

Land north-west of Admiralty Lookout Dover Castle Kent

Archaeological Watching-Brief Report

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Land north-west of Admiralty Lookout, Dover Castle

SITE REPORT SHEET

COUNTY: Kent	TOWN/PARISH: Dover	DATE: 25/3/15
RECORDING BODY: Canterbury Archaeological Trust		Individual: Paul-Samual Armour
SITE NAME: Land north-west of Admiralty Lookout, Dover Castle, Kent (Fig. 1) CAT SITE CODE: DCAF-WB-15		CAT Report No: 51/2015 Archive Number: 3471 (part of) Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 1019075
NGR: 632707, 141650 centred		ELEVATION: c. 85m OD
TOPOGRAPHY: Area of level artificially terraced ground (Plate I)		NATURAL: Upper Chalk (Seaford Formation)
FORMER LAND-USE: Grassed area to rear of Admiralty Lookout (previously site of Hospital Barracks, demolished c. 1960 (Fig. 1))		FUTURE LAND-USE: Fenced compound around First World War anti-aircraft gun exhibit
LAND-OWNER: English Heritage		TENANT: X
TYPE OF EXCAVATION: Hand excavation of post-pits for a new fenced compound (Plate II).		
EXTENT OF EXCAVATION (Fig. 1; Plate I): Total of 50 post-pits were excavated around the perimeter of a rectangular area measuring approximately 16m north-west to south-east by 15.10m north-east by south-west. The pits comprised of 16 main pits (labelled A-S; omitting O) for fence posts, measuring between 0.20 and 0.36m across and 0.36 – 0.52m deep, whilst 32 subsidiary pits (2 with each main pit) measured an average of 0.20m across and were no deeper than 0.35m. A further 2 pits, to be used for gate-posts, located along the western edge, were dug to a greater depth of between 0.72 – 0.80m.		
NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION: Close observation of the excavation of each post-pit (Plate II)		
EXPOSED DEPOSITS: Natural chalk bed rock was reached in 10 of the main pits, at varying depths of 0.32 to 0.72m below present ground level; the average depth was 0.40m. The chalk was shallowest towards the east and progressively deeper towards the west.		

Most post-pits revealed only a succession of modern levelling and demolition deposits (Figs 3-5); the bulk of these appeared to be related to the demolition of the Hospital Barracks (c.1960s).

Overlying many of these deposits were several areas (Fig 2) of earlier tarmac surfaces (pits M, N, Q-S) and concrete (pits I-N and P-Q). It was clear that the concrete was, in most cases, in thin layers between 0.04 and 0.12m thick. It is not likely to have formed part of any structure but probably related to temporary surfaces over an uneven area.

To open the area to the public and allow access to the Admiralty Lookout buildings, the entire area was levelled with pea-shingle, ranging from 0.03 to 0.10 in depth, followed by a thick layer of 'terram'. Subsequently, this was overlain with up to 0.20m of topsoil and turfed. The smaller, subsidiary post-pits rarely cut through the pea-shingle to its full depth. The ground surface had an approximate height of 85m OD.

The topsoil was cut in post-pit A by a recent service trench, 0.30m deep, running parallel with the concrete retaining wall along the northern part of the site. No topsoil was present in post-pit D - a drainage trench 0.17m wide boarded with wooden planks and filled with 0.20m of pea-shingle, had been dug along the line of the brick retaining wall here.

Areas of mortared yellow stock brick and red brick were revealed in 5 of the pits, most of this was fragmentary at best. In only two areas (pit group G and pit group L, subsidiary pit) the post-pits are aligned over the known plan of the demolished hospital barracks building and walls or other brick-work was not recorded in either.

The main post-pit of group L was the only pit to have substantial brick wall remains at a depth of 0.20m below ground (Fig 4). The excavation caused only slight damage to what was clearly a large wall. A total of 0.25m of brickwork measuring approximately 0.23m square was removed. The wall is likely to be aligned north-west by south-east.

The two subsidiary pits, either side of the main pit, in group L were excavated to no more than 0.18m deep, stopping on concrete.

FINDS AND FEATURES:

No artefacts of archaeological significance were noted during the programme of excavation. The single area of significant brickwork noted is probably related to a wall associated with the former Hospital Barracks building, probably part of south-west entrance area; however, it does not align directly with any walls seen on the known plan from c.1927 (Porter 2014).

FUTURE POTENTIAL OF AREA:

The site occupies an artificial terrace cut into on the chalk hill side. Further foundations of the old Hospital Barracks will survive on this terrace, with the remains of the nineteenth-century Hospital Battery closer to the cliff-edge.

REFERENCE:

Porter, R., 2014 *Dover Castle: Fortress Dover and the First World War Heritage Statement in Support of a SMC C6 Application* (EH report, July 2014).

Fig.1



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PROJECT NAME

Dover Castle Anti-aircraft Gun

PROJECT CODE

DCAF-WB-15

SITE ADDRESS

Dover Castle
Admiralty Lookout
Kent

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P-SA

SCALE(S)

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DATE

24/03/15

LAST REVISION

26/03/15

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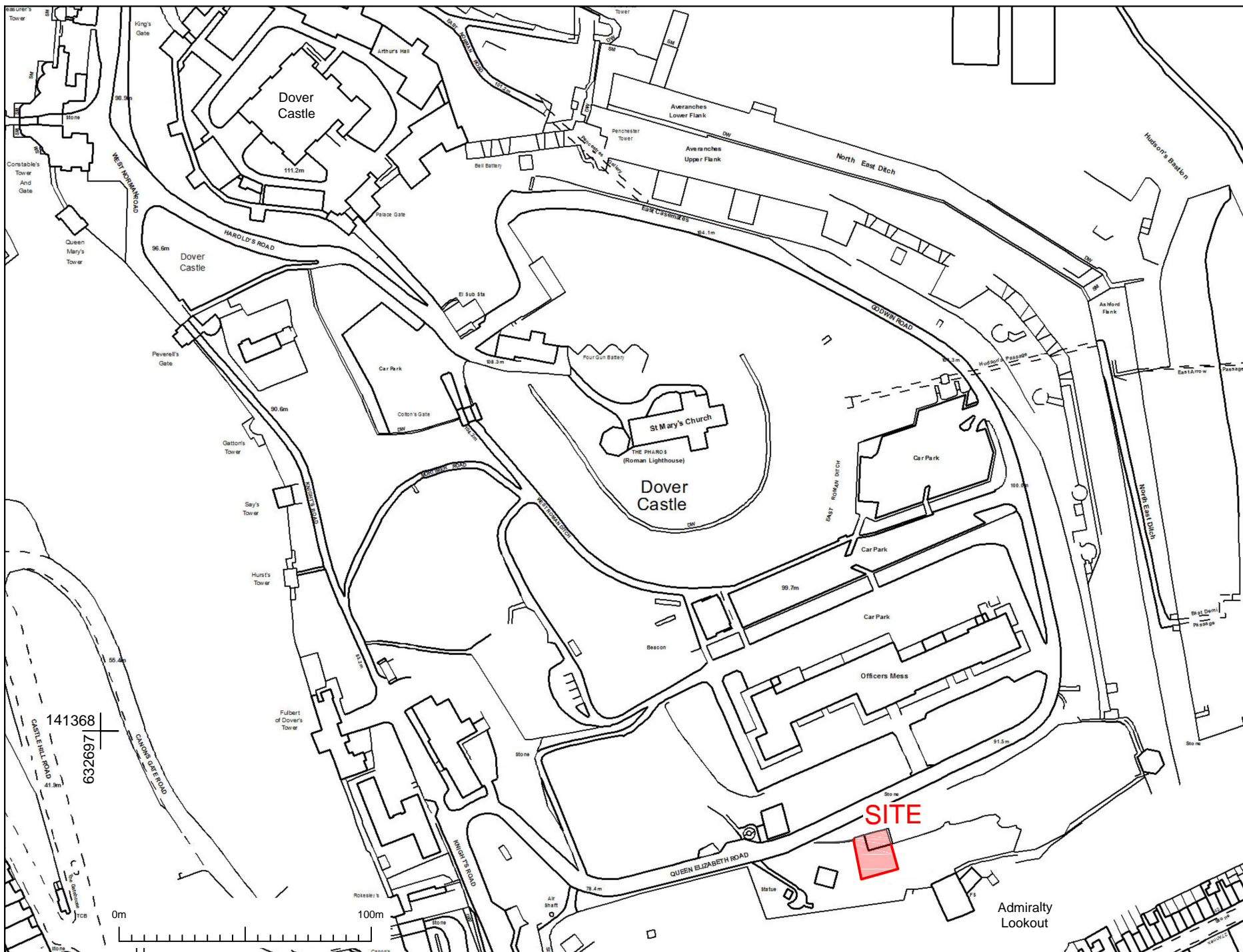
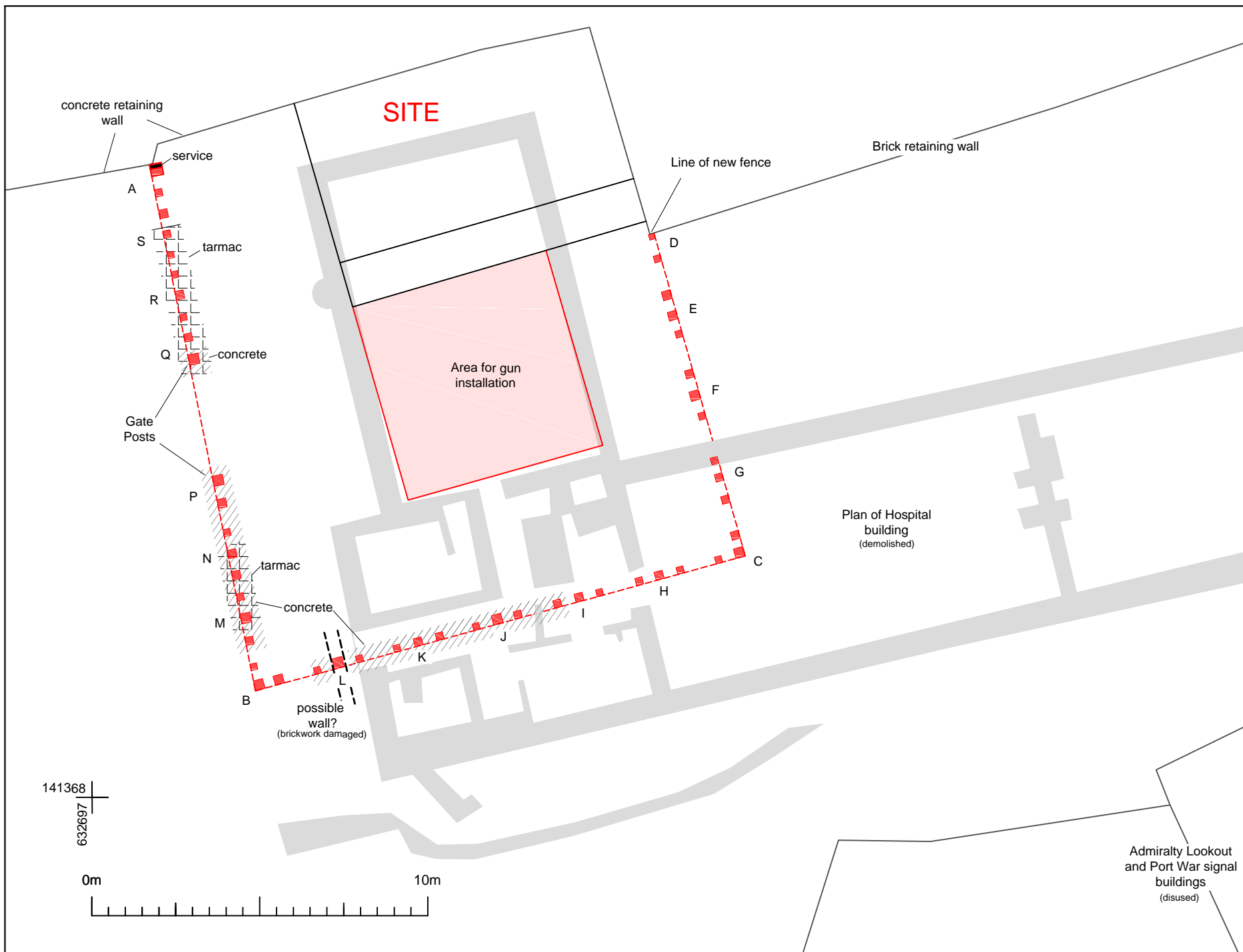


Fig.3 General plan of Dover Castle showing location of site

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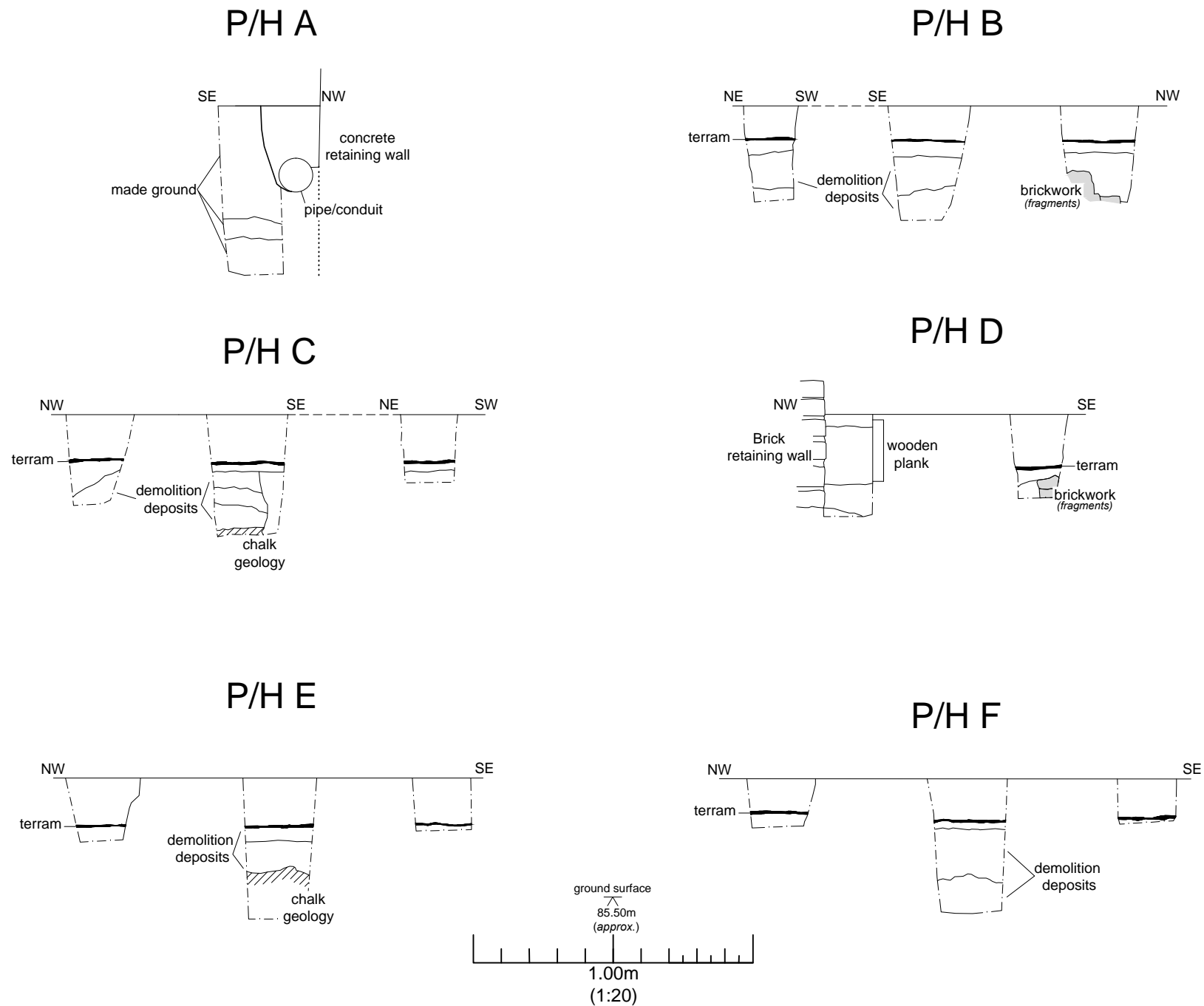
Fig.2



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Fig.2 General site plan showing position of excavated post-pits in relation to former hospital building

Fig.3

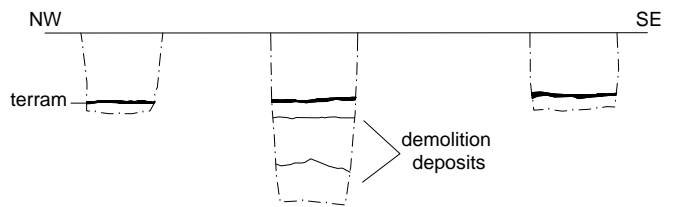


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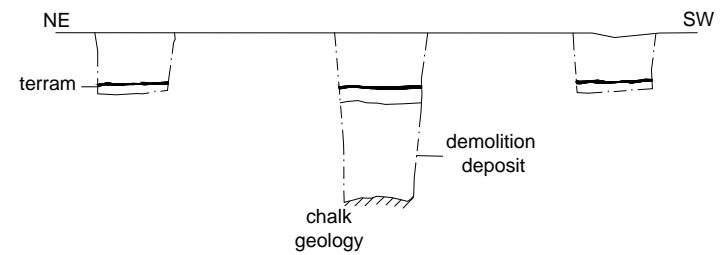
Fig.3 Sections through recorded deposits in post-pits A-F

Fig.4

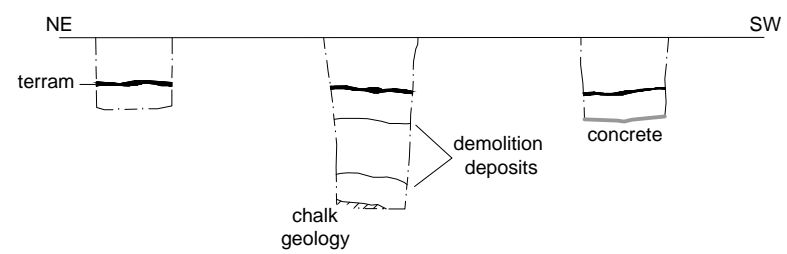
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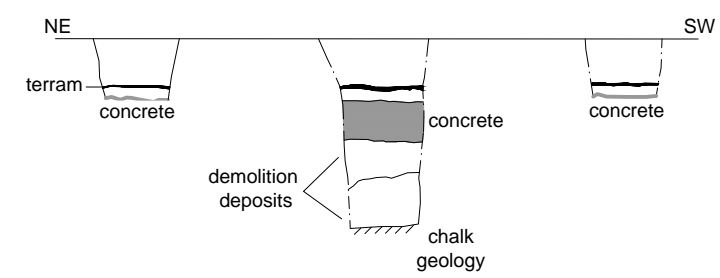
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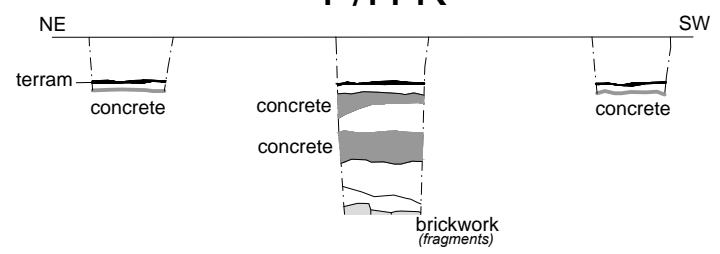
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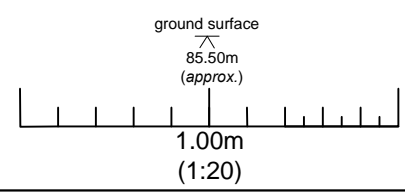
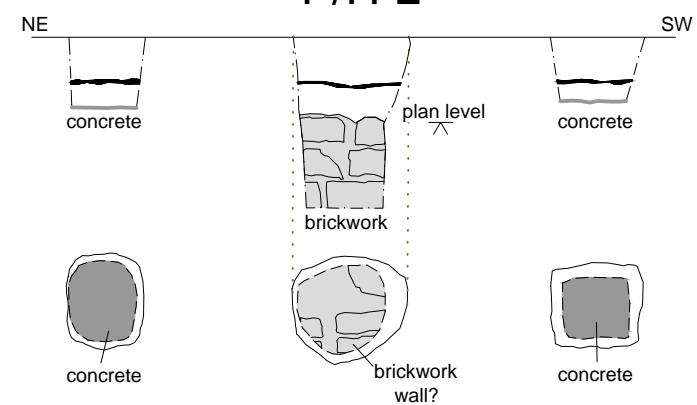
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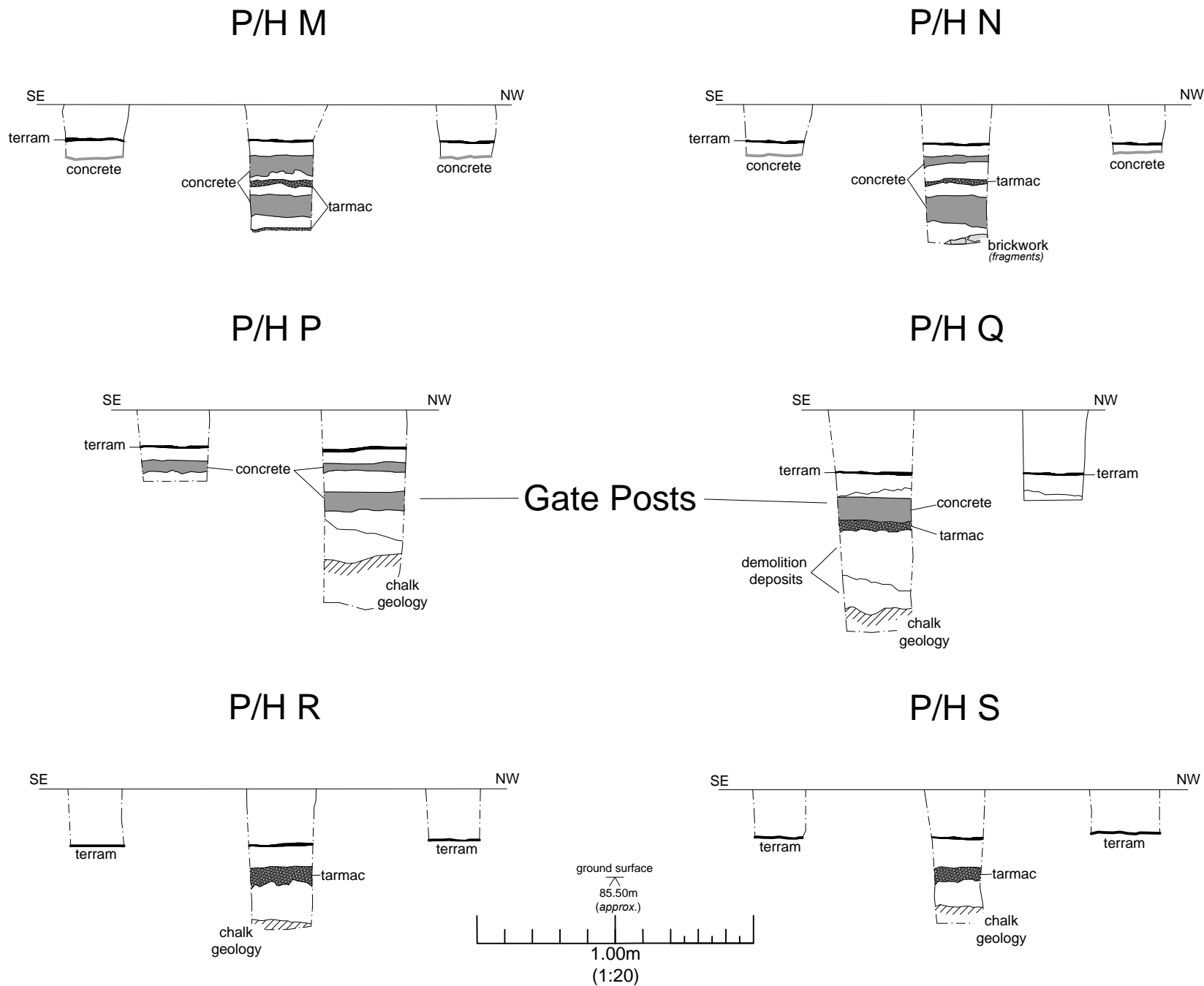
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Fig.4 Sections through recorded deposits in post-pits G-L

Fig.5



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Fig.5 Sections through recorded deposits in post-pits M-S



Plate I General view of excavated post-pits, looking north-west



Plate II General view of excavated post-pit group I, looking south-east



Plate III Top of wall in post-pit L before damaged, looking south-east