

Exeter City Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: St David's, Exeter	National Grid Reference: SX 9178 9271	Number:
Subject: Archaeological building recording at No 52 Northernhay Street, Exeter, Devon.		Photo attached: Y
Planning Application no: 13/4605/03	Recipient museum: n/a	
OASIS ID: oakforda1-118165	Museum Accession no: n/a	
Contractor's reference number: OA1150	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 06/03 and 08/05/2014	
<p>Introduction: Historical building recording was undertaken in March 2014 by Oakford Archaeology (OA) during building work at No 52 Northernhay Street, Exeter, Devon (SX 9178 9271). The work, consisting of the recording of the face of the city wall exposed within No. 52, was carried out as a condition of planning permission (ref. 13/4605/03, condition 3) granted by Exeter City Council for change of use from existing commercial property to two dwellings. In May 2014 scaffolding was erected on the outside face of the city wall in Northernhay Street for the repointing and general maintenance of the masonry and OA undertook a second phase of building recording. This second phase of work was commissioned by Exeter City Council in response to the redevelopment of No 52.</p> <p>Extensive recording of the city wall was undertaken between 1978 and 1993 by Exeter Archaeology, but did not include the detailed recording of the section of wall within and above No. 52. The results and historic development were fully described by Stuart Blaylock (Blaylock 1995) and will not be discussed here.</p> <p>Archaeological and historical background: The city Wall was originally built in the 2nd century AD to enclose the <i>civitas</i> of <i>Isca Dumnoniorum</i>. It was added to and maintained as a defensive enclosure for the city throughout the Middle Ages, and until the late 17th century was intermittently used for defensive purposes. Originally consisting of a circuit 2.35km in length, the city wall retains fabric representing all periods. For much of its circuit it retains its Roman core, although relatively few sections of the wall preserve any Roman facework. There is little evidence for Saxon fabric, but with the Norman conquest the city wall entered into a period of probably continuous repair and maintenance which has lasted until the present century. Subjected to five major sieges in the period between 1485 and 1660, the walls ceased to function in the defence of the city after the Civil War. The circuit continued as a boundary until the removal of the gates between 1769 and 1819. During the 20th-century developments in Exeter caused the greatest losses in the circuit and today <i>c.</i> 1705m or 72.5% of the total circuit survives.</p> <p>Located 10m north of the site of the North Gate, buildings are shown on or near the site on Robert Sherwood's 1633 and 1638 maps of Exeter, although these would have been cleared prior to the Civil War sieges of 1643 and 1646. Shown on Benjamin Donn's 1765 map of Exeter (Fig. 2) the site is first mentioned in the Exeter Flying Post in 1794-5 when the landlord of the Falcon Inn William Hamlyn is found 'guilty of violent assault with intent to rob', and transported for 7 years. The lease subsequently passed to John Jacobs (d. 1804), Mr Bolt (d. 1812) and then Mr Lang. Coldridge's 1819 Map of Exeter (Fig. 3) shows the Falcon (<i>Faulcon, Falkon</i>) Inn and the first full description is provided in the <i>Sherborne Mercury</i> 1st March 1830: 'To be let with early possession: a capital new Inn called the Falcon in North street in the occupation of Mr Lang who is retiring from business. The house is now in full trade, replete with every convenience, has a large yard with lead Pump, Stables and all convenient Outbuildings. The House has good Parlours, Bar, Tap-room, Kitchens, Dining room, various Bed rooms etc. May be viewed on application to Mr Lang and further particulars had of Mr Powning, South Street, Exeter'.</p>		

On the 29th December 1832 the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* announced that Nicholas Strong had taken possession of the Falcon, although 11 years later, on the 14th February 1843, the *London Gazette* mentions the imminent insolvency of the business. The 1843 St David's tithe map (Fig. 4) revealed that the property had passed to Francis Whalley. Leased to John Tilbury, the Inn had passed to Thomas Dare by 1847. The 1851 census provides the following description of the site and its occupants: 'Falcon Inn, North Street: Thomas Dare, aged 48, Builder and Innkeeper, born Exeter with wife Fanny, aged 47 (b. Kenton), Thomas (son) aged 23, Innkeeper (b. Exeter), plus four additional children, and ten additional occupants including two servants and travellers'.

By 1853 and advert in the *Western Times* showed that the Inn was for let again, while an advert on the 6th September 1856 shows that the Inn apparently ceased to trade in the intervening years 'To be let at a very moderate rent a convenient House with Shop and a good supply of water being part of the premises late the Falcon, North Street. Also a Cottage adjoining. Apply to H. Turner, Westgate Yard'.

Throughout the remainder of the 19th and 20th centuries (Figs. 5 & 6) the site does not often appear in documentary sources, suggesting that for most of the time, it was functioning as a yard between other premises.

The building survey (Figs. 7 & 8)

Between the boundary of Northgate Court and 51 Northernhay Street a stretch of 6.7m of facework of the city wall was recorded. Three main facework builds were seen, although the facework on the ground floor was covered in modern masonry and the first floor was partly covered in paint, making detailed recording difficult.

Main facework builds

Phase I

Large well-squared closely jointed blocks of breccia (Heavitree stone) ashlar laid in 26 horizontal courses continuing from No 51 Northernhay Street. There was evidence of three possible putlog holes, filled with volcanic trap blocks, identified on the first floor. Slate was also used to pack out joints and to level individual blocks. The parapet includes the probable remains of crenellation, with an upstanding rectangular block of masonry (a merlon) separating two apparent crenels or embrasures to each side, with the eastern one being blocked with later phase II fabric, and the western now left open. Below and just to the west of the merlon, within the lowermost part of what would have been the parapet wall, was one side of another possible aperture, which may have been an embrasure or loop for a cannon or gun, lying flat on the walkway behind the parapet, and trained through this aperture to cover the approach to the North Gate. All of the first floor build within No 52 was re-pointed using light orange lime mortar with coarse grit, while the build above the roof line was re-pointed using a greyish white lime mortar, making it difficult to identify areas of primary mortar. In several areas however white lime mortar with moderate grit was identified. Some very large breccia blocks appear in this facework, up to 1.34m x 0.22m. The build is post-medieval, and is likely to be 16th century in date.

Phase II

Small area of mixed rubble filling the eastern embrasure or crenel within the parapet, consisting largely of volcanic trap rubble, with some large breccia blocks. It had been re-pointed using a greyish white lime mortar; no areas of original mortar were identified. This build is likely to be late 17th/early 18th century in date, after the end of the civil war when the city wall ceased to be used primarily as a fortification.

Phase III

The earlier breccia fabric is cut to the south-west and replaced by rubble walling associated with a house built on the inside of the wall. Fabric recording of the rear face in 1988 revealed mainly 19th century fabric. The fabric consisted of volcanic rubble mixed with some breccia blocks (presumably derived from the earlier phase). There were some small stones, and occasional slate fragments to pack out the joints. The first floor build was covered in paint, making it difficult to see areas of primary mortar. The later mortar in this area consisted of mid orange lime mortar to a depth of 20-30mm, with mid reddish brown soil behind to a depth of 10-20mm. Behind this a light to mid pinkish brown lime mortar containing large grit, flecks of lime and slate was visible. The wall above the roof line was re-pointed using the same mid pinkish

brown lime mortar.

A row of breccia blocks at the top of this build may represent the coping below the eaves, which along with a single window consisting of a simple wooden frame and slate lintel, marks the remains of a building located at the back of Paul Street and built into the city wall. This was probably built in the 18th century, with structures shown in this position on Donn's map of Exeter of 1765. All the buildings on the north-west side of Paul Street were razed in slum clearance in the 1920's and it is not known if the houses that survived until this time were 18th century structures or later replacements. The build is therefore likely to be late 18th/19th century in date, or it could date from the repair of this section of wall and the construction of a buttress to the rear in the 1980s.

Phase IV

Modern repair to the end wall following the demolition of the house at the rear.

Features within the build

The gun loop or embrasure. This possible feature was located high up (5.6m above present ground level) near the surviving top of the build, and below and to the right of the merlon above. The loop takes the form of a narrow slit, c. 0.4m high, framed with large blocks of breccia. This feature could either have been a narrow slit, and therefore a loop, or it could be one side of a wider embrasure for a gun. In the Tudor period small cannon at Dartmouth and Pendennis were virtually lying on the ground on wooden chocks rather than carriages (A. Pye *pers comm.*).

Project archive and OASIS entry

Due to the limited nature of the work and lack of any finds a project archive will not be retained. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the city historic environment record and to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological InterventionS) and forms the only record and archive of the project.

Bibliography:

Unpublished sources

Bedford, J.B. and Salvatore, J.P. 1993: 'Excavations at 41-42 High Street (Star Jeans) Exeter 1980 Part 1: Roman Military', Exeter Archaeol. Rep. 93.07.

Exeter Flying Post various

Exeter & Plymouth Gazette various

London Gazette various

Western Times various

Published sources

Bidwell, P.T. 1980: *Roman Exeter: Fortress and Town* (Exeter).

Blaylock, S. R. 1995 'Exeter City Wall Survey', English Heritage and Exeter City Council.

Henderson, C.G. 1988: 'Exeter (*Isca Dumnoniorum*)', in Webster G (ed.) *Fortress into City: The consolidation of Roman Britain, first century AD*, 91-119.

Stoyle, M. 2003 'Circling with stone: Exeter's City Walls', University of Exeter Press.

Recorder:

L Brown & MFR Steinmetzer (Oakford Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:

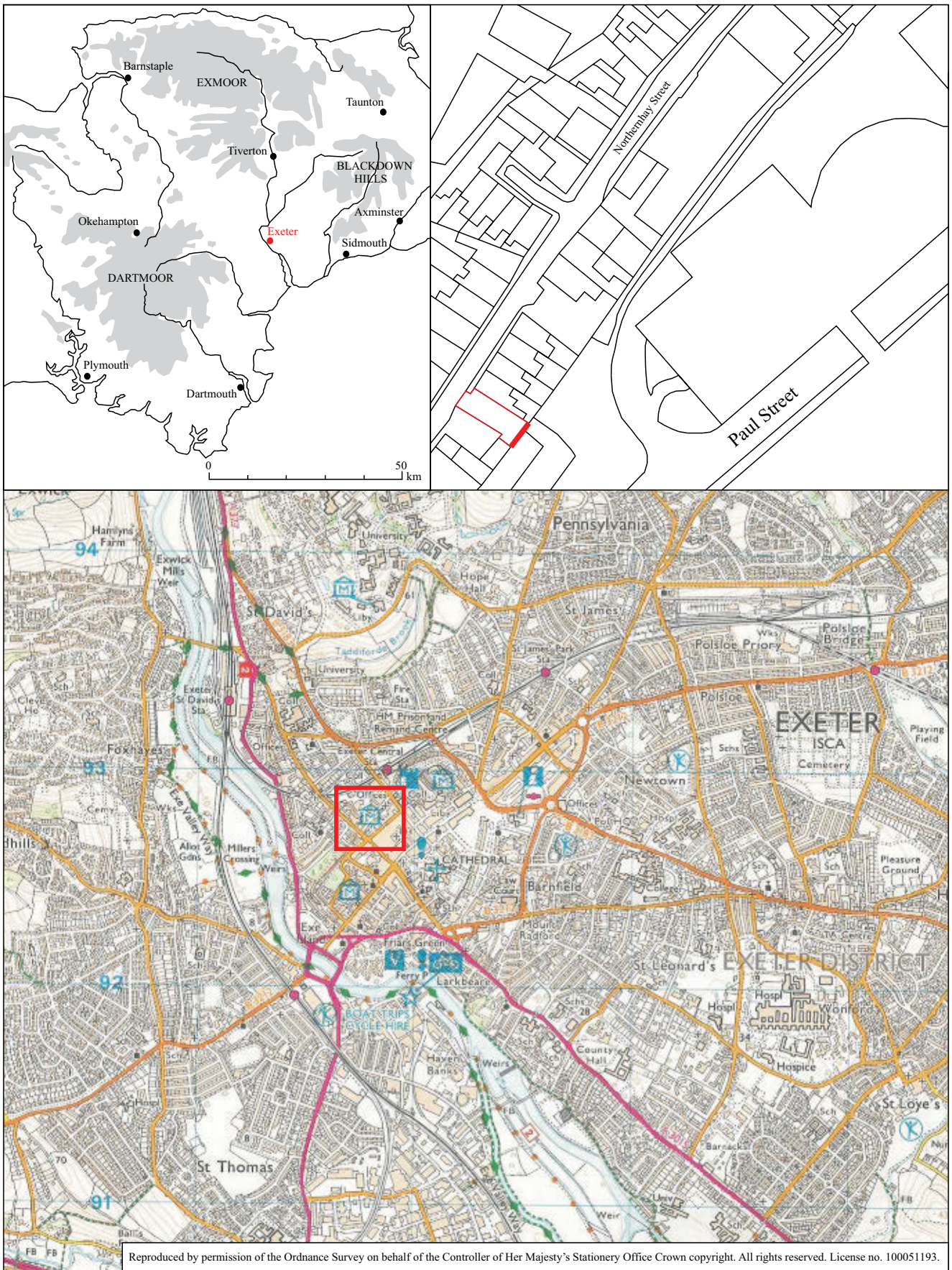


Fig. 1 Location of site.

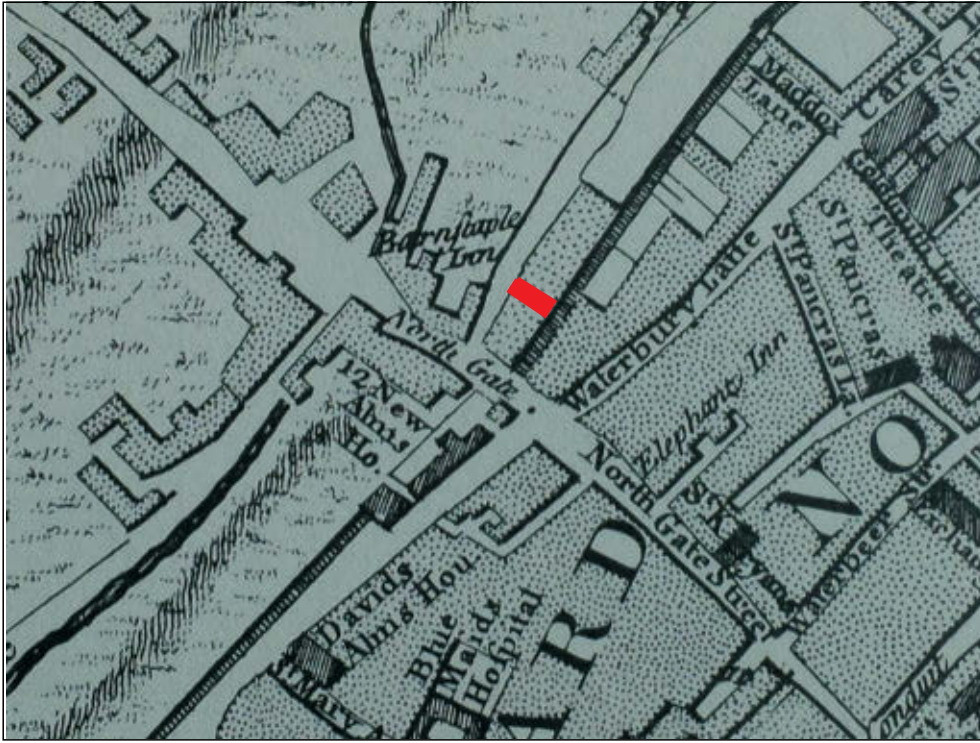


Fig. 2 Detail from Benjamin Donn's 1765 map of Exeter showing the location of the site.

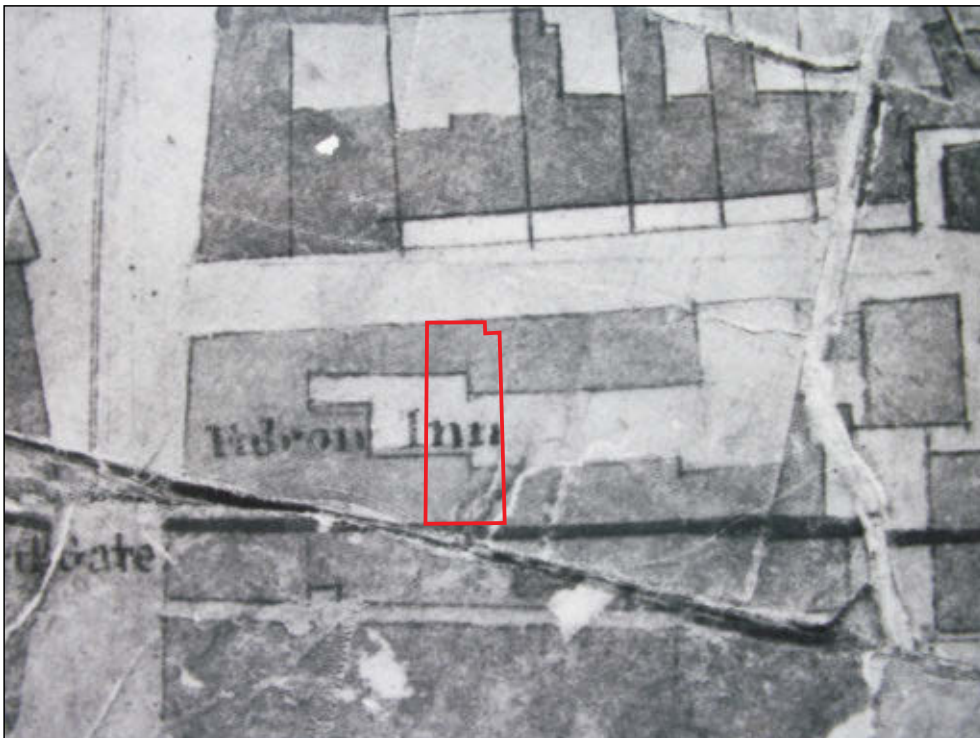


Fig. 3 Detail from John Coldridge's 1819 map of Exeter showing the location of the site.

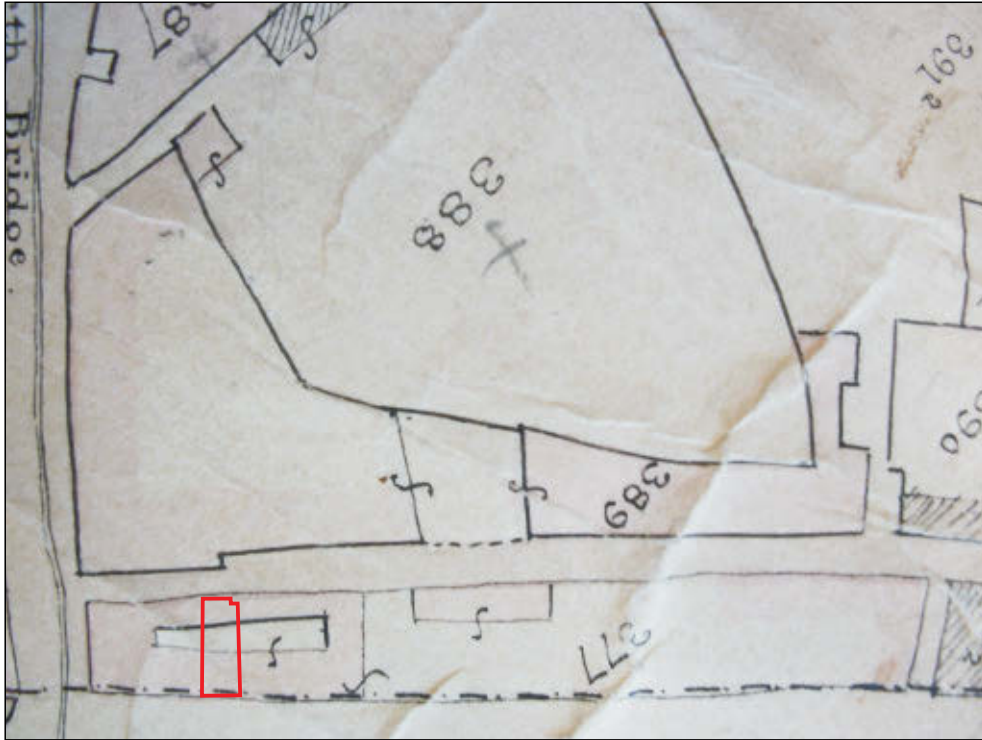


Fig. 4 Detail from the 1843 St David's tithe map showing the location of the site.

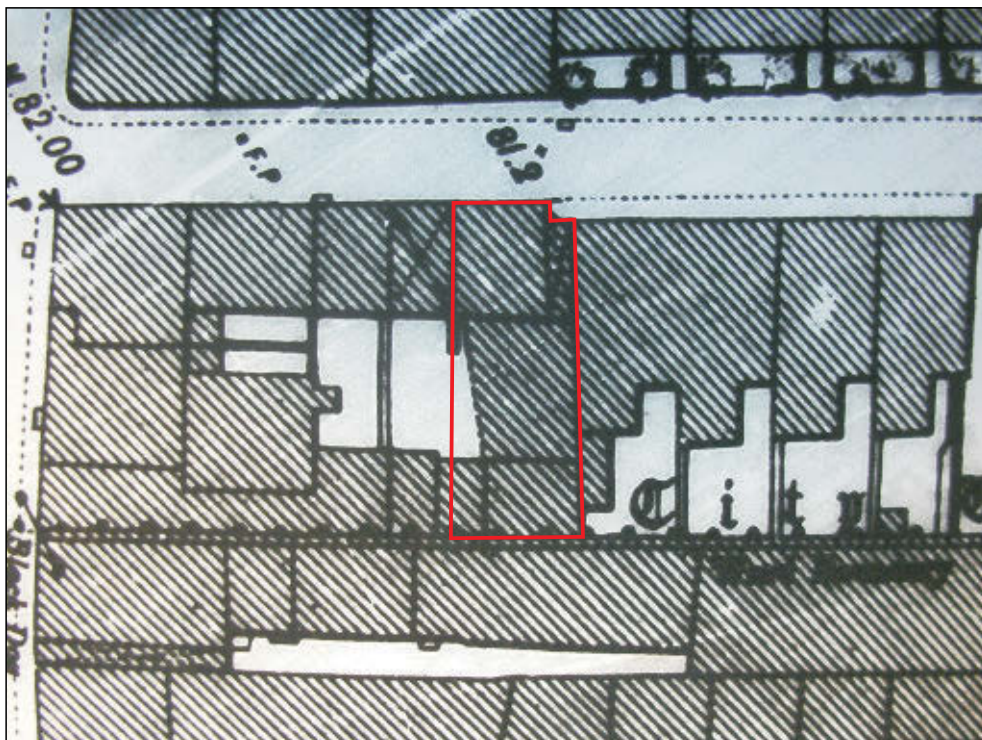


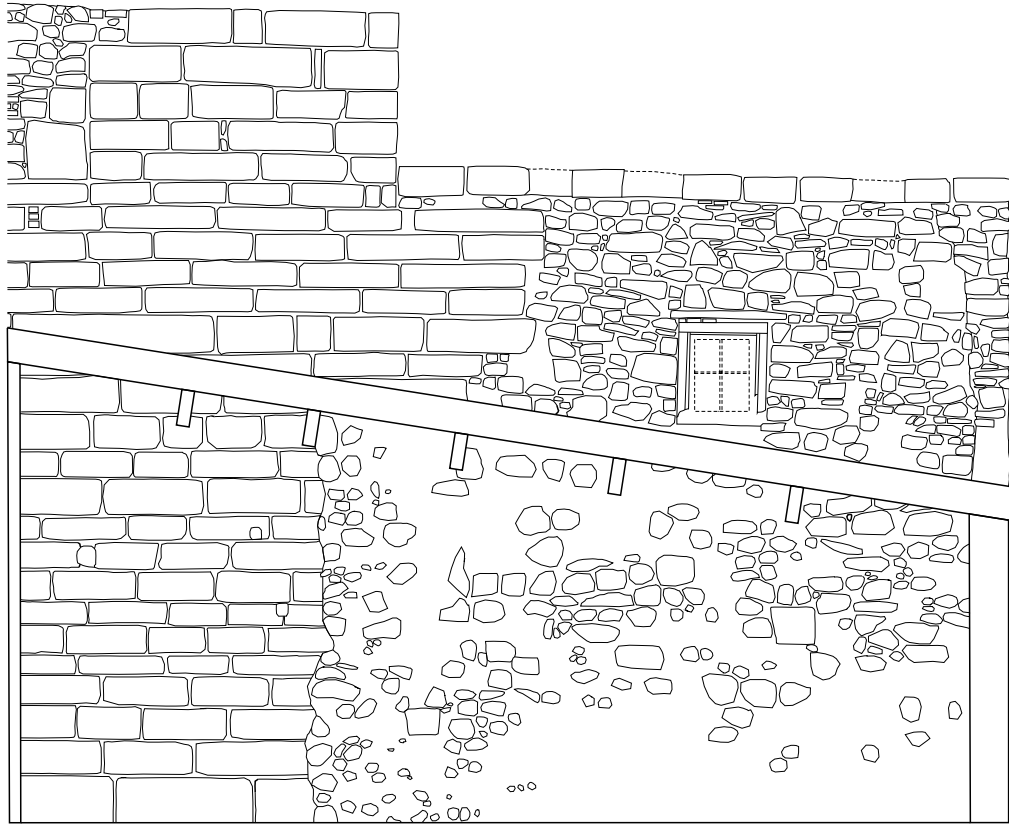
Fig. 5 Detail from the 1st edition 1891 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXXX.6.17. showing the location of the site.



Fig. 6 Detail from the 2nd edition 1905 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXXX.6.17. showing the location of the site.

Exeter: City Wall 52 Northernhay Street 2014

External Elevation



First Floor

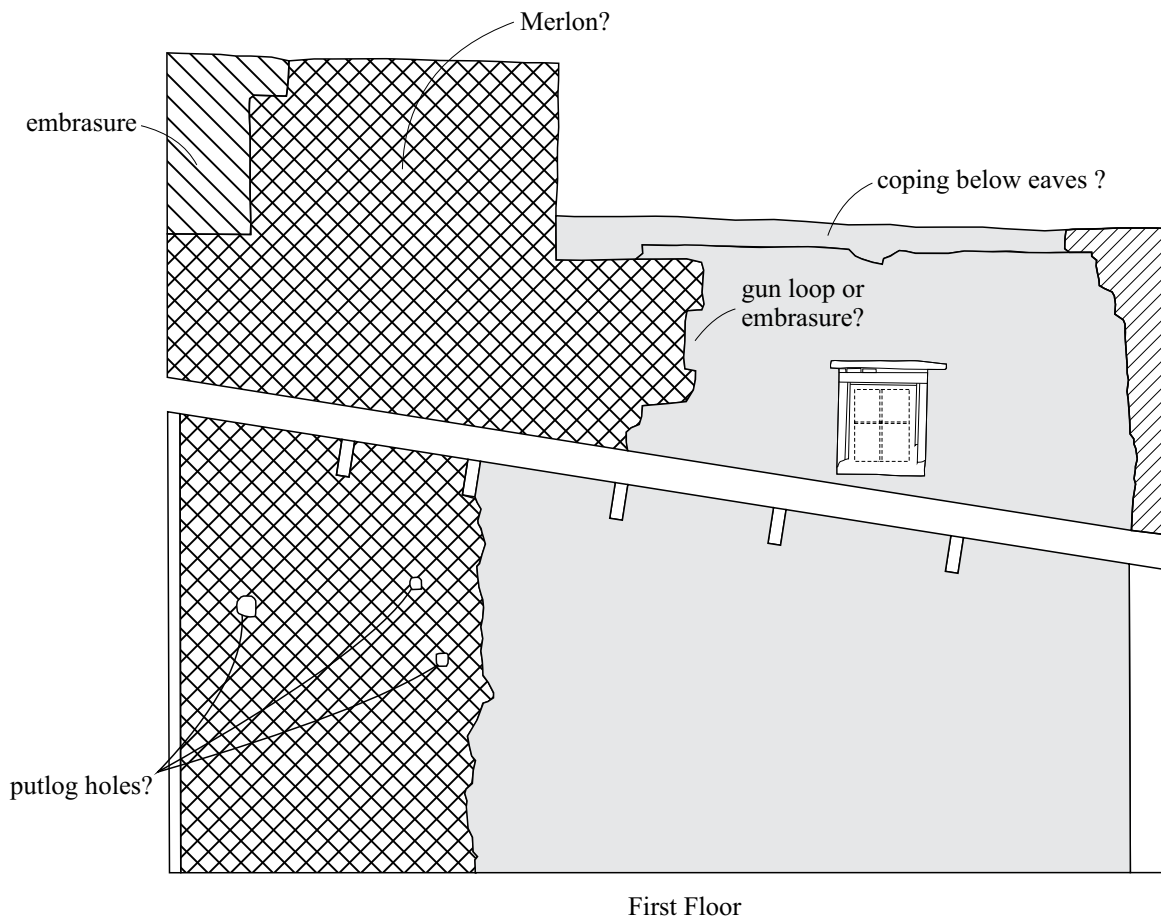
0 5 metres



Fig. 7 Detailed stone-for-stone recording of the wall to the south-east of No. 52 Northernhay Street.

Exeter: City Wall 52 Northernhay Street 2014

External Elevation



0 5 metres





-  Phase I - 16th century wall originally with merlon separated by wide embrasures
-  Phase II - late 17th/18th century walling/infilling of embrasures
-  Phase III - 18th/19th century rebuilding associated with construction of house at rear
-  Phase IV - modern repair following demolition of house at rear



Fig. 8 Interpretative drawing with shading to show phases of masonry.