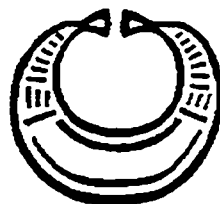
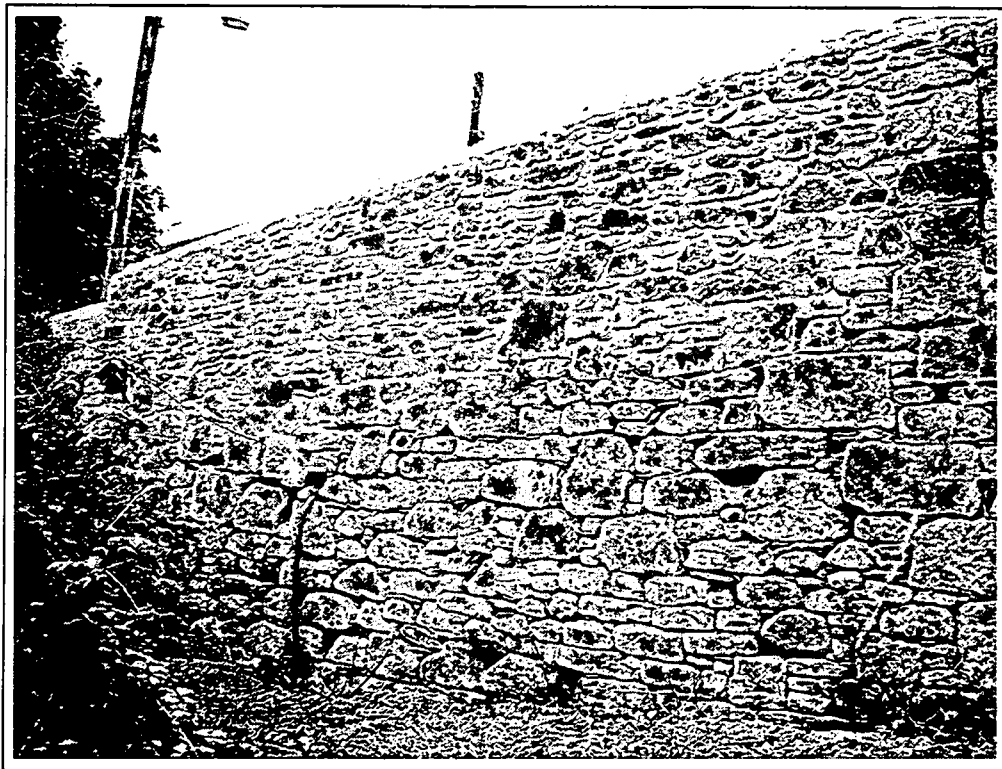


ENCLOSURE WALL AT GLASNEY COLLEGE, CORNWALL

Archaeological recording and repair work



Cornwall Archaeological Unit

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**Enclosure wall at Glasney
College, Penryn**

Archaeological recording and repair work

Richard Cole BA

December 2003

Report No: 2003R081

CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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Within Cornwall Archaeological Unit, the report was commented on by Ann Preston Jones.

Cover illustration

The walling following repair works.

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Abbreviations

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
EH	English Heritage
NGR	National Grid Reference
PRN	Primary Record Number in Cornwall HER
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
SM	Scheduled Monument

1 Summary

Glasney College in Penryn was founded in 1265 and dissolved in the 1540s. The main area of the church and associated cemetery lies below ground within a playing field run by Carrick District Council.

Above ground remains of the complex are restricted to a small section of walling on the edge of the open space (north-east corner). A large retaining wall with parapet runs alongside the southern edge of the Scheduled area. A small section of the parapet collapsed in March 2002. In 2003, Cornwall County Council's Transportation and Estates Section took responsibility for repairing the damage and the future maintenance of the wall as a whole. This report records the repair work carried out on the wall and the archaeological work which preceded it.

The recording work has been important in helping to assess the status of this wall, which stands on the site of one of Cornwall's major ecclesiastical sites and has been claimed as the most substantial visible element of that complex. The overall conclusion is that the obviously old and extremely well built wall probably follows the line of the medieval cemetery wall depicted by Georges, but is likely to be a post-medieval construction. The parapet of the wall, comprising a rough mix of stone, was found to have been rebuilt on many occasions.

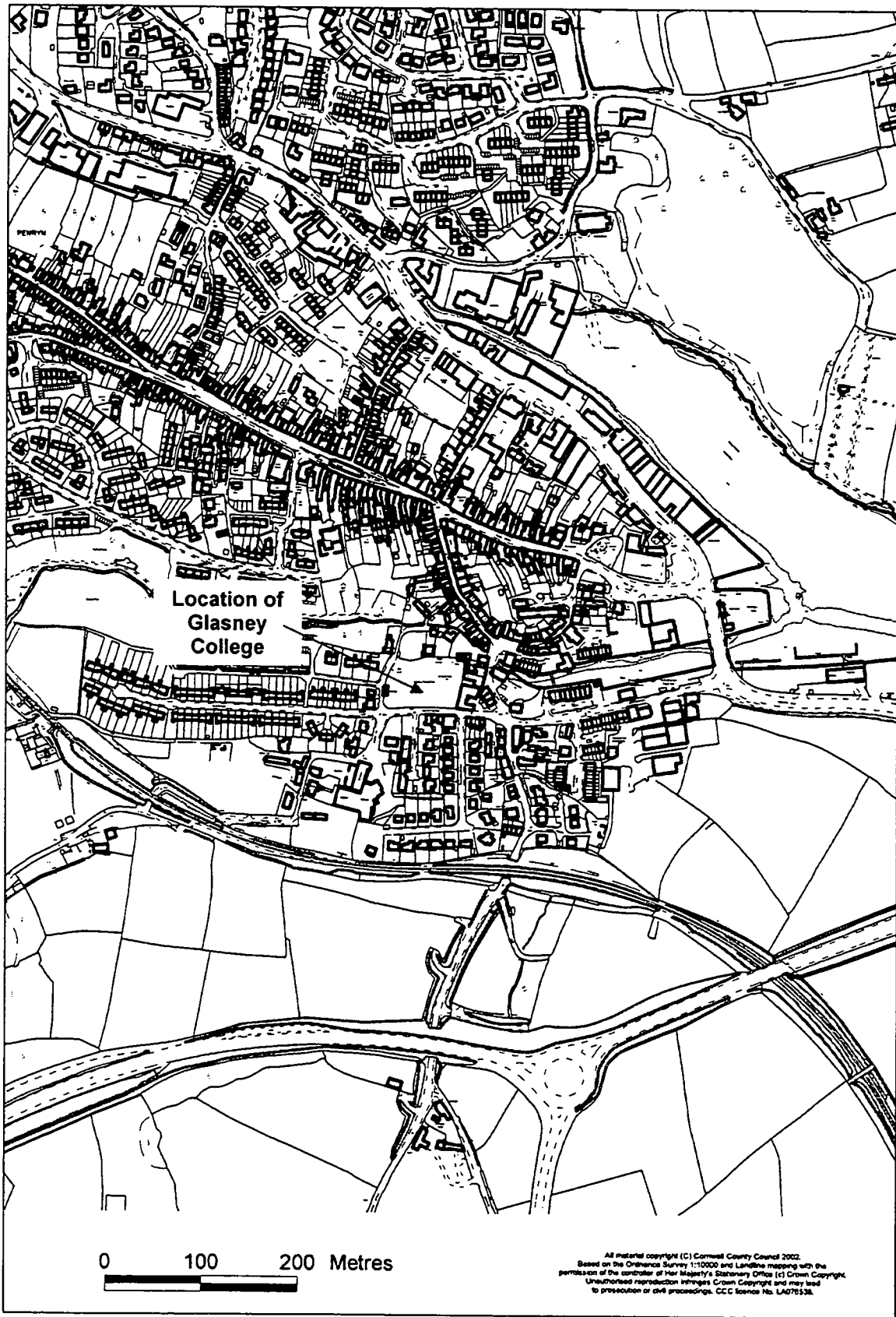


Fig. 1 Location of Glasney College.

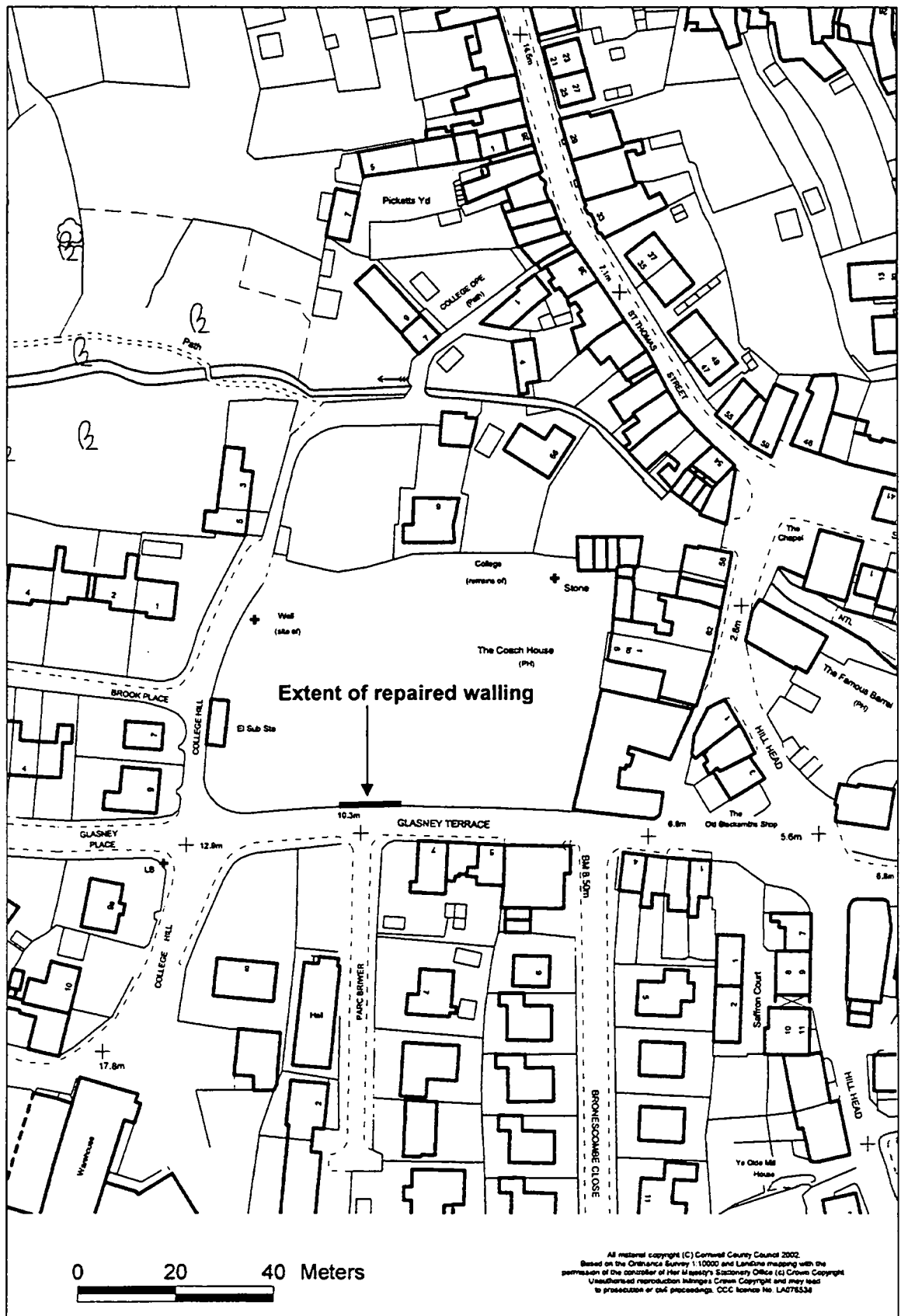


Fig. 2 Location of the walling at Glasney College.

2 Introduction

Glasney College (SW 7857 3418) in Penryn was founded in 1265 and dissolved in the 1540s. The main area of the church and associated cemetery lies below ground within a playing field run by Carrick District Council. This open area constitutes the bulk of the Scheduled area (Cornwall 1083). The site is also number 18660 in Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Record.

Above ground remains of the complex are restricted to a small section of walling on the edge of the open space (north-east corner). A series of five evaluation trenches were excavated within the Scheduled area in July 2003, which confirmed the presence of the Church and its layout (see CAU forthcoming).

At the southern edge of the site, there is a sizeable retaining wall with parapet, which runs alongside Glasney Terrace to the south. It has been suggested that this wall may be partially of medieval origin, or at least stand on the site of a medieval wall, as its position appears to correlate with the southern boundary wall of the Church's cemetery on Georges drawing of 1580 (see Figure 3).

A small section of the parapet collapsed in March 2002 as a direct result of disturbance caused by a *Buddleia* growing within the walling (Preston-Jones 2002). In 2003, Cornwall County Council's Transportation and Estates Section stepped in and agreed to accept responsibility for repairing this area of damage and the future maintenance of the wall as a whole.

It was agreed that the repair could take place without Scheduled Monument Consent, due to CAU being involved in the preliminary recording and the design of the specification for the repair. In the event however, the works undertaken were more extensive than originally planned due to the poor condition of the wall.

3 Background

3.1 Location

The area of collapsed walling was located on the northern side of Glasney Terrace, directly opposite a modern cul-de-sac named Park Briwer (SW 7856 3415).

3.2 Archaeological and historical summary

An archaeological and historical assessment of Glasney College was recently completed by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit (Berry, Lawson-Jones and Mattingly 2003), in advance of an archaeological excavation which took place in July 2003.

Glasney College was founded in 1265 by Bishop Bronescombe of Exeter, perhaps as a western administrative and educational centre for the Diocese of Exeter. It was a secular foundation modelled on Exeter Cathedral with a provost, twelve canons, and thirteen vicars which, 'at its peak might have accommodated between 50 and 70 people within its various walled closes' (Berry, Lawson-Jones and Mattingly 2003, 9). It has particular significance as the place where Cornish mystery plays and saints' 'lives' were written in the 15th century. Later illustrations suggest that the complex included a fine church, with a cemetery to the south and to the south of this again, the canon's houses. The whole complex was defended by a battlemented wall and fortified gatehouse to the south-east of the church.

When the establishment was dissolved at the Reformation the buildings were gradually sold off, robbed or (most recently) built over, so that very little now survives above ground (CAU 2003, 16 – 19). The main area of the church and cemetery appears to have remained as an open space which constitutes the bulk of the Scheduled area.

The southern perimeter of the playing field, forming a boundary with Glasney Terrace, is a substantial retaining wall, apparently on the site of the southern boundary of the College's cemetery.

In advance of the works, the wall was assessed by Eric Berry (Carrick District Council). He noted that it was "of high quality construction built of squared and coursed masonry that can only have been justified as part of the collegiate complex. Though there are no visible architectural features in the wall it is of a quality that sets it apart from other boundary walls in Penryn including burgage plot walls. The wall has been partly rebuilt at its upper level in some parts and has been truncated at its west end. This wall corresponds in position to the burial ground wall shown on the late 16th century depiction of the Glasney site by Georges. At the west end of this wall is shown a lych gate. No evidence of this now survives but it is possible that the wall has been truncated to beyond the point of its former existence."

This view can, however, be questioned for although the drawing shows a wall in the same position as the modern wall, it is of very different character. Georges representation shows a less substantial structure with open ground either side and, in one location, a gateway leading through the wall. It certainly does not show such a substantial retaining wall or any differences in ground levels. The accuracy of this representation of Glasney College may be doubted (see CAU forthcoming); but this and other representations suggest that the present retaining wall is most likely to be a post-dissolution construction, possibly following the line of the earlier wall.

A boundary in this location is clearly shown on early maps dating from the 18th century, including a 1793 Basset estate map (Berry, Lawson-Jones and Mattingly 2003, 31).

4 Archaeological recording

4.1 Condition of the walling

The community space which contains the largest portion of the site is maintained by Carrick District Council as an informal playing field. Because it is a Scheduled Monument, there is no play equipment and the only management consists of regular grass cutting.

The wall, which is the subject of this report, presently acts as a retaining wall between the playing field and Glasney Terrace to the south (see Figures 1 and 2). The total height of the wall is approximately 4.0m from the level of the field to the top of the surviving parapet. On the southern side, the wall stands approximately 1.6m above the roadway. The height of the wall includes a concrete capping of 0.25m at the top of the parapet.

The parapet of the wall has been compromised along much of its length because of neglect and damage caused by vegetation such as buddleia. English Heritage field monument warden Ann Preston-Jones visited the site in March 2002 and compiled a damage report following the collapse of the section of the wall, which was the subject of the repair work. She noted:

"The north face of the wall (facing the playing field), where not covered by ivy or hidden by shrubs, is however of good quality masonry, and built of roughly coursed rectangular blocks of granite on average 0.15m by 0.2-0.25m across. In contrast, the top part of the

wall, appears (like the parapet of a bridge) to have been built and rebuilt over the years. It displays a variety of stonework styles, from small slate to fresh drill-marked granite, all constructed, pointed or rendered in cement and with a cement capping.

“The damage is to the south (road) face of this wall ... where a 3m length of wall has collapsed and fallen into the road. A further section of this leans, resulting in a damaged length of overall 6 to 7 metres. There is no apparent damage to the north side of the wall. The wall at this point is built of small slate, with an earth and rubble core, cement pointing and a triangular cement coping, a large chunk of which has fallen off as a single piece.”

4.2 Archaeological recording

Prior to the repair works being undertaken, staff from Cornwall County Council removed all vegetation from the section of wall, to be repaired, to give a clear view of the structure for recording purposes and scaffolding was erected against the northern side of the wall. Closer analysis of the wall showed that it would be unwise to simply repair the worst area of collapse, given the unstable nature of the wall to the west.

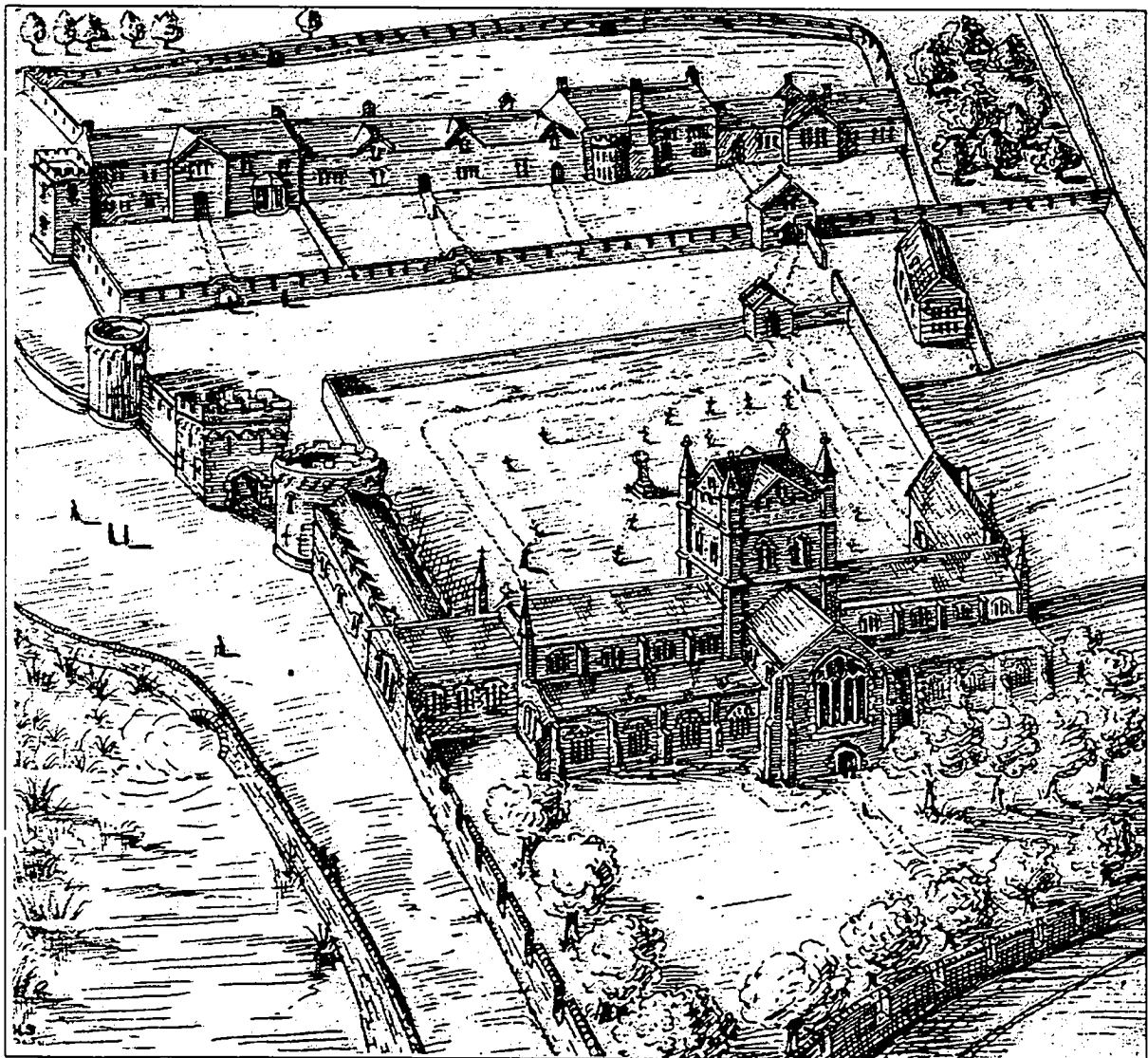


Fig. 3 *Glasney College from a drawing by Sir Ferdinand Georges c. 1580*

It was agreed to concentrate on rebuilding a section of walling measuring approximately 8m long. The height of walling repair varied between 1.0m and 1.2m, not including the concrete capping.

The archaeological recording consisted of a detailed elevation drawing of the north facing elevation. The southern face of the wall was not drawn because it had been heavily mortared over time and the individual stones, etc, were not easily visible. Black and white record photos, to illustrate the structure of the wall and the extent of the damaged area, which were also taken prior to, during and after works.

A 12m long section of the walling was planned at a scale of 1:20, both to record the character of the wall and also to guide the repair work. The wall was examined for information on the nature of its construction, stone type and size, etc. Due to time and budget constraints, it was not possible to plan the entire height of this 12m section and work was concentrated on the parts which were to be rebuilt, namely the parapet. The top of the retaining section of wall was also recorded to give an indication of its character, which was generally uniform. A cross section of the retaining wall and parapet was also recorded.

An archaeologist made regular visits to ensure that the work was being carried out according to the guidelines in the specification, discussing variations that were necessary and advising on the finished appearance of the monument.

4.3 The findings

Figure 4 shows the extent of walling affected by the repair works, with the rebuilt section shaded in grey. Figure 5 meanwhile shows the various distinct components or phases of walling as referred to below. The detailed examination of the walling reinforced comments about the walling made in the original damage report by Ann Preston-Jones.

The retaining wall

The bottom 2.0m – 2.5m of walling, which broadly equates to the actual retaining wall below the level of the road (Glasney Terrace), is a well constructed and very well preserved dry stone wall (phase 1). It is made up of large granite blocks, interspersed with smaller but well placed granite pieces. There is no indication that it was ever mortared.

Large granite blocks also make up the quoins of a blocked 'doorway,' with the walling of a similar character to the retaining wall.

The parapet

The parapet contained a number of obvious phases of rebuild and/or repair, all of relatively recent date. Near the actual area of collapse, there was a large area of small stones of very poor quality (phase 2), which were roughly placed and unstable (see Figure 7). This area of stonework contained smaller granite pieces and, interestingly, a greater proportion of killas pieces. It had also been badly affected by the invasive roots of ivy and other vegetation.

Larger granite pieces (phase 3) had been placed on the top of this section of weak walling, and along a considerable length of the wall, which is almost certainly another phase of rebuild. This walling, around the collapse, was also of a very poor character. To the west, the walling improved in quality but was still less substantial than the retaining wall, containing occasional pieces of killas or red brick, as well as evidence of some small voids. A distinct area of mortared repair could also be noted in this area. Much of this walling, to the east of the blocked doorway had a pronounced lean and was therefore rebuilt.

To the west of the doorway, the wall was constructed of similar stone but was in better condition (phase 4). A small area was being pushed out by roots from a buddleia. The plant was removed and the walling in this area reinstated. One area of earlier repair could be recorded where a concrete render was visible.

To the east of the collapsed section of wall, there was a further piece of rebuilt wall (phase 5). This was made up of angular grey white, shiny granite blocks of a very recent date, laid within a sandy mortar.

Blocked 'doorway'

The blocked 'doorway' (phase 6), measuring 1.6m high and 1.2m wide, was also recorded. On the southern side, the footings of this opening respected the level of the road while to the north, there was a drop of 2.0m from the base of the gap to the ground level of the field.

The stonework which fills this gap comprised a considerable number of angular grey white, granite blocks and killas pieces, suggesting a relatively late date for its infill. These stones were within a very hard blue-grey cement which was very distinct from the surrounding wall.

5 The repair work

In the first instance, the intention was to repair the worst area of collapse. Following vegetation clearance, the poor condition of the walling over a larger distance became clear. The works undertaken were therefore more extensive than originally planned.

The following actions were identified to repair the walling.

1. The wall was rebuilt in a style similar to that of the original construction using adjoining sections and the CAU elevation drawing as a guide. Large stones near the retaining part of the wall or by the blocked opening, which needed to be taken down, were replaced in their original positions.
2. The wall was rebuilt mainly using materials retrieved from the damaged area of wall.
3. As the original walling appears not to have been mortared, the initial view was that the replaced stones would be bedded in mortar, but this mortar would be kept well back from the face of the wall to retain the appearance of the dry-stone construction. Due to the smallness of many of the granite pieces replaced, this was not easy to achieve.
4. The stark and imposing nature of the triangular concrete capping was also assessed. The replacement capping for the repaired section of wall was constructed using laid stonework.

6 Conclusion

This report has detailed the repair to a relatively small section of the wall to the south of the Scheduled area associated with Glasney College. Other sections of the wall are in a poor condition, and it is likely that further works may be promoted through a strength assessment initiative of all road-retaining walls which is being carried out by the County Council.

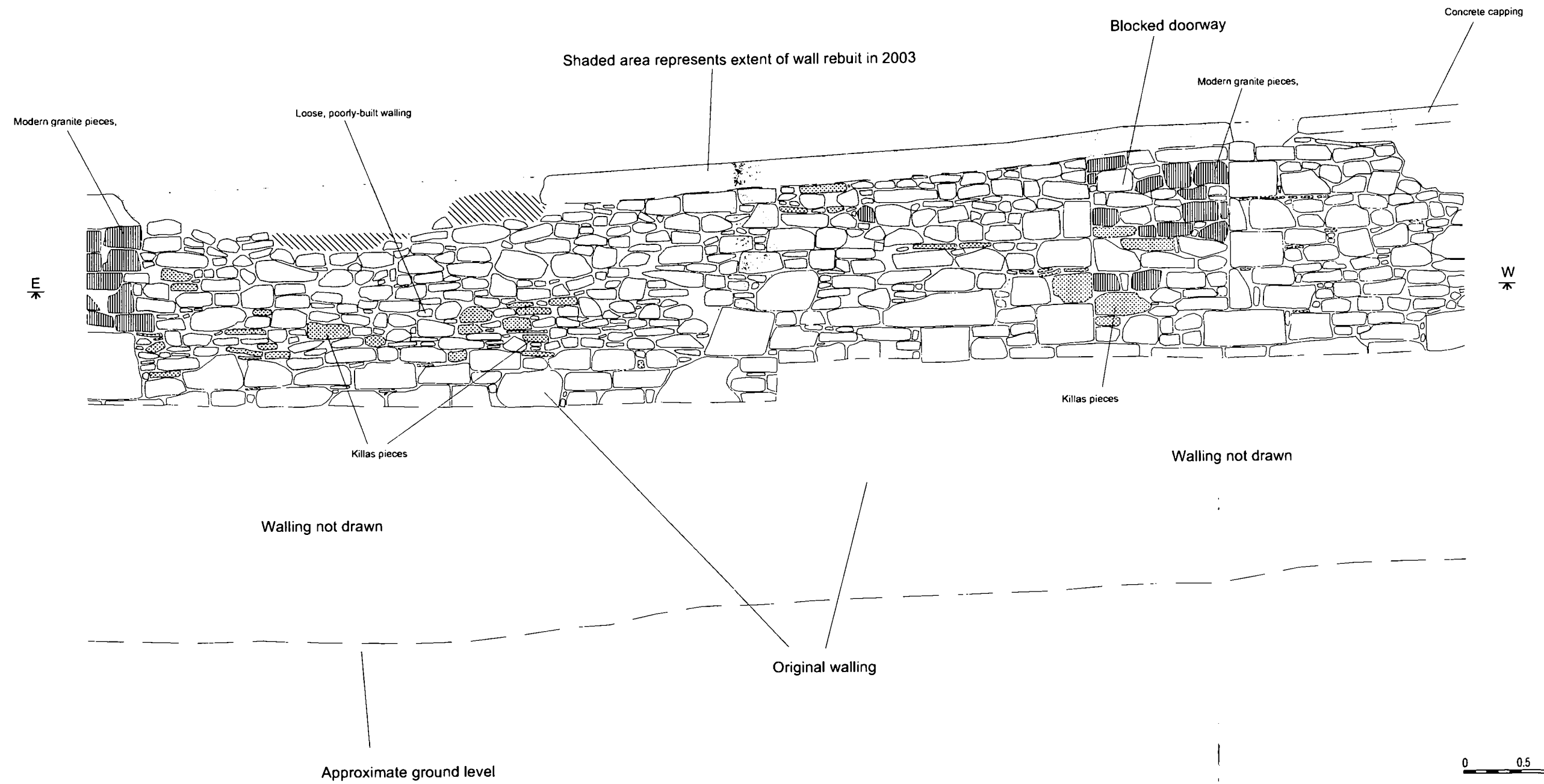
The recording work has been important in helping to assess the status of this wall, which stands on the site of one of Cornwall's major ecclesiastical sites and has been claimed as

the most substantial visible element of that complex. The overall conclusion is that, although the wall is obviously old and extremely well built, and probably follows the line of the medieval cemetery wall depicted by Georges, the actual wall is likely to be a post-medieval construction. A distinct scarp which exists at the base of the wall in places may represent remains of the medieval wall, though would need further investigation.

The blocked doorway may correspond in its position with the gateway shown by Georges, but again, this may reflect continuity in spirit rather than substance. None of the stones in the doorway are chamfered or decorated, also suggesting a post-dissolution date. The parapet meanwhile, comprising a rough mix of stone with occasional pieces of brick and plenty of later cement mortar, was found to have been rebuilt on many occasions.

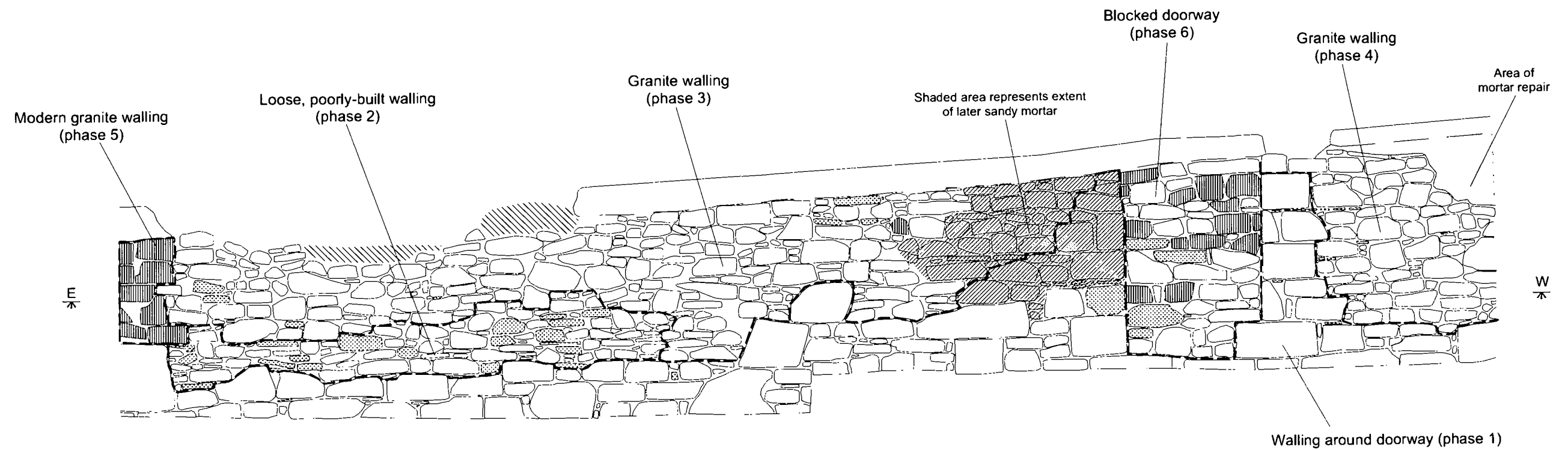
The recording work associated with the initial repair will also help inform the archaeological recording needs for any forthcoming work on other sections of the wall.

The Cornwall Archaeological Unit will need to be involved, at an early stage, in any such fresh proposals, agreeing the specification for repair works and the necessary archaeological recording.



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Figure 4 Detailed drawing of walling prior to repair works



Walling not drawn (phase 1)

The retaining wall and stonework around the blocked doorway (phase 1)

Walling not drawn (phase 1)

0 0.5 1m

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Figure 5 Detailed drawing showing distinct areas of walling.



Fig. 6 Photograph of collapsed walling.

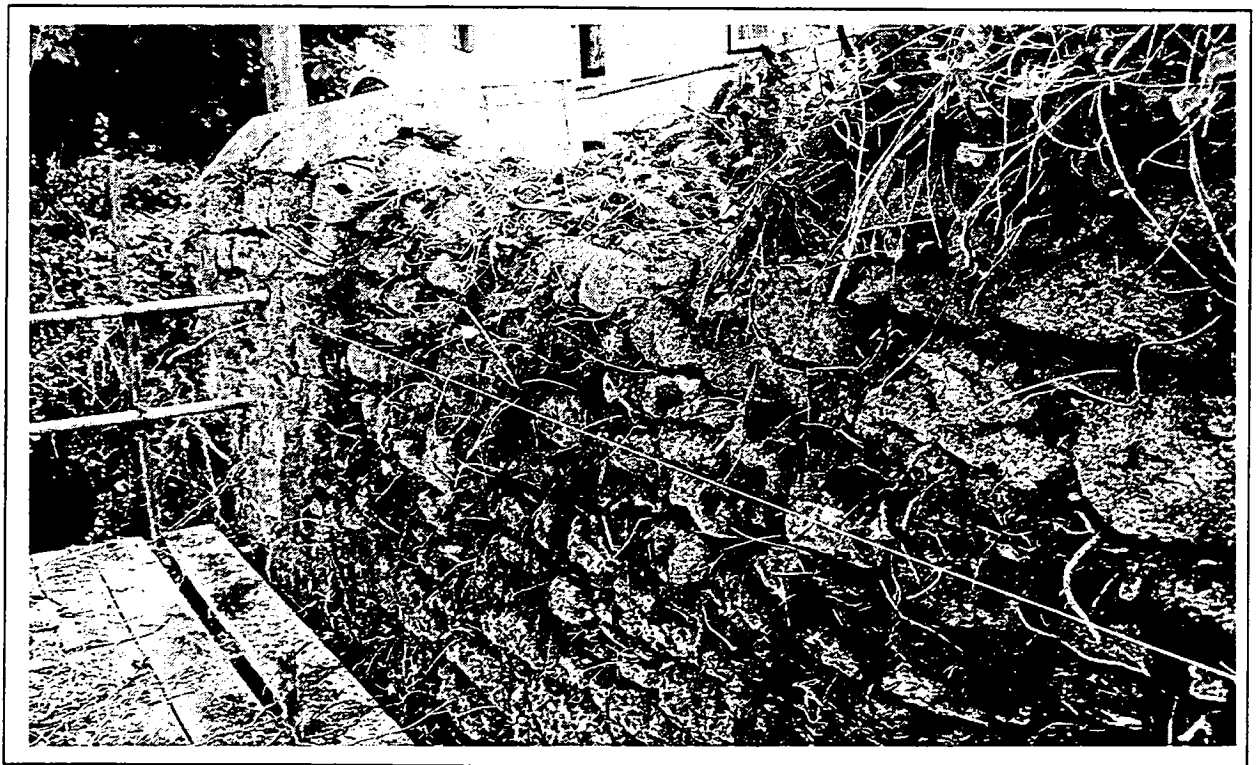


Fig. 7 Photograph of loose, poor quality walling (from north).

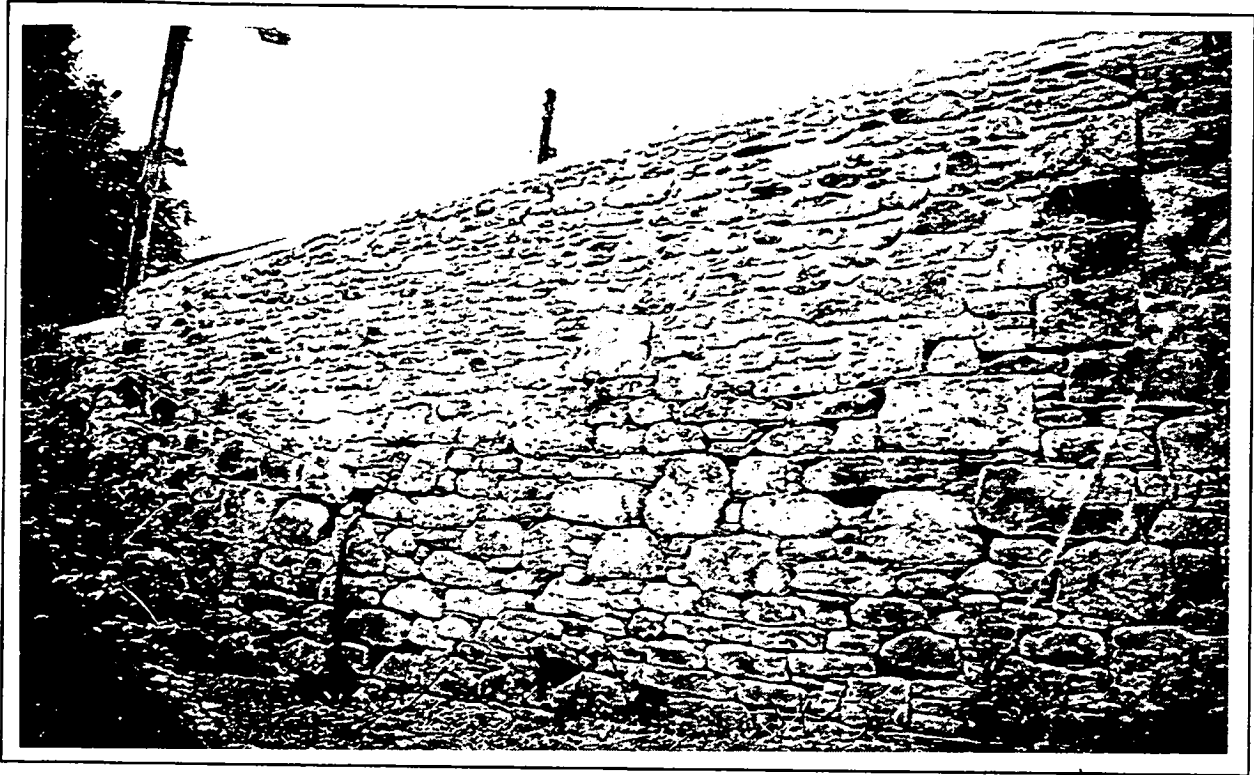


Fig. 8 Photograph of walling following repair works (from north).

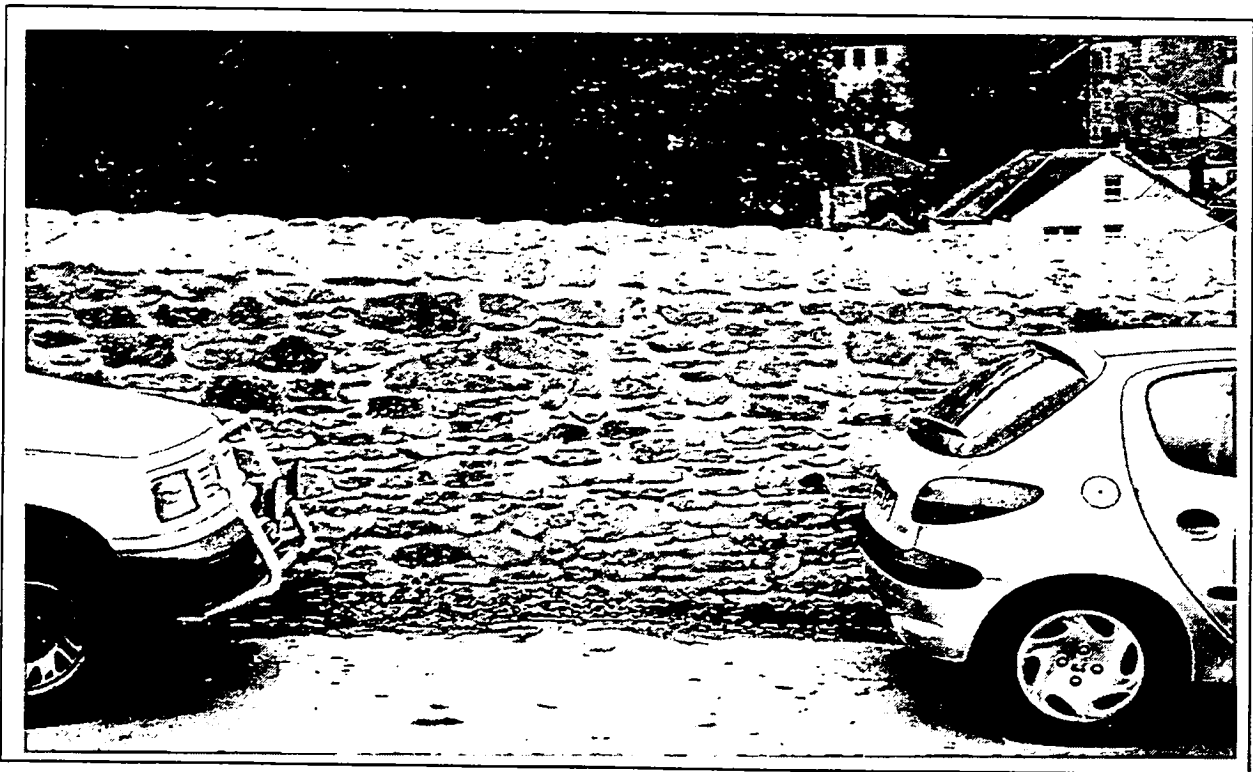


Fig. 9 Photograph of walling following repair works (from south).

7 References

7.1 Primary sources

1839 Tithe Apportionment Survey

1880 OS 25 inch map

1907 OS 25 inch map

7.2 Publications

Berry, E., Lawson-Jones, A. and Mattingly, J. 2003. *Glasney College, Penryn: archaeological assessment and evaluation*, CAU

Preston-Jones, A. 2002. *Glasney College, Penryn*, English Heritage Field Monument Warden's Damage Report

Wingfield, D. 1979, *Penryn: Archaeology and Development – A Survey*, ICS and CCRA
CAU, forthcoming report on evaluation trenching at Glasney

8 Project archive

The CAU project number is 2003016.

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall County Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration.
2. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope: GRE 208/14 - 1-2
3. Black and white photographs archived under the following index numbers: GBP 1587 2-35, 1588 3-20.
4. This report held in digital form as: G:\CAU\DOCUMENT\THE PROJECTS\SITES\SITES G\GLASNEY COLLEGE\GLASNEY WALL REPAIR REPORT.DOC