

Introduction

This report sets out the results of recording undertaken by the writer in advance of repair work to the wall forming the northern boundary of Castle Dikes House, 37 Castlegate, Malton (SE 78977155 - 79037157). This wall allegedly forms the south-west part of the wall of Malton's former medieval castle.

Repair works were necessitated because of erosion to the wall by frost damage and plant infestation. Repair works involved the removal of the covering vegetation, the repointing of areas of surviving facing stone, and the consolidation of areas of exposed wall core.

The archaeological recording took place during the execution of the scheme of repair works, but prior to works on the particular areas of archaeological interest.

All work was funded by English Heritage and arranged through J Ette, Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

SE 79000 71569 (centre)

SAM NY 1261

NYCC HER	
SNY	11358
ENY	3577
CNY	
Parish	3083
Rec'd	1716194

Historical Background

Malton Castle is thought to have been constructed in stone in the early twelfth century, and was granted by Henry I to Eustace fitz John (Robinson 1978, no. 174). King John ordered the demolition of the castle in 1214, but the founding of a chantry in the castle's chapel in 1257 implies that it had been rebuilt by the mid-13th century. In 1322 Robert de Bruis occupied the castle, using it as a base to despoil the surrounding area. The castle was then wrecked when de Bruis abandoned it.

Leland, writing in the reign of Henry VIII, described the ruinous state of the castle, whose site was used for the construction of a Jacobean mansion at around 1600. The mansion itself was destroyed in 1675.

Subsequently, the wall under discussion formed the southern boundary of the grounds of The Lodge, which is shown as being partly laid out to formal gardens on a plan of 1730 (Dickinson, 1730). The same plan shows the building known as Castle Dikes House, whose gardens now rise in two terraces to the assumed castle wall.

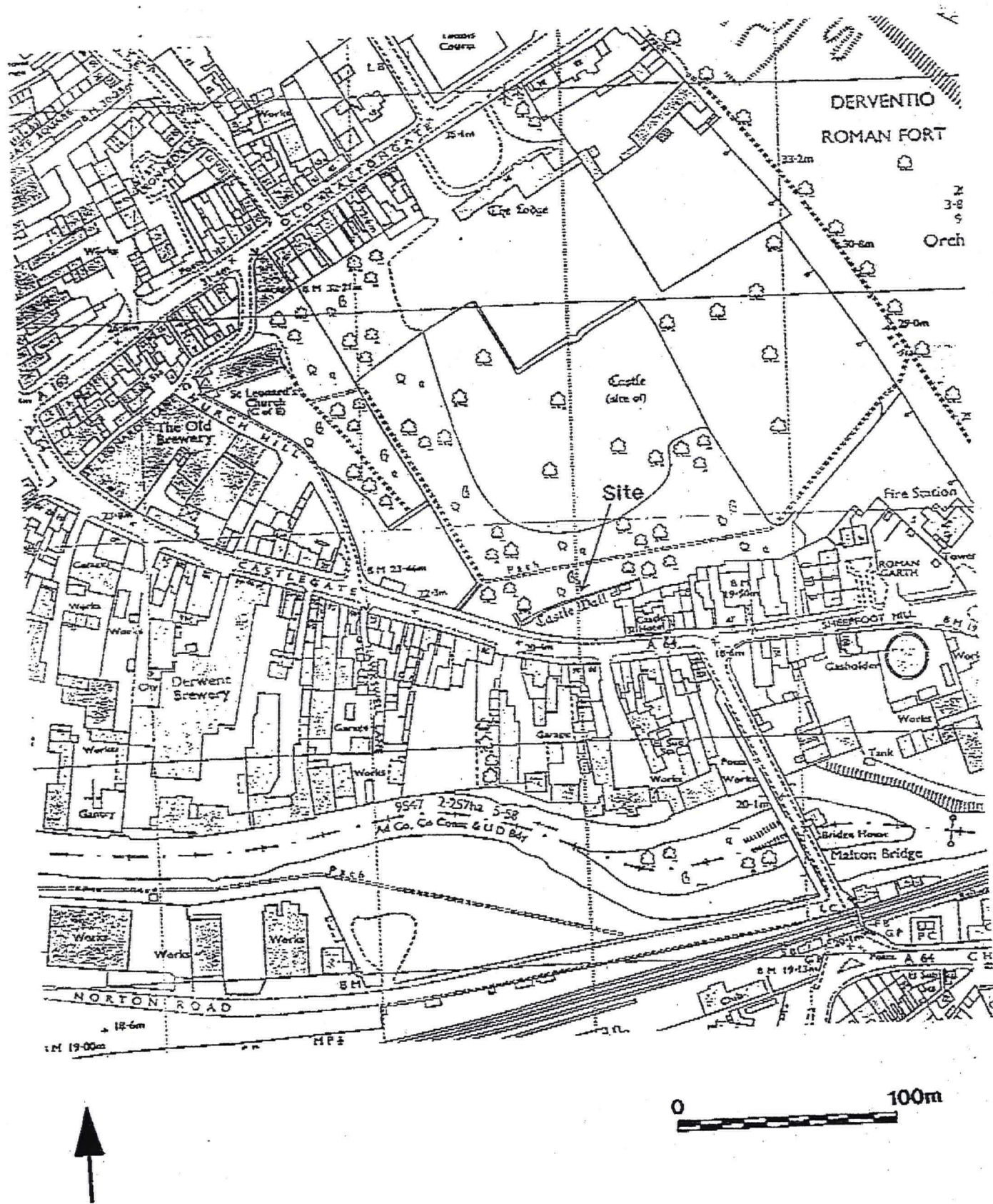


Figure 1 - Site Location.

West boundary

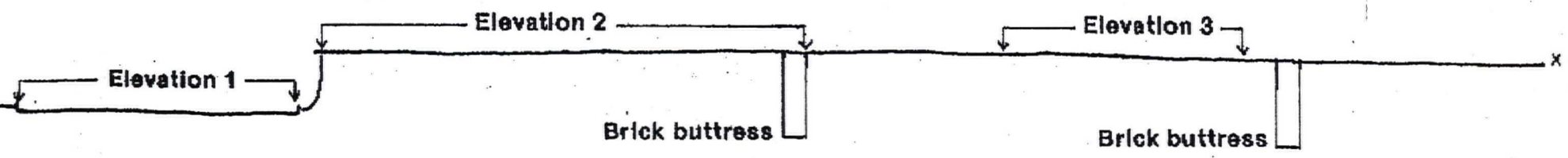
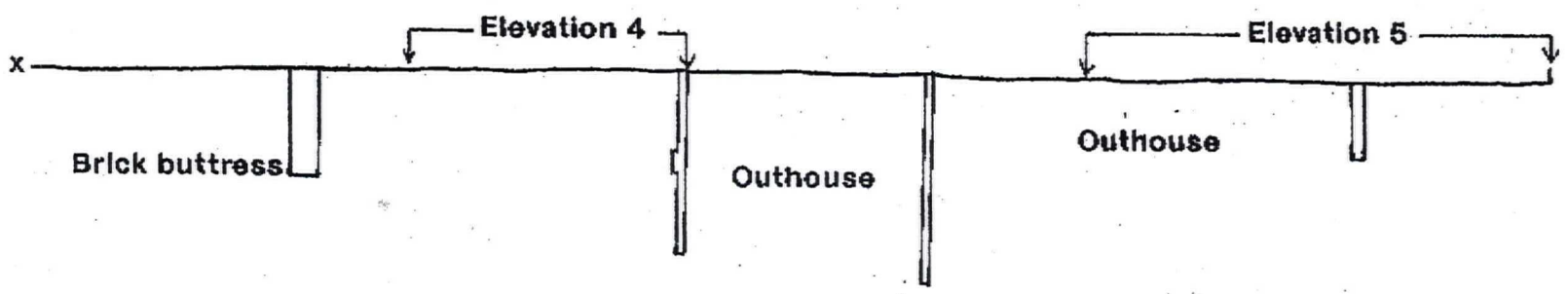


Figure 2 - Site Plan



East boundary



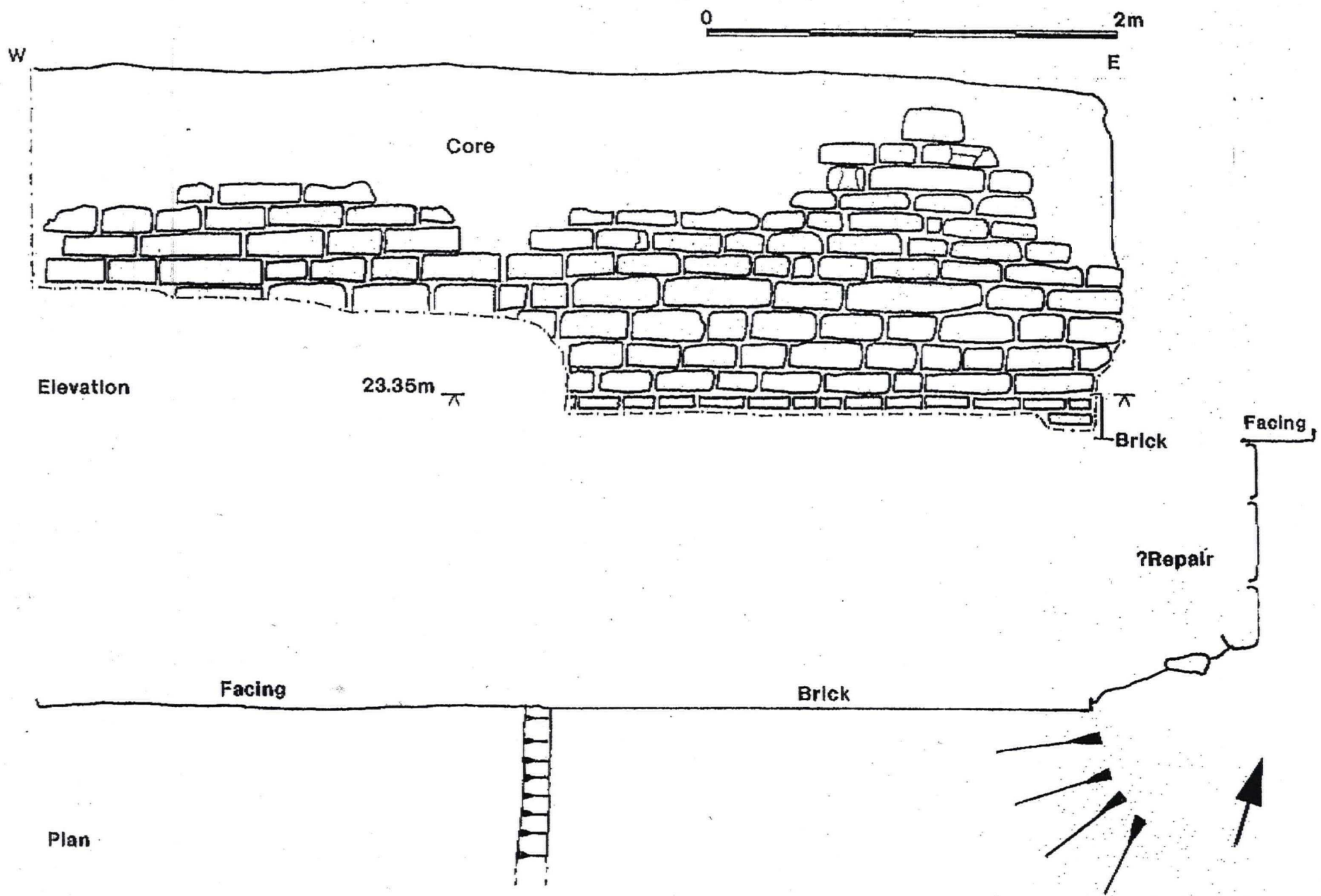


Figure 3 - Area 1, Elevation and Plan

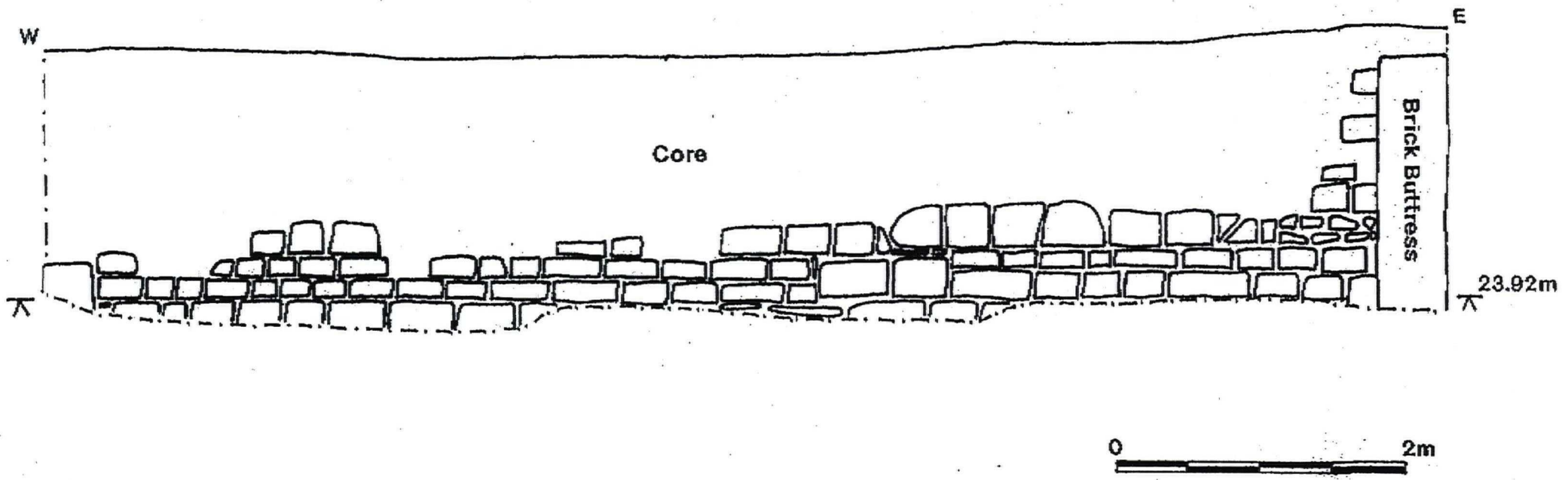


Figure 4 - Area 2, Elevation

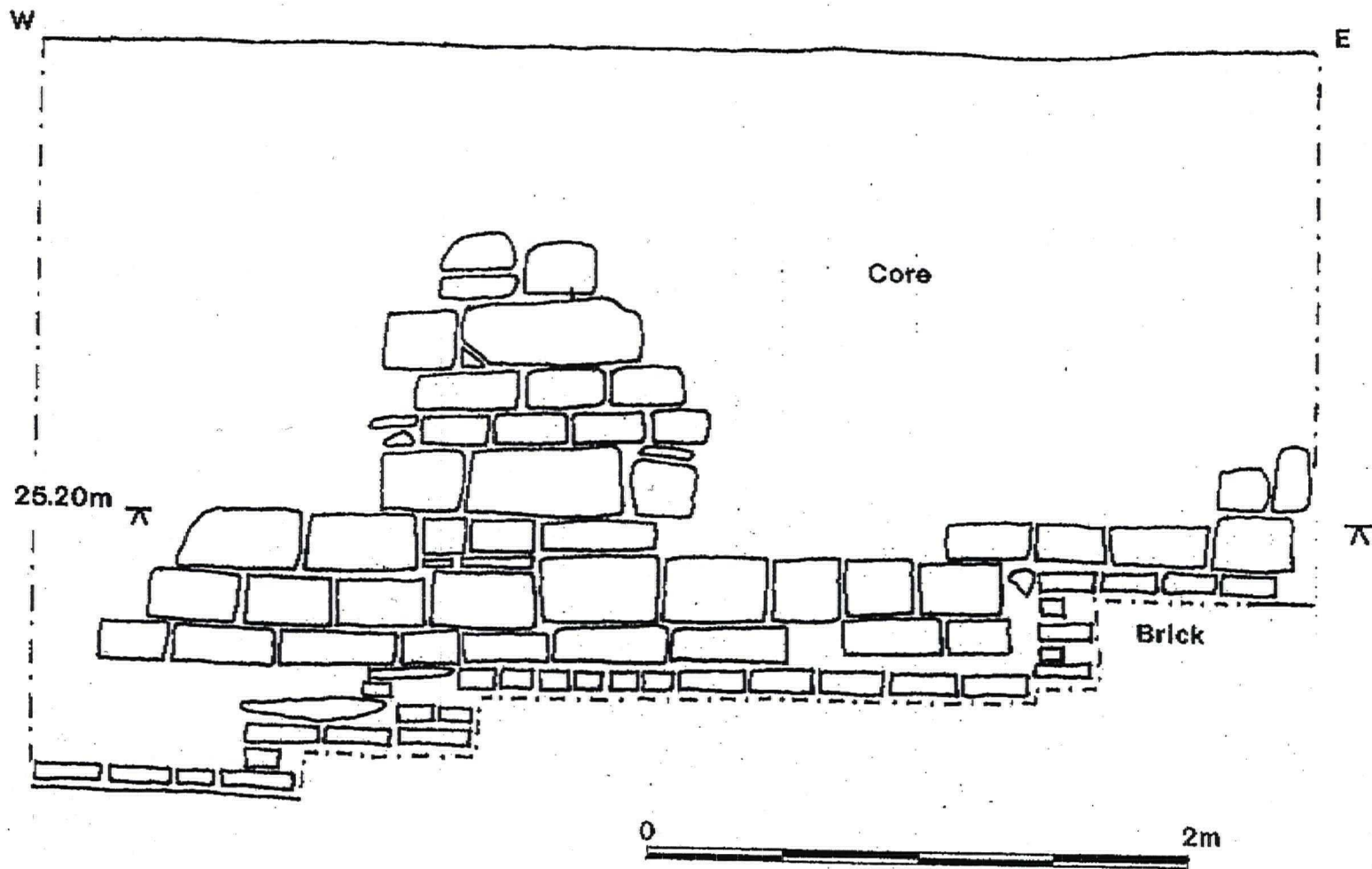


Figure 5 - Area 3, Elevation.

Survey Results

Area 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)

Area 1 was situated at the west of the site, adjacent to the point where the wall is believed to return northwards. Also at this point, the face of the wall is offset c.1.3m to the south from Area 2, a feature visible on Wise's plan of Malton (Wise, 1843).

A substantial amount of facing stone was present at Area 1. The stones were laid in squared regular courses, each c.13 cm high. The quoins at the eastern end, where the wall returns northwards to Area 2, were unstressed. Also at the eastern end, the squared limestones rested on a brick foot. Where the wall returned northwards, the facing stones ran behind a roughly mortared mass of uneven masonry, apparently a modern repair or reinforcing to the offset part of the wall.

Area 2 (Figs. 2 and 4)

Area 2 was situated immediately east of Area 1, and extended as far as the westernmost brick buttress. The western half of the area showed two courses of regular squared limestones, each c.15 cm in height. These two courses rested on a squared regular course 22 cm in height. The eastern half of the area showed three somewhat uneven courses, with two courses, 22 cm and 30 cm high respectively, separated by a probable string course, which had a height of 11 cm. A patch of random masonry, presumably a repair, occurred immediately west of the brick buttress.

Area 3 (Figs. 2 and 5)

Area 3 was situated c.4m east of Area 2, between the western and central brick buttresses. The remaining facing stones were situated above a brick foot laid in a random arrangement of headers and stretchers. The facing stones were of squared uneven courses between 12 and 25 cm in height.

It is possible that the variation in the height of the courses reflects a number of previous repairs.

Area 4 (Figs. 2 and 6)

Area 4 was situated c.1.5m east of Area 3, between the easternmost brick buttress and the western wall of a roofless outhouse.

The western block of surviving facing work had a brick foot, which was present below three squared courses of limestones, each having a height of c.14 cm. These were overlain by three squared uneven courses, each c.22 cm in height. Traces of a further squared, uneven course, c.16 cm high, occurred above.

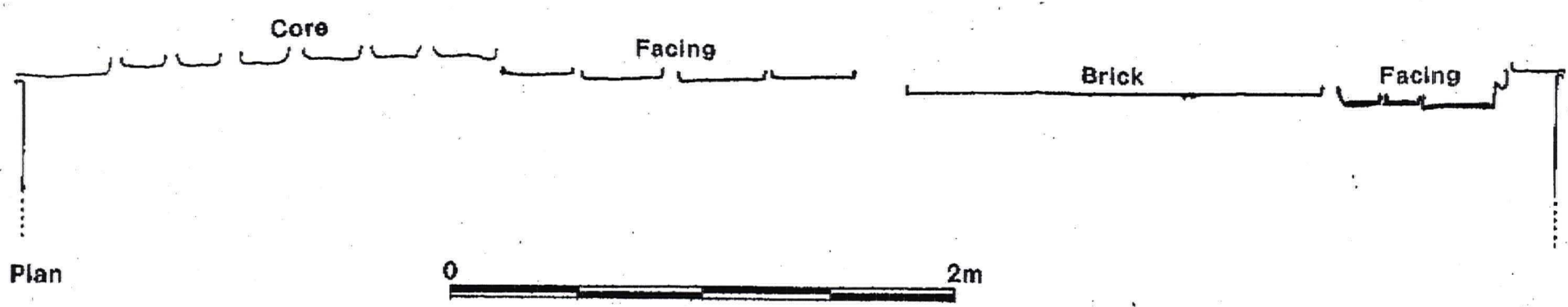
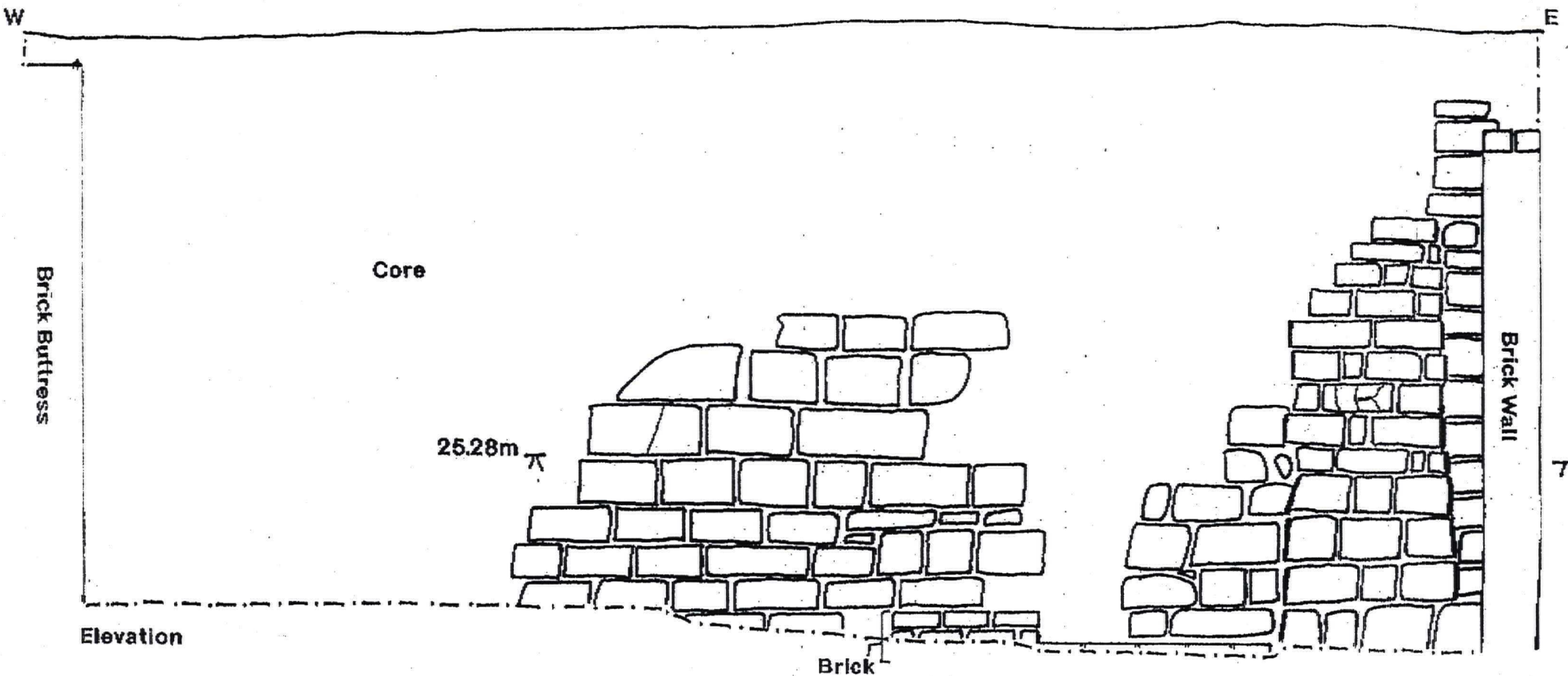


Figure 6 - Area 4 Elevation and Plan

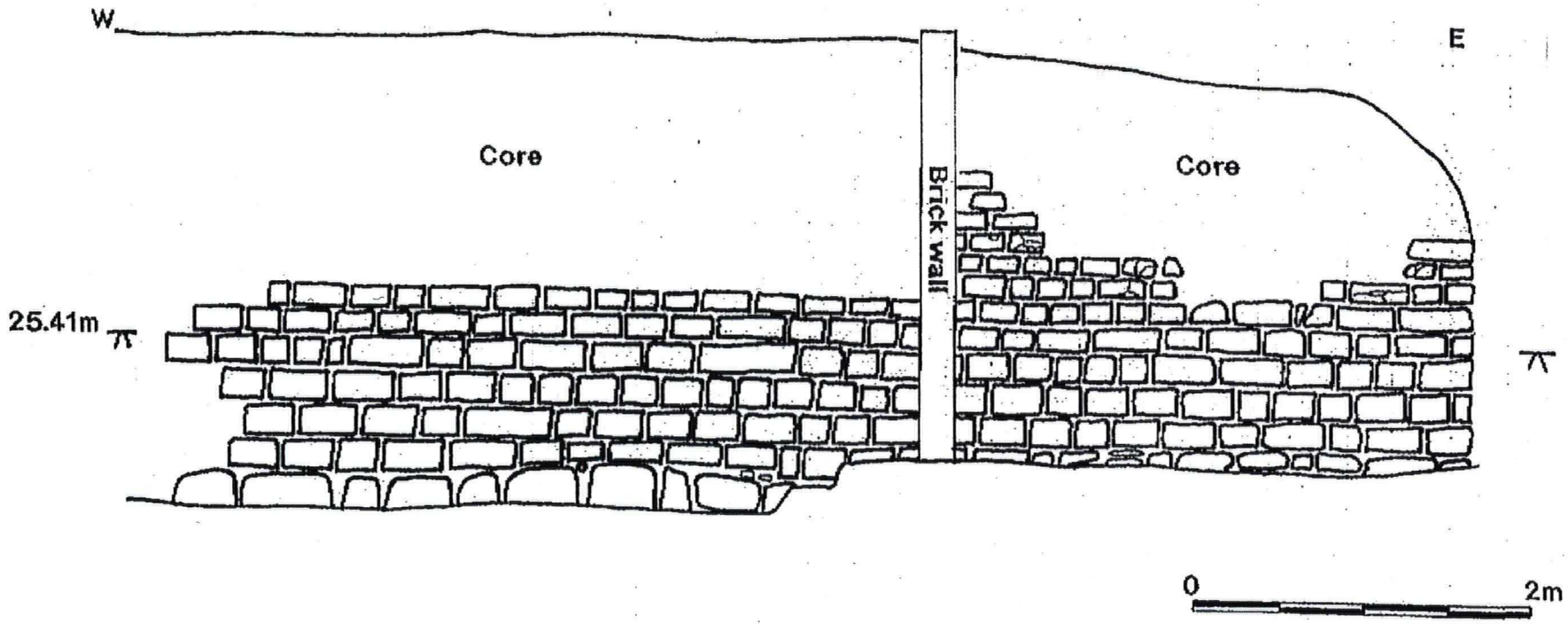


Figure 7 - Area 5, Elev 1

The eastern part of Area 4 showed a masonry feature, possibly a buttress, whose face was offset c.17 cm from the general line of the wall's face. The masonry of this feature was laid in uneven squared courses, the lowest four courses of which each had a height of 16-18 cm, with the upper nine courses each having a height of 11-12 cm.

The adjoining facing stones to the west of the 'buttress' formed a straight joint with the 'buttress'. The masonry adjoining the 'buttress' to the east extended behind the stones of the 'buttress'. There was a difference in character to the masonry on either side of the 'buttress', with the facing stones to the east having narrower courses (14-16 cm), than those to the west (16-20 cm), and generally conforming to different levels.

Area 5 (Figs. 2 and 7)

Area 5 was situated at the eastern end of the site. Twelve courses of facing stone survived, probably due to the relatively sheltered nature of the area and the fact that the western part of the area had been protected by a now roofless brick outhouse.

The squared masonry had been laid in fairly regular courses, c.16 cm high, with stones of between 18 and 50 cm in length. The foot of the wall at the western part of the area was composed of more massive, and rather irregular, rounded limestones, which were at least 20 cm in height. This area of footing probably represented a repair at ground level.

The facing stones at the eastern end of the area formed a straight joint, to the east of which no facing survived and slumping had occurred. The wall did not return at this point. However, it is doubtful that an entrance was represented here because the quoins were unstressed, and showed none of the ashlar detailing that might be expected at a gateway.

Discussion

The major feature of the area of the surveyed wall was the southwards offset at the west of the site. As stated above, this feature was in existence at least as early as 1843 (Wise). An earlier plan (Dickinson, 1730) does not show this offset to the wall, but such a relatively minor topographical feature may have escaped the map-maker's notice, bearing in mind the somewhat stylised representation of buildings.

Hinderwell's plan of Malton (Fig. 8 - Hinderwell, c.1825) makes an attempt to show the position of the medieval castle, and shows a possible internal bastion or turret at the area under discussion. It is therefore possible that a corner turret is represented at Area 1, and such a strengthening to the defences might be expected at the point where the alignment of the wall radically changes from ENE-WSW to NNE-SSW.

It is noteworthy that the masonry of the 'corner turret' at Area 1 is of slightly different build to that of the rest of the wall, the courses being slightly narrower, and hence the stones smaller, than the other areas surveyed. This might imply a different date of construction, but the crucial point at which the feature joins the rest of the wall is obscured by a later area of uneven masonry, presumably a relatively recent repair.

The Hinderwell plan also shows three external features in the survey area; these are interpreted by Robinson as external bastions (Robinson no. 174). There are no traces at the wall today which might represent such structures whose position closely ties in with the three, presumably post-medieval, brick buttresses present at the site.

The other feature of note is the 'buttress' in Area 4. This feature would appear to be later than the masonry which adjoins it to the east, as this masonry extends behind the 'buttress'. The adjoining masonry to the west shows a straight joint for three courses at the base of the 'buttress', suggesting that the facing was cut to receive the 'buttress' at this point. It seems reasonable to interpret the feature as reinforcing to the wall, in the manner of the later brick buttresses. However, the variation between the masonry on either side of the 'buttress' make it possible that some further process is involved, such as the existence of a gang joint.

It is clear from the survey that erosion caused by weathering at ground level to the wall has caused structural problems in the past. The large footing stones at the west of Area 5, and brick insertions or 'underpinning' at Areas 1, 3 and 4 represent various attempts at repairing the wall, a process which has culminated in the present repairs.