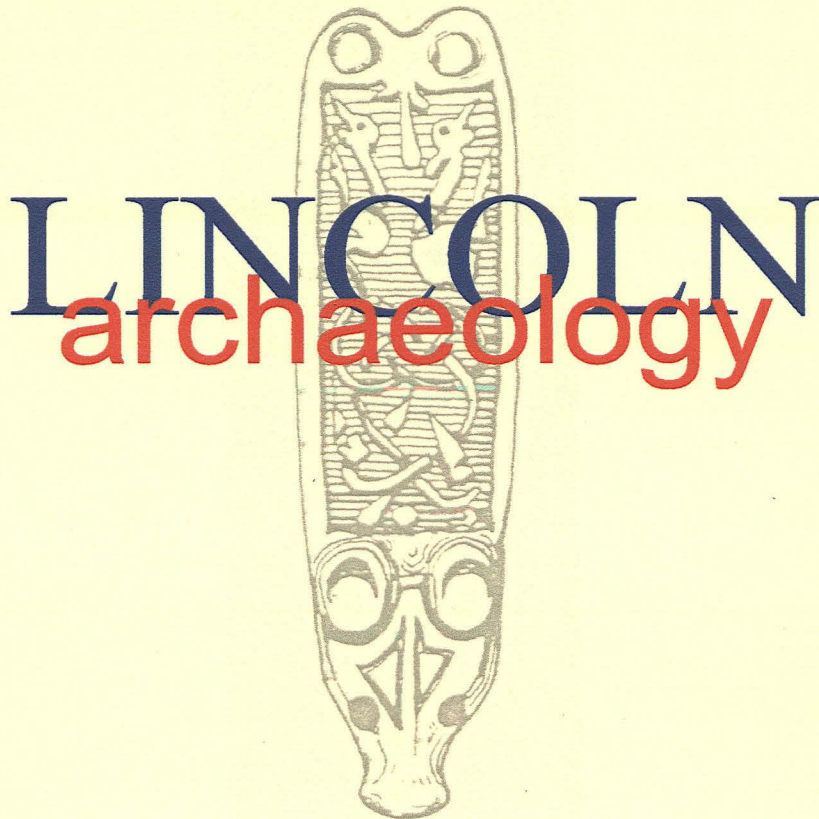


A Report to English Heritage

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The South Gate of the Roman Upper City at 44 Steep Hill, Lincoln

Archaeological Recording

By R Trimble

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THE SOUTH GATE OF THE ROMAN UPPER CITY AT 44 STEEP HILL, LINCOLN

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Archaeological recording

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THE SOUTH GATE OF THE ROMAN UPPER CITY AT 44 STEEP HILL, LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

SUMMARY

During the period 10-16 October 2001, the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (CLAU) carried out a programme of building recording occasioned by structural alterations to the property at 44 Steep Hill, Lincoln. The project was commissioned by English Heritage and was completed in accordance with a brief issued by the Heritage Team, Department of Planning, City of Lincoln.

Sited over the south gate of the Roman Upper City, the property (probably together with No.45) was known as the Fiddle and Trumpet public house in the late 18th century and later as the Leopard until at least 1913.

The primary purpose of the project was to record elements of the Roman gateway made visible by the current works.

The principal findings of the project appear to demonstrate that the gateway had two main carriageways, the westernmost spanning Steep Hill and the easternmost approximately coinciding with the east-west limits of No. 44. The distance between probable walls of the gateway and hence of the eastern carriageway found inside the house was 3.95m. Repeating this interval to allow for a western carriageway places its western wall more or less on the line of the western street frontage.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

During the period 10-16 October 2001, the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (CLAU) carried out a programme of building recording occasioned by structural alterations to the building at 44 Steep Hill, Lincoln. The project was commissioned by English Heritage and was completed in accordance with a brief issued by the Heritage Team, Department of Planning, City of Lincoln.

Together with No. 43 to the north, the property is a Grade II listed building (1941-1/9/362). It lies within Conservation Area No.1 (Cathedral and City Centre) and at the western periphery of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (County No. 115 Lindum Colonia).

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Lincoln City Council cannot therefore, be held responsible for any loss delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & LOCATION (Fig. 1)

The brick-fronted building, on three floors and with upper and lower cellars, is located on the eastern side of Steep Hill at NGR SK 97633 71753. A wooden floor at ground level has recently been installed following removal of the original floor after the property became vacant in the 1990's.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sited over the south gate of the Roman Upper City, the property (probably together with No.45) was known as the Fiddle and Trumpet public house in the late 18th century and later as the Leopard until at least 1913 (Jones *et al* 1996, 21).

There has been considerable debate over the layout of the Roman gate, which was constructed in stone in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. A single carriageway with flanking side passages corresponding with the north gate (Newport Arch) was proposed in an article by Richmond in 1946. According to this reconstruction the western carriageway, as defined by a fragment of Roman masonry still visible between Nos. 25 and 26 to the west and 18th century depictions of the remains of an arch springing from between Nos. 44 and 45 to the east, would have spanned the area now occupied by the road (Steep Hill) and pavements. Another fragment of apparently Roman masonry (the subject of recording during the current project – see Figs. 2 & 5) in a coal store to the rear of the ground floor room of No. 44 was interpreted (Richmond 1946, 32-3) as forming the outer wall of the eastern side passage.

The reconstruction described above was later modified (Collingwood & Richmond 1969, 101) in the light of the discovery, in 1956, of a curving ashlar wall interpreted as a possible drum tower of *c* 9m diameter (also recorded during a watching brief by CLAU in 1990), in shops at Nos. 26/27 to the west of Steep Hill. On the basis of the new evidence, a double carriageway with flanking drum towers was suggested.

The case for a double carriageway was reinforced by the discovery of an 18th century sketch by Grimm (Jones 1980, 28) showing an eastern arch (viewed from the north) with the beginnings of a subsidiary passage on its eastern side and the springing for a western arch. Another representation, this time with a stone wall infilling the eastern arch and a stone wall returning to the north in place of the side passage, is contained in a pen and wash drawing by Nathan Drake (*c* 1740-50 but probably composed in 1730). Both of these depictions would appear to represent idealised reconstructions of the gateway, since a late 18th century drawing by Nathan Nattes has a timber-framed building of late 15th/early 16th century date in the foreground (on the plot now occupied by No. 44) and the beginnings of an arch projecting from the property boundary with No. 45 to the south.

The latter contradiction can be explained by reference to Sympton's description of the gateway, written in 1739-40 (Richmond 1946, 32). Here it is reported that, in addition to the jamb of the arch projecting from the external wall, the 'east postern' (with a diameter of '7 foot') survived in an upstairs room of the adjacent building to the east. Similar circumstances were reported in Camden's *Brittania* (1788), where it is stated that the entire 'east postern' could be seen in a chamber occupied by a barber 'but of the principal gate nothing now remains except the foundation'. It is known from the Hundred Rolls that the Steep Hill roadway was much wider during the immediate post-conquest (AD1066) period; with properties to the east of the present road representing later encroachments upon the road. The eastern boundary for this row of properties is formed by the Precentor's wall (Johnson & Vince 1992, 13).

An account (Thompson & Whitwell 1973, 200) of a visit to Lincoln by Edward Browne in 1662, who came upon two arches consisting of 'vast' stones after 'climbing up a steep hill', could refer to the front and rear arches of the western carriageway. This suggests that the Roman gateway may have survived in more complete form until at least the mid 17th century.

A watching brief during construction of a new store to the rear of the property to the south of No. 44 disclosed only comparatively recent features and deposits (Wragg 1999).

4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project as formulated in a CLAU specification of 13 July 2001 were:

- To produce a photographic and stone-by-stone drawn record of the visible Roman masonry on the east side of the ground floor.

- To examine other masonry on the ground floor and upper cellar to establish the need for further recording.
- To produce a project archive for deposition with the City and County Museum together with a client report
- To provide information for accession to the county Sites and Monuments Record and the Lincoln Archaeological Database.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

As part of the programme of refurbishment to No. 44, plaster was removed from the east wall of the southernmost ground floor room. This revealed a substantial section of masonry considered to form part of the Roman gate structure. Another part of the structure (thought to be the *spina* – see below) was located through excavations to reduce ground level to accommodate altered access arrangements within the internal doorway between the southern and northern bays of the house. The opportunity was also taken to examine further possible elements of the gate structure in the upper cellar (directly beneath the southern ground floor room – see 2.0 above) and to relate these to parts of the structure exposed in the ground floor room. It was also decided, following consultation with the City Archaeologist, that the fragment of probable Roman masonry, between Nos. 25 & 26 on the opposite side of Steep Hill, should be accurately located through survey to permit a more complete reconstruction of the ground plan of the gate structure.

The supposed Roman masonry at ground floor level was first cleaned by hand, removing all loose plaster obscuring the joints. Within the cellar, features were subjected to light brushing only. All features were then photographed using colour print film.

All elevations/sections then were drawn at a scale of 1:10 (reproduced here as Figs. 3-5, scale 1:20). The elevation of the east wall (Fig.5, Elevation 9) was drawn in greatest detail, using a datum which was located by EDM total station and then related to Ordnance Datum. The remaining elevation/section drawings, generally showing individual stones, were more approximate – mostly being constructed from measurements taken from salient reference points. Points included on the drawings were then located by EDM total station and thus related to the main section of masonry in the ground floor room.

The only plan (Fig. 2), showing masonry revealed by excavations within the doorway giving access to the northern room, was drawn at a scale of 1:20 (reproduced here at 1:50).

6.0 RESULTS

The structural components described in this section all seem to relate to a pair of north - south aligned walls interpreted as the east wall of the eastern carriageway and the central wall or *spina* of the Roman gate (see 7.0 Discussion & Conclusions, below). For ease of reference the evidence for each wall is presented separately.

The easternmost wall (east wall of the eastern carriageway?)

The substantial fragment of this wall (Fig. 2; Fig. 5, Section/Elevation 9 & 10 – see also Plate II), revealed to the east of the ground floor southern bay of the building, was truncated to the south at the point where a stair to the first floor had been situated. Here, it was abutted on the east by a short section of stone wall extending to the line of the external wall to the rear of the property. To the north, the recorded section of wall continued northwards beyond the point where its west face was abutted by an east-west internal wall. The date of construction of these later stone walls is not known. However, it is likely that they predate the latest brick-built reconstruction of the building in the early 19th century (Jones *et al* 1996, 22). Although partially obscured by a timber joist, the top course of the recorded section of wall must form its uppermost level, because the floor of the room above extends over the wall to meet with an external wall set further to the east.

The recorded section of wall, including a block in the east wall of the basement (see below), stood to a height of at least 2.95m (base at *c.* 59.66m OD). It was constructed from massive limestone blocks, generally squared but roughly hewn, laid in courses of *c.* 500mm deep. Its maximum thickness as seen at its truncated southern end (see Fig. 5, Section 10) was *c.* 950mm. The majority of the stones were only partially visible and those at the southern end may have been cut at a later date but it is likely that the largest block, measuring 1.7m long, may have been typical of the wall as a whole. There was no clear evidence for bonding material between the stones; a soft and loose brown-grey and light-grey mortar, present in places, was thought most likely to be residual material from medieval or later rendering over the wall. A number of mortar-filled recesses (Fig. 5, Section/Elevation 9, I, II, III) were interpreted as putlog holes associated with the reuse of the wall in a later building, while a pair of somewhat smaller, rectangular holes filled with concrete (A & B), may have received a door jamb.

A southward continuation of the wall was probably represented by the separate block of stone set into the east wall in the upper cellar (Fig. 4, Section/Elevation 6 & 7 – see also Plate IV). The stone, which lay to the rear of an alcove furnished with a stone sill, appeared to rest upon natural limestone – the sides of the basement having been roughly cut and partly faced with limestone and a concrete render.

Yet further to the south, at the base of the south wall of the ground floor room, was another large stone (Fig. 5, Section/Elevation 8 – see also Plate III) measuring 1m across and 540mm high from floor level. It lay on the precise alignment of the main wall and may therefore be interpreted as its southernmost recorded extent.

The westernmost wall (spina?)

The fragment of wall encountered within the internal doorway on the Steep Hill side of the building (see plan on Fig. 2 – also Fig. 3, Section/Elevations 2 & 3, see also Plate I) consisted of two courses, each represented by a single large stone. The lower stone (also visible in the north wall of the cellar), whose upper surface lay more or less at the level of the floor of the southern bay of the building, measured at least 1.1m wide east - west (possibly continuing beneath the west wall of the building) and *c.* 1.5m north – south. Its thickness, which was difficult to determine owing to the problems of working at different levels, was worked out by reference to levels taken at ground floor and within the cellar. This gave a thickness of *c.* 600mm (bottom level *c.* 59.70m OD). It appeared to rest upon natural limestone covered by concrete render.

The uppermost stone, standing *c.* 380mm high, had it seems, been truncated at its southern end during construction of the east-west internal wall. The entire wall may have been truncated (or terminated?) to the north, where the trench contained comparatively recent dark silt (Fig. 3, Section/Elevation 1)

Another large stone in the south wall of the cellar, (Fig. 4, Section/Elevation 4 & 5), on the correct alignment to form a southward continuation of the supposed *spina*, was at least 970mm wide - its western extent being obscured by wooden cladding. Its base, which lay at *c.* 59.55m OD, again rested upon natural stone with mortar facing.

7.0 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the project would appear to support the case for a double carriageway at the south gate of the Roman upper city. It is likely that the two walls investigated represent, respectively, the east wall of the east carriageway, and the central wall (*spina*) dividing the two carriageways. The distance between these walls indicates a carriageway of *c.* 3.95m wide. Repeating this interval to allow for a western carriageway (see Fig. 2) places its western wall more or less on the line (within 200mm) of the western street frontage and the fragment of masonry between Nos. 25 and 26 Steep Hill. The project did not produce any evidence for associated side passages, but the gap between the east wall of the eastern carriageway and the precenitor's wall may well have accommodated such a feature.

It is of interest that the base level of the gate structure lay at comparatively shallow depth (between 59.55 and 59.70m OD) – at, or only just below, the level of the present road surface.

To conclude, the project has produced an extremely valuable record of deposits relating to the Roman south gate, sufficient to permit a comprehensive consideration of the position and layout of the gate. It

should be noted that further remains, namely the east wall of the gate, may lie behind timber cladding in the northern part of the building. Although unaffected by the current renovations, they should be given consideration in the event of future alterations to the property.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report, on behalf of CLAU, would like to thank English Heritage and in particular Glynn Coppack (East Midlands Regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments) for the provision of funding and for interest in the project. Thanks are also due to consultants (R J Maxwell), the owner's representative (Mr Jim Morris), and the building contractor (NJP Builders). The author would also like to express gratitude to Michael Jones (Lincoln City Archaeologist) for advice on the archaeological background and history of the Roman gate, and to Darren Pullen for his contribution towards the successful completion of fieldwork.

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10.0 LHA NOTE/ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 LHA NOTE DETAILS

CLAU CODE: SHK01

PLANNING APPLICATION NO.: 2000/0068/F & 2000/0069/LBC

FIELD OFFICER: R. Trimble

NGR: SK 97633/7153

CIVIL PARISH: Lincoln

SMR No.: ****

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 10-16/10/2001

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Building Recording

UNDERTAKEN FOR: English Heritage

10.2 ARCHIVE DETAILS

PRESENT LOCATION: City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, Charlotte House, The Lawn, Union Road, Lincoln, LN1 3BL.

FINAL LOCATION: The City and County Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln.

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: .2001.280

ACCESSION DATE: -****

COLOUR PLATES



Plate I – View showing remains of probable spina (looking north, 0.5m scale).

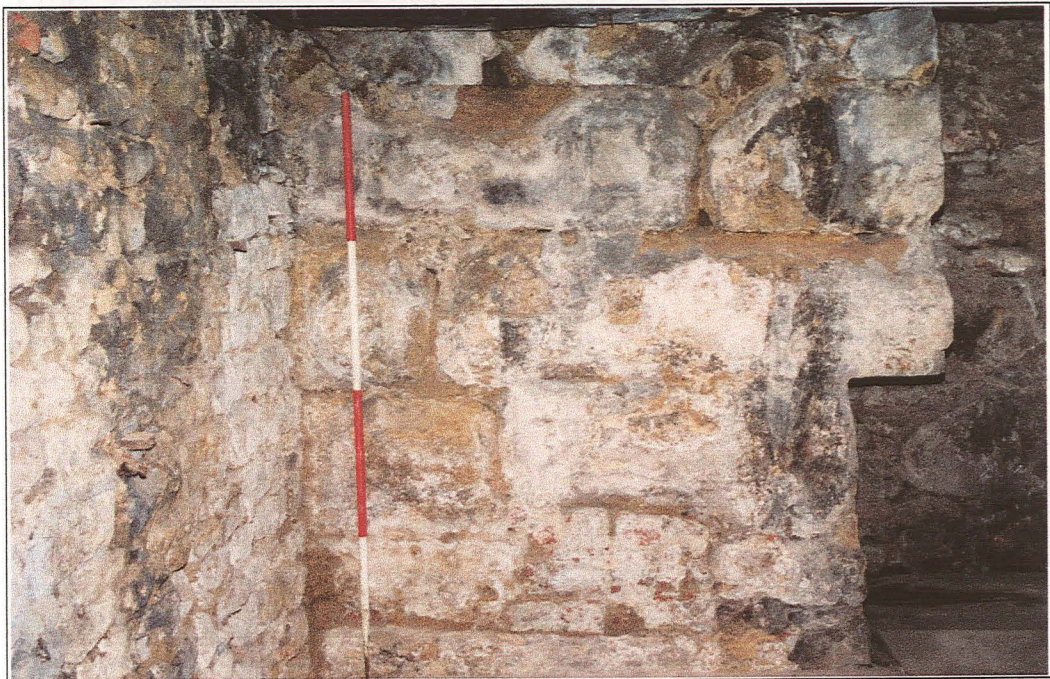


Plate II – View showing probable east wall of the eastern carriageway (looking east, 2m scale).

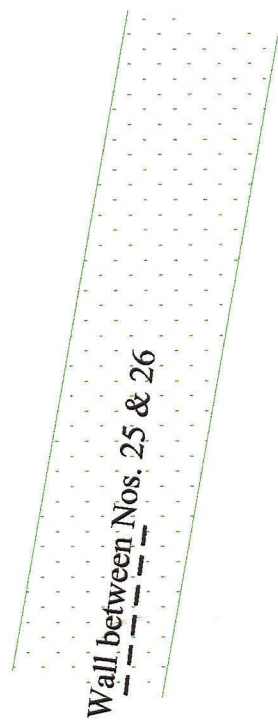
COLOUR PLATES (Continued)



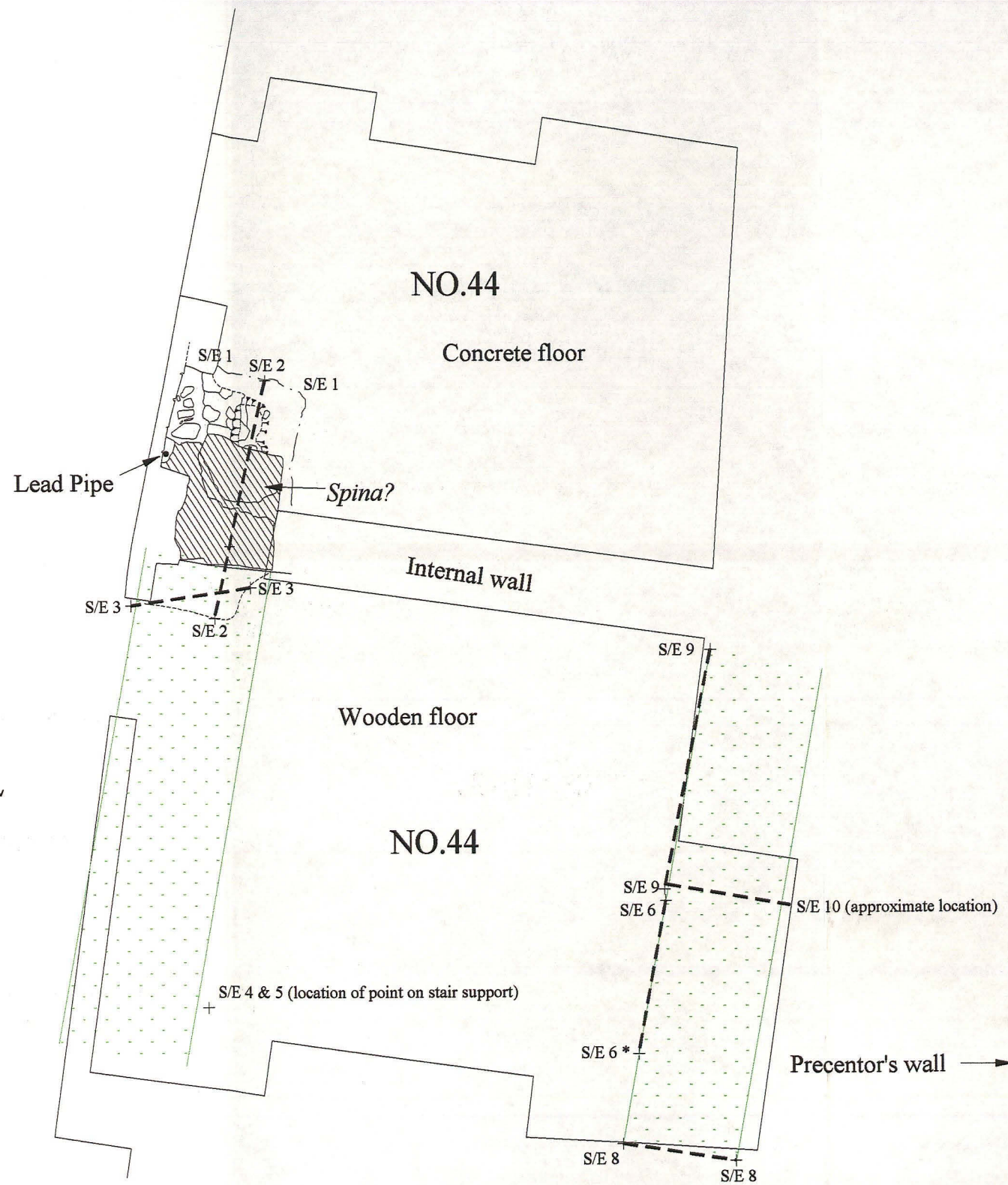
Plate III – Block of limestone in south wall (looking south, 1m scale).



Plate IV – Block of limestone in east wall of cellar (looking east, 1m scale).

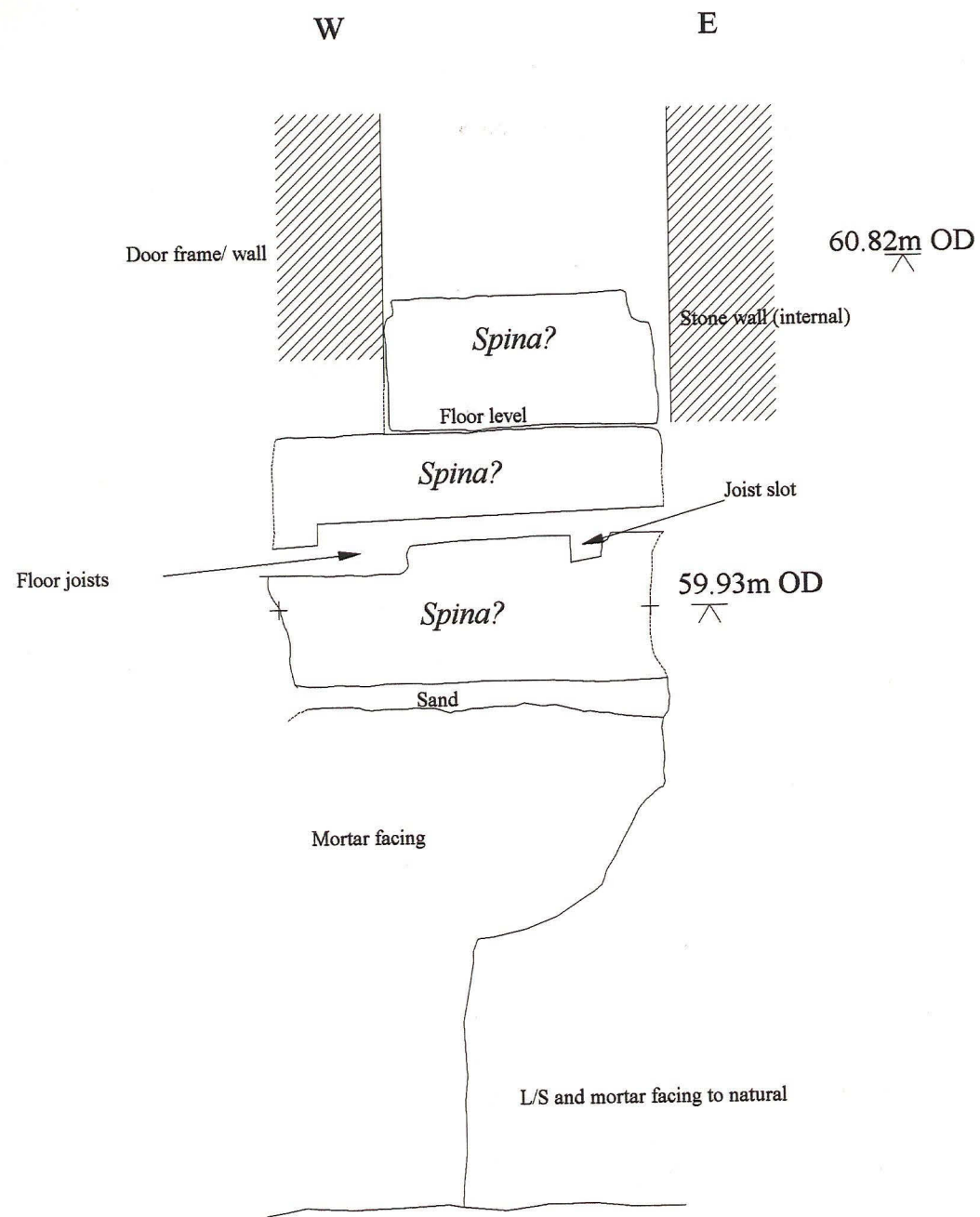


STEEP HILL

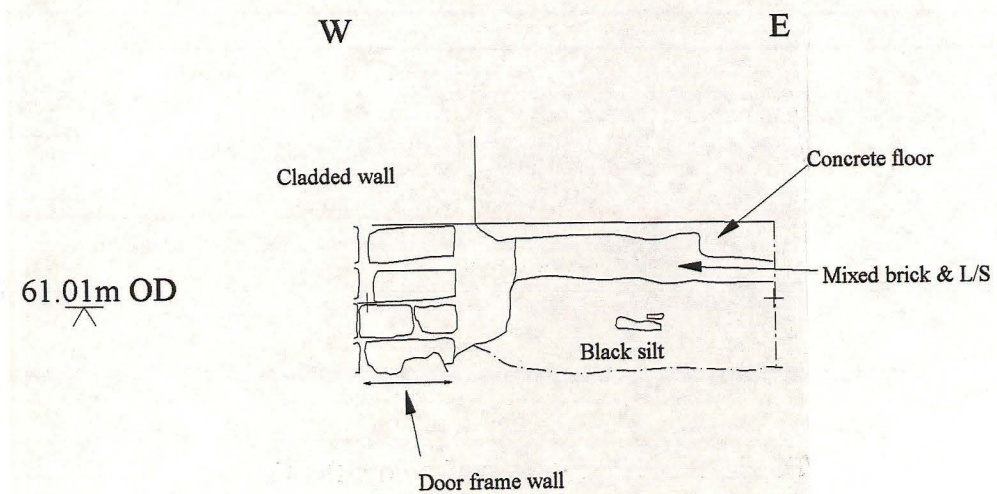
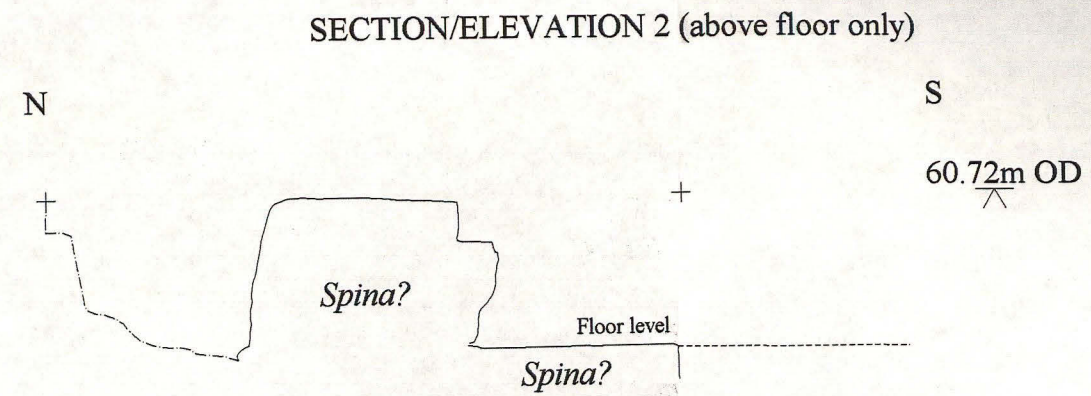


* Profile 7 not shown (arbitrary line across wall)

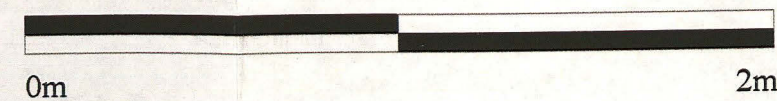


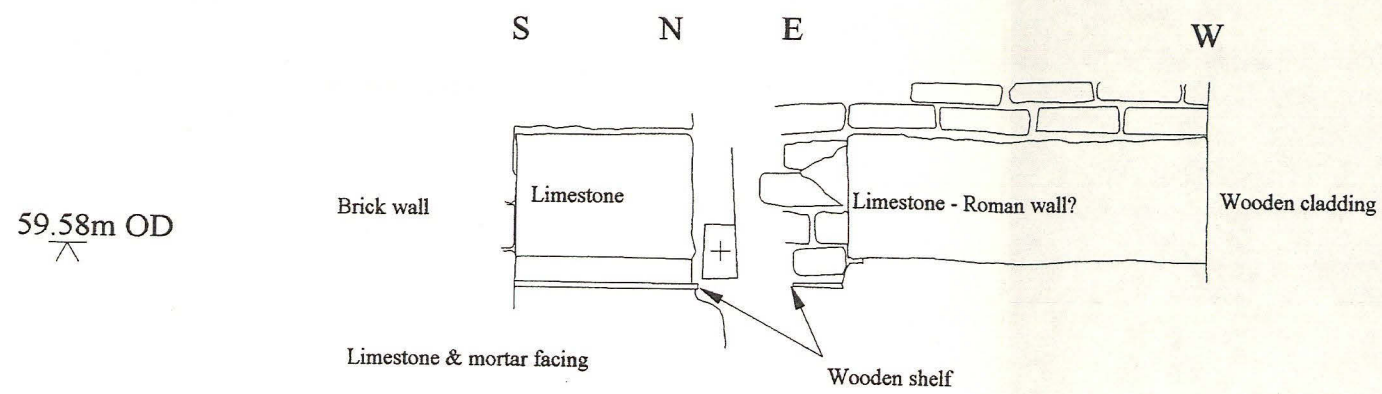


SECTION/ELEVATION 3 (above and below floor)

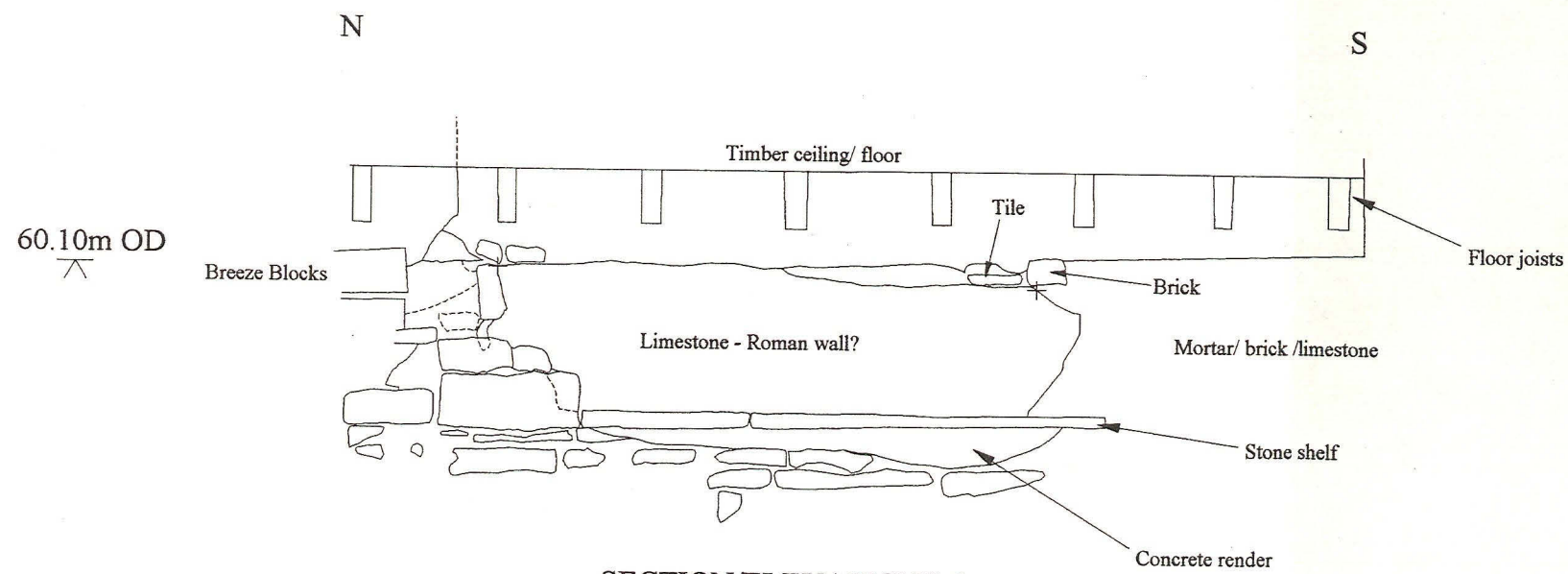


SECTION/ELEVATION 1

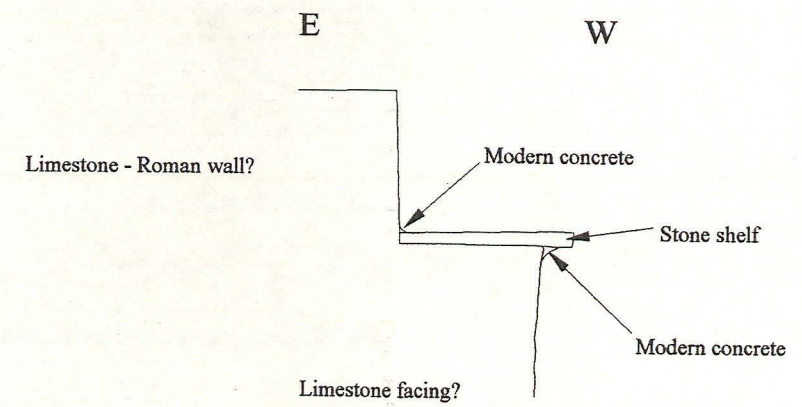




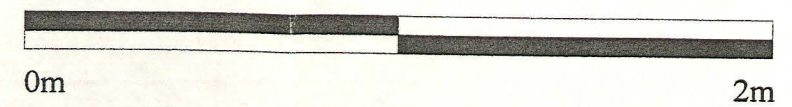
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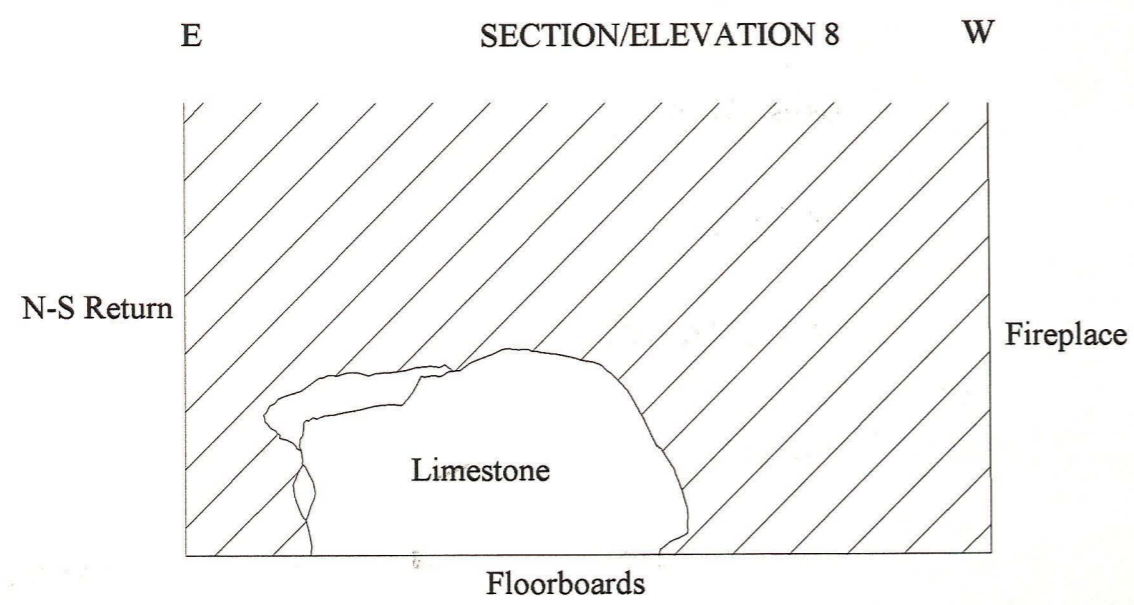
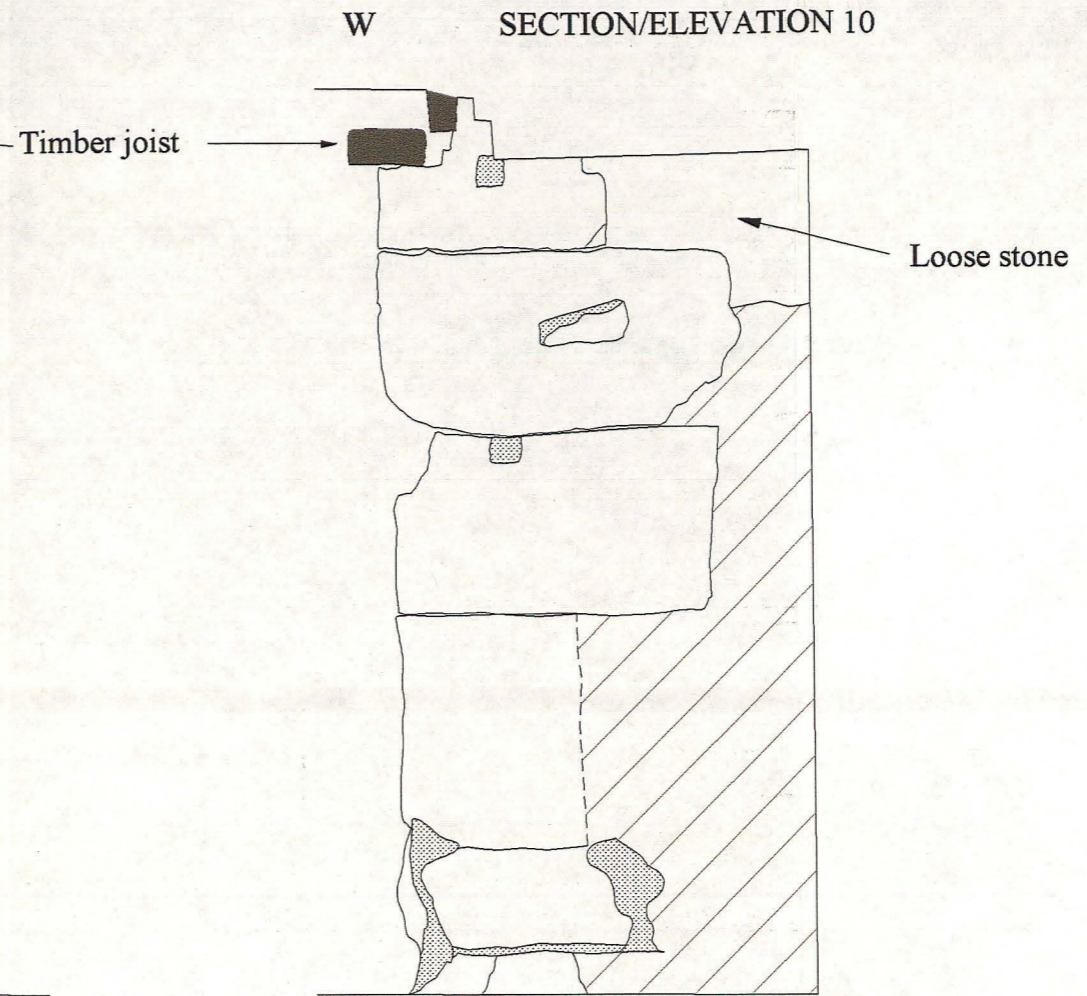
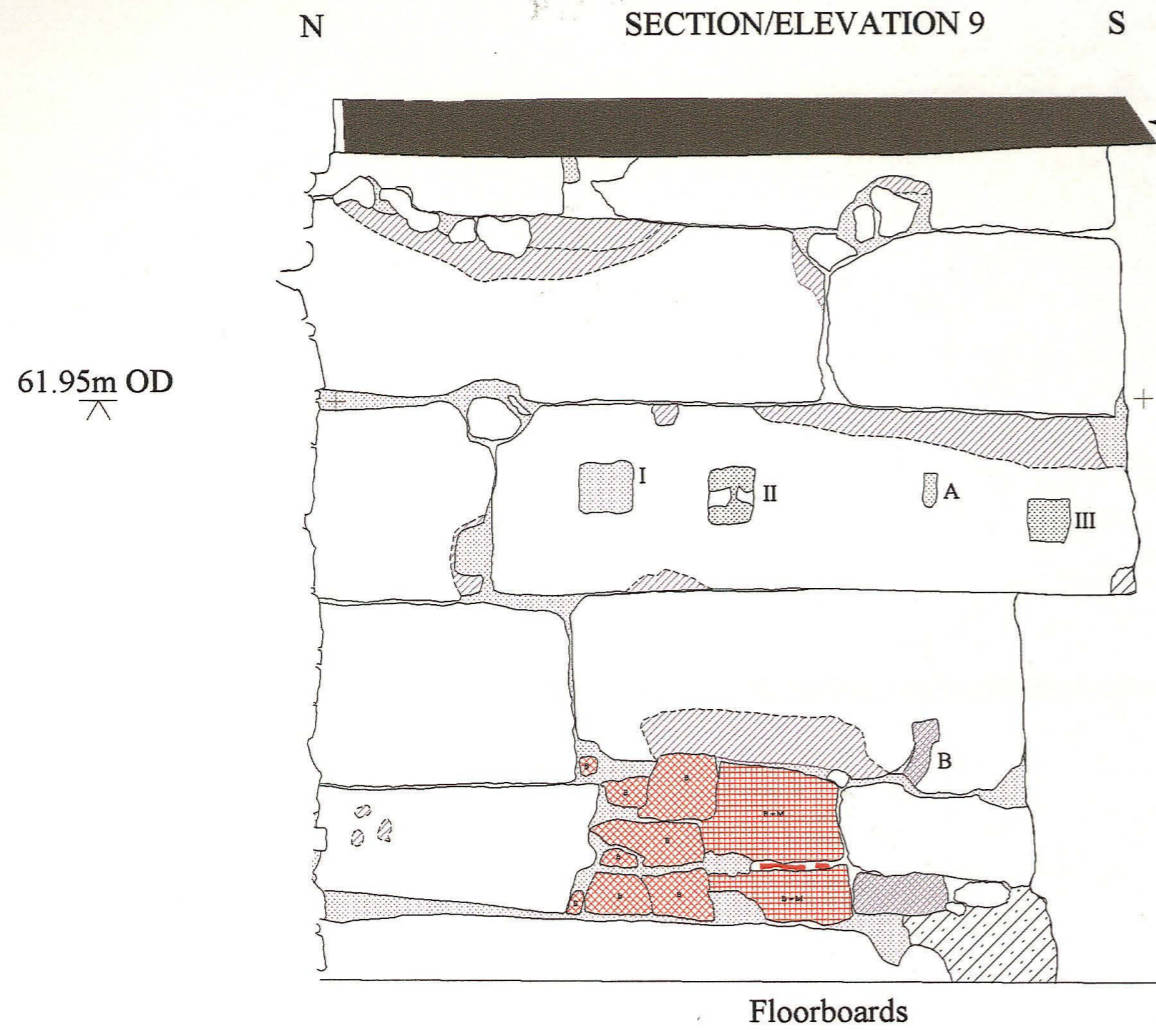


SECTION/ELEVATIONS 6



SECTION/ELEVATION 7 (Profile across Elevation 6)





- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| | Recessed area | | Concrete with limestone inclusions |
| | Soft light grey/brown mortar | | Brick |
| | Mixed brick and mortar | | Limestone wall |
| | Concrete | | |

