

archaeological service



**worcestershire**  
county council

EVALUATION AT  
34-6 WATLING STREET,  
LEINTWARDINE,  
HEREFORDSHIRE

Scheduled Ancient Monument: Here and Worc 28

David Wichbold

Illustrations by  
Carolyn Hunt

December 1998

Copyright © Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council

Field Section,  
Archaeological Service,  
Worcestershire County Council,  
Tolladine Road,  
Worcester WR4 9NB

Project 1434  
Report 703  
HSM 24437

## Contents

### Part 1 Project summary

1	Reasons for the project	1
2	Outline of results and significance	1
3	Conclusions	1

### Part 2 Detailed report

4	Aims	2
5	Archaeological background	2
6	Methods	3
6.1	Fieldwork	3
6.1.1	Excavation strategy	3
6.2	Artefacts	3
6.2.1	Artefact recovery policy	3
6.2.2	Method of analysis	3
7	Analysis	3
8	Discussion	5
9	Significance	6
10	Impact	6
11	Academic summary	6
12	The archive	6
13	Acknowledgements	7
14	Personnel	7
15	Bibliography	7
16	Abbreviations	8

## Figures

1	Location of the site	facing page	1
2	Archaeological sites in Leintwardine (Dalwood 1996)		
3	Components of Roman settlement: HSM 21087 = Roman defences (Dalwood 1996)		
4	Interpretive plan of Leintwardine		
5	Location of trench		
6	Trench plan		
7	Schematic cross sections showing (I) possible positions of Roman ditches and ramparts (Dalwood 1997)		
	(II) Location of Roman ditches observed in evaluation trench		



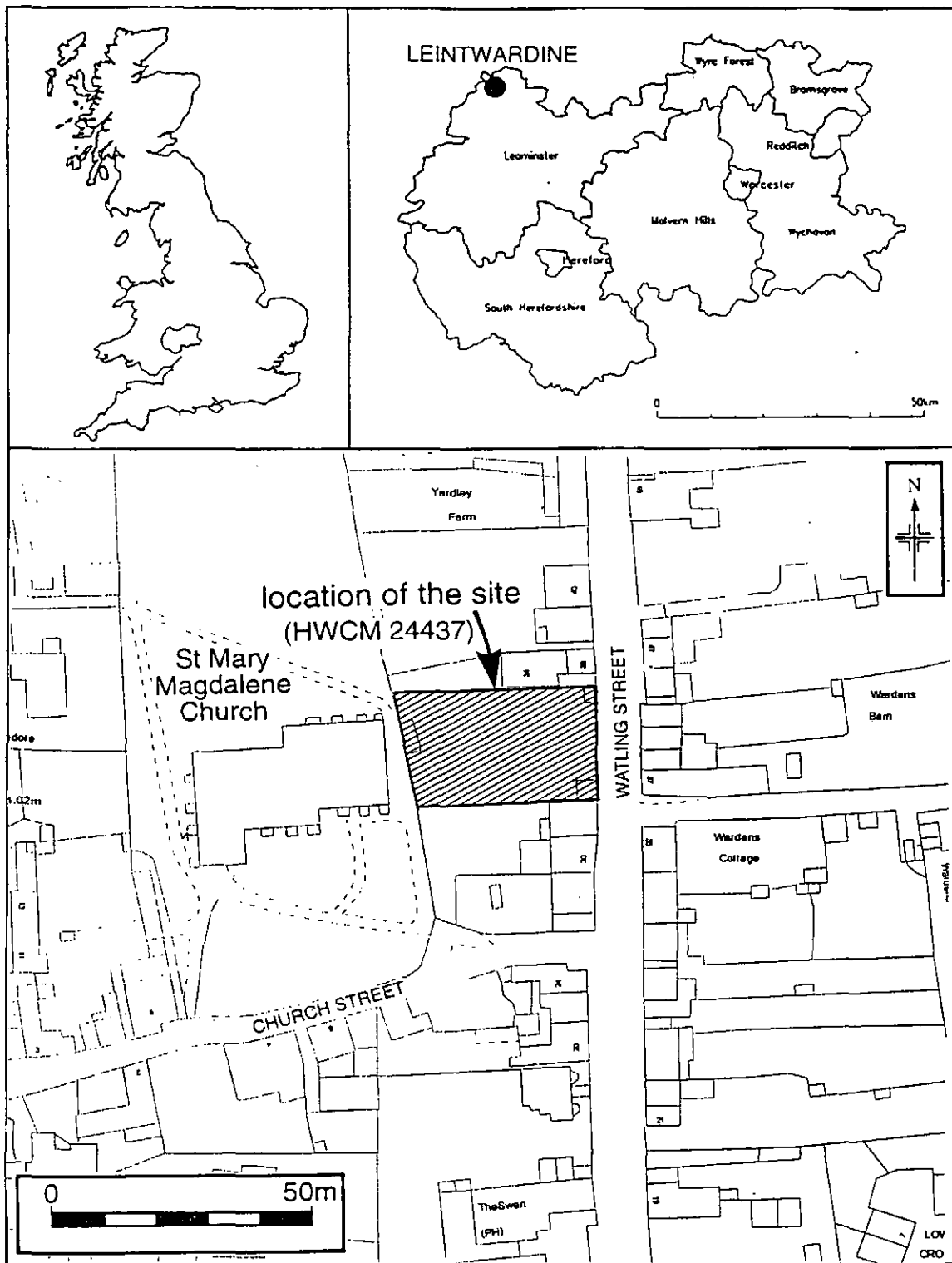


Figure 1: Location of the site

© Crown Copyright.

## Part 2 Detailed report

### 4 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. As a result sufficient information will exist to enable decisions to be taken on appropriate treatment of archaeological deposits affected by the development, aimed primarily at the preservation of significant deposits. The project is specifically directed to the location of Roman defensive ditches and associated features within the areas of the proposed building since these are likely to be subject to disturbance.

### 5 Archaeological background

The site of the evaluation is located at 34-6 Watling Street, Leintwardine (NGR SO 4050 7410) and is registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (HSM 24437). It is bordered on the east by Watling Street and on the west by the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene. Property boundaries form both the north and south sides (Fig 1).

A planning application is intended to be submitted to Herefordshire Council and proposes the construction of a single dwelling. The site lies within a scheduled ancient monument, the Roman station of *Bravinium* (English Heritage 1994, 7; SAM reference number Here and Worc 28), and as such is subject to the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*. As a known archaeological site, the local plan policies for archaeology apply (Leominster District local plan 1989; A30 and A31). It is within the defined extent of the defences (Dalwood 1997: HSM 21087) of the Roman settlement of Leintwardine, which were constructed in the late 2nd century (Stanford 1968, 316). It is thought that at this period Leintwardine was a civilian settlement with the status of a small town and was occupied until at least the late 4th century. The surviving earthworks, a number of archaeological investigations and the topography of the later settlement have allowed the extent of the defences to be broadly defined (Fig 3). The site has been used as a garden for the last 200 years, and gardening activity may have removed any surface evidence for the defences in the form of earthworks. However it is probable that buried remains survive relating to the Roman defences beneath modern garden soils.

The adjacent building (34-6 Watling Street; Fig 1 and 5) dates from the 17th century. It is possible that buried remains of post-medieval date relating to the occupation of the building within the garden area. It is also possible that earlier (medieval) remains may survive.

The archaeological background to the site is given in the desk based assessment completed in February 1997 (Dalwood 1997). This report identified the area of the evaluation as lying within the the Roman defences of Leintwardine (HSM 21087; Fig 3).

An evaluation was required as a condition of planning permission by English Heritage. This was undertaken at the request of the client (Mrs J E Morris) to

evaluate the garden area, c 40m by c 30m, of 34-6 Watling Street, prior to a planning application which will propose the construction of a single dwelling.

The evaluation was designed to provide information on the location of the predicted Roman defensive ditches and associated features together with subsequent medieval, post-medieval and modern deposits.

The soils of the area are silty stagnogleys or stagnogleyic brown earths of the Rowton association (Ragg *et al* 1984; Soil Survey of England and Wales). The underlying geology consists of till drift deposits overlying Much Wenlock Limestone Formation and Gorstian Siltstone (British Geological Survey 1:250,000).

## 6 Methods

### 6.1 Fieldwork

#### 6.1.1 Excavation strategy

The evaluation took place on 2nd to 3rd November 1998. One trench, aligned east to west from near the roadside, was 16m long by 0.95m wide and up to 0.84m deep. This was excavated using a mechanical excavator. Selected deposits were then excavated by hand. Also a 4.50m long and 1.20m deep east to west section of a car parking area cut into the site was cleaned. Recording followed standard practice (CAS 1995).

Deposits in the trench were recognised as backfilled Roman defensive ditches, and due to their significance it was decided not to excavate any part of their fill.

### 6.2 Artefacts

#### 6.2.1 Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts from the excavated area were retained in accordance with the Service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

#### 6.2.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. A primary record was made of all finds using the Context Finds Records (AS 8). Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated (Table 1). Where possible a *terminus post quem* date was produced for each context containing artefacts (Table 2). Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the County Archaeological Service (Hurst 1994).

## 7 Analysis

The results of the structural analysis are described below by period. The artefactual results are tabulated (Table 1).

Within the 16m by 0.95m evaluation trench and the parking area deposits of archaeological significance were observed (Figs 5 and 6).

evaluate the garden area, c 40m by c 30m, of 34-6 Watling Street, prior to a planning application which will propose the construction of a single dwelling.

The evaluation was designed to provide information on the location of the predicted Roman defensive ditches and associated features together with subsequent medieval, post-medieval and modern deposits.

The soils of the area are silty stagnogleys or stagnogleyic brown earths of the Rowton association (Ragg *et al* 1984; Soil Survey of England and Wales). The underlying geology consists of till drift deposits overlying Much Wenlock Limestone Formation and Gorstian Siltstone (British Geological Survey 1:250,000).

## 6 Methods

### 6.1 Fieldwork

#### 6.1.1 Excavation strategy

The evaluation took place on 2nd to 3rd November 1998. One trench, aligned east to west from near the roadside, was 16m long by 0.95m wide and up to 0.84m deep. This was excavated using a mechanical excavator. Selected deposits were then excavated by hand. Also a 4.50m long and 1.20m deep east to west section of a car parking area cut into the site was cleaned. Recording followed standard practice (CAS 1995).

Deposits in the trench were recognised as backfilled Roman defensive ditches, and due to their significance it was decided not to excavate any part of their fill.

### 6.2 Artefacts

#### 6.2.1 Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts from the excavated area were retained in accordance with the Service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

#### 6.2.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. A primary record was made of all finds using the Context Finds Records (AS 8). Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated (Table 1). Where possible a *terminus post quem* date was produced for each context containing artefacts (Table 2). Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the County Archaeological Service (Hurst 1994).

## 7 Analysis

The results of the structural analysis are described below by period. The artefactual results are tabulated (Table 1).

Within the 16m by 0.95m evaluation trench and the parking area deposits of archaeological significance were observed (Figs 5 and 6).



### *The parking area*

The north section of the parking area, which had been cut into the garden area, was cleaned and revealed a layer of topsoil (100) up to 0.54m deep sealing a Roman layer of silty clay subsoil (101) up to 0.45m deep which sealed natural stoney clay (102).

### *The evaluation trench*

The removal of topsoil and subsoil (200 and 201) in the trench revealed a number of post-medieval post-holes and pits cut into a ditch fill (202) and slightly disturbed natural stoney clay (224). A ditch (201), aligned north to south, was located 5.75m west of the east garden wall and was 2.70m wide. It was cut into natural (224) and a layer (223), the same as layer (101) seen in the parking area. Another ditch (205) was located at the west end of the trench 16.65m west of the east garden wall.

### *Natural deposits*

Natural undisturbed subsoil was identified in the parking area (102) and slightly disturbed natural subsoil was identified in the west half of the trench (224; Fig 6).

### *Roman deposits*

In the parking area natural was overlaid by a pale grey brown silty clay (101). This was flecked with charcoal, small lumps of burnt daub, and contained one sherd of Roman pottery. This has been interpreted as a levelled Roman deposit. This deposit was also seen in the east part of the trench (223; Fig 6) and was cut by a ditch (203; Figs 6 and 7) whose fill (202) contained a large quantity of small lumps of burnt daub and charcoal flecks. On its west side this ditch cut a disturbed natural deposit (224) which at the west end of the trench was cut by another ditch (205; Figs 6 and 7). The fill (204) contained small to medium lumps of burnt daub from broken-up clay ovens or kilns and one sherd of Roman pottery. Also to the west end of the trench were the remnants of a pebble surface set in a compact yellow-brown silty clay layer (218 and 221; Fig 6) The ditch fills and pebble surface were overlaid by a post-medieval horticultural soil (201) and cut by post-holes and pits.

Both ditches are identified as part of the sequence of ramparts and ditches forming the defensive earthworks of Roman Leintwardine (Fig 3). One layer (101/223) possibly represents a levelled Roman deposit earlier than ditch (203).

### *Post-medieval and modern deposits*

Two pits and a post-hole (209, 213 and 207; Fig 6) cut the ditch fill (202). Four other post-holes (211, 215, 217 and 220) cut the disturbed natural layer (224). The fills of all of these features was the same, a very dark grey-brown loam. Only two of these features had any datable finds, posthole fill (206) contained one 16th to 17th century sherd of pottery and pit fill (212) contained a mixture of Roman, medieval and post-medieval sherds of pottery. These pits and post-holes have been interpreted as activity around a property boundary. The only modern deposit seen on the site was the topsoil layer (100).

Table 1

**Quantification of the artefacts (hand retrieved material only).**

Roman pottery	5	40g
Medieval pottery 12th to 15th century	7	70g
Post-medieval pottery 16th to 17th century	2	38g
Post-medieval pottery 18th century	3	20g
Roman tile	1	4g
Post-medieval tile	1	2g
Roman daub	16	620g
Animal bone	2	8g
Unworked flint	1	4g

Table 2

***Terminus post quem* dates for contexts with finds assemblages**

U/S	18th century
100	Roman
101	Roman
204	Roman
206	16th to 17th century
212	18th century

8

## Discussion

Two ditches were identified within the evaluation trench, both of them likely to be Roman. The first ditch (203: Fig 6) was 2.70m wide and located 5.75m west of the garden wall alongside Watling Street. Its position and width (Fig 7) broadly correspond with that of the outer ditch of three widely spaced ditches seen in the north-west corner of the defences (Stanford 1968). This ditch is seen here at a depth of 0.64m (131.56m AOD) from the present ground level. The fill (202) contained a quantity of small lumps of burnt daub, probably from ovens or kilns. The other ditch (205: Fig 6) was at least 0.70m wide and located 16.65m west of the garden wall alongside Watling Street. Its position (Fig 7) corresponds with that of the central ditch seen at 12-14 Watling Street (Woodiwiss 1992), although here it is seen at a depth of 0.76m (131.56m AOD) compared to 1.85m at 12-14 Watling Street, below present ground level. The fill (204) contains small to medium lumps of burnt daub from ovens or kilns.

It was not possible to closely date the backfilling of the ditches but the deposits seen could be either Roman or medieval. There was no dating evidence associated with the pebble surface (218) but its position just above the slightly disturbed natural layer (224) would make it likely to be Roman.

The finds assemblage from the evaluation is very small but there were some important features. The Roman pottery fragments were all small and abraded but were typical of Roman pottery in this part of Herefordshire. The daub may have come from an oven. All the sherds of medieval pottery were residual but the presence of cooking pot and jug fabrics suggested the presence of domestic occupation somewhere in the vicinity between the 12th and 15th centuries. It

is generally agreed (Dalwood 1996) that the post-medieval village was focussed on Watling Street. The presence of medieval sherds points to medieval occupation along Watling Street (formerly East Street), as along the High Street (on the line of the Roman road).

This evaluation has confirmed the presence and line of two ditches, forming part of the defences of Roman Leintwardine. The ditches were recorded during previous archaeological work in the area of the defences (Stanford 1968 and Woodiwiss 1992), and predicted in the desk-based assessment (Dalwood 1997)

## 9      **Significance**

The evaluation trench lies within a scheduled ancient monument and revealed deposits of Roman and later date. These deposits were identified as the fills of the outer and middle ditches forming part of the sequence of Roman defensive ditches constructed in the late 2nd century. It may be judged that the Roman deposits are of national significance.

## 10     **Impact**

The evaluation demonstrated that significant archaeological deposits relating to the Roman defences of Leintwardine survive in the area of the proposed development, buried beneath modern and post-medieval garden soils that varied in depth from 0.34m to 0.76m. The top of significant deposits was recorded at between 131.81m AOD and 131.56m AOD and could potentially be damaged by the proposed development.

## 11     **Academic summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 34-6 Watling Street, Leintwardine. The outer and middle ditches of the Roman defences were identified in the evaluation trench. The evaluation also revealed evidence of Roman ovens in this area together with artefactual evidence for occupation in this area between the 12th and 15th centuries.*

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intend to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The Client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

## 12     **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 07 Context records AS1
- 06 Context finds records AS8
- 01 Fieldwork progress record AS2
- 01 Colour transparency film

01 Black and white photographic film  
01 Scale drawing  
01 Box of finds  
01 Computer disk

It is intended that the project archive will be deposited at Herefordshire County Museum.

### 13      **Acknowledgements**

The service would like to thank Mr and Mrs Morris, Helena Smith of Herefordshire Council and Sue Cole of English Heritage for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

### 14      **Personnel**

Project leader; David Wichbold  
On site assistance; Anna Deeks BA  
Artefact specialist; Victoria Buteux BA MIFA  
Illustrator; Carolyn Hunt PIFA  
Project manager; Hal Dalwood BA MIFA

### 15      **Bibliography**

CAS 1995 *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, internal report, 399

Dalwood, H, 1996 *Archaeological assessment of Leintwardine Roman settlement, Hereford and Worcester*, County Archaeological Service HWCC, internal report, 324

Dalwood, H, 1997 *Desk-based assesment of land adjacent to 34-6 Watling Street, Leintwardine*, County Archaeological Service, HWCC, internal report, 533

English Heritage 1994 *Department of National Heritage County list of scheduled monuments: Hereford and Worcester*

Ragg, J M, Beard, G R, George, H, Heaven, F W, Hollis, J M, Jones, R J A, Palmer, R C, Reeve, M J, Robson, J D, and Whitfield, W A D, 1984 *Soils and their use in midland and western England*, Soils Survey of England and Wales, 12

Stanford, S C, 1968 The Roman forts at Leintwardine and Buckton, *Trans Woolhope Natur Fld Clb*, 39 (2), 222-332

Whitfield, W A D, 1971 *Soils in Herefordshire*, Soil Survey Record, 3, Harpenden

Woodiwiss, S, 1992 *Evaluation at the Old Vicarage, 12-14 Watling Street, Leintwardine*, HWCC County Archaeological Service internal rep 104

16

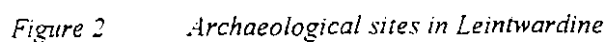
## **Abbreviations and glossary**

HSM - Numbers prefixed with "HSM" are the primary reference numbers used by the Herefordshire County Sites and Monuments Record.

SMR - Sites and Monuments Record

County Archaeological Service  
Hereford & Worcester  
County Council

1:5000  
date: 27.6.96 C.H.



County Archaeological Service  
Hereford & Worcester  
County Council

Roman Urban  
Components & Form  
1:5000  
Plotted: 27.6.96 C.H.

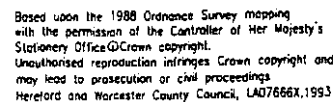


Figure 3 Components of Roman settlement: HWC.M 21087 = Roman defences (Dahwood 1996)

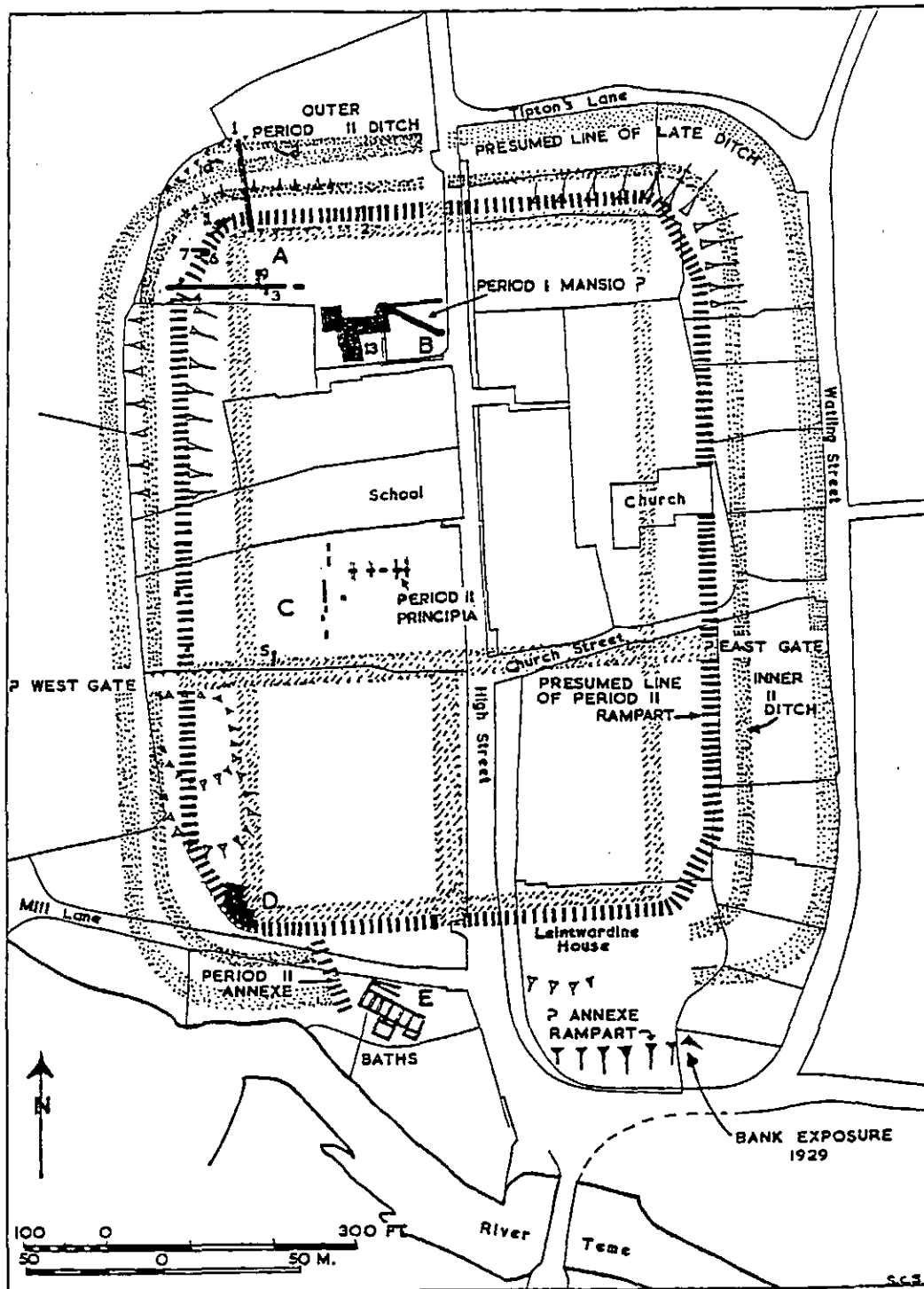


Figure 4 Interpretive plan of Leintwardine (Stanford 1968)



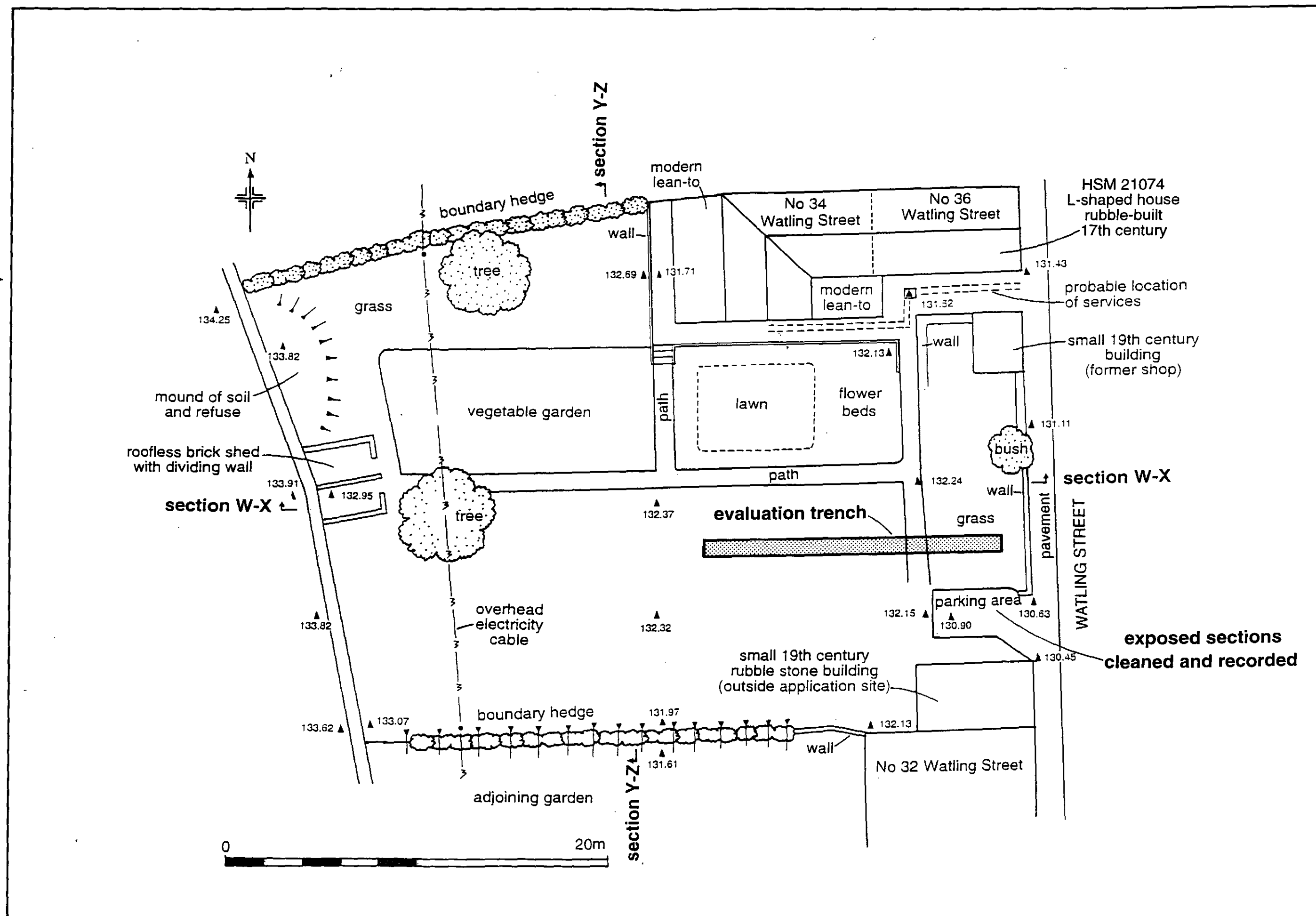


Figure 5: Location of trench (based on site survey in Dalwood 1997)

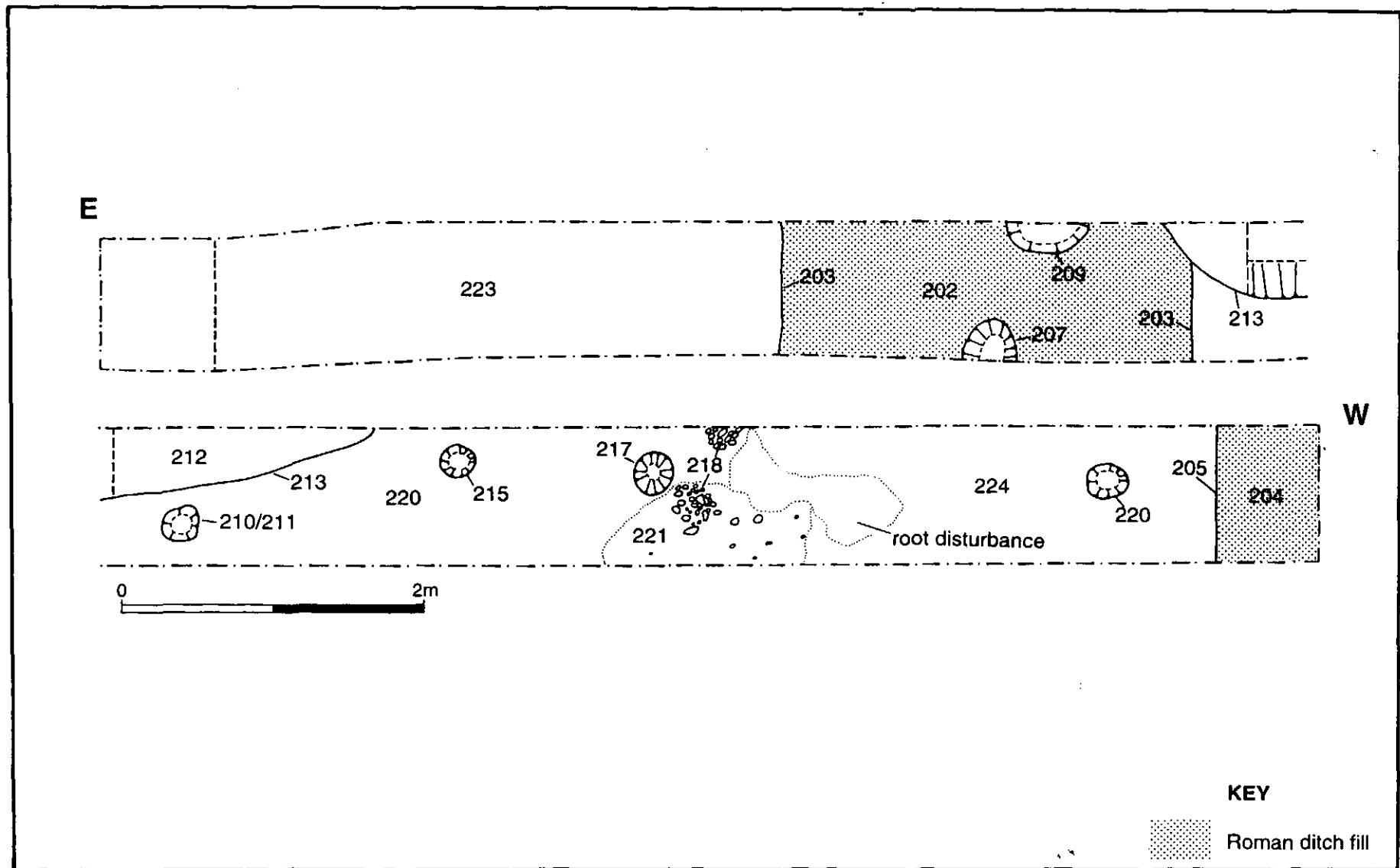


Figure 6: Trench plan

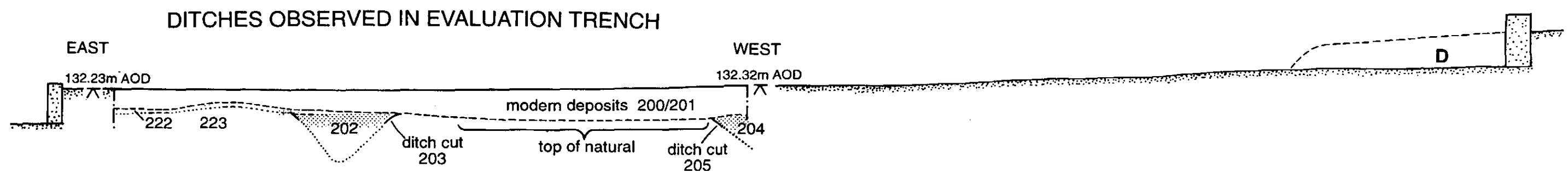
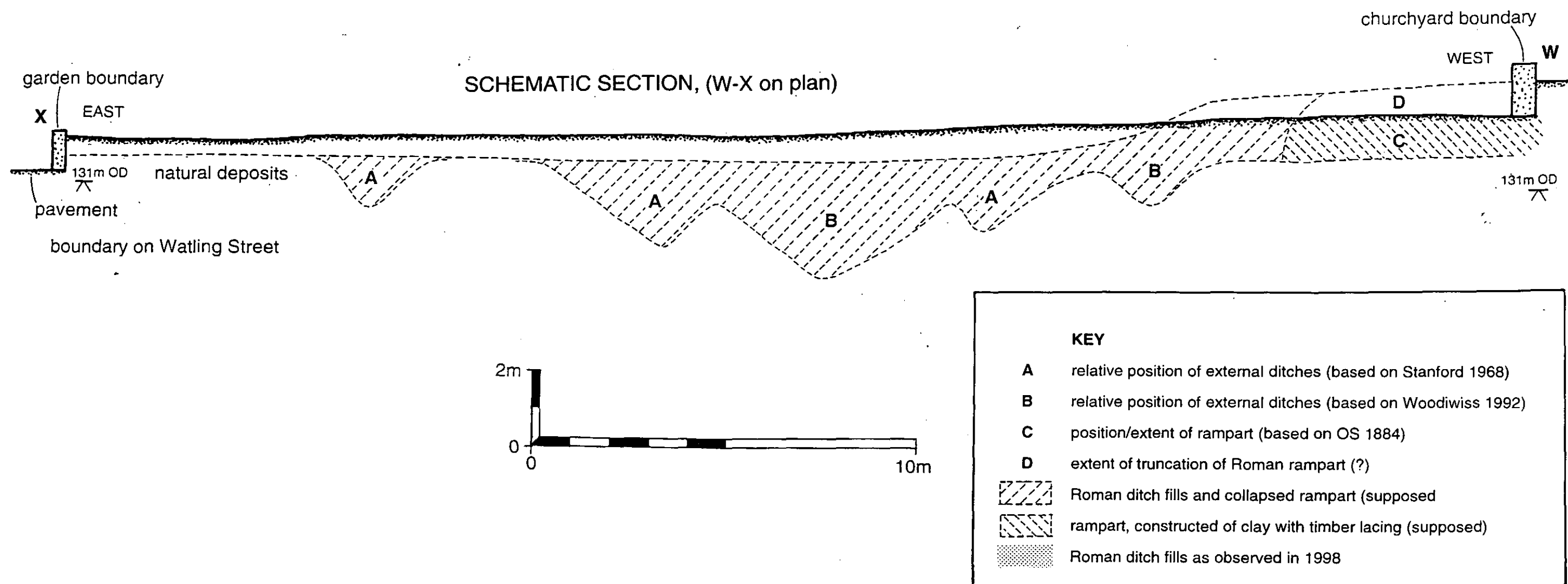


Figure 7(I): Schematic cross-section showing possible position of Roman ditches and ramparts (Dalwood 1997)

(II): Location of Roman ditches observed in evaluation trench (1998)