

An Archaeological Watching Brief at the 'Fortification Wall', Lichfield Cathedral Close 1994

1.0 Introduction

This short report, documenting the results of the watching brief of the repairs to the south elevation of the 'fortification wall' is provided as an appendix to the original 1990 evaluation report (Jones 1990, reference to wall alignment also follows the liturgical orientation of the cathedral for convenience like the earlier report.)

The 'fortification wall' is situated within the curtilage of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Lichfield Cathedral, therefore a brief report was requested on the archaeological implications of the wall repair by David Heath of English Heritage. Following discussions between Mr Robert Meeson, the Staffordshire County Archaeology Officer, and Dr Warwick Rodwell, the Cathedral Archaeologist, archaeological monitoring was undertaken by suitably qualified staff from Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at the request of Duval Brownhill Partnership, architects for the scheme, on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral.

Archaeological monitoring was required for the groundworks necessary to consolidate and underpin the south-facing elevation of the so-called 'fortification wall' situated in the southeast angle of Lichfield Cathedral Close, overlooking the Minster Pool. The 1990 archaeological evaluation had established that this wall was in fact part of an hitherto unsuspected medieval building, and contained several original features within its build including a splayed window, garderobe chamber, and two doorways. In addition, the evaluation indicated that the wall was in imminent danger of collapse.

2.0 The Watching Brief

The principle objective of the watching brief was to obtain a record of any archaeological deposits disturbed during the excavation of the underpinning trench, and secondly to check for further structural evidence in the fabric of the south-facing elevation for a putative west-facing return wall indicated by a robber trench identified in Trench III (West) in the 1990 evaluation (Fig. 1).

The consolidation work involved the dismantling of the southern elevation of the 'fortification wall' and the excavation of a trench c.1m wide and c.1m deep along the wall-face for the concrete underpinning plinth on which the wall was subsequently rebuilt. The excavation of the trench was undertaken by the rebuilding contractors and was to be archaeologically monitored. The wall was rebuilt in two stages. However, only after the excavation of the first stage of trenching was the requirement for an archaeological watching brief established, therefore observations of this section of trenching were based upon a site visit after the concrete plinth was in place. Observation of the second stage went ahead without any problems.

3.0 Results

It was observed that the underpinning trench was excavated through a mixed context of humic garden soil, rubble, roots and mortar along its entire length and depth.

This is consistent with the results from Trenches II and IV (East) and IV (West) of the 1990 evaluation, and shows that there was uniform dumping activity presumably to artificially raise the ground-level between the perimeter 'fortification wall' and the Minster Pool in the Post-Medieval Period. No evidence for the return of the putative west-facing return wall was observed in the fabric of the south elevation of the 'fortification wall'. However, this still does not rule out the interpretation of the robber trench in Trench III (West) of the 1990 evaluation as structural evidence for a return wall. Indeed evidence for such a return would be more expected within the fabric of the northern inner face, as opposed to the southern outer face of the 'fortification wall' which was the elevation examined.

4.0 Acknowledgements

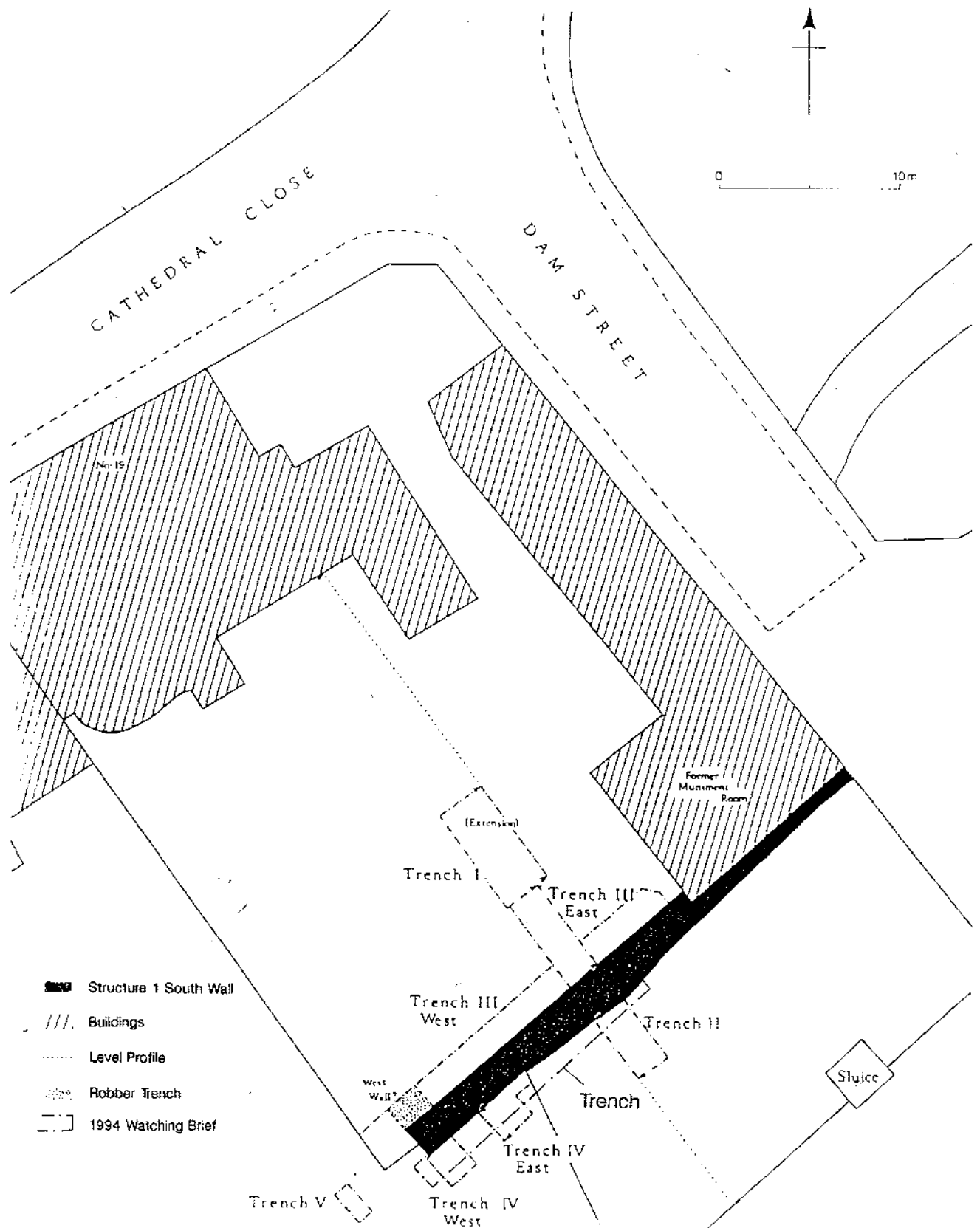
The fieldwork was carried out by Steve Litherland and Jon Stenberg of Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, and the figure prepared by Nigel Dodds. The assistance of Mr Robert Meeson and Dr Warwick Rodwell in the initial stages is readily acknowledged as is the co-operation of the Duvall Brownhill Partnership and the groundworks contractors for the scheme.

5.0 References

- Jones, A. (1990) *Lichfield Cathedral Close
Archaeological Evaluation (Stages 1-4)*

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CLOSE 1989-90

Areas of Archaeological Excavation








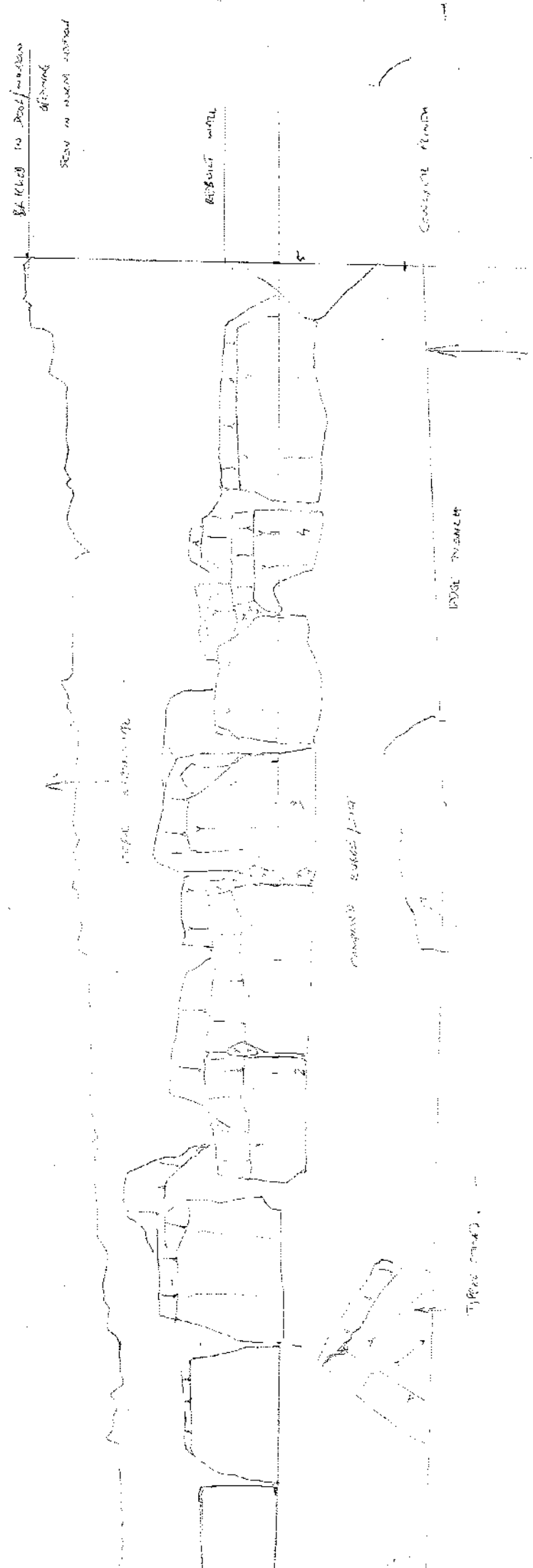
-  Structure 1 South Wall
-  Buildings
-  Level Profile
-  Robber Trench
-  1994 Watching Brief

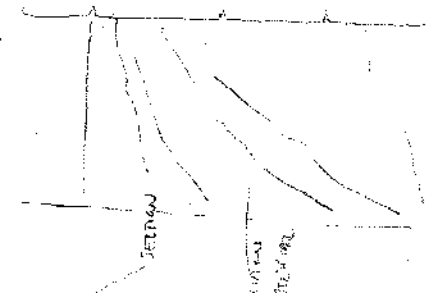
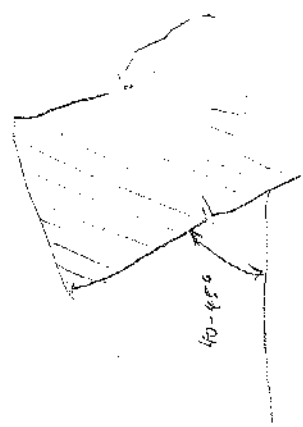
Figure 1

LICENCED ARCHITECT 94

F-20 3013



TEMPORARY WALLING BUILT 1 BRIDGE IN PLACE
AVERAGE DEPTH OF BENCH 30CM
APPROX TWT ABOVE 40-45' @



LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CLOSE 1989-90

Structure 1 South Wall South Elevation

W

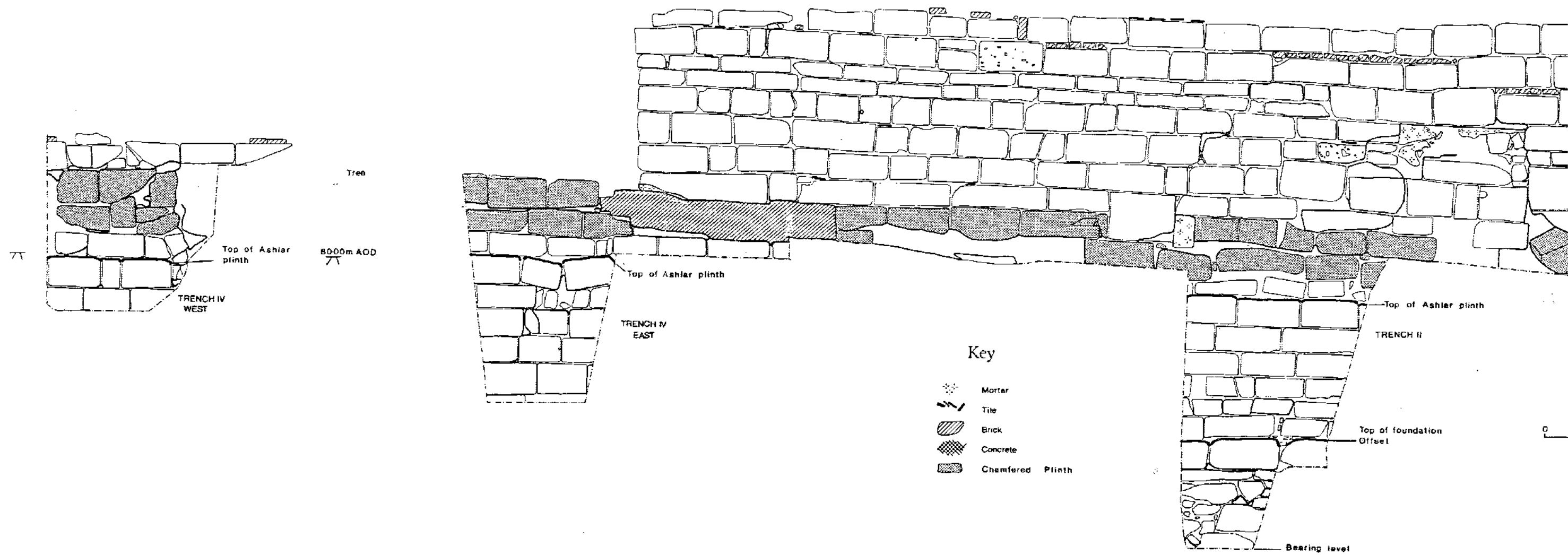


Figure 2

DSE 1989-90
Elevation

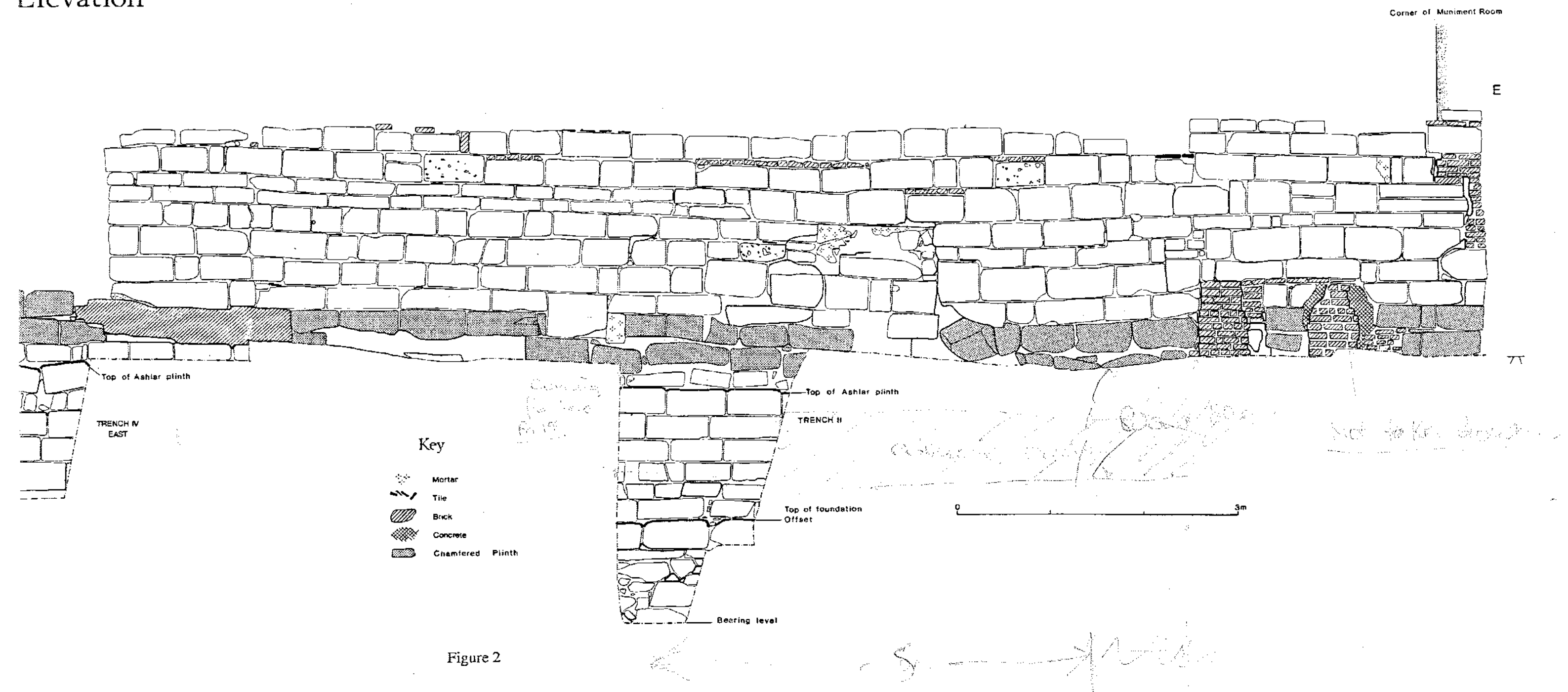
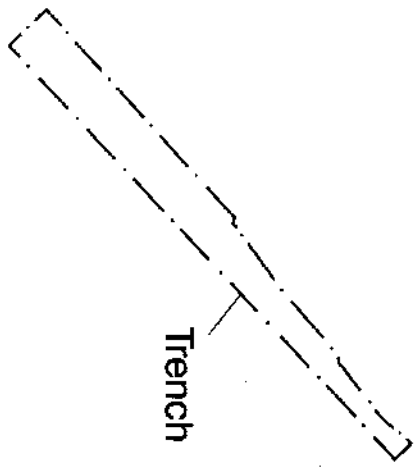


Figure 2

1994 Watching Brief



LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL CLOSE 1989-90

Areas of Archaeological Excavation

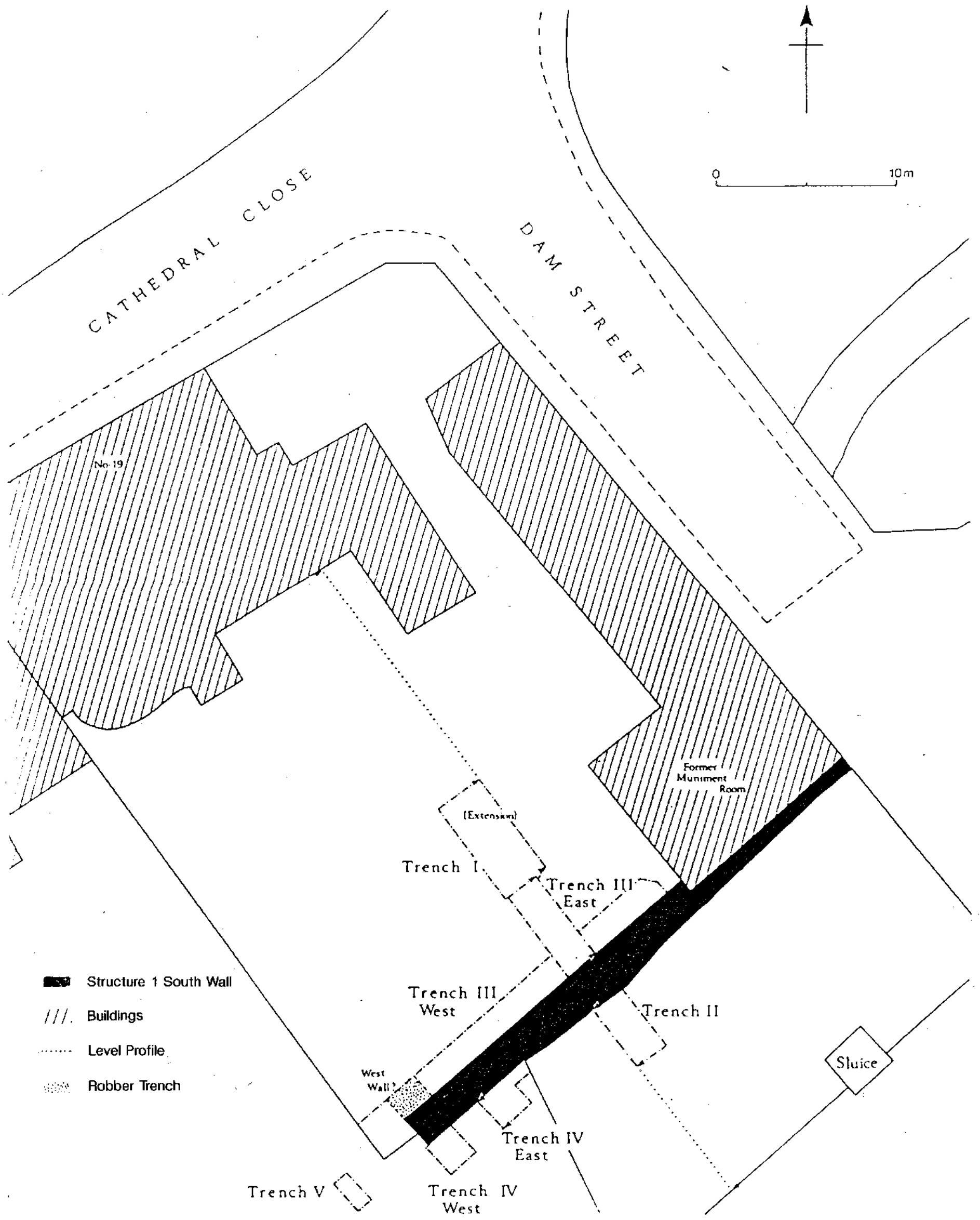
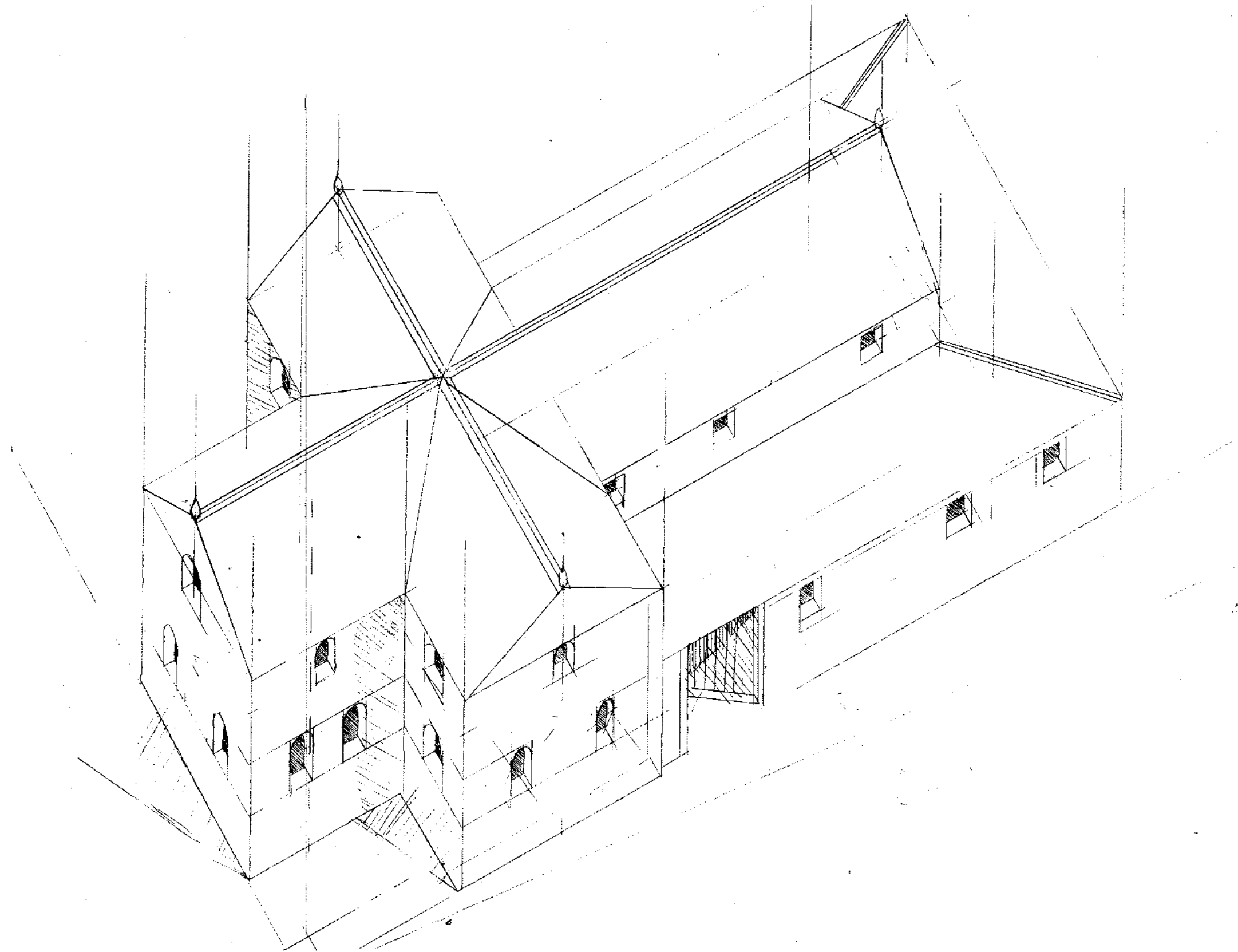
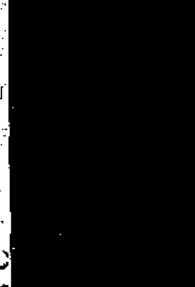
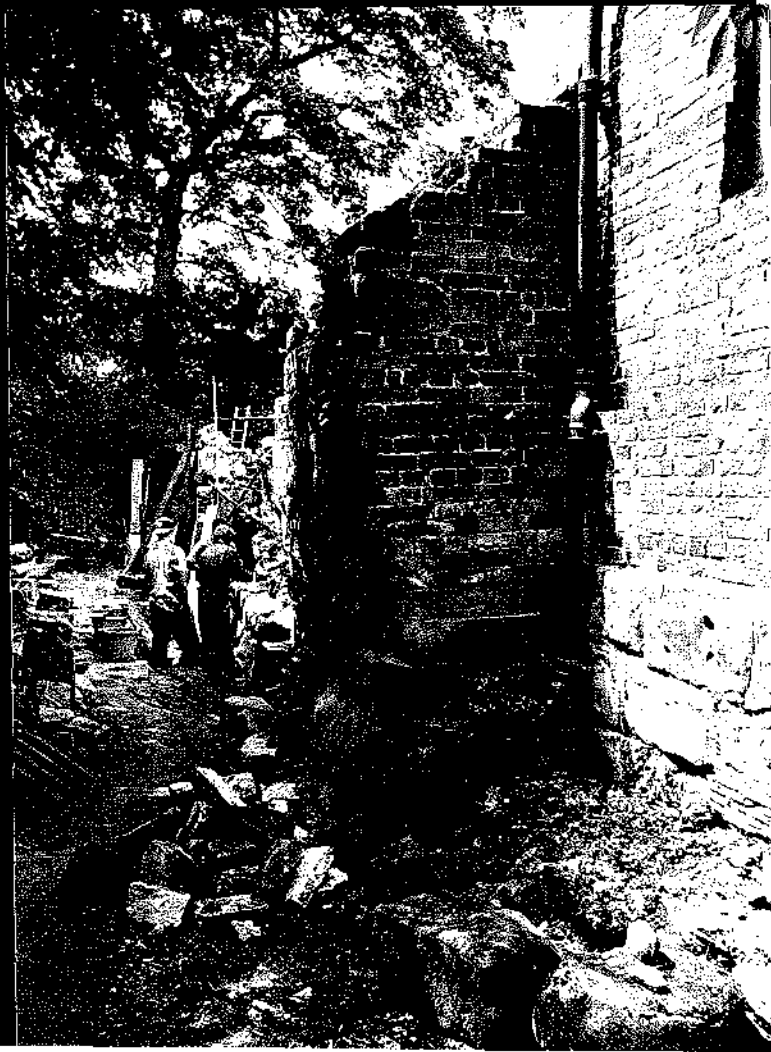


Figure 1



SUBJECT

TECHNICAL DATA LITCHFIELD



JODERIA 75 6 2-37 1 26 LITCHFIELD 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50



19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50



