

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING  
AT LAFROWDA,  
ST GERMAN'S ROAD, EXETER**

**Prepared for Cowlin**

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**Exeter Archaeology**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

This report has been prepared by Exeter Archaeology (EA) for Cowlin and presents the results of archaeological recording during the construction of new university student accommodation at Lafrowda, St German's Road, Exeter (centred on SX 9227 9396; Fig. 1). The work, undertaken in April 2010, was required under condition 7 attached to the grant of planning permission (No. 09/0782/03) by the local planning authority, Exeter City Council.

## 2. BACKGROUND

An archaeological assessment of the site was prepared by EA in December 2008 (report number 08.84). Prehistoric flint scatters have been recovered from the northern part of the campus, and any groundworks on the university have the potential to find further prehistoric artefacts or features associated with prehistoric settlements.

This assessment also identified a number of buildings or former buildings on the site including a barn, St German's Lodge (constructed 1870), St German's House (1870s), Lafrowda (1875 – to be retained as part of the development) and a Report and Control Centre (1943).

The Report and Control Centre was purpose built on the site in 1943. Prior to this, reporting and control facilities had been located initially in the police station/court house in Waterbeer Street, moving in 1940 to the basement of the city library in Castle Street, and from May 1942 – when the library was severely damaged in the blitz – to St German's House itself. The role of a report and control centre was to receive details of raids and incidents from air-raid wardens and other sources, and to put into effect any necessary remedial action (Passmore 2010). These arrangements for local authorities to provide facilities were formalised in the *Air Raid Precautions Act 1939*. In 1948 there were plans to demolish the centre (in line with the planning policy for civil defence buildings constructed during the war). However this did not occur and the property was acquired by the University, possibly in 1949 when they purchased St German's House. The building was latterly used as rifle range.

## 3. AIMS

The aims of the work were to record the Report and Control Centre prior to demolition, and to attend groundworks within areas that had not been subject to previous major ground disturbance in order to identify, investigate and record any archaeological deposits that may be present.

## 4. METHOD (Appendix 1)

The work was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by EA and approved by the local planning authority. This document is presented as Appendix 1.

A written description of the Report and Control Centre was prepared, along with a 1:100 plan and a photographic record using black-and-white film and a high quality digital camera.

A record of groundworks was prepared using daily watching brief record sheets with locations marked on a site plan. These were accompanied by a photographic record using black-and-white film and a high quality digital camera.

## 5. GROUNDWORKS (Fig. 2; Pl. 4)

### *Area 1*

This area was formerly occupied by St German's House and St German's Lodge, as well as parts of their gardens. The construction of these properties had, within their footprints, truncated any earlier remains/deposits. Within the surviving garden of St German's House topsoil, which varied in depth, overlaid natural stony clay subsoil. No features were exposed (Pl. 4).

### *Area 2*

Natural subsoil was exposed across this area underlying modern landscaping deposits. The subsoil was heavily truncated by excavations for services supplying Zennor House. No features were exposed.

### *Area 3*

Natural subsoil was exposed across this area underlying modern landscaping deposits. The area was generally free of truncation, other than a large sewer located to the north of the swimming pool, and terracing for the construction of Rowe House. No features were exposed.

## 6. THE REPORT AND CONTROL CENTRE (Fig. 3; Pls 1-3)

The centre was a single-storeyed building constructed of red brick laid in Flemish bond and painted white both internally and externally (Pl. 1). The building had a concrete floor, and a slightly pitched concrete roof covered with bitumen. The original windows survived and, although of differing dimensions, each had two panes of frosted glass set into metal casements with wooden frames. Most casements were top opening, although in the larger windows some casements were side opening. Most rooms originally had high-level openings, presumably vents, in their north and south elevations. All had been blocked although a few incorporated modern vents, some of which were electrically powered. No original fixtures and fittings survived, with all existing fittings (lights, vents, cupboards and floor coverings) relating to the building's use as a firing range.

The building was entered from a door in the east elevation that gave access to an L-shaped corridor. Adjacent to the door was the remains of a stencilled sign R1. Opposite the door the corridor led to a former long, narrow room, originally a single space, but later subdivided into three rooms housing a toilet and washing facilities. Here there were three window openings the south elevation, with the middle opening having been blocked.

The north arm of the corridor opened out into the eastern room of the rifle range that was latterly used as an office and a recreation room (Pl. 3). The original layout was much different, and could be discerned from scars of partitions on the ceiling and walls. The north arm of the corridor would have given access to a second corridor whose position lay on the west side of the present room. The plan of these corridors was staggered to reduce the effect of a bomb blast penetrating through the building. To the east the scars showed the area was divided into two equal-sized rooms both with smaller 'cubicles' and a third smaller room to the southeast. Each room or cubicle was lit by a small window. The cubicles represent former separate male and female toilets.

To the west, the corridor would have provided access to the eastern of four rooms, all of which had been converted into a single room forming the long rifle range. A central door into this room survived and there was a second blocked opening to the north. This opening, however, may have been inserted since unlike the other doors it did not have a concrete lintel. The scar of the removed west wall of this room could be observed including, adjacent to the south elevation, a scar of the frame of a doorway into next room.

The next room to the west had been slightly larger than the east room, and again scars of its removed west wall could be observed, where on the south elevation an area of masonry had been rebuilt. Part of the south elevation projected slightly into this room, and here there were two doors – one of which was blocked – giving access to an area to the southwest. This area could not be inspected. However, the presence of two doors may indicate this area was divided into two rooms. The only feature visible from the outside was a high-level vent in the west elevation.

To the west there were formerly two further rooms. The dividing wall had been removed, as had the west wall of the original building. These walls were demolished when the building was extended and converted into a rifle range. Where these walls had been removed rolled steel joists had been added providing support for the roof. The west room would originally have had a door in its south elevation (now blocked), protected by a small porch or blast entrance that was also blocked at its outer entrance.

When converted into a rifle range the building was extended to the west by a further 6m (Pl. 2). This extension was constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond, with a sloping roof, the latter recently replaced with bitumen sheets. The earlier roof was supported on large beams. At the west end of the extension were boards for attaching targets, behind which were steel plates separated by a sand-filled void.

## 7. DISCUSSION

Despite extensive truncation caused by the construction of the existing accommodation blocks and their service provision, areas of undisturbed ground survive within the site. Further areas will remain undisturbed after the completion of the present works, in particular the former gardens of Lafrowda and St German's House. In the areas observed no archaeological features were exposed and no finds were recovered.

The Report and Control Centre was one of a number of purpose-built civil defence-related structures constructed across the city during the Second World War. The present survey has enabled a record to be made that complements recently published research into the history of the building. The shell of the building survived but it had been internally stripped of its internal features and fittings during conversion to a rifle range. The survey has however allowed a partial reconstruction of its plan to be put forward.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project was commissioned by Cowlin and managed for them by M. Savage and EA by P. Stead. The fieldwork was undertaken by A.J. Passmore, and the report illustrations were prepared by T. Ives. Thanks are due to M.J. Passmore for providing historical information on the Report and Control Centre. The work was monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by their Archaeology Officer, A. Pye.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

- Exeter Archaeology 2008 *Archaeological Assessment of the University of Exeter's Lafrowda Site*, Exeter Archaeology Report number **08.84**.
- Passmore, M. 2010 *A Brief Introduction to Twentieth-Century Military and Civil Defence Archaeology in Devon Number 15: Second World War Report and Control Centre Exeter* (M.J. Passmore: Exeter).

## APPENDIX 1: The method statement

METHOD STATEMENT FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MONITORING AND RECORDING AT LAFROWDA, ST. GERMAN'S ROAD, EXETER

Prepared by Exeter Archaeology  
for  
Cowlin

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Exeter Archaeology (EA) for Cowlin to describe the methods for monitoring and recording during groundworks ahead of the development of new university student accommodation blocks at Lafrowda, St. German's Road, Exeter (centred at SX 9227 9396). It represents the "written scheme of archaeological work" required by the planning authority, as advised by Exeter City Council's Archaeology Officer (ECC AO) under an archaeological condition attached to the grant of planning permission (no. 09/0782/03) for the development.
- 1.2 An archaeological assessment of the site was carried out in 2008 (EA report no. 08.84). This identified that no archaeological remains or deposits were known within the site, although flint scatters had been identified within the vicinity and that therefore the site contains some potential for preservation of prehistoric features and deposits. Extensive terracing for the construction of the existing student accommodation has adversely affected any potential archaeological resource within these areas, the potential for archaeological survival being largely confined to the central, landscaped and garden areas of the site.
- 1.3 In addition to potential below ground survival, the former WWII control centre has been identified as being of architectural interest.

## 2. METHOD

- 2.1 Liaison will be established with the client and their contractor prior to works commencing in order to advise on EA requirements and to ensure the economic targeting of visits.

*Building Recording*

- 2.2 A rapid photographic survey (internal and external) will be carried out at the WWII command building prior to demolition. This will be accompanied by a brief summary description of the building. The location of the photographs will be annotated onto architects 'as existing' plans of the building.
- 2.3 Further visits will be made to the command building during and following the soft strip to investigate and record any further original fabric that may be exposed.

*Monitoring during groundworks*

- 2.4 An archaeologist will attend during groundworks within areas that have not been subject to previous major ground disturbance in order to identify, investigate and record any archaeological deposits that may be present. Visits will be targeted on the central landscaped and garden areas of the site and will entail monitoring of topsoil removal, access roads etc. If, following exposure of a significant and spatially representative sample of the site it is evident that archaeological deposits are unlikely to be present, and subject to review with, and agreement from the ECC AO, monitoring will be terminated.
- 2.5 The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced EA archaeologists, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, 1994, revised 2008). The project will be managed by Peter Stead. EA is managed by a full member of the Institute for Archaeologists.
- 2.6 Where feasible, excavation will be carried out using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Areas containing archaeological material will be hand cleaned and recorded as appropriate. Any significant archaeological remains and deposits will be excavated by EA staff down to the formation or

invert level required by the development or to natural subsoil, whichever is the higher. Excavation will generally be by hand, though some use of machinery under archaeological supervision may be employed, by agreement with the ECC AO. Although this may cause localised delays to the groundworks contractor's programme, every effort will be made to keep such delays to a minimum.

- 2.7 The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve artefacts or report on other aspects of the investigations can be called upon (see below).
- 2.8 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by any archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby (see below), when as a minimum, reflective jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be worn.
- 2.9 Initial cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation or longer term conservation measures will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1* (UKIC, 2001); *First Aid for Finds* (UKIC & RESCUE, 1997).
- 2.10 Should any human remains be exposed, these will initially be left *in situ*. If removal at either this or a later stage in the archaeological works is deemed necessary, these will then be fully excavated and removed from the site in compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations; any consents or licenses required will be obtained by EA on behalf of the client. Any remains will be excavated in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologist Technical Paper No. 13 (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Where appropriate bulk samples will be collected.
- 2.11 Should items be exposed that fall within the remit of the Treasure Act 1996, then these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Act. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 2.12 Standard EA recording and sampling procedures will be employed, consisting of:
- (i) Pro forma single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales 1:10, 1:20, 1:50 and 1:100 as appropriate;
  - (ii) black and white print and colour digital photography;
  - (iii) survey and location of finds deposits or archaeological features using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate;
  - (iv) labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels, post-1800 unstratified pottery to be discarded on site with a small sample retained for dating evidence as required;
  - (v) the assessment, as appropriate, of deposits on site by the EA Scientific Officer regarding the possible yield (if any) of environmental or microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits of potential for recovery of dated/dateable plant and animal remains survive, they will be sampled using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines 2002/1) and advice will be sought as necessary from the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor.
- 2.13 The ECC AO will be informed of the start of the project, and will monitor it throughout on behalf of the planning authority and may wish to inspect the works in progress.
- 2.14 A completion date for the site work will be agreed with the ECC AO.
3. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING
- 3.1 The reporting requirements will be confirmed with the ECC AO on completion of the site work.
- 3.2 A report will be prepared. If little or no archaeological remains are exposed, then only minimal reporting would be required, in the form of a short entry to the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (DCC HER) database. This will be compiled and submitted in digital and hard copy form within 3 months of the completion of field work.



If significant remains are present, then more detailed reporting would be required, in the form of a summary report and, if merited, wider publication.

- 3.3 If required, a summary report, including all specialist assessments of artefact assemblages, will be submitted within two months of the close of fieldwork.

The report will contain the following elements:

- i) location plan.
  - ii) a concise summary of the project results.
  - iii) the aims and methods adopted in the course of the investigation.
  - iv) a written description of the remains found and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of the known development of the site.
  - v) plans and sections of archaeological deposits and features at appropriate scales.
  - vi) specialist reports as appropriate.
  - vii) copies of relevant historic maps and other documentation.
- 3.4 Copies of the report will be produced for distribution to the Client and the local planning authority, within three months of the completion of the fieldwork. Copies will also be deposited in the DCC HER and with the site archive.
- 3.5 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared in accordance with *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) upon completion of the project. This will be deposited with The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter, under an accession number supplied by the museum (pending). Guidelines in the *Procedures for the Deposit of Archaeological Archives from Developer Funded Fieldwork to Exeter City Museum* (September 2006) will be followed. The archive, including a copy of the report, will be deposited within two months of completion of agreed reporting work.
- 3.6 If a summary report is produced, details of the project, including a pdf copy of the report will be submitted to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigations) database.
- 3.7 A short report summarising the results of the project will be prepared for inclusion within the “round up” section of the appropriate national journal, if merited, within 12 months of the completion of site work.
- 3.8 Should particularly significant remains, finds and/or deposits be encountered, then these, because of their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with the ECCAO, in consultation with the Client. EA, on behalf of the Client, will then implement publication in accordance with a timescale agreed with the above parties. A final proof copy will be produced within 18 months of the completion of field work.

#### *Health & Safety*

- 3.9 EA operations are subject to Health and Safety policies prepared by Exeter City Council which include all aspects of work covered by the *Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)*. All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices* and a *Risk Assessment* will be prepared in advance.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following specialists can be called upon if required:

*Dating techniques* Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre;  
*Environmental data*: Vanessa Straker (English Heritage) University of Bristol;  
*Faunal remains*: L. Higbee (Taunton);  
*Finds conservation*: Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums);  
*Human remains*: Louise Loe (Oxford Archaeology);  
*Medieval and post-medieval finds*: John Allan (Exeter Archaeology) and sub-consultants;  
*Metallurgy*: Ancient Monuments Laboratory (English Heritage), Gill Juleff (Exeter University);  
*Molluscan analysis*: Marine-Janice Light (Godalming); Terrestrial- Dr. M. Allen (AEA, Wiltshire);

*Numismatics*: Norman Shiel (Exeter);

*Petrology/geology*: Dr R. Scrivener (British Geological Survey);

*Plant remains*: Julie Jones (Bristol);

*Pollen*: Dr R. Scaife (University of Southampton);

*Prehistoric pottery*: Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);

*Radiocarbon dating*: University of Waikato, New Zealand: Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre, East Kilbride

*Roman finds*: Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields)' Dr Mark Corney (freelance);

*Soil Science*: Dr. M. Allen (AEA, Wiltshire).

**Exeter Archaeology**

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Fig. 1 Location of site.

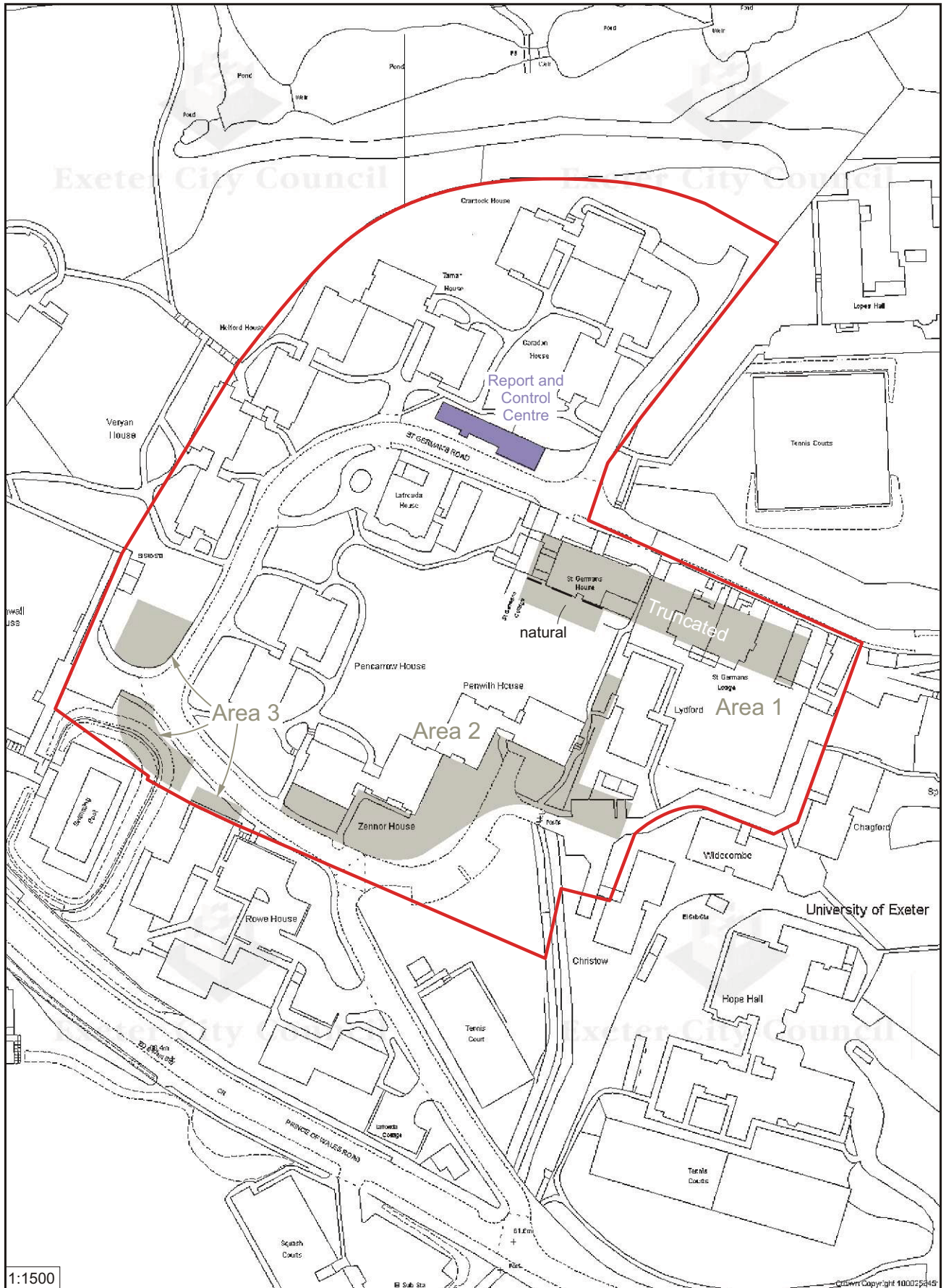


Fig. 2 Location of observations.

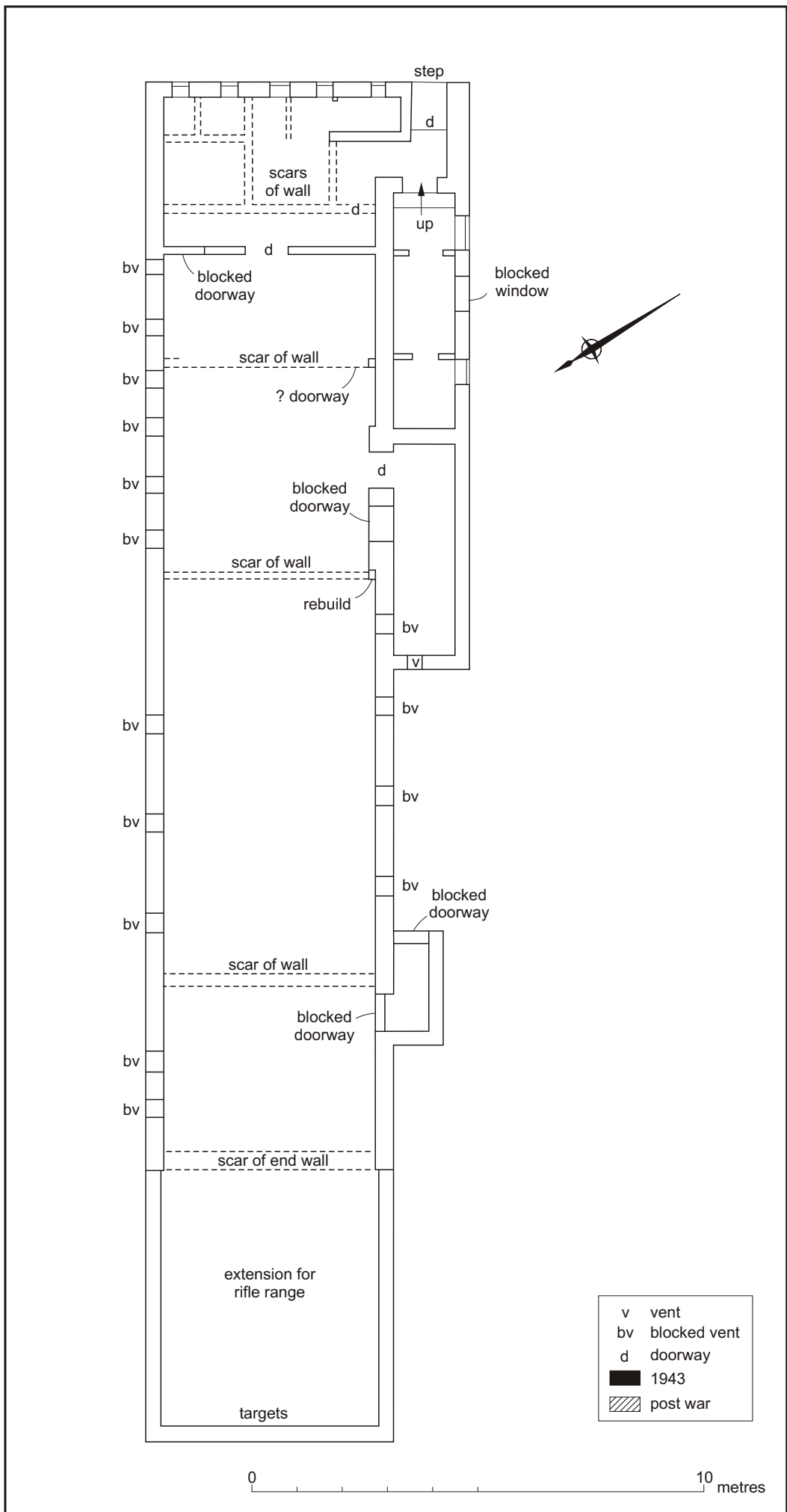


Fig. 3 Plan of the Report and Control Centre.



Plate 1 The Report and Control Centre, looking west. 1m scale



Plate 2 The north elevation of the Report and Control Center showing the post-war extension, looking southeast. 1m scale.



Plate 3 The interior of the Report and Control Centre showing barred windows and scars of removed partitions, looking east. 1m scale.



Plate 4 Ground reduction in the former garden of St German's House, looking northwest. 1m scale.