

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 959

**Building Survey at Woodbastwick Old Hall,  
Woodbastwick,  
Norfolk**

HER 38134

Kenneth Penn

June 2004

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Local Authority No. 100019340

Fig.1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (23/06/2004). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**



Location: The Old Hall, Woodbastwick, east Norfolk  
Grid Ref: TG 3265 1615  
HER No.: 38134  
Date of fieldwork: August 2003 to January 2004

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## **Summary**

*Proposed building work at The Old Hall, Woodbastwick, east Norfolk, prompted a record of specific features of the existing building before alteration/demolition or exposure during changes to the structure. Little evidence for original 16th or 17th century fabric was found, although one of the walls, when demolished contained architectural fragments, probably derived from a major ecclesiastical building, possibly from St Benets Abbey, not far away.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

The Old Hall, Woodbastwick, east Norfolk, is an unlisted house close to the River Bure in the Broads. The building lies within the park enclosing its 19th-century successor, the present Woodbastwick Hall.

This work was commissioned by FPD Savills on behalf of their client.

This building recording was undertaken in accordance with a Brief for Building Recording issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ER 12.4.03) and a project design for Building Recording prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU ref. JB/1590 May 2003). Woodbastwick is situated in Broadland.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## **2.0 Topography**

The house stands on the edge of the River Bure, along which there is an easy connection to St Benets Abbey, dissolved not long before the first hall was thought to have been built.

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The Old Hall is an 'L'-shaped building, thought to have been originally constructed around c. 1600. A wing was added to the north-western part of the building, during the mid 20th century, to form a U-shape.

A full description of the building by Edwin Rose is held in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) which provides the historical background to the present work.

## 4.0 Methodology

The objective of this watching brief was to record any elements to be demolished or altered by photographic survey, augmented with drawings where required, of exposed parts of the interior. With particular attention paid to features of historic importance and significant structural details, including worked stone. Also to note the use of re-used stone and to identify material to be salvaged and recorded.

The work was carried out during building operations at the Old Hall as opportunities occurred and carried on from August 2003 to January 2004. Recording was undertaken as specified areas were exposed and as building work allowed.

## 5.0 Results

### ***Area A: chimney breast***

(Figs 2 and 3)

The chimney breast was altered in modern times to project 1.1m from the west wall. It is proposed to cut the brickwork back by about 0.3m (that is, to 0.8m from the wall).

Removal of an area of plaster on the side of the breast revealed the brickwork of an earlier chimney with traces of a yet earlier chimney lower down. In the upper part, the bricks of the later chimney breast survived to about 0.4m out from the wall, with a ragged edge that suggested the breast projected further. The bricks were similar to those seen at B (across the room) in size and in bond, i.e. in courses alternately composed of all headers and then all stretchers. The bricks were 21/2" x 41/4" x 87/8". Lower down (the lowest 0.9m) the possibly earlier breast was of a coarser build, made of flint cobbles and small brick pieces randomly in mortar.

### ***Area B: new doorway into library***

(Fig. 2)

Plaster was removed from the area intended for a new doorway from the library into the hall. This revealed the brickwork of the wall, which was very regular in character. The courses were alternately all stretchers or all headers. The brickwork, up to 1.12m from the floor, projected about 2mm-4mm beyond the wall above and was slightly discoloured in comparison with the 'freshness' of the brickwork above.

### ***Area C: former north wall***

(Figs 2 and 4)

This is the north wall of the north to south wing, to be removed on the ground floor and replaced with a steel joist. Prior to demolition, plaster was removed from the face of this wall and its short return to the doorway in the east wall. The exposed wall had two main elements, the lower part and the upper part, with a horizontal band of brickwork three courses deep between them.

The lower part of the wall, from the floor to 1.7m from the floor, was of roughly coursed but unbonded material, mostly flint cobbles, with occasional pieces of brick and stone, and with 'rows' of bricks, mostly headers, on end, laid 'tilted'. At the corner close to the east wall, three courses of 'short' brickwork alternated with three courses of 'long' brickwork (as seen elsewhere).

Between the upper and lower parts was a band of three 'courses', the lowest a row of stretchers and a long piece of wood, then a row of headers on end (and some flints) with the upper row a line of stretchers. None of this was properly bonded.

Above this, the wall was uncoursed mortared flint (with the occasional brick) up to 3.8m from the floor. Above this was modern brickwork.

The short return was mostly of brick, with small 'panels' of flint.

### ***Areas D, E and F: the east wall (exterior face)***

(Figs 2, 5, 6 and 7)

This wall is the east wall of the building, of mixed character, with flint brick and some pieces of stone among the materials used, in a mostly random manner. It has a doorway to the right, that is, the north side.

The wall has clearly been much altered, with two lean-to structures and a modern window inserted centrally. A doorway towards the left (south) side has brick detailing and may therefore be of fairly early date.

Removal of the two lean-to elements and the plaster on the exterior face of the east wall revealed a little more of the character of the wall and of features hidden under the plaster, although much remains obscure.

The floor of the left lean-to had been lowered by about 0.70m and a plinth built against the east wall (about 0.15m deep).

Removal of the plaster also revealed that the south wall, the main façade, was formed of two touching walls, each 0.20m thick.

The east wall was a mixture of materials, with large amounts of flint, areas of coursed bricks and pieces of stone, of various sizes. Although towards the left side the arrangement of stone and brick might suggest a fossil quoin, this was not in fact the case. Instead, areas of uncoursed flints and uncoursed bricks were found alongside the use of brick in a haphazard manner.

Oven?

(Fig. 5)

At the extreme left, set within the inner of the two main walls, was the remains of a small arched structure, probably an oven. This sprang from 0.80m above the former floor level and was constructed of small purple-brown bricks. The arch of the oven's dome ended above a wall that lined the main exterior wall. It seems possible that the oven became disused when the wall was constructed, possibly at the same time that the floor was lowered for the lean-to and the retaining plinth built.

Door

(Fig. 5)

At the left side the doorway was probably an original feature, constructed with neat brick jambs butting the flint wall. As seen elsewhere, the brick was coursed three 'short' and three 'long' alternately.

Window

(Fig. 5)

The oddest feature was the blocked window to the left of the southern doorway. The jambs and central mullion were each constructed of a column of single bricks, with a timber head and a thin timber batten as a 'cill'. Another thin piece of timber ran across the centre horizontally, through the bricks. The four openings are blocked with bricks, those at bottom left quite modern. Within the house, this backs onto a fireplace.

NB: timber battens appear elsewhere in the walls. Two thin battens to the left of the window frame a group of bricks, top and bottom.

Former door?

(Fig.6)

A modern window is placed centrally in the east wall and this may obscure the brick outline of a former doorway, although if this was the case then the lower parts of the brick jambs are missing. Centrally and towards the right the wall is uncoursed flint cobbles with an occasional piece of stone.

Door

(Fig.7)

At the right side is another doorway, presently in use, outline with brick jambs with the same use of 'long and short' brickwork, each of three courses. This is also seen internally (C) and in the east wall where a ?former door is postulated.

The salvaged stone

(Fig. 8)

When the flint and brick wall at C was demolished, the stone and flint was sorted on site to reserve and architectural fragments. Besides many plain or rough pieces of stone, seven pieces of architectural character were kept (stones 1-7).

Stone 1: 25cms in length. Possibly part of a window surround.

Stone 2: not illustrated. Junction of ribs. Medieval.

Stone 3: 25cms in length. Moulded fragment. Later medieval.

Stone 4: 35cms in length. Segment of attached column. Later medieval.

Stone 5: 35cms in length. Moulded fragment. Medieval.

Stone 6: 13cms in depth and width. Fragment of ?capital. Norman.

Stone 7: 25cms in length. Possibly part of window tracery. Medieval.

## 6.0 Conclusions

None of the recorded features obviously related to any early, i.e. 16th or 17th century house here. The presence of medieval architectural stone is worthy of note, however, as it probably derived from a major ecclesiastical building, possibly from St Benets Abbey, not far away. When the stone arrived on site is not clear, although an early date is probable.



### ***Acknowledgements***

We are grateful to FPD Savills for commissioning this work on behalf of their Client. The work was carried out by the writer, who is grateful for the help given him by Trevor Terrington and John baker of John Youngs (Builders). The report was illustrated, formatted and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Alice Lyons.



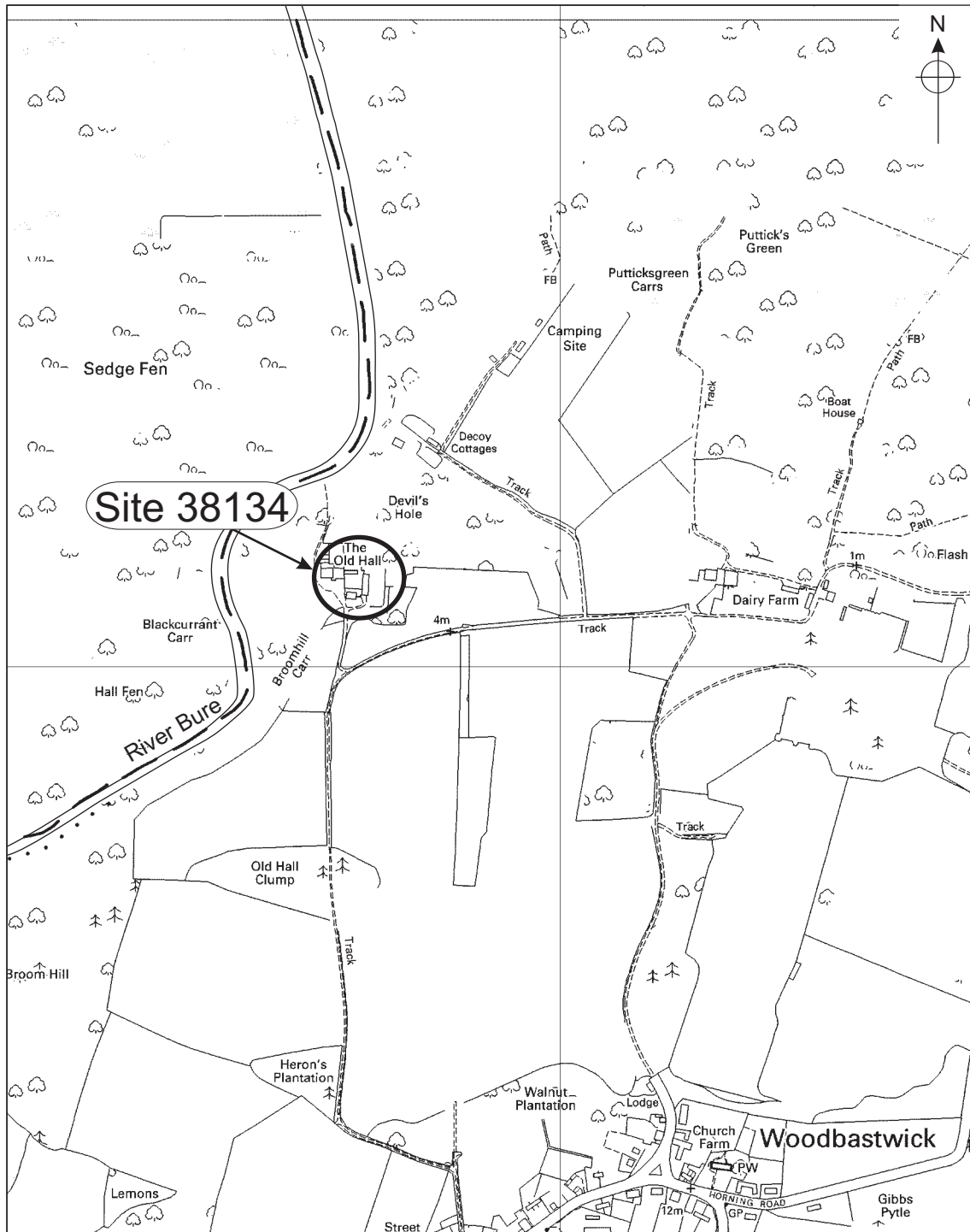


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

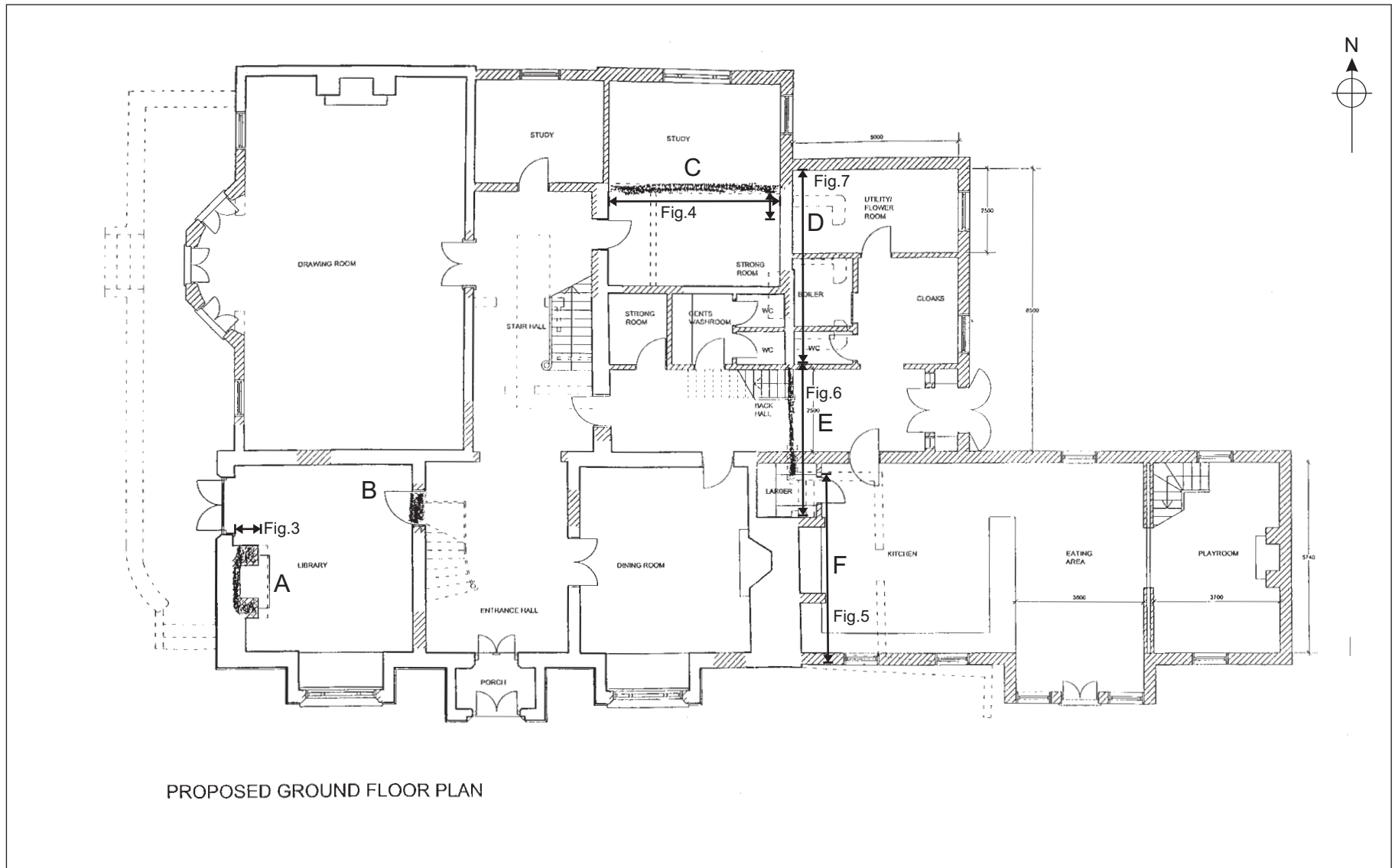
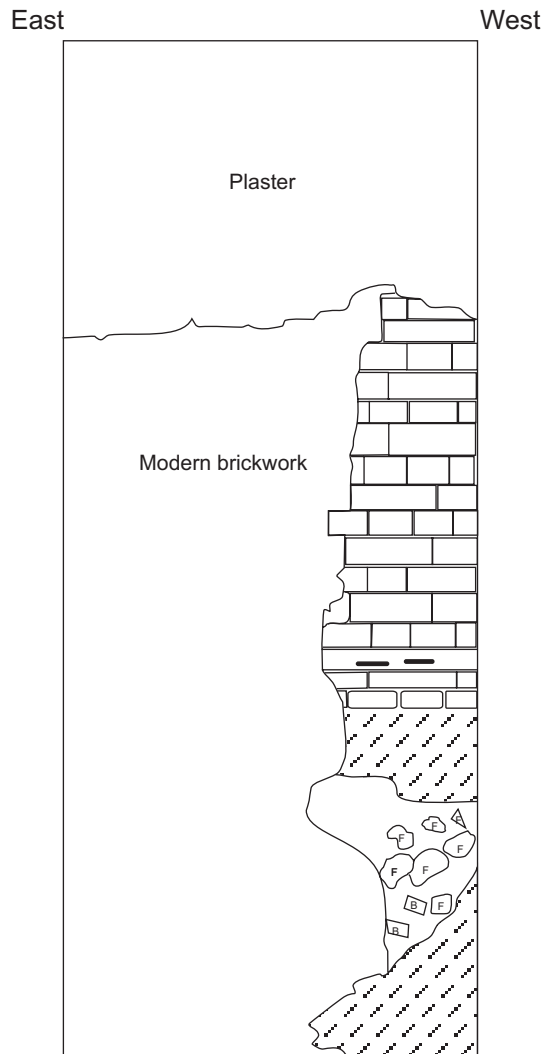


Figure 2. Plan of new house showing location (A-F) described in this report. Not to scale



North facing elevation




- Key
-  Mortar
  -  Flint cobbles
  -  Mortar



Figure 3. Chimney breast (A), side view with plaster removed. Scale 1:20

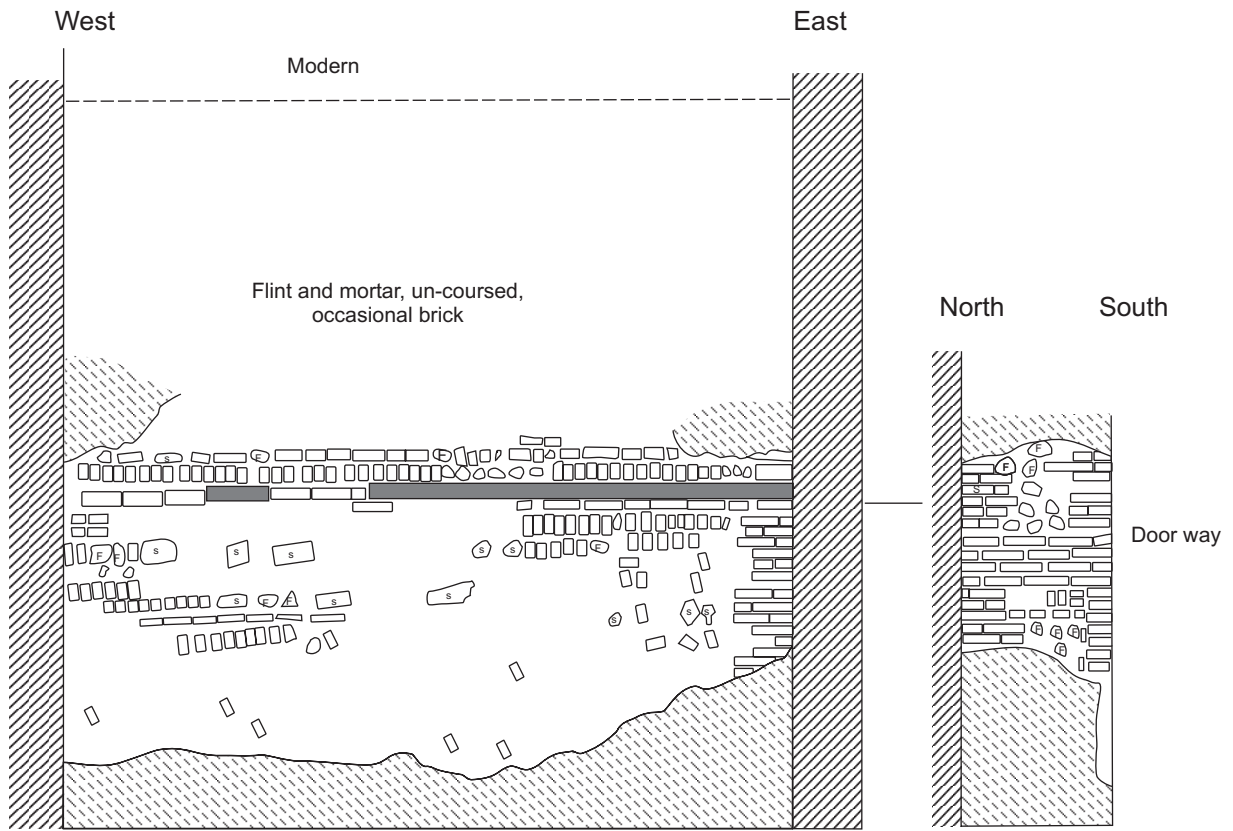


Figure 4. Wall (C), elevation. Scale 1:20

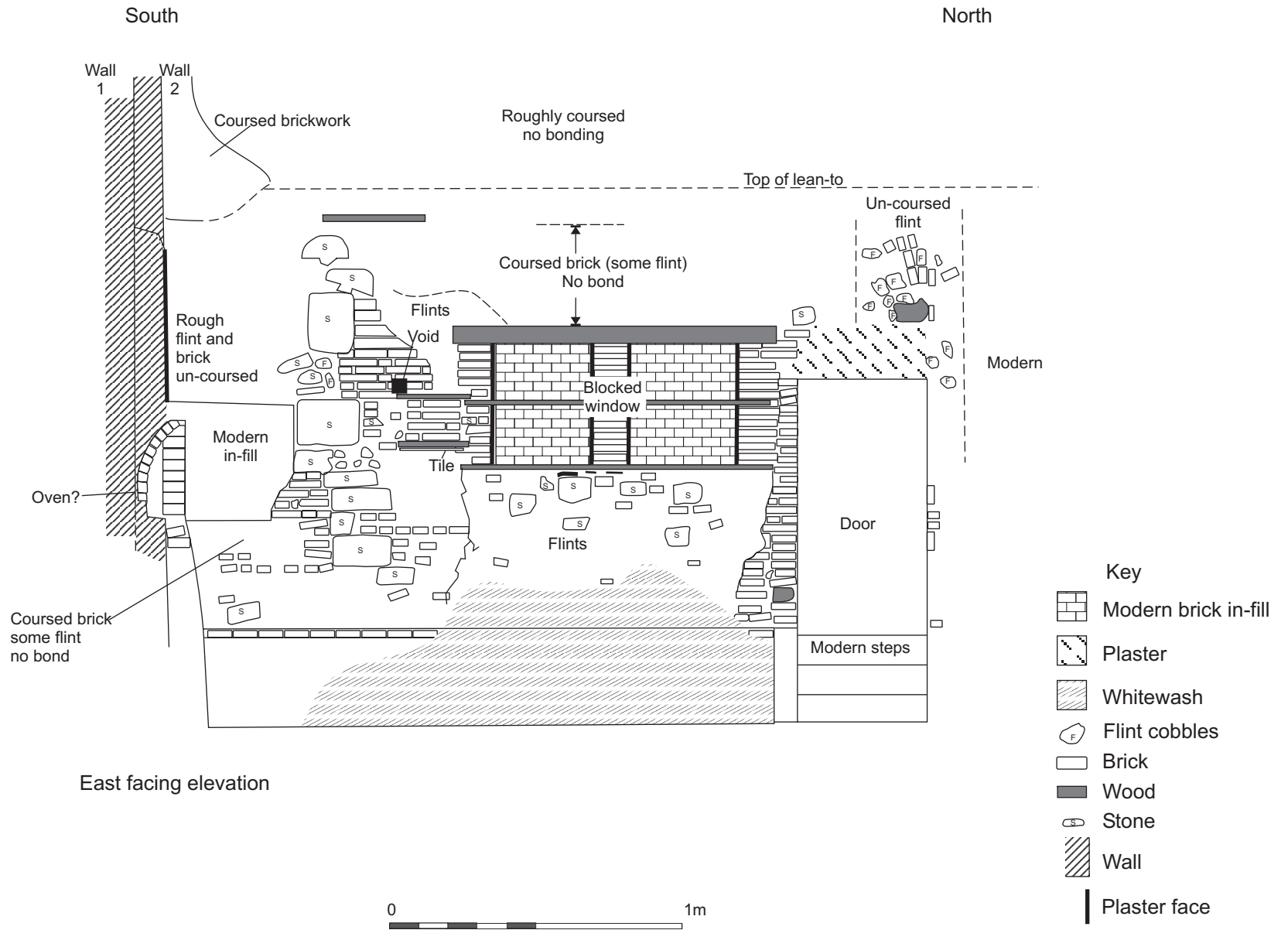
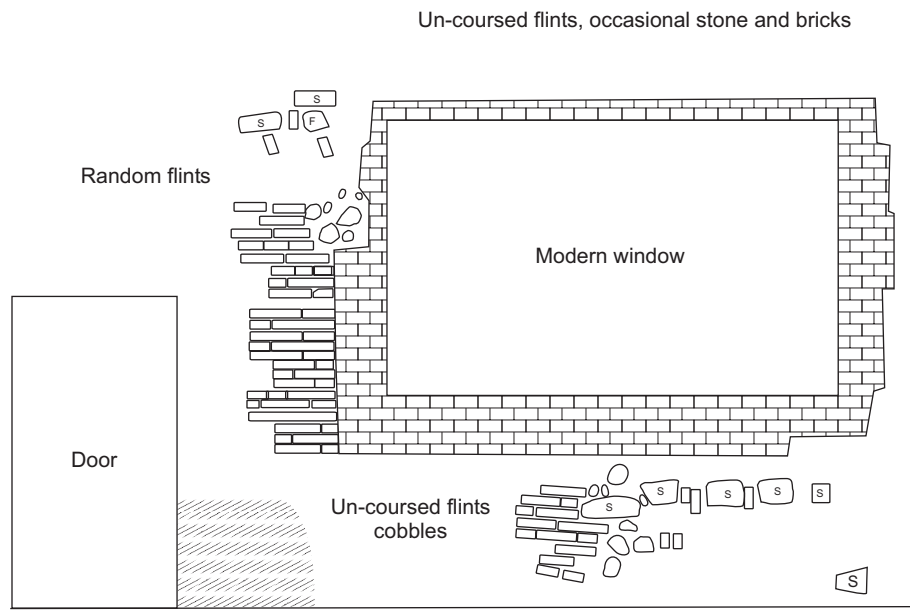


Figure 5. Wall elevation (F), south part. Scale 1:20






South

North



East facing elevation

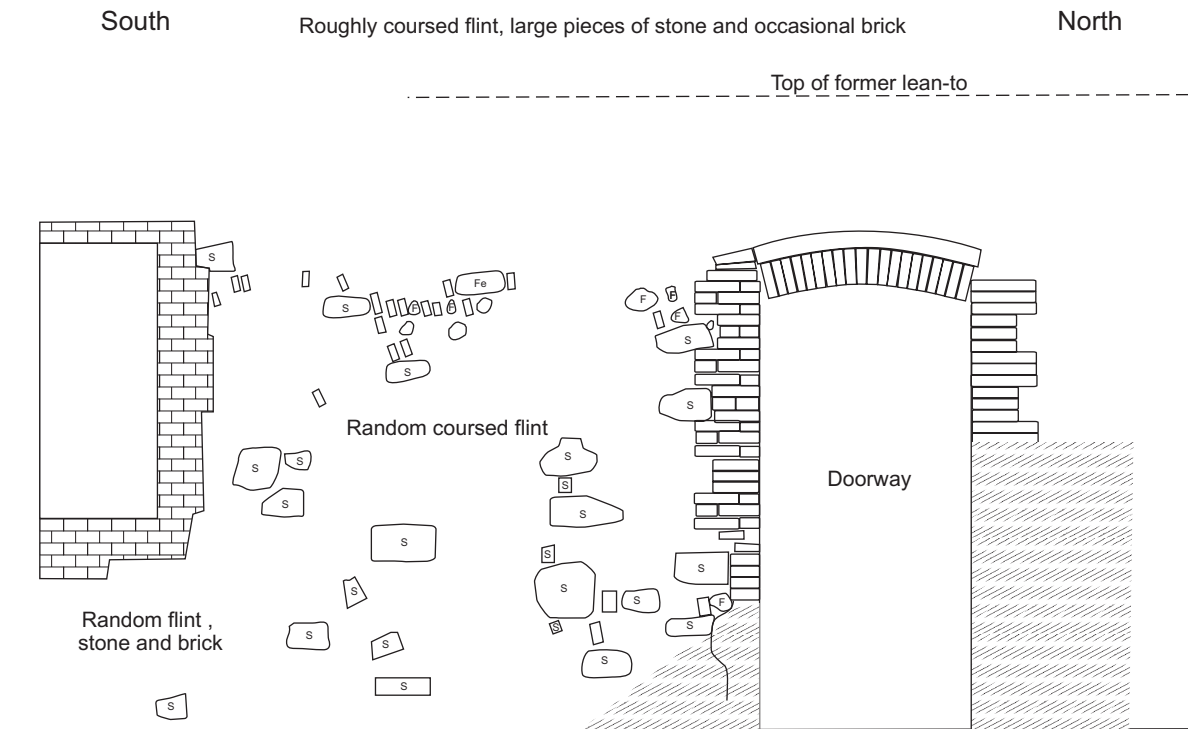
Key

-  Modern brickwork
-  Obscured
-  Flint cobbles
-  Brick
-  Stone

0 1m







Figure 6. Wall elevation at E, central part. Scale 1:20





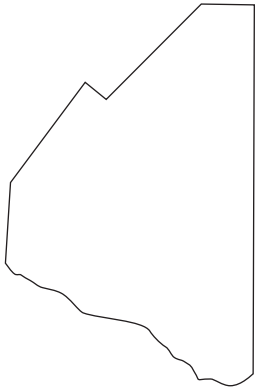
East facing elevation

Key

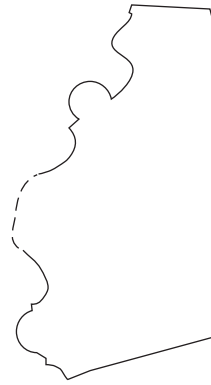
-  Modern brickwork
-  Obscured
-  Flint cobbles
-  Brick
-  Stone
-  Iron

0 1m

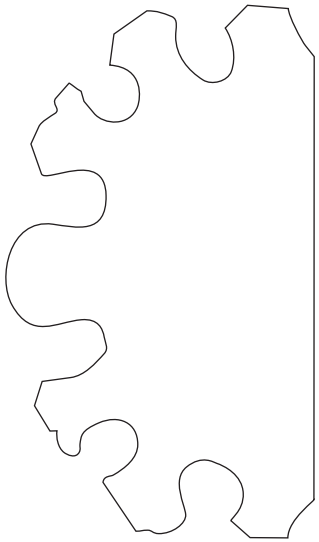
Figure 7. Wall elevation at (D), north part. Scale 1:20



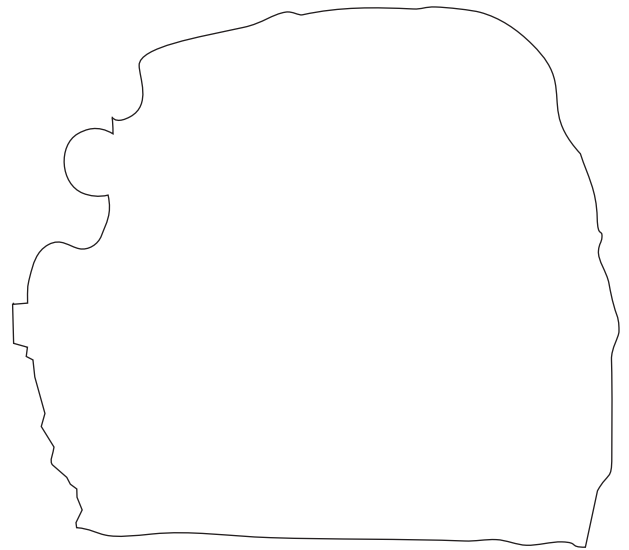
1: Part of window surround



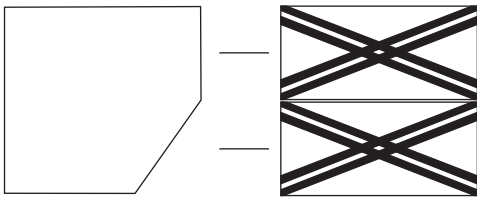
3: Moulded fragment



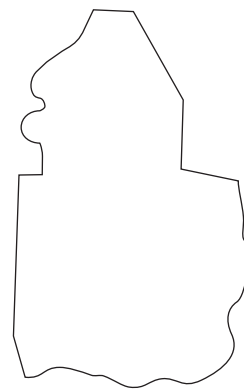
4: Segment of attached column



5: Moulded fragment



6: Fragment of ?capital



7: Possibly part of window tracery

Figure 8. Stones 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Scale 1:50