

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON THE SITE OF A PROPOSED MEMORIAL  
AT THE MOUND, ROYAL CITADEL, PLYMOUTH**

**Prepared on behalf of Le Page Architects Ltd  
for the Ministry of Defence**

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**Exeter Archaeology**

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Obverse 'GEORGE RULES' is legible.

## Summary

*An archaeological watching brief on land at The Mound, Royal Citadel, Plymouth (NGR SX 4804 5397), was carried out during November 2010 on the site of the former north ravelin (a triangular detached work placed in the ditch in front of the main gate of the Citadel for added defence).. The work comprised the observation, monitoring and recording of archaeological features exposed during the topsoil stripping of an area intended for a military memorial and its associated landscaping features.*

*Previous archaeological evaluation of the area had revealed what were interpreted as the remains of the ravelin wall, and guard house (Barrack Office), at the northern end of the site, whilst work in the centre and south of the development area had exposed deposits relating to the raising of the ravelin mound in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The watching brief clarified the nature of the walls seen in evaluation and demonstrated that the wall remains exposed and recorded corresponded closely to the plan of the ravelin, the Barrack Office, and its associated steps, depicted on a plan of the Citadel of around 1856. It would appear that the exercise has revealed the footings of the inner ravelin revetment wall and the walls of the Barrack Office as they would have been left below ground following demolition and landscaping as part of the conversion of the area into the Hoe Gardens in the 1880s. The watching brief has also confirmed the presence of raised mound material of the 17<sup>th</sup> century ravelin.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared on behalf of Le Page Architects Ltd for the Ministry of Defence and sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in November 2010 on the site of a proposed memorial to those who have served in 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery and have lost their lives in recent conflicts. The site of the proposed memorial is known as 'The Mound' and is located forward of the main gate of the Royal Citadel, Hoe Street, Plymouth, (NGR SX 4804 5397, Fig. 1).

The Royal Citadel is a Scheduled Monument (SM No. 26245) and its ramparts and bastions, including the main gate and sallyports, are in the guardianship of English Heritage (EH). Since its construction, in the 17th century to protect the Cattewater anchorage and to ensure the town's loyalty to the Crown in the aftermath of the Civil War, the Citadel has remained in military ownership and is currently occupied by 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery. The site also lies within the Registered Historic Park and Garden of The Hoe which is registered at Grade II.

The watching brief was undertaken as a condition of Scheduled Monument Clearance, granted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as advised by the Government Historic Estates Unit (GHEU) of English Heritage.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Royal Citadel is one of the most complete surviving examples of bastioned artillery defence in England and is the most intact of the important later 17th-century group built to defend the principal British naval ports. The Citadel was commissioned by Charles II and built between 1665-70 to a design by Sir Bernard de Gomme, a Dutch military engineer. It replaced and in part incorporated an existing Elizabethan fortification constructed during the 1590s. The site of this lies in the south-east corner of the later Citadel, immediately to the east and south-east of the Chapel and Great Storehouse. The late 17th-century Citadel took the form of an irregular star-shaped fortification with seven bastions connected by curtain walls encircled by a defensive ditch, with a detached triangular outwork or *ravelin*, to the north, in front of the main entrance.

The north ravelin survives as a triangular, low, flat-topped mound in front of the north gate. Situated within the ditch, the outwork would originally have had a wall along the two outward-facing sides with embrasures for the cannons. A gateway was situated on the north-east side of the ravelin, with a drawbridge crossing the ditch to the glacis. The gateway had a limestone arch which, in 1888, was removed and re-erected over the entrance to the west sallyport on the main defensive circuit. A further drawbridge crossed from the southern side of the ravelin to the main gateway of the Citadel. A guard house, variously described as a 'By guard' or 'Barrack Office' was situated in the inner apex of the ravelin just inside the outer drawbridge gateway. The building is shown as the 'By Guard' on a plan of 1677 (Fig. 2) and shows particularly well on an engraving by Sandford Mace of 1737 (Woodward, 1987, Plate 22) where it has a set of steps to one side. It appears to have been replaced or enlarged by a building, marked as the Barrack Office, which appears on an OS plan of around 1856 with a new central set of steps on its south approach and with a pathway leading to the drawbridge (Fig. 3). The ditches were infilled in the 1880's and the ravelin

incorporated into the area of walks and formal lawns forming The Hoe public gardens during the late 19th century.

### 3. AIMS

The principal aim of the watching brief was to monitor and record any exposed archaeology relating to the north ravelin and its associated guard house, the presence of which had been established by previous evaluation, and to ensure that a proper and sufficient record was made of any such exposures during the topsoil stripping and preparation of the ground for the erection of the memorial. A second aim was to record the sequence of deposits where the base of the memorial was to be sited below the exposed ground surface.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

The previous evaluation report (Steinmetzer, 2010) was comprehensively referred to both prior to and during the watching brief process. Areas adjacent to the evaluation trenches were observed where topsoil stripping or ground reduction took place. In accordance with standard EA procedure, stratigraphic information was recorded on evaluation trench record sheets and single context record sheets. Drawings of plans and sections were compiled at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate, and a photographic record was made in black-and-white print and colour (digital) format. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets.

### 5. RESULTS

Relevant plans and sections are included as Figs. 1-7 and context descriptions are set out in Appendix 1.

#### 5.1 Area north of the memorial

The area had previously been investigated by evaluation trench 4 (Steinmetzer, 2010). During monitoring of previously undisturbed ground (reduced for the purposes of a paved access to the memorial) new observations were made both north and south of the previous evaluation (Fig. 4). Exposed were the ashlar-faced limestone blocks of the inner revetment wall of the ravelin [1006] and [1007] (Fig. 5). This wall also served as the rear wall of the Barrack Office (shown on OS plan of c.1856, Fig. 3). The apex of the wall was lost during the construction of the ornamental steps to The Mound during its incorporation into the Hoe Gardens (Fig. 5; Plate 5).

Monitoring of ground reduction in the vicinity of the southern end of Trench 4 of the evaluation exercise revealed evidence of a wall [1010] the lower course of which comprised roughly cut limestone blocks (Fig.5, Plate 2). This wall overlies the wall footings exposed in the evaluation exercise as [406] which, with [1008] and [1011], appear with some certainty to be the walls of the Barrack Office very clearly seen on the plan of around 1856 located in the forward apex of the ravelin courtyard. Between the front and back walls of the Barrack Office a layer of limestone fragments [1025] was recorded. This layer was found to include large pieces of limestone densely packed and it was originally interpreted in the evaluation as the core of the ravelin wall. However, it is now suggested to be demolition debris within the Barrack Office following its demolition.

About 2.5m forward (south) of the Barrack Office limestone footings [1015] and [1016] were exposed. These are interpreted as the footings for a set of steps which would have provided a formal approach to the Barrack Office from the courtyard (Plate 4). The steps were provided with brick paving [1014] some of which has survived (Fig. 5). The splayed lower footings of the steps [1017], depicted again on the OS plan of 1856, formed a semi-circular area fronting the Barrack Office steps at the courtyard level (Fig. 5, Plate 3). A small area of cobbling [1018] survived to the west of the steps; this surface was almost certainly open and in use during the late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> century when a token (see below) was dropped and lost upon it (Fig. 5, Plate 3: foreground).

## 5.2 Area of the memorial base

The base footing for the memorial (approximately 1.5msq.) was excavated and the southern section recorded. The area had previously been investigated by evaluation trenches 2 and 3 (Steinmetzer, 2010). The position of the base footing is shown on Fig. 4. It had already been established in evaluation that compacted clay deposits associated with the original raising of the ravelin mound survived in this position and these deposits were seen again as context [1003] in the south face of the foundation trench for the memorial (Fig. 6, Section 1). The deposit comprised a grey silty-clay encountered at a depth of about 360-370mm below present ground surface (b.g.s.). This material was reduced to a further depth of 180mm bgs. to the required formation level within the designated foundation trench for the memorial at 550mm b.g.s.

## 5.3 Area south of the memorial

No new observations were made in the area south of the memorial. The area had previously been investigated by evaluation trench 1 (Steinmetzer, 2010).

## 6. FINDS

A worn copper alloy token was retrieved from context [1018] a cobbled pathway south of the Barrack Office. It measured 21mm in diameter and weighed less than 1g. On one side of the token is the bust of George III with the legend '*GEORGE RULES*' and on the opposite side there is a depiction of Britannia with the legend '*BRITANNIA'S*' (Plate 6). These counterfeit coins were produced after 1771, when it became an imprisonable crime to mint exact copies of legal tender; although this did not cover counterfeits where the coins closely resembled the originals but where the legends were only subtly changed. The law did not therefore apply to these imperfect counterfeits which were known simply as tokens. Tokens became accepted into general usage as there was a great shortage of small change at this time. The token was based on a George III penny implying that it would have been produced between 1771 and 1820.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The watching brief clarified the nature of the walls seen in evaluation and demonstrated that the wall remains exposed and recorded within the ravelin corresponded closely to the Barrack Office and its associated steps depicted on a plan

of the Citadel of around 1856. It would appear that the exercise has revealed the footings of the inner ravelin wall and the Barrack Office as they would have been left below ground following demolition and landscaping as part of the conversion of the area into the Hoe Gardens in the 1880s.

The watching brief has also confirmed to presence of mound material of the 17<sup>th</sup> century ravelin this material monitored and recorded where it was removed.

## SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive currently being held by Exeter Archaeology (Project 7366) pending deposition at Plymouth City Museum (AR.2010.4). Details of the investigations, including a copy of this report, have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (exeterar1-88974).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was carried out for Le Page Architects on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Thanks are due to Major Paul Greene (29 Commando RA) for his co-operation and assistance, and to Michael Turner and Paddy Elson (GHEU) and Plymouth City Council (HES) for their input and advice throughout. The project was managed by Simon Crosbie (Le Page Architects) and Andrew Passmore (EA). Fieldwork was directed by James Aaronson. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Marie Leverett.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

- |                     |        |   |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| OS plan             | c.1856 | 1:500 plan of the Royal Citadel and Barbican, Plymouth. Plymouth and West Devon Record Office.  |
| Roch, J.?           | 1677   | Plan of the Citadel and part of the town of Plymouth BL Add MS 5415 E.2.  |
| Steinmetzer, M.F.R. | 2010   | Archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed memorial at The Mound, Royal Citadel, Plymouth. Exeter Archaeology Report No 10.12. |
| Woodward, F.W.      | 1987   | <i>Citadel: A history of the Royal Citadel, Plymouth.</i>   |

APPENDIX 1:  
CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

(n.b. Context sheets describing modern features will be found with the archive under Accession No AR 2010.4 to be lodged with the Plymouth City Museum).

Context No.	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
1000	0.0-100mm	Black silty loam	Topsoil (with plant root)
1001	100mm-300mm	Black to dark-grey silt-clay with frequent fragments of brick, slate, limestone rubble and mortar.	Demolition deposit. Late 19 <sup>th</sup> or early 20 <sup>th</sup> century
1002	300mm-370mm	Brown clay-silt with small sub-angular stones and pebbles.	Levelling material
1003	370mm to formation level at 550mm	Grey silty-clay with small sub-angular stones and pebbles.	17 <sup>th</sup> century made ground for the ravelin mound
1006	260mm	Limestone ashlar bonded with lime-mortar	North ravelin wall (west side)
1007	100mm	Limestone ashlar bonded with lime-mortar	North ravelin wall (east side)
1008		Limestone and slate, mortar bonded	Barrack office wall footings
1009		Limestone and slate, mortar bonded	Barrack office wall footings
1010		Limestone blocks bonded with lime-mortar	Barrack office wall
1011		Limestone blocks bonded with lime-mortar	Barrack office wall
1012		Black to dark-grey silty clay with frequent limestone fragments, brick frags, slate, charcoal and mortar.	Demolition deposit
1013		Limestone rubble	Demolition deposit
1014	070mm	Brick surface	19 <sup>th</sup> century brick surface
1015		Limestone blocks	Top step foundations leading to barrack office
1016		Limestone and mortar	Foundation of steps leading to barrack office
1017		Compacted limestone and mortar	Splayed staircase foundations
1018		Cobbles	Pathway. Probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century
1025		Limestone rubble in a coarse and compacted reddish-brown clay-silt.	Demolition deposit
1026		Yellowish-white sandy lime mortar	Dump of lime-mortar mix



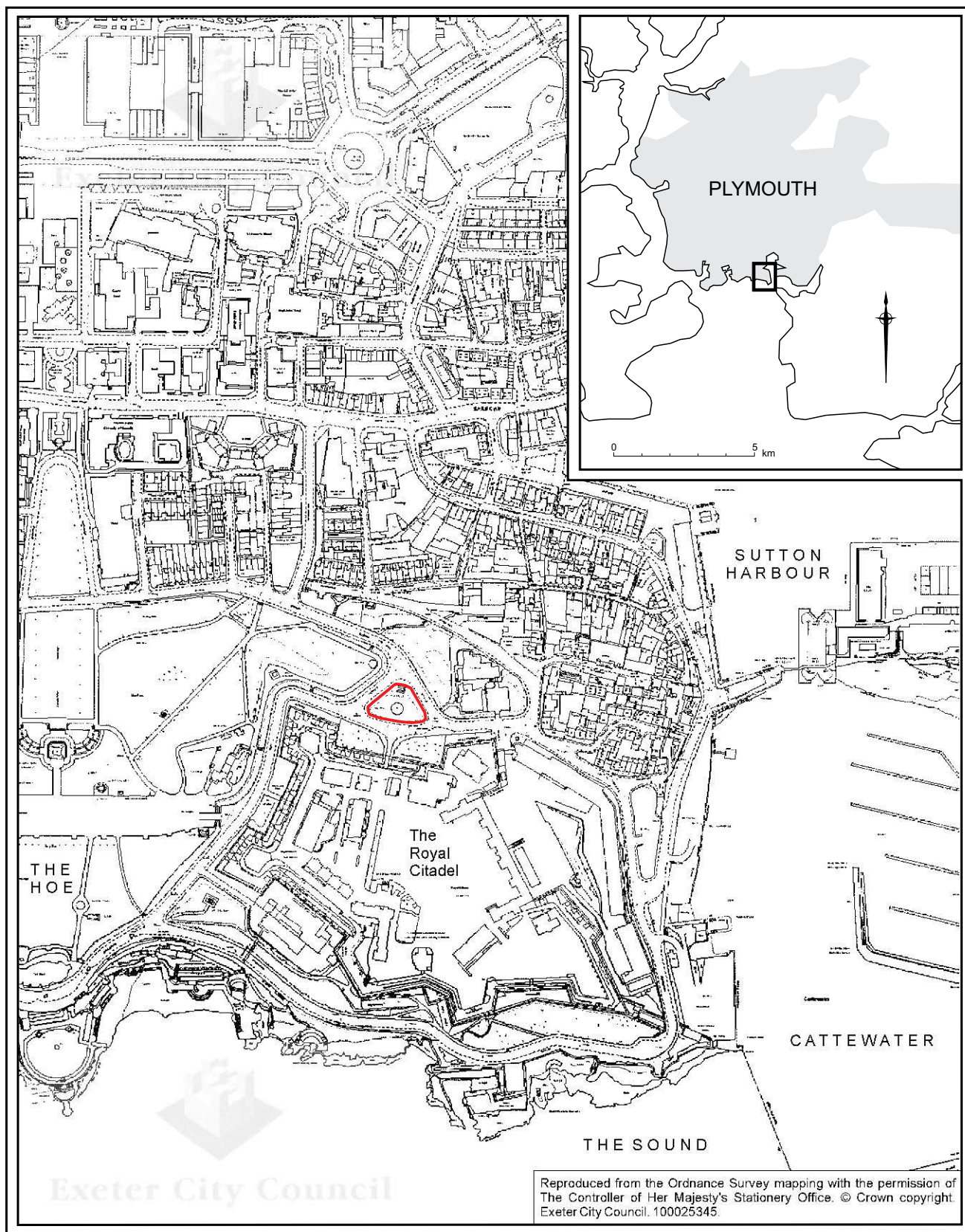


Fig. 1 Location of site. Scale 1:5,000.

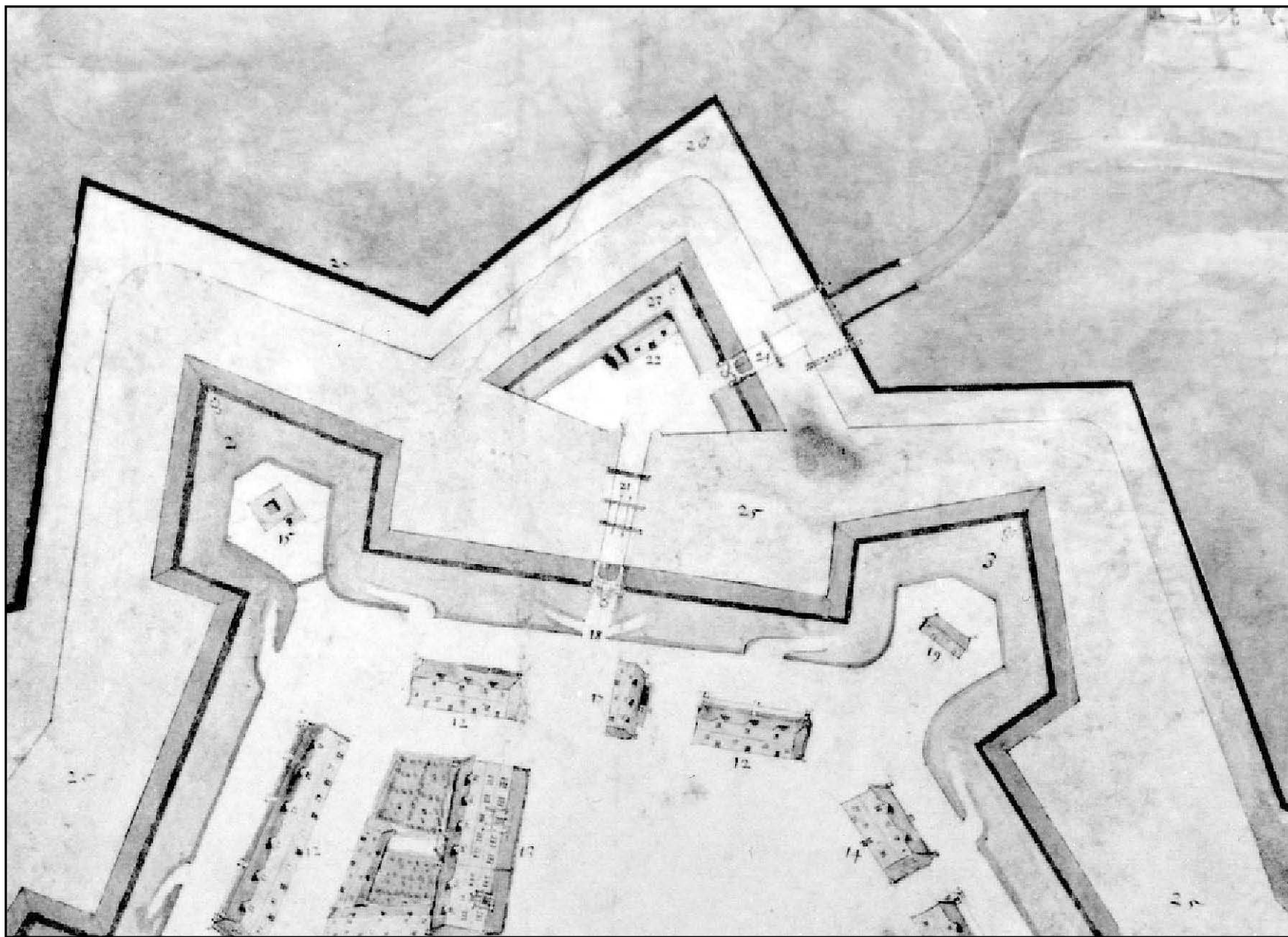


Fig. 2 Detail of the 1677 plan of the Royal Citadel showing the north ravelin.

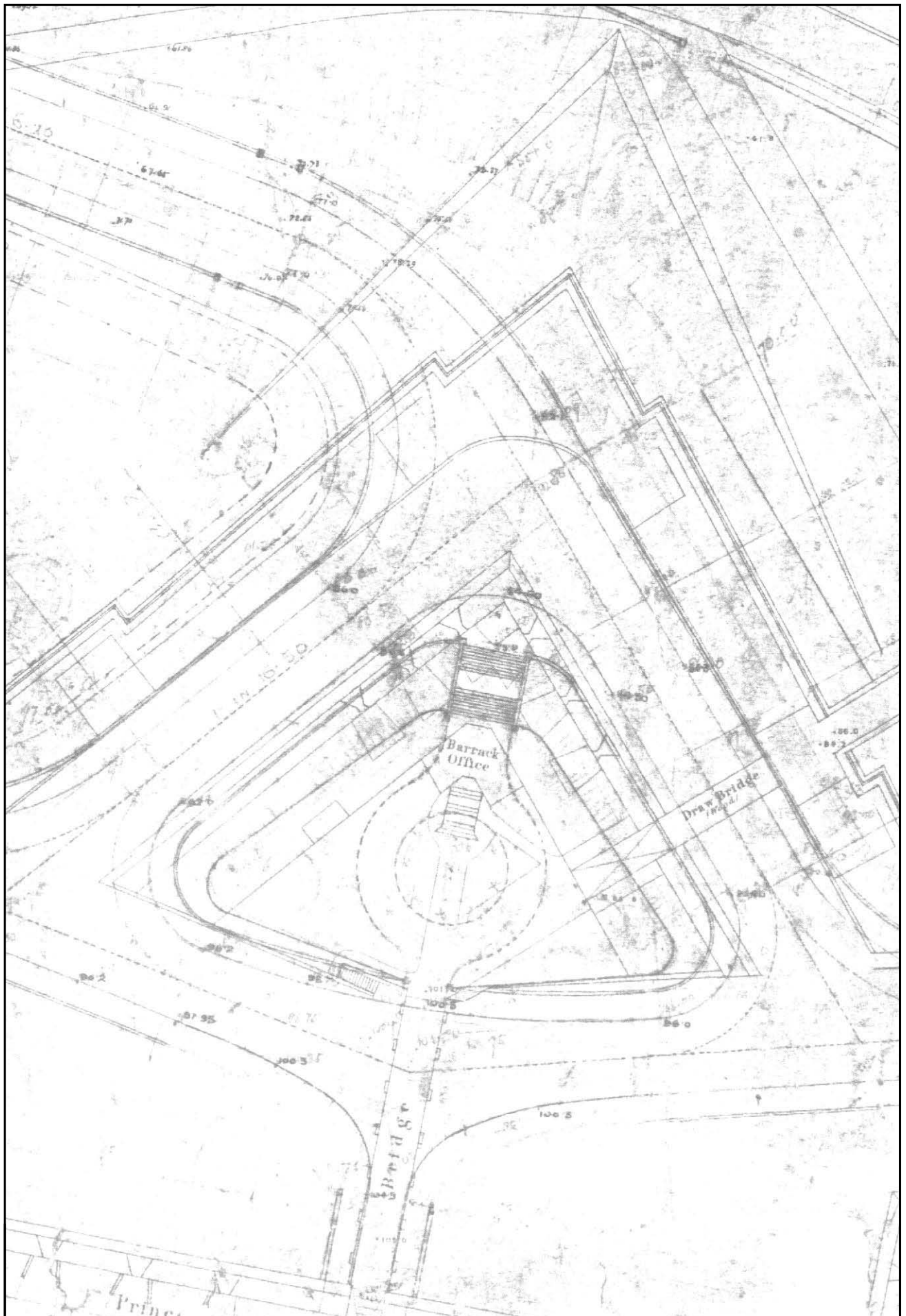


Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1856.



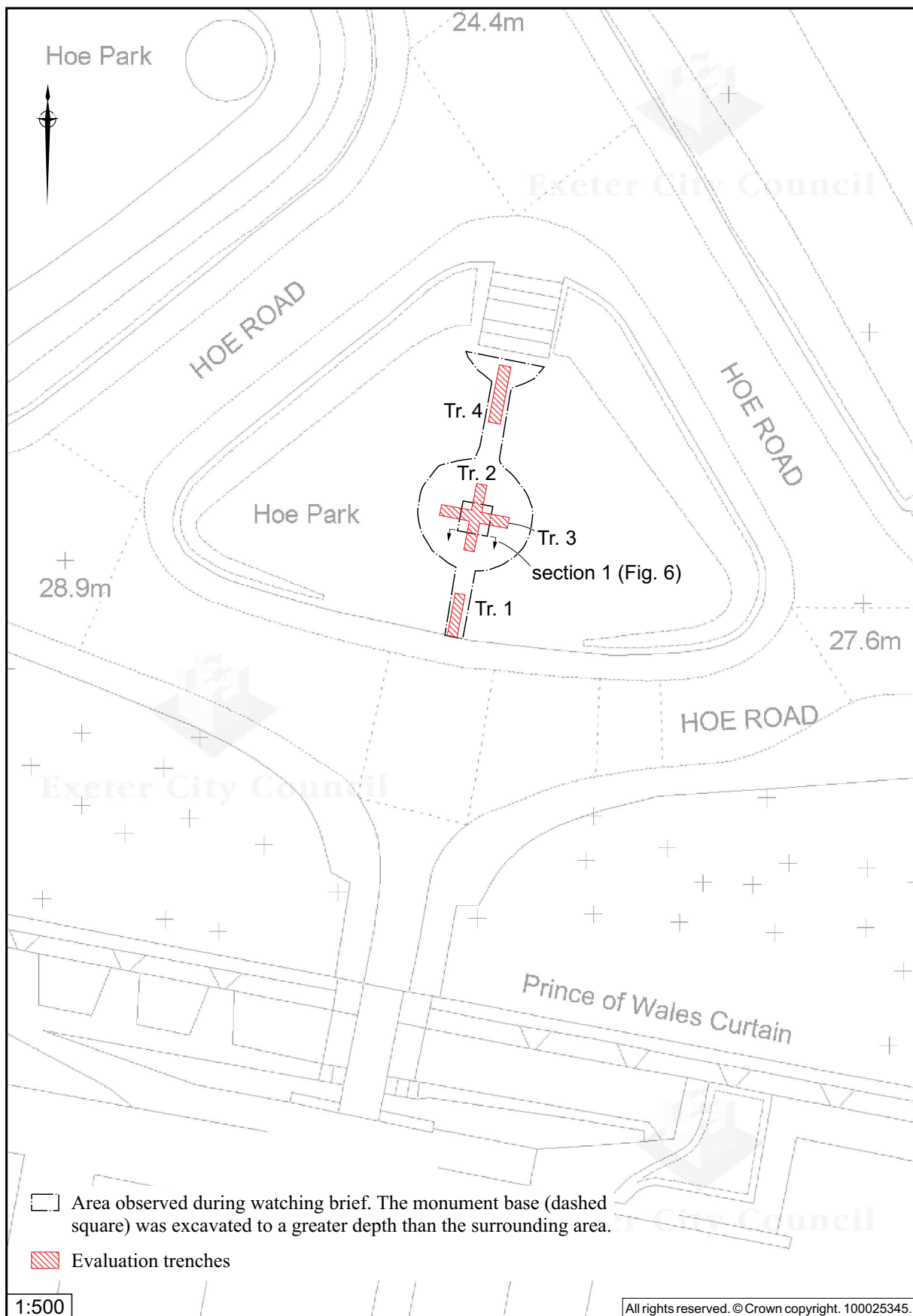


Fig. 4 Evaluation trench and watching brief location plan.

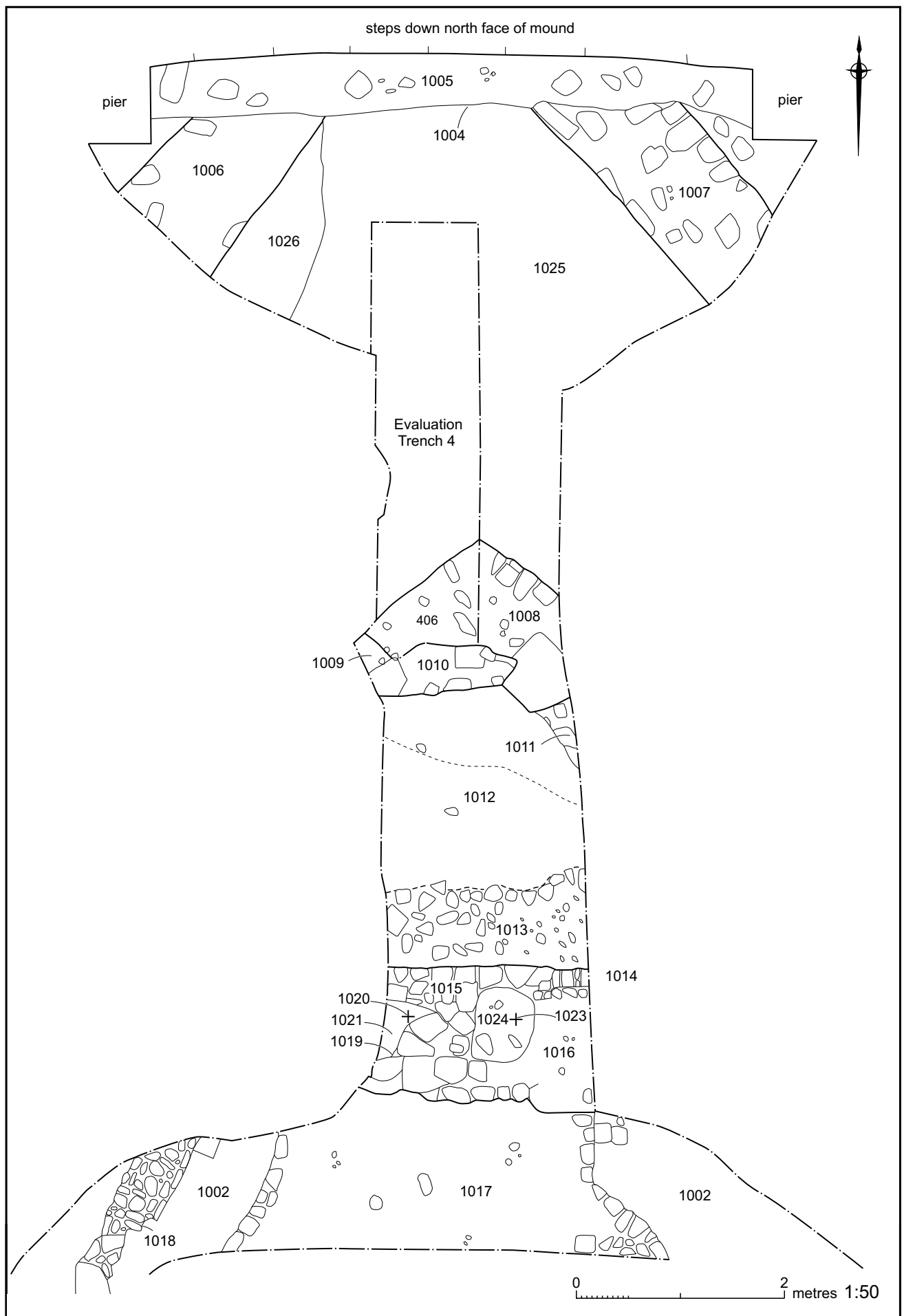
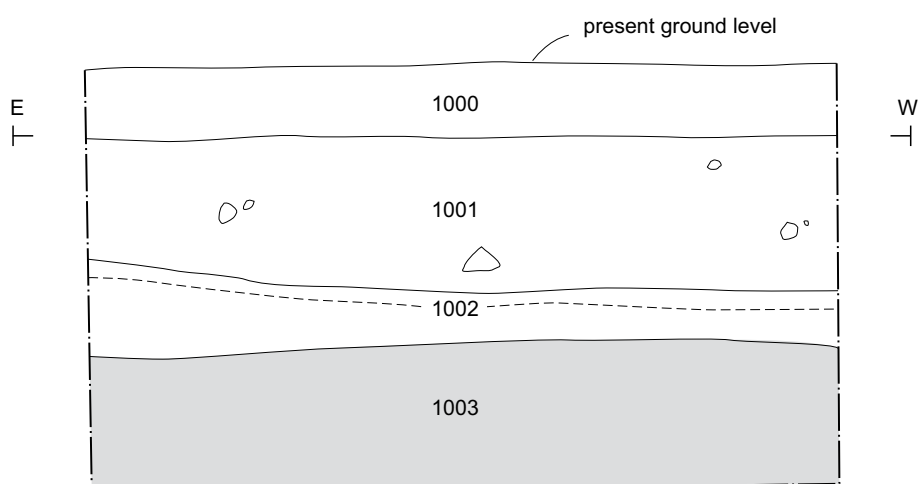



Fig. 5 Plan of features exposed during watching brief

# Section 1 (1:10)



 17th century ravelin mound material


0  0.5 metres

Fig. 6 North-facing section across memorial base (section location shown on Fig. 4).

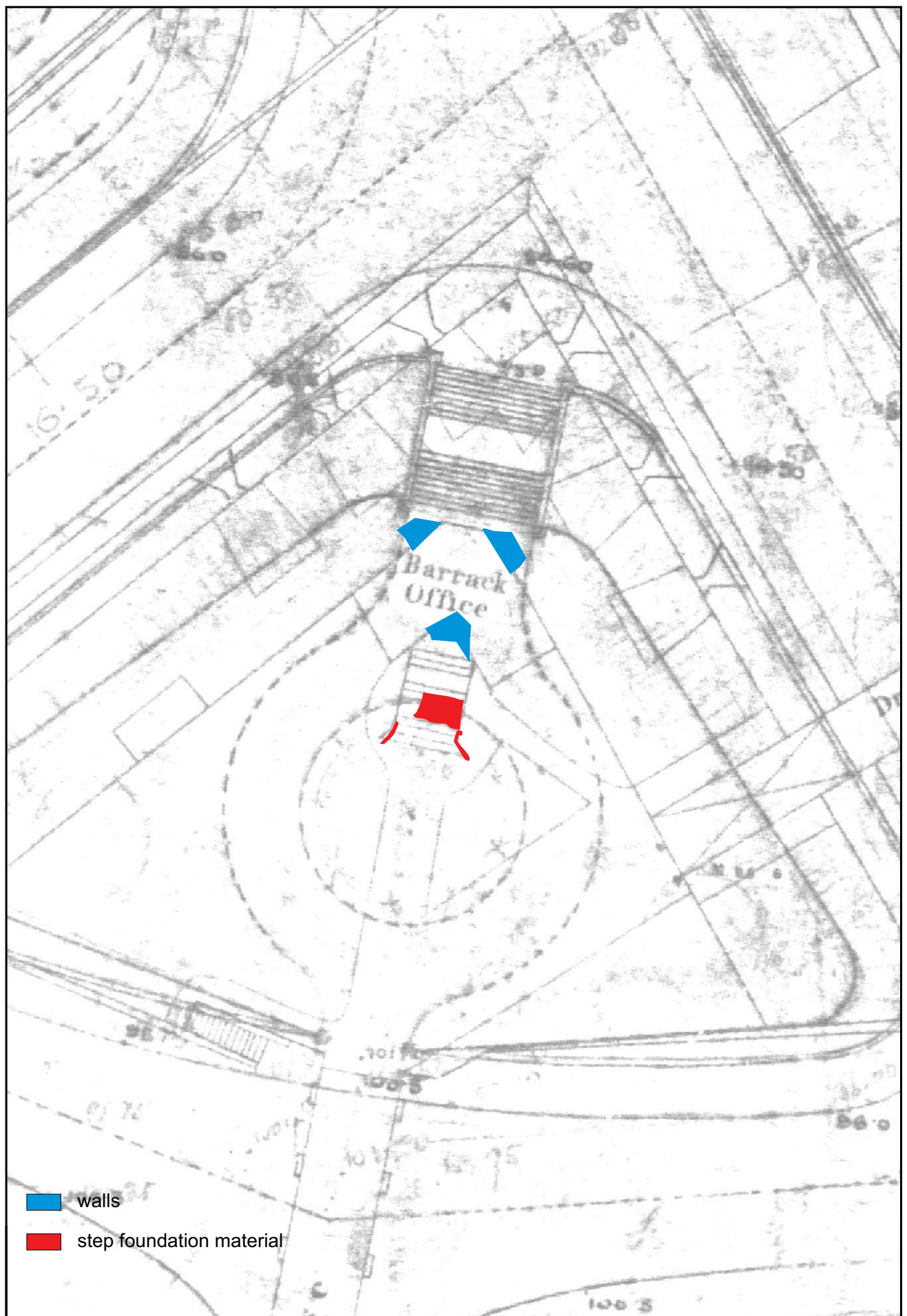


Fig. 7 Exposed features overlain on the 1856 Ordnance Survey plan of the Royal Citadel at 1:250.





Plate 1 The exposed features. Barrack Office wall [1010] in foreground looking south. 1m scale.



Plate 2 Detail of Barrack Office wall [1010] looking east. 25cm scale.





Plate 3 Base of steps [1017] and surviving cobbles [1018] looking east. 1m scale.



Plate 4 Foundation for top of steps [1015] looking east. 1m scale.





Plate 5 Ravelin revetment walls [1007] (foreground) and [1006] (background) looking west. 1m scale.



Plate 6 Evasion token of the late 18th - early 19th century. Obverse. GEORGE RULES is legible.