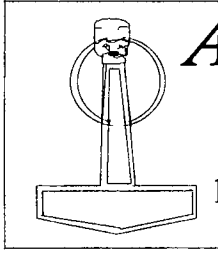


ENY166  
SNY574



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

WATCHING BRIEF

AT

SUNWIN HOUSE,

165-170, HIGH STREET,

NORTHALLERTON

FOR

YORKSHIRE COOPERATIVES LTD

2/00/110/32V

ALISON CLARKE

NOVEMBER 2000

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Parish	2110
Rec'd	29/11/2000

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT SUNWIN HOUSE, NORTHALLERTON

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A proposal to replace the existing retail store at 167, High Street, Northallerton (SE 3683 9376), with a new building led to an archaeological condition being placed on the planning permission. The work took place in several stages, starting with the demolition of the existing buildings on the site, and the levelling of the site before new construction took place. Trial pits were machine excavated after demolition to ascertain the nature of the subsoils, and these were observed archaeologically, as was the levelling of the site. Further archaeological work was decided on the basis of the findings of the trial holes. As much of the site was heavily disturbed with cellars and deep concrete foundations, this further work consisted of a watching and recording brief on all remaining ground disturbance work. All the archaeological work took place between 1 August and 14 September 2000.

### 2 THE SITE

2.1 The site (fig 1), on the west side of Northallerton High Street, is a double frontage just under 23 metres wide at the front, widening to 31 metres behind an adjoining shop (Bon Marché) to the north, before narrowing again to 17 metres in a dog-leg where a short terrace of houses (Westgarth) intrudes from the south. The whole site is approximately 195 metres long from east to west, of which the westernmost 65 metres is open tarmac access and car parking.

2.2 Ground levels fall gently from north to south, and there was a step down to the south-east to the south of the Bon Marché shop.

2.3 The site was originally divided into several plots fronting the High Street, and also incorporates the rear portion of the adjoining plot to the north, the front of which is occupied by Bon Marché. A truncated sandstone wall emerges from the south wall of Bon Marché, approximately 8.6 metres from the eastern end. This must originally have continued across the site, lining up with a break in the line of the wall forming the southern edge of the site, and probably formed the rear wall of the building. The masonry of the wall is similar to that of the cellars at the front of the site.

2.4 At the front or eastern end of the site was a line of cellars, beginning 65 cm west of the rear of the pavement. The central one was open, and measured 5.2 metres by 5.3 metres, by 1.8 metres deep. It was constructed of well shaped sandstone blocks, similar to those comprising the front wall of the property to the north. Adjacent to the north was a further, smaller cellar that had been filled in previously, and it was reported that other cellars also extended to the south along the same line.

2.5 The area of the former shop was heavily disturbed by massive reinforced concrete foundation blocks that extended up to 1.2 metres beneath the surface.

### 3 TRIAL HOLES

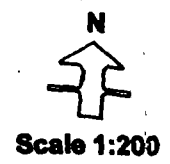
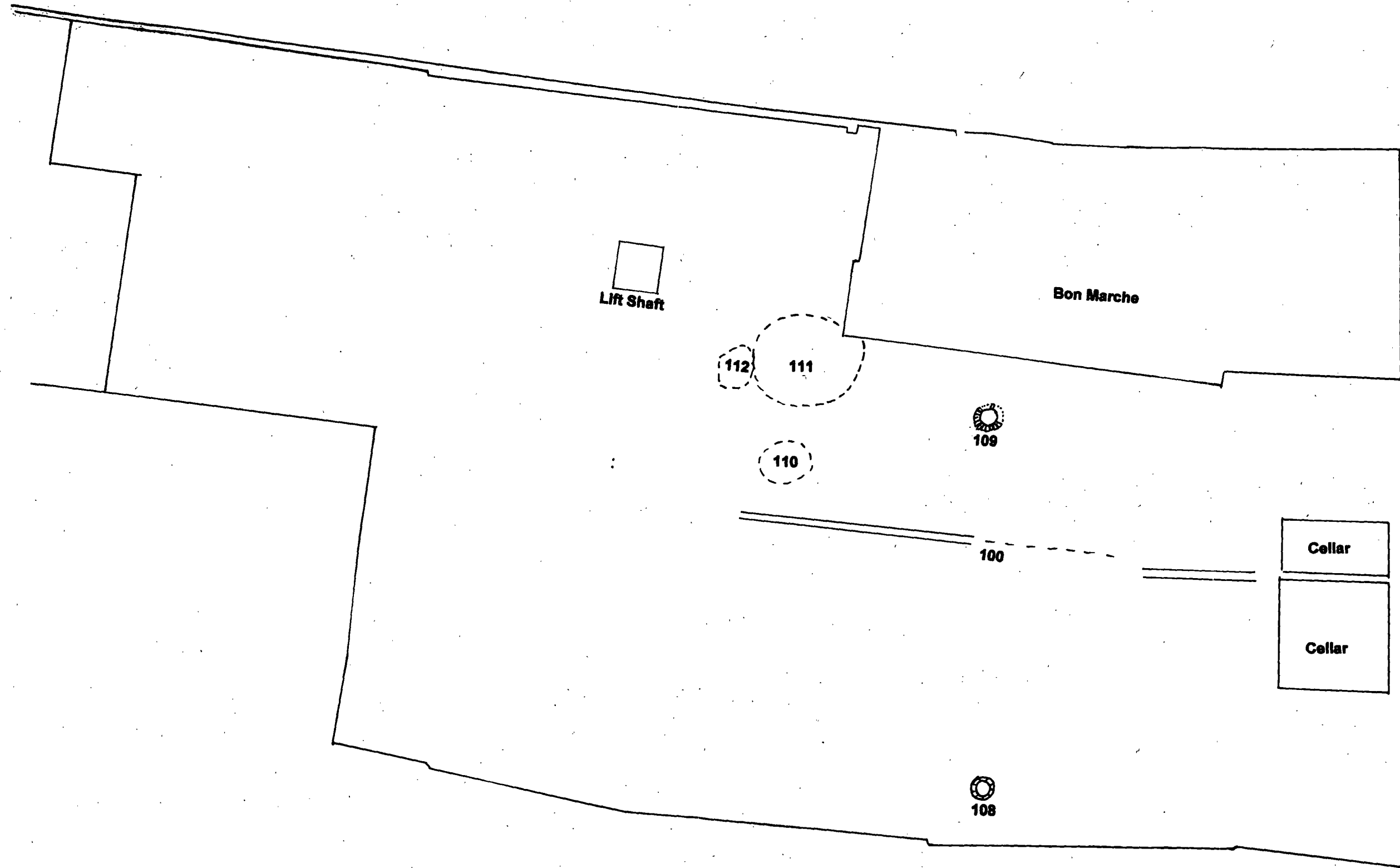
3.1 Ten trial holes were machine excavated after the initial demolition of the existing buildings on the site. Most were ranged around the edges of the site in order to check on the foundations of the surrounding buildings, with others along the centre to determine the nature of the ground.

3.2 THI, on the north side of the site towards the rear, had a tarmac surface over brick rubble to a depth of 40 cm. This overlay dark brown loam, which at a depth of 105 cm below the surface became reddish and sandy with pebbles and some larger stones. By 155 cm below the surface, the soil was gravelly in a clay matrix, and at 180 cm the gravel became paler and



SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 1 LOCATION

Scale 1:1000



SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 3 SITE PLAN (b)

finer This extended to the base at 190cm below the surface Against the bnck wall on the north of the site was a concrete slab at 82 – 100 cm down, emerging for 70 cm from the base of the brick foundations 60 cm west of the end of the hole the slab ended in a brick wall that extended to the edge of the concrete slab

3 3 TH2 (PI 1) was against the wall of 6 Westgarth, on the south side of the site towards the rear Tarmac and bnck rubble overlay dark brown loam, similar to that in TH1, to a depth of 120 cm below the surface Beneath this was brown sand to the base at 175 cm The concrete base of the bnck wall foundations was visible at a depth of 85 to 108 cm below the surface on the south side of the hole

3 4 TH3, in the centre west of the site between TH1 and TH2, had a tarmac surface overlying cobbles and bncks to a depth of 60 cm No structure was discernible though the bncks appeared to be in lines Below the bnck was a fine dark brown loam as in TH1 and TH2 At 105 cm this turned to orangey brown stony loam, merging into loose orange sandy gravel with mainly small water-worn stones, extending to the base of the hole at 2 1 m

3 5 TH4 was against the north wall of the site immediately west of the rear of Bon Marché, in an area formerly occupied by washrooms A surface covering of tiles overlay a concrete pad resting on hardcore and a second concrete pad and a layer of bnck rubble Below this, from 55 cm below the surface to 110 cm, was a similar dark brown loam as elsewhere, overlying dark reddish brown compacted sandy loam becoming silty sand with depth At a depth of 150 cm this turned to yellow sand that extended to the base of the hole at 165 cm

3 6 TH5 was on the north side of the site towards the rear of Bon Marché Concrete covered brick rubble to a depth of 50 cm, below which was a fine-textured brown sandy loam with small pebbles, gradually becoming less dark and slightly sandier By 160 cm below the surface the natural pale yellow-brown sand was visible Against the side wall of Bon Marché the bnck and cobble foundations were visible to a depth of one metre

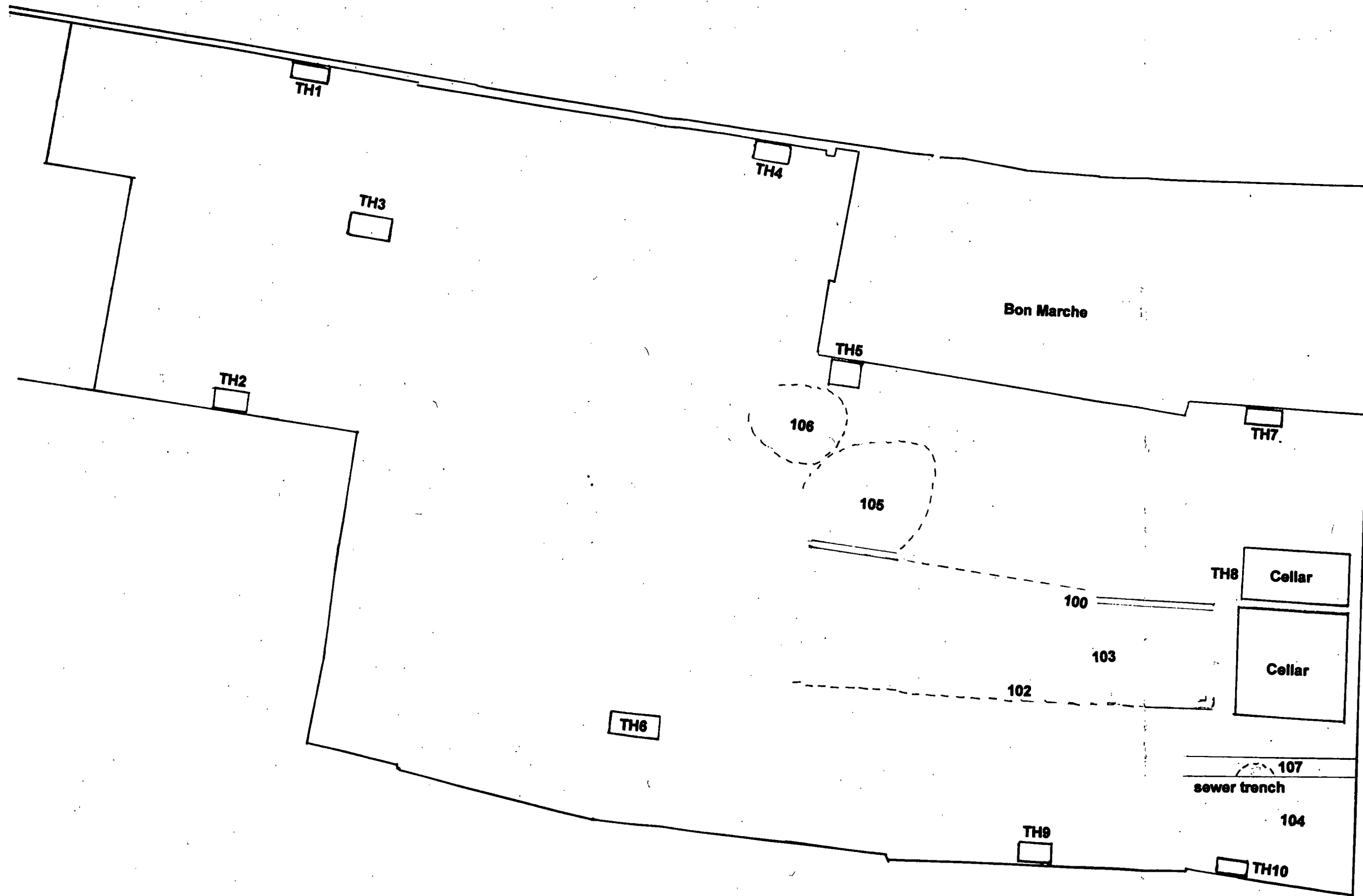
3 7 TH6 (PI 2), towards the southern side of the site and about half way down it, had a surface of bnck rubble in a brown sandy loam On the northern side was a water service pipe just below the surface, surrounded by dirty brownish yellow sand Beneath this on the western end was orangey brown compacted fine sand, while to the east was a mid-grey-brown loam with frequent mortar or concrete flecks This soil appeared to cut the orange sand, and at a depth of 142 cm it overlay a layer of concentrated bnck/tile rubble including pantile fragments This extended to a depth of 175 cm, and cut into clean pale orangey yellow silty sand The base of the hole was at 230 cm below the surface

3 8 TH7 was adjacent to the wall of Bon Marché, on the north side of the site and near to the front (east) The surface bnck rubble extended to 24 cm below the surface, beneath which was reddish brown stony loam to a depth of 90 cm This overlay the natural pale yellow-brown sand, which extended to the base of the hole Against the side wall of Bon Marché the 2" hand made bricks were visible, set directly onto the soil to a depth of only 12 cm

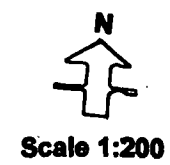
3 9 TH8 (PI 3) was positioned over the corner of the small cellar to the north of the main, open cellar This cellar proved to be the same depth as the larger one to the south, but only 250 cm wide The infill was composed of rubble including dressed sandstone blocks and quantities of bnck The sandstone blocks came from the back (west) wall of the cellar, and included two pieces resembling door jambs or lintels of massive construction (PI 4) The fill behind (west of) this wall was reddish brown stony sandy loam to a depth of 110 cm Beneath the sandstone flag floor of the cellar, at 140 cm below the surface, was the natural pale yellow sand

3 10 TH9, against the south side of the site, contained bnck rubble over brown loam with small stones and occasional bnck fragments to a depth of 60 cm This merged gradually with clean brownish red sand, which turned to yellow sand at a depth of 145 cm

3 11 TH10 was also on the south side of the site near to the front (eastern) end Brick rubble to a depth of 15 cm overlay reddish brown stony sandy loam, which extended to 85 cm below



SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 2 SITE PLAN (a)



the surface and overlay the natural yellow sand. Towards the west end of the hole were lenses of green and orange sand, above an area of slightly clayey dark brown loam with stones between 45 and 85 cm below the surface. Within this was a concentration of horse bones and a fragment of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Against the wall at the edge of the site the brick and cobble foundations were visible to a depth of 45 cm, above 10 cm of dark brown rubbly soil which overlay the reddish brown loam.

#### 4 SITE LEVELLING

4.1 The site was disturbed in numerous places by large reinforced concrete foundation pads, and the removal of these by machine further disturbed the ground around them. The surface was liberally strewn with rubble after the demolition process, consisting of brick, concrete and gravel. The brick, which appeared in places to have been deliberately spread to form a sub-base for the concrete, was very broken up but seemed all to be standard modern brick. The concrete was on average 50 cm thick over the whole site, but had been largely broken up in the demolition phase (PI 5).

4.2 Beneath the rubble the traces of former structures could be traced in places. West of the main cellar were two lines of brick and stonework (100 and 101, fig 2), some of it similar to the cellars to the east. Between these was a concentration of crushed brick. The foundations extended to a line just west of the rear of Bon Marché, and could be the remains of a further cellar. To the south east of the site were further traces of brick foundations, but no distinct structures could be identified.

4.3 Immediately to the north of the brick foundations in the centre of the site, towards the rear of Bon Marché, was an area of hard compacted gravelly soil (105, fig 2), with a clear and apparently vertical interface with the brick foundations. This was in the area of the former step inside the shop. It overlay more brick and gravel and contained modern pottery. Another concentration of brick (106) lay beneath the general rubble to the north-west of this compacted area. *? consolidation?*

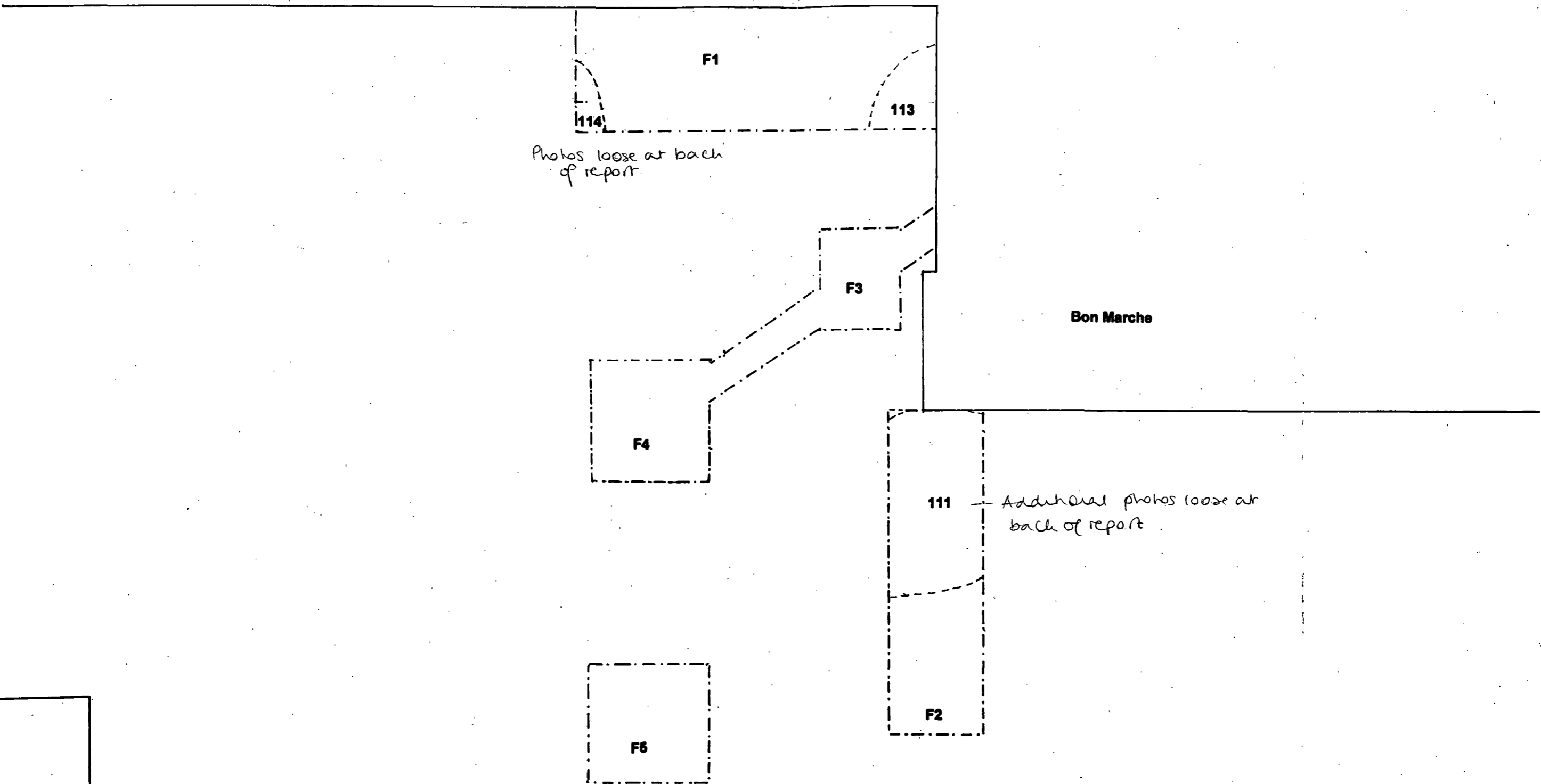
4.4 Immediately behind Bon Marché was an area of deep disturbance where there had been toilets, showers and a lift shaft. Towards the rear of the main part of the site the disturbance caused by the concrete foundations was compounded by service cables. Elsewhere the rubble overlay brown disturbed gritty sandy loam, variable and still disturbed in many places.

4.5 The ground to the south of the site was partially made up by machine in order to create a level surface, so the underlying soils were not exposed.

4.6 A sewer trench was exposed to the south of the main cellar. This contained, approximately 4 metres west of the pavement edge, the traces of a pit cut into the reddish silty loam (107, fig 2). The pit was at least 50 cm in diameter, and contained a concentration of animal bones, mainly small, coal fragments, a clay pipe stem and a post-medieval pottery sherd in a friable dark brown loam.

#### 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The trial holes and levelling of the site exposed several cellars, and traces of further structural foundations beneath the concrete foundation slab covering the site. Brick and concrete rubble covered the site to depths between 25 and 60 cm. However, large areas of the site were more deeply disturbed by concrete foundation blocks up to 1.3 metres thick, and by other modern features such as the lift shaft and the pit observed in TH6. Beneath the rubble towards the rear of the site was generally dark brown loam, similar to garden soil, extending to over a metre below the surface and overlying natural yellow, orange and red sands and gravel. Towards the front of the site the soils beneath the rubble were mainly reddish brown sandy loams, extending to between 90 and 160 cm below the surface and overlying the natural sand. In places this reddish sandy loam appeared between the dark brown loam and the natural towards the rear of the site.



SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 5 FOUNDATIONS

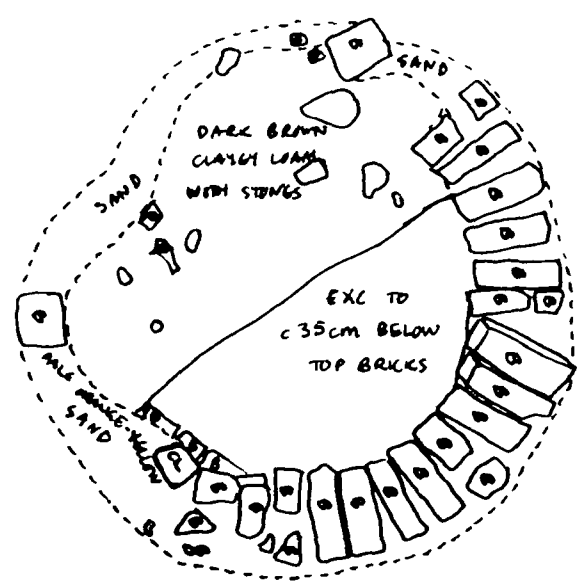
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B - brick P - pot CL - clay

N

Scale 1:20



SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 4 WELL HEAD (109)

5 2 Finds were minimal, consisting of some post medieval pottery, animal bone and one sherd of medieval green-glazed pottery from the northern edge of the site. Three pits of post-medieval date were exposed.

5 3 Because of the extent of the disturbance, especially in the eastern half of the site, it was decided to conduct an occasional watching brief, concentrating on the western half of the site where modern disturbance appeared to be less.

## 6 FURTHER LEVELLING – CONSTRUCTION PHASE

6 1 Further levelling and lowering of the site took place subsequent to the demolition contractors leaving the site. Between 70 cm and 100 cm was removed from the whole site. Several new features emerged in the course of this.

6 2 Two wells became visible, one close to the northern side of the site and one near the southern side. They were both approximately 20 metres from the eastern or front end of the site, and although within the former building were probably outside the buildings to which they relate. This can be deduced from the probable former rear line of the buildings discussed above (2 3). The more southerly well (108, fig 3, PI 6) was still open and was lined with dark red, curved, very hard bricks 3" thick, similar to engineering bricks. The internal diameter was 93 cm and it was 3.4 metres deep. The northern well (109, fig 3, PI 7) was also brick lined, but with soft, crumbly hand-made bricks 2" thick. The top circle of bricks survived only in part, and the well had been filled in (fig 4). A half section of the well was excavated to a depth of 35 cm (Pis 8, 9), and was found to contain 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery fragments. After recording, the well was left to be covered over once more.

6 3 Further west, the area adjacent to the rear corner of Bon Marché revealed, beneath the compacted gravelly soil, several features. A small circular feature contained brown loam with frequent small stones (110, fig 3, PI 10) and a larger feature, approximately 6 metres in diameter, contained fine dark brown loam (111, fig 3, PI 11). The latter was cut by a smaller feature to the west containing brick and mortar rubble (112, fig 3). The large feature appeared to be a pit, the upper portions of which were visible in the section by the rear corner of Bon Marché, and a fragment of green glaze pottery was retrieved from the surface.

6 4 The disturbed area to the west of Bon Marché continued disturbed to the new levels, which were here 135 cm below the former ground surface. More generally, the western part of the site proved to be mostly covered with the reddish silty sand observed in the trial holes, disturbed and cut by modern features in places. At the western end of the site, the cleared level was 120 cm below the remaining concrete. The concrete was 30 cm thick and overlaid 70 cm of disturbed soil above the reddish silty sand. The underlying sands were visible in places, especially towards the south where the red silty sand was thinner or absent.

6 5 In the centre of the site, the east-west brick foundations (100) remained visible, and extended approximately 5 metres further west than was apparent higher up.

## 7 FOUNDATION PADS

7 1 After the site was levelled, foundation pads were machine excavated around the perimeter of the site, with some smaller ones in the centre. Selected foundations were observed during excavation, including that on the rear corner of Bon Marché where features had been recorded.

7 2 A foundation (F1, fig 5) in the north corner behind Bon Marché revealed two possible pit features. The upper levels of this area were heavily disturbed, but at the base of the foundation, approximately 80 cm below the cleared surface, a disturbance (113, fig 5) was visible in the south-east corner, consisting of a patch of fine brown stony loam cut into the

natural yellow sand. This appeared to be part of a modern disturbance. In the south-west corner of the foundation was an area of dark brown loam, cut into the natural stony silty sand (114, fig 5). The interface between the two was clear and vertical, and the feature was at least 70 cm across, being cut by the edge of the foundation trench. It contained fragments of post-medieval pottery and a clay pipe stem.

7.3 In the foundation trench on the south-west corner of Bon Marché (F2, fig 5), which cut through the feature 111 observed previously, a large pit was revealed. The foundations of the shop cut the north edge of the feature, which was at least 4.2 metres across. It extended east and west of the foundation trench to an unknown distance, and was up to 1.8 metres deep below the cleared surface. The fill consisted of layers of brown silty loam with varying amounts of stones, interleaved with layers of orange and pale yellow sand. The profile was a broad V-shape with sloping sides and a rounded base (fig 6, Pis 12, 13). It contained a number of medieval pottery fragments especially in the lower fill.

7.4 The foundations nearest to this feature were observed (F3, F4 and F5, fig 5), but no trace of it was revealed and these trenches contained only natural silts and sands.

## 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The further levelling of the site revealed a number of new features including two wells. Both of these were within the former building but to the rear of the line of previous buildings visible in the wall of Bon Marché (see 2.3). Unfortunately it was not possible to investigate possible earlier phases of these wells. A 19<sup>th</sup> century date can be assigned to the southern well, and probably 18<sup>th</sup> century for the northern one, but this may have been older.

8.2 Most of the site was levelled down to natural soils, although these were still disturbed in some areas particularly to the south and west of the site. The eastern end was also disturbed to a deeper level by the cellars, and a sewer trench ran from west to east across the south centre of the site. The natural soils were reddish brown silty sands above red, orange and yellow sands and occasional gravel.

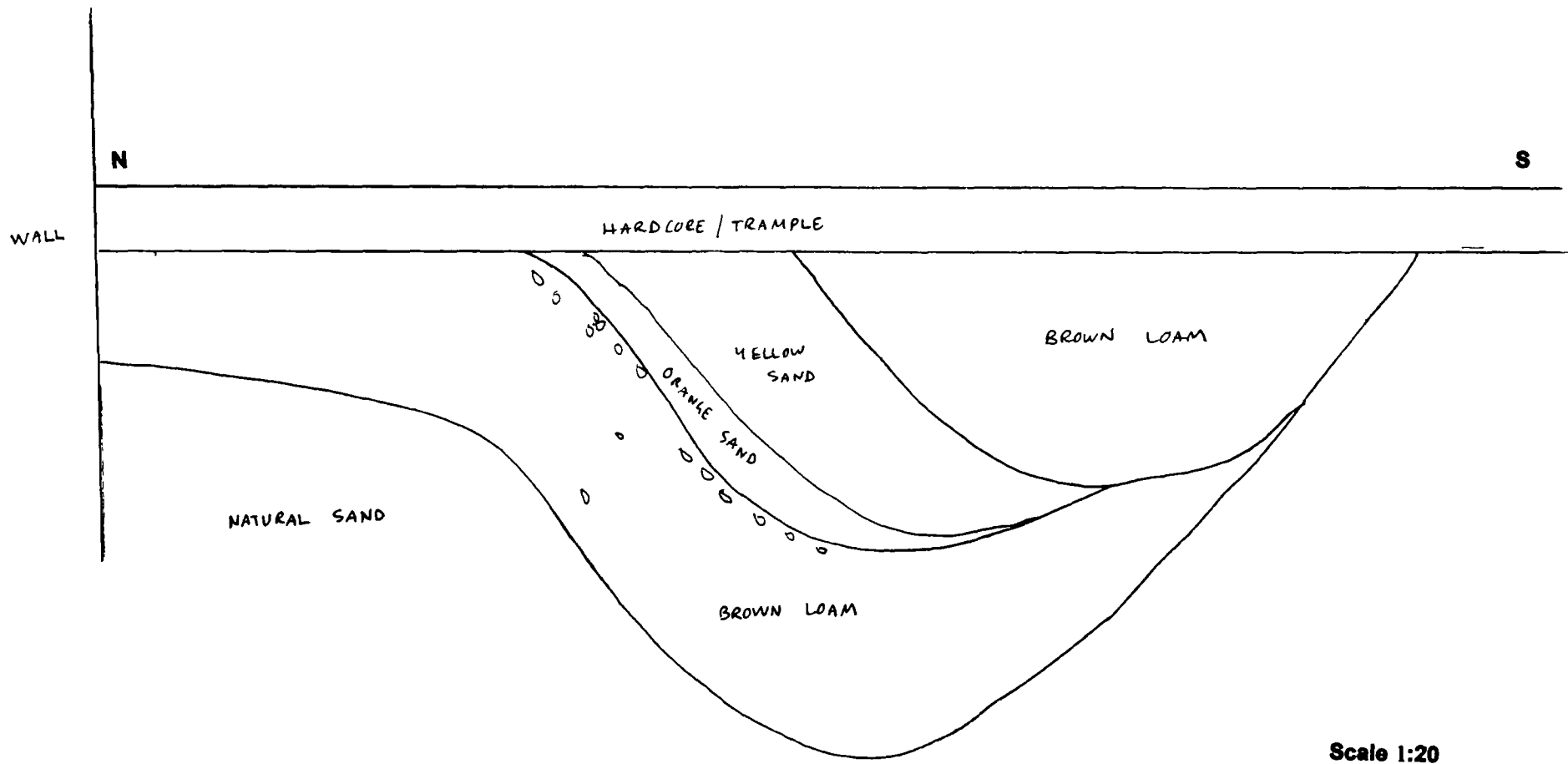
8.3 Apart from modern disturbances, there were two other features cut into the natural subsoil, both in the area to the south and west of Bon Marché. Part of a possible pit of post-medieval date was exposed in the corner of foundation pad F1 (fig 5), and part of a medieval pit in F2. The latter was machine excavated to its base and proved to be 1.8 metres deep.

## 9 DISCUSSION

9.1 The site as a whole was heavily disturbed by modern building foundations and services. Despite this, a number of features of archaeological interest were observed and recorded. The position of the two wells might indicate a water source along the back of the High Street. The medieval pit shows that the area was in occupation from that period, and its position indicates that the boundary between the site and Bon Marché was not in its current position.

9.2 No traces of boundaries between the plots making up the site were found, but the brick and stone foundations may well relate to 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century back-yard development. Dwellings behind the High Street are known to have existed down many of the alleys until the 1960's when most were cleared.

9.3 The stone wall visible on the south side of Bon Marché and the finely built stone cellars indicate that a substantial dwelling stood on the site at one time. This must have extended to include the Bon Marché site, and may have taken up the whole frontage. There was no sign of a continuation of the wall to the south, but the open cellar is more than half way along the frontage.



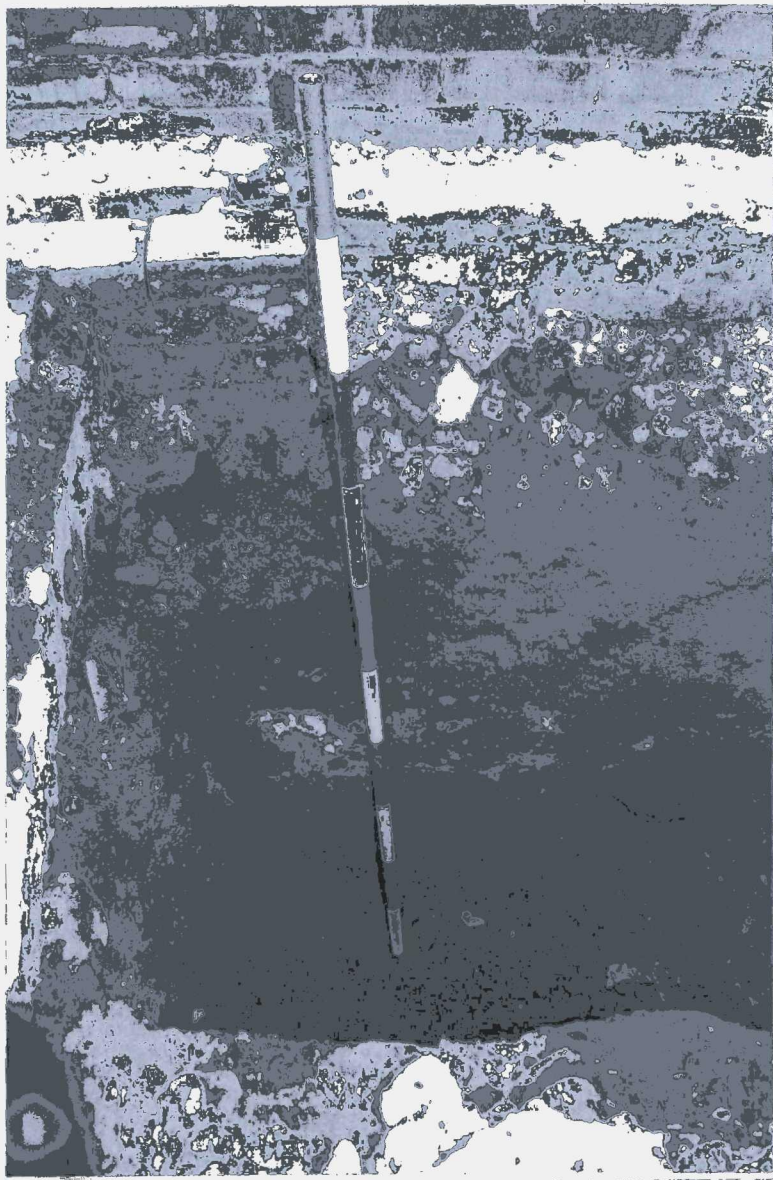
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SUNWIN HOUSE NORTHALLERTON FIG 6 WEST FACING SECTION 111 (SKETCH)

9.4 From this evidence, and the position of the medieval pit, it would seem that the property boundaries have been fairly fluid over time. Plots have apparently merged and divided to suit the needs of the moment.

No evidence of industrial activities was encountered, apart possibly from the concentration of horse bones in TH10 which were associated with 19<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The function of the medieval feature is hard to determine without knowing its full extent.

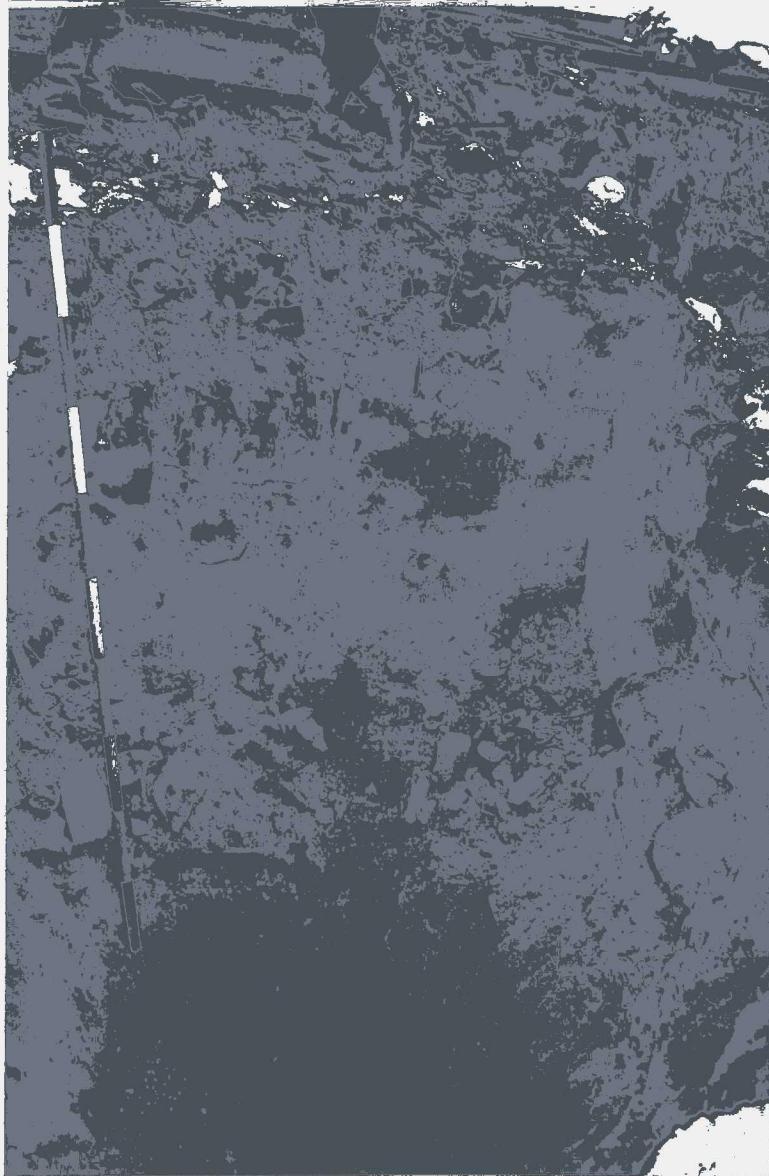
*Alison Clarke 27/11/00*



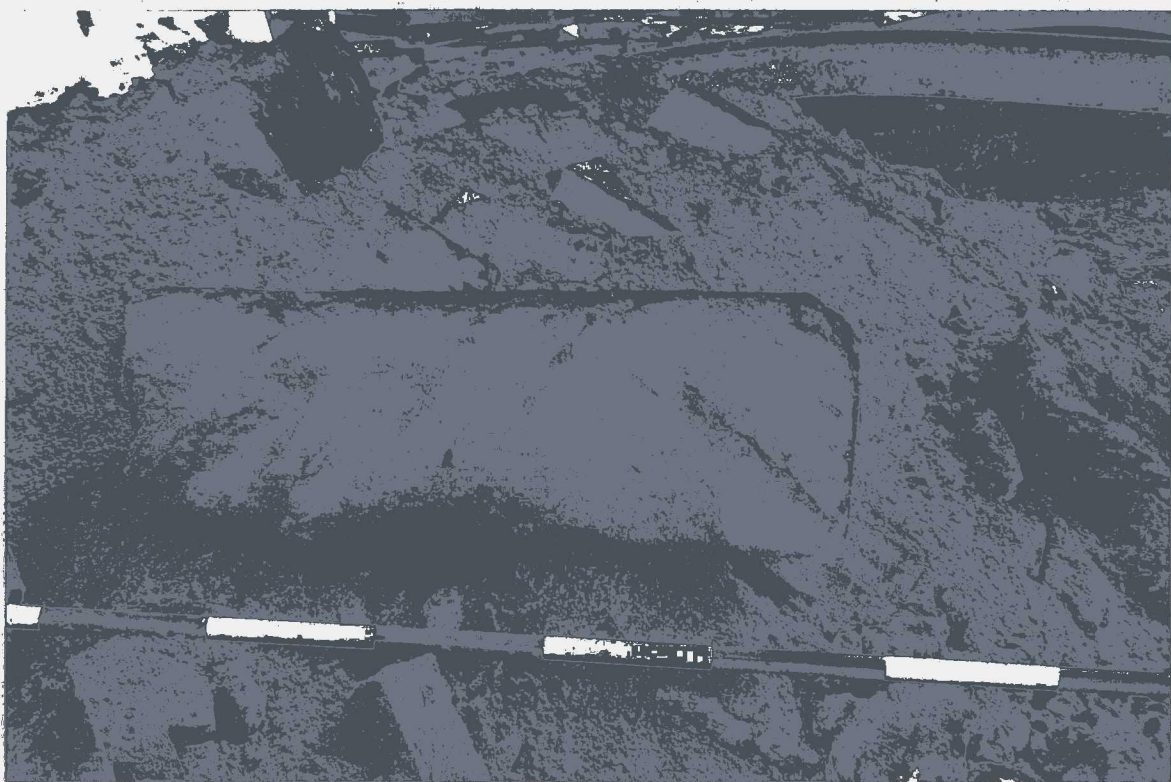
**Plate 1**  
**TH2 from**  
**north**



**Plate 2 TH 6 from south**



**Plate 3  
TH8 Cellar  
From east**



**Plate 4 Stone lintol from TH 8**



**Plate 5 View to east after first levelling**



**Plate 6 Well (108) from north**

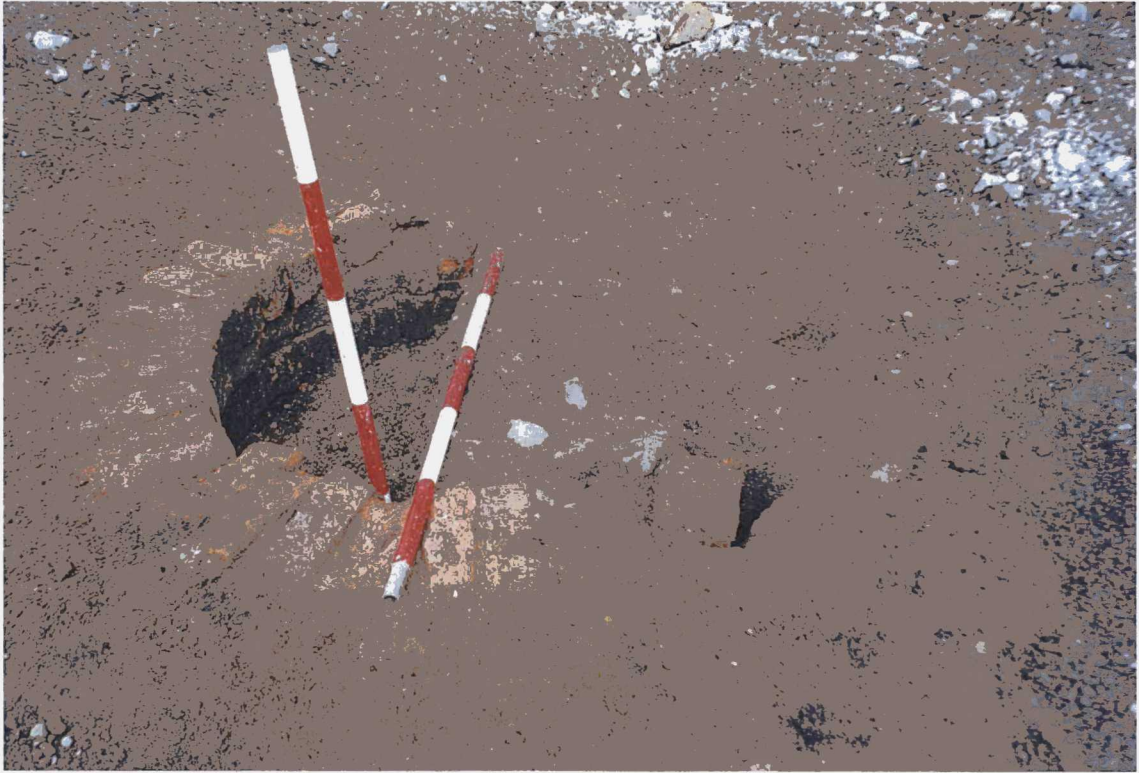




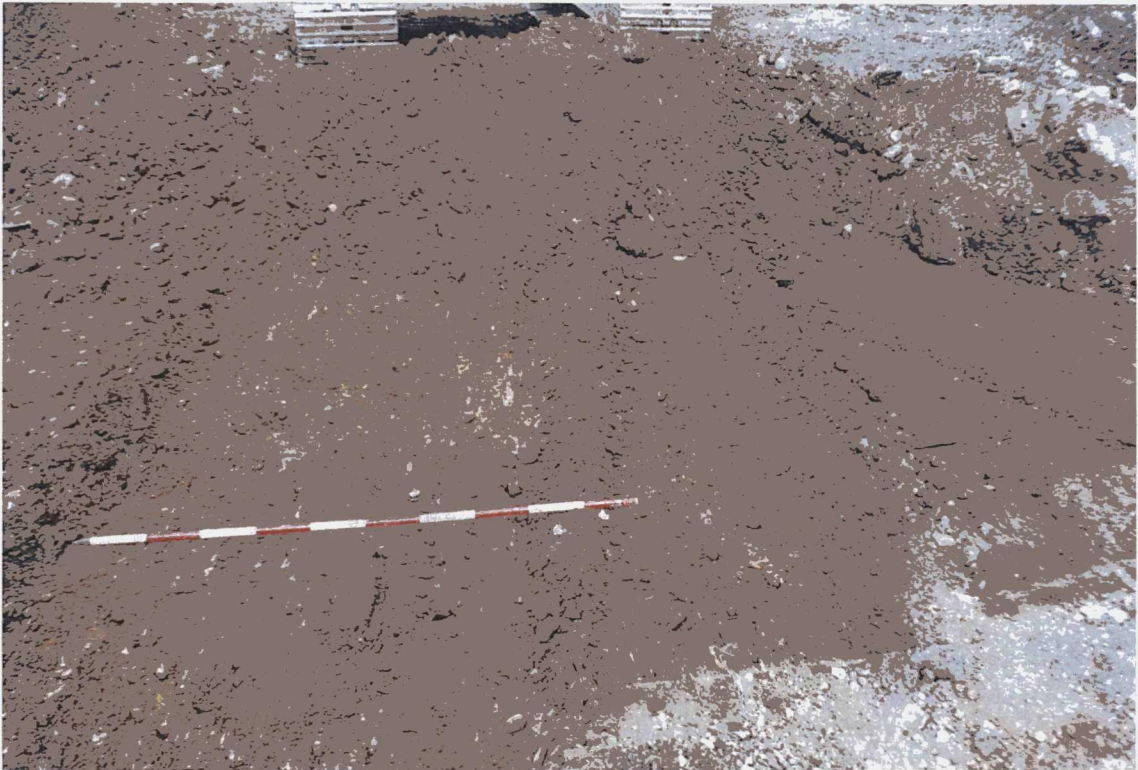
**Plate 7 Well (109) before excavation**



**Plate 8 Well (109) after excavation**



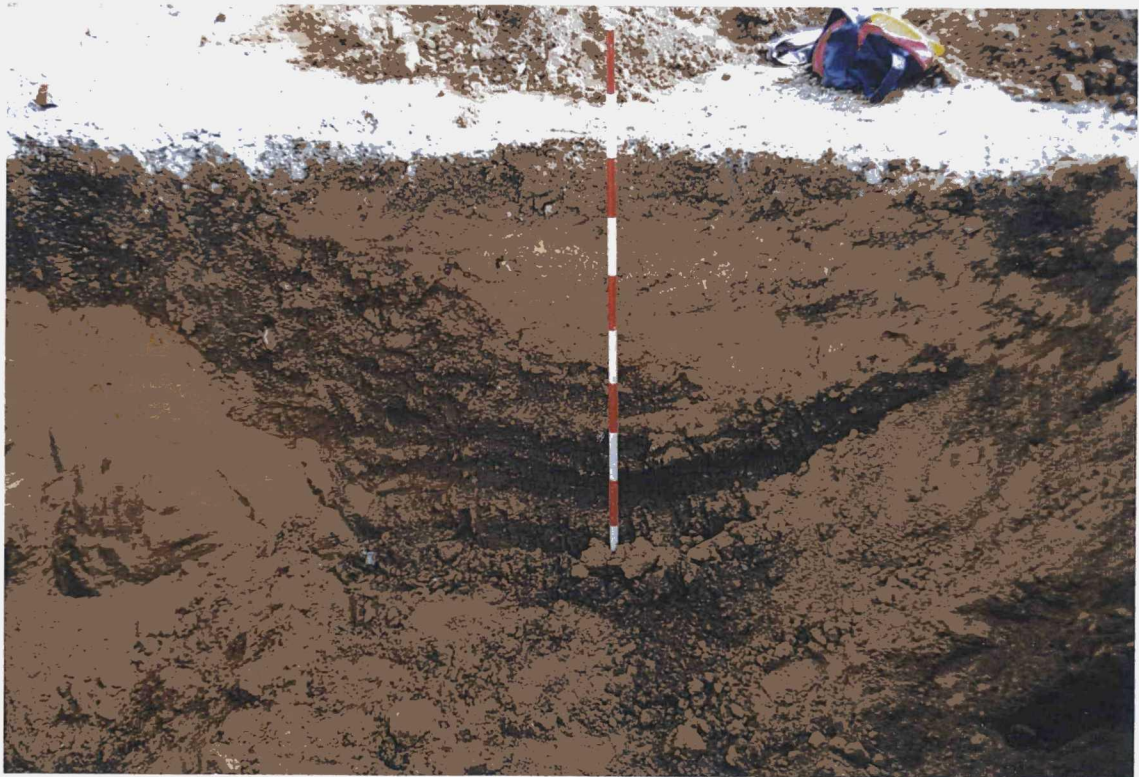
**Plate 9 Well (109) after excavation**



**Plate 10 Feature 110**



**Plate 11 Surface of Feature 111 from west**



**Plate 12 West facing section of feature 111**



**Plate 13 East facing Section of Feature 111**

FEATURE III  
FROM N-E



FEATURE III SECTION  
FROM THE WEST

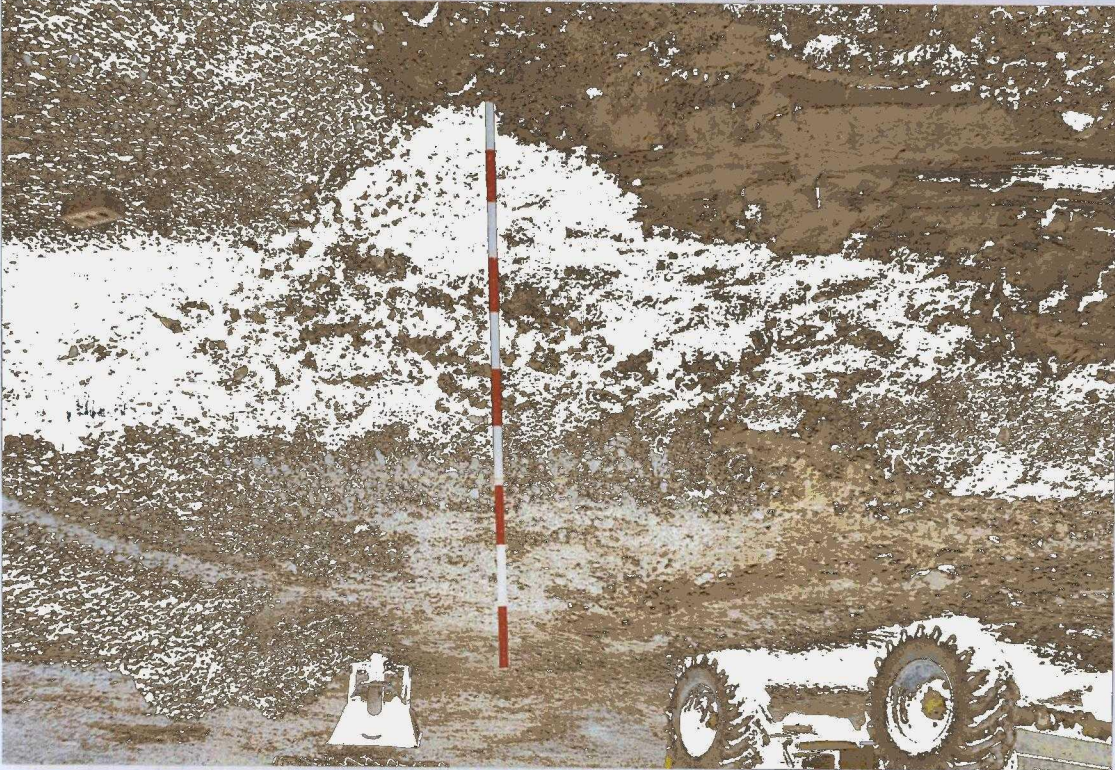


FEATURE III FROM NORTH

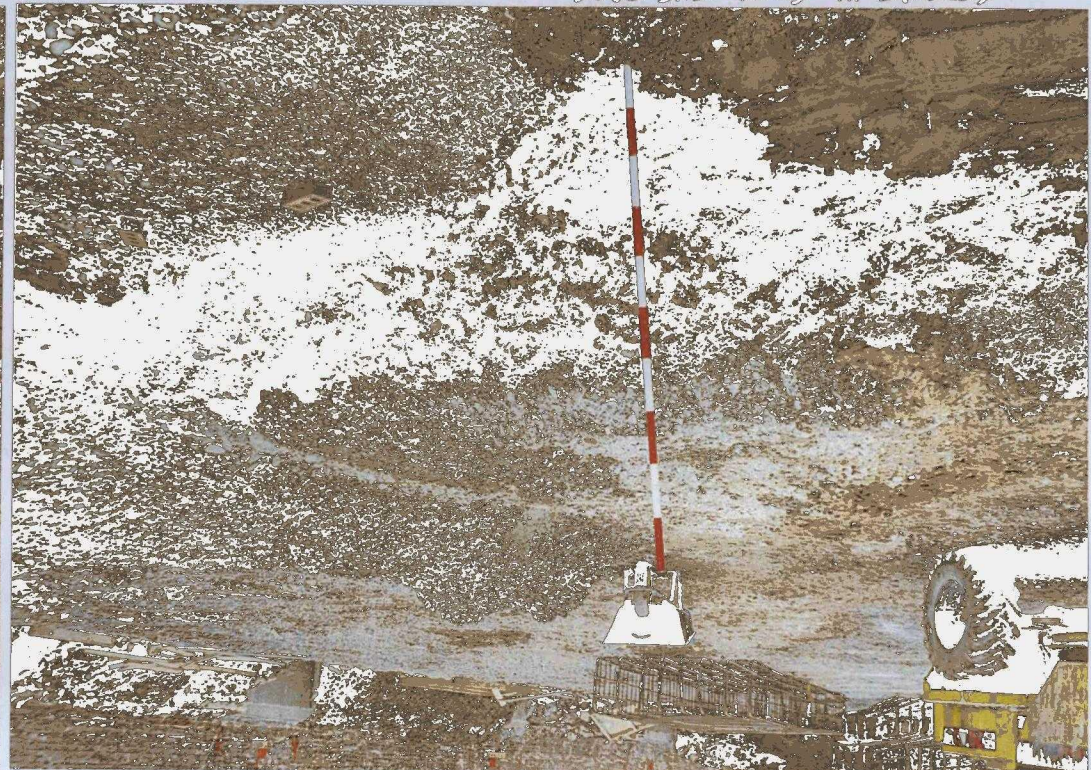


FEATURE III FROM THE EAST

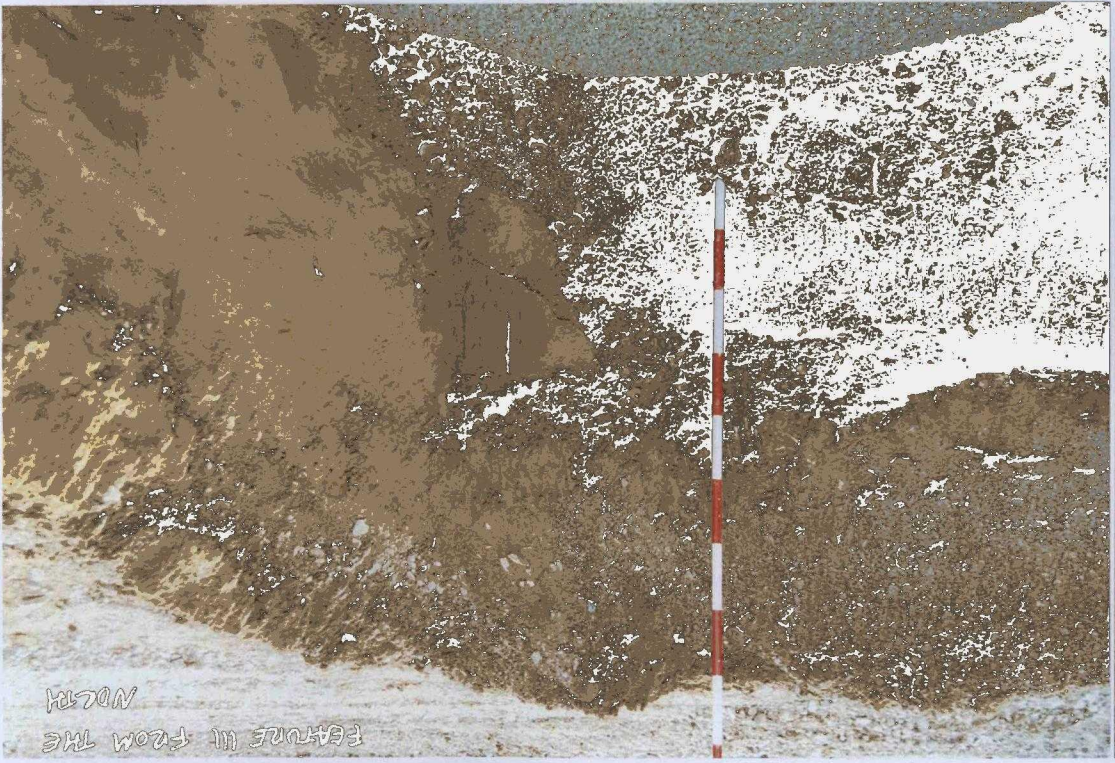
FEATURE III FROM THE EAST



FEATURE III FROM THE EAST



FEATURE III FROM THE NORTH



FEATURE III FROM THE WEST

