Water, who are refurbishing an early 19th-century sewer. A number of access pits about 2.5 m square were cut through archaeological deposits of Roman and medieval date.

At the lowest level in two of the pits the foundations of barrack blocks within the Roman legionary fortress were uncovered about 3 metres below the modern street surface. Outside Mol's Coffee House the top of a late Roman well was exposed, and higher up in the same trench part of a medieval skeleton came to light, a reminder that until 1636, when the ancient cathedral graveyard closed, almost every Exeter citizen was buried in the Close. Further down the lane, next to the Cathedral School, the clay floor of a medieval canon's house was discovered alongside a Tudor-period drainage culvert built of stone, whilst in another trench successive Norman street levels were excavated, the first to be found in Exeter. Notable finds from the excavations include 12th-century decorated pottery from Normandy and Bristol.

### **1.2 South Gate**

A watching brief on contractor's excavations over the site of the SW projecting barbican tower suggests that none of the front part of the tower survives. Documentary research by Mark Stoye has at last indicated a likely date for the construction of the late medieval gate in the second decade of the 15th century. The towers of the Roman and medieval gates have been marked out in the pavement and a new information panel has been provided. Over the past five years successive archaeological excavations and observations have added considerably to our understanding of the gate's history, building on the earlier work of Lady Fox. We now know that four distinct gate structures were erected on this site between the later 2nd century and the early 15th century.

### **1.3 5-7 Palace Gate**

A small excavation in the cellar of No. 7 Palace Gate was carried out in advance of building works by the Cathedral School funded by the Dean and Chapter. The site is located immediately to the NE of the Roman legionary fortress. Early Roman rubbish layers were found to overlie a fine pre-Roman colluvial deposit which had accumulated within the upper part of the Coombe valley on the NE side of Palace Gate. This deposit was also observed further down the valley in the Lower Coombe Street car park site, where it reaches a considerable thickness.



#### **1.4 Bowhill House**

Fabric recording, a watching brief and small-scale excavation have continued over the summer months. The restoration works carried out by English Heritage since the late 1970s are now nearing completion. It is anticipated that final reports on the archaeological investigations will be prepared in 1995/6, possibly in monograph format.

#### **1.5 Honiton Inn, Paris Street**

A watching brief on the excavation of a car park extension at the rear of this public house in St Sidwells revealed a large deposit of clay-pipe waste dating from the period 1690-1720.

#### **1.6 Convent School, Palace Gate**

Further fabric survey commissioned by the school governors has confirmed an early date for the southern block, which contains a 16th-century arch-braced roof of 7 bays, sub-divided by two closed trusses. A report on the survey, incorporating detailed drawings of the early roof structures, is in preparation.

#### **1.7 Northcott Warehouse, Alphington Street**

A survey of a warehouse, used in recent years by the Northcott Theatre for storage of props, was commissioned by Exeter City Council. The building lies near to the Shooting Marsh Stile site excavated in 1984. Documentary research shows it to have been erected, probably in the 1820s, as an extension to a tannery established on the site in the late 18th century.

#### **1.8 Ship Inn, St Martin's Lane**

Archaeological fabric survey undertaken during refurbishment works in the Ship Inn demonstrated that the building originally comprised three identical 16th-century houses built together in a row. Each house possessed a first-floor chamber provided with a fireplace set in the rear stone wall. No evidence survived for any corresponding provision on the ground floor. The jointed cruck roof was originally unceiled over the first floor. The houses were heightened in the late 17th century and only united to form the present property in the 1930s.

#### **1.9 Lucky Lane**

A watching brief on groundworks for two new houses on a site located to the SW of Holloway Street demonstrated that this area had been quarried for gravel around 1800. A brick-built ice-house was discovered which partly underlay the SW side of Lucky Lane (to the rear of Colleton Crescent).

#### **1.10 City Wall survey**

Work on the survey has continued throughout the summer and a number of primary project reports have been produced on both general and specific aspects of the results. The survey will be completed by the end of the year.

### **1.11 City Wall recording**

Limited fabric recording was carried out this summer at two points close to the North Gate, where minor repairs were required. Much more extensive and detailed surveys involving stone-for-stone drawing and analysis of mortars were undertaken in the Bradninch Hall area and to either side of Athelstan's Tower in Northernhay Gardens. This has done much to clarify the structural sequence in the wall next to the Castle and has led to the identification of previously unrecognised areas of Roman and early medieval masonry.

### **1.12 30-32 Longbrook Street**

An archaeological evaluation at this site demonstrated that the rear wall of the property (formerly a garage) preserves 17th-century masonry. A considerable amount of documentary evidence exists for tenements outside the East Gate since many properties here formed part of the estate of the Dean and Chapter.

### **1.13 GPO sorting office site, Bonhay Road**

An evaluation excavation in the car park at the rear of the former sorting office premises next to St David's Station was designed to locate a lane which is believed to have led to the medieval mill of St Nicholas Priory, sited on the Exe floodplain. The lane proved to have been a hollow way. Any trace of the mill building or its leat would have been removed by a major flood episode in the 18th century which resulted in the erosion of earlier alluvial deposits in this area.

### **1.14 41-2 High Street**

Fabric recording during contractor's works in this pair of 16th-century houses (probably erected in 1664) revealed new details in the back block, whose roof was recorded in detail. The main building was recorded by the Unit about 15 years ago.

### **1.15 Minor watching briefs**

Minor watching briefs have been undertaken over the past six months on contractor's excavations at Southernhay, Western Way, South Street, Fore Street, Cowick Street, Pines Gardens, Matford Lane, Alphington, Little Silver, Trew's Weir, Leighton Terrace and Magdalen Street

## **2. PUBLICATIONS ETC.**

### **2.1 Danes Castle**

The monument has now been landscaped and the legal formalities for the transfer of the ownership of the site from South West Water to Exeter City Council are proceeding. The design for an information panel has been prepared and a formal opening ceremony is planned for around the end of the year. The primary project report on the excavation is complete. Radiocarbon dates from the fill of the boundary ditch underlying the medieval cultivation soil show the feature to be prehistoric in date rather than late Saxon.



## 2.2 Urban Archaeological Database

Discussions with English Heritage have resulted in the preparation of an agreed specification for the Phase I project which will commence shortly and will be finished in March. Phase II will follow in 1995.

## 2.3 Topsham Museum Exhibition

The AFU contributed two panels on aspects of Topsham Quay and early warehouses to the museum's summer exhibition whose theme was the buildings of the town in the period 1650-1750.

## 2.4 Roman legionary fortress

Work on the preparation of primary project reports on excavation sites containing Roman military levels was completed this summer. Further progress towards full publication of the fortress sites will not be possible before next year and will depend on the availability of funds.

## 2.5 Underground Passages booklet

This was published in April.

## 2.6 Civil War defences booklet

The text for this A5 booklet by Mark Stoye is now complete. Some line illustrations have yet to be prepared. The booklet should appear early in the New Year.

## 2.7 *Exeter in the Civil War*

The compilation of this monograph by Mark Stoye is expected to be finished by the early summer of 1995.

## 2.8 *People and Places in medieval Exeter*

Work on the compilation of this monograph has continued through the year. It is likely to be completed late in 1995.

## 2.9 'Exeter' in *Historical Atlas of South West England*

The preparation of maps and text for this publication continues and should be finished in December.

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