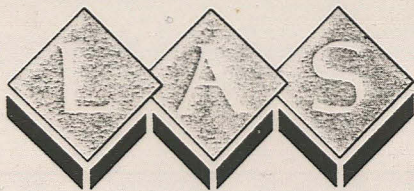


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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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SS PETER and PAUL CHURCH, CAISTOR

NGR: TA 11720110

SITE CODE: CCT 95

MUSEUM ACC. NO.: 148.95

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

FOR

THE PCC OF SS PETER AND PAUL

October 1996

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section
12 Broad Lane
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TEL. 0522 575232 FAX: 0522 530724
30.10.96.

Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Caistor and the church of SS Peter and Paul. Inset based on the 1953 OS 1:25000 map reproduced with the permission of the Ordnance Survey. © Crown Copyright. LAS licence no. AL50424A.

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Pl. 1 Trench 1. Service trench along N wall of the tower showing two-stage chamfered plinth. 50cm scale is resting against concrete run-off which masks the junction of the tower and the nave. The vertical joint in the masonry marks the junction between nave (r) and porch (l).

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SS Peter and Paul Church, Caistor
Archaeological Recording
NGR: TA 11720110
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Summary

Two service trenches for the provision of kitchen and toilet facilities inside the tower were archaeologically excavated and recorded at the church of the Saints Peter and Paul. Recording of the lower internal tower elevations was also carried out but the results are not included in this report.

The service trench along the north wall of the tower revealed a chamfered plinth which suggests a Norman rather than Saxon date for construction of the tower. Removal of the modern floor levels inside the tower revealed a lead working area and the sandstone rubble foundations of the tower. The foundations of the present tower were found extending either side of the modern threshold of the tower west door.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Caistor Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological recording during the groundworks phase for provision of toilet and kitchen facilities in the tower of the church of Saints Peter and Paul, Caistor (Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of the Parish of Caistor in accordance with the conditions of the Faculty granted by the Chancellor under the terms of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991.

The scheme of works comprised:

- insertion of an additional floor in the church tower to create a meeting room, below the bell ringing chamber

- provision of a W.C. and kitchen on the ground floor of the tower

Archaeological Background

The church and churchyard of SS Peter and Paul lies within the late Roman defences at Caistor. Little is known of any early Saxon presence within the town itself although a substantial 6th century cremation cemetery was found at Fonaby in the 1950s and other Saxon remains of similar date have been recorded on the periphery of the modern town, to the south.

The early ecclesiastical importance of Caistor was first established in 1770 when part of an 8th or 9th century *titulus* or dedication stone was discovered in the churchyard. It would have been set on a holy site to record the dedication of a building or altar, presumably a precursor to the present parish church, forming an epitaph to a ruler or saint. Unfortunately the stone was lost in the 19th century although an engraving, showing the incomplete inscription survives. Its presence suggests that there existed in Caistor an

early Saxon church of some importance, which in turn suggests that Caistor was a settlement which retained its high status after the end of the Roman period. It has been suggested that Caistor became the capital of the North Riding of the Kingdom of Lindsey but documentary and other evidence is of a much later date. The presence of a mint in the 10th century, is certainly an indication that Caistor was part of a royal estate by that time. (Other royal estates in Lindsey included Lincoln, Torksey and Horncastle, all of which had 10th century mints.) In the Domesday Survey of 1086 Caistor was described as a royal estate holding land in many surrounding villages. A church is mentioned in the survey.

Further evidence for the early ecclesiastical importance of the site has been inferred from the fabric of the present church. The transepts appear to preserve the remains of an earlier building which had a large crossing with lateral *porticus*, usually indicative of a church of senior status in the later pre-Conquest period (Stocker 1993, 117).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

The archaeological recording comprised two main elements; excavation of service trenches inside and adjacent to the tower, and recording of the internal wall elevations.

Copies of the report have been sent to the Parochial Church Council of the church of SS Peter and Paul, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record, and the City and County Museum, Lincoln. All archive records will be lodged with the museum when the project is completed.

1. Excavation

All archaeological features were allocated context numbers for recording purposes; these are referred to in the text, figures and the context list (Appendix 1). In the text that follows context numbers are recorded in **bold** (for cuts) or ***bold and italic*** (for fills and layers)

Excavation was carried out jointly by the contractors and LAS. Trench 1, for the sewer was dug across the NW corner of the tower running beneath the threshold of the tower west door and across the churchyard to the main sewer. The stretch inside the tower and just beyond the threshold was archaeologically excavated. The remainder was dug by the contractors. Trench 2 for the watermain on the north side of the tower was excavated by LAS (Fig. 2).

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Excavation on the north side of the tower for the insertion of a water main revealed a two-stage chamfered plinth (Fig. 2, Pls. 1, 2) which runs from the nave junction. Any return angle was obscured by a large run-off along the base of the north aisle west wall. There was no observable relationship to the nave. The plinth continued uninterrupted along the north wall beneath the blocked north door (Pl. 3) suggesting that the door may have been inserted.

All soil removed in this trench was topsoil which had accumulated against the wall.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

The red and black 20th century floor tiles **1** in the north-west angle of the tower were carefully lifted by the contractors along the line of the service trench to a maximum width of 1m and extending 3m across the north-west angle of the tower floor. These were put to one side for re-use inside the tower. The service trench was a maximum of 600mm wide and was archaeologically excavated.

The tiles were bedded on a loose mortar **2** which was thickest towards the threshold where it filled a dip in the floor surface and overlaid the brickwork **21** beneath the threshold stone **20** which must all have been laid at the same time.

Beneath the modern tile floor and its bedding were the remnants of a mortar floor **3** which had signs of burning in the NW corner of the tower (Pl. 4). It is possible that a stove may have been positioned in this area. Immediately beneath the mortar floor was a thin layer of charcoal **4** which contained a pottery base sherd from a vessel of 17th or 18th century date. It sealed a series of ashy layers **11, 12, 13** which filled a shallow pit **15** c.0.25m deep (Pl. 5). The pit lining **14** was a bright red sand which indicated burning *in situ* to a high temperature (Pl. 6). Fill **12** contained large quantities of lead waste which suggests that the pit was a small hearth used for making lead window comes or castings for roof repairs.

The trench cut across the middle of the hearth and its full dimensions could not be determined. Its south side overlaid a small pit **16** of unknown function which contained a loose fill of mortar with pieces of sandstone, a few fragments of human bone, an oyster shell and a single sherd of medieval pottery, **17**. It was sealed by the mortar floor **3**. The pit had cut through a sandstone rubble **19** deposit which formed the tower foundation (Pl. 7). A single rim sherd of 12th century pottery was found in **19**. It was difficult to distinguish foundation material from the redeposited rubble in pit **16**.

Outside the tower a large grave stone dated 1793 was removed by the contractors. According to one of the churchwardens it had been laid flat against the threshold recently and a 1993 penny was found in the topsoil, **7**, beneath the slab. Also below the topsoil was a disturbed area, **8**, of unknown function containing loose mortar, small pieces of stone and brick and scraps of 18th and 19th century pottery. The material in **8** was partially derived from a firm mortary deposit **9** which butted the brickwork **21** beneath the threshold **20**. It also overlaid stonework, **10**, which extended to a distance of 1.80m beyond the west tower wall (Pl. 8). In such a small trench interpretation cannot be certain but if the stonework was part of the tower foundation it would have been more than 2m wide. (Its depth was not recorded). Perhaps the original builders were aware of the poor ground conditions which have led to the structural problems in the tower, which are

clearly expressed in the cracks visible in the west door and the large south-west buttress constructed in 1906.

The service trench beyond the tower entrance was excavated by the contractors. Its depth increased to a maximum of 0.50m at its entry into the large pit for the inspection chamber next to the boundary wall of the churchyard. The pit (Pl. 9) was excavated to a depth of 2.70m to enable connection with the mains sewer in Church Street. The trench sides were not stable and detailed archaeological recording was not possible. Several burials of post-medieval date were encountered in this pit. They were dated by their associated coffin fittings (handles, nails etc). An assorted collection of pottery sherds was retrieved from the pit including six Roman, three medieval and four of seventeenth-century date. No undisturbed horizons were observed, nor any indication of any earlier boundary to the churchyard.

2. Internal Elevations

Internal wood panelling had been removed some years previously because of infestation. The old plaster above the previously panelled area was to be removed to the new first-floor ceiling height and the walls at ground floor level to be replastered.

Exposure of the internal wall fabric to a height of c.6m above existing floor level provided an opportunity to examine the internal wall elevations which contain blocked windows and other openings not readily visible on the outside wall faces. Interpretation of the tower fabric has been hampered by the poor state of the external stonework and it was hoped that detailed inspection of the internal elevations might throw new light on its development. A full stone-by-stone drawn survey of the walls was proposed as part of the archaeological recording programme.

Although the original proposal had been to replaster the walls the parish decided to leave the stripped walls bare, to avoid the additional cost of recording the walls. However, insertion of the new floor, stair access and the kitchen and toilet fittings would obscure a considerable part of the walls and it was felt that, given the historical importance of the church, the survey was still necessary. The parish did not wish to pay for such a survey and elevation drawings were prepared by the architect. These proved to be unsuitable for archaeological purposes so the survey was undertaken by LAS but the results are not included in this report. The results and implications for the dating of the tower will be submitted for publication to an appropriate academic journal.

A photographic record was made of the stripped wall elevations. The new floor is supported on 24 small metal supports secured in the wall fabric.

DISCUSSION

Excavation of the service trench did not reveal any significant archaeological remains except for the lead melting hearth. The tower foundations were also exposed. As expected the trench across the churchyard revealed little apart

from a few human bones which were reburied. The deep pit dug for the inspection chamber adjacent to the churchyard wall showed that the ground was disturbed by post-medieval burials to a depth of over 2m. There was no indication of any boundary pre-dating the existing stone retaining wall.

Although the new first floor itself appears to have caused a minimum of disturbance to the tower fabric its insertion and that of a stair, toilet and kitchen have masked large areas of the elevations at ground level and will make any future recording of the tower walls the more difficult at a future date even though replastering has not been carried out. The results of this survey will be published elsewhere.

The plinth revealed in the trench on the north side of the tower is more characteristic of a Norman rather than Saxon date which has implications for interpretation of the development of the church. It reinforces the view that the earliest surviving fabric in the church is to be found in the south transept.

Naomi Field and Ray North
October 1996

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank the architect Eirikur Walton of Brown and Buttrick for supplying ground plans of the church tower, the building contractors for their help and cooperation on site. Recording on site was carried out by Naomi Field and Mick Clark, who also prepared the drawings. Mick McDaid and Ray North prepared the site archive. Jane Frost collated and produced the report.

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Stocker, D., 1993. 'The early church in Lincolnshire', in A. Vince, *Pre-Viking Lindsey*.

Appendix 1: Caistor Church Context List

Context No	Type	Relationship	Description
1	layer	above 2	floor tiles
2	layer	above 3	mortar bed
3	layer	above 4	mortar floor
4	layer	above 5	black layer
5	layer	below 4	rubble
6	not used		
7	layer		turf and topsoil
8	fill	within 9	mortar & loose
9	fill	above 10	firm mortar
10	fill	below 9	foundation wall
11	fill	below 4	ash layer
12	fill		ash layer with lead
13	fill		fine grey sand
14	fill		red sand
15	cut	contains 11,12,13,14	lead working
16	cut	contains 17	
17	fill	within 16	
18	fill		internal wall foundation
19	fill		fill of above
20	fill	cont with 1	threshold stone
21	fill	beneath 20,above 10	

Fig. 1 Location of Caistor and the church at St Peter and Paul. Inset based on the 1953 OS 1:25000 map reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, © Crown copyright. LAG licence no. AL50424A.

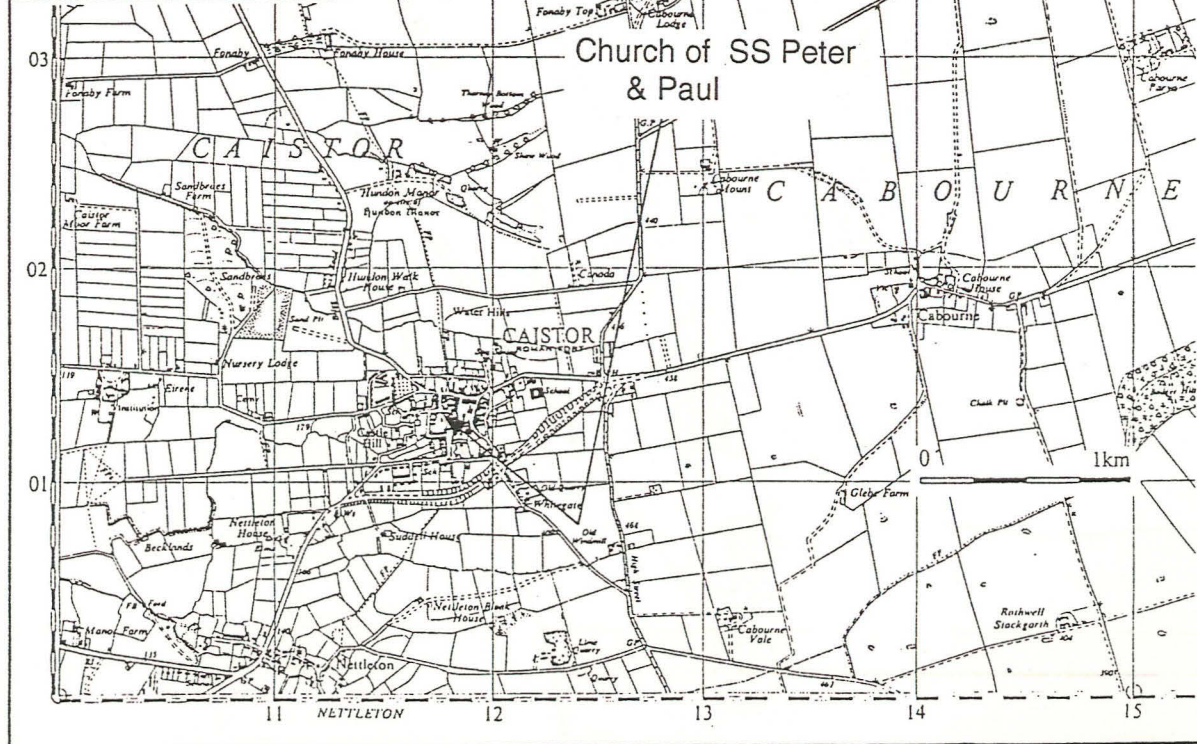
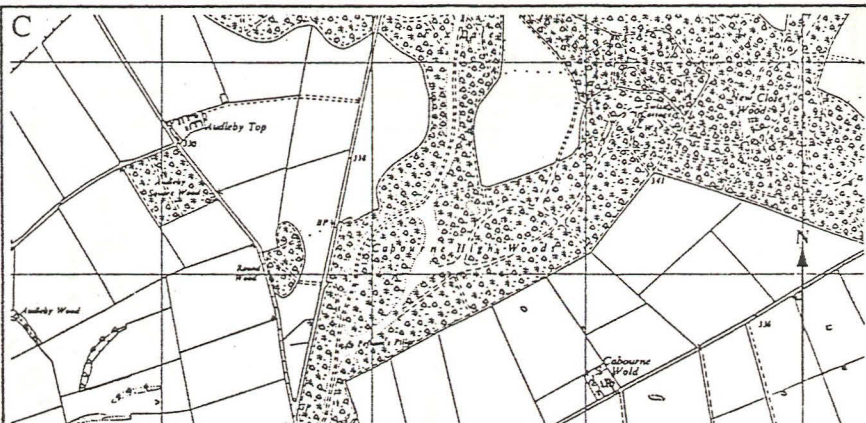
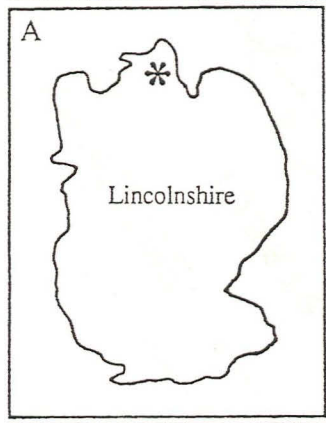
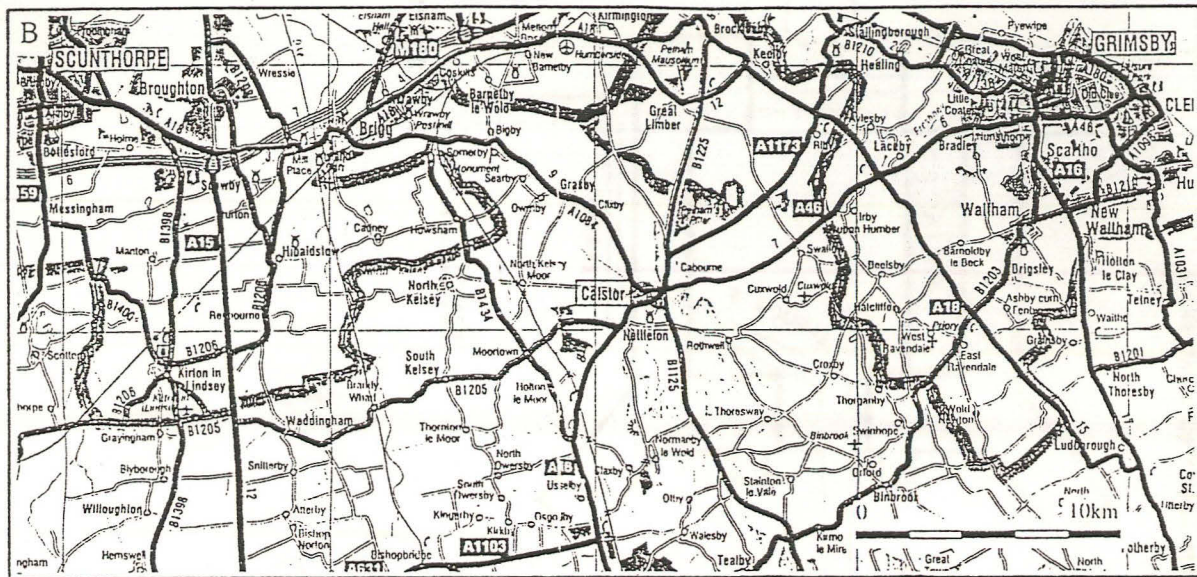


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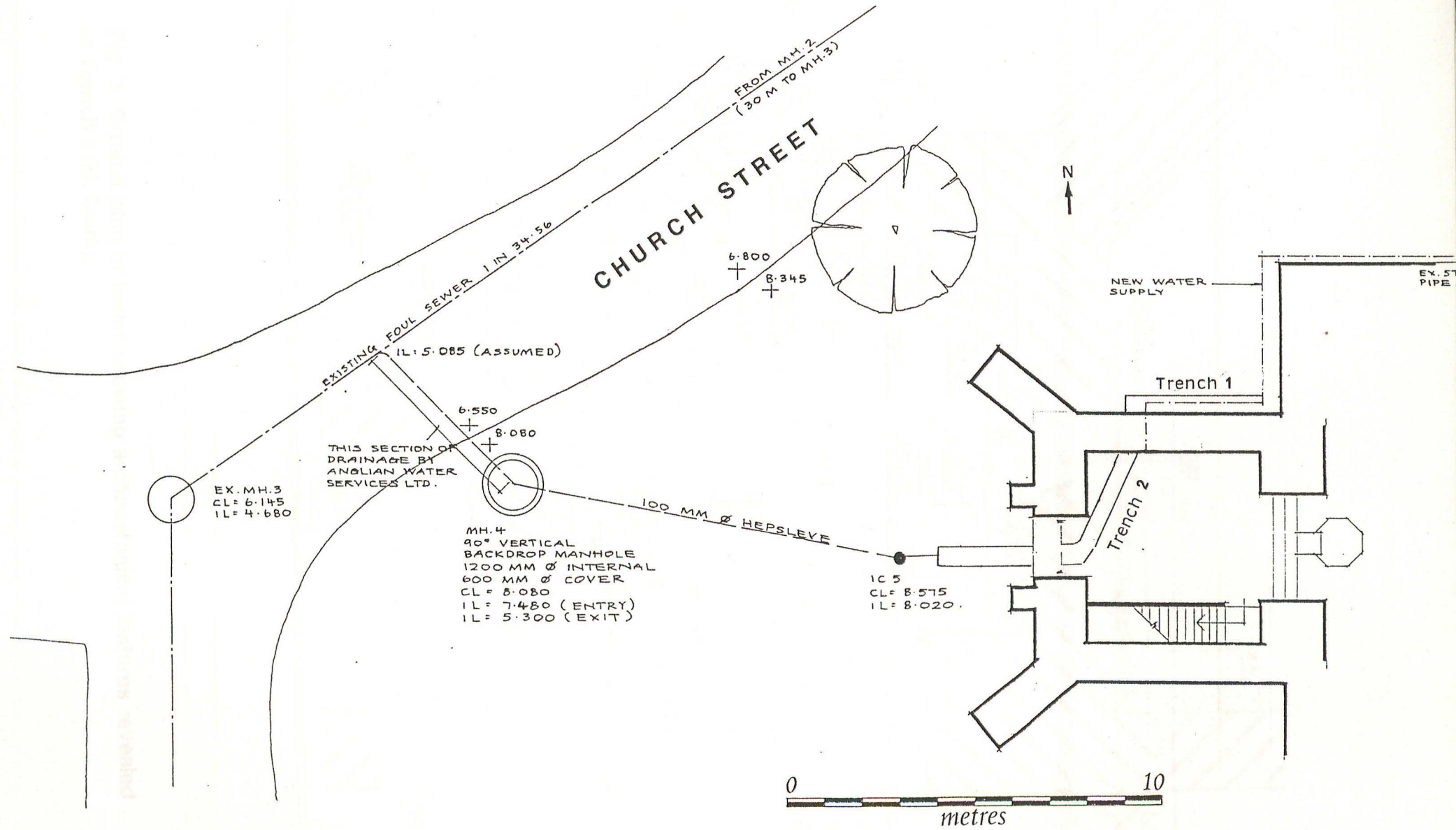


Fig. 2 Trench location plan, based on survey prepared by Brown and Buttrick, Chartered Architects.

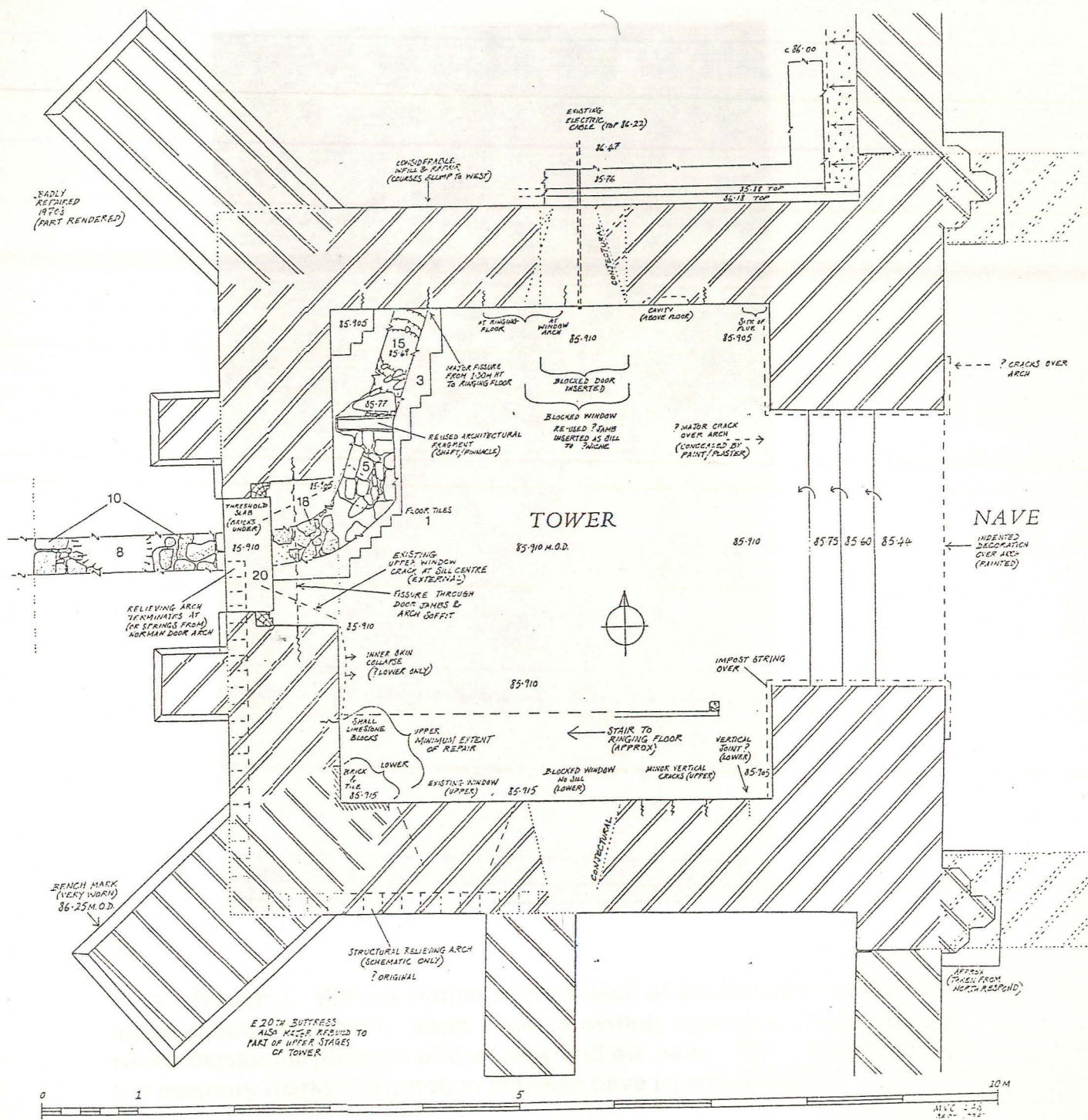
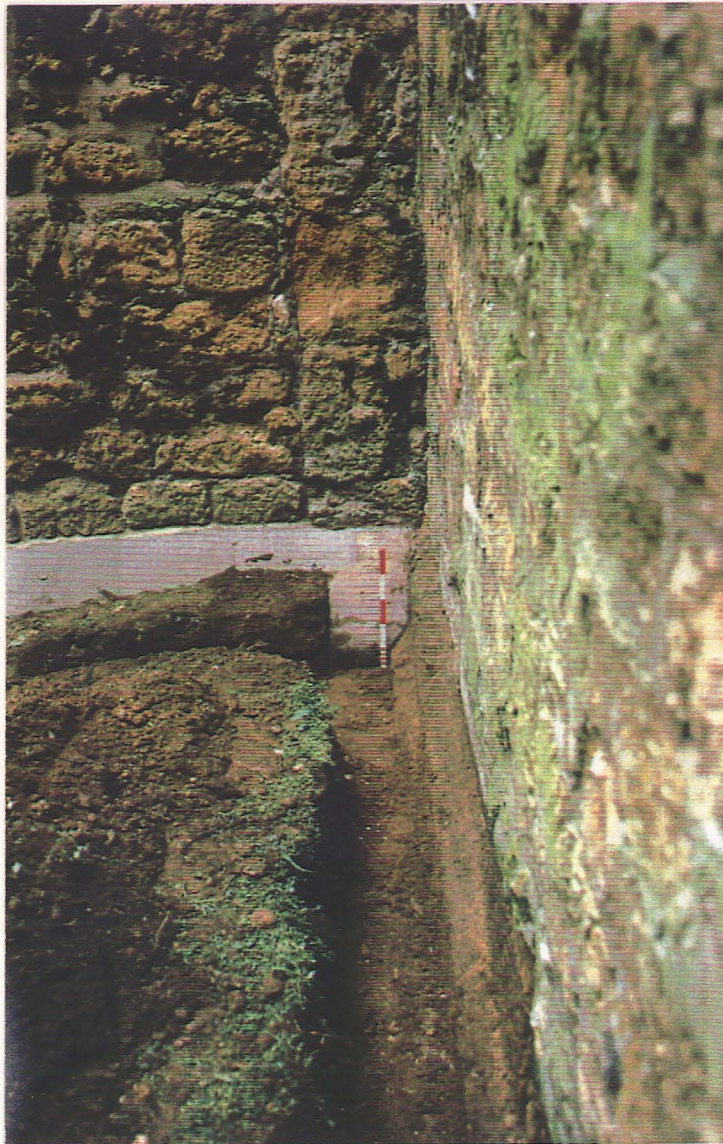


Fig. 3 Ground plan of tower showing archaeological features revealed in Trench 1 (M. Clark).



Pl. 1 Trench 1. Service trench along N wall of the tower showing two-stage chamfered plinth. 50cm scale is resting against concrete run-off which masks the junction of the tower and the nave. The vertical joint in the masonry marks the junction between nave (r) and porch (l).



Pl. 2 Close-up view of two-stage chamfered plinth.

Pl. 3 Chamfered plinth runs uninterrupted beneath blocked door.

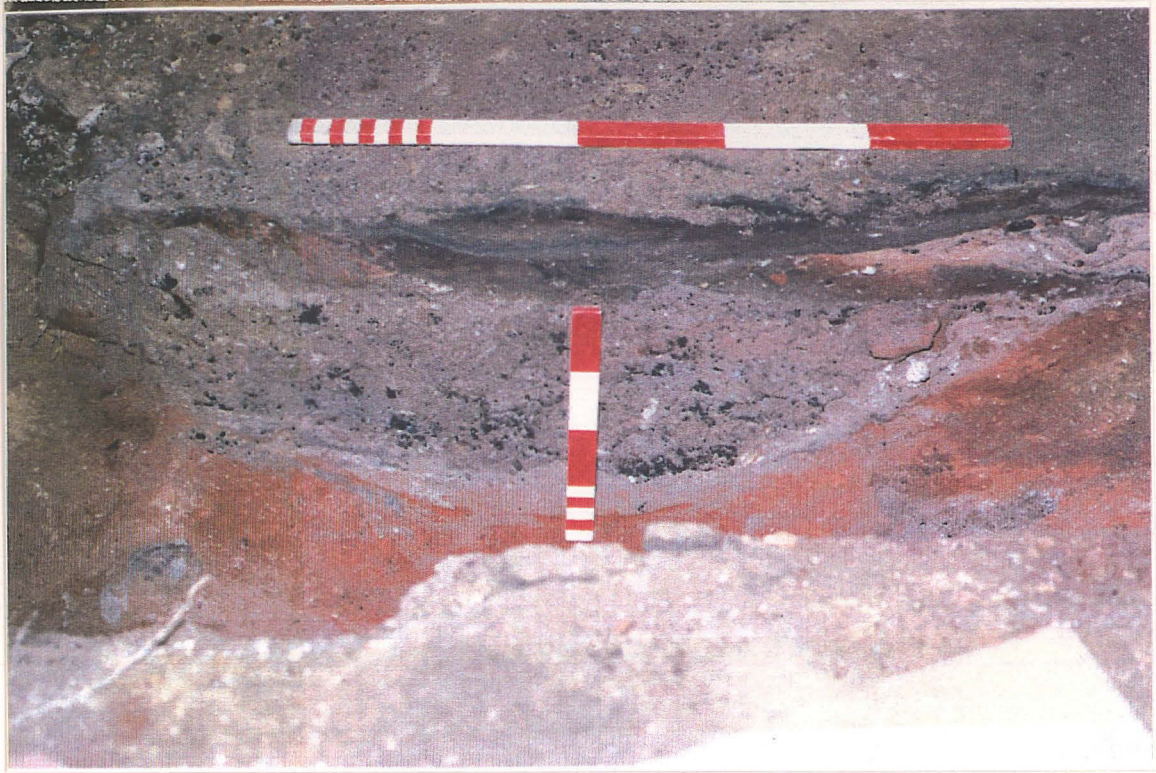




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Pl. 5 Lead melting hearth 15, prior to excavation showing that it extended beyond the limits of the trench. View looking N, scale 50cm.



Pl. 6 Cross section through hearth 15 showing ash layers and intensely burnt base and sides, note pit 16 to left of picture. Large scale 50cm, small scale 25cm.

Pl. 7 Tower foundations 19, with pit 16 to right of wall line. Scale 50cm.





Pl. 8 Modern mortar deposit 9 overlying wall foundation 10. Looking E, scale 50cm.

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