

**RECENT OBSERVATIONS
DURING BUILDING WORKS
AT 8-9 THE CLOSE, EXETER:**

INTERIM REPORT to AUGUST 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes recent observations and interventions within the fabric of Nos 8, and 9a The Close, Exeter (SX 92176 92590), a Grade I Listed Building standing on the north-eastern side of The Close within the City Centre Conservation Area and the statutory Exeter Area of Archaeological Importance (Fig. 1). The works were undertaken during a programme of refurbishment and repair of the building in 2008–9.

The catalyst for the work was the removal to new premises of the occupants, a firm of solicitors, ending an association between this building and the legal profession which had existed since the 19th century. Following the removal of the tenants an archaeological assessment was commissioned by J.D. Wetherspoon PLC as part of a planning application for the redevelopment and change of use of the property from offices to a public house and restaurant. The assessment report was compiled by Exeter Archaeology (EA) and submitted in December 2007; it contains a full account of the building as it is currently understood, with a survey of previous archaeological interventions and antiquarian observations relevant to the property (EA Report No. 07.97).

After the submission of the assessment report investigative works were undertaken to establish the date, structural condition and historic significance of elements of the building. These works were monitored by Exeter Archaeology in June 2008 and are included in the report below. Soon afterwards the application for planning permission for the change of use was refused and J.D. Wetherspoon PLC withdrew their interest in the property.

The owners of the property subsequently began a programme of refurbishment and repair to secure the building, which was in poor condition, from further deterioration and fit it for occupation by new tenants. The works were extensive, involving the re-slating of parts of the roofs, the repair of structural timberwork and joinery, both internally and externally, stonework and brickwork and timber repairs to the external walls and the complete redecoration of the interior and exterior, including the removal of modern cladding and finishes. In reflection of the historic importance of the building and its Grade 1 listing a condition of planning consent was imposed by the Local Planning Authority, Exeter City Council (ECC) requiring the implementation of an agreed programme of archaeological recording. The extent of the works was determined by the ECC Archaeology and Planning Officer. The works aimed to:

- Provide information as to the significance of historic joinery and fabric, to help determine the most appropriate methods of repair or replacement.
- Extend the detailed photographic record of the building.
- Describe and interpret any fabric revealed during the alterations.
- Annotate and otherwise augment the existing drawn record.
- Produce new record drawings of significant historic fabric exposed or otherwise affected by the refurbishment works.
- Report on the findings resulting from the archaeological recording project.

The works were carried out by Exeter Archaeology in spring and summer of 2009, as roof structures and wall surfaces were stripped for structural repairs, re-slating and plastering. A drawn record of the Notaries house (hitherto unrecorded) was also made to record the extensive remains of late 17th- and 18th-century panelling which were exposed by the removal of modern wallpapers, cladding and other finishes.

This report represents an interim report on the works undertaken up to August 2009. The refurbishment of the property is not yet complete and further recording works may be undertaken in future.

2. SUMMARY HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

Nos 8, 9 and 9a The Close, Exeter were formerly a single property, one of a group of large medieval canons' houses in this part of the Close. The houses may have their origins in the 12th and 13th centuries, the cathedral clergy having by this time abandoned their 'common life' (one of the requirements of the original foundation of the cathedral) in favour of private residences occupying

large tenements in the Close (Orme 1986, 33). Although it was obviously an important and architecturally impressive property, the house does not appear to have been assigned to a particular Cathedral Dignitary in the medieval period and its occupants and use for most of the period remain uncertain.

The medieval house consisted of a front range of mixed stone and timber construction fronting the Close, now a separate property and known as No. 9 The Close. Behind this was a hall range with a narrow courtyard on each side. The hall has a magnificent late-medieval false hammer-beam roof, one of the outstanding structures of its kind in the country. At the north-western end of the hall was a further range or ranges, now largely destroyed, which has been replaced by a large late 17th-century brick house. The hall and rear ranges are known as the 'Law Library' and 'Notaries House' respectively, and together with the north-westerly rooms of the south-eastern range, which rise into a small pavilion-like structure under a pyramidal roof, constitute No. 8 The Close. The remainder of the south-eastern range, lying alongside the lane leading to the residentiary house formerly appropriated to the Archdeacon of Totnes is now known as No. 9a The Close.

Despite theories that the building could have served as an ecclesiastical court or administrative building (J. Thorp, pers. comm.) it is most likely that the building was originally a canon's residence, with a grand hall for semi-public use and chambers, lodgings and service buildings in the other ranges. By the late 16th century the number of canonries at the cathedral had been reduced and the house was leased out to tenants to provide an income for the Dean and Chapter. During most of the 16th and 17th centuries it was occupied by the Bruton Family and, from 1668, by Christopher Bale, who may have subdivided the house to form two properties. Bale rebuilt the property in the 1690s following a disastrous fire and appears to have extensively refurbished the whole, particularly the hall and the south-eastern range. This disaster may be the origin of the Notaries House, which seems to have replaced the medieval private apartments.

Further subdivision of the house in the 18th century resulted in its present division into three distinct properties, as reflected by the modern numbering. During most of the 19th century Nos 9 and 9a were occupied as private houses and the Notaries House and the medieval hall as the offices of a legal firm, whose premises were extended during the 20th century into No. 9a.

The front range and the hall of the present building survive substantially in their medieval form, though the hall has been encroached on at its north-western end by a galleried structure housing lavatories, which relates to the rear range or Notaries House. Although elements of the former rear range may survive, as identified in the assessment (Parker *et al.* 2007, 10-11), the present building is almost entirely of late 17th-century date, one of the best surviving buildings of its period in the city. No. 9a shows much evidence of late 17th-century rebuilding, but the basic form of the building and its roof structures, though fragmentary, are medieval.

For a more detailed documentary and physical description of the buildings, and an account of previous archaeological interventions, see the assessment report (Parker *et al.*: EA Report No. 07.97).

3. RECORDING UNDERTAKEN IN JUNE 2008

These works took place as part of an investigative exercise aimed at establishing the state of repair of the roof structure and the nature of the enclosures at the north-eastern end of the hall, in order to inform an application for the repair of the roof and the possible removal of the gallery structures which have encroached upon the volume of the medieval hall.

3.1 Assessment of the gallery within the hall

Opening No. 1

This small opening was made in the ceiling of the kitchen within the present main entrance passage at the north-west end of the hall in an attempt to establish the probable date and structure of the gallery. The opening revealed that the floor was supported on softwood joists running from north-east to south-west, overlain by softwood boards running in the opposite direction.

Opening No. 2

This opening was made by lifting a board in the women's lavatories on the first-floor gallery. This revealed that the gallery had two levels of floor boards and joists, the modern floor having presumably been raised above the level of the original floor either to strengthen it or to ease access to the lavatories. No evidence of any earlier fabric was encountered.

Opening No. 3

This opening was made in the stud wall fronting the gallery at about dado level and sought to establish whether the gallery had ever been an open gallery with a balustraded parapet, like the 17th- or 18th-century gallery in the Deanery hall. The aperture measured about 1m². The wall proved to have been constructed of relatively light studwork with diagonal braces, covered in thin cleft laths secured with hand-made nails and overlain by a layer of thick, pink plaster bound with small quantities of hair. There was no visible evidence of any earlier parapet.

Opening No. 4

This opening was made above the door head at the entrance to the hall from the entrance passage, above the south-western jamb. It revealed that there is no bressummer supporting the gallery, the structure is supported on modern timbers and no fabric earlier in date than the 19th century was observed.

Conclusions

It may be presumed that the gallery is of 19th-century, rather than earlier date and that it was never an open gallery with a balustrade. The gallery appears to have been inserted when the present entrance passage was made at the end of the hall. It provided an enclosed passage from the main door of the hall to the Notaries House and also two first-floor closets, presumably lavatories, accessible from the main stair of that building. The gallery was presumably added after the conversion of the building for use as offices.

3.2 Investigation of the Hall Roof*Opening No. 5*

This opening was made on the north-western side of the roof at the level of the eaves plates, near the foot of one of the main trusses. The opening showed the feet of one rafter of a principal truss (Truss II) descending into a sole piece into which it was tenoned and secured by a single peg. The wall plate was tenoned into the side of the sole piece and effectively butted against it. The sole piece was halved over the eaves plate, which appeared also to run in sections between the trusses. The foot of a common rafter truss was also visible; the rafter could be seen to meet the eaves plate with a birds-mouth joint, secured by a peg driven diagonally through from the upper face of the rafter. All the timbers were in excellent condition. The common rafters had been reinforced by later rafters laid alongside them to which all the modern battens had been nailed. The roof slates were of asbestos, presumably of post-war date, perhaps representing reparations after damage in the blitz.

Opening No. 6

This opening was made in the position of the sole piece of one of the intermediate trusses, to the south-west of the truss previously observed in Bay 2 of the roof, revealing the area between trusses IIa and III. The opening revealed that the intermediate trusses also have sole pieces, which are halved over the wall plates and eaves plates and extend beyond the wall plates into the hall to support the carved lions which ornament these trusses. The lions appear to be physically part of these timbers rather than applied ornaments secured with tenons, pegs or spikes. The ashlar pieces or vertical timbers supporting the cusped ornaments which extend into the backs of the lions heads are secured in place by small wedges driven into the sole pieces. Many of the timbers were marked with carpenters' marks in discreet places where they would not be easily visible from below.

Openings 7, 8 and 9

These openings, all in the same side of the roof, were unfortunately not inspected. They were all made at the point where the principal trusses meet the wall plates, as in Opening No. 5. The contractors reported that the timbers were generally in sound condition.

Opening No. 10

This opening was made on the south-eastern side of the roof, towards the south-western end of the hall, in the area of Bay 3. This opening revealed one whole half bay. Each half bay contains three common rafter trusses between the main and intermediate trusses. The timbers were in excellent condition and the spacing of the rafters was slightly wider than on the other side of the roof. The carpentry details in this area showed no variations from those on the other side of the roof and, as before, many of the timbers were scored with carpenter's marks.

Opening No. 11

This opening was made immediately to the south-west of the modern chimney and encompassed half a bay (Bay 2). The principal rafter of the main truss to the south-west of the present chimney was seated in a socket in a sole piece and secured with two pegs. Beyond this the roof continued as usual until the point where the chimney stack would be expected to penetrate the roof structure. Here, the sole piece of the intermediate truss ended, or had been truncated, flush with the back of the wall plates. The eaves plate also stopped short at this point. There appears to have been no tie between the two timbers on the wall top at this point. One of the ashlar pieces of the intermediate trusses appeared to have its base tenon at right angles to the ridge in a variation of the usual pattern. The condition of the timbers, as might be expected on the south side of the roof in the area of a chimney, was not good. Although these observations suggested the presence of a larger and earlier chimney stack, it was unfortunately impossible to conclusively determine whether the roof timbers had been designed to accommodate a chimney at this point or whether they had been truncated to allow for the addition of a chimney at a later date.

One important piece of evidence visible in this area was the treatment of the wind braces, whose moulded faces extended behind the present ceiling (Fig. 2). There can be no doubt that the roof was not originally ceiled beneath the rafters, as at present, and that all the timbers were originally fully displayed.

Opening No. 12

This was the last of the openings made in the roof, to the north-east of the chimney, revealing approximately two thirds of a bay. Again the principal sole piece at the foot of truss II had two pegs securing the principal rafter, whereas the intermediate truss had but one. The treatment of the chimney remains inconclusive due to the extent of the decay in this area; although there was no obvious special provision for a chimney in this area nothing actually precludes a primary chimney. Since it is possible that the timbers were fabricated elsewhere and then transported to the site for assembly, there may have been no specific provision for the chimney built into in the timber structure; the timbers may have been truncated and adapted around the shaft of a chimney stack during assembly.

Conclusions

The investigations within the hall roof have added much to our understanding of the structure of the roof at the eaves, exposing areas which have not previously been recorded. The timbers, except in the area of the chimney and against the rear wall of the Notaries House, are in remarkably good condition. It is clear that the roof was not designed to be ceiled and that its timbers were formerly fully exposed, but it remains uncertain whether or not the hall originally had a chimney. The absence of smoke blackening or soot staining on any of the timbers proves that the hall was never heated by an open hearth; therefore the 'louvre' at the apex of the roof at the south-western end of the hall is certainly a lantern or ventilator and not an outlet for smoke. It is highly unlikely that a later medieval hall of this status and magnificence was unheated; a primary chimney could have existed and a large fireplace opening is therefore likely to be concealed behind modern plaster in the south-eastern wall of the hall.

4. RECORDING UNDERTAKEN IN MARCH AND APRIL 2009

This recording took place during the refurbishment works aimed at re-edifying the building for continued use as offices. The interiors were being stripped out, including the removal of modern partitions and decorative finishes, to reveal the historic fabric. Structural repairs were identified as necessary in several places where neglect had resulted in structural failure. Slates were removed and roofs exposed in preparation for the re-roofing of parts of the south-eastern range. The redecoration of the exteriors, including carpentry repairs to doorways, gateways and windows was also undertaken at this time. The archaeological works were monitored in a series of site visits at the request of the contractors. The exposed fabric was recorded by photography and by limited measured drawing.

4.1 Works to the pavilion block at No. 8 The Close

South-east elevation

During March 2009 concerns as to the structural stability of the timber-framed upper storey of the 'pavilion' block at the north-eastern end of the south-eastern range led to the removal of the modern render covering the elevation. This part of the building has previously been interpreted as an early 18th-century addition overlying the remains of a medieval range with 16th- and 17th-century additions. The range retains fragments of an elaborate late medieval roof structure and must have been an important part of the medieval canon's house (Parker *et al* 2007, 18).

This part of the house contains two rooms on each storey, separated by a brick chimney stack. The chimney can be seen to conflict with windows on several storeys, which suggests that it is inserted within the shell of an earlier building. The room on the top floor of this building is lit by an oriel window overhanging the adjacent lane, in a timber-framed section of the elevation covered with a modern concrete render.

Upon removal of the rendered surface of the wall the timber structure of the upper storey was found to be bulging out over the lane by as much as 0.18m. The timber framing consists of substantial but slender vertical studs in oak, linking a sill beam and head beam of similar scantling. The vertical studs are braced by a pair of curving braces forming a pointed arch (Fig. 3). All the timbers are secured with spikes or nails rather than pegs. The surface of the timbers is highly corroded, as though they had been exposed to the weather. This may imply that the original render was recessed within the panels to expose the timbers; however, no evidence of any fixing to secure the infill panels was apparent and it is uncertain how the panels were finished.

Both the sill and top rail of the frame appeared to be intact, the bulge in the wall occurring not because of the decay of the sill, but because of the failure of a halved scarf joint at the centre of the sill. Some of the timbers bore traces of redundant sockets and appear to have been reused from an earlier structure. The scantling of these timbers suggests that of common rafter trusses and it is possible that they are parts of the earlier roof structure reused in this position.

The majority of the timbers were in good condition, though the stud at the north-eastern limit of the façade had entirely perished, and the larger stud to the south-west, which presumably lay at the centre of the original wall frame had partially perished at the base. The section of the frame to the south-west of this stud had been renewed in the 19th century, presumably when the existing oriel window was inserted. It is uncertain whether further elements of this frame survive to the south-west of the oriel, though this is very likely.

The roof of the 'pavilion' block

The roof of the pavilion block was stripped of slates in April 2009, revealing part of the underlying roof structure. Unfortunately the roof space was not accessible due to closely-spaced 20th-century battens; the roof structure could thus only be inspected remotely. The roof is supported on two or possibly two-and-a-half 'A'-frame trusses, consisting of pairs of principal rafters linked by collar beams, which are tenoned and pegged into the underside of the principal rafters. At the apex a yoke supports the ridge. The third possible truss appears to be truncated above the collar by the hip rafters of the north-eastern slope of the roof. The purlins are threaded through the principal rafters in short lengths linked by diagonal scarf joints within the mortices. Some sockets appear to be redundant.

The timbers are clean, well squared and so regular that they appear to have been produced in a saw mill. On the other hand, the redundant sockets, the pegged construction and the way in which the pegs are left protruding suggest a much earlier origin for the structure. It is perhaps the case that the modern appearance of parts of the roof is due to a heavy restoration or rebuilding in the 19th or 20th century. The original structure is hard to date without close inspection but some of the constructional details suggest that the roof may date from the 17th or early 18th century.

Conclusions

The timber-framed structure forming the 'pavilion' at the north-eastern end of the range is certainly a post-medieval addition and was erected above the remains of an earlier range in place of a high-quality medieval roof, perhaps reusing some of its timbers. The use of oak studs with curved braces is unusual later than the end of the 17th century at which time softwood appears to have been imported in quantity and was preferred for studwork and framing. Work of the later period is characterised by studs with slighter scantling and straight braces. It may be conjectured that this addition formed part of a late 17th-century refurbishment of the buildings.

As there was no communication between the rooms in this block and the rest of No. 9a, the altered building must have formed part of the property now No. 8 The Close. It perhaps relates to a phase of subdivision of the medieval canons' house into smaller residential units, perhaps after the acquisition of the property by Christopher Bale in 1668. The building is not well integrated with the adjoining Notaries' House, as it presumably would have been if both buildings were contemporary or if this structure had been remodelled subsequently. Instead, it forms a small separate pavilion whose floor levels and fenestration bear no relation to the formal façade of the adjoining house. The building may therefore conceivably pre-date the fire which destroyed the northern parts of the house in the 1690s; it may have formed part of an earlier remodelling of the property, perhaps answering to a similar projection at the opposite end of the façade.

5. RECORDING UNDERTAKEN IN MAY 2009

The next phase of recording took place after the completion of stripping out and involved the production of drawn and photographic records of the exposed fabric. Section drawings of the Notaries house were made at a scale of 1: 50, together with details of mouldings, to record the extent of preservation of panelling and historic fixtures in this important building, which has not previously been recorded in any detail (Figs 4-8)

Detailed recording was also concentrated on an area of roof of No. 9a The Close, to the south-west of the pavilion block, extending between the pavilion block and the large lucam or dormer window over the staircase of No. 9a. The roofs of this part of the range have not previously been available for recording. Initially only a limited area of the roof was opened up but, over the following weeks, further areas of the roof were opened and recorded by photography and in hand-measured drawings (Figs, 9-12).

5.1 **The roofs of No. 9a The Close**

The recent recording concentrated on the north-eastern parts of the roof, which were covered with slates which had been Turnerised and were in poor condition. The recording has shown that the range has three medieval roofs, two of which have unusual constructional features. The roofs have suffered many phases of alteration, particularly to the upper parts and the collars, which have been removed in order to create headroom in the attic rooms of the building. It is likely that the current second floor is an insertion and that the first-floor rooms, and possibly the whole volume of the interior, were originally open to the apex of the roof.

The South-western roof

The roof over the south-western part of the building was recorded in measured sketches for the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (Now EA) during a previous episode of building recording in 1979. John Thorp and Stewart Brown identified two medieval roofs over the range, producing a measured drawing of one of the trusses over the south-western section of No. 9a and a brief

description of the adjoining roof to the north-east, over the centre of the building. Only the apex of the latter roof was visible. The roofs were interpreted as medieval, the central roof being the oldest, consisting of two bays defined by three closed trusses, while the south-western roof was interpreted as a later-medieval construction butting against this roof and against the roof of the front range (EA Archive No. 235). There was no access to the north-eastern parts of the roof at this time.

The south-western part of the roof is inaccessible today, but a rough photographic record made through a small aperture in 2007 shows that it has at least three handsome arch-braced roof trusses with chamfered arch braces and very large, square purlins. This roof perhaps dates from the 15th or early 16th century.

Central roof

The apex of the south-western truss of the central roof was the only part initially exposed. This truss lies on the line of the partition separating the staircase from the attic room in the north-eastern part of the building (Fig. 9). The tops of two principal rafters were observed, meeting at the apex in a vertical joint, one tenoning into the other and secured by a single peg. There was a diagonally-set ridge tree, though this does not appear to have been an original feature; the present ridge tree is an addition in softwood probably dating from the 17th century. No sign of a collar beam was visible, perhaps because this was at a lower level, and is now either concealed within the fabric of the partition or has been wholly removed.

The purlins are tenoned into the principal rafters with bare-faced tenons secured from the underside with pegs. The original purlin on this side of the roof still remained in position but could be seen to have bowed, distorting the original roof structure. A later roof structure of purlins and rafters had therefore been superimposed above this. On the north-western side of the roof the additional purlin was trenched into the earlier principal rafter; like the ridge tree, these roof timbers are perhaps a 17th-century addition or repair.

Several medieval common rafters survived on the north-western side of the roof, underneath their 17th-century successors. Most of the medieval rafters had been truncated above the upper purlin, though three survived to a higher level. Unfortunately it was not possible to establish the original treatment of the rafters at the ridge. There seem to have been seven common rafters in each bay, the bays being unusually wide.

On the south-eastern side of the roof the common rafters appeared to have been truncated completely or entirely removed when this plane of the roof was reconstructed either in the late 19th or 20th century. This plane of the roof must already have been altered when the dormer windows and the lucam over the staircase were added in the 17th century. Few 17th-century timbers have survived, perhaps because they were of very slight scantling indeed. They had been augmented in the 20th century by doubling up with additional timbers to bear the modern slate roof covering.

The subsequent removal of a larger area of slates allowed the inspection of other parts of the roof, including the construction of the eaves in the truss previously described. The broad blade of the principal rafter on the south-eastern side of the roof could be seen to extend down to a bird's-mouth joint in the upper surface of a square-set eaves plate which had been truncated during later alterations to the building. There appeared to be no provision for a wall plate, which suggests that the wall of this part of the building was originally very thin, perhaps a timber-framed wall, as in the upper storey of the front block, though there is no evidence here that the wall jettied out over the lane.

The eaves plate was formerly continuous on both sides of the truss, rather than butting against it or tenoning in to it as would be expected if this was a main truss. The truss might thus be interpreted as an intermediate truss, perhaps with a different construction from the adjoining trusses, and this suggests that, unless this roof shared the same wall plate and was thus contemporary with the adjoining roof, it must originally have extended further to the south west.

Below the bird's-mouth joint at the foot of the rafter a horizontal timber resembling a sole piece was tenoned into the inner face of the eaves plate and at right angles to it. This timber also received the principal rafter in its upper surface, secured with a single peg. Instead of continuing in the manner of a sole piece to connect to the rear face of an arch brace, this timber only extended for a short length before a second timber was scarfed onto its end with an open tenon, to continue towards the centre of the building. This joint was presumably intended to lengthen the timber; however, as the timber is less than half a metre long the rationale for this is obscure. The full extent of the extended

timber was concealed within the partition and was not visible; only the rear face of a short vertical timber, perhaps an ashlar piece, could be seen seated in the upper surface of this timber. The scarf has failed and the timber has sunk slightly, suggesting that it may be part of a suspended structure such as a 'false hammer beam' or 'extended sole piece'. This impression was strengthened by an angled socket and a row of peg holes in the underside of the timber which suggested the former presence of a timber corbel or bracket linking the sole piece and its continuation to a wall post in the timber-framed south-eastern wall. This detail suggests that the timber was not originally part of a closed truss, as suggested by Thorp and Brown, but that the present partition infilling the truss is later, enclosing part of a roof which formerly extended both south-west and north-east of this truss.

The opposite foot of the truss was not exposed during the alterations, but could be seen within the eaves pockets on the opposite side of the roof and differed slightly from that described. In this case the sole piece or false hammer beam appeared to be a continuous timber, with the ashlar piece seated in its upper surface (Fig. 10). The eaves plate was unfortunately concealed by debris on the wall top and the sockets and pegs for the bracket beneath the sole piece or hammer beam, if one existed, were also obscured. The reason for the differing treatment on this side of the roof is not known; it is possible that the north-western wall was constructed of a different material and to a greater thickness, and that a different solution to the design of the eaves had to be found in this case. No evidence for a primary partition within this truss was visible.

Further exposure of the roof during re-slating revealed much of its north-western side and parts of its south-eastern side, though the exposed area did not extend as far as the truss described above (Fig. 11). The central roof and parts of the more elaborate roof over the north-eastern part of the building were revealed and recorded.

The central roof appears to have had a system of at least two, and possibly three, wide bays defined by two further trusses similar in design to the truss previously described, resting on sole pieces extending from the wall tops. The central truss had been mutilated but the infilled socket for the collar was just visible. Above this joint the timber took a curved form, which may imply some particularly complex and perhaps decorative treatment of this truss. The sole piece on the north-western side is missing and the foot of the truss on the opposite side had been truncated by a post-medieval chimney.

The north-eastern truss retained part of its sole piece or hammer beam on the north-western side, which had been truncated by the insertion of the present second floor. The timber featured a small socket in its upper surface. Although this might have represented evidence of a closed truss, no corresponding sockets appeared in the soffit of the principal rafter and it is possible that the socket was simply a carpenter's mistake or a redundant feature of a reused timber. The original form of the trusses in this part of the roof would require further investigation before a confident reconstruction of its original form would be possible.

There were two levels of purlins in the roof. The lower purlin survived on the north-western side and also for most of the south eastern side, where it had been retained beneath the openings for the dormer windows. Most of the common rafters on the south-eastern side had been removed and all the remaining rafters were truncated above the upper purlin. The present dwarf walls defining the sides of the attic room could be seen to be an addition, probably of 18th- or 19th-century date; the floorboards of the present second floor, which was presumably inserted during the 17th-century alterations, extended beneath them into the eaves and the undersides of the original roof timbers beyond these walls showed traces of an inserted lath and plaster ceiling.

North-eastern roof

At the north-eastern end of the roof structure, butting directly against the north-eastern face is a section of a far more elaborate and complex roof (Fig. 12). Only a small part of this roof remains, extending to approximately half a bay. The rest was removed at the erection of the 'pavilion' over the north-eastern end of the range in the late 17th century (See above). Unusually, this roof has common and principal rafters of the same narrow scantling in both the main and the subsidiary trusses, as though the whole roof were composed of common-rafter couples. Four couples survive. At the south western end, butting against the central roof, is an arch-braced roof truss consisting of two rafters, mitred to meet vertically at the apex and joined by a single peg. These timbers were formerly linked by a collar beam, which was tenoned through the rafters and secured with pegs. The sockets remain,

but the collar beam and other timbers in the central part of the truss have been entirely removed to improve the headroom in the attic.

The rafters are secured to the large, curved and chamfered arch braces by slip tenons, for which the ends of the pegs are visible on each side of the roof at approximately a third of the height of the rafters. The arch braces rise from moulded wall plates which survive on both sides of the roof with a complex profile of hollow and ogee mouldings supporting a chamfered sill. The chamfer on the sill returns onto the lower arch braces; a most refined and elegant detail.

The arch brace on the north-western side is truncated at the point where it meets the dwarf walls defining the present room. This timber must formerly have run up to meet a horizontal purlin, which remains in position half way between the slip tenon and the collar. There is some evidence that the arch brace continued past the purlin and was not interrupted by it, though whether it was a single timber for its entire length is unclear. On the south-eastern side of the roof the lower arch brace is a composite timber formed of two timbers scarfed together and secured with three pegs.

The arch braces in the main truss are only chamfered on their north-eastern face, and must presumably have butted up against a closed truss or partition within the north-easterly truss of the adjoining roof, though no supporting evidence for such a partition has been observed. The arch-braced truss is labelled 'IIIP' on its south eastern rafter and 'IIII' on its north-western rafter. We may thus postulate a roof with four main trusses, extending for at least three and possibly four bays.

The adjoining two trusses are simply common rafter couples and show no evidence of collars, arch braces, ashlar pieces or other refinements. They were presumably held in position only by their joints with the purlins and by the pegs at the apex. No carpenters' marks have been observed; these timbers may not have been individually identified as part of the numbering system previously described.

The fourth truss is of particular interest because it survives almost complete, and has a distinct form which shows that it was not one of the main trusses. This truss consists of a 'common rafter' couple with the same scantling as the other timbers, linked by a collar beam tenoned into the rafters and braced by arch braces. Unlike those of the main truss, these arch braces are without chamfers. The lower part of the north-western arch brace has been truncated short of the wall of the Notaries House, but the south-eastern arch brace survives and sits in the top of the moulded wall plate with a bird's-mouth joint. This timber is also a composite timber, consisting of two sections joined with an open tenon scarf joint. The reason for this peculiar treatment where timbers are 'extended' by scarfing is not known, but is a feature of the trusses on this side of both this roof and the earlier roof to the south west.

Although the arch braces are subsidiary to the purlins, being without chamfers, they appear to interrupt the purlins, which may be halved over them. The purlins have a chamfered underside reflecting the chamfers of the arch braces in the main truss, though this detail is obscured by later plaster. It is not possible to determine whether or not the junction of the timbers was originally masked by a boss. At the junction of the arch braces and the collar beam is a small longitudinal timber which appears also to have a chamfered underside; this is almost certainly a collar purlin. The roof may thus be reconstructed as having a pattern of rectangular panels defined by chamfered ribs forming a clearly defined curved 'ceiling' below the collar beam, resembling that of a wagon or barrel roof. This is a roof of very high quality and must have covered an important room.

Conclusions

The south-eastern range of the house is basically a medieval building, but has been heavily rebuilt in the late 17th century. Due to the extent of the rebuilding the original form of the range remains uncertain. For example, it is difficult to determine whether the building was originally of one or two storeys. The present second floor is certainly a late 17th- or 18th-century insertion and there can be no doubt that the medieval roofs were formerly open at least to first-floor level. The south-eastern wall of the central section of the roof had only a single plate at the eaves, suggesting that it was a thin wall. It is most likely that the lower part of the wall was of stone construction but that the upper part was timber framed, as previously suggested in the assessment (Parker *et al* 2007, 11). The timbers on this side had extra brackets or braces to link them with the timber studs of the wall.

There are three different medieval roofs over this range, which implies that there were three different apartments within it. None of the roofs are smoke blackened, which shows either that the

rooms were unheated or that they were provided with fireplaces and chimneys, though none survives. The south-western roof is a fine arch-braced roof elegantly finished with chamfering and must have roofed an important chamber. The central roof was much cruder in design and finish. It is perhaps rather older than the south-western roof, with wide bays and trusses with what appear to have been extended sole pieces at the base of the rafters. Although these might relate to partitions closing the trusses there is some evidence to suggest that the trusses were originally designed to be open. The sole pieces may have formed false hammer beams or other largely decorative structures suspended from the trusses. The roof may have continued to the south-west and has been perhaps truncated by the adjoining roof structures.

No evidence has been observed to show that the trusses were originally closed, as suggested by Thorp and Brown. If it is not an original partition, the surviving partition alongside the staircase is most likely to date from the late 17th century, relating to the insertion of the staircase and second-floor structures within the shell of the medieval building. It is also possible that it could be a late-medieval insertion, contemporary with the south-western roof, especially if this did truncate an earlier roof structure. It is likely that the most north-easterly truss of this roof was also closed, though again, no fixings, grooves or other means of securing the panels have been observed. These are perhaps obscured by later plaster.

The roof of the north-eastern part of the building, though only fragmentary, is of the greatest interest. Although less than half a bay survives there is enough evidence to show the original form of the roof and some evidence for its extent. The design of the roof is unusual in that it seems to have had some of the characteristics of a wagon roof, with closely spaced trusses of the same scantling as the common rafters and a pattern of chamfered ribs, including a collar purlin or 'ridge rib' defining square panels forming a semi-circular 'barrel vault' beneath the level of the collars. In other respects the roof was unlike a wagon roof; not every truss was arch braced and there was a clear system of main and intermediate trusses with plain common rafters between them. The carpentry was complex, employing slip tenons, and the roof was supported on elaborately-moulded wall plates which may imply that there were further decorations, such as bosses, which have not survived.

Half a bay of the roof remains, terminating at truss 'IIII', the surviving section may thus be extrapolated to form a three-bay roof with six half bays. The roof could have extended for approximately 6m, if truss 'I' lay against the north-eastern gable, or for around 8m, forming a longer roof, if there were a fourth bay beyond Truss I. The first option coincides with a vertical break in the north-western wall of the range, which may show the original limit of the medieval building. The second option fits the existing length of the range and could also have been its original extent.

Although not strictly a wagon roof, a curved ceiling was clearly the effect aimed at by the designer. Wagon roofs are not usually found in domestic contexts in Devon, but appear to have been reserved for churches; in fact, distinct and separate traditions of domestic and ecclesiastical roof design appear to have prevailed in Devon throughout the medieval period. Domestic roofs were usually designed to emphasise their division into bays by use of prominent trusses at regular intervals; church roofs of the same period almost all underplay or suppress the main trusses in favour of a pattern of ribs forming a continuous curved ceiling resembling a barrel vault. This roof clearly belongs in the latter category and, as we may reasonably assume that its unusual design form reflects its context, it may be conjectured that the roof covered a domestic chapel or oratory. The location of the room within the complex is suitable for such a function and its alignment, though not precisely east/west is comparable with that of St Martin's Church and other churches in the city. If this is a domestic chapel it may be confidently assumed that the principal chambers lay alongside, in the northern part of the house, on the site of the existing Notaries House.

5.2 Recording in the Notaries House

Alterations to the Notaries House involved the removal of modern painted and papered finishes on many of the wall surfaces and ceilings in advance of redecoration. This revealed many interesting features, and exposed details of the panelling and historic paintwork which had formerly been obscured.

Ground floor

In the main entrance hallway at ground-floor level, the removal of later wallpapers and cladding exposed wall panelling covering the wall surfaces to the full height of the room. This panelling was entirely plain, without mouldings, consisting of stiles and rails forming a low dado with a planted, moulded rail and tall rectangular panels above, reaching as far as the box-cornice below the ceiling. The panelling on the north-western side of the hallway was intact, but that on the south-eastern side had been much damaged by the insertion of electrical services and openings cut through the wall for the use of a receptionist. The panelling showed many layers of surviving historic paintwork and may well preserve the original painted finishes. The relationship between the panelling and the pedimented door-case around the doorway to the north-west room was of some interest; the two do not seem to respect each other; the panel continues unbroken behind the door-case. These features may not be contemporary and it is possible that the door-case is a later addition relating to a mid 18th-century refurbishment of the house.

In the adjoining room to the north west of the staircase the removal of the dividing partition and the modern cladding of the walling has revealed further panelling which was not previously exposed (Fig. 13). This panelling consists of un-moulded stiles and rails, as previously described, over a low dado from which the moulded rail has been removed. The large-field panelling above the dado is, however, not recessed within the frame as in the panelling in the entrance passage, but lies flush with it. These panels have also clearly been enlarged by the addition of extra fillets of wood to fill the spaces within the frame. The panels and rails also show scarring which appears to represent the outline of planted mouldings, now missing, which are not related to the present arrangement of the panels. This evidence shows that the flush panels were not originally so, but must have been mounted proud of the frame and surrounded by bolection mouldings. Similar panels survive elsewhere in the house, particularly above the first-floor fireplaces and this treatment would certainly have been expected in a grand panelled room of this date. Fortunately a section of the original bolection moulding survives, reused behind the panelling as a stud to secure the flush panels, and this permits a confident reconstruction of the original scheme. The panelling was painted a light brownish grey, probably 'stone colour' or 'drab' as was popular at the time. This might be the original treatment, or it might conceal other layers overlying an earlier painted scheme dating from the 1690s.

The fireplace appears to have been exceptionally grand, comparable in scale with that surviving in the medieval hall or 'Law Library' and probably of similar design. The mantelpiece may have been as much as 2m above floor level, and was surmounted by a low and broad panel or 'tabernacle frame' between this and the cornice. This suggests a highly architectural chimneypiece with a deep entablature, perhaps enriched with carving and surmounted by a painting.

The panelling of the pier between the windows in the front or north-eastern wall of this room also shows signs of alteration, probably relating to the insertion of the sash windows and the present folding shutters in the early 19th century. These windows presumably replaced earlier 'mullion and cross' windows. An unusual feature of the panelled pier between the windows was a secondary panel with a triangular head, apparently cut into the panelling. This was surmounted by the 'shadow' of an ornate shaped-gabled structure, possibly representing the pediment of a 'pier glass'. A mirror, perhaps with girandoles, would almost certainly have hung in this position during the 18th-century in association with a pier table or cabinet. Alternatively the triangular recess in the panelling may suggest that this furnishing was a deeper structure than a mere pier glass, possibly a tall pier cabinet built into the panelling. Evidence of furnishings of this date does not usually survive in Exeter houses and this is therefore of great interest.

The panelling was probably mutilated during the late 18th or early 19th century when the room was modernised, possibly at the same time as the sash windows were inserted to replace the original casements. The projecting bolection mouldings were removed and reused as fillets fixed to the rear of the panels, to which the remaining panels, suitably augmented by extra fillets of waste material, were nailed to produce a flat surface suitable for wall hangings or paper. The wall paper seems to have been applied directly over this flattened surface, though there is some evidence of hessian or canvas backing glued over the panels to support other layers of wall paper.

The original chimneypiece was initially retained, since the remains of the early wallpapers respect its outline. After it was finally removed the area formerly covered by the chimney piece was boarded over with later softwood boards respecting a much smaller chimneypiece with a marble

mantelshelf. This must date from the early 19th century; it has unfortunately been mutilated and the mantelshelf broken off. The sequence and date of each phase of decorations in this room could only be established with certainty by a specialist in paint conservation.

The room to the south-east of the staircase has also been altered. This room has no panelling to the walls, which are plastered and retain evidence of dark green paintwork. The plaster cornice and the ornate, eared fireplace suggest a phase of remodelling in the mid 18th century, perhaps when the Baroque doorcases were added in the entrance hall. It is possible that bolection-moulded or large-field panelling was removed from this room during the 18th-century refurbishment, perhaps for subsequent reuse in another part of the house. No other significant observations have been made on this floor.

First floor

The first-floor rooms of the Notaries House have been stripped of furnishings and other modern accretions, including the partitions dividing the main rooms into separate offices. The walls of the north-western room are covered with plain large-field panelling divided into upper and lower sections which do not quite align. Although the upper part of the panelling consists of a regular sequence of tall, narrow panels the part below the dado has wider panels which do not perfectly agree with these. In the opposite wall the upper part of the panelling shows greater irregularity than the lower (Fig. 5). The significance of this irregularity is unclear; it may have allowed for cupboards and other features within the panelling (perhaps located in earlier recesses in the walls), though this seems unlikely. Perhaps the reuse of the panelling is a more plausible explanation. A panel of modern cladding above the fireplace probably obscures an earlier panel or 'tabernacle frame', perhaps formerly bolection moulded, together with evidence of the 17th-century fireplace.

In the room to the south-east of the staircase the north-western wall is covered with regular panels, both above and below the dado. This plain large-field panelling shows little sign of any disturbance and may well be original. The stiles and rails are still painted with orange 20th-century paint but the 20th-century woodchip paper infilling in the panels has been removed. The panels are painted in a dull grey green, probably 'drab', but with rough, possibly discoloured edges to the panels. This could represent glue for securing either an applied decorative border in each panel, or some other decorative treatment such as canvas for supporting painted cloth or leather hangings. The large panel over the fireplace shows a similar treatment, but is also filled with a pattern of nail holes suggesting that some form of covering was secured to it. Although this might be expected to have been a painting on canvas, the pattern of nail holes is oddly irregular and would surely interfere with any painted scene; perhaps this represents an attempt at repair of a badly damaged overmantel painting (Fig. 14).

The south-east wall has three tall narrow panels towards the rear wall, interrupted by two superimposed horizontal panels towards the centre of the room. None of the panels align with those below the dado. The reason for this marked eccentricity in the layout of the panels is not understood; it is unlikely to relate to any moveable piece of furniture, though it might have been customised to display a particularly precious painting or wall hanging. The sequence of decorative finishes in the room and the nature of the hangings, if such they were, could only be established with certainty by a paint conservator or specialist.

In the adjoining pavilion the bookshelves and other features remain *in situ*. One unusual feature here relates to the treatment of the timber screen separating this room from the service staircase. The flush upper panels of the screen have been opened up by the contractors to reveal a pair of domed-headed niches, constructed of lath and plaster, which would have presumably served to display vases, busts or other *objects d'art* (Fig. 15). It is uncertain how the niches originally related to the timber screen; although they seem to butt against the rear face of the screen, the plain rectangular framework does not properly accommodate the niches and, behind this, the unplastered backs of the niches project within plastered and whitewashed rectangular alcoves which presumably pre-date them. It is possible that the screen was adapted to create the niches, and later modified a second time when they were sealed up, producing a featureless flat wall with flush doors and panels. The original appearance of the screen may have been more complex than at present; an architectural treatment of applied bolection mouldings may formerly have existed here, evidence for which may remain beneath the modern decorative finishes.

Second floor

The staircase from the second to the third floor has been partially stripped of paint, revealing that some elements of the staircase, the handrail and the newels, are of oak whereas the turned balusters are of softwood. The staircase was almost certainly intended to have been painted from the start, either in 'stone colour' or with marbling or graining to imitate a more expensive finish. The lower flights may still retain evidence of the historic decorative treatment.

The second-floor room to the north west of the staircase has been restored to its original dimensions by the demolition of a dividing partition. This room retains fine plain, large-field panelling to the front wall of the house and a magnificent 17th-century bolection-moulded fireplace at the rear with a 'tabernacle frame' over suitable for a painting. The two side walls are more unusual, with a wooden frame or box at floor and ceiling level surrounding a large recessed plaster panel. The panels are not well finished or decorated and were presumably concealed by hangings of tapestry or stained cloths. As the cloths would have concealed a cupboard or recess in the wall it is likely that a heavy or durable hanging was employed, though no trace of fixings for such hangings have been observed. It is possible that the hangings were fitted to a removable timber frame which has not survived.

The south-eastern room has also been restored to its original dimensions and stripped of modern plasterboard cladding, revealing that it was also panelled. In this case the panelling certainly appears to have been reused. The front wall is covered with a regular arrangement of panelling which appears to be designed for this position, but the panelling of the rear wall is superimposed upon a plastered wall surface which is finely finished with whitewash and may originally have been exposed. The timber framework defining the surviving panels is irregular; some sections show evidence of a dado rail, which has been removed, other sections have tall panels without any evidence of a dado.

To the north of the fireplace one section of panelling incorporates a door which opens directly into a brick wall, with no sign of any alcove behind it (Fig. 16). This panel also bears traces of applied mouldings which surround and respect the door and relate to a missing dado rail. The panels are surrounded by rows of nail holes suggesting that they were covered with cloth hangings. The pattern of nail marks respects the moulding around the door, but not the dado rail, which must have been broken off before the hangings were applied. This suggests that the hangings were secondary. Bizarrely, although the hangings respected the outline of the door, the nail marks occur in the frame around the door rather than in the door itself, and the hangings would thus have sealed the door shut. As the door is redundant in this position it seems certain that the panelling is reset in this context. It is uncertain whether the hangings were added before or after the relocation of the panelling to this room, though the fact that the hangings sealed the door suggests that this may have been the case. Why the shape of the door was still respected after this is unknown.

The fireplace has a large frame surrounding an empty panel above it which may formerly have accommodated a painting. This seems to have been removed when the hangings were introduced, although nail holes surrounding the panel show that the hangings respected the panel. The panelling around the window also shows signs of modification, which could result from the replacement of the original window, which may have necessitated alterations to the embrasure.

Both the north-western and south-eastern walls of the room have unusual wooden framing surrounding voids within which the plastered wall surface is visible (Fig. 17). The panels on the north-western wall vary in size, whereas those in the south-eastern wall consist of four regular, tall panels. These are proud of the original wall surface, though marks in the plaster seem to show that similar vertical stiles formerly existed against the wall surface. To the north-east a small doorway in the south-eastern wall opens in to a cupboard which corresponds to a blocked window, visible externally. The reason for the variation in the panels is not known; it is possible that they were designed to frame painted cloths or hangings of varying sizes reused from another context.

Third floor

The refurbishment of the third floor rooms has revealed little new evidence. The fireplace in the south-eastern room has been exposed, revealing an early 19th-century cast-iron hob grate within an earlier arched opening. The fireplace in the north-western room remains blocked. No other features of interest were exposed by the refurbishment works at this level.

Cellars

The clearance of the cellars of the Notaries House has so far had little impact on the historic fabric. The main area affected is the doorway from the basement of the pavilion building to the area outside the front of the house. Surviving peg holes showed that this was originally a four-light window into which a later doorway had been cut. The sill of the window had to be cut away for the insertion of new timber and the doorpost was likewise replaced. The original pendant from the base of the staircase was unfortunately lost during the clearance of the building.

6. RECORDING UNDERTAKEN IN JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2009

6.1 **The South-East Boundary Wall** (by Gary Young)

In conjunction with the program of repair and renovation work carried out within the buildings, repointing and repair works were also undertaken on the boundary wall to the north-east of the property. The wall was recorded by annotated photographs (Figs 18-21). Situated on the south-east side of the car park in front of the Notaries House (No. 8 the Close) this wall borders the alleyway that formerly led to the Archdeacon of Totnes' Residence. The wall extends from the pavilion block at the eastern corner of the Notaries House in a north-easterly direction as far as Chapel Street, a distance of 19.5m. The boundary divides two different ground levels, the level of the alleyway lying below the level of the car park and sloping upwards to the north-east. The maximum ground level difference of c.1.4m at the south end reduces at the north end to c.0.70m. The higher ground level overlies the vaulted cellar in front of The Notaries House. Access through the wall is provided by a door at the south-western end where steps from the car park drop down towards the alley.

North-eastern section (Fig. 18)

The north-eastern section of the boundary wall has been shown in the assessment to run across part of the property formerly belonging to the Archdeacon of Totnes, which extended across the north-eastern part of the present car park (Parker *et al.* 2007, Fig. 6). The wall has been truncated by the introduction, after the Second World War, of the present Chapel Street, which overlies the rear parts of the medieval canonries. The wall is 0.80m thick in this area, thinner than the sections to the south west, which are 0.95m in thickness and appear to incorporate the remains of demolished medieval buildings.

The north-eastern part of the wall is of mixed geology, incorporating dressed and moulded blocks of Salcombe stone. This part of the wall incorporates a blocked opening, perhaps a gateway linking the two parts of the Archdeacon of Totnes' property. The north-western jamb of this opening is visible in the form of a vertical break, interrupted at the base by a later phase of Salcombe stone repair. The south-western limit of the opening is represented by a group of dressed quoins which are undercut by the blocking, but which may represent the corner of the demolished building (see below).

The blocking of the opening is composed of random, un-coursed rubble of mixed geology including Salcombe and volcanic stone, volcanic trap, Heavitree breccia, granite, chert and red sandstone. On the south-east side of the wall the blocking is divided into two clear phases. The lower, phase is comprised of large finely dressed Heavitree blocks. This meets in a roughly horizontal break with a later phase of rubble stone of mixed type above. A similar area of blocking above the main phase is visible on the north-west side of the wall beneath the modern capping. These two upper phases are presumably repairs. The south-western jamb of the gateway is emphasised by an increase in the thickness of the wall, which has been rebuilt to a curved form to ease access through the gateway.

?Demolished building

The mid section of the wall seems to represent the lower part of the wall of a demolished building. This is defined by two sets of dressed quoins visible in the north-western face of the wall (figs 18, 20). The group of quoins to the south-west of the gateway are answered by a further group approximately 9.25m to the south west. The north-eastern set of quoins comprise one Salcombe stone and two of volcanic trap, undercut by the jamb of a later archway. Although these quoins initially appear to mark the *external* corners of a building it would seem more likely that the building extended to the north-

west side of the wall. An indication of this is the gothic arched window set into the south-eastern face of the wall approximately equidistant between the two sets of quoins. Visible only from the alley, the top of this low-level window is only 1m above the ground on this side of the wall and therefore below the ground level of the car park. Only partially intact, the window has moulded Beer stone dressings which show unequivocally that this is the *exterior* face of the window.

There are a number of possible areas of blocking in the wall of the former building (Fig. 19). These blocked apertures are poorly defined and of irregular dimensions but invariably contain Heavitree breccia. This is notable as there are no other instances of this stone within this section of wall. The predominant fabric of the wall is purplish veined volcanic stone with the occasional inclusion of other stones, chiefly Salcombe stone. The masonry is almost entirely of random rubble, roughly squared, and bonded with off-white gritty lime mortar. No definable breaks were perceived apart from a distinct horizontal division. This gently sloping line began at the base of the Salcombe stone quoins at the south-western end and finished *c.*0.25m below the quoins at the north end. Below this line the masonry was slightly more regular in size and more rectilinear. The coursing was also slightly less random than that above the break.

All but one of the blocked apertures appeared to span the horizontal division. The blocking at the south-western end seemed to be entirely below the break. However all the areas of blocking were fairly evenly spaced from each other with gaps of between *c.*0.6m and 0.8m and all occurred at a similar height. The low level of the arched window would suggest that the ground level has also risen on the east side of the wall, so it is feasible that these blocked apertures are former sockets for floor timbers. Given their dimensions, irregular outlines and their absence from the south-east, external, elevation, the blocked holes are suggestive of infilled first floor beam sockets. Their position on the horizontal break would therefore fit a building sequence with at least a short delay between the ground and first floor levels. There is no indication of a more lengthy delay as the masonry above and below the horizontal break is not dissimilar and, as far as can be discerned, the mortar is uniform.

Archway

Just south of the former building is a blocked archway, only the upper half of which is visible on the north-west side of the wall (Fig.20). Viewed from the south-east side, this doorway is furnished with an arched surround in volcanic stone which shows that this must be its external face. The surrounding masonry incorporates a mixture of Heavitree breccia, Beer and volcanic stone with many quite large dressed blocks. This mixed masonry continues almost to the top of the wall with no apparent breaks apart from a top course of Heavitree breccia blocks.

On the north-western side of the wall the archway has a set of dressed Beer stones forming the north-eastern jamb of the opening and these have been cut into the corner of the former building below the Salcombe stone quoins. The former opening is headed by a brick arch that is continuous with the Beer stone fabric of the jamb and bonded in a white lime mortar with fine grit. The aperture itself has been blocked with coarse-textured red bricks in lime mortar.

The southern end of the brick arch is tied into a section of dressed Beer stone walling. In amongst the Beer stone masonry there are a number of reused floor tiles and the occasional piece of Salcombe and Heavitree stone. Also present in this section of wall is a horizontal break, this time clearly defined. The Beer stone fabric ends slightly below the top of the brick arch and it seems reasonable to suppose that this was the original height of the wall as the quoins of the earlier building above have not been displaced. Set approximately midway within this build there is a small patch of brickwork 0.25m below the horizontal break. Above this line the wall comprises more mixed stone including Heavitree and dressed Beer stones. Also visible was a volcanic block with what appeared to be a double hollow chamfered moulding.

The discrepancies between the two sides of this section of wall indicate that the original wall with the volcanic stone door surround has been thickened on its north-west side in two phases. The first phase involved the addition of the brick arch and Beer stone jambs, perhaps to add strength to the wall. The later upper section was probably built following the demolition of the former building and was inserted to provide a uniform face to the west side of the boundary wall. The wide mix of stone seems to suggest that this section of wall was built using whatever materials were to hand. It is tempting to wonder if the moulded volcanic stone with the hollow chamfers derived from the earlier demolished building.

These two phases of wall end in a vertical break *c.*3.00m south-west of the southern quoins of the former building (Fig. 21). South-west of this division the wall has at least three phases divided by horizontal breaks. The lower section of masonry consists almost entirely of roughly-squared volcanic rubble and is possibly of late-medieval date. The next phase above this is of volcanic stone mixed with Heavitree breccia. Above this is a later phase of heightening or repair that extends over the Beer stone fabric to the north-east and downwards vertically to fill the vertical break. This fabric is of random rubble of Heavitree breccia, volcanic trap and limestone mixed with occasional bricks. These are coarse-textured handmade bricks of probable 18th-century date.

Again there is a discrepancy between the fabric visible on the two sides of the wall. On the south-east side horizontal breaks equivalent to those visible on the north-west side are visible; However, the lowest phase is composed of a more mixed range of geology including Beer stone. The middle phases are similar on both sides with a mix of volcanic and Heavitree breccia whereas the top section is of large dressed Heavitree breccia blocks with occasional brick. The very top of the wall over the whole length of the structure has been consolidated with a modern phase comprising brick, granite rubble, brick copings and slates. It is possible that these builds may be associated with a gatehouse bridging the lane leading to the adjoining Archdeacons' residence

Doorway

To the south-west of this section is the doorway to the alley, which appears to have been cut through the wall from a lower level than the present ground surface and now has modern steps descending to from the car park (Fig. 21). The door has rather crude modern brick jambs internally and a timber lintel (the latter recently removed). On the south-east, external, side of the wall the doorway preserves older brick jambs, the bricks having been cut and fitted to the gaps presented by the existing stonework in the surrounding wall, indicating this door has been inserted. Above is a triangular brick pediment, which breaks into the Heavitree breccia fabric above, possibly indicating the wall was probably heightened before the door was inserted. Wooden slips built into the jambs for fixings suggest that there was formerly a wooden casing to the entire doorway, perhaps an elaborate timber door-case, now removed. It is likely that the doorway is of late 17th or 18th-century date.

Conclusions

The boundary wall is a complex structure containing work of many periods, many of which may be medieval or early post-medieval in date. The remains of a large medieval building on the rear part of the present site have been postulated. This is constructed of volcanic trap and had at least two storeys, the lower storey being lit by a small lancet window. These details could well suggest that the building was of 13th- or 14th-century date. The structure may have been demolished in the late 17th century, perhaps following the fire which destroyed 'most & the chiefest part' of the property in *c.*1692 (Parker *et al.* 2007, 5). The existence of this range argues that the medieval mansion was larger and more complex than now appears, possibly with a further rear courtyard surrounded by important buildings.

Ground levels in the rear part of the site appear to have risen substantially above the medieval levels, perhaps as a consequence of the construction of the present vaulted cellar in front of the house in the late 18th or early 19th century, when the garden of the entire property may have been raised to the level of Chapel Street. This is likely to have protected any buried archaeological remains in the area from modern disturbance and may have ensured high levels of preservation of the remains of the demolished structures.

The boundary wall may also incorporate elements of buildings relating to the property of the Archdeacon of Totnes, whose historic residentiary house was damaged in the Second World War and subsequently demolished. These remains include some evidence of a possible gatehouse and might provide crucial evidence for reconstructing the layout of the lost archdeacons' mansion.

7. DISCUSSION

The recent works at Nos 8 and 9a the Close have revealed much new information about the structure of the medieval and late 17th-century buildings.

The exposure of the eaves sections of the hall roof has clarified the construction of the principal, intermediate and common rafter trusses and will allow useful comparisons with other roofs

in this important group. A most significant observation is that there was no primary ceiling in this roof. The moulded timbers extend behind the existing plasterwork and there is no provision for earlier lath or plaster and no evidence of torching between the rafters. The roofs of the Deanery and the former Archdeacon of Exeter's house in Palace Gate have also been shown in recent episodes of recording to have no primary ceilings. It is clear that these roofs, even at this high social level, were originally presented with fully-exposed timbers. The battens and slating may even have been visible from the interior unless boards were laid over the rafters as a foundation for slates or shingles. No evidence of such boards has yet been observed. The issue of whether there was a primary chimney remains inconclusive, though, on balance, it is considered that a chimney is likely to have existed.

The re-roofing of the south-eastern range allowed examination and recording of the remains of two further medieval roofs which, added to the record made by Thorp and Brown in the late 1970s, greatly increases our understanding of this range. Both roofs have highly unusual features. The central roof appears to have been designed to spring from a timber-framed wall, suggesting that at least the upper part of the south-east wall of the range was timber framed prior to its reconstruction in brick in the late 17th century. The form of the trusses is also unusual, with ashlar pieces and horizontal timbers at eaves level; the latter perhaps representing extended sole pieces, ties or possibly hammer beams. Many of the structural details of this roof remain obscured. Its character is more severe, without chamfering or other decoration, which might suggest that it covered service rooms such as chambers or perhaps a kitchen. The original extent of the roof is also uncertain; it may represent a surviving fragment of an earlier roof over the whole range.

The remains of a further medieval roof at the north-western end of this range, though fragmentary, are of the greatest interest and may be extrapolated to recover most of the details of the design and, to a degree, the probable extent of the roof. This roof was undoubtedly of high status, being decorated with chamfers and mouldings. Unlike the other roofs of the range the design of this roof appears to have suppressed the principal trusses dividing it into bays, and featured purlins and other timbers treated as longitudinal ribs dividing the underside of the roof into a curved form with rectangular panels. The roof thus presents some of the characteristics of a wagon or barrel roof. If our conjecture that such roofs were usually associated with religious buildings is correct it is highly likely that this part of the range contained a domestic chapel. This is of crucial importance for the interpretation of the house, since it would confirm that the medieval domestic apartments lay in this part of the house rather than at the opposite end of the hall, fronting The Close. Apart from the chapels of the Deanery, the Bishops' Palace and the small chapel or oratory at No 10 The Close, none of the other canonries in the Close is known to preserve any physical evidence for the location of their domestic chapel. The roof of the putative chapel appears to have been removed and the current upper storey of this range added in the late 17th century, utilising curved timber braces in oak. This part of the house is curiously unrelated to the Notaries House and may conceivably predate the fire which destroyed the neighbouring ranges in the 1690s.

Recording of the south-eastern boundary wall of the property have added significantly to our understanding of the probable layout of the medieval house and also of the adjoining property. The probable remains of at least two important early structures have been identified in the garden and car park areas of both properties.

The Notaries House has not previously been recorded archaeologically in any detail. It is an important urban example of a late 17th-century fashion for improving existing high-status houses by the addition of tall new, classically inspired wings to the earlier structures. Examples of this practice identified by Bridget Cherry in rural gentry mansions include new wings at Dunsland House, Bradford (c. 1690, demolished); Portledge, Alwington and Youlston Park, Shirwell (Cherry 1988, 96; 102). A further, most impressive, lost example formerly stood at Oakhay, Stoke Canon (Gray 1995, pl. 1, 2) and a modest example of c.1700 in an urban context remains at the rear of an earlier 17th-century merchant's house in Cullompton, now the Manor House Hotel.

The stripping out of the modern interior cladding of the Notaries House has exposed large areas of timber panelling, much of which was not previously visible. This includes the remains of bolection-moulded panelling in one of the main ground-floor rooms and simpler panelled schemes in the rooms on the upper storeys. The panelling is probably of late 17th- or early 18th-century date and bears evidence of successive schemes of modification and redecoration. There is a high potential for

the survival of painted decorative schemes such as marbling, and a strong possibility that some rooms were hung with painted cloths, tapestry or leather wall hangings.

The interior of the late 17th-century house seems to have been refurbished on several occasions, particularly in the 18th and early 19th centuries, at which time sections of panelling may have been relocated and paper or silk wall-coverings substituted for the original panelled schemes. The baroque door cases and the elaborate chimneypiece in one of the ground-floor rooms are among the finest examples of 18th-century domestic fixtures to survive *in situ* in Exeter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LOCATIONS OF MOULDING PROFILES FROM THE NOTARIES HOUSE
(As illustrated in Figs. 7 & 8)

- a Basement east end room, cornice on north and east walls.
- b Basement east end room, door architrave around the west door.
- c First floor stair landing, dado rail.
- d First floor east side room, dado rail.
- e Ground floor east side room, cornice.
- f Ground floor east side room, dado rail.
- g Second floor east side room, bolection moulding around the fireplace.
- h Second floor east side room, fireplace mantelpiece.
- i Second floor central room, cornice moulding on the south wall only.
- j Second floor west side room, bolection moulding around the fireplace.
- k Second floor west side room, cornice.
- l Second floor stair landing, door architrave.
- m First floor east side room, bolection moulding around the fireplace.
- n Second floor west side room, dado rail.
- o Second floor west side room, bolection moulding around panel above fireplace.

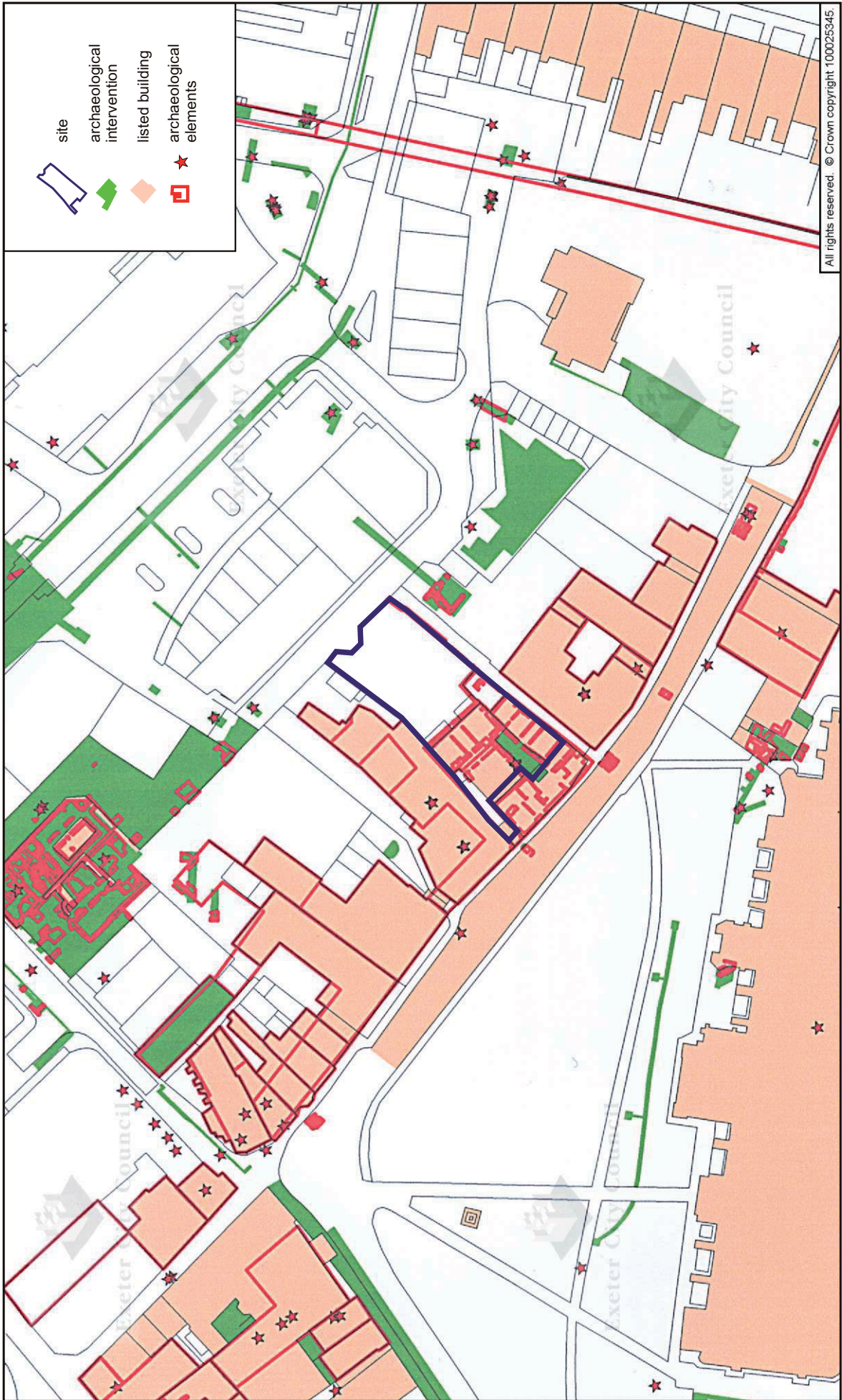


Fig. 1 Location of site. Scale 1:10000.



Fig. 2 Detail of the hall roof showing clean timbers and the moulded face of a windbrace protruding behind the later ceiling.



Fig. 3 View of the pavilion block showing the exposed framing prior to repairs.



Fig. 4 Section of the Notaries House looking south-west. Scale 1:100.

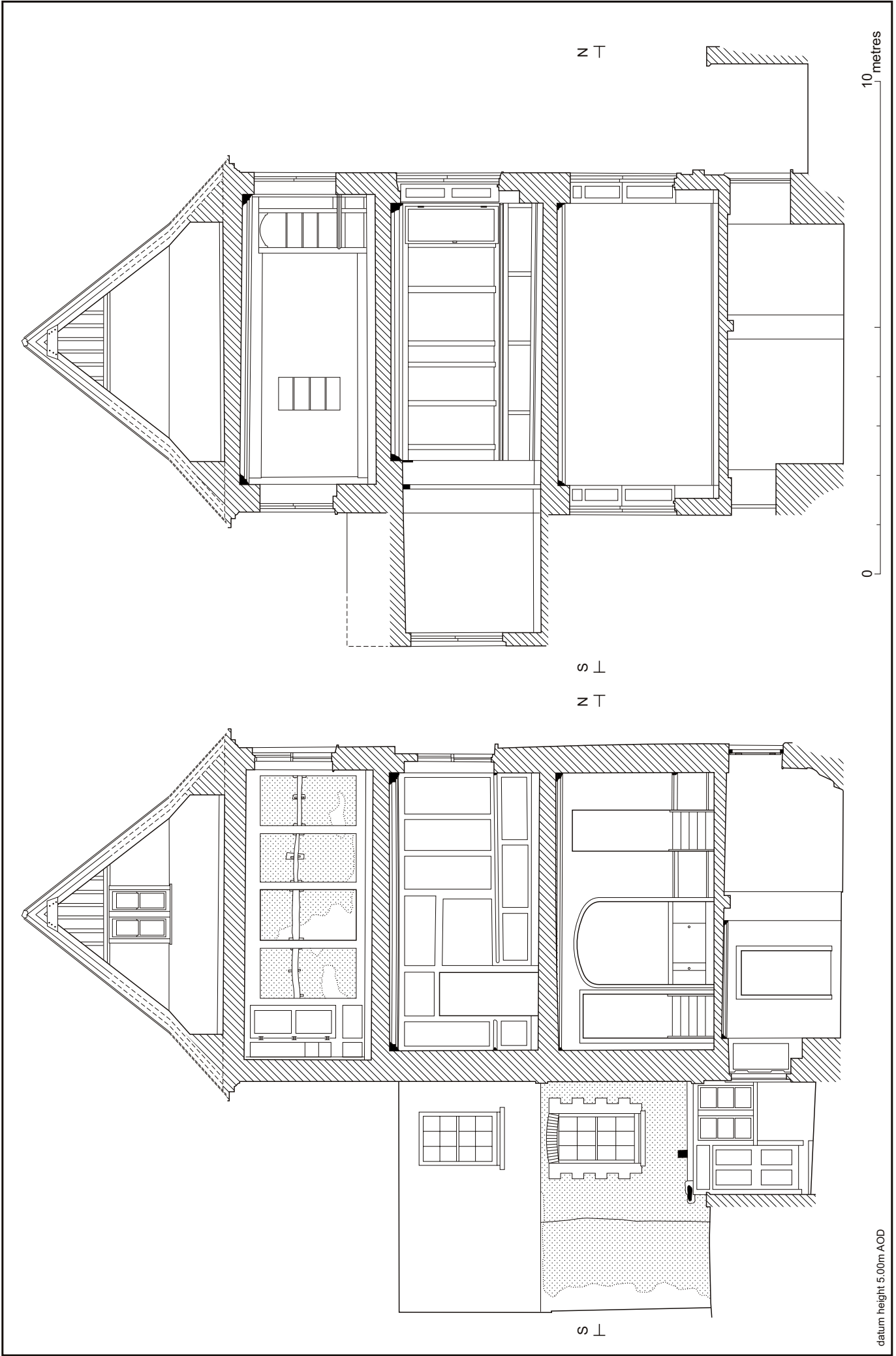


Fig. 5 Sections of the Notaries House looking south-east and north-west. Scale 1:100.



datum 5.00m AOD

Fig. 6 Section of the Notaries House looking north-east. Scale 1:100.

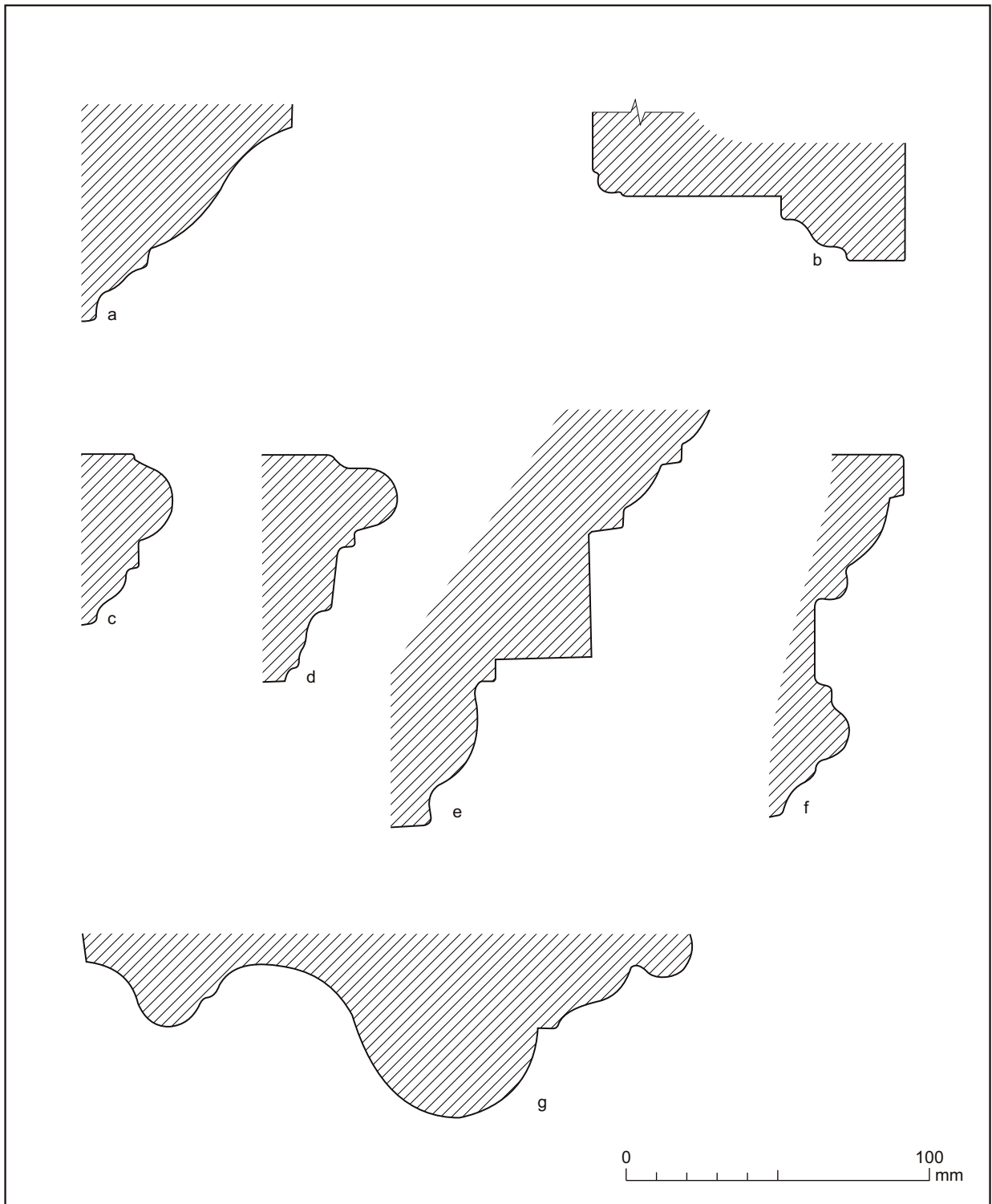


Fig. 7 Details of mouldings in the Notaries House. (See page 19 for list of locations).

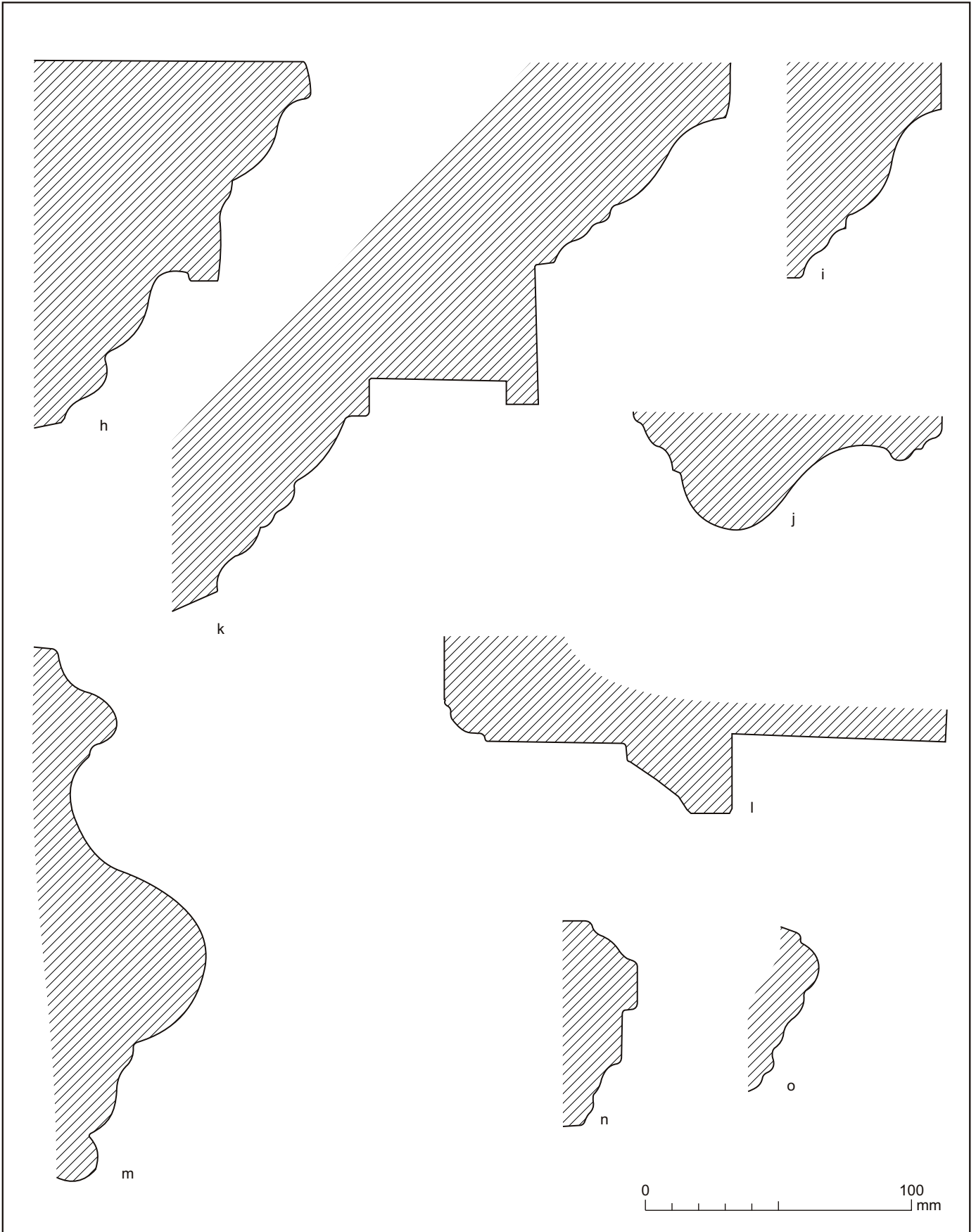


Fig. 8 Details of mouldings in the Notaries House. (See page 19 for list of locations).

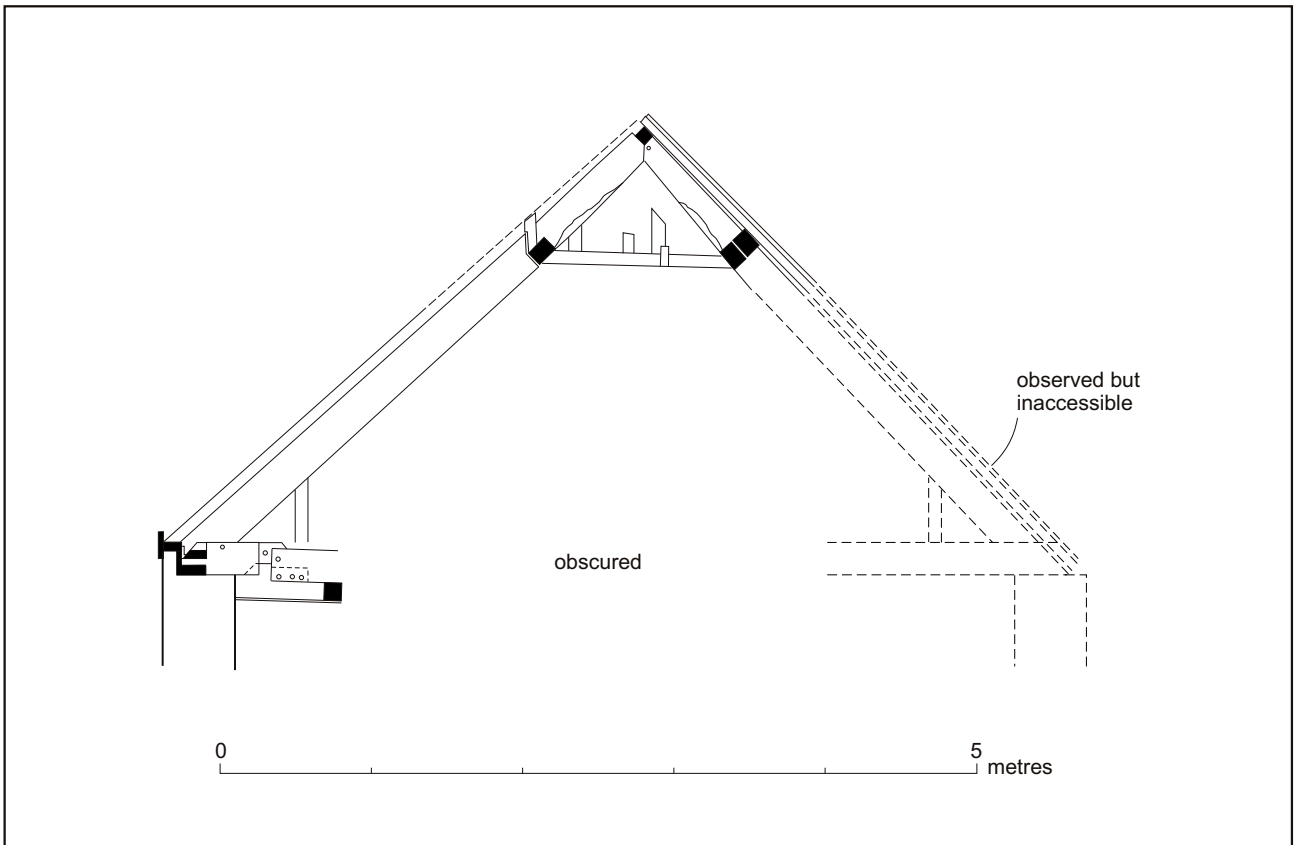


Fig. 9 Section through the central roof of No. 9a showing the south-western truss. Scale 1:50.



Fig. 10 Detail of the north-western foot of the truss, looking south-west.

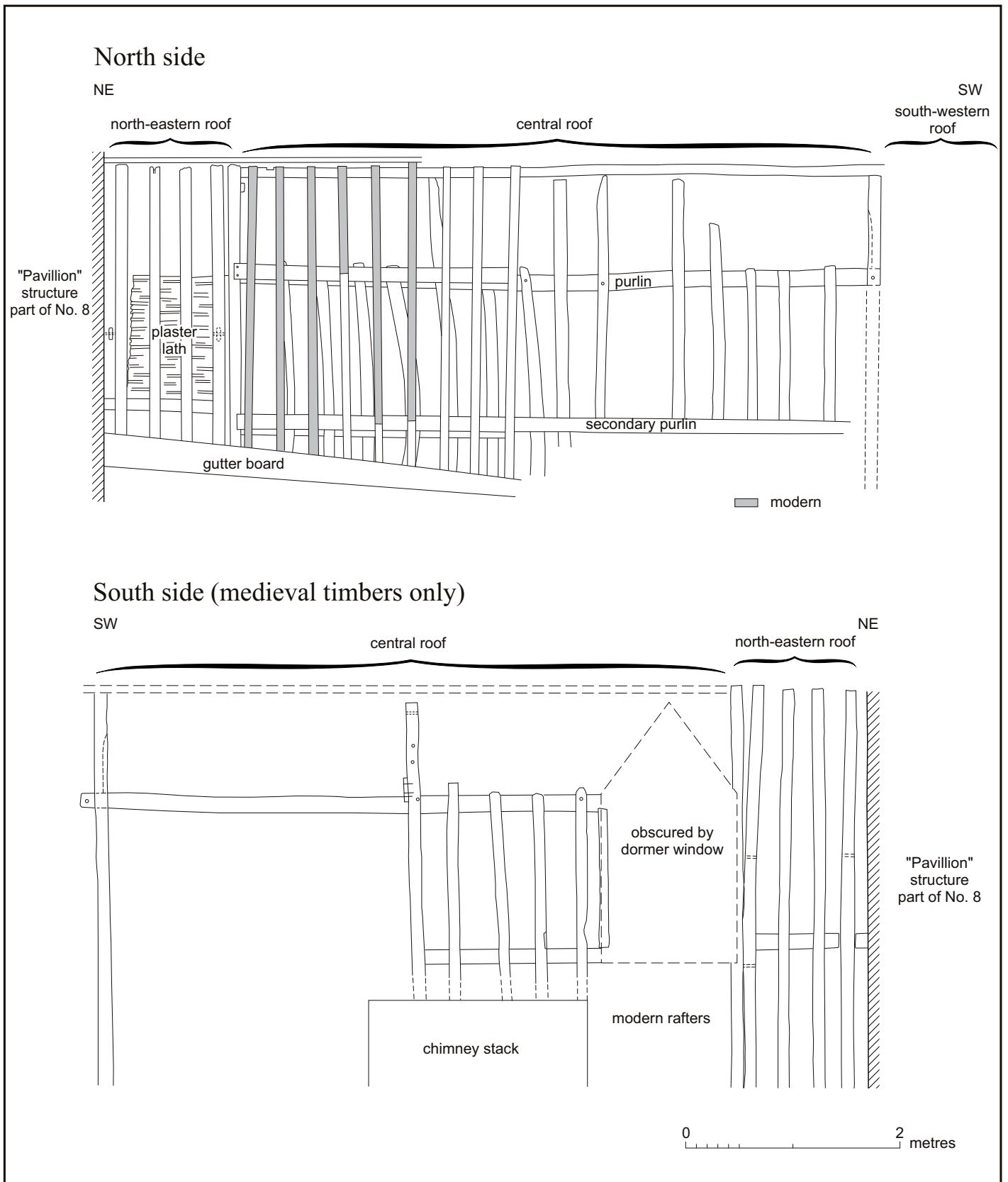


Fig. 11 Plans of the rafters on the north-west and south-east sides of the roof of No. 9a showing the extent of the surviving timbers. Scale 1:50.

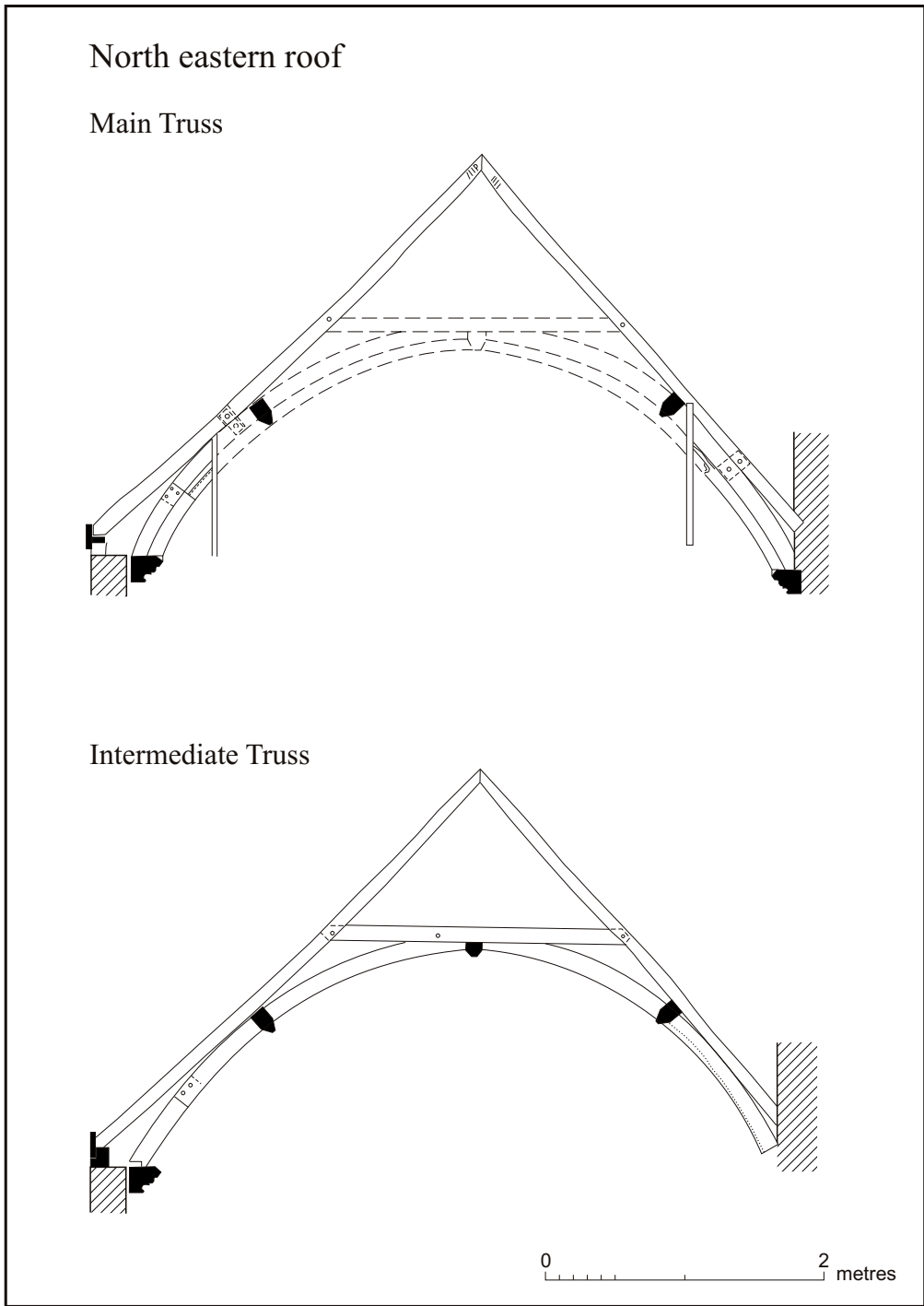


Fig. 12 Sections through the surviving half bay of the north-western roof, looking southwest, showing main truss III (top) and the unmarked intermediate truss at the probable centre of the bay. Scale 1:50.



Fig. 13 View of the late 17th century bolection-moulded panelling in the ground floor west side room. Scale 1m. View south-east.



Fig. 14 View of the fireplace in the first floor, south-east room, showing the pattern of nail marks. Scale 1m. View south.



Fig. 15 View of the screen in the pavilion block showing the niches. Scale 1m. View north-west.



Fig. 16 Details of the panelling in the second floor, south-east room showing the anomalous door and nail marks. Scale 1m. View south.



Fig. 17 View of the panelling on the south-eastern wall of the second floor south-east room.
Scale 1m. View east.

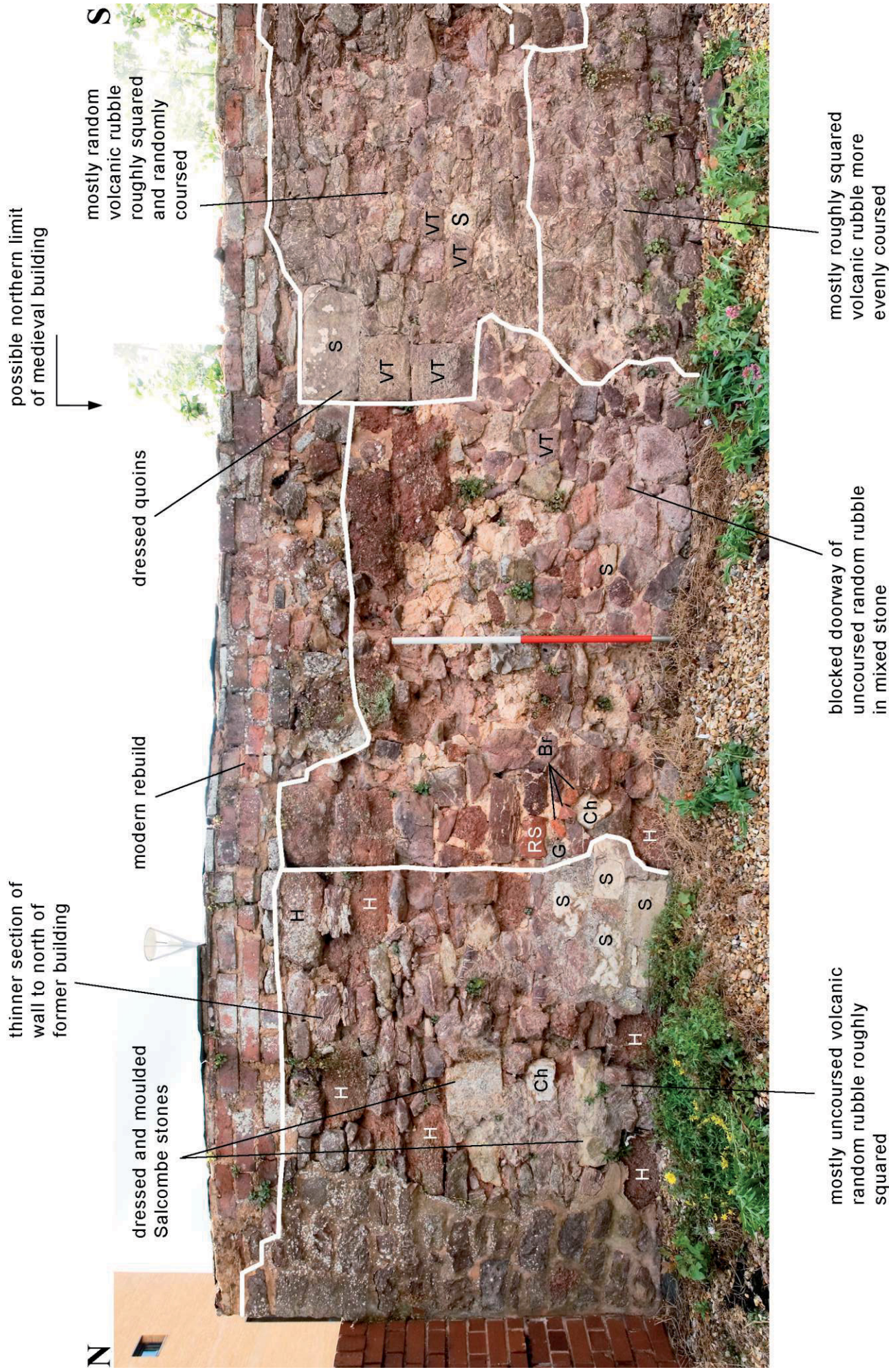


Fig. 18 View of the north-western elevation of the north-eastern section of the boundary wall, showing the blocked gateway and quoins. Scale 1m. (See Fig.21 for masonry key.)

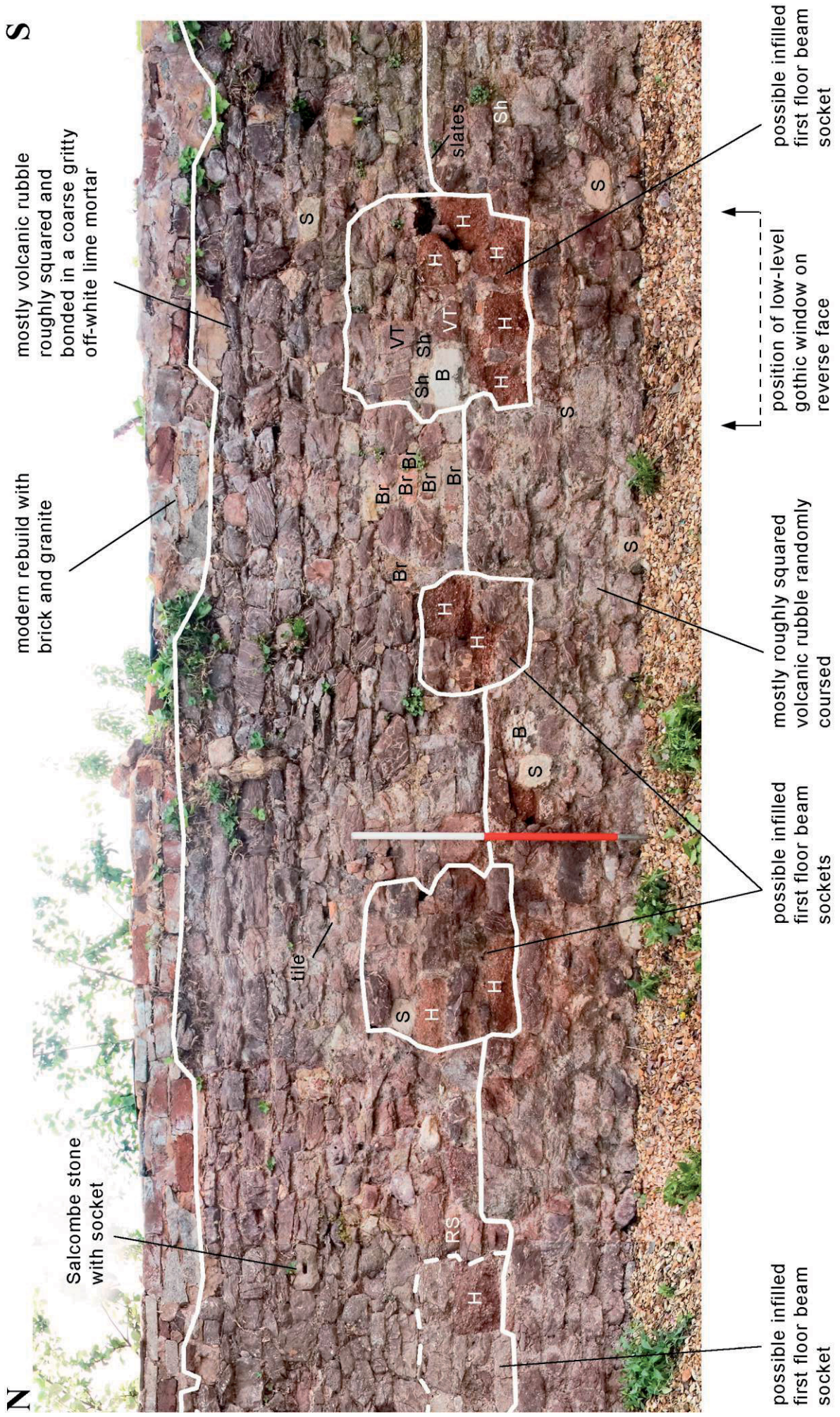


Fig. 19 View of the north-western elevation of the central section of the boundary wall, showing the blocked joist sockets at first-floor level. Scale 1m. (See Fig. 21 for masonry key.)

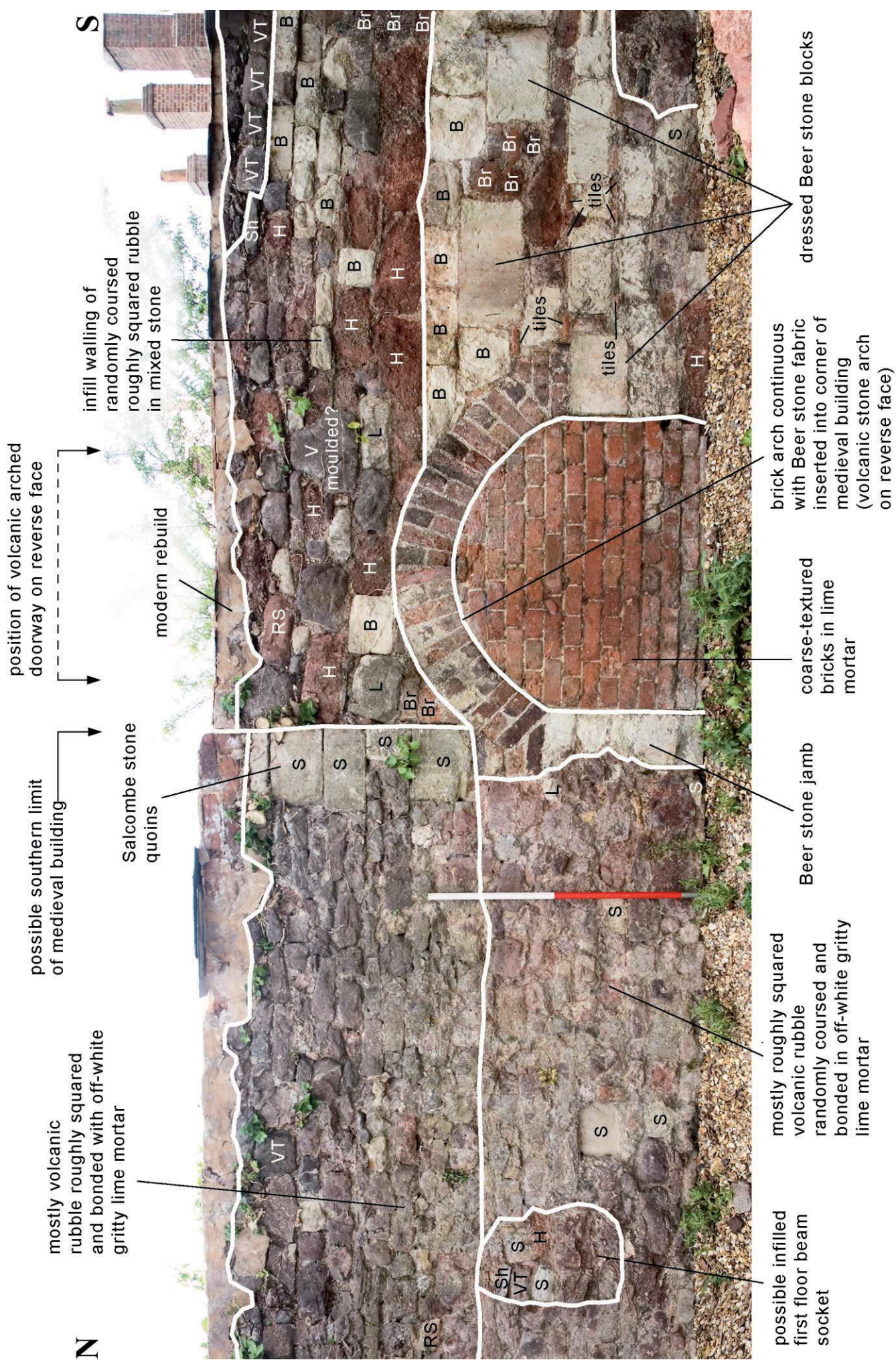


Fig. 20 View of the blocked archway and quoins to the south-west of the demolished structure. Scale 1m. (see Fig. 21 for masonry key).



Fig. 21 View of the south-western section of the boundary wall, showing the vertical break and doorway. Scale 1m.