

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING
AT CRICKLEPIT STREET,
EXETER, DEVON, 2007**

**Prepared for Exeter City Council
Engineering and Construction Group**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the result of archaeological recording during rebuilding and repairs to the retaining wall below Cricklepit Street, Exeter (SX 9187 9219; fig. 1). The recording was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) between October and December 2007 on behalf of the Exeter City Council Engineering and Construction Group. The work was required under condition 4 of the grant of planning permission (ECC, 07/1504/16), and was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by EA (2007).

2. THE SCHEME

The scheme involved works to a length of approximately 50m of the retaining wall located to the east of Cricklepit Mill, and included the following elements:

- Rebuilding of a stretch of collapsed retaining wall, including grading back of deposits behind the wall, and excavation of a new foundation trench;
- Repair and repointing of the retaining wall;
- Removal of the existing parapet wall and replacement with a lower parapet wall and railings;
- Resurfacing of approximately 20m of Cricklepit Street, including the excavation of a 40m trench for an electricity cable for future street lighting.

3. AIMS

The aims of the work were (a) to enhance the existing record of the retaining wall, and (b) to record any deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the rebuilding of the retaining wall, and resurfacing of Cricklepit Street.

4. METHOD

4.1 Building recording

The existing drawings of the retaining wall were inspected and updated as necessary, and were accompanied by a written description and a photographic record of new observations using black-and white film and digital photography.

4.2 Groundwork monitoring

During the observations of groundworks the standard EA recording system was employed, consisting of:

- Standardised EA watching brief sheets, drawings in plan and section at scales of 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate;
- Survey and location of features;
- Labelling and bagging of finds on site;
- Black-and-white film and colour digital photography illustrating both the detail and the general context of principal features, finds excavated, and the site as a whole. Registers of site photographs were maintained on *pro forma* record sheets.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 Historical background

Histories of the Cricklepit and Lower Mills were produced by EA in 1995 and 1996 respectively (Pye, *et al.* 1995; Collings *et al.* 1996), a summary of which is presented below. Fulling is first documented in Exeter in the mid 15th century and it has been suggested that a mill of this date was constructed within what later became the lower mill complex (Henderson *et al.* 1996, 6). The first references to this activity in the Cricklepit area, however, are found a century later, when the then unnamed mill (generally known as Andrews' & Palmer's Mills after 18th-century occupiers) below Cricklepit Mill contained four stocks. Between 1668 and 1838 the mill was divided into two properties, and by 1697 there were two waterwheels on the Higher Leat with a third located in a channel within the mill to the north of the leat. In 1898 the corn merchant William George Shears purchased the property, and soon after, all the structures on the site had been demolished, although one of the waterwheels was retained with shafting to power machinery in the corn mills immediately below Cricklepit Mill.

The Cricklepit Saw Mill was established in the early 1850s on the site of an earlier fulling and corn mill associated with Cricklepit Mill. This earlier mill did not extend as far back as the retaining wall. At the end of the 19th century the mill was also used to crush bone, before reverting back to use as a corn mill.

5.2 The city wall and the retaining wall (fig. 2)

The visible masonry of the city wall above Cricklepit Street is entirely of late medieval and later date; no Roman fabric can be seen, although masonry of this date and part of the rampart behind the wall was exposed in excavations undertaken in 1974. Excavations within Cricklepit Street in 1988-89 exposed masonry, located 3-3.50m outside the line of the city wall. This was interpreted as a footing for the Roman wall, although it was also suggested that the masonry may be of medieval date (Simpson 1993, 5-7).

The retaining wall was recorded in 1989 (EA archive number 272), but the results were not published. Phasing of the fabric was prepared, however, and a version of this is presented below with minor typographical corrections (see also fig. 3). The retaining wall incorporates parts of several structures – the Miller's House (associated with Cricklepit Mill), Cricklepit Saw Mill, and Andrews' & Palmer's Mills.

Group I. Miller's House and garden. 1670s or possible earlier.

Walls 2205 and 2206, incorporating fireplaces 2203 and 2204. Possibly steps 1723, garden wall 2207 and retaining wall 2208.

Group II. Cricklepit Saw Mill area. ?post 1670s, pre 1814.

Walls 2128 and 2136, including probably contemporary 2163 and opening 2167.

Group III. Cricklepit Saw Mill area. ?post 1670s, pre 1814.

Wall 2166 and ?blocking 2141. Between the 1750s and 1819 Andrews' and Palmer's Mill was constructed. The east wall is possibly on the line of 2116 and the west wall on the line of 2115.

Group IV. ?rebuild of the retaining wall in 1814.

1. Cricklepit Saw Mill: walls 2130 and 2131.

2. Andrews' and Palmer's Mill: wall 2125/2124/2131 and wall 2130; wall scars 2115 and 2126; joist sockets 2150; building levels 2121, 2153 and 2154.

Note the east wall of the mill was probably on the line of 2116, and the west wall, on the basis of map evidence, is most likely to be represented by wall scar 2115. The wall represented by scar 2126 performs no obvious function as it is too far west to be the west wall of the mill building, and too far east to be the property boundary between the mill garden and Cricklepit Fulling Mill.

Group Va. Andrews' and Palmer's Mill. ?1814-1876.

East wall of mill demolished and 2116 and buttress 2148-2149 constructed as patching/strengthening. The line of the new wall was further to the east, and no archaeological evidence survives. Joist sockets 2216 were probably added at this date, or possibly in the earlier intervening period.

Shed added to west of mill building, with west wall 2156 on line of natural subsoil, and west wall on line of scar 2126. Joist/rafter sockets 2155 and possibly 2225 may belong to this shed.

Group Vb. Construction of Saw and bone-crushing mill. 1850s.

Archways 2137/2165 (later narrowed/rebuilt including 2164) and 2145/2134.

Group VI. 20th century

1. Cricklepit Saw Mill (mostly post-1934 fire). Walls 2209, 2210, 2212, 2213, 2215, 2220, 2221, 2222 and probably patching 2217, 2218, 2219. Archways blocked with 2144 and 2146 and wall rendered. Gable end of roofline visible. Buttress 2135 added.

2. Andrews' and Palmer's Mill (mostly post-1927). West wall 2111 [this is an upstanding post, wall line may be 2115], east wall on line of 2116, which is the limit of the contemporary concrete floor (2112). First floor/roof at west end – sockets 2147 [not labelled on drawings, probably associated with Cricklepit saw mill], first floor at east end – floor 2114, sockets 2113 and 2161?.

Note presence of 2120 at similar level suggests there may have been an earlier first floor/roofline on line of 2113/2114. Difference in level of sockets 2147 [see above] and 2113/2161 suggests that a wall on line of scar 2115 was still being used. Group also includes walling 2214, 2117, 2224 and 2168, all of which post-date 2116/2149.

5.3 Cricklepit Mill excavations

In 1989-90 a series of excavations were undertaken around Cricklepit Mill. Of these works a summary of the excavations within Andrews' and Palmer's Mills was prepared (Henderson, *et al.* 1996, 6-8). No evidence for the supposed medieval fulling mill or a mid-sixteenth century mill was found, although the site of the latter probably corresponds with the current position of the waterwheels on the Higher Leat.

The site of the third wheel was partially excavated. A pair of fulling stocks probably initially lay on the north side of the wheel. In about 1760 the fulling mills were substantially rebuilt, with a long section of Heavitree stone wall being erected against Cricklepit Street. A new stone-lined sump and pair of stocks were introduced, the position of the stocks being indicated by a 4m long recess in the retaining wall.

In 1814 the arrangement of the sumps was changed. The previous sump on the north side of the wheel was removed and replaced by one of a different form, with one stock on each side of the wheel, each over its own sump. The whole arrangement was 3.20m long by 2.60m wide, with the axle located centrally across the sump and wheelpit. The heads of the stocks were probably lifted by cams projecting from pit wheels turning on either side of the waterwheel. Later in the 19th century the axle bearing on the south side of the wheelpit was relocated to a position within the sump.

6 RESULTS (fig. 3; pls 1 and 2)

6.1 The city wall

During the resurfacing of Cricklepit Street, part of the city wall was exposed, to a maximum depth of 0.70m below the level of the wall recorded in the 1980s (Simpson 1993, fig. 3, elevation 3). The only feature recorded was plinth 26, which was exposed continuing for a distance of 8.60m west of its previously recorded extent. For most of this length the plinth had been cut back flush with the masonry of the wall.

6.2 Andrews' & Palmer's Mills

Vegetation clearance below the retaining wall exposed the excavated remains of Andrews' & Palmer's Mills. At a distance of approximately 8m to the east of the previously-excavated area

the footing of a breccia wall was exposed, representing the east wall of the mill, as defined by scar 2116 on the retaining wall. At a distance of 2.60m from the retaining wall a roughly parallel brick wall was partially exposed, representing the south wall of the mill. In the southeast corner of the mill the top of the barrel-vaulted tailrace, with a manhole, was partially exposed.

6.3 The retaining wall (pl. 1)

A 5m length of the collapsed retaining wall was rebuilt. Excavation of collapsed deposits behind the wall, and a new foundation trench, measuring 1.15m wide by 0.40m deep, were monitored. The following deposit sequence was observed:

- Loose brown silty clay with abundant volcanic trap, slate, bone and tile, probably representing post-medieval or modern collapse/levelling.
- Yellow silty clay with occasional large trap fragments.
- Reddish-brown silty clay with occasional trap, bone, and patches of grey/brown silty clay.
- Yellow silty clay with occasional large trap fragments. These last three deposits represent infilling behind retaining wall 2130, which was probably erected in 1814. The wall was observed to curve behind wall 2135, and a cut into the natural clay for its construction was observed.

Examination of the retaining wall revealed a few new observations:

- Brick pier 2118 was removed, and brick patching of 2153 and 2120 continued behind the pier.
- At west end of build 2130 much brick rubble was present, the west end being delineated by a scar recorded in 1989.
- Below 2154 is a void.
- Walls 2136 and 2137 are partially covered by hard red cement render. On the render are two vertical scars of removed machinery brackets, each with six bolt holes.
- Masonry 2166 contains two distinct fabrics. The lower fabric is constructed of large blocks of breccia bonded in red clay, and the upper fabric is constructed of small blocks of volcanic trap with small quantities of breccia, bonded in pink-white cement mortar. Both fabrics have overlying remains of white lime plaster.
- Removal of brick blocking 2144 to the arched opening 2137, enabled recording of the interior of the opening. At a distance of 1.16m from the entrance a randomly-laid red brick wall, bonded in what appeared to be a pinkish mortar, was present. The bricks blocked the upper part of the chamber and rested on piers at either side. The void below the blocking and the area in front of the blocking was partially infilled with soil. The recess could be as deep (1.70m) as recess 2134 to the east. The side walls of both arches are constructed of brick.
- A number of voids and possible sockets were also noted throughout the western end of the retaining wall.

6.4 Excavations along Cricklepit Street (pl. 2)

A 22.30m length of Cricklepit Street was resurfaced. In general only modern (post-1988-89) deposits were observed. At the east end of the excavation, below 0.40m of modern material, post-medieval levelling deposits of clay and white lime mortar were exposed.

A service trench, incorporating pits for fence posts was excavated for a length of 49m behind the retaining wall. The trench measured 0.40m wide by 0.40m deep, and the pits were 0.45m² by 0.55m deep, and were excavated and recorded from west to east (see below). At the west end of the trench entirely modern deposits were exposed, including a large pit containing industrial

waste. Within the east end of the trench (from 45.90m onwards) an existing service trench had truncated all deposits

Between 10m and 11m from the west end of the trench the following deposit sequence was observed:

- 0-0.10m – 500 – hardcore and/or modern levelling;
- 0.10-0.18m – 502 – a surface of compact rounded and sub-rounded gravel with occasional larger cobbles;
- 0.18-0.23m – 503 – bedding layer for surface 502 comprising fine gravel mixed with cinder and coal;
- 0.23-0.25m – 504 – probably make-up layer for surface 502 comprising compacted red clay and lime mortar;
- 0.25-0.30m – 505 – compacted reddish-brown clayey silt with 70% sub-angular and rounded pebbles forming a possible surface or bedding layer for a surface. Further to the east this deposit also contained brick fragments;
- 0.30-0.42m – 506 – compact red and reddish-brown sandy clay with occasional angular stones, roof slate, mortar fragments, 18th-century pottery, clay tobacco pipes, glass, shell and bone possibly forming a make-up layer for 505.

Between 25m and 41.30m from the west end of the trench the following deposit sequence was observed:

- 0-0.10m – 508 – tarmac surface and make-up;
- 0.10-0.16m – 509 – brown clay and sub-angular stones and pebbles;
- 0.16-0.28m – 510 – levelling deposit comprising red sandy clay with mortar flecks and fragments, occasional brick, coal, cinder, volcanic trap fragments, 18th-century pottery and clay tobacco pipes. Note there is no evidence of surface 502 as observed to the west.

Between 41.30m and 45.90m from the west end of the trench the following deposit sequence was observed:

- 0-0.12m – 508 – tarmac surface and make-up;
- 0.12-0.18m – 511 – Red clay mixed with reddish-brown silty clay forming a levelling layer for surface 508;
- 0.18-0.28m – 512 – surface of rounded and sub-rounded waterworn cobbles, typically 0.08m long by 0.06m wide, set vertically, and mixed with waterworn gravel and brown clayey silt as a bedding layer;
- 0.28-0.36m – 513 – bedding deposit for surface 512 comprising compacted thin layers of red clay, brown clayey silt and buff/cream lime mortar mixed with stones and fine gravel and charcoal;
- 0.36-0.40m – 513 – mixed red clay and brown clayey silt with some sub-angular stones and gravel, red brick, lime mortar and roof slate fragments, charcoal, bone, oyster shell, breccia fragments and 17th/18th-century pottery forming a levelling deposit.

A construction trench (515) for the retaining wall was also exposed and had been backfilled with red clay and loose dark brown clayey silt with sub-angular breccia, cobbles, gravel, roof state fragments, bone, clay tobacco pipe and post-medieval pottery (516).

7. THE FINDS, *by J. Durrant*

A small assemblage of finds was collected from the excavations in Cricklepit Street, details of which are presented below. All weights given are in grams (to the nearest 2 grams). Qty denotes quantity. The following site code was used to mark finds: EA 6289.

Context Dating

<i>context</i>	<i>date/period</i>
501	19-20th century
506	18th century
507	Post-medieval
510	18th century
514	17-18th century
516	Post-medieval

tkd	tankard
trld	trailed
typ	type
wht	white
Wstr	Westerwald

Clay Pipe

<i>context</i>	<i>bowls</i>	<i>stems</i>	<i>dates/comments</i>
501	-	2	plain
506	-	1	plain

Glass

<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
506	1	onion bottle neck fragment (17C)

Miscellaneous

<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>comments</i>
501	1	?clay pipe waste

Pottery & Dating Evidence

<i>context</i>	<i>contents/dating evidence</i>	<i>sherds</i>	<i>vessels</i>
501	ND gtw, bs (16-19C, disc)	1	1
	Wht ew (19-20C, disc)	2	2
506	ND/SS cw, scraps, worn (18-19C)	4	4
	T-g ew, pln (18C)	1	1
	Wht ew (18C)	1	1
510	Wstr tnk rim, burnt (post- 1680)	1	1
	SS cw, inc. 1 chmb pt rim trld slp (18C)	3	3
514	SS cw bs, pln (17-18C)	3	3
516	ND gtw bwl rim typ 3 (16-19C)	1	1

Abbreviations Listing

bs	body sherd
bwl	bowl
C	Century
chmb	chamber
cw	coarseware
disc	discarded
ew	earthenware
gtw	gravel-tempered ware
ND	North Devon
pln	plain
slp	slip
SS	South Somerset
T-g	tin-glazed

Statistics

total number of sherds: 17
 minimum number of vessels: 17
 total weight of sherds: 264

Shell

<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>
506	1

Slag

<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>weight</i>
507	1	62

8. DISCUSSION

No deposits or features earlier than the medieval period were exposed. A small section of the medieval city wall, previously obscured by the surfaces of Cricklepit Street, was recorded.

The earliest fabric in the retaining wall is located to the north of the area surveyed and is related to the miller's house associated with Cricklepit Mill. This probably dates to the 1660s or earlier.

To the south of Cricklepit mill in the area of the Cricklepit Saw Mill several phases of later fabric (pre-dating 1814) survives. A mill on the site of Andrews' and Palmer's Mill, probably contemporary with this fabric was located to the south of the retaining wall. This was excavated in 1988-89, and was reburied prior to the start of the current works. Further exposure of the

tailrace to this mill was recorded following vegetation clearance. Shallow excavations in Cricklepit Street exposed surfaces dating from the 18th-century onwards.

The majority of the retaining wall dates from a rebuilding episode in 1814, and a succession of 19th- and 20th-century alterations. At this time the wall formed part of the Cricklepit Saw Mill and the Andrews' and Palmer's Mills. The upper part of the retaining wall in the vicinity of the Cricklepit Saw Mill has been rebuilt and this may be associated with the construction of the Saw Mill in the 1850s.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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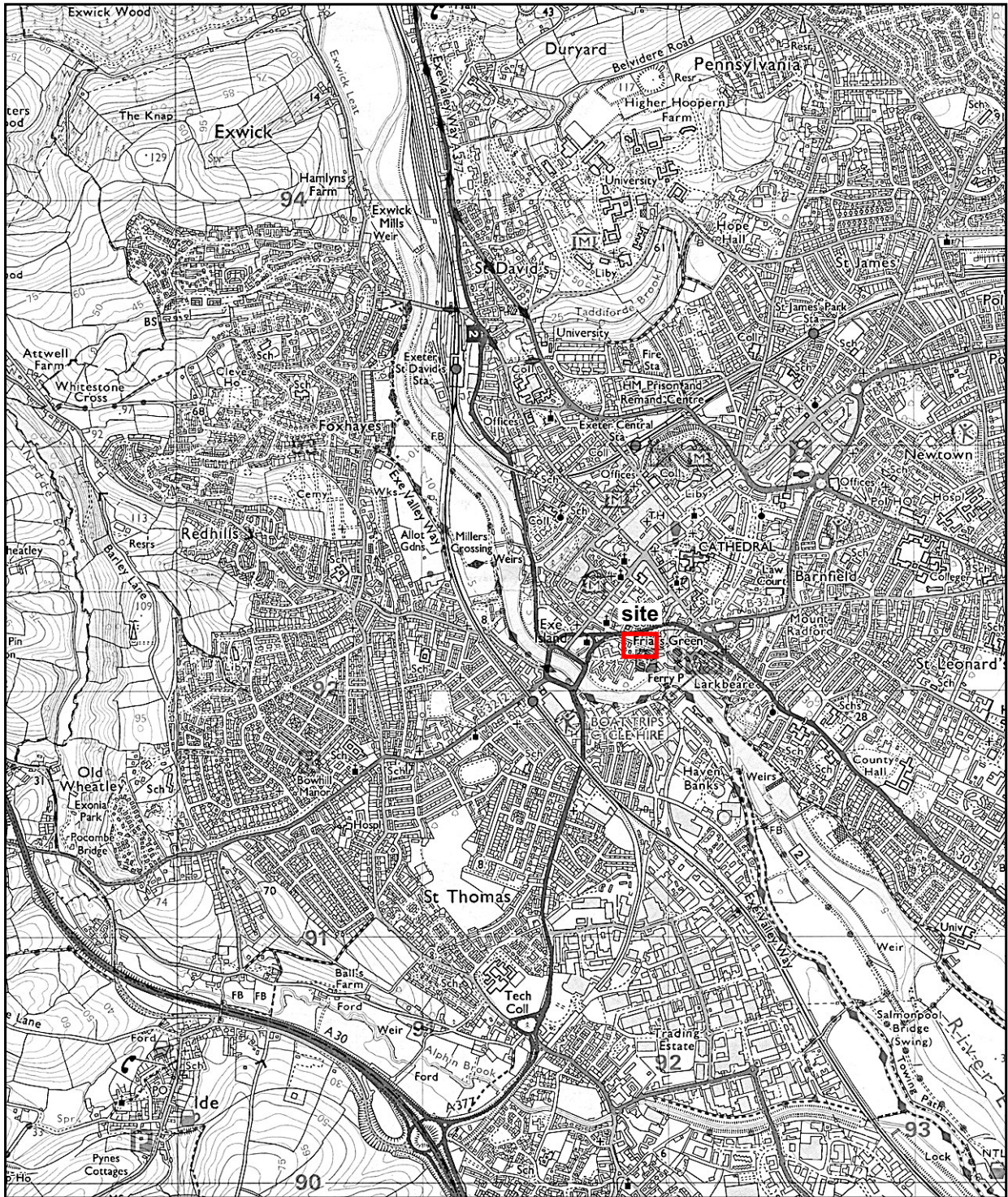


Fig. 1 Location of site. Reproduced from the 1:25,000 Explorer™ map 114 by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 2005. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100016685.

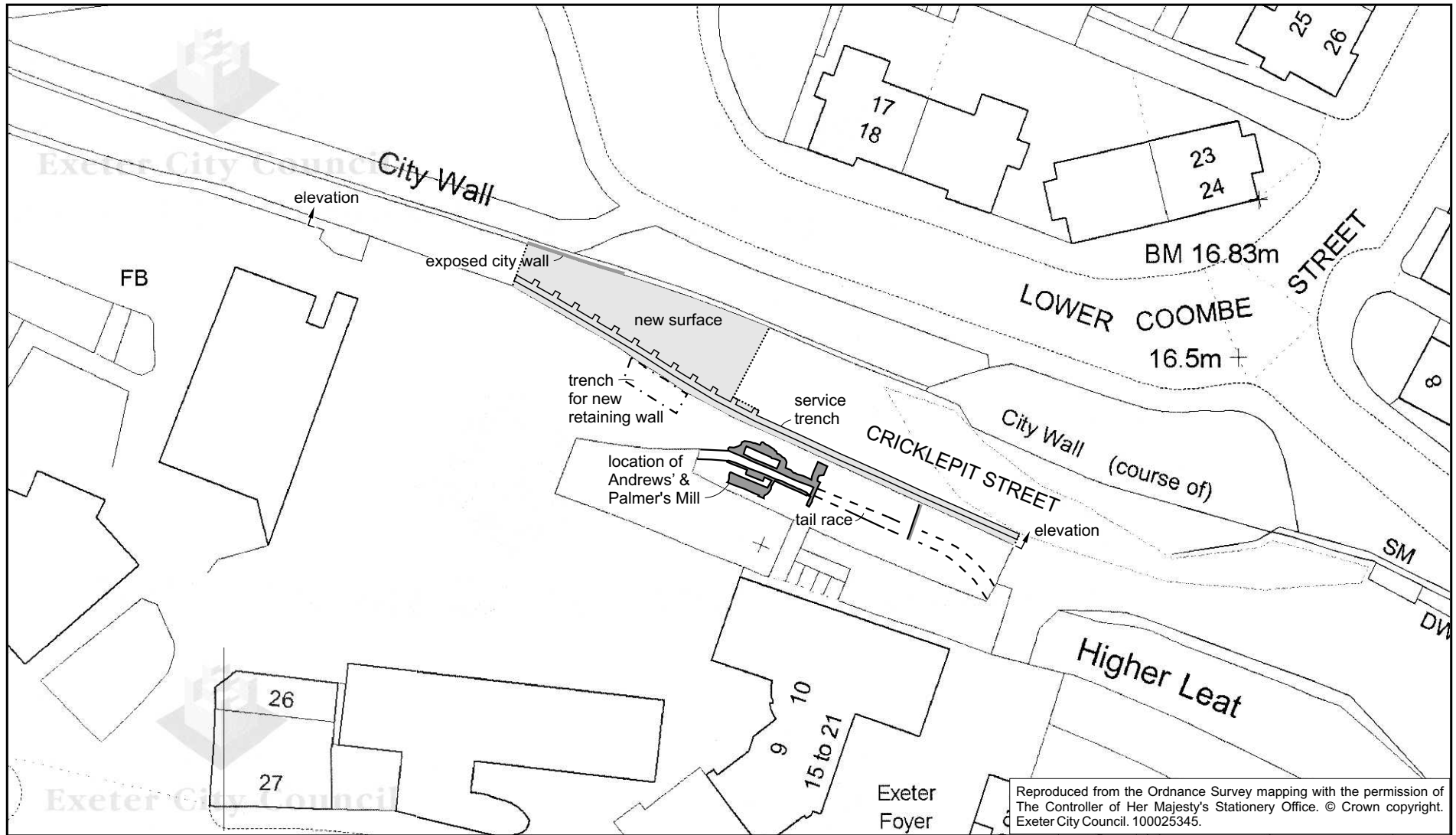


Fig. 2 Location of observations. Scale 1:500 @ A4.

Elevation of the retaining wall



Fig. 3 Phased elevation of the retaining wall, based on drawings prepared in 1989 and 2007.



Plate 1 Excavation for new retaining wall showing infill deposits overlaying natural, looking north-east. 1m scale.



Plate 2 Cricklepit Street, showing extent of ground reduction and location of service trench, looking south-east.