

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 NATURE OF THE RECORD
- 7 CONCLUSIONS
- 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Study Area
- Figure 3: Proposed Works
- Figure 4: Excavation Area
- Figure 5: Sections

SUMMARY

In February 2005 Foundations Archaeology was commissioned to undertake a controlled archaeological watching brief to monitor construction groundworks for a new disabled access for St Nicholas Church Gloucester (NGR: ST 8292 1879). The works were commissioned by Philip Hughes Associates on behalf of The Churches Conservation Trust.

The archaeological works comprised the control of the groundworks, which included ground reduction within the study area and excavation of footings for two retaining walls for the disabled ramp. The works were also undertaken to prevent the disturbance of *insitu* burials and to make sure that no human bone was removed from church grounds.

One *in situ* burial was encountered and the groundworks were modified so that the grave remained undisturbed. All disarticulated bone was returned to the appropriate construction cut once excavation was completed. No significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present within the monitored area.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief to monitor the construction of a new disabled access at the northwest door of St. Nicholas Church, Westgate Street, Gloucester (NGR: ST 8292 1879). The works were commissioned by Philip Hughes Associates on behalf of The Churches Conservation Trust.
- 1.2 The works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2005), which was based upon the brief supplied by Gloucester City Council (2005). The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2001), Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The church of St Nicholas is Grade 1 listed and dates from the 11th century. The tower and spire of the church are believed to have been constructed in the 15th century. The area outside the northwest door of the church was formerly part of the churchyard, therefore there was potential for the presence of human remains and *in situ* burials.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations, 2005).
 - i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits within the site area, and date these where possible.
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.

- iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The works required the reduction of the site area by 0.10m to 0.20m, followed by the construction of two parallel retaining walls. The area contained between the two walls was thereafter reduced by up to 0.30m (see Figure 4).
- 4.2 All groundworks within the study area were carried out by hand by the groundworkers and were observed and closely monitored by an archaeologist. When features or deposits of potential archaeological significance were noted, they were closely examined, defined, manually excavated and recorded to appropriate standards. All spoil tips were scanned for finds and disarticulated human bone and all human bone was returned to the excavated area prior to construction of the ramp and retaining walls.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The first phase of works involved the reduction of the entire study area.
- 5.2 The study area (approximately 2.5m by 6m) was partly stripped of topsoil to a depth of between 0.10m to 0.25m. Located 3m north of the doorway was a concrete buttress which was constructed in the mid 20th century in order to support the church tower.
- 5.3 The study area was reduced on either side of the concrete buttress, the northern half was given context (101) and the southern half was context (102), as there was no physical relationship between the two areas it was not possible to ascertain if they were the same context or just very similar in appearance. Topsoil (101)/(102) was a dark grey/black imported soil, and was removed to a depth of 0.25m at the southern end and 0.12m at the northern end. This layer contained frequent modern inclusions, which included pottery, china, plastic and brick and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone fragments.
- 5.4 The second phase of works was the excavation for the new retaining walls.
- 5.5 **East retaining wall.** The retaining wall cut was present for a length of 3.10m, was excavated to a depth of 0.8m at the southern end and onto the concrete buttress at the northern end. The base layer encountered was (111), a dark grey gritty sandy clay, which was visible for a depth of up to 0.50m and contained occasional charcoal fragments, late Post-medieval artefacts and a few pieces of disarticulated human bone. This layer partly sealed the concrete buttress. Contained within (111) was charcoal lense (104), this deposit was visible for a width of 0.22m and was 0.02m thick. Deposit (111) was possibly cut by [113], a shallow depression, which may have been disturbance from the large lump of concrete located between deposits (111) and (110). Possible cut [113]

contained (110) a rubble fill of slate, stone and concrete in a dark grey clay sand matrix, up to 0.37m thick. Context (110) was very similar and possibly equivalent to (102), with the exception of the high stone content. The stone was a yellow/cream oolite and did not show any signs of working. This possible cut was in turn sealed by stone paving slabs (109), up to 0.06m thick. Deposits (111) and (110) were cut on the northern side by a modern drain. North of the drain was the continuation of the concrete buttress. This was sealed by (108) a disturbed backfill deposit which comprised a dark grey sand clay with frequent modern artefactual evidence, including whole and part bricks and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone fragments. This was present for a width of 0.25m and was 0.18m thick.

- 5.6 **West retaining wall.** The retaining wall cut was excavated to a depth of 0.54m at the southern end, excavation stopped at 3.30m from the southern end where the concrete buttress was the same height as the reduced area. The base layer encountered was (107), a dark grey sandy clay layer, which was visible for 0.07m, with late Post-medieval artefacts and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone. This was sealed by (106), a stone rubble layer in a dark grey/black sandy clay matrix, up to 0.10m thick. The stone within this layer was a yellow/beige oolite, which did not show any signs of working. This was in turn sealed by (105), a dark grey/black sandy clay, with frequent CBM fragments, a piece of clay pipe, five sherds of Late Post-medieval pottery and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone, this was equivalent to (111). A lense of (104) was contained within this deposit, which was visible for a width of 0.60m and was 0.02m thick. A number of stone patches (103), of a light yellow/cream oolite, up to 0.06m by 0.06m by 0.10m, were pressed into the surface of (105). The stones did not show any signs of working. Contexts (103) and (105) were then sealed by (102), a black/grey silty clay layer, up to 0.24m thick, which contained occasional charcoal flecks and modern material, including plastic, a small quantity of disarticulated human bone was also present. Layers (105) and (102) were cut on the northern edge by [112], which was the cut for the concrete buttress. The concrete buttress was then sealed by (108).
- 5.7 The third phase of works was the reduction of the area between the two retaining walls, to form a slope for the disabled ramp.
- 5.8 The area located between the two retaining walls was reduced by a further 0.10m into context (102). During this reduction a grave cut was visible on a south east-north west alignment, located 1.55m north of the western edge of the church door. The south eastern end had been removed by a modern drain cut on a north east-south west alignment, but was present for a length of 0.98m and was at least 0.44m wide. It was decided that depth of hardcore over this area could be reduced slightly in order for the grave to not be disturbed, the grave was then covered and preserved *in situ*. The area between the door and the burial was subsequently reduced further to produce a slope from the grave area to the door, where the level had been reduced by a further 0.20m into (102). A quantity of clay pipes were present near the doorway, contained within (102).

- 5.9 No further burials or archaeological finds or deposits were present within the study area.

6 NATURE OF THE RECORD

- 6.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Context Sheets

Plans

Sections

Photographs

- 6.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations, 2005). In summary, the following excavation methods were utilised: observation of all substantial groundworks associated with the construction of the new disabled access. The groundworks were undertaken by contractors both manually and by machine. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the specification (ibid.) and Foundations Archaeology *Technical Manual 3 (Excavation Manual)*. All site records are available in the site archive.
- 6.3 Following the completion of the Watching Brief an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled in accordance with Appendix 3 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).
- 6.4 Upon completion of the report, an *OASIS* form will be completed.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The area for the new disabled access had been heavily disturbed during the construction of the supporting buttress for the church tower.
- 7.2 *In situ* burials were present within the study area, but the works were modified slightly in order to not disturb the remains. All disarticulated bone was redeposited within the study area.
- 7.3 All artefactual material was late Post-medieval/modern in date. No significant archaeological finds or features were present within the study area.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foundations Archaeology 2005 *St Nicholas, Westgate Street, Gloucester, Written Scheme of Investigation.*

Gloucester Historic Environment Team 2005 *Brief for a Controlled Archaeological Watching Brief: St Nicholas' Church, Westgate Street, Gloucester.*

IFA 1994 (revised 2001) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*
Institute of Field Archaeologists

Philip Hughes Associates 2004 *Specification and Schedule of Work for New Disabled Access at St Nicholas Church, Gloucester*

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Philip Hughes of Philip Hughes Associates, Phil Greatorex of Gloucester Historic Environment Team and the on site workers for their help in the completion of this project.



© Crown Copyright
Reproduced under licence AL523064A

FIGURE 1: Site Location

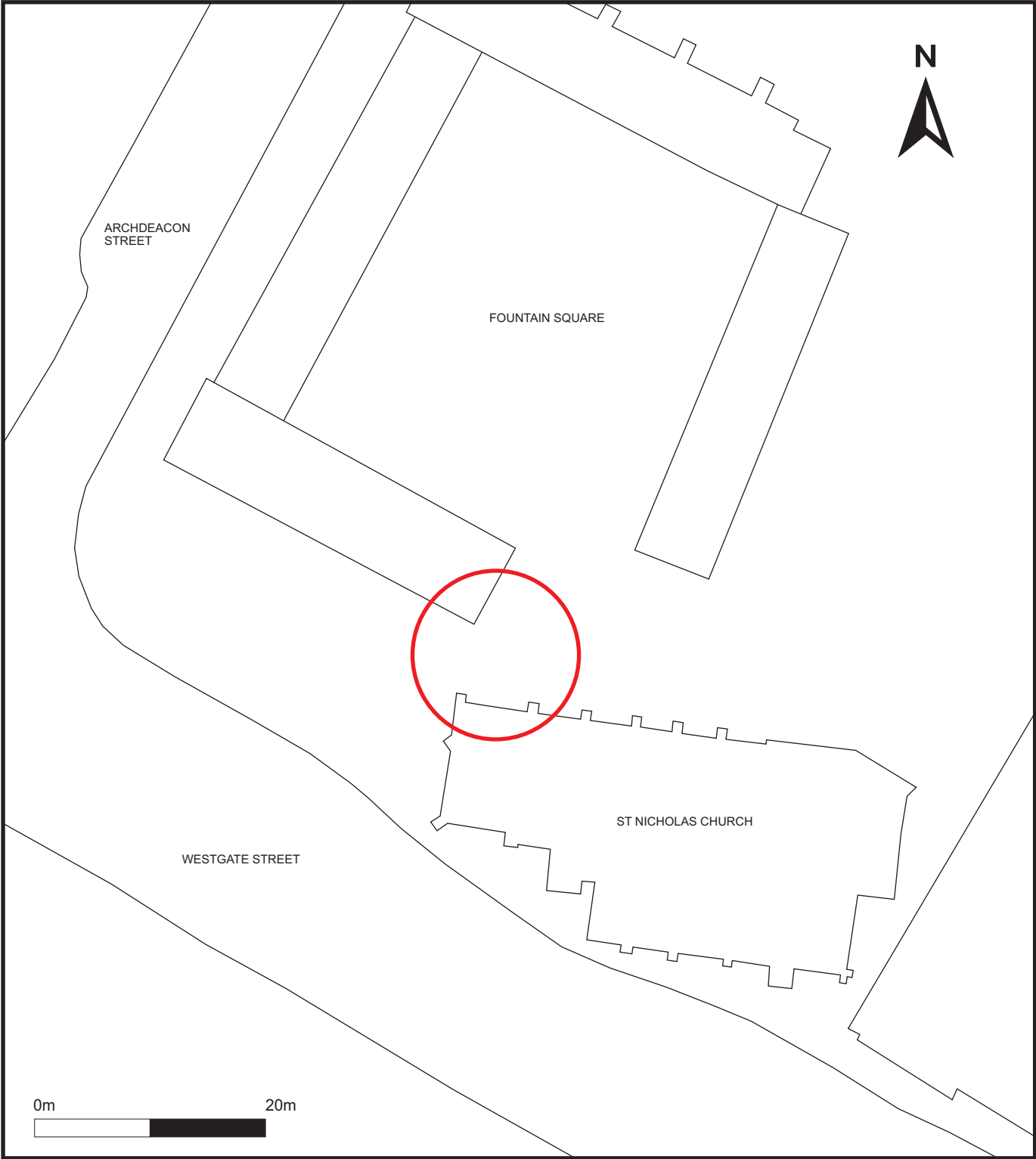


FIGURE 2: Study Area

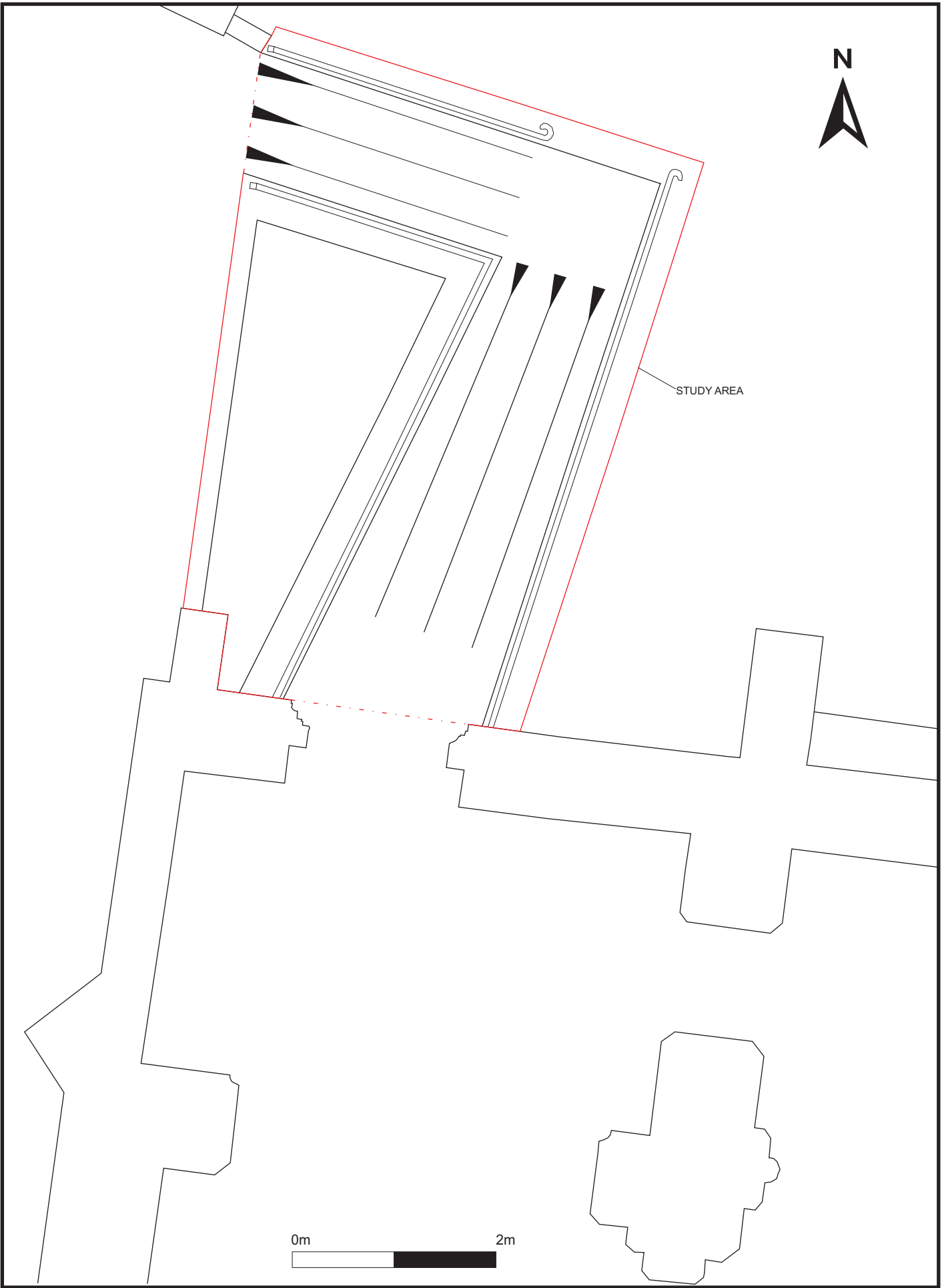


FIGURE 3: Proposed Works

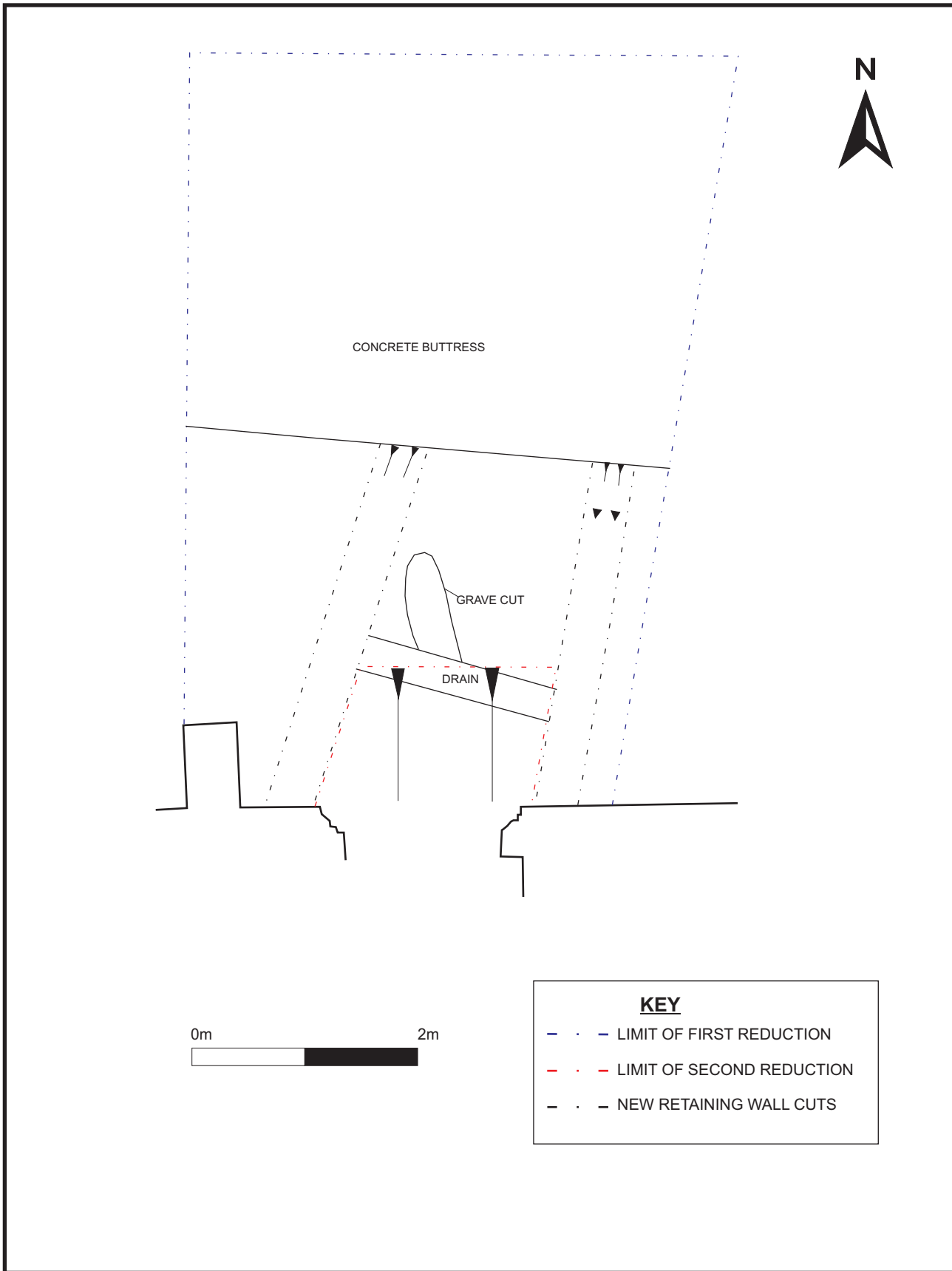
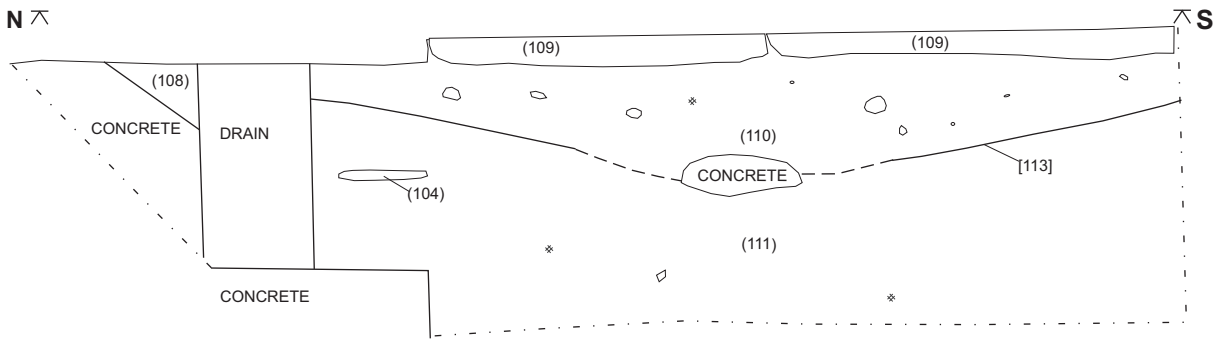


FIGURE 4: Excavation Plan

WEST FACING SECTION EAST RETAINING WALL



EAST FACING SECTION OF WEST RETAINING WALL

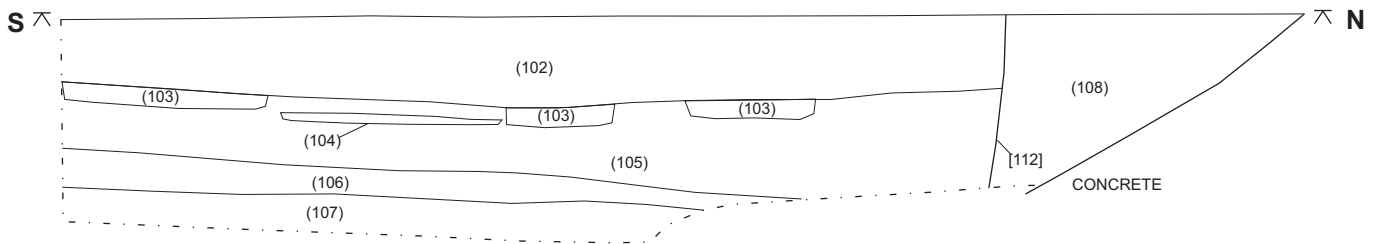


FIGURE 5: Sections