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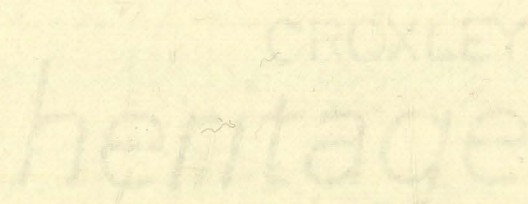
LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Woolsthorpe Manor, Lincolnshire
Archaeological Excavation**

**NGR: SK 9243 2436
Site code: WMS02
LCNCC Accession No. : 2002.444**

**Report for
The National Trust**

**by
D. Young**



**LAS Report No. 621
November 2002**

Conservation
Services

20 NOV 2002

Highways & Planning
Directorate

Event 43549

Source 48278

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Woolsthorpe Manor, Lincolnshire Archaeological Excavation

NGR: SK 9243 2436

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Summary

A small excavation on the north side of the kitchen wing revealed a small length of limestone wall, much damaged by later drains. It may be the remnant of the foundation for the external steps, demolished in 1942, leading to a door on the first floor.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by the National Trust to carry out an excavation prior to intended restoration of an external stone staircase demolished in 1942. The work was carried out in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

Site Location and Background

Woolsthorpe Manor is located approximately 11km south of Grantham, close to the village of Colsterworth (Fig. 1). The present house was built by the Newton family between 1623 and 1639, and was the birthplace and family home of Sir Isaac Newton who was born there in 1642. The house was later modernised by the Edmund Turnor in the late eighteenth century.

The excavation site was positioned on the north side of the east wing to the rear of the house (Fig. 2, Pl. 1), alongside the north-facing wall. The area is presently turfed and steeply sloping towards a deeply set lane running along the back of the house.

Aims and Objectives

The main objective of the excavation was to locate any remaining traces of the external stone staircase which was constructed some time after 1798 and demolished in 1942.

Method

The excavation took place on the 5th and 6th of September 2002. An area 4m x 1.5m (N-S) was stripped of turf and hand cleaned to identify surviving archaeology. Extensive disturbance from service trenches led to alteration of the trench size to approximately 3m x 2.5m (N-S). Drainage trenches were hand excavated to a safe depth for their continued use and any archaeology was identified and recorded.

Results

Stripping of the turf and topsoil (100) in the original trench revealed several service trenches (Fig. 3, Pl. 2), mostly very modern.

A drainage trench [111] containing a salt-glazed pipe crossed the excavation area, parallel to the north wall of the building, leading from a brick inspection chamber to the west. It cut through two earlier pipe trenches, [108] to the south and adjacent to the wall and [107] to the north, which contained a cast iron drainpipe (Pl. 3). The three drainage trenches [108], [110] and [111], were excavated to a depth of 0.7m at the western end of site, reduced to 0.35m due to the fall of the land, at the eastern end.

A cobbled surface, 102, was discovered at the northern side of the site, although badly cut into by a trench for a mains water pipe [109] and by the drainage trench [111] and by the manhole to the west (Pl. 3). The mains water trench, (fill 105) was not excavated. Beneath the cobble surface was an earlier topsoil/subsoil horizon 101 which overlay the natural yellow/orange clay 112.

Removal of the fills of the drainage trenches, (104) and (107), uncovered the remnants of an E-W aligned limestone wall, (103), with a cream-coloured mortar bonding (Pl. 4). The wall was built upon a natural ironstone deposit and lies 0.45m from the building. Only one course of the south face of the wall survived, 1.2m in length, its full width is unknown. This may be a remnant of the footings for the dismantled staircase.

Three sherds of 19-20th century pottery, one complete brick voussoir and a large fragment of a second were recovered from the fill of the drainage trench (107) together with two large fragments of brick/tile. All are 19th century in date (see Appendix 2). They need not necessarily provide a date for the construction of this drain and could be residual. The only other finds were two sherds of pottery from the topsoil, one 17-18th century in date, the other 19th century.

Discussion

This part of the east wing was originally a thatched lean-to known as the 'dirty kitchen' which was altered between 1798 and 1805 to its present appearance (National Trust 2001, 8). A photograph held by the National Trust at Woolsthorpe Manor shows the position of the stair parallel to the north wall of the East Wing. The zig-zag scar of its position is still visible on the wall, as is the blocked first-floor doorway which led into the store above the ground floor kitchen (Pl. 5). The door jambs appear to be quite different from the jambs surrounding the other openings on this side of the building and appears to be inserted. The staircase is not marked on J. C. Barrow's plan of 1797, although there appears to be one on the south side of this wing. The door, and the stair access, were probably both part of the scheme of alterations known to have taken place at the turn of the 18th/19th century.

The few finds from the excavation are of 17th–19th century date but almost all come from one of the pipe trenches and have probably been redeposited from earlier contexts.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the demolition of the staircase in the early 1940's was exceptionally thorough, and the later criss-crossing of the area with drains completed the obliteration process. The small stub of mortared limestone 103 appears to be all that remains of the foundations for this staircase but so little survived that this interpretation can only be conjectural.

Acknowledgements

LAS wishes to thank the National Trust and particularly Emma Hegarty for her help and co-operation during the period of the excavation. The report was edited by Naomi Field and Mark Williams prepared the illustrations.

Reference

The National Trust 2001 *Isaac Newton and Woolsthorpe Manor*. Guidebook published 1987, revised 1992, 1996 and 2001.

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Drawings and Sections 2 sheets

Photographs LAS film no. 114, negs. 1A-14A

Correspondence

Doug Young
November 2002

Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1

Woolsthorpe Manor (WMS 02)

Context List

Context No	Context Type	Description
100	Turf and topsoil	Dark grey/brown, max. 10cms deep
101	Topsoil/subsoil below 102	Dark grey brown soil.
102	Cobbled surface below 100	Max. 12cms river-stone surface.
103	Limestone wall	Limestone wall with cream mortar bonding
104	Fill of drainage trench [108]	Very sandy, many limestone and ironstone fragments
105	Fill of water supply trench [109]	Grey clay, limestone pieces, ironstone fragments
106	Fill of drainage trench [110]	Very mixed, clay, limestone, ironstone fragments
107	Fill of drainage trench [111]	Grey clay, limestone fragments
108	Cut of drainage trench	70 cms wide, not excavated.
109	Cut of water supply trench	36 cms wide, not excavated
110	Cut of drainage trench	Size unknown, (cut by [111])
111	Cut of drainage trench	75 cms wide, depth unknown.
112	Yellow-orange clay	natural

Appendix 2

Pottery Archive WMS02

Jane Young Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
101	BL	Black-glazed wares	jug/chamber pot	1	9	BS	LHJ	17th to 18th
101	WHITE	Modern whiteware	saucer	1	7	base		19th
101	TPW	Transfer printed ware	plate	1	3	rim		19th
107	BERTH	Brown glazed earthenware	teapot lid	1	9	knob		19th to 20th
107	TPW	Transfer printed ware	plate	1	8	base		19th to 20th
107	WHITE	Modern whiteware	bowl	1	3	rim	blue banded	19th to 20th

Tile Archive WMS02

Jane Young Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	cname	full name	frags	weight	description	date
107	PANT	Pantile	1	54		19th
107	MODTIL	Modern tile	1	5	white glaze	19th to 20th
107	VOU	Vousoir brick	1	2481	handmade;mortar over all edges;230x110x45-65mm	19th
107	VOU	Vousoir brick	1	1548	handmade;165x110x44-65mm	19th
107	BRK	Brick	2	1317	very poor fabric;135mm width 25mm thick	19th

The Figures

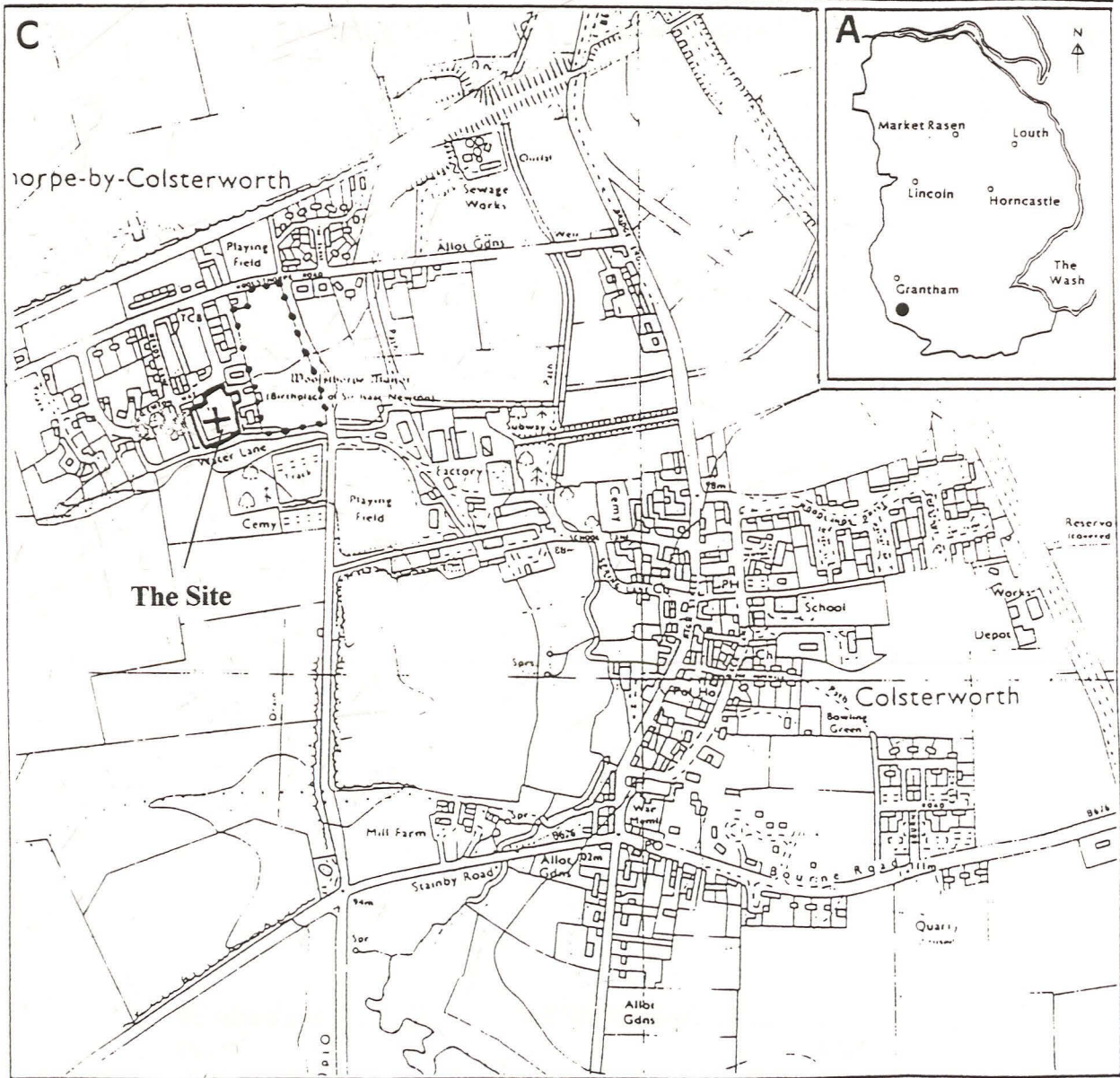
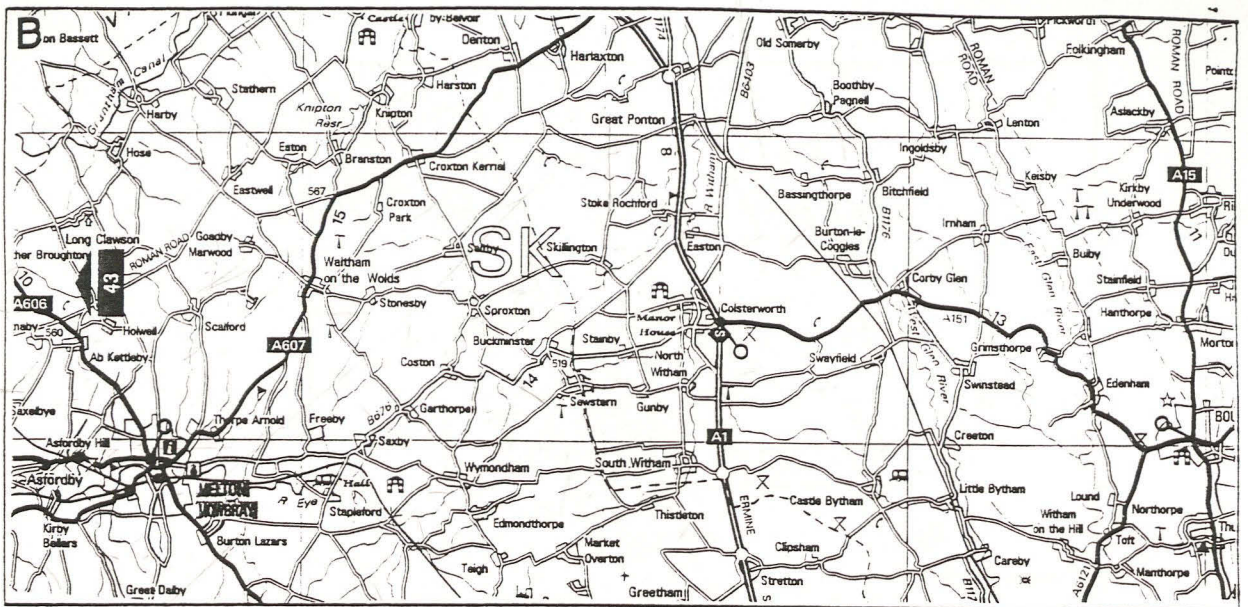
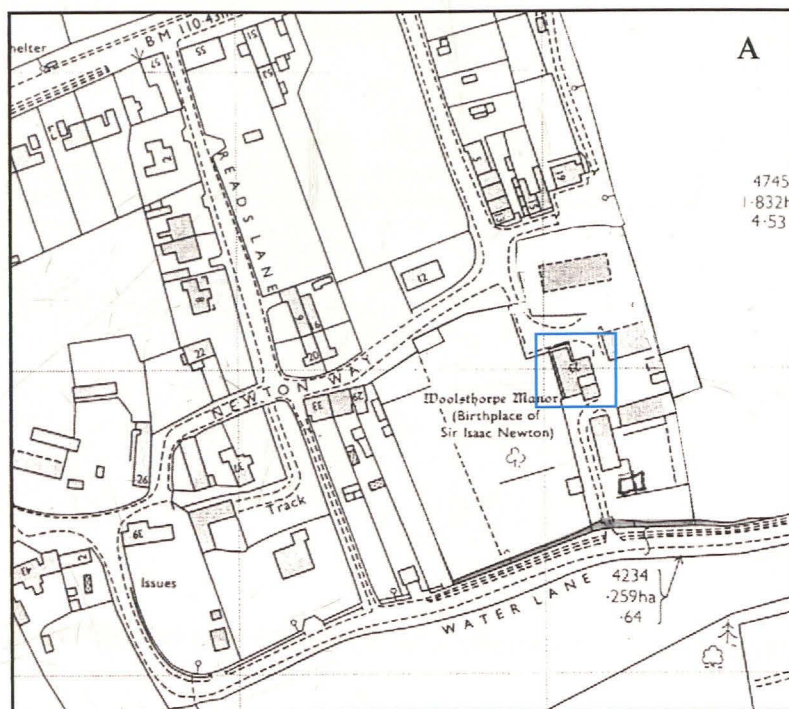


Fig. 1 Location of Woolsthorpe Manor (C based on the 1: 10,000 OS map SK 92SW © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Contoller of HMSO, LAS licence AL 10002165).



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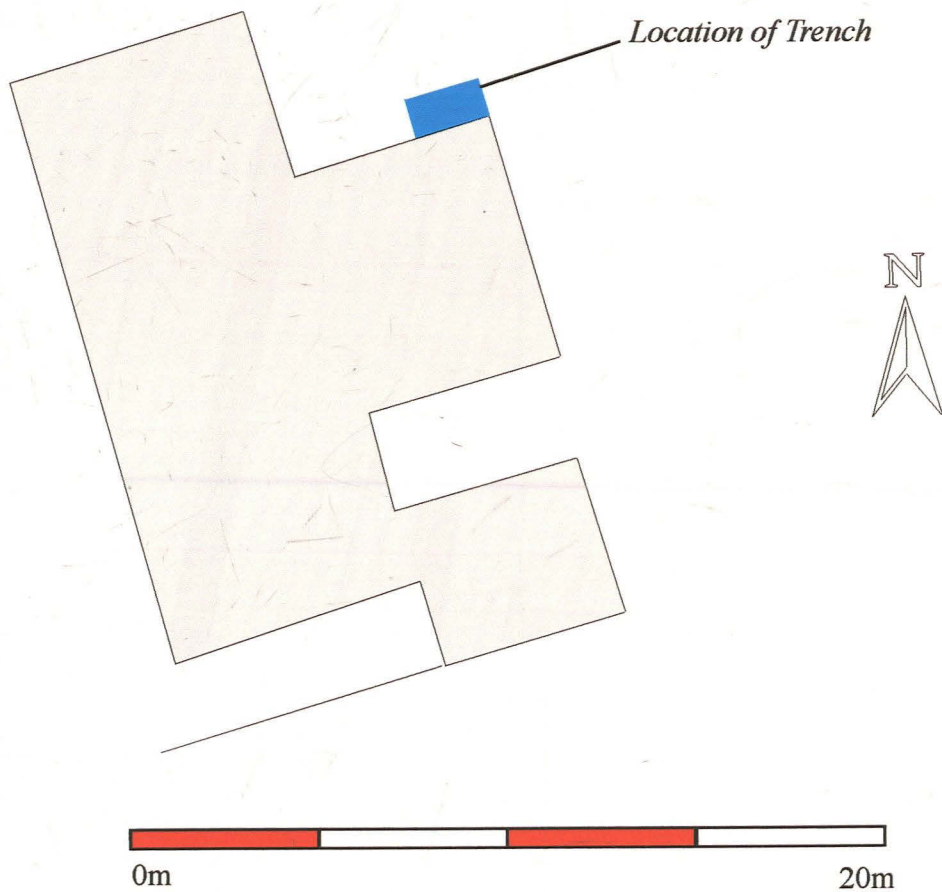


Fig. 2 Position of the excavation, Woolsthorpe Manor (based upon 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map. Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No AL100002165.

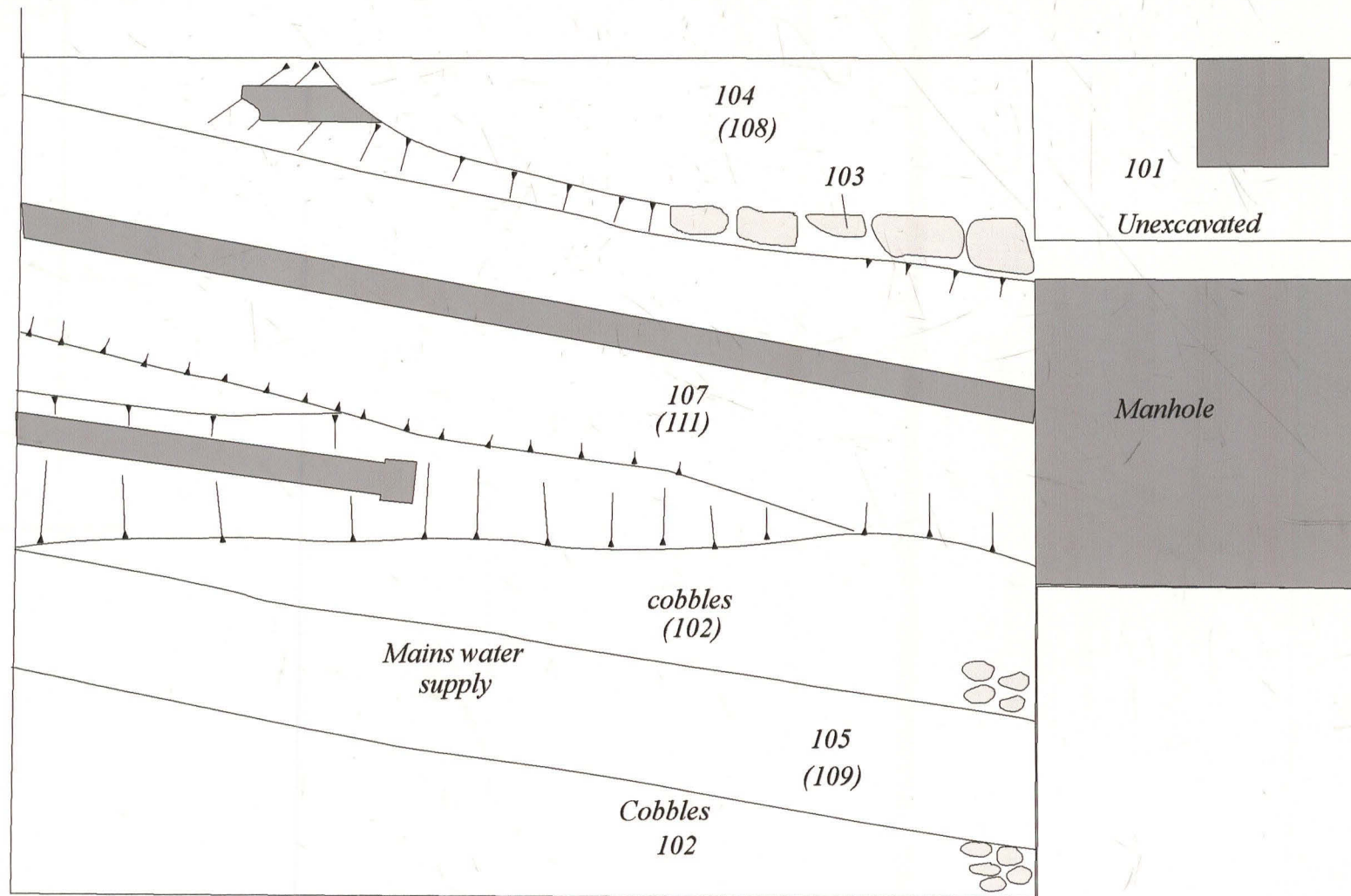


Fig. 3 Plan of trench. Scale 1:20

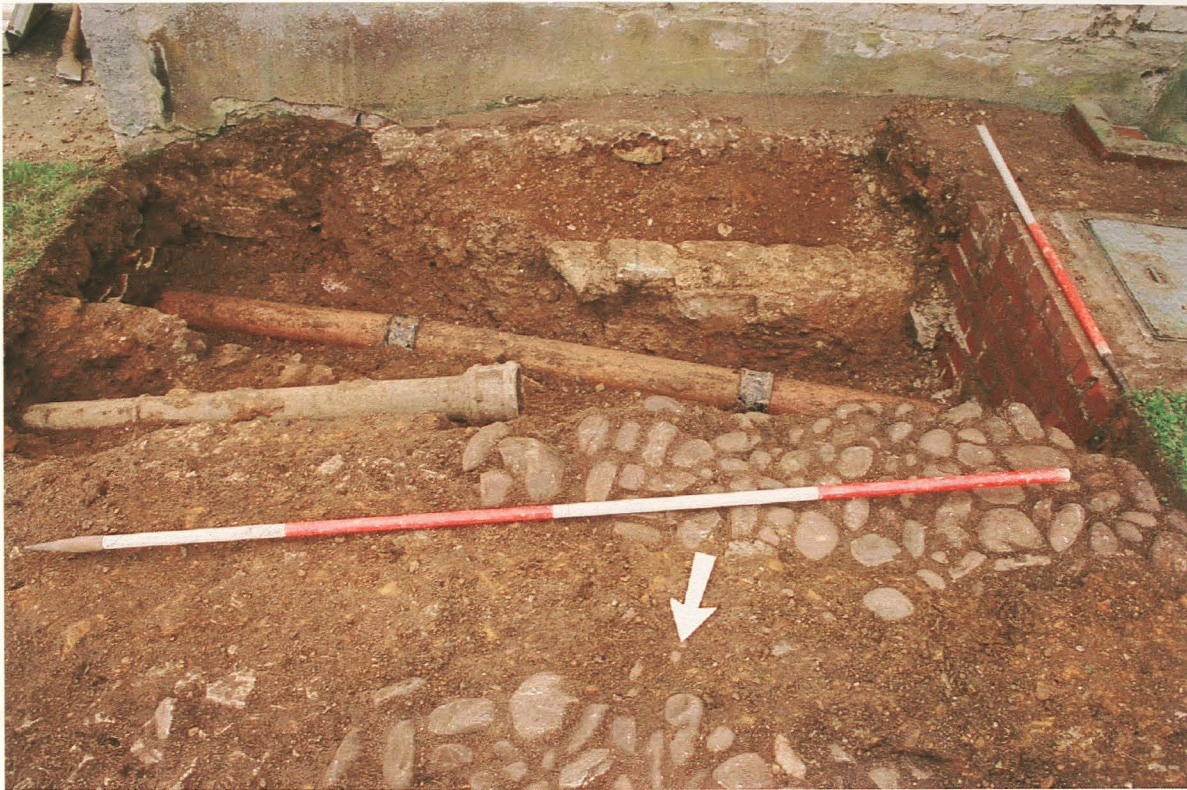
The Plates



Pl. 1 General view of the position of the site prior to excavation.



Pl. 2 General view showing excavation trench, looking west.



Pl. 3 (above) View looking south showing the cobbled surface (102) and the service trenches partially excavated. Scales 2m and 1m



Pl. 4 (left) View looking east showing the limestone wall (103), cut through by the partially excavated service trench 111 (left) and 108 (right). Scale 1m.



Pl. 5 North wall of east wing showing shadow of removed stair to left of central floor window and blocked door above.