Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 171

July 1991

Archaeological Work at Ercall Hall, High Ercall, Shropshire in 1991

by
Ian Ferris & Steve Litherland

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux (Manager), Peter Leach or Iain Ferris (Assistant Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 021 414 5513

Archaeological Work at Ercall Hall, High Ercall, Shropshire in 1991

by

Iain Ferris & Steve Litherland

Contents

Introduction 1

The Trial Trenches 1
- Trench 1
- Trench 2
- Trench 3
- Trench 4
- Trench 5
- Trench 6
- Trench 7
- Trenches 8 & 9

Discussion and Archaeological Implications 4
- Trenches 1-3
- Trenches 4,5 & 7
- Trench 6
- Trenches 8 & 9

The Earthwork Survey 5

Building Recording 6
- Introduction
- Southern Range
- Northern Range
- Discussion and Recommendations

The Documentary Assessment 8
- Summary
- The Medieval Period
- Other Activities
- High Ercall Hall from the 17th Century
- The Civil War

A Summary of Recommendations 13

Appendices
- 1. Environmental Sample (by R. Heath) 13
- 2. Stucco-work 13
- 3. The Finds (by L. Bevan) 14
- 4. Location of Historical Sources 14

Acknowledgements 15

References 15

List of Figures 16

Archaeological Work at Ercall Hall, High Ercall, Shropshire in 1991

Introduction

In May 1991 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) was commissioned by Ibis Construction Limited (on behalf of their client) to undertake archaeological works at Ercall Magna Hall, High Ercall (SJ 595174), near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The brief for the work, prepared by the Shropshire County Council Conservation Department, specified the excavation of a number of trial trenches, the survey and description of extant earthworks in the Hall grounds, and the recording of a number of the external elevations of the Hall building itself.

The Trial Trenches (For location see Figure 8)

A total of nine trial trenches or trial pits was dug; Trenches 1–3 were to investigate the line of a ditch or moat to the north of the Hall, to provide information on the implication of the proposed re-excavation and flooding of part of this feature; Trenches 4 and 5, in a pasture field to the east of the Hall, were dug to assess the presence or absence of archaeological features along the proposed line of an electricity service trench; Trench 6, towards the northwest corner of the pasture field, was excavated to assess the implications of the proposed location here of a conservatory; Trenches 7 and 8, in the southwest corner of the present back garden to the Hall, were excavated across the line to be affected by the proposed widening of the present access route; Trench 9, again in the pasture field, was dug against the south end of a stretch of free-standing, stone arcading, to investigate its possible relationship to features in Trenches 4 and 5, as an aid to their interpretation.

The results of the trenching will be presented below, trench by trench, with a following general discussion of the archaeological implications of each proposed element of the building work. The information from the trial trenches will also be drawn upon in the discussion of the earthwork survey and the recording of the standing building.

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Aligned roughly north–south, this trench was *c.* 18.5m long and 1.6m wide, and was opened by machine. Over the line of the whole trench was a depth of 0.08–0.15m of topsoil (1000), overlying, at the south end of the trench, a band of compact, orange sand (1004), and a clean dark brown silt with pebbles (1005). Towards the northern end of the trench the topsoil overlay a compact, brown silt with pebbles (1003) and a 0.20–0.75m thick, wedge-shaped deposit of mixed, dirty, black-brown sandy silt with charcoal, mortar and brick inclusions (1007).

Deposit 1007 directly overlay the surface of the natural red sandstone bedrock which was seen to slope gently southwards before being sharply cut away, almost to a vertical face, *c.* 3m from the northern end of the trench, this face being the cut of the ditch (F2). Cutting layer 1007, and partially sealed by 1003, was a V-shaped trench or gulley (F1), *c.* 1.60m deep and backfilled with a deposit of compact, clean brown silt (1002) and a lens of dirty grey mixed clay (1010), utilising the earlier ditch edge and possibly modifying the cut, though comparison with the edges of the ditch in Trenches 2 and 3 suggests that such modification was probably negligible.

At the southern end of the trench, 1005 overlay a 0.40–0.60m thick spread of clean, mottled, red-orange silty sand with occasional pebble inclusion (1006), cut by a northwest–southeast-aligned foundation trench (F4) along the western edge of which was set a brick wall (F3). These features were left unexcavated and *in situ*. Deposit 1006 was extremely loose and unstable, and at this level shoring was inserted to facilitate further excavation towards the centre and northern end of the trench. To the north layer 1006 overlay a *c.* 0.30m thick, levelled spread of dirty black silty sand with charcoal, brick and mortar (1001) which, in turn, overlay a mottled and mixed red silty sand with Harnage slate

fragments (1008), both deposits containing 17th century pottery. For logistical and safety reasons it was decided to limit further excavation to a *c.* 2.25m long sondage in the centre of the trench, in the hope of defining the bottom of the ditch. Here, layer 1006 directly overlay a *c.* 2.45m thick deposit of loose, red-orange silty sand (1009), at which level the water-table was contacted, some 3.40m below the present ground surface. Augering revealed that layer 1009 continued downwards for another 0.25m, and overlay a compact, waterlogged black clay silt containing numerous chunks of wood and other organic material (1011), a deposit at least 0.80m in thickness. All excavation ceased at this level, despite the bottom of the ditch not having been contacted, as it was unfeasible, from a safety point of view, to excavate such a relatively narrow trench down to, and below, the base of the auger hole (at approximately 4.70m below present ground surface).

Trench 2 (Figure 3)

Aligned roughly north–south, this trench, 19.50m long and 1.60m wide, was opened by machine. A 0.30–0.40m thick layer of topsoil (2000) overlay the gently sloping natural bedrock at the northern end of the trench, with the topsoil slumping into the upper fill of the ditch (F200) towards the centre of the trench. Some 6.50m from the northern end of the trench was contacted the cut for the ditch, up against which was excavated a sondage through the upper 1.50m of ditch deposits, excavation ceasing at this level due to the instability of the deposits. The ditch fills consisted of, (in sequence from the upper fill downwards), a clean red-brown sand (2001), a clean brown sand flecked with charcoal (2002), a compact, clean red-brown sand (2003), a clean brown sand with pebbles (2004), a clean brown sand (2005), a clean red sand (2006) and a clean brown sand (2007). A second sondage was excavated towards the southern end of the trench to try to locate the inner cut of the ditch, the sloping sandstone bedrock being contacted at a depth of 2m below the present ground surface. The upper ditch fill consisted of deposit 2003, as seen to the north, overlying a sloping layer of dirty brown, mixed sand (2008), in turn overlying a clean red-brown sand with Harnage slate fragments (2009). Excavation by hand ceased at this level. Attempts to further define the southern ditch cut and profile, using a mechanical excavator, were abandoned due to the continual collapse and slumping of the trench sides during machining.

Trench 3 (Figure 4)

Aligned roughly north–south, this trench, *c.* 13.50m long and 1.60m wide, was again opened by machine. The outer cut of the ditch (F3), encountered *c.* 4.50m from the northern end of the trench, was once more directly beneath the 0.10–0.80m thick topsoil (3000), the topsoil dishing towards the centre of the ditch where it was more mixed (3001). A sondage was dug up against the ditch-cut to a depth of *c.* 2.20m below the present ground surface. There appeared to be a re-cut into the upper ditch fills, this 0.80m deep re-cut being backfilled with a clean red brown sand with pebbles and sandstone fragments (3002) and contained the articulated skeleton of a horse, so that it can be assumed that this re-cut was for the specific purpose of burying the beast. The truncated backfills of ditch F3 consisted of, (from the upper layer downwards), a clean, red-orange silty sand with sandstone and pebble inclusions (3003), a banded, red-brown silty sand (3004) and a brown, dirty, mixed silty sand containing blocks of red sandstone and bricks (3005).

The southern end of the trench was excavated only to a depth of 1m, the material beneath the topsoil being a single deposit of clean red-orange. silty sand (3006), probably slumped make-up from the earthen bank to the south.

Trench 4 (Figure 5)

Aligned northwest–southwest, this trench, measuring 7.20m long and 1.60m wide, was opened by machine. The *c.* 0.20m deep topsoil (4000) overlay a 0.10–0.40m thick deposit or levelling horizon of loose fragments of sandstone rubble, brick and sand (4001, 4003), sitting on a thin skim of compact, buff mortar (4002) which might be the remnant of a floor surface (F401). Under the mortar was a 0.30m thick deposit of clean red-brown, silty sand with pebbles and clay (4004) cut by a possible posthole (F402),

overlying a mottled green brown silty sand with charcoal and pebbles (4006) with a lens of charcoaly silt (4007). The whole trench was then cleaned down to a horizon of mixed dark silty sand (4008, 4009) with charcoal, sandstone chunks and pebbles. Into this horizon was cut a series of negative features, none of which was excavated, including three possible post-holes or pits (F403, F404, F406), and three linear trenches or gullies (F405, F407, F408). A sondage dug at the south end of the trench revealed that 4009 overlay the natural sandy subsoil (4010), at a depth of almost 1m below the present ground surface.

Trench 5 (Figure 6)

Aligned northeast–southwest and measuring 4m x 1.60m, this trench was opened by machine. The topsoil (5000), was *c.* 0.20m thick and, in the centre of the trench, overlay a 0.30m deep spread of rubble (5001) directly over a *c.* 2.20m wide wall foundation (F500) constructed of blocks of red sandstone with a mortar bonding (5004). This wall had a good straight face along its northern edge while the southern edge was more irregular, with there being some suggestion that the wall had been widened from an original width of *c.* 1.40m. To the north of the wall was a spread of builders rubble (5001), very similar to layers 4001 and 4003 in Trench 4, which was removed to a depth of 0.30m, but not bottomed, to expose the wall face. To the south of wall F500, and butting up against the wall face, was a layer of brown silty sand with charcoal and mortar flecks (5002), containing a sherd of later medieval pottery; again, this deposit was not fully excavated but lowered *c.* 0.25–0.30m to expose the southern wall face.

Harnage slate fragments were recovered from the topsoil (5000).

Trench 6 (Figure 7)

Measuring 3m by 2.50m this trench was opened by machine, to remove the *c.* 0.20–0.25m deep topsoil (6000). Directly beneath the topsoil was revealed a yard surface (F601) formed of bricks (6001), with a straight edge to the west, and sloping away quite steeply to the east probably as the result of the settling of the bricks. Associated with F601 was an open drain (F602A), built of sandstone gutterstones, and a narrower drain (F602B) covered by ceramic tiles, both connected to a square soakaway (F602C), which in the southwest corner of the trench overlay a deposit of rubble and sandstone (6004). Partially covered by 6004, and forming the western boundary to the brick yard surface was a possible wall foundation (F603) formed of rough blocks of red sandstone.

Trench 7

Measuring 1m square this trench was opened by machine up against the western face of the southern end of the free-standing stone arcading in the field to the east of the Hall; the trench was then cleaned by hand. Examination of the east section revealed that the arcading had shallow and insubstantial footings (7002), set in a foundation trench that was sealed by the 0.20m deep topsoil (7000) and cut into a level of builders rubble (7001), similar to 5001 in Trench 5 and 4001 and 4003 in Trench 4.

Trenches 8 and 9

These trenches were opened by hand and dug on both sides of the pathway giving access to the rear entrance of the Hall. Trench 8, measuring 0.64m by 0.90m, was restricted by the nearby presence of a tree, and the area available for excavation within the trench further limited by the intrusion of substantial tree roots. Topsoil and garden soil (8000) were excavated to a depth of 0.80m, and augering revealed a further depth of 0.25m before natural sand was encountered. Trench 9, measuring 1.40 by 1.10m, revealed a depth of 0.25–0.35m of garden soil (9000), overlying a thin spread of charcoal (9001), in turn over a 0.08–0.10m thick layer of sandstone chunks (9002), and that in turn overlay a deposit of mixed brown silty sand (9003), containing quantities of sandstone rubble (9004), though not in any coherent pattern or form. Removal of the rubble, to a depth of 0.80m below the present ground surface, revealed the upper surface of a dirty mixed silt (9005) that augering revealed to be 0.45m deep and overlying natural sand.

Discussion and Archaeological Implications

Trenches 1–3

The logistical and safety problems in excavating the trial trenches across the ditch mean that only a partial interpretation of the feature can be offered. In all three trenches the outer cut of the ditch (variously called F2, F200 and F300) was defined, with the sandstone bedrock gently sloping southwards before being cut away to a steep, in places almost vertical, edge. The inner cut was nowhere satisfactorily defined, though in Trench 2 a small portion of the steeply-sloping bedrock side was exposed at the bottom of a sondage, suggesting a width for the feature of at least 10 metres. Again, its full depth was nowhere defined, though in Trench 1 deposits in the centre of the ditch were recorded to a depth of 4.70m below the present day ground surface. Finds recovered from the lower ditch fills included 17th century pottery, and one or two residual sherds of late medieval pottery (from 3001 and 3004 in Trench 3); the upper ditch fills were quite heavily disturbed in Trenches 1 and 3 in particular. In Trench 1 18th or 19th century garden features (wall F3, trench F4 and ditch F2) cut across the top of the line of the ditch.

However, despite the obvious lacunae in the data a model can be offered for the periods of use and disuse of the feature. The ditch would appear to be one element of a Civil War defensive fortification, and though the suggestion that the line of the ditch could have followed the line of a pre-existing medieval moat, as can be demonstrated at other sites such as, for instance, at Hawton in Nottinghamshire (Crossley 1990, 116), this remains merely a hypothesis not proven by the evaluation. The form that such fortifications took would have been dictated by the theories of military engineering developed on the European mainland during the Thirty Years War (Wagner 1979), and employed at numerous sieges throughout England in the Civil War (Ross 1887; Harrington 1987). The width, steepness of slope and evident depth of the ditch make it in itself a formidable obstacle, but it would appear that the feature was further strengthened by being flooded, for an instruction issued by the Parliamentary County Committee, after the Hall had been captured, ordered the local commander to 'drain the moat' (see below for a fuller discussion of the siege and its aftermath). Beyond the inner edge of the ditch/moat would have been an open or 'killing zone' and then a substantial earthen rampart, still surviving for a short stretch at High Ercall, created from natural sand, doubtless upcast from the digging of the ditch. The looseness and instability of the sand makes it likely that the outer rampart face would have been reinforced with a gabionage revetment (Wagner 1979, 225, figure c), while it is, again, likely that an earthen parapet would have been constructed along the top of the rampart. The inner rampart face would have been revetted, probably in stone (?quarried from the ditch during its excavation), and it is possible that the lower stone coursing of the north and west walls of the garden to the north of the Hall represent the surviving remnants of that revetment wall with an eastern stretch of wall now only partially visible. The defences were further strengthened by the provision of stone bastions or towers, a portion of one such tower surviving at the northeast angle of the defensive circuit.

It is probable that this defensive circuit was somewhat damaged and denuded during the siege, with the rampart further slighted and the ditch drained and probably partially backfilled at this time. The absence today of any trace of a rampart to the west of the Hall indicates its total levelling, either after the war or at a later date during the laying out of a garden, over the ditch line, which here is not as pronounced as to the north. The deposits backfilling the upper part of the ditch in Trench 1 were identical to the rampart make-up and probably are derived from its levelling here, thus also obscuring the line of the inner edge of the ditch. With the outer revetment removed from the rampart, weathering and erosion would soon have led to its denudation, such sandy deposits being particularly prone to slumping, as can be seen in, and to the south of, Trenches 2 and 3 where again the rampart slump has protruded over the postulated 'killing zone' and again has masked the line of the inner ditch edge.

The projected re-excavation of part of the ditch has some implications for the archaeological integrity of the overall group of defensive earthworks, the nature of these implications being dependent on the extent and depth of the re-excavation. The width and depth of the ditch,

and the nature of the uppermost backfill deposits, with the exception of the garden features cut across the backfilled ditch in Trench 1 and of some interest in themselves, mean that a substantial amount of the ditch could be reopened with little effect on the overall integrity of the feature. However, some care should be taken not to overcut the ditch sides, for though in historical terms a relatively recent feature, Civil War siege works are an important and understudied category of earthwork, more often than not completely obliterated after the end of the war (see Gaunt 1987; Harrington 1987; Crossley 1990, 113–117) particularly when associated with a relatively ephemeral military operation like the siege of Ercall Hall, and their study has been prioritised by the Research Committee of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology (Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology 1988,9). It is therefore recommended that some archaeological input, probably a watching and recording brief, accompany the groundworks here, the nature and scale of that input being dependent on the final scheme for the works.

Trenches 4, 5 and 7

These trenches were excavated to locate any below-ground remains of demolished structures which might be affected by the digging of an electricity service trench. Trenches 4 and 7 located no walling, and therefore the relationship of the free-standing stone arcading in this field to the main Hall still remains problematic; Trench 7, indeed, probably shows that this arcading is a late garden feature, with no structural function. A possible floor level in Trench 4 sealed a horizon into which was cut a series of negative features that may have structural origins; unfortunately no dating evidence for either the floor or the features below was recovered and they make little overall sense when viewed in such a limited area. In Trench 5 was uncovered a massive wall foundation which picture research suggests to be part of a stone tower, perhaps of a medieval origin, which was still standing in the late 18th century (see below).

The results from these trenches mean that careful consideration should be given to the route and depth of the proposed service trenches, particularly in the area of the suggested stone tower and that the works here should be monitored by, if not actually carried out by, an archaeological contractor.

Trench 6

This trench provided evidence for the presence of a well-preserved yard area to the rear of the house, perhaps of an 18th century/19th century date, only a few centimetres beneath the present ground surface. Again, though relatively late in date these features can contribute to the elucidation of the overall history of the Hall complex and should disturbance here during the construction of a conservatory be unavoidable, then threatened deposits and features should be excavated and recorded.

Trenches 8 and 9

No archaeological features were recorded in these trenches; the proposed widening of the access route here with some lowering of the ground surface for the insertion of foundations should nevertheless be monitored by an archaeologist.

The Earthwork Survey (Figure 8)

The brief for the archaeological work included the survey 'of the entire site to a scale of 1:100'. However, the extent of the earthworks and their relative lack of complexity meant that 1:200 was a more appropriate and manageable scale; the plan produced was a hachure survey with spot heights.

Dishing along the line of the ditch/moat is most apparent to the north and west of the Hall, with the single surviving stretch of the bank evidently intruding over the inner line of the ditch. The outer ditch edge can be traced in the present churchyard and for a short stretch to the south of the Hall.

The west and north stretches of the garden wall are coursed towards the base in sandstone and it is possible that these are the remnants of revetting for the inner face of the bank. This interpretation is further supported by the fact that a turn in the north garden wall can be discerned, from whence the stonework runs north–south, most of this wall being obscured by vegetation. The remains of a stone bastion or defensive corner tower were also recorded.

Building Recording (Figures 9–16)

Introduction

The present Hall building is the survival of a once much larger structure, and today consists of two main ranges (Figure 9), a northern range aligned roughly east–west and an interconnected southern range aligned roughly north–south, forming an L-shaped plan. Both ranges are cellared, that of the northern range being mainly constructed of stone and that of the southern range built mainly of brick; access to the cellars is now blocked-off. The accommodation consists of a ground floor and first floor with an extremely large and spacious roof-space forming what is, to all intents and purposes, a second storey. The main construction of the building is in red/purple sandstone with windows, doorways and stringcourses in grey-green limestone, with brick gables. Repairs and infillings are in a variety of reused materials.

The present campaign of repair and renovation at the Hall has provided the impetus and necessity for building recording ahead of the full programme of work. The brief specified the recording in detail of the southwest and southeast elevations and less detailed work on the other elevations. Some examination of the interior of the building was also undertaken as an aid to interpretation, although stripping and repair work internally is still in progress. Each recorded elevation will be briefly described below, highlighting any evidence for construction, repair or alteration, followed by a more speculative discussion of the reconstruction of the original Hall complex, drawing also on the results of the documentary/cartographic research. For specific areas of repair reference should be made in the first place to the drawn elevations reproduced at the end of this report, where areas of repair and rebuild are indicated by the thicker delineation of stonework.

Southern Range

West Wall; external elevation (Figure 10)

This elevation consists of part of the southern range and the western gable end of the north range. Major areas of repair are noticeable towards the centre, ground floor area on the north gable end, around the insertion of a large mullioned and transomed window. On the southern range a number of areas of repair are identifiable with two major vertical breaks being visible towards the south end of the range, one being marked by the truncation of the stringcoursing above first floor level, the other being marked by a scar, now infilled with brick. An area of brick infilling is also visible above the southernmost window at first floor level. A blocked-in doorway is visible at ground floor level at the southern end of the elevation. For the internal views of a number of these features see Figure 11.

East Wall; external elevation (Figure 12)

Again, the main alterations to this elevation are seen at the south end of the wall, with two major vertical breaks and scars equivalent to those seen on the west elevation. Within the area between the breaks can be seen two regular areas of stone infilling, revealed on the internal elevation (Figure 13) to be timber-framed openings, one at first floor and one at roof-space level. The two ground floor windows at the southern end of the wall are later insertions.

South Wall; external elevation (Figure 14)

The appearance of this gable end of the range is of a composite build with much reused material. At ground floor level a large brick-arched opening or cart-door has been punched through the stonework, while to the east of this opening is an inserted brick-lined doorway at first floor level, reached by a set of stone steps.

Northern Range

South Wall; external elevation (Figure 15)

There has been little in the way of major alteration to this wall, apart from at ground floor level with the insertion of the westernmost doorway and the window above, and a taller doorway towards the centre of the elevation. The remnant of the stone jamb of a former window remains *in situ* towards the western end of the wall, and a sill of another towards the eastern end.

East Wall; external elevation (Figure 16)

Only a few elements of this elevation were recorded, including the former position of a window at the south end of the wall, marked by the position of the sill, this window itself perhaps having been inserted in the position of a former doorway. The doorway at the north end of the wall is a later insertion, with a probable infilled window, marked by a concentration of orange sandstone blocks, above.

Discussion and Recommendations

There can be no doubt that the present Hall building is but a remnant of the original 17th-century structure, but what form that structure took is uncertain, the most likely form being an H-shaped plan. The present remnant of the building itself is of two builds and it is therefore perhaps feasible to suggest that the original plan as envisaged was to be built in stages but perhaps was never completed. Much discussion has centred on the obvious scars at the south end of the south range, on both the west and east walls, but the width of this area of disturbance seems too narrow for it to mark the position or keying of a former accommodation wing and it may be that a wing, if built, extended further south than the present south end of the building. This end of the building has been greatly modified, if not actually completely rebuilt, to cater for an agricultural use of much of the southern range, with now-blocked open bays for loading noted in the east wall and a cart door in the south wall, and it is probable that the scars on the west and east walls are related to agricultural buildings rather than being the keying for a structure that was never completed. The massive roof-space would originally have been used not only for accommodation of servants but for storage space (see Barley 1986, 219–222); with the change in use of the house after the post-Civil War rebuilding, to more of a working farmhouse, the use of this space for storage and processing would have been expanded along with the conversion of much of the southern range to a barn or farm store.

The interpretation of the building is at present only at an interim stage and a fuller discussion must await the inspection of any further works at the Hall as part of the on-going renovation process. To aid further interpretation it is recommended that any programme of internal plaster stripping includes an element of archaeological recording, by drawing, notes and photographs, and that a full photographic record and sample drawn record be made of the imposing roof structure and roof space. A brief assessment of the documentary material has indicated that the potential exists for some further reseach work to clarify a number of outstanding problems in the interpretation of the house.

The Documentary Assessment

A brief survey was undertaken of the documentary and cartographic material relating to High Ercall Hall to assist with the objectives of the evaluation exercise, and to elucidate any features recorded during the programme of on-site excavation and building recording. Given the limited time available the main aim was to evaluate the quantity and type of surviving evidence, and attempt to assess its importance. To these ends the collections of the Shropshire County Record Office (SRO), the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the Local Studies Archive of the Shrewsbury Public Library (SPL), the Shropshire VCH, and Birmingham University Library, were consulted, and letters were sent to the British Architectural Library of the R.I.B.A. and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The search revealed a number of interesting points concerning the history of the house and its immediate estate, which are outlined in summary below.

The documentary evidence relating to High Ercall, mainly contained in the Barnard MSS (transcription and catalogue in SRO), is both broad and detailed and, therefore, it is not surprising to find that various aspects of the parish of High Ercall's past have been examined in detail by historians: notably Eyton(1854–60) and Bassett(forthcoming), on the Saxon and early medieval settlement, and Hill(1984) on the development of the medieval manor and enclosures. In addition, High Ercall received the attentions of various Salopian antiquarians, in particular Mytton (*c.*1730), Blakeway, Dukes, and Hardwicke (in the early 19th century), Stackhouse Acton (1867), and Forrest (1924). However, no specific consideration of the development of the house itself has yet been undertaken.

Summary

Given the central concern of the programme of work with understanding the standing building, the moat, and other associated features historical analysis was mainly concentrated on the 17th century and later, although an outline of various medieval features or structures, remains of which may be located within the moated enclosure, is also given.

The Medieval Period

During the course of research a few documents were found which shed some light on the medieval phase of occupation of the site which may have some bearing on the archaeological response to the proposed redevelopments. At this time the manor complex was a 'capital messuage' of a large estate which had been carved from the surrounding waste following the Norman Conquest.

The first document, from 1332, concerns a dower house which William de Ercalewe, Lord of the manor, settled on behalf of his wife Petronilla, to the adjoining church (Barnard MSS 1/1/44–6). The house is described as being situated 'at the bottom of his garden near to the church', and, in addition, an adjoining croft and aldecroft are mentioned. While it is difficult to pinpoint the precise location of this building, it is highly likely that it lies somewhere on the eastern side of the manorial complex.

A detailed study of the development of the manor at High Ercall between 1086 and 1399 concludes that the manor bore little resemblance to the 'typical Midland manor' in origin, development, or tenurial organisation (Hill 1984,31); instead it is compared to a well-managed 17th-century estate. However, whether this type of development was typical of a marcher-type manor, able to expand further onto the surrounding wastes, or is perhaps unique, remains in question, as does the issue of whether or not the form of the manorial complex at High Ercall may have reflected these differences.

A marriage settlement of 1424 does give a picture of the manorial complex in the early 15th century (Barnard MSS 2/8/20–1,23–6, and 28–32; a full transcription can be found in Hill 1984, 32). It describes a moat and bridge, a three storey gatehouse containing five rooms, the whole upper floor being a single chamber, and a detached stone tower capable of defence (see below). Besides the hall and offices there was a Great

Chamber with rooms behind it, and two more rooms on the ground floor and one above. The hall was probably still open to the roof, but at least the chambers in the lower half were ceilinged as there was another room above. Reference to a new barn is evidence for recent improvement, and the general impression given is of a busy estate centre with stabling, barleyrick tower, garner and hay-bury or loft.

Other Activities

The same marriage settlement mentions several orchards nearby and a pond in a field just to the south of the church called Quabbs Vivary (SMR PRN 4071). This pond may have served a double purpose, as a stew for fish and also as a source of water for retting flax for the Lord's Linarium nearby (Barnard MSS 1/1/18). In the 18th century Rocque speaks of land adjoining the pond as 'hempbutt as supposed', which suggests that this activity has a long history at High Ercall. A study of probate inventories for the Wellington area between 1660 and 1750 clearly showed that dyeing was an important local industry (Trinder and Cox 1980,47), and this activity may account in part for the remarkable attic space in the present hall, which is reminiscent of some sort of processing area.

High Ercall Hall from the 17th Century

Four brief descriptions of the hall have been made to date (Tipping 1920,234–240; Forrest 1924,67–74; Pevsner 1958,148–9; and Gomme 1988,19). A number of sometimes conflicting assertions have been made concerning the development of the hall, often in the case of the earlier authors for somewhat tenuous reasons; the supporting evidence for these more dubious assertions has not been located and should therefore be treated with some caution.

The completion of the hall has been dated 1608, based on the inscription now located on a plaque on the middle gable of the northeast elevation. The authenticity of this plaque appears to have been accepted by the various authors, despite the possible connection of the local master stonemason Walter Hancock, who died in 1599, to the hall. The Hancock connection appears to have originated with Forrest, and to be mainly based on a letter, dated 1595, from Sir Francis Newport at High Ercall to the burgesses of Shrewsbury recommending Hancock as a mason for the new stone market hall. The letter attests to Newport's personal esteem for Hancock which implies he had first-hand experience of his work and, in addition, he cites a Mr Justice Owen of Condover Hall who could recommend Hancock if he were not presently out of the county. However, if Newport's recommendation was based on work at High Ercall this would make the proposed period of construction stretch over a period of at least 13 years, which must be unlikely. Newport owned other properties in the area, including another house at Eyton-on-Severn which was rebuilt around this time, the remains of which indicate that it was a house of more architectural pretension, and his interest in building would probably have brought him into contact with Hancock. The stout, workmanlike appearance and stonework of High Ercall Hall is more reminiscent of a functional building, the hub of a busy estate, and a strong bastion in the increasingly troubled times of the early 17th century, rather than a gentleman's retreat like the Elizabethan wing of nearby Moreton Corbet.

An alternative explanation of Hancock's early involvement and the completion date of *c.*1608 might be that there were two or more building operations. Chronological comparison of the all-stone build of the main storeys with the combination of diapered brick and stone of the northeast facing gables is tempting; however, the integrated construction of the substantial roof structure of raised crucks in this wing of the house suggests this interpretation is unlikely (Gomme 1988,19). Clearly further documentary evidence is required to elucidate the nature of Hancock's work in the area, for any attribution on stylistic grounds, especially as Forrest and Pevsner appear to suggest his hand in the construction of the dubious loggia, must be made with extreme caution, especially as Airs has recently demonstrated that it was not Hancock but another freemason, Laurence Shipway, who must have had the major hand at Condover Hall (Airs 1984,368–73). Overall any direct linkage of Hancock to the design of High Ercall is extremely tenuous, although this does not rule

out the possibility that Newport may have consulted with him at the initial planning stages of the project.

The first concrete documentary evidence we have of any building work is contained in the first will of Sir Francis Newport, dated 1604 (Barnard MSS 2/2/8). In this will 'sylinges of waynscott and stuff, boards of timber fallen and unwrought, brick and stone provided for building, glass and iron wrought and unwrought, lead wrought and unwrought, wains and other implements for building' are mentioned, an itemisation which would appear to indicate that the building was some way from completion. This reinforces the conclusion that the completion date of 1608 given on the plaque is correct. However, when the assiduous Salopian antiquarian Mytton recorded the plaque in 1734 curiously he noted that it was located 'over the door in the garden being part of the building supposed to be the brewhouse/washhouse at High Ercall' (BU Mytton MSS 7/ii/2/454). Either the rooms inside the middle gable had those functions or alternatively it has been resited here at a later date. The plaque was located on 'one of the gables' by the early 19th century according to Hardwicke, certainly a recess is visible for it in a photograph taken in 1920, although the plaque is not actually (Tipping 1920, 234). None of the various illustrative sources so far consulted are of sufficient detail to resolve this question.

Forrest mentions two other periods of building at High Ercall, when Sir Francis probably built a defensive wall inside the moat around the enclosure before he died in 1623, and later, when his son, Sir Richard Newport constructed a drawbridge over the moat (Forrest 1924,70 -1). These assertions seem to be entirely based upon two other inscriptions now situated in the garden wall to the east of the three-gabled elevation, and no primary documentary evidence was found to support either assertion.

Indeed, Mytton notes of the inscription relating to building works carried out by Francis Newport between 1617 and 1620 that this was located over the main porch of the castle or hall (BU Mytton MSS 7/ii/2/455), and, therefore, presumably referred to that particular part of the hall rather than any defensive wall. If the entrance to the hall was always from the northwest, which the various illustrations of the hall would appear to confirm, from the late 18th century at least, then the south running wing of the hall may date from this period, and, in fact, the roof structure in this area is different. The implication, if this were true, is that building works did indeed proceed over a long period of time at High Ercall. The assertions that the house was originally based around a courtyard with three wings cannot be backed up by documentary evidence and the results of the building recording and excavations would appear to indicate that the third wing running east–west behind the main, three-gabled front never actually existed, the scars on the northeast elevation being incompatible with a large wing. Orders that the house be kept in good repair together with the pales of the park, were given in 1639, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War (Barnard MSS 2/4/58–9).

The Civil War

The Civil War period clearly represented a watershed in the history of High Ercall Hall, leaving the hall slighted, never to be reoccupied by the Newport family. It should be recognised that the following account of the main events and background to the siege which occurred here, while based on some primary documentation, requires a more detailed check of the original sources than was here possible, given time constraints.

For much of the Civil War High Ercall was an important Royalist garrison, one of a series of manor houses, including nearby Lilleshall and Moreton Corbet, which provided intermediate cover and support to the major garrisons based at Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth and Ludlow, defending the Welsh Marches.

The stoutly-built house, surrounded by a moat and situated along with the adjacent church on a natural defensive knoll, was further fortified by Sir Richard Newport after he was persuaded to join the Royalist cause in 1643. These new fortifications probably included the deepening of the moat, and possibly the construction of a drawbridge referred to on a fragment of stone in the garden wall. In addition, Hardwicke observed that the ruins of five defensive watchtowers were in existence 'until about the year 1796'. In 1646

the Parliamentary Committee of Shropshire ordered these new defensive works be slighted, and the moat drained (CSPD, 6/4/46). Like a number of Shropshire gentry Newport had prudently been unwilling to openly side with either faction until it became clear that the differences between King and Parliament were not resolvable through negotiation.

Newport was an important local figure, the family had important marital links to a number of Shropshire gentry, and the large estates provided the resources to raise and arm about 200 men (Symonds Diary Add.MSS. Brit.Mus.17062), and donate £6000 to the King, for which he was created Lord Newport. According to Stockhouse Acton, the Parliamentary Committee for Compounding noted that his support had been vital in confirming the support of the County Militia to the King, and that thereafter he and his son Francis had played an important role in the Royalist Committee of Array (Stockhouse Acton 1867,44–48).

In 1645 the tide of war turned against the Royalists in the West; Shrewsbury fell in February, and following the rout at Naseby a few months later, the Parliamentary Colonels Reinking and Mytton succeeded in subduing Shropshire, the fall of High Ercall in 1646 leaving only Ludlow in the Kings hands. The protracted siege was proof of the strength of the fortified manor house; when ordnance was brought up to quell it, it was reported that 20 barrels of gunpowder were required by the parliamentary guns, which inflicted severe damage on the garrison (Stockhouse Acton 1867,47), in Hardwicke's words 'prostrating the high and mighty walls spread in ruins its hospitable halls, and exposed its spacious and ornamented chambers to the elements ...'. Eventually 212 men and horse surrendered. Following the intense bombardment the hall reverted to a farmhouse, and while the Parliamentary Committee was instructed not to demolish the house when the new fortifications were slighted (*op cit*), clearly a great deal of damage had been done. In his will, proved in 1651, Sir Richard Newport (as he had reverted to) clearly bemoaned the loss of his house here: 'Since it hath pleased Almighty God that in the malignity of these present times my family is dissolved, my chief home High Ercall is ruined, my household stuff and stock sold, woods wasted, and my whole estate of years past sequestered...for having assisted the King' (Barnard MSS 2/5/14). No documentary evidence referring to the rebuilding of the hall was found, but again Hardwicke notes that 'after sometime the ruined walls were rebuilt in the same style as they first appeared with many gables of brick and in 1651 was occupied by John Stanier, gent and agent to Sir Francis Newport II. He mentions another tenant called Ellesmere, so it is possible the house was divided in two at this time.

A number of stray finds have been located in the immediate area of the hall relating to the Civil War period. These include; a collection of musket balls, found about 700m to the east of the house in what may have been the main camp of the Parliamentarians (SMR PRN 3738); a hoard of about 1000 Elizabethan and Carolinian coins reported by Forrest as being found in *c.*1880 when part of the moat was levelled (also noted by Hardwicke, but dated 1817); and a human skeleton was found in 1977, which, while the stratigraphic relationship had been destroyed, was thought to post-date the Civil War period.

Cartographic evidence concerning the development of the house proved disappointing. No estate maps appear to have survived, if indeed any had been made, and the early county maps, including the Rocque map of 1752, are not of sufficiently detailed scale to be useful in identifying changes in the ground plan of the house. The Tithe Map of 1832, and the later more informative large-scale Ordnance Survey maps, show that the ground plan of the hall has remained essentially the same for the past 160 years, although the arrangement of the farm-buildings has altered. However, Blakeway included a transcription of a set of household accounts, dated 1687, which contain many references to continuing building works and redecoration, as well as to the structure of the household (Blakeway MS10 SPLMF 37).

The various illustrations of the house which have been located and studied so far have proved far more interesting. In particular, two illustrations which accompanied the draft text of

the proposed Dukes County History, and probably date from sometime between the late 18th and early19th century, clearly show a large stone defensive tower rising above the roof line of the later house, located just behind, and slightly to the west of, the northeast elevation. The tower appears to be in a somewhat ruinous state, but is recognisably older than the rest of the house, and may even equate with the strong tower mentioned in the marriage settlement of 1424. If this tower was still extant in the late 18th century then it is just possible that the 2-inch draft map made by the Ordnance Survey for the 1-inch series *c.*1817 might contain sufficient detail to show this feature if it survived to that date, but it was certainly not recorded on the Tithe Map of 1832. In addition, two cottages are clearly visible in the garden to the north of the hall. While the evidence of these illustrations should be treated with some caution, and further confirmation of these two prints either by reference to the 2-inch map or other illustrations is required, it is interesting to note that Mytton refers to the Hall as the castle, which raises the possibility that High Ercall might be a reverse image of nearby Moreton Corbet Castle, where the new Elizabethan wing was destroyed and the castle remained intact after the Civil War

One case which highlights the dangers of relying too heavily on the authenticity of some illustrative material, is the print of the south elevation of the hall which appears in Stockhouse Acton. The perspective of the view is totally wrong, for it would be impossible to see the church at all from the position of the spectator. Pevsner made much of the arcade of four arches in the print, claiming that 'they must have originally been part of an open loggia such as still exists at Condover', and concurring with the print stating it was 'probably part of a range of buildings forming one composition with the remaining two ranges'. This now appears to be highly unlikely, given the doubt cast on the linkage of Hancock to both Condover and High Ercall, and the probable location of the strong tower in what would have been the centre of this building, a proposition that is supported by the exposure during excavation of a massive sandstone wall-footing in this area, a footing far too large to be the foundation of any wing of the 17th-century house. It would appear to be far more likely that the loggia is, as Gomme claims, a folly or a minor garden feature, especially as no mention of it is made in Mytton's notes.

Finally, the illustrations suggest that the roof was tiled with large slates, rather than the present small clay tiles. These may well have been of the local Harnage slate which was quarried near Cound and appears to have been used extensively on larger buildings in the area from the later Middle Ages until the mid-17th century (VCH 1968,68; Lawson 1985,118). Fragments of these tiles appear making up the level of various courses throughout the building, and the steeply-pitched angle of the roof together with the massive nature of the roof timbers support this possibility. A number of tiles of Harnage slate was also found during the excavation.

The evidence relating to the development of the hall in the 18th century and after appears to indicate that at some point prior to 1868, when the Stockhouse Acton print was published, another programme of building work was instituted. There is a tantalising reference in a pamphlet on the archaeology of High Ercall produced by Anslow in 1883, a pamphlet which includes the primary description of the coin hoard, stating that the compilation of the history of the house was greatly aided by the present owner, a Mr Steedman, who had restored the house about 20 years earlier with due respect to the historic nature of the building; it may be possible to locate building records for this work.

A Summary of Recommendations

1. Archaeological excavation and monitoring; consideration should be given to the routing of the service trench and the building of the conservatory in such a way as to avoid the disturbance of the 'stone tower' and the yard respectively. If this is neither feasible nor practical then some provision for archaeological excavation and recording of threatened features and deposits should be considered. Depending on the degree of re-excavation of the moat, the monitoring of groundworks may constitute a more than adequate archaeological response.
2. Building recording; the recording of features exposed by the programme of internal plaster stripping could aid the interpretation of the building's history and should be considered as part of the overall renovation scheme. Photographic recording of the present roof space and roof structure prior to renovation is recommended.
3. Documentary research; the potential exists for a short programme of further documentary research, to include the examination of the legal documentation relating to the ownership of the property and records in collections outside the county. If works associated with Recommendations 1. and 2. above are carried out, then a more coherent context for those works could be provided by a second stage of research running in tandem.

. . oo Ooo . .

Appendices

1. Environmental Sample (by Russell Heath)

A sub-sample of waterlogged deposit 1011 from Trench 1 was wet-sieved and a total of 2.1g (from 500g) of organic material was recovered. Remains of acorns and blackberries, tree buds and leaf fragments were recovered, along with a large number of insect remains; this is in addition to larger pieces of wood and branch recovered by hand from the samples.

The organic remains are both profuse and well-preserved and represent micro-environmental material not generally available for the period of the mid-17th century from when the deposit will have been laid down.

2. Stucco-work

During the inspection of the interior of the Hall two boxes of mainly decorated plaster fragments were found in the roof space; the evident interest in this discovery led to the finding of further boxes in one of the outbuildings, thanks to information from Mr. R. Hadlington, the site agent. The plaster or, more properly, stucco fragments represented the remains of a decorated ceiling of some pretension, and it would be churlish not to assume that it is derived from the Hall. More problematic is its date; the style of the motifs used, that is high-relief bunches of grapes, trailing vine tendrils, oak-leaves and acorns and so on, would fit well a date in the first quarter of the 17th century (see Puloy 1982 for dated ceilings in Hertfordshire; unfortunately no comparable county survey exists for Shropshire) though it must be borne in mind that the later Victorian vogue for all things Jacobean sometimes led to the production of bogus ceiling designs (Puloy 1982, 144).

While not of the highest workmanship the stuccowork is nevertheless the product of a skilled craftsman and it might be expected that one of the many Italian *stuccatori* working in England at this time (Beard 1964; Beard 1975) may have been responsible for the work; however, without documentary evidence, neither the identity of the craftsman nor a precise date for the work can be ventured.

It may be possible to reconstruct some portions of the ceiling design – this has not yet been attempted – and it is possible that photographs of the ceiling *in situ* could be in the possession of previous owners of the Hall.

3. The Finds (by Lynne Bevan)

Pottery

A total of 221 sherds of pottery was recovered from the evaluation. Of these the majority (114 sherds) was of a 19th/20th century date, and came from the uppermost levels of the evaluation trenches, in most cases alongside residual pottery of the 16th–18th centuries (102 sherds). Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from Trench 3, a 12th–14th century cooking pot rim from 3001 and a 14th–15th century jug handle from 3004. In Trench 5 part of a 14th–15th century bowl/saucer came from deposit 5002 and may, in fact, date this horizon.

Harnage Slates

Pieces of Harnage slate roof tile were recovered from the excavation and it seems likely that this material was originally used for roofing the Hall. Slates came from Trench 1 (1008), Trench 2 (2009) and Trench 5 (5000) and a complete tile, with peg hole, was found in the garden.

4. Location of Historical Sources

Aerial Photographs of the area did not offer any further interpretation of the earthworks or other related features The main sets consulted were vertical *c.*1:10000 black-and-white photographs taken for planning purposes, a few oblique shots taken recently on colour print which, while more detailed, did not reveal anything not already highlighted by the recent Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of the area.

Cartographic sources before the Ordnance Survey coverage in the 19th century are all of insufficient scale to identify the block plan of the house, although Rocque (1752) appears to suggest an L-plan. The first Ordnance Survey map, the 2-inch draft *c.*1817 for the 1-inch edition may contain more detail, however, this was not located during the initial search. The 1839 Tithe Map of High Ercall (SRO 2258/1, fig.1) whilst predating the large-scale Ordnance Survey plans by *c.*40 years, appears to show little difference in the block plan of the house, although it is interesting to note that the arrangement of farm-buildings and outhouses was different, and also that to the southwest of the enclosure a long narrow strip of water might represent the last waterlogged arm of the moat, now almost completed levelled. Further southwest, a pond may correspond to the SMR listing of a medieval fishpond in this area (PRN 4071). The Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps (fig.2) show the house much as it is today, although it is clear that the moat has been substantially levelled on the southwest side.

Only three illustrations are reproduced below (Figures 17–19), attributed to Dukes and Stockhouse Acton respectively, unfortunately these are the least remarkable views of the house (see discussion above); further illustrations are known to exist in Dukes MSS for a county history (207,208,216), – in Pearson c.1820, and possibly in Shropshire Views (Jones 1829). Other descriptions of the house may be found in Blakeway MS 10, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and in Hardwicke's Shropshire Collections vol.ii in the William Salt Library, Stafford. Mytton did not make a sketch of the hall (the Mytton MSS 7/ii/1–7 in Birmingham University Library), although he did make several sketches and descriptions of the church and monuments, including the plaque present on the middle, northeast gable of the hall (7/ii/450–459). In addition, the Buckler collection in the British Library should be consulted.

Apart from various references to High Ercall in the calendared records of the Public Record Office which were not consulted in the course of this survey, the main body of primary documentary evidence is contained in the Barnard MSS in the possession of the present Lord, but largely catalogued and transcribed by Hill in the SRO (4 volumes). The main entries relating to the arrangement of the hall and manor are as follows:

2/2/8 the first will of Sir Francis Newport dated 1604, which includes an itemisation of building materials to be conferred to his son,

2/3/7–8 a settlement of the manor of 1613/4,

2/3/11 includes a description of the desmesne in the same year, 2/4/58–9 a lease which specifically defines the house be kept in repair, 2/5/14 the will of Sir Richard Newport proved in 1651,

1/39/5 (same as copy in SRO 659/1) which describes the restored Newport estates in 1680, and

1/1/44–46 which is an earlier account of the settlement of a Dower House near the church made in 1332.

Materials in the SRO include: 659/1, 778/5 1313/170–1 and 1848/SP27 a–b which record the sale of the house in 1930, and a set of undated black and white photographs of the hall 2063/115–7.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological work was carried out under the supervision of Iain Ferris and Jon Sterenberg, assisted by Rob Atkins, Sally Finter, Martin Lightfoot, Steve Litherland, Jonathan McKelvey, Ed Newton, and Luigi Signorelli, and the earthwork survey supervised by Laurence Jones. The finds were processed by Lynne Bevan, while Russell Heath commented on the samples from the ditch. All figures were prepared by Mark Breedon, with the exception of the survey drawing which was prepared by Laurence Jones and Luigi Signorelli, the text was typed by Ann Humphries and the report produced by Liz Hooper.

Steve Litherland would like to thank the staff of the following organisations for their assistance during the course of the documentary survey: the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record; the Local Studies Library, Shrewsbury; the County Record Office, Shire Hall; and Paul Stamper of the Shropshire Victoria County History.

Finally, thanks to Mr. R. Hadlington, the agent overseeing the works at Ercall Hall, for his help and interest during the archaeological work.

References

Airs, M. 1982 *The Buildings of Britain: Tudor and Jacobean.*

Airs, M. 1984 Lawrence Shipway, Freemason. *Architectural History* 27, 368-73.

Anslow, R. 1883 *The Archaeology of High Ercall.*

Barley, M. 1986 *Houses and History*

Beard, G. 1964 Italian Stuccoists in England. *Apollo* (July) 48-56

Beard, G. 1975 *Decorative Plasterwork in Great Britain*

Crossley, D. 1990 *Post-Medieval Archaeology in Britain*

Dukes, F. (ed.) 1844 *Antiquities of Shropshire*

Everitt, A. 1969 The Local Community and the Great Rebellion *Historical Association Pamphlets* G70.

Eyton, R.W. 1854-60 *Antiquities of Shropshire* Vols.1-12.

Ferris, I.M. 1986 A Survey of Hamstall Hall, Staffordshire. *Transactions of the South Staffs. Archaeological and Historical Society* 26, 44-82.

Firth, C.H. 1902 *Cromwell's Army.*

Forrest, H.E. 1924 *Some Shropshire Houses and Their Owners.*

Gaunt, P. 1987 *The Cromwellian Gazetteer*

Gomme, A. 1988 High Ercall Hall. *Report of the Society of Architectural History 1988*,19.

Hall, J. (ed.) 1889 Thomas Malbon's Diary. *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society*, Vol.19.

Hardwicke, W. *c.*1830 *Shropshire Collections* Vol. 2

Harrington, P. 1987 English Civil War Fortifications. *Fort* No.15, 39-60

Hill, M.C. 1984 The Demesne and the Waste: a Study of Medieval Enclosure on the Manor of High Ercall, 1086-1399. *T.S.A.S.* 62.

Hutton, R. 1982 *The Royalist War Effort 1642-1646.*

Jones 1829 *Shropshire Views*

Kenyon, J.R. 1990 *Castles, Town Defences, and Artillery Fortifications in Britain and Ireland: a Bibliography, Volume 3.* CBA Research Report No.72

Lawson, J.B. 1985 Harnage Slates and Other Roofing Materials in Shrewsbury and Neighbourhood in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period. *T.S.A.S.* 64, 116-117.

Long,C. (ed.) 1859 Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army During the Great Civil War, by Richard Symonds. *Camden Society Papers*, Series 1, No.74.

Mercer,E. and Stamper, P. 1989 Plaish Hall and Early Brickwork in Shropshire. *T.S.A.S.* 66 90-96.

Newman, J. 1988 The Elizabethan and Jacobean Great House: a Review of Recent Research. *Archaeological Journal* 145, 365-373.

Pennington,D.H. and Roots, I.A. 1957 The Committee At Stafford 1643-1645. *Staffordshire Historical Collections*, 4th Series, Vol.1.

Pevsner,N. 1958 *The Buildings of England: Shropshire.*

Puloy, M. 1982 Decorative Plasterwork in Hertfordshire. *Hertfordshire Archaeology* Volume 8, 144-199

Ross, W.G.	1887	*Military Engineering During the Great Civil War 1642-1649*
Sherwood, R.E.	1974	*Civil Strife in the Midlands 1642-1651.*
Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology	1988	*Research Priorities for Post-Medieval Archaeology*
Stockhouse Acton, F.	1867	*The Garrisons of Shropshire During the Civil War 1642-1648.*
Summerson, J.	1977	*Architecture in Britain 1530-1830.* 6th Revised Edition
Thompson, M.W.	1987	*The Decline of the Castle*
Tipping, A.H.	1920	High Ercall Hall and Eyton-on Severn, Shropshire, The Former Homes of the Newports. *Country Life* February 21st 1920, 234-240.
Trinder,B. and Cox, P.	1980	*Yeomen and Colliers: A Study of Probate Inventories for the Wellington Area 1660-1750.*
VCH	1968	*Victoria County History of Shropshire* Vol.8.
VCH	1989	*Victoria County History of Shropshire* Vol.4.
Wagner, E.	1979	*European Weapons and Warfare 1618-1648*
Watson, M.D.	1987	A Gazetteer of Moated Sites in Shropshire. *T.S.A.S.* 65, 1-12.

List of Figures

Figure 1	Location Plans
Figure 2	Trench 1; plan and section
Figure 3	Trench 2; plan and section
Figure 4	Trench 3; plan and section
Figure 5	Trench 4; plan and sections
Figure 6	Trench 5; plan
Figure 7	Trench 6; plan
Figure 8	The Earthwork Survey
Figure 9	Ercall Hall; ground and floor plans
Figure 10	Ercall Hall; Southern Range, West Wall; external elevation
Figure 11	Ercall Hall; Southern Range, West Wall; internal elevation
Figure 12	Ercall Hall; Southern Range, East Wall; external elevation
Figure 13	Ercall Hall; Southern Range, East Wall; internal elevation
Figure 14	Ercall Hall; Southern Range, South Wall; external elevation
Figure 15	Ercall Hall; Northern Range, South Wall; external elevation
Figure 16	Ercall Hall; Northern Range, East Wall; external elevation
Figure 17	Early 19th century watercolour by Farmer Dukes
Figure 18	Print in Stockhouse Acton *c.*1867
Figure 19	Print in Stockhouse Acton *c.*1867

HIGH ERCALL 1991 Location Plan

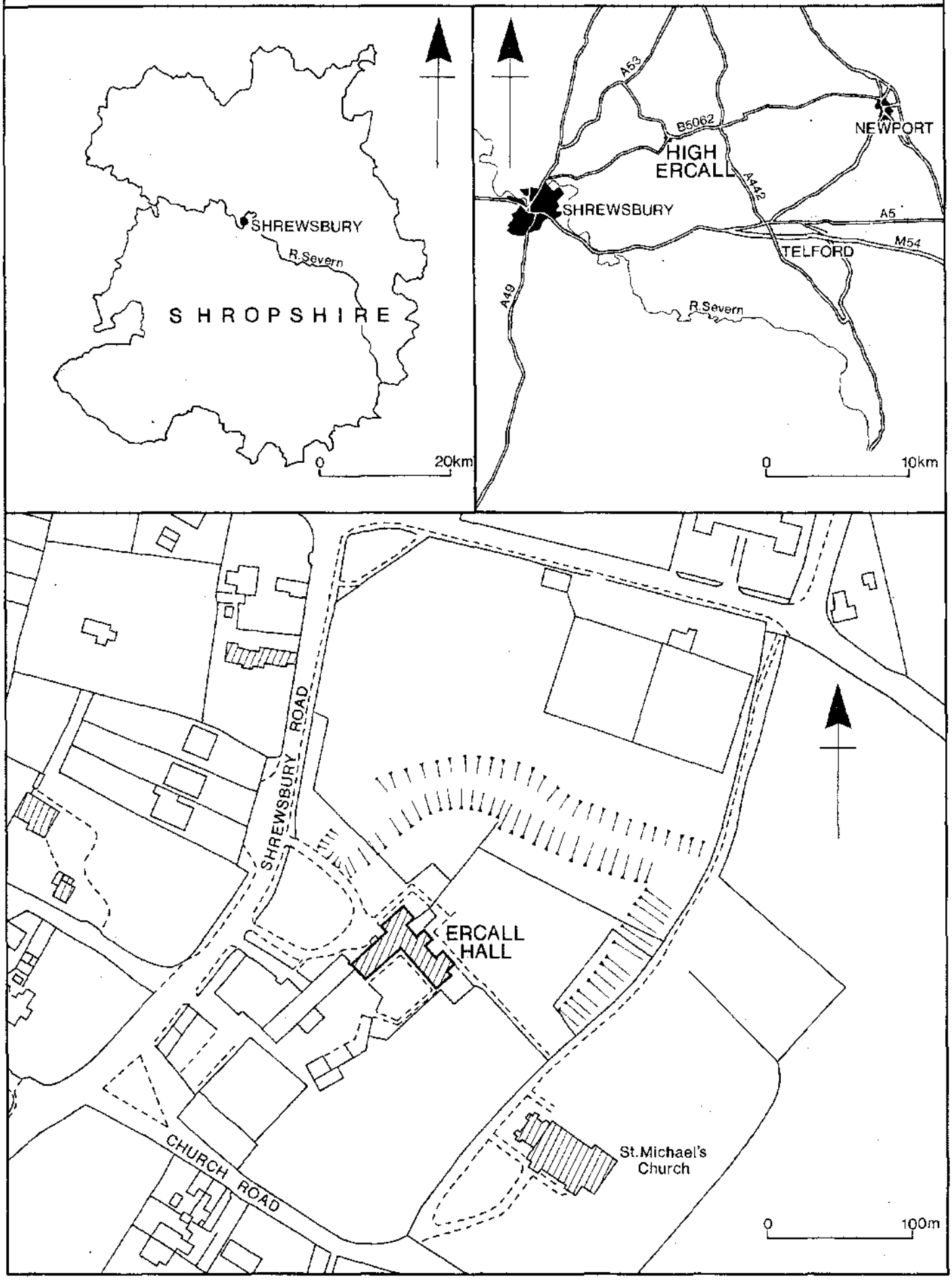


Figure 1

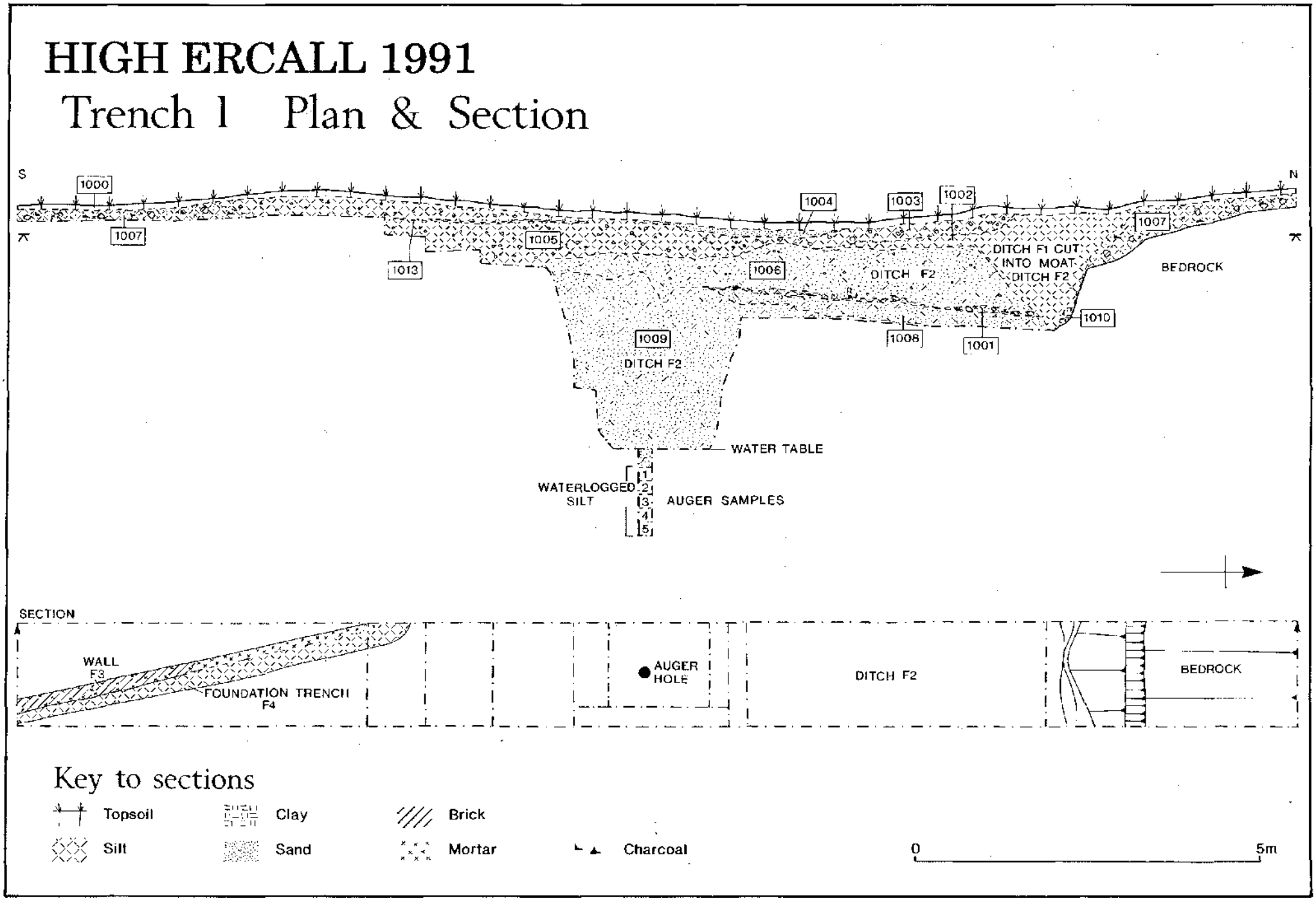
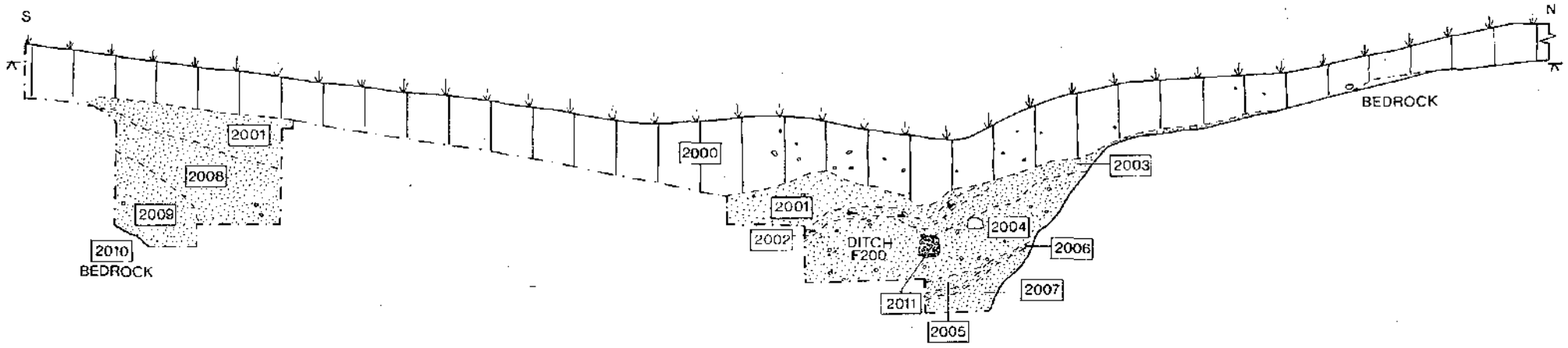
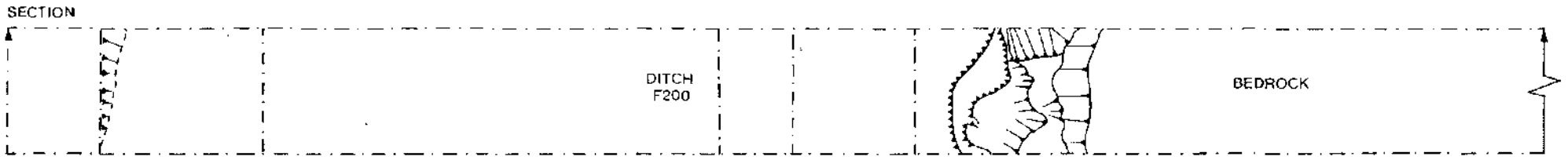

HIGH ERCALL 1991
Trench 1 Plan & Section
S
N
1000
1007
1013
1005
1004
1003
1002
1006
DITCH F2
DITCH F1 CUT INTO MOAT DITCH F2
BEDROCK
1010
1009
DITCH F2
1008
1001
WATER TABLE
WATERLOGGED SILT
1
2
3
4
5
AUGER SAMPLES
SECTION
WALL F3
FOUNDATION TRENCH F4
AUGER HOLE
DITCH F2
BEDROCK
Key to sections
Topsoil
Clay
Brick
Silt
Sand
Mortar
Charcoal
0
5m

Figure 2

HIGH ERCALL 1991

Trench 2 Plan & Section





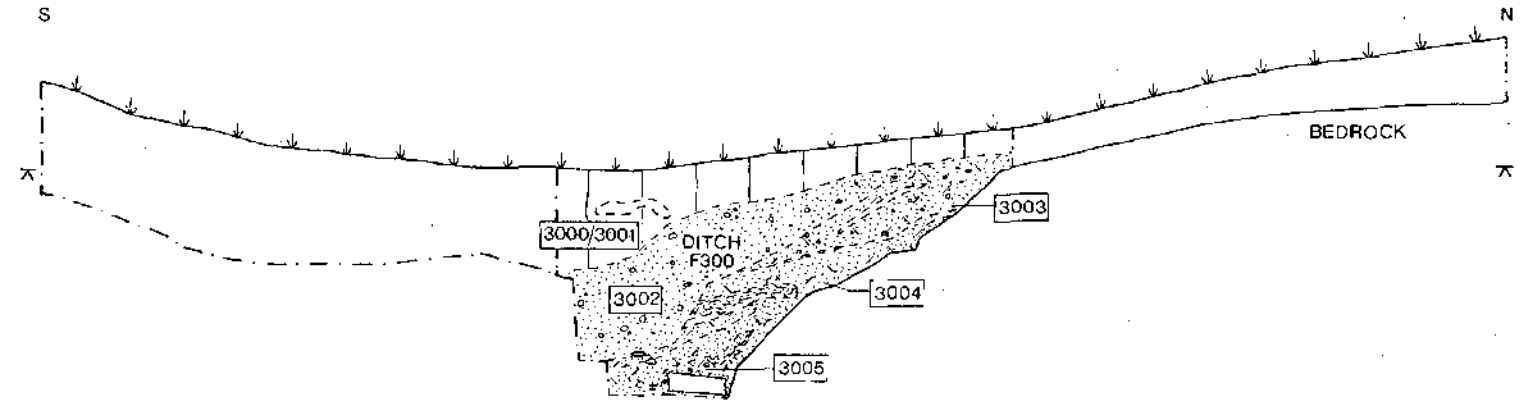
Key to section on Fig 2

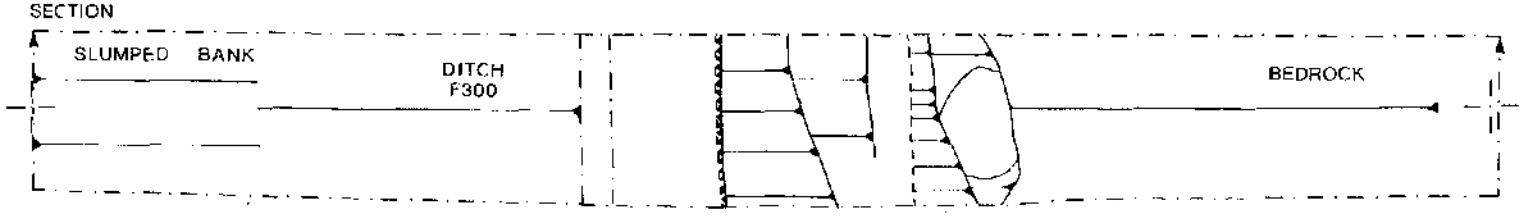
0 5m

Figure 3

HIGH ERCALL 1991

Trench 3 Plan & Section





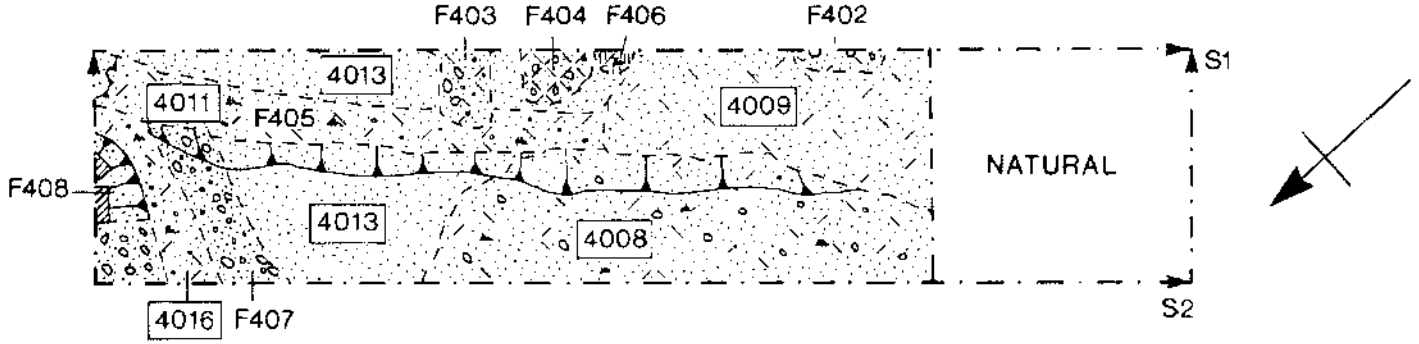
Key to section on Fig 2

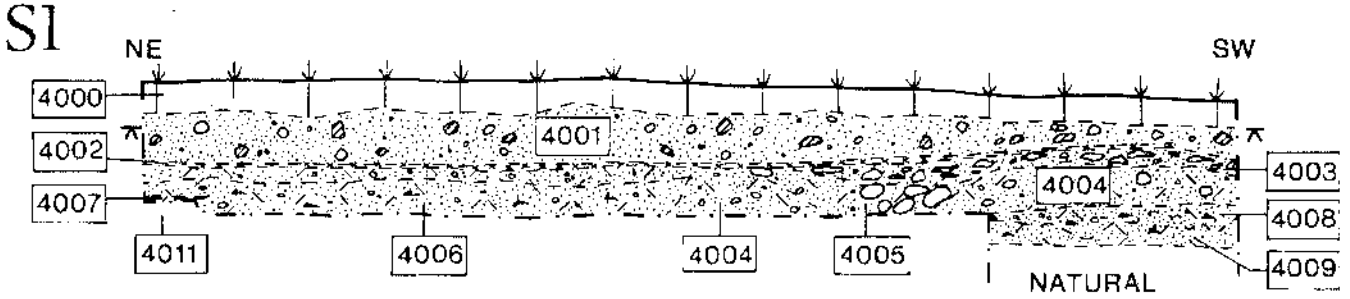
0 5m

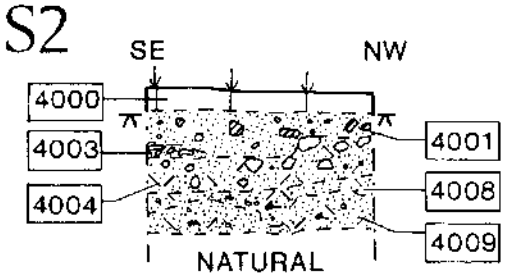
Figure 4

HIGH ERCALL 1991

Trench 4 Plan & Sections







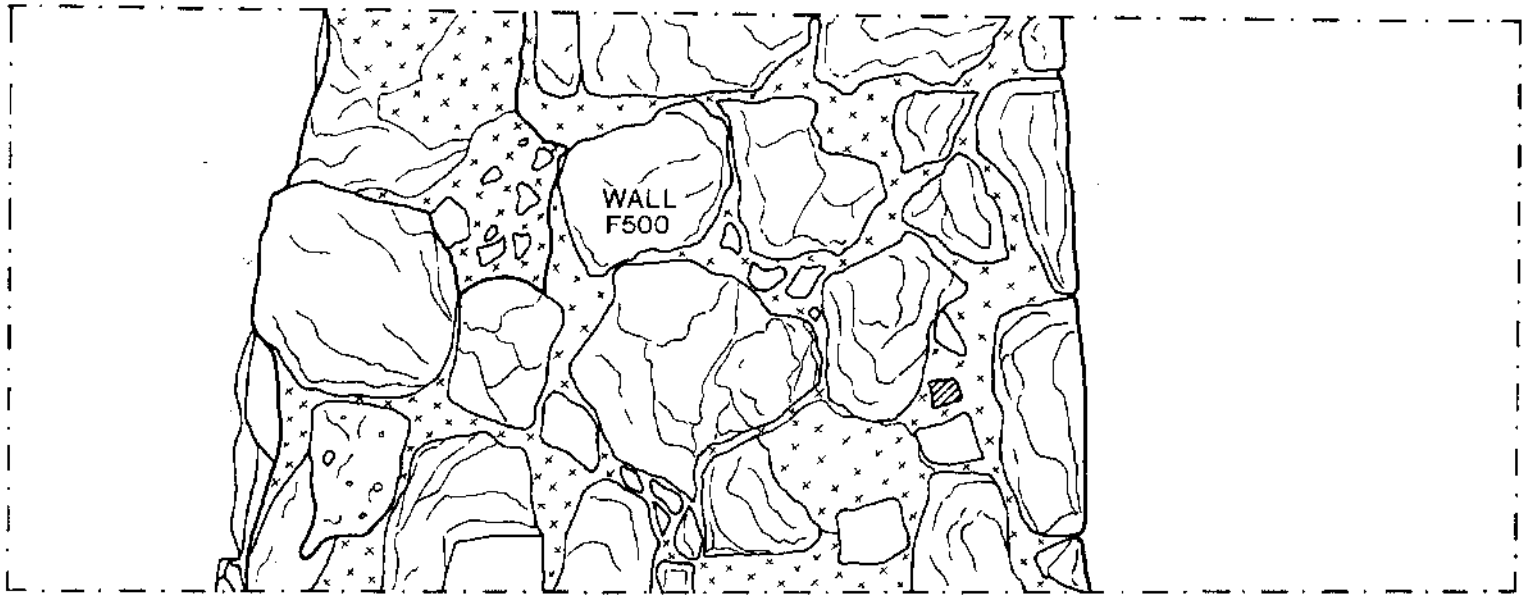
Key to sections on Fig 2

0 2m

Figure 5

HIGH ERCALL 1991

Trench 5 Plan



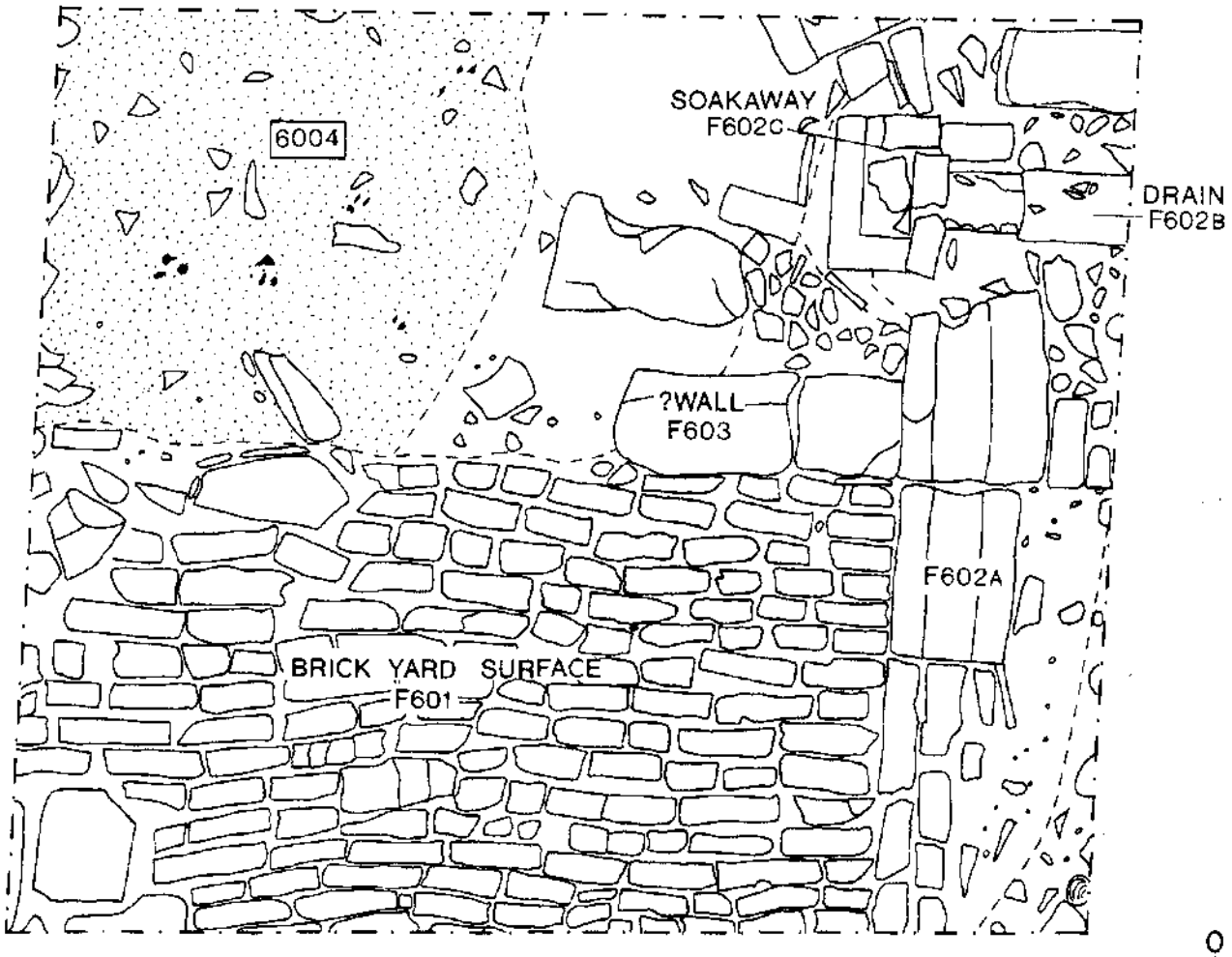
Key to plan on Fig 2

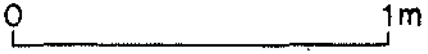
0 1m

Figure 6

HIGH ERCALL 1991

Trench 6 Plan





Key to plan on Fig 2

Figure 7

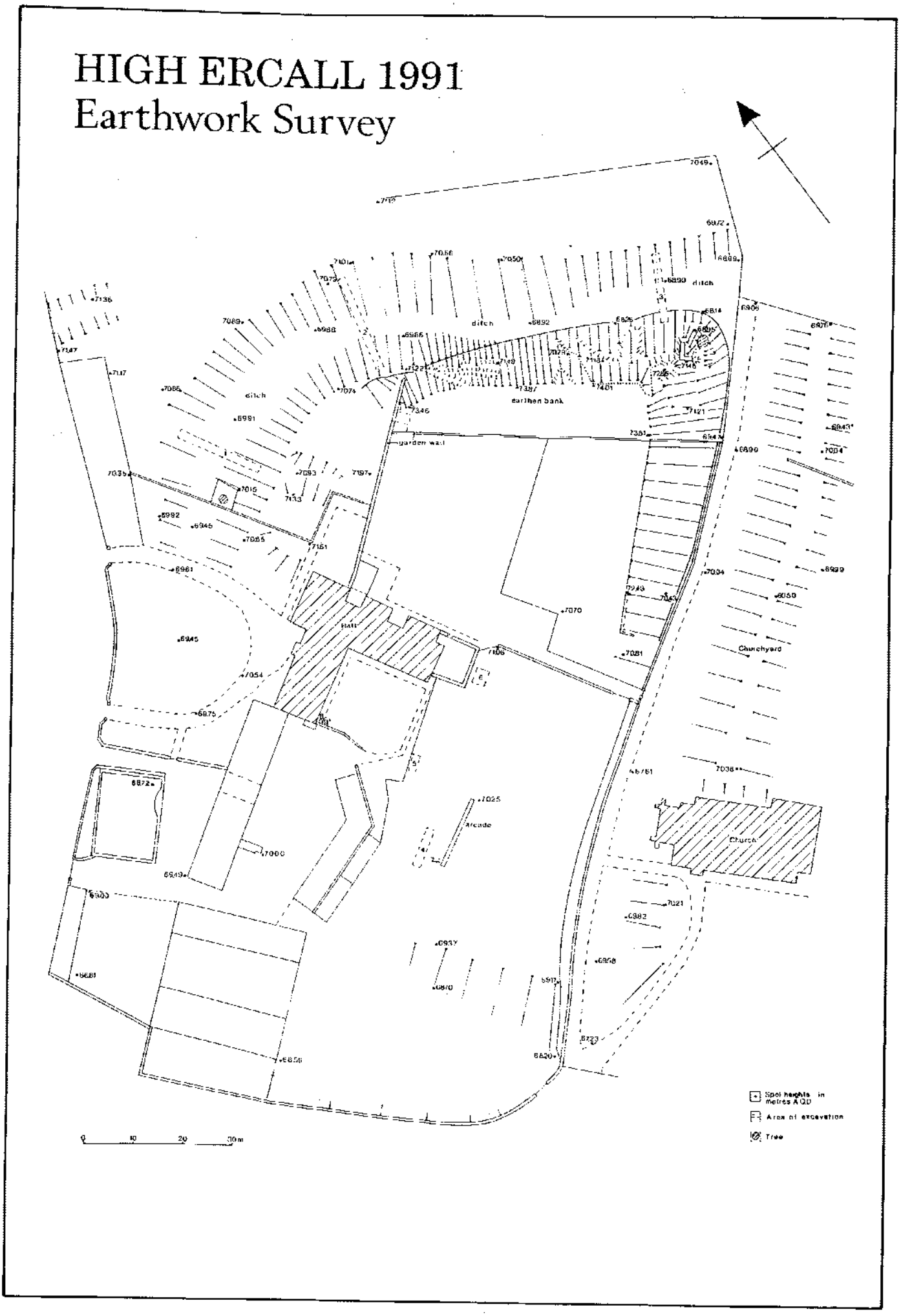

HIGH ERCALL 1991
Earthwork Survey
ditch
earthen bank
garden wall
Churchyard
Church
Arcade
Hall
Spot heights in metres AOD
Area of excavation
Tree
0
10
20
30m

Figure 8

HIGH ERCALL 1991

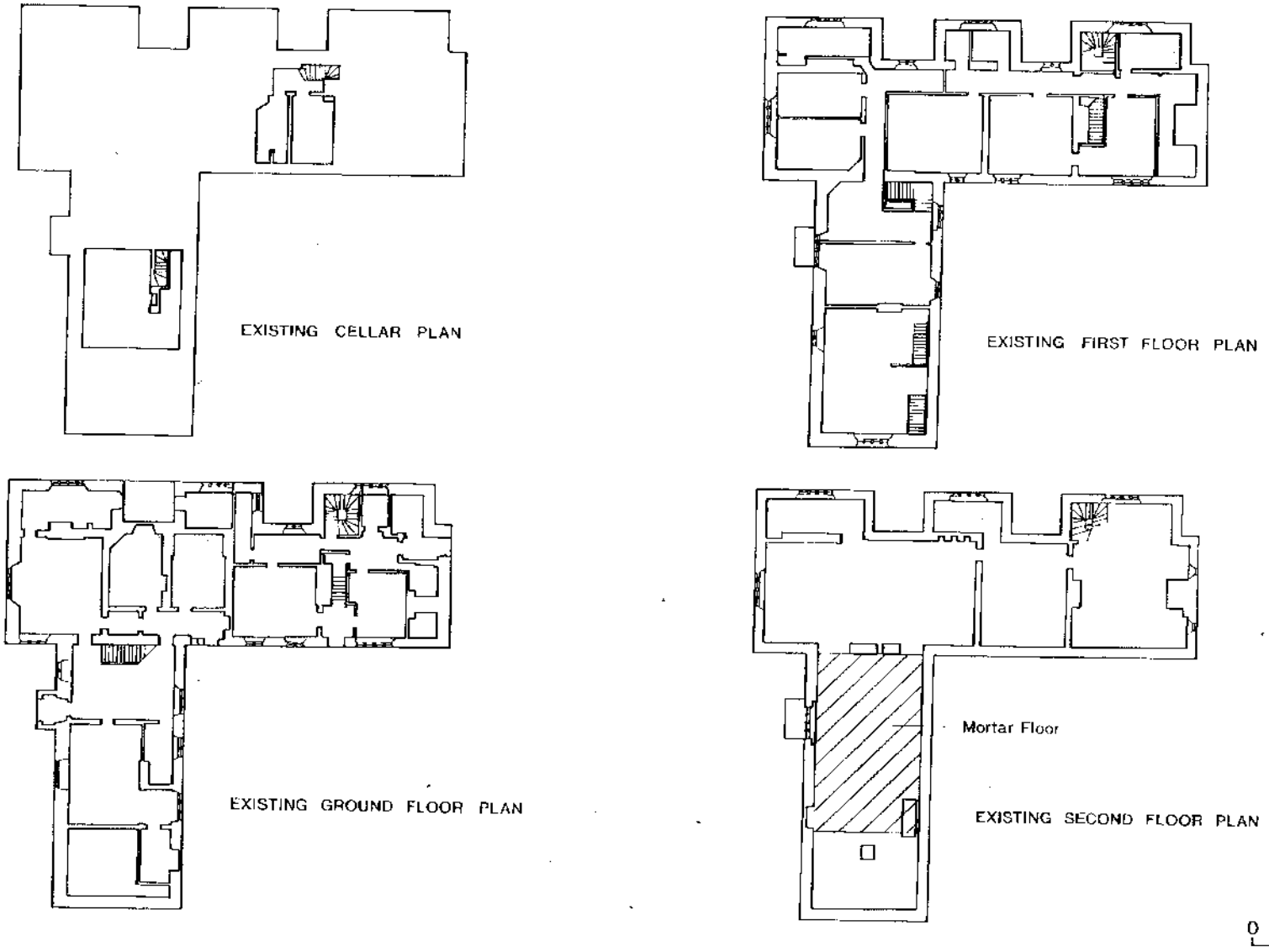
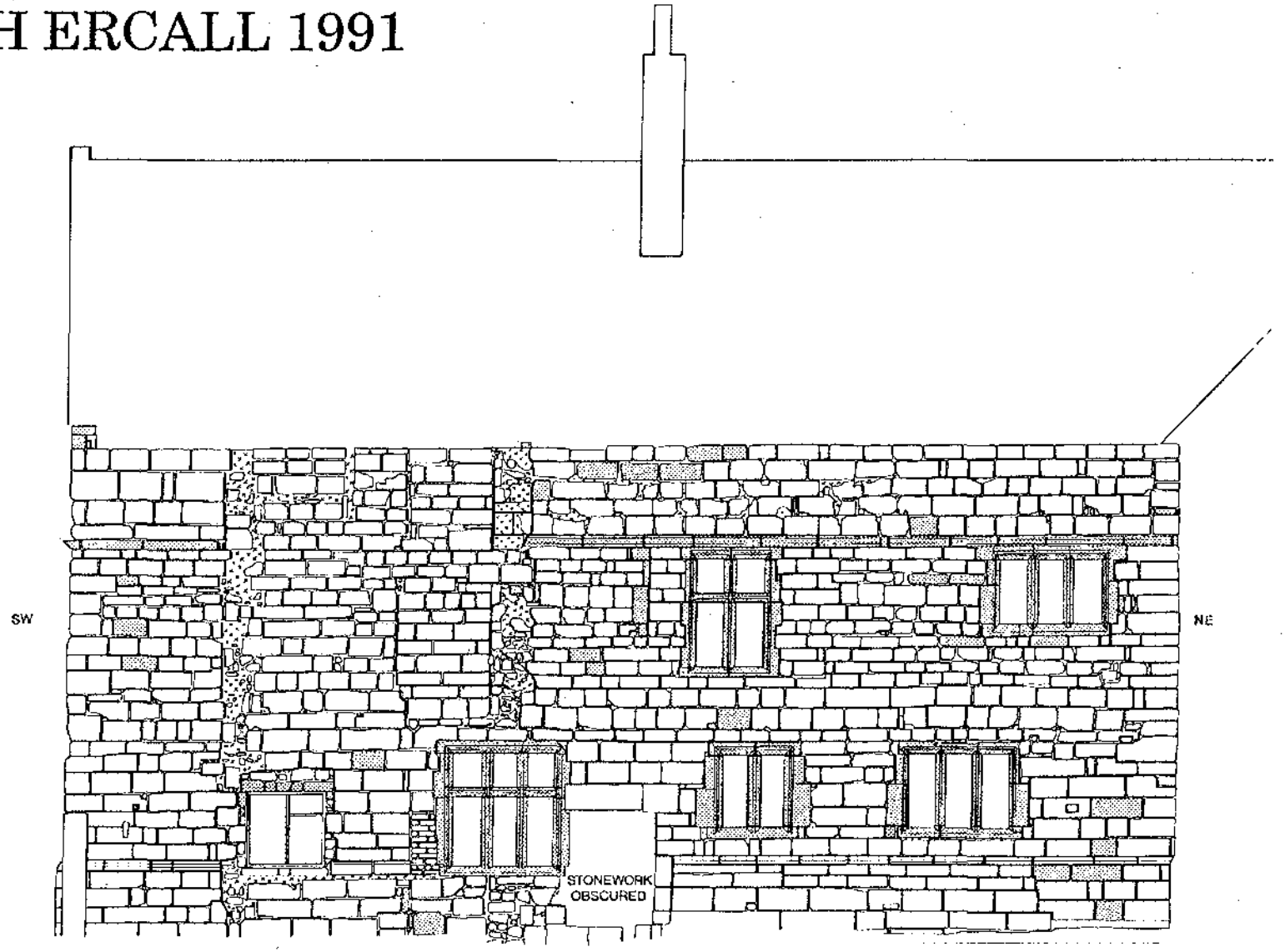


Figure 9

HIGH ERCALL 1991



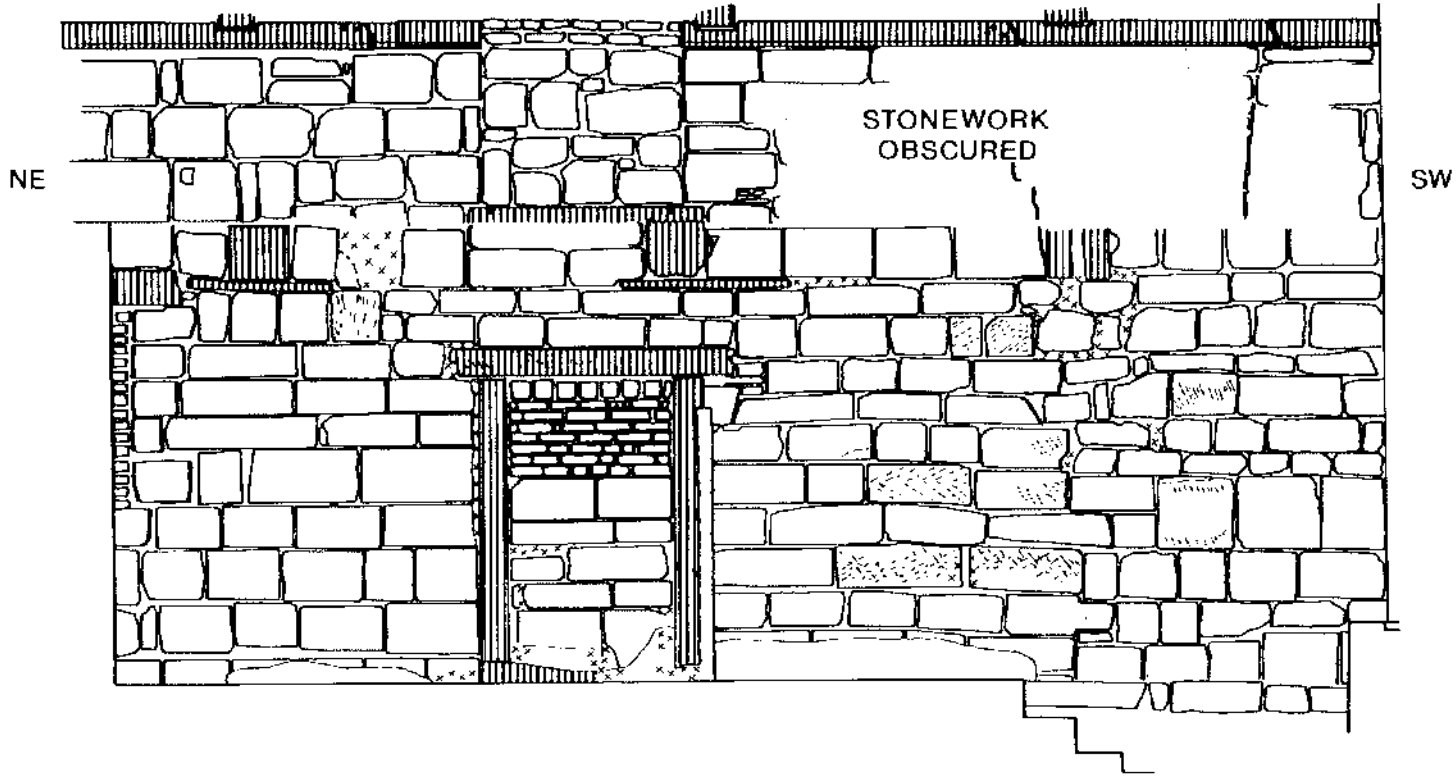
Grey Limestone

Yellow Sandstone

0 5m

Figure 12

HIGH ERCALL 1991

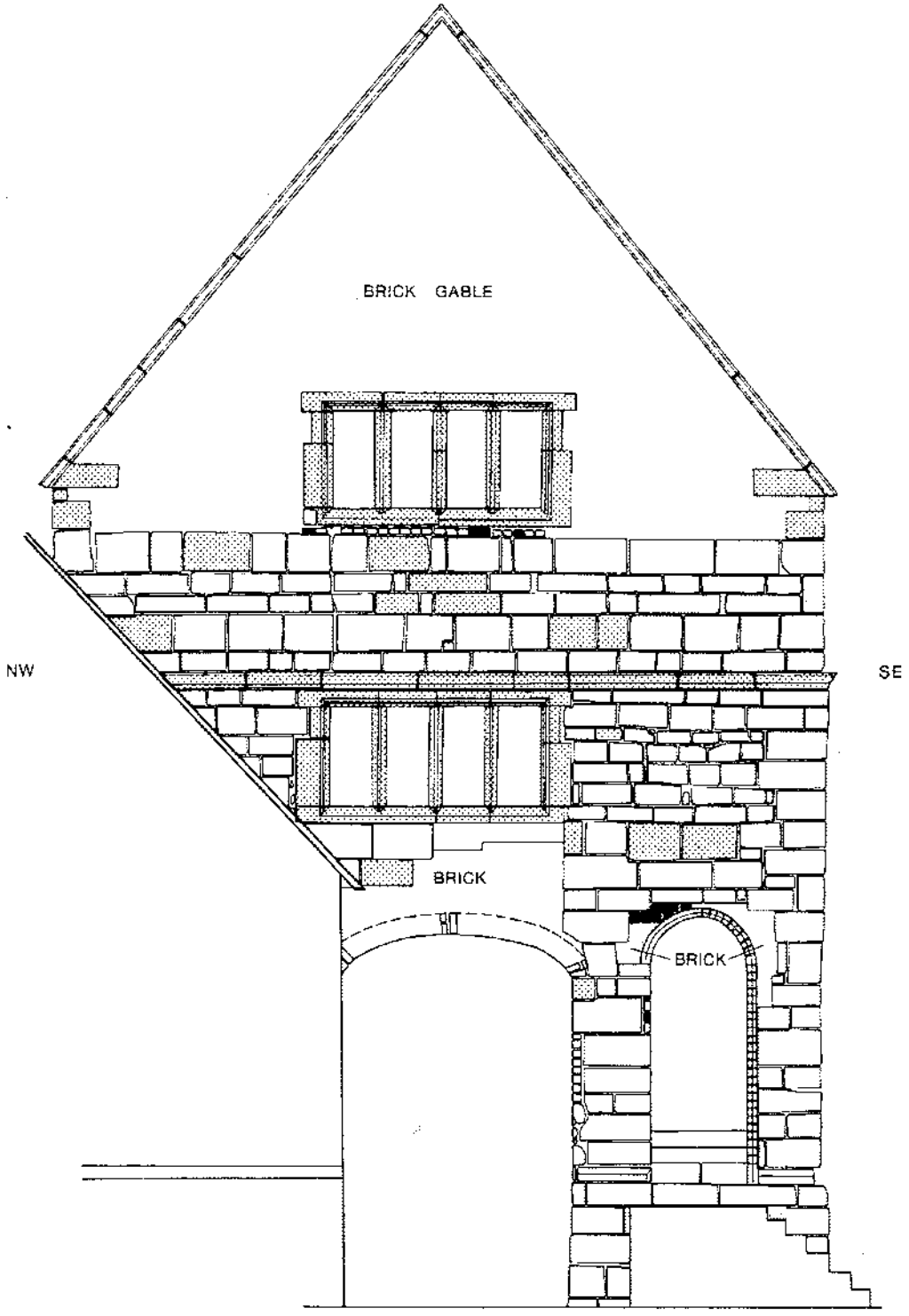


Timber

0 5m

Figure 13

HIGH ERCALL 1991



Grey Limestone

0 5m

Figure 14

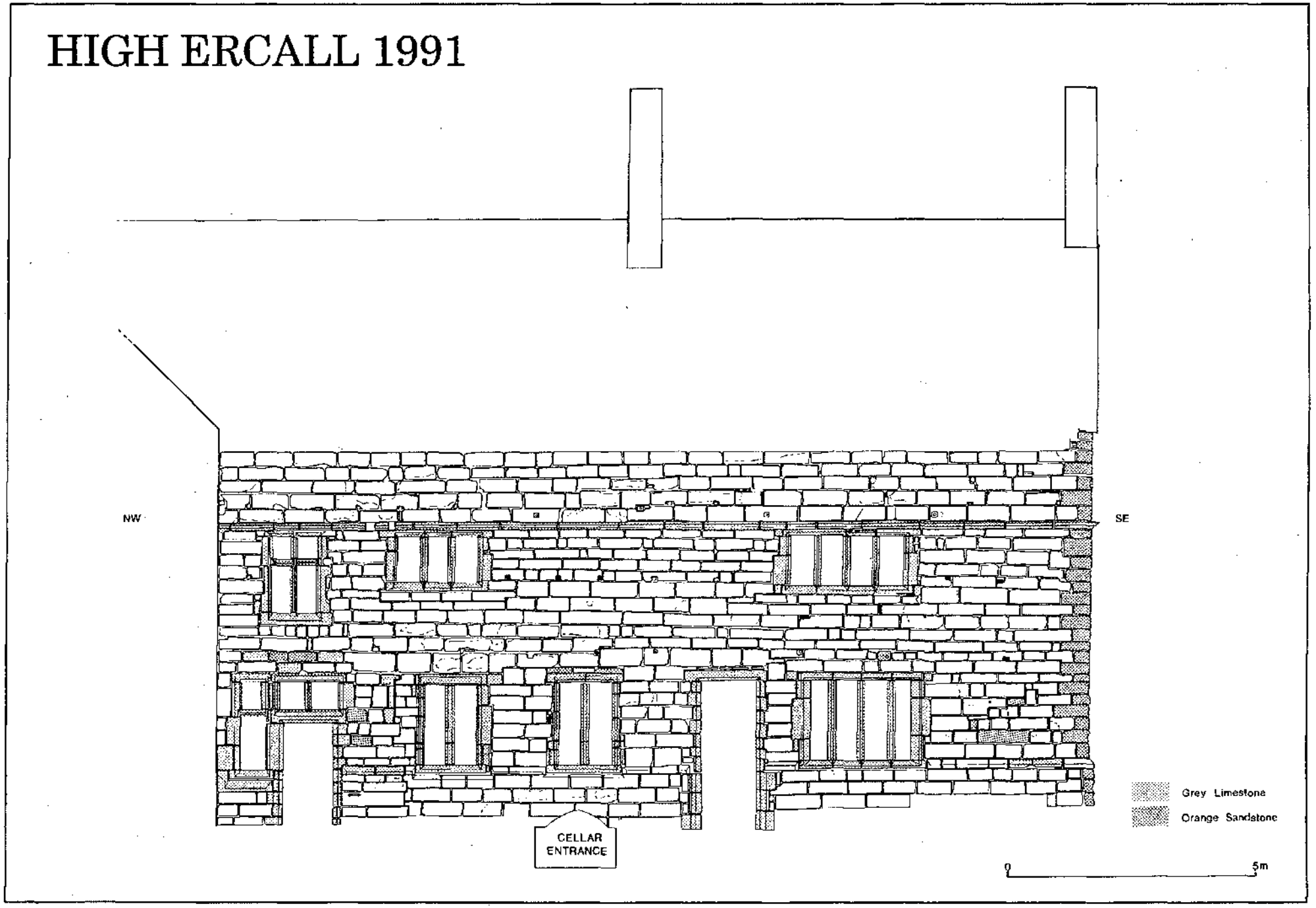

HIGH ERCALL 1991
NW
SE
CELLAR ENTRANCE
Grey Limestone
Orange Sandstone
0
5m

Figure 15

HIGH ERCALL 1991

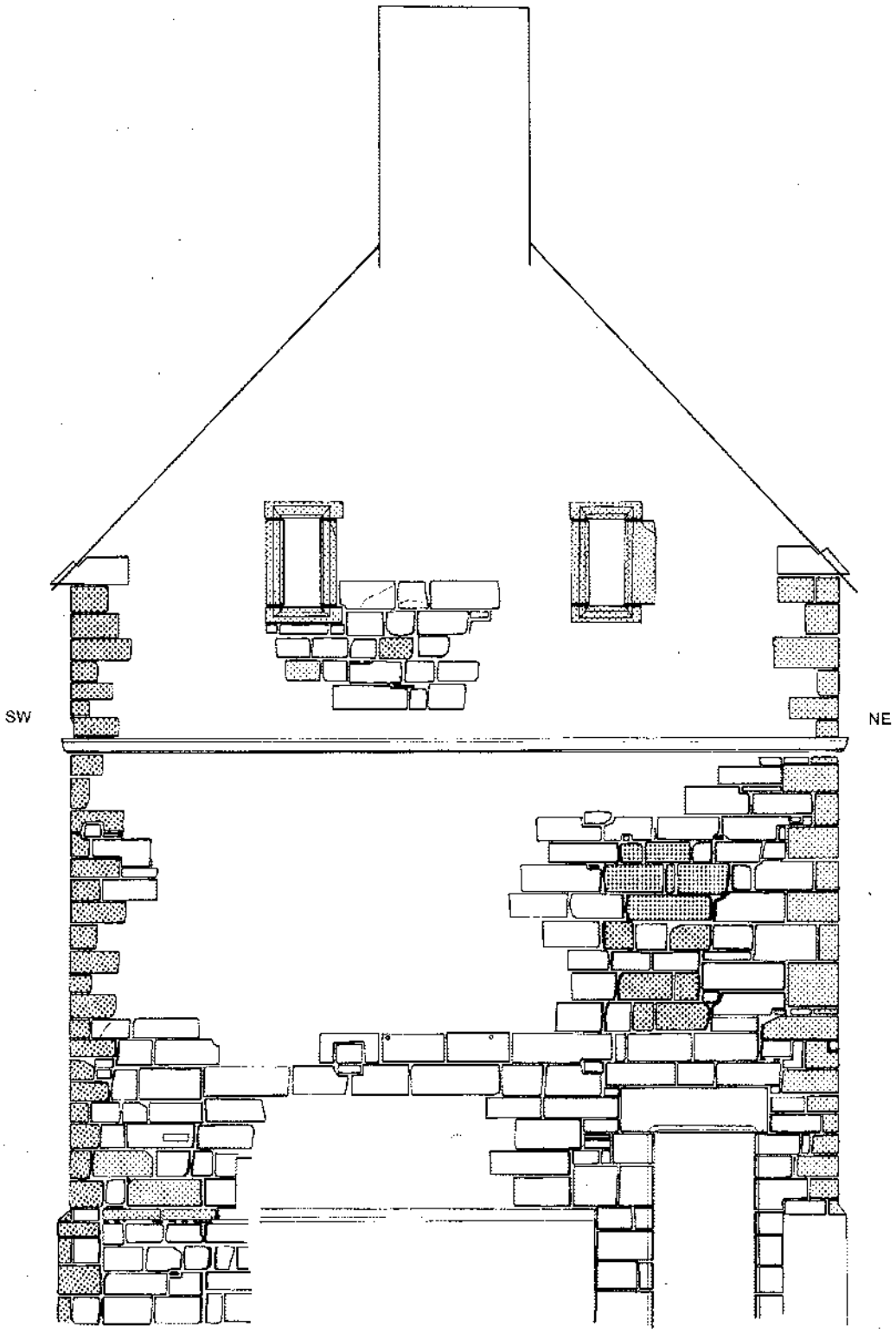


Figure 16

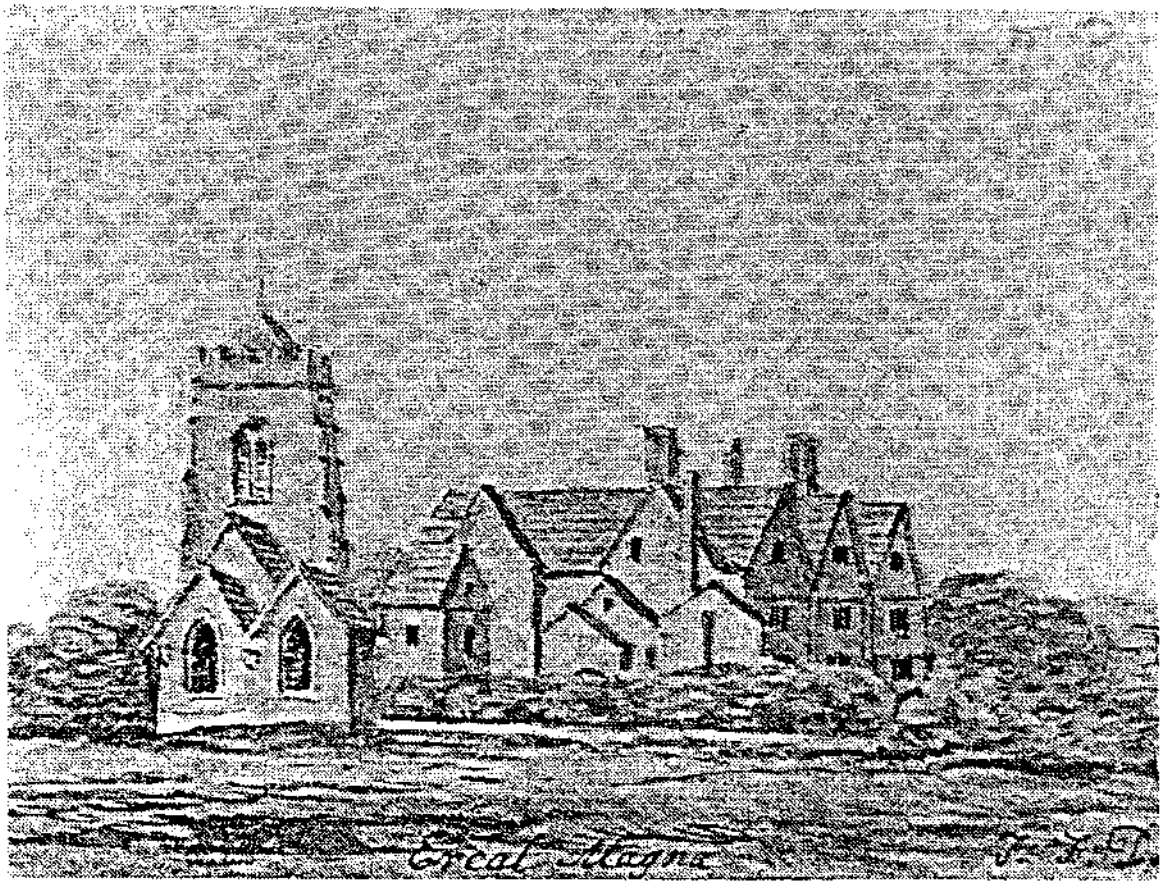


Figure 17

Figure 18

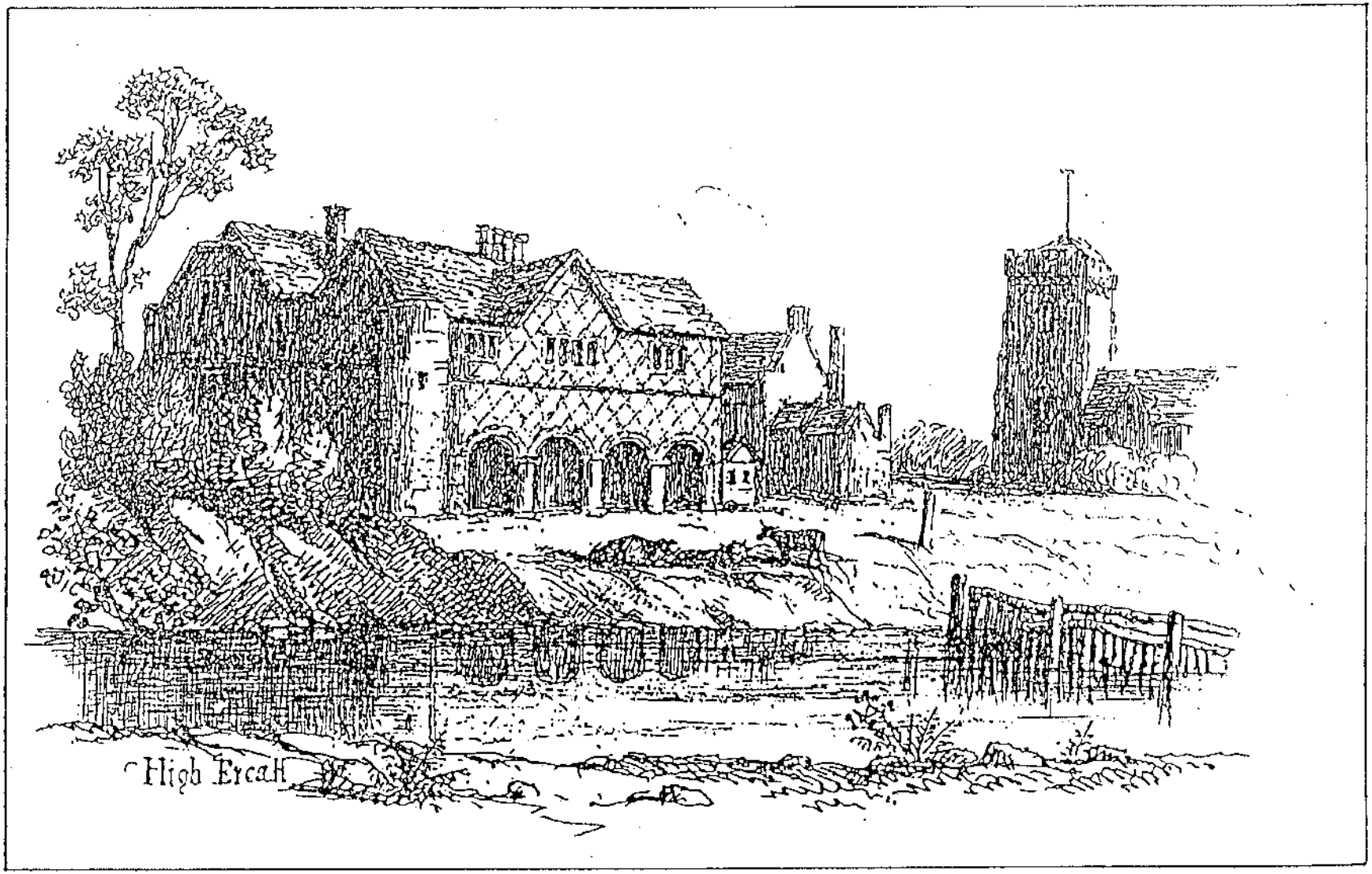


Figure 19