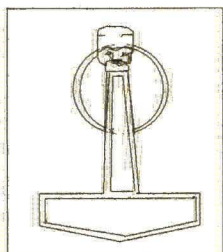


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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AND EXCAVATIONS

AT

WELL HALL

WELL, NEAR BEDALE

FOR

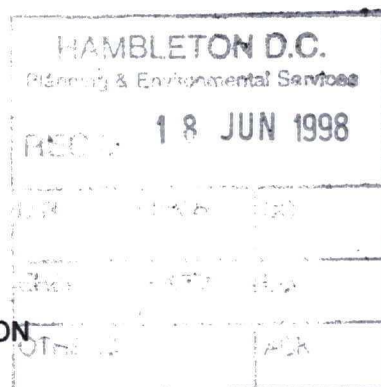
M and C GLATMAN

ALISON CLARKE

JUNE 1998

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AT WELL HALL, WELL, BEDALE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A major refurbishment of Well Hall, Well, near Bedale (Plan 1), was undertaken in the autumn/winter of 1997/8. This involved various ground disturbance works in different parts of the grounds, and alterations inside the house. Because of the considerable archaeological interest of these works, an archaeologist was appointed to oversee and if necessary excavate all ground disturbance works and other alterations affecting the historic fabric of the house.

1.2 The village of Well has produced evidence of Roman occupation, including a bath house associated with springs from which the village got its name. A Roman statue discovered in the church was reputed to have come from the grounds of Well Hall, though this is unconfirmed.

1.3 The Hall itself is of considerable architectural and historic significance (Plan 2). It stands in its own grounds to the west of the parish church, separated from the road by a line of almshouses. The north wing consists of a three storey stone building dating to the 13th century, with a vaulted undercroft surviving almost intact on the ground floor. The south wing is partly late 17th century and partly late 18th, with an 18th century lofted stable block and north range, and various 19th century additions (Plates 1,2,3). All these are described in some detail in a North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group report compiled for the previous owners in 1985.

2. PROPOSED WORKS

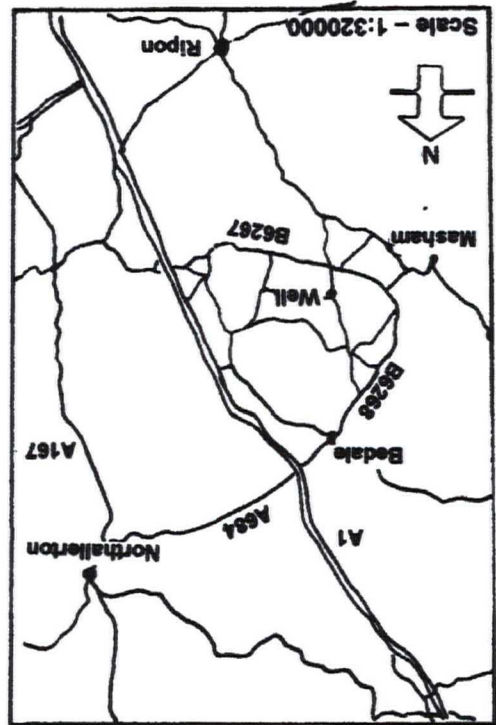
2.1 The works undertaken in 1997/8 which affected the archaeology consisted of lowering the floor of the undercroft, extending the swimming pool to the north-east of the house, and the excavation of various service trenches outside the house (Plan 2). The level of the undercroft floor had been raised over the years until it was clearly well above its original height. In addition, a tracery window in the south face of the medieval hall was uncovered and restored, various other windows uncovered, and the roof of the stable block repaired. These works were also observed and recorded.

2.2 The majority of the work was undertaken by the contractors under archaeological supervision, but the lower levels of the undercroft floor were archaeologically excavated by hand.

3. UNDERCROFT FLOOR

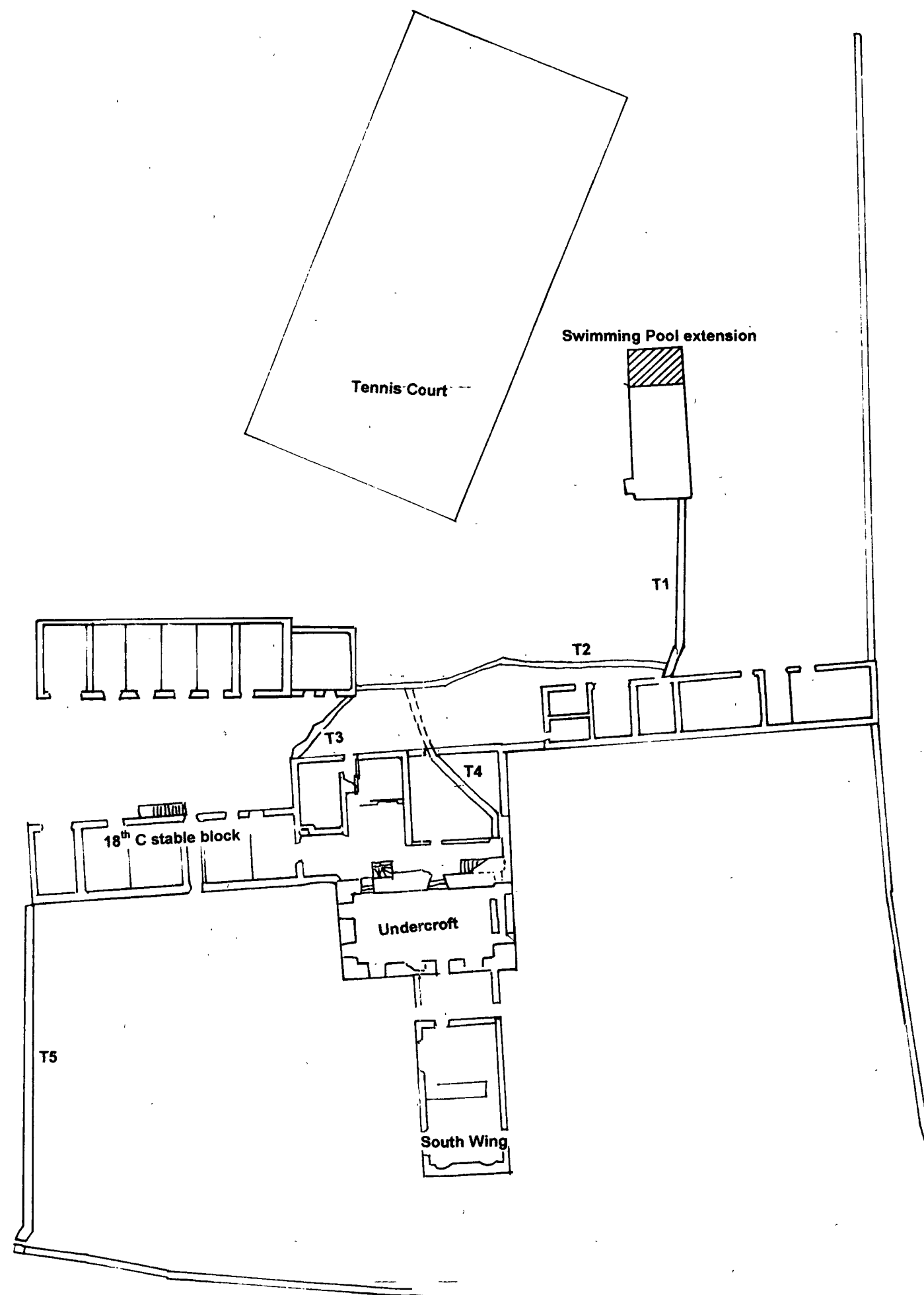
3.1 The undercroft is vaulted with chamfered ribs supported by three sandstone cylindrical pillars in a row down the centre of the room (Plan 3). The corbels in the walls from which the vaulting springs are all individually hand carved. The present entrances to the room, two in the north wall and one in the south, are not original. The main original entrance was towards the west end of the south wall, which now contains a window. A second entrance was at the north end of the east wall, also now containing a window. A further entrance, now blocked, is visible near the east end of the south wall, and there is an alcove to the west of the current door in the south side. The east wall of the room is doubled skinned, with arched openings at either end of the inner skin and a tunnel vault between the two skins.

3.2 Over the years, the floor of the vaulted undercroft had been raised so that the three central pillars were partly buried and the room was very low (Plate 4). It was decided to lower the floor so that the bases of the pillars were exposed and the room restored to something approaching its original dimensions. The top of one of the pillar bases was exposed at a depth of 47cm. below the former floor surface, and was shown to consist of a plain chamfered cylindrical stone plinth 26cm in depth (Plate 5).



PLAN 1 WELL HALL, BEDALE - LOCATION

N
Scale - 1:400



PLAN 2 WELL HALL, BEDALE - SITE PLAN

4 WATCHING BRIEF DESCRIPTION

4.1 The former floor was 9cm thick and was laid on concrete 9cm thick. This was removed to reveal a rubble surface consisting of angular stones with occasional brick in a matrix of dry mortar and grey-brown sand (Plate 4). It was on average 40cm thick and contained a large quantity of glass as well as occasional pottery and some animal bone. The pottery and vessel glass date between the late seventeenth and late eighteenth century, with one sixteenth century goblet fragment and some seventeenth century window glass (discussed in detail in the glass report). The rubble was hand excavated by the contractors.

4.2 Across the centre of the room, between the two main doors in the north and south walls, ran a brick path, 1.5 metres wide and consisting of hand-made 2" x 2.5" bricks laid on edge, at the same level as the top of the rubble (Plate 6). To the east of the brick path, several layers of concrete overlay the rubble fill, with former subdivisions of the room marked by lines of bricks at and above the level of the rubble.

4.3 As the rubble was removed, several features emerged from within it (Plan 3). At the west end of the room, close to the southern window in the west end, were two slate slabs set vertically at right angles to each other (Plates 7,8). The larger, parallel to the west wall and 52cm east of it, was 80cm long, 1.5cm wide and 45cm deep. The second, running towards the west wall, was 3.5cm wide, 47cm deep and 47cm wide. The soil contained within this feature was a very dry ashy mortar and brown sand, containing pieces of slate, fire blackened brick and coal. The slates and this fill overlay a hard brown earth with no signs of burning, and the slates themselves showed no signs of burning, suggesting that the burnt material was placed there rather than being burnt in situ.

4.4 The rubble beneath the two west windows consisted almost entirely of large stones. It became apparent that these were tied in to the wall into which the windows were cut, and that the original wall continued across the line of the window bays up to the level of the later floor (Plate 9). This is consistent with these windows having been inserted in the west wall at a relatively late date.

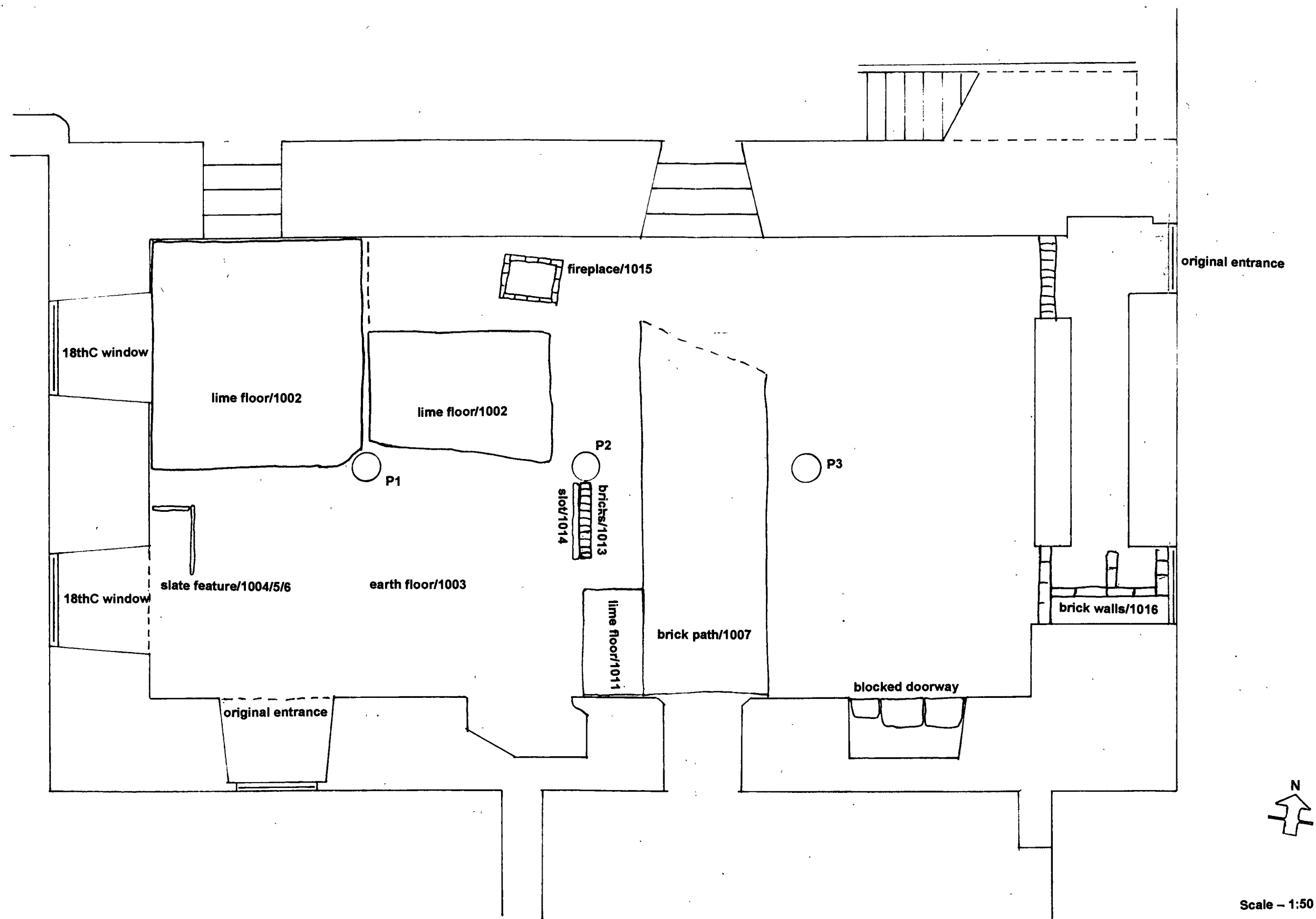
4.5 It was clear however that the window near the west end of the south wall was part of an original opening as dressed stones round the window continued down to the base of the wall, with a loose rubble fill to a depth of 55cm below the former floor surface.

4.6 In front of the fireplace, which was situated in the north wall between the two doors, was a disturbed area containing a brick-lined rectangular ash pit with internal dimensions of 70cm by 52cm, which cut through the rubble fill to a depth of 60cm (Plate 10). It lay at a slight angle to the fireplace, and slightly offset from it, and had a concrete base.

4.7 In the north-west quadrant of the room a rammed lime floor emerged 30cm below the top of the rubble fill (Plate 11). It extended from the north side of the room to the line of the central pillars, and from the west end to the westernmost of the three pillars. A further stretch of lime floor lay further east (Plate 12), nearly as far as the central pillar, but not extending up to the north wall where the ground was disturbed by the ashpit. The edges of the first floor were raised into a lip on its north, west and south sides, representing the original edges of the floor as they rose to the walls. It was of variable thickness, between 5 and 8cm, and was composed of rammed lime with traces of straw and horsehair within it. In places two layers were discernible. It did not extend into the bay of the west window and therefore presumably predated it. The second area of lime floor was more damaged but was of similar construction.

4.8 A few vestiges of lime floor were also present against the dressed stones of the original entrance in the south wall, at a similar depth.

4.9 Running south from the central pillar for 95cm was a single line of 2" bricks, with a slot to the immediate west of it filled with dark brown decayed timber, 7cm deep (Plate 13). To the south of this was a rectangular slab of hard lime floor which ran from the south wall to within



PLAN 3 WELL HALL, BEDALE - UNDERCROFT FLOOR STAGE 1

35cm of the brick line (Plate 14) It was 69cm wide with its eastern edge partly under the brick path, and 10cm thick The level of these features was 17cm below the top of the rubble fill

4 10 On the south wall east of the door was a blocked doorway (Plate 15) It showed evidence of previous alterations, having been widened on its western side The removal of the rubble fill revealed large dressed stones forming a step up from the floor level below the rubble On the eastern side these were butted up to the ashlar on the side of the doorway, but on the western side, where the door had been widened, they were continuous with the south wall

4 11 At the eastern end of the room, in the southern end of the double skinned wall, a brick wall ran from the inner east wall to the south wall, and another at right angles to it up to the window The walls were truncated at the level of the top of the rubble fill, and were set in a pale brown loamy sand A further line of bricks ran from the north end of the inner wall to the north wall These overlay a line of stones which formed a step up from the base of the rubble fill

4 12 Below the rubble fill was a hard-packed earth floor This had an uneven and sloping surface, being generally highest in the south-west quadrant of the room and lowest at the eastern end, with a difference of up to 30cm in height (Plate 16) Near the western end it dropped quite steeply to form a west facing slope before flattening out again (Plate 7) This break of slope was visible in the area of the lime floor also, where the floor was broken along continuation of the same line (Plate 11) The surface was a pale brown stony sand, packed hard with some mortar and some darker patches It was cut by the slate feature at the south-west end, the ash pit in front of the fireplace, the lime floors and the features between the central pillar and the south door

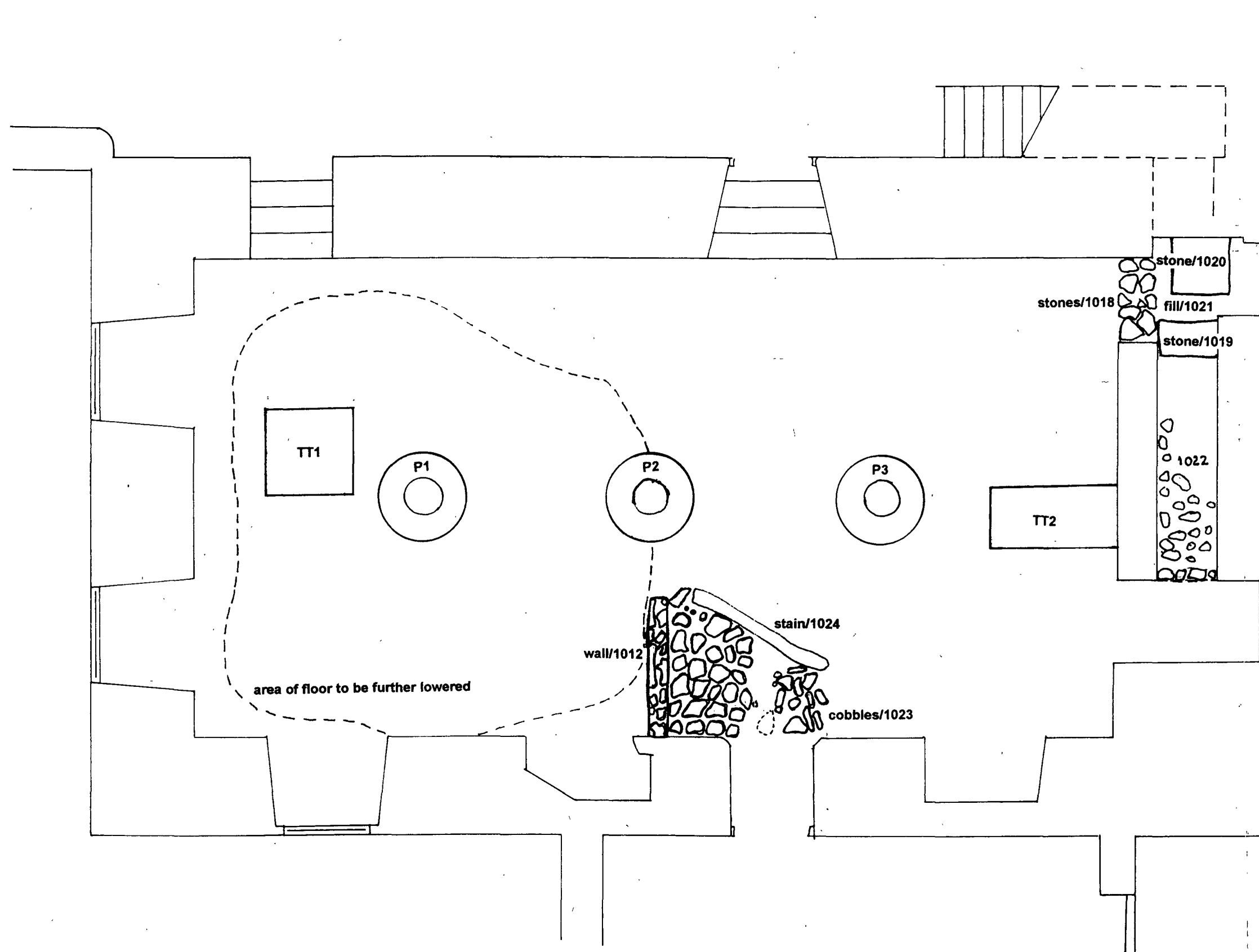
4 13 The bases of the pillars were not yet fully exposed, though the shape of the eastern pillar base was visibly different from the other two It had a more complex shape, with two rounded rims, a narrow one above a thick, which rested on an octagonal plinth with a wider lower stage, and was approximately 38cm in depth (Plate 17) The top of the base was 6cm higher than that of the other two pillar bases, and its base 6cm lower

4 14 Further work at the eastern end of the room within the double wall revealed more features (Plan 4) The brick walls on the south side were removed, along with the rubble and brick fill around them This revealed that the inner wall at its base continued across the thickness of the alcove between the inner and outer walls The space between the walls was approximately 40cm higher than the base of the rubble fill, and consisted of a hard compacted pale brown earth beneath 12cm of rubble, containing at the southern end a number of stones and cobbles (Plates 18,19)

4 15 At the northern end of the space was a large dressed stone at the same level as the compacted earth, which emerged from the outer east wall (Plate 20) Between the north end of the inner wall and the north wall of the room was a line of large stones, continuing the line of the inner wall but at a lower level than the surface between the inner and outer east walls (Plate 21) Between this wall line and the window, to the north of the large dressed stone, was a gap filled with pale brown rubbly sand with brick fragments, and in the extreme north-east corner was a flat stone slab approximately 10cm below the large dressed stone on the other side of the opening (Plate 22)

4 16 The dressed stones around the window at the north end of the outer east wall continued down to the level of the flat slab in the north-east corner of the room

4 17 Beneath and immediately to the west of the lime slab south of the central pillar was a line of stone wall footings 20cm wide, with some decayed wood within it, which formed the western edge of an area of cobbling (Plan 4) The patch of cobbles, in a triangular area approximately 180cm x 150cm, stretched across in front of the south door at a depth between 43cm and 55cm below the former floor level (Plate 23) It consisted of well-laid flat-topped stones, bounded to the north-east by a curving line of dark soil



Scale - 1:50

PLAN 4 WELL HALL, BEDALE - UNDERCROFT FLOOR STAGE 2

4 18 The north-east corner of the undercroft wall was dug through for the insertion of electricity cables. This revealed that the north wall had a straight edge, visible from inside the room, in line with the inner east wall, east of which the north wall was thinner. This seems to be an original feature, as the blocked doorway in the east wall extends right into the corner on its north side. On the outside the situation is obscured by the later buildings to the north, but the wall has obviously suffered from various alterations. In the course of this part of the work, the flat stone in front of the blocked door, and the line of stones from the north wall to the inner east wall, were removed without archaeological supervision.

5 TRIAL TRENCHES

5 1 At this stage of the works it was decided to excavate by hand two trial trenches to determine the depth of the deposits in the floor, and from the results of these excavations decide what the eventual height of the floor should be. The trenches, TT1 and TT2, were positioned at opposite ends of the room (Plan 4). TT1 was to the west of the western pillar just within the area of the lime floor, and TT2 was against the inner eastern wall. TT1 was one metre square, and TT2 1.5 metres by 75 cm.

5 2 Below the lime floor in TT1 was a very loose mid brown loamy sand with both clay and lime patches, which covered a very uneven surface of compacted sand and clay with decayed stones and burnt areas. One fragment of medieval pottery was recovered from a patch of clay. Decayed sandstone, gritty sands, soft dark brown loam and burnt earth soils were deposited in fine layers and patches throughout the trench for a depth of approximately 20 cm (Plate 24). On the western side of the trench an area of compacted gravel appeared at 15cm from the base of the lime floor, forming a clear straight line edge with the variable soils to the east. This feature continued downwards to form a slot with a curving base of packed chalk fragments, 13cm deep (Plate 25). Over the rest of the trench shallow layers, some with charcoal flecks, continued to a depth of 25cm below the base of the lime floor, below which was a compacted yellow-brown gravel overlying pale brown sandy gravel (Plan 5).

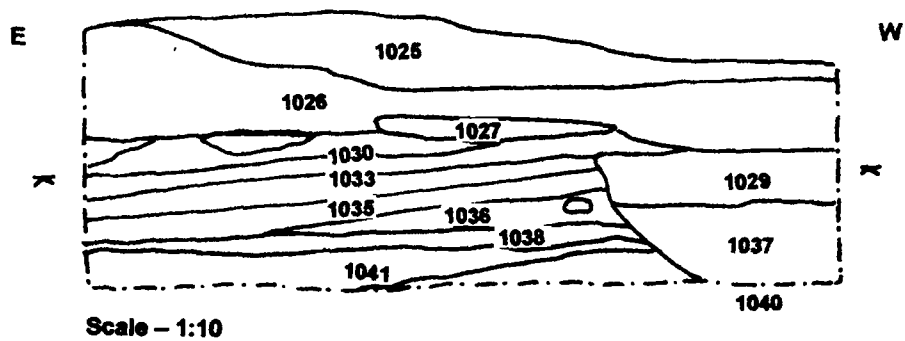
5 3 The layers over the majority of the trench had the appearance of successive floor levels, with charcoal flecks and burnt areas frequent. The burning could indicate small scale semi-industrial activity in the room. The slot could have been a drainage channel.

5 4 The surface of TT2 was mottled black and brown compacted sand with charcoal flecks, similar to that over most of the floor area below the rubble. Near to the east wall was a softer loamy mid brown sand, falling towards the protruding cobble foundations of the wall. Beneath these was compacted gritty sand containing a medieval pottery fragment, which overlay dark red silty sand with chalk flecks in places. This surrounded a group of cobbles at the eastern end of the trench, and sloped downwards to the west by approximately 10cm, rising again at the western end of the trench (Plate 26). The base of the dip was below the maximum depth required, so it was not further excavated. At the eastern end more cobbles were revealed below the first group, set in soft brown loamy sand. Below the red silty sand between the cobbles and the dip was compacted stony yellow gravelly sand, and at the western end of the trench a thin layer of white mortar fine sand overlay very compacted pale brown silty clay containing fragments of brick/tile (Plan 6).

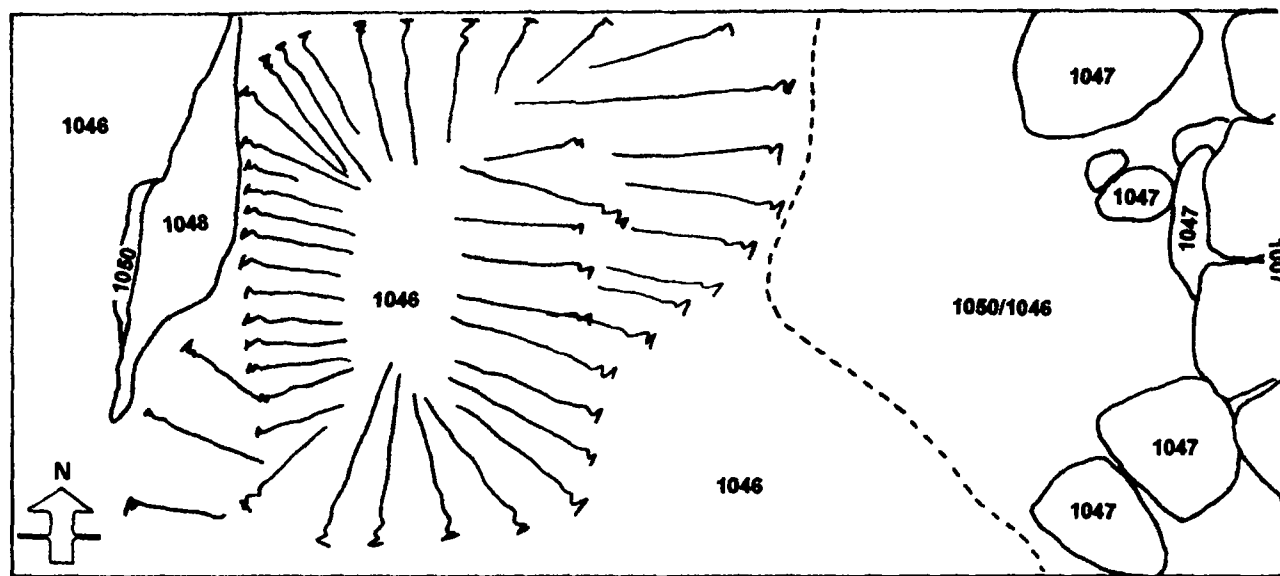
5 5 The cobbles could represent an extension of the wall footings, perhaps in an area less stable than elsewhere, or, less probably, the remains of a floor surface. The rest of the soils represent a build up of ground, perhaps from storage uses or building work within the room.

6 EXCAVATION OF THE FLOOR

6 1 After some discussion the final height of the floor was decided upon. In order to achieve a finished floor level which would fully reveal the pillar bases it would be necessary to excavate considerably further down. Since this would destroy all the archaeological deposits in the room, and might also compromise the stability of the foundations, an intermediate level was agreed on. This involved some further excavation of the western half of the floor, to a maximum depth of approximately 20cm, and the excavation of circles around each pillar to a



PLAN 5 WELL HALL, BEDALE - TT1 NORTH FACING SECTION



PLAN 6 WELL HALL, BEDALE - TT2 PLAN

depth of 30cm below the level of the rest of the room. The remainder of the floor was sufficiently low to provide a base for the new floor.

6.2 To the west of the two main doors, much of the height of the floor needed to be reduced, but on the northern half the amount to be taken off was minimal once the lime floors were removed. The cobbled area in front of the south door was left intact.

6.3 Under the lime floors in the north west corner of the room was loose gritty sand overlying a more compacted sand. The footings of a wall between the western pillar and the north wall, dividing the two areas of lime floor, were revealed, consisting of stones and lumps of lime mortar. On the north side of the western pillar was a disturbed area forming a steep sided pit filled with large angular stones.

6.4 To the west of the wall foundations and cobbled area at the south door, a possible floor surface of hard packed limestone chippings was revealed beneath the brown compacted sand (Plan 7). It had two layers within it, and beneath the upper layer various features emerged, including several large roughly dressed stones and an apparent post hole packed with limestone half way between the western pillar and the south wall (Plan 8, Plate 27). A green glazed base from a medieval pot was found by one of the stones. To the north and south of this area were variable clayey sands and sandy clays, containing post medieval pottery.

6.5 The highest part of the floor, with most to be removed, lay on the south side between the western pillar and the west wall, in front of the south window which was originally an entrance. Here, beneath the compacted sand which lay beneath the rubble fill, was an area of compacted gritty sand which may represent a former floor surface. This in turn overlay laminated light and dark brown clayey sands and then several centimetres of brightly coloured laminated compacted sands with patches of charcoal and grey clay (Plan 7). The laminations were very fine and discontinuous, suggesting casual depositions of material including burning, rather than discrete floor surfaces.

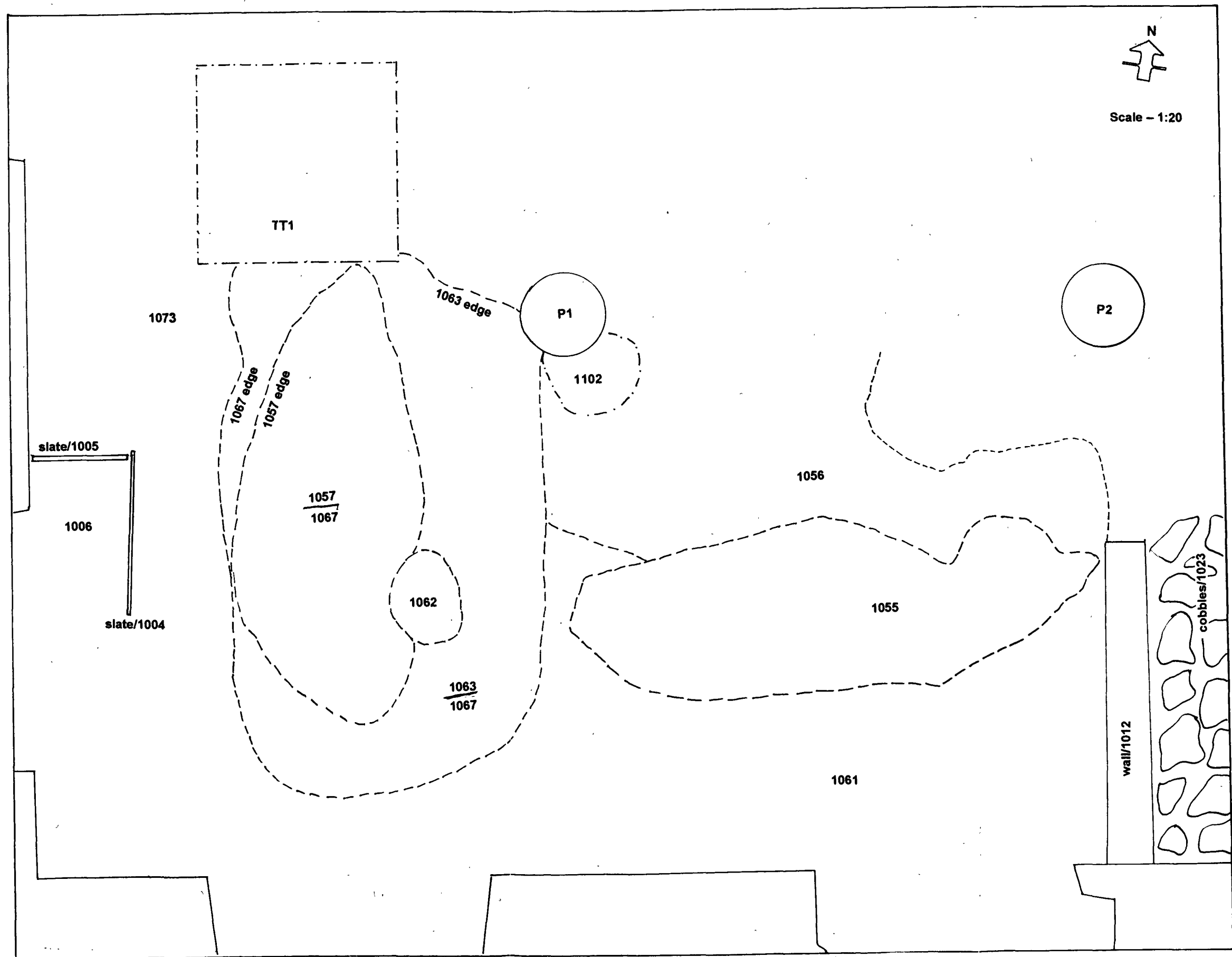
6.6 Beneath these layers was a layer of hard stony gravel, which was the same as that observed in the western part of TT1. To the east and dipping beneath it were further compacted layers of sand, gravel, sandy clay and lime, with occasional dumps of clay (Plate 28). To the west, the loose loamy sand visible to the north of the pillars extended southwards (Plan 8). A further disturbance on the west side of the western pillar was similar in shape to that on the north, though with a fill of sand rather than stones, and the curved base of the pillar was sheared off vertically at this point (Plan 8).

7 THE PILLAR BASES

7.1 Once the desired floor level was achieved, circles 30cm wide around each pillar were marked out and excavated. The intention was to excavate to a depth of 30cm, so that lights could be inserted in a lowered floor to reveal and illuminate the pillar bases. The western pillar was designated P1, the central P2 and the eastern P3.

7.2 P1 was surrounded by disturbances described above. These were similar in shape and size, though the fill of each was different. That on the south was known to be caused by digging at the start of the works to reveal the depth of the pillar base, and it seems possible that the other two, to the north and west, were caused by similar interventions in the past. Between the disturbances, brown stony sands, some with mortar and charcoal flecks, lay to a depth of up to 20cm from the level established as the base of the new floor, below which was a very hard stony gravel with some sandy areas and a heavily compacted surface (Plate 29). On the right of the pillar was a rectangular void which appeared to have contained a timber, and to the north was a strip of lime mortar running northwards. This was below the level of the wall footings visible alongside the lime floors, and may relate to an earlier division of the room. The base of the pillar was set into the hard gravel to a depth of 5cm.

7.3 On the south side of P2 a line of stones in white lime mortar continued the wall line recorded to the west of the cobbled area. This had a bronze hinge and a rectangular broken



PLAN 7 WELL HALL, BEDALE - UNDERCROFT FLOOR STAGE 3

tin sheet in association with it. Elsewhere around the pillar were layers of black, grey, white and brown sands, some clayey, some stony and all compacted. Mortar was present in several layers, and charcoal flecks also occurred. Below these layers at a depth of 20 to 25cm was compacted gravel similar to that in P1, into which the pillar base was set (Plate 30).

7.4 Around P3 compacted loamy sand and gritty sand overlay a looser loamy sand containing a medieval potsherd. Beneath it was a layer of reddish brown silty sand similar to that in TT2, which in turn overlay hard stony gravel. At the base of the pillar, which was set into the top of the gravel, was a flat piece of slate emerging from beneath it (Plate 31).

7.5 None of the trenches around the pillars was taken to 30cm, as this would have involved disturbing the gravel into which the pillars were set, and might have destabilised the pillars themselves. The average depth of the three excavations was 25cm below the base of the new floor.

8. INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

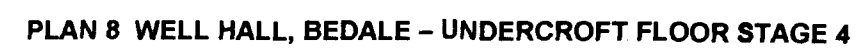
8.1 The floor of the undercroft has obviously undergone many alterations over the years. The rubble fill, which was originally designated as twentieth century, was clearly earlier, and the glassware found in it dates it to the end of the eighteenth century. It is suggested that the presence of large amounts of glass is associated with mortar bonding, a feature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Willmott, *The Glass from the Undercroft*, attached). The brick path across the room must also date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. As the rooms to the north of the Undercroft are eighteenth century, and the floor levels to the north are higher, the raising of the floor and the laying of the path may well date to the same period. The north door may be of the same date also.

8.2 The window glass, which was found at the western end of the room, was deposited at the same time as the rubble, and it seems logical to conclude that the existing windows in the west wall were put in at the end of the eighteenth century, possibly replacing earlier ones as the glass itself is seventeenth century. The bays in the thickness of the wall at the west end were created at the same time. Alternatively, it is possible that the window came from one of the first floor windows, which were altered in the late seventeenth century and again in the late eighteenth.

8.3 The room has been sub-divided at various periods, the latest being in the nineteenth century after the raising of the floor with the rubble fill, when the eastern end was divided up by brick walls. Earlier divisions included a cross wall from the central pillar to the south wall and another from the western pillar to the north wall. The lime floors on the north side of the room were divided by the second of these walls, and this part of the room was obviously in a different usage from the rest at the time of their presence. They must have been in use until the end of the eighteenth century, but could have been laid considerably earlier. The possible posthole between the western pillar and the south wall may also represent a former division, though its position may be fortuitous and it may not be structural.

8.4 The slate feature in the south west of the room is of unclear function. It seems to have been used to deposit ashes, but it is a long way from the fireplace on the north wall. If it was set into the ground it must post-date the late eighteenth century rubble fill which surrounds it, and the fireplace was probably in its current position by then. Alternatively, if it was free-standing against the west wall and originally had a third side, it would then pre-date the alteration of the west windows at the end of the eighteenth century. In this case, it might suggest that there was a fire or fireplace in another part of the room, closer to the ashpit.

8.5 The cobble floor is of unknown date but it predates the lime floor slab above it and is contemporary with the wall running up to the central pillar. The dark-stained area to the north-east of the cobbles contained post-medieval pottery, but this may be later than the cobbles themselves. The features to the west of the cobbles and cross wall contained post-medieval stoneware as well as the large medieval green glaze pot base, though finds were scarce in this area.



8.6 The area in front of the original south doorway where the ground was highest, and most of TT1, showed a succession of thin layers. These can be interpreted as floors, but were not deliberately laid down one after the other. Rather, there seem to have been accumulations of material, including trample and burnt material, which covered the ground in a random fashion and gradually built up on different parts of the surface. Beneath the lime floors, these layers were levelled off when the floors were laid, but elsewhere the floor must have become increasingly uneven, suggesting that it was used for low status activities, possibly workshops or storage.

8.7 The blocked doorway in the eastern half of the south wall was widened in the past, before it was blocked. The dressed stones of the original doorway reach to the bottom of the stonework on the eastern side. But on the west side, where it has been widened, the original wall line continues across at the bottom of the wall for 37cm eastwards. The height of the late eighteenth century rubble fill floor was the same as that of the continuing wall stones, suggesting that the widening took place relatively late in the history of the room, though the Vernacular Buildings Study Group report suggests that it was connected with the construction of the first part of the south wing in the late 17th century.

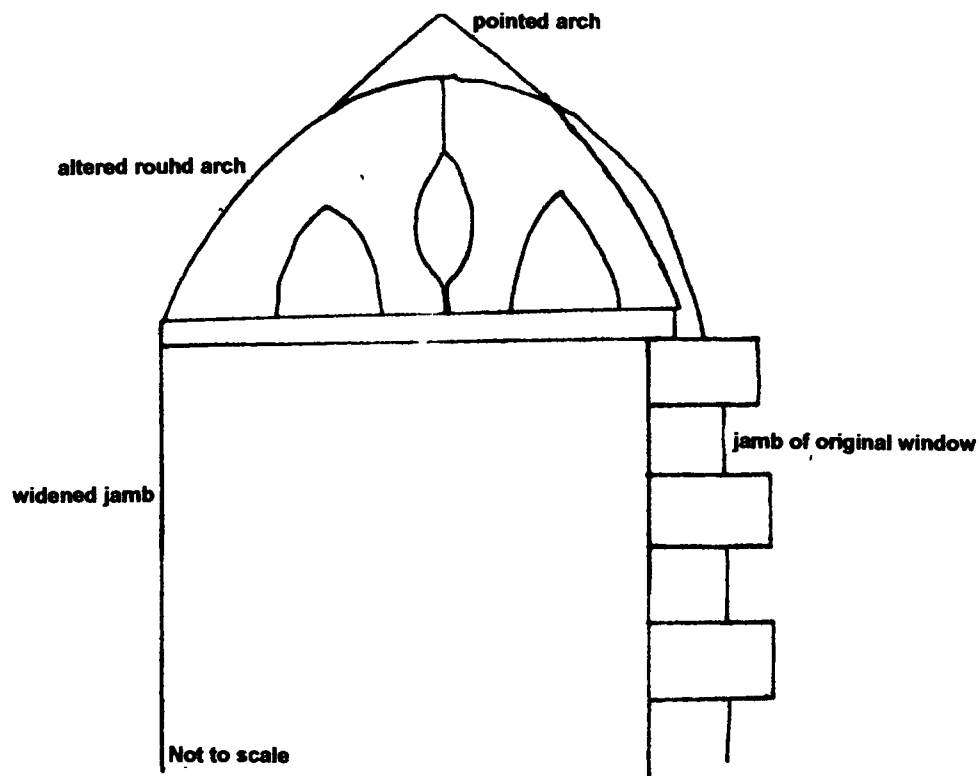
8.8 The east end of the undercroft revealed some interesting features. The dressed stones continuing down below the present window opening confirmed the doorway in the northern end of the east wall. The flat stone in the north-east corner extended beneath the north wall and may have formed part of the doorstep of this door. The line of stones between the north wall and the inner east wall suggest that the alcove was at one point walled off from the room. This might in fact be the case, as the large stone to the south of the original doorway may be the first step of the original staircase leading up through the double wall to the first floor, for which the door in the east wall was the entrance. The surface revealed by the removal of the rubble could well have supported stone steps rising to the south, and the cobbles further south could represent the infill as the staircase rose. If this was a staircase then it may have been in use until the present staircase just to the north of the undercroft was built, probably as part of the eighteenth century rooms to the north.

8.9 The south east corner of the room is postulated by the Vernacular Buildings study to have been the site of a garderobe at first floor level, possibly cleaned from the position of the south window in the east wall. The excavations in the undercroft revealed no direct evidence of this, but the extreme southern end of the east wall had insecure foundations which needed to be propped up. Since the wall is extremely thick here, it may indicate that it was not a solid structure and has been infilled at a later date. There was no evidence that the inner wall ever extended further south than at present, so access to the base of the garderobe may have been possible from inside.

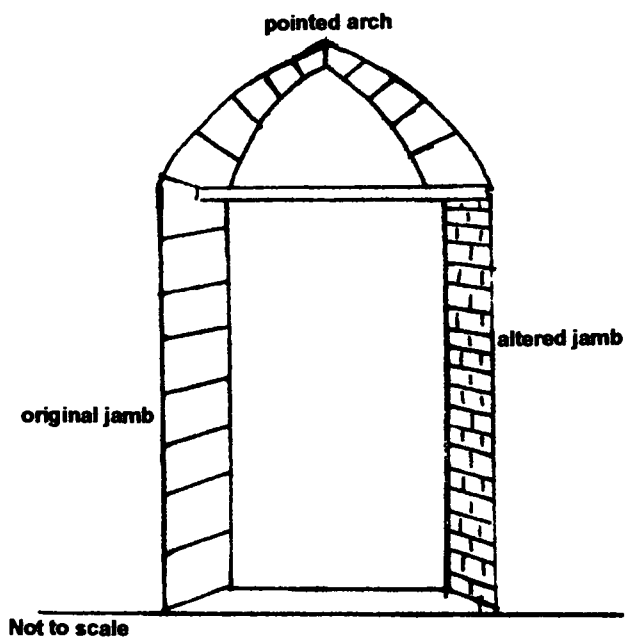
9. WINDOWS

9.1 From the roofspace of the medieval hall, the topmost portions of three windows were visible before work commenced, two in the west wall and one in the south wall (Plates 32,33,34). All three were splayed pointed arches, described in some detail in the survey carried out by North Yorkshire and Cleveland Vernacular Buildings Study Group. The two west windows have been altered. Stone tracery, topped by a moulded string course, has been truncated to insert Georgian sash windows (Plate 35). This tracery appears not to be itself original, as it does not reach to the full height of the pointed arch visible from the roof space. It probably dates from the late seventeenth century when the windows were altered to accommodate a ceiling over the first floor hall at its current level.

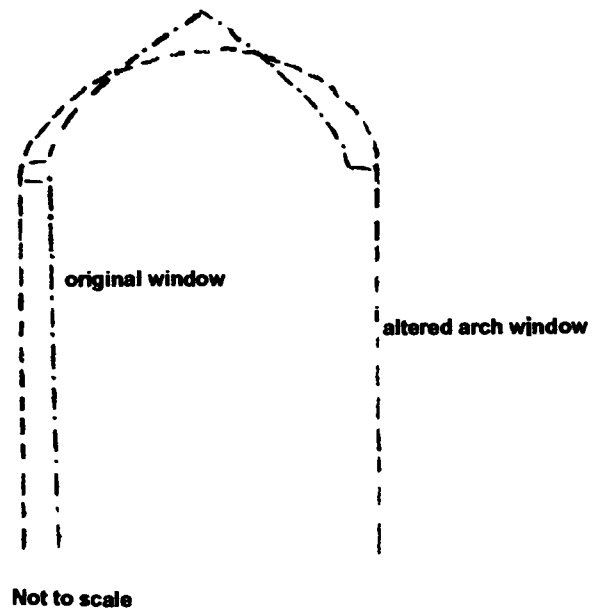
9.2 The south window has a slightly different history. Before the current work commenced, all that was visible of the window (from the roofspace) was the pointed top which contained plate tracery, and some dressed stone jambs emerging from the rendered south wall where the window had been blocked up (Plan 9). The Vernacular Buildings Study Group report implies that the stone tracery at the top was original, but closer examination showed that the shape of the tracery did not match the original pointed arch and was filled with smaller stones at the very summit.



PLAN 9 WELL HALL, BEDALE – SOUTH WINDOW EXTERNAL



**PLAN 10 WELL HALL, BEDALE –
SOUTH WINDOW INTERNAL**



**PLAN 11 WELL HALL, BEDALE –
SOUTH WINDOW RELATIONSHIPS - interior**

9.3 This observation proved accurate when the window was opened out on the first floor of the Hall. The tracery proved to be fitted to the outer arch of the window, which was an altered round arch, slightly offset from the pointed arch. The inner splay of the pointed window was preserved on the east side (Plate 36), although from the outside the round-arch window edge was slightly wider than the pointed window. On the west side, the pointed window shape survived only at the top (that part which was visible from the roofspace). Below the arch it had been cut away and replaced with brickwork forming the vertical splay of the round window on a wider path than that of the pointed window (Plan 10, Plate 37). Stone jambs formed the outside of both sides.

9.4 The interpretation of this rather complicated picture must conclude that the pointed window was the original, reaching up into what later became the roofspace in the same way as the two western windows. This was subsequently altered to form a round arched window both lower and wider than the original, at which time the surviving plate tracery was inserted. As indicated above, these alterations presumably date to the late seventeenth century (Plan 11). The south window reached a similar height to the two western windows as they now survive. The southern window was then blocked up completely, perhaps at the same time as the sash windows were inserted roughly a hundred years later.

9.5 Another window was discovered in the south wall during the course of works. This was located over the doorway between the medieval hall and the south range, and visible from the north (earlier) side (Plate 38). It had been hidden by plasterboard and the floor of the attic room. Only the top of a blocked (?plate tracery) pointed arch survived, 41cm in height and 82cm wide at the base. The stonework of the splayed sides appeared similar to that of the other first floor windows. This window was presumably largely removed when the south wing was constructed in the late seventeenth century. The remains of the window were left in situ and re-covered.

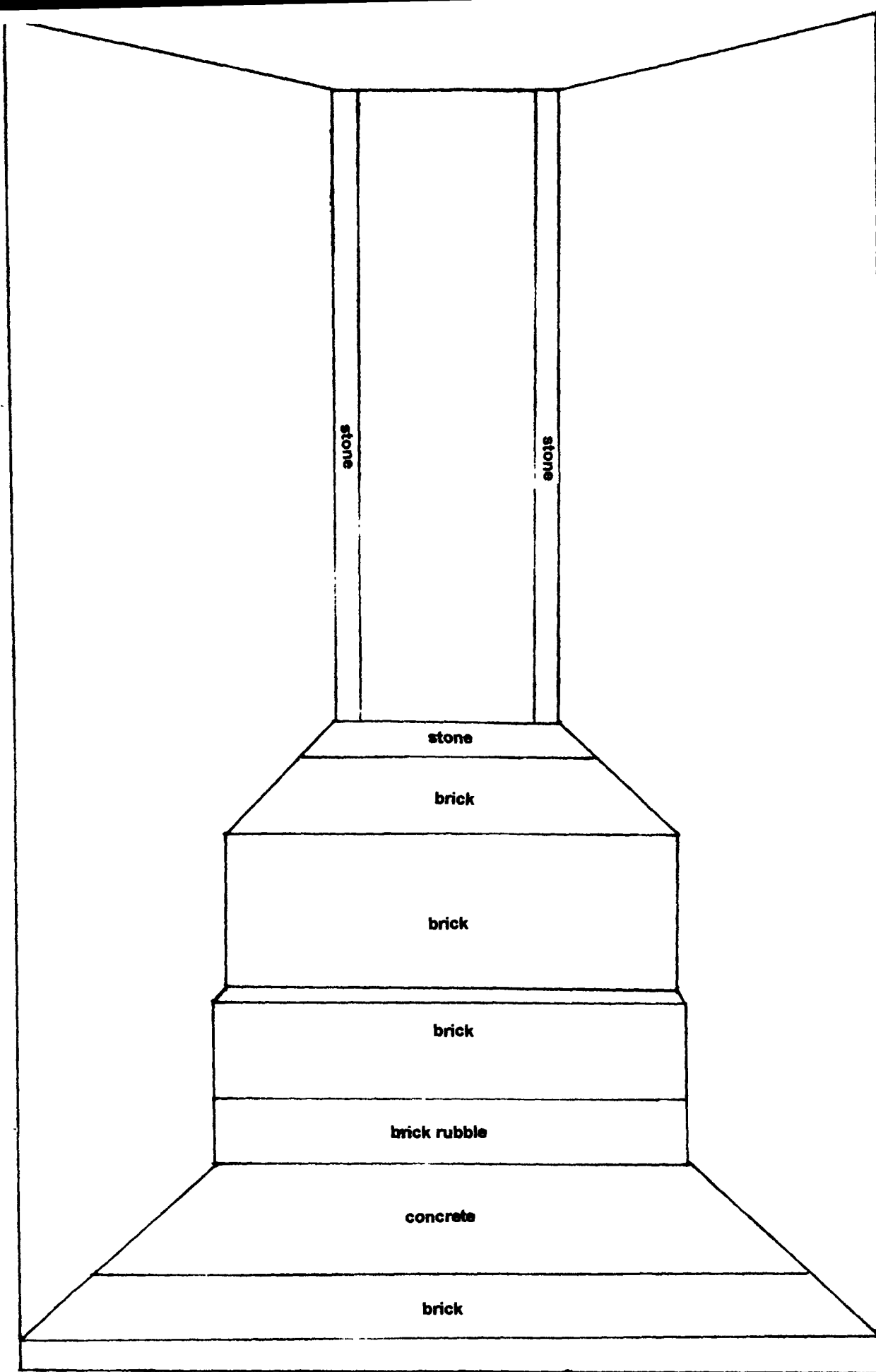
9.6 A further opening in the south wall of the hall was also unblocked. This was situated at the eastern end of the south wall, and from the outside it was apparent that it rose from just above the string course (Plate 39). It had chamfered sides, and had holes in the lintel for two vertical bars. Inside, the stonework revealed a splay which reached to the floor level, below the level of the sill (Plan 12). The intervening space was built up in brick, rubble and concrete steps. This may be an original window in the staircase from the undercroft, or possibly associated with the garderobe in the south-east corner of the first floor mentioned in the Vernacular Buildings Study Group report.

10. EXTERNAL WORKS – WATCHING BRIEF

10.1 There is a possibility of Roman settlement in the vicinity of Well Hall, so all ground disturbance works around the house were the subject of an archaeological watching brief. The swimming pool was enlarged to the north and east, and a service trench excavated from its southern end to the old boiler house. Further service trenches were dug from the old boiler house to the stables range to the north of the Hall, from there through the yard to the north of the undercroft, and from the south-west corner of the west range to the front gates to the south (Plan 2). Most of these works were done using a mini-digger, with some hand digging in restricted areas.

11. SWIMMING POOL

11.1 The existing swimming pool was enlarged to the north and east, using a mini-digger. The pool sloped down from the shallow end at the south to approximately 2.5m deep at the north end, and was lined with concrete which was removed. The 3 metre extension northward cut through topsoil and loam into disturbed gravels, loamy in places, with a large pit partially revealed over the north east corner. This was over 5.3 metres in diameter and up to 1.6 metres deep with sloping sides and base. It was filled with mixed loam and gravel and contained a high proportion of 19th century rubbish including animal bones, pottery, glass and brick and tile fragments (Plate 40). Elsewhere the disturbed gravels overlay natural gravel.



Scale – 1:10 (isometric)

PLAN 12 WELL HALL, BEDALE – SOUTH-EAST CORNER WINDOW – interior

from a depth of between 1 metre and 1.6 metres below the surface. No features of archaeological interest other than the 19th century pit were noted.

12 SERVICE TRENCHES

12.1 A service trench, T1, cut from the south – east corner of the swimming pool to the boiler room was 75 cm wide, 115cm deep at the swimming pool end and 85cm deep at its southern end. The northern end contained similar soils to the swimming pool, 50cm of disturbed gravel over natural gravel. Approximately 4 metres from the north end was a concentration of large stones 20 to 45cm deep and extending for 1 metre southwards. Below these, and extending further south, was a layer of disturbed brown gravelly loam which gradually deepened southwards to below the base of the trench. Another concentration of stones 1 metre wide and 30 to 50 cm deep occurred 2.5 metres from the southern end. No artefacts were recorded as the work was done in the absence of the archaeologist, so it is difficult to assess the significance of these features.

12.2 A trench, T2, from the pool boiler room to the eastern end of the new stable range was machine excavated. This was 85cm wide and up to 90cm deep. It ran through made up ground, but no features were visible other than a patch of cobbles north of the yard, and a number of drains. The trench cut into the natural gravel at its base.

12.3 A further trench, T3, was dug from the cottage to the eastern end of the stable range. This encountered a number of modern disturbances in the form of cables and drains, including a manhole cover. The disturbed stony loamy sandy gravel overlay the natural gravel.

12.4 A shallow trench, T4, 30cm deep and up to a metre wide, was hand dug across the yard to the north of the Undercroft, from the entrance to the north – east corner of the Undercroft through a store room. The yard was cleared of concrete 10 to 15cm thick, which overlay a loose pale brown stony loamy sand. This contained various 19th century artefacts including a late Victoria penny, and a number of large dressed stones which were not in situ. Across the centre, running north-east to south-west, was an area of possible stone wall foundations. The whole area was disturbed by modern drains and services.

Further south were more stone wall foundations running east-west across the trench, 165cm north of the outside of the store adjacent to the north wall of the Undercroft. They were 50cm wide, and ran under the garden wall to the east to return southwards in line with the east wall of the Undercroft up to the back wall of the store. These probably relate to the steeply sloping gable visible on the north wall of the Undercroft at first floor level, which predates the buttress at the east end of the north wall.

The store itself, which was filled with soil to a depth of 50 cm, was emptied out. The fill was a brown sandy mortary stony loam containing much 19th century rubbish and covered in concrete.

12.5 The final service trench, T5, was machine cut from the south-west corner of the 18th century stable block to the east side of the front gates, across the gravel path. It was approximately 1 metre wide and 50 cm deep. Beneath 20 cm of stony loam and laid gravel were layers of made-up ground consisting of further gravel and loam, above paler disturbed gravel with brick fragments. The base of the trench revealed undisturbed gravel. Near the north end was an area of large cobbles surrounded by mortary soil, and further south a concentration of brick also surrounded by mortary soil. Neither of these appeared to be of structural significance. At the southern end of the trench the soil was brown loam disturbed by tree roots.

13. STABLE BLOCK

13.1 The eighteenth century stone built lofted stable block is mentioned but not described in the Vernacular Buildings Study Group report. It runs west from the north wing, being linked to it by a later infill. It has gable ends to east and west, with a central gable facing south which

housed the pigeon loft (Plate 41) The ground floor contains a series of rooms accessed from each other and from entrances on the north side A central passage runs through the building from north to south, beneath the central gable on the south wall The windows are not original On the first floor level the entire block is open to the roof, and the building can be seen to consist of eight bays, with the central gable straddling the central truss A line of windows at first floor level on the south side has been blocked apart from two Access to the first floor is from an external stone staircase on the north side

13.2 The seven trusses vary in appearance The central one is of a king post construction, with adaptations to accommodate the gable roof, and the others are double butt-purlins, all but one with no collars The two outer trusses at each end have two sloping struts supporting the principal rafter (Plate 42), but the trusses on either side of the central one have five or six (originally more) vertical struts (Plate 43) One had a short collar between the central two struts The central truss has one strut sloping out from the base of the king post to the north side of the principal rafter The tie beams were rough and uneven, and rafters ran between some, though not all, of them (Plate 44)

13.3 Restoration work was undertaken on the roof, replacing all decayed timbers This involved most of the common rafters and all of the timber of the pigeon loft gable The main trusses were retained

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