Structures known as the “Great Stables”, Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire: Level 3 Historic Building Survey

Tattershall Castle, Sleaford Road, Tattershall, Lincolnshire, LN4 4LR

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Summary

The structures known as the "Great Stables" at Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire, were recorded by Triskele Heritage in May 2022 for the Warhorse Project (administered by the University of Exeter and the University of East Anglia). Tattershall Castle lies to the south-west of the village of Tattershall and to the south of Sleaford Road. The structures surveyed consist of a north-south orientated south range with an adjacent north range, orientated east-west. The structures lie within the L-shaped Outer Ward of Tattershall Castle, to the south-west of the mediaeval Outer Gate. Only the south and part of the east elevation of the south range survive as standing walls. The rest of the structures are presented as excavated foundations.

Tattershall Castle was originally constructed for Robert de Tateshale during the 1230s. The complex was then significantly expanded in brick for Ralph Lord Cromwell during the 1430s and 1440s. The structures which were surveyed during this project were originally built during the mid-fifteenth century. Evidence was found for the presence of a two-storey building with tracery windows and heated chambers at the south end at both ground and first floor. The south range was originally divided into two spaces by a transverse wall. A brick threshold with stone jambs indicated an access into the south range via the east elevation. The north range was a secondary build but had intercommunication with the south range. The south range was probably built as a lodging range for household retainers which had offices or stores in the northern chambers.

The building may have been remodelled as a stable during a second phase of use. It is not clear exactly when this took place, but it may have been during the early modern period. Excavations by William Weir, in 1912, revealed the presence of a possible spine drain for equine effluent, running the length of the south range, and tether rings were inserted into the east elevation. A third phase of use took place after the castle became a working farm in 1693. Illustrations made during the eighteenth and nineteenth century show the north end of the building in ruins whilst the south end was in use as a barn. The entire structure was a roofless ruin by 1870. It was excavated and conserved by Weir between 1912 and 1914.

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Introduction

Tattershall Castle is situated to the south of Sleaford Road, Tattershall, Lincolnshire, LN4 4LR (Figure 1). The National Grid Reference for the site is TF 2110 5754 and it lies on the 6-7 metre contour. The site lies on the sandy and coarse loamy soils of the Blackwood Association which developed on drift geology of the Lower River Terrace sands overlying Jurassic Kimmeridge or Ampthill Clay formations.

The mediaeval castle was originally developed in stone for Robert de Tateshale during the 1230s. It was then massively expanded and remodelled in brick for Ralph Lord Cromwell during the 1430s and 1440s. It remained an elite residence during the post-mediaeval period, when it was primarily owned by the earls of Lincoln during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The castle was slighted during the British Civil Wars. The site was operated as a working farm by tenants of the earls of Devon from 1693 until 1912. Tattershall was then purchased by Lord Curzon and conserved by the architect William Weir. It was donated to the National Trust in 1925 who maintain it as a publicly accessible site.

The property is a scheduled monument (NHLE: 1018394) and incorporates six grade I listed structures: the great tower (NHLE: 1215317), round towers (NHL: 1216195), kitchen ruins (NHLE: 1288162), moat walls (NHLE: 1215318), ticket office and shop (NHLE: 1287738) and the stable ruins (NHL: 1215319). The castle consists of three wards surrounded by wet moats (Figure 2). The Inner Ward is a polygonal enclosure which is dominated by the 33.5-metre-high great tower (Figure 2 & Figure 3). To the north and east is the L-shaped Middle Ward, which contains a building known as the Guardhouse (Figure 2 & Figure 3). To the north and west is another L-shaped enclosure known as the Outer Ward, which contains the ruins known as the stables (Figure 2 & Figure 3).

The stable ruins are the focus of this document. The building is orientated north-north-east to south-south-west (Figure 2 & Figure 4). For clarity of reporting, it will be assumed that the longitudinal axis of the building is orientated north-south. The building consists of unroofed, ruined, upstanding brick walls on the south and east elevations with the rest of the structure revealed as excavated foundations only (Figure 4 & Figure 5). The listing entry describes the structure as follows:

> "*Reputedly stable block, now ruins. c.1440. Red brick and ashlar dressings. 2 storey, incomplete 3 bay front with to left a segmental arched doorway and to right 2 window*

openings and 4 tethering rings in the wall. Left hand gable has plinth and 2 projecting stacks, one corbelled out at first floor level. In the ground floor are 2 windows and in the first floor a single window. All of 2 lights, cusped heads and moulded stone surrounds. Inside the ground floor had original basket arched fireplace, now replaced by segmental arch, flanked by single pointed niches." (NHLE: 1215319).

Fieldwork Methodology

The building was subject to a research-led historic buildings survey to Level 3 as defined by Historic England (2016). A Level 3 project will create "*an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use*." (Historic England 2016, 26).

The author of this report attended site in May 2022. This site visit built upon fieldwork and research undertaken during a collaborative doctoral award carried out 2016-2021 (Wright 2021). The fieldwork included the production of handwritten notes, measured sketch drawings and photographs which were taken on a Canon EOS 1200D. The locations of the photographs are listed on the photoplan which accompanies this report (Figure 39).

No existing metric survey was available for the building, but the National Trust were able to provide in-house photocopies and PDFs which showed plans of the built environment. Additionally, the published plan of the structures excavated by William Weir, during the 1910s conservation project, was consulted. The elevations of the building were created using photogrammetry techniques and the drawings were rendered in AutoCAD (Figure 4 & Figure 5).

The project sought to accurately map, assess and date the building at Tattershall Castle. The recording of structures associated with manorial centres is specifically called for by the East Midlands archaeological research agenda (Knight, Vyner & Allen 2012, 94). The work was informed by reference to the standard guidance and manuals on fieldwork practice (Historic England 2016; CIfA 2014; Swallow et al 2004; Morris 2000) and was funded by the Warhorse Project administered by the University of Exeter and the University of East Anglia.

Historic Background

Introduction

Tattershall Castle was originally developed for Robert de Tateshale during the 1230s. At this point, the site probably consisted of a single, moated, polygonal courtyard (congruent with the present Inner Ward) which had rounded angle towers linked by stretches of stone curtain wall (Figure 2). The gatehouse lay in the north-east angle and faced back towards the village of Tattershall (Wright 2021, 24-36). This site was massively expanded and remodelled in brick under Ralph Lord Cromwell between c 1431 and c 1451. Cromwell probably arranged for the introduction of two L-shaped enclosures – the Outer Ward and Middle Ward – which looped around the west, north and east sides of the Inner Ward (Figure 2; Wright 2021, 37-49). The building in the Outer Ward, which is to be considered during the present study, was constructed during the Cromwellian period (Wright 2021, 40-44). It has conventionally been identified as the "*great stable*" which is referred to in the mediaeval building accounts for the castle (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 146; Simpson 1960, xiii, 21, 25, 32, 38, 60, 65, 73, 78).

Mediaeval Building Accounts

The great stable ("*magni stabuli*") is one of the most referenced structures in the fragmentary fifteenth-century building accounts (Simpson 1960, 21, 25, 32, 38, 60, 65, 73, 78). The accounts first mention the digging of foundations, by labourers under the supervision of Matthew Dyker, in 1438-9 (Simpson 1960, 21, 60). Later in the account for the same period, there is mention of the supply of bricks:

> "*On the new building of a large stable within the Castle, at the west end of le Wolhous, by Godfrey Brekman and his mates, within the period of the account, as below: 236,000* [bricks]. *On the foundations of a small house between the aforesaid stable and le Wolhous, made by the said Godfrey Brekman and his mates, as below: 46,000* [bricks]… *For the chimneys and windows of the said stable, of the worked bricks called hewentile: 2,200* [bricks]" (Simpson 1960, 25, 65).

During the next accounting period (1439-40) 28,500 bricks were delivered for paving the floor of the great stable and a further 48,000 bricks were provided for the construction of "*a wall of one house situated between the stable and the mill-house*" (Simpson 1960, 32, 73). Finally, during post-construction repairs to the castle, made in 1472, 110 large nails were purchased for maintenance on "*the great bridge beside my lord's outer stables*" (Simpson 1960, 38, 78). It is not certain whether this last entry refers to the same building as the first three. The original mediaeval Latin terminology in 1438-39 is: "*magni stabuli infra castrum*" ("*large stable within*

the castle"); whereas in 1472 it is rendered "*stabulos domini exteriors*" ("*my lord's outer stables*"). However, the nearby presence of "*the great bridge*", in relation to the latter, may be an indication that the stable was in the vicinity of the Outer Gatehouse on the northern side of the Outer Ward (Figure 2). Theoretically, this could be the same building as that mentioned in the 1430s.

Certain observations can be made about the stables as described in the building accounts. They were probably located close to the Outer Gate of the castle and construction began with the cutting of foundations and delivery of bricks in 1438-39. The floor surface was brick-paved and the moulded detailing of the building required hand-cut bricks rather than stonework. There was a residential capacity at the stable, noted through the presence of chimneys which were presumably connected to heated chambers. The stable was located to the west of a small house with '*le Wolhous*' or "*mill-house*" further to the east. The function of the latter building is debatable. In the 1438-39 account the terminology may point to a building for storing wool or sheepskins ("*le Wolhous*"). However, in 1439-40, the same building is referred to as a mill ("*mill-house*"). It is possible that the two different terms were employed to describe the same building which may have been a fulling mill for pounding impurities from wool. It will be noted below that there is a tripartite division in the group of buildings considered here. It is tempting to see in this the layout of stables, small house and "*Wolhous*". However, there is overall cause for concern in the identification of the building as the mediaeval stables (discussed below).

Post-mediaeval Depictions

There are no known references to or depictions of the building throughout the early modern period. The castle remained in occupation throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century and was the principal residence of the Clinton earls of Lincoln from 1573-74 (Wright 2021, 177-178). During the British Civil Wars, the castle was garrisoned and changed hands twice, but without suffering skirmish or siege. In 1651, it was slighted on the orders of Parliament (Wright 2021, 178-181). Following the wars, the Clintons remained in residence until the site passed to the Fortescue family in 1693. As their concerns were predominantly in the south-west, and Tattershall had been damaged during the slighting, the castle became part of a working farm during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The castle was also extensively robbed of much remaining masonry by Gervase Footitt, who established two limekilns on the site in 1790 (Wright 2021, 181-88).

The earliest known visual image of the building was made in 1727 by, the antiquarian topographer, William Millicent (Figure 6). He depicted the west and south elevations of the

structure which was probably in use as a farm building by this point (Figure 7). The south elevation is shown with a crow-stepped gable and a centrally located chimney stack. The fenestration indicates that the building was originally two-storey - with two-light windows either side of the stack at ground floor level and one at first floor level to the west of the chimney. To the east of the stack is single-storey, lean-to structure with a tiled roof, a window loop in the south elevation and what may be a door or a buttress in the west elevation. To the north of the gabled south elevation is a structure with a tiled roof. This section has a projecting string course and three, narrow, high-level narrow windows grouped towards the north. The northern end of the building is shown as roofless ruins. A building break, or crack in the masonry, is visible between the roofed and unroofed areas. However, the string course appears to continue along the west elevation and around a return onto the flanking projection at the north end, indicating that the ruins were probably once an integral part of the original build. The northern wing has a ragged arch in its south elevation that could be evidence for a former window or a door (although it is also admitted that it could have been created because of general neglect).

The impression of the building by Millicent is generally confirmed through two drawings made in 1788-89 by John Claude Nattes for Sir Joseph Banks. In one of these drawings, he depicted the south gable with its central chimney stack flanked by two tracery windows, with a third to the west at first floor level (Figure 8). By this period, the bottom of the chimney stack had been punched through to create an entrance in the gable end with rather ramshackle, planked, double doors. Nattes also showed the three tiers of corbels supporting the first-floor chimney and the lean-to projection in the south-east corner (the latter partially hidden behind what looks like a haystack). He also sketched out the impression of a second lean-to projecting from the west elevation. The second drawing by Nattes shows east elevation of the building (Figure 9). The south gable is shown projecting above the roofline of the tiled structure to the north and a matching high gable is also shown at the northern end of this build. The elevation below is only loosely drawn but it seems clear that there was a ground storey doorway (which can be seen rising behind the wall at the edge of the Inner Moat) and two, rectangular, high-level openings underneath the eaves. To the north of the tiled build is a second structure that appears to be thatched.

A copy of a drawing in the collection of William Brand of Boston, published in 1818, broadly confirms the details of Nattes' illustration of the south gable (Figure 10). The two tracery windows to the west of the chimney stack were present and there is also the impression of the inserted doorway at the base of the stack. A plan of the site by Nicholson, made in 1842, shows a rectangular building with the southern chimney stack projecting and a wall projecting to the east to form a gate or door between the building and the Inner Moat (Figure 11).

Nicholson (1842, 9) noted that the building was in use as a barn at this time, but he supposed that it had formerly been a guard house used by the castle garrison – a notion later explored further by William Weir (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203).

An early photograph of the castle, taken in 1857, confirms much of the Nattes drawing of the east elevation (Figure 12). The south gable is shown rising high above the tiled roofline and is match by a second gable to the north. The thatched structure has gone, and the north gable is blank except for a centrally placed breather at the apex of the gable and a door at ground level. The first few courses of masonry and all the north-east corner of the building appear to be built in pale coloured stonework, which stands out from the darker brick above. The details of the east elevation conform to the impressions made by Nattes. A high-level double loading door (perhaps to a hayloft) is shown as being hung from strap hinges just to the north of the centreline of the building. To the south is a blocked window with very fresh-looking pointing around its jambs and below the cill. In the south-east corner is the top of a double-leafed door showing above the moat wall.

By c 1870 the building had entirely slipped into ruin. A photograph, in the collection of the National Trust, shows a roofless structure with the east elevation similar in profile to the current silhouette of the building (Figure 13). The lean-to and doors have been removed from the south elevation – revealing a jagged hole in the chimney stack. At approximately the same time that the photograph was taken, the surveyor F. R. Reed draw a schematic ground plan of the castle, published in 1872, which confirms the ruination of the building (Figure 14). He only saw fit to show masonry walls for the south and part of the east and west elevations. He also depicted the northern projecting range but there was a substantial gap in the ground between the two structures - suggesting that the building had been largely cleared. A photograph of 1880 confirms the roofless appearance and showed that it was possible to see the interior of the south elevation when looking south-west by this point (Figure 15).

The ruined and fragmentary nature of the building led to a confusing impression of the building on the first two 1:2500 editions of the Ordnance Survey, published in 1889 (Figure 16) and 1905 (Figure 17). They show a sinuous boundary, looping south-west from the Sleaford Road, which suddenly straightens to the north-west of the moat wall – this is probably the east elevation of the building. The south elevation is hinted at by the perpendicular boundary running east-west from the moat wall and the west elevation is sketched as the hachures of an earthwork. Meanwhile the projecting north range is clearly shown as wall lines.

Curzon & Weir's Excavation and Conservation Project

Tattershall Castle was purchased by George Nathaniel Curzon in 1911 and, the following year, he funded a programme of archaeological excavations and conservation work across the site which was carried out under the architect William Weir. Both men were heavily inspired by the conservation practices of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings so the actual work to the masonry was extremely light-touch and involved only limited intervention (Wright 2021, 188-190). The archival research, archaeological excavation, and architectural conservation at Tattershall was described in a book collated by H. A. Tipping, after Curzon's death, and included substantial appendices written by Weir and the project's historical consultant: Alexander Hamilton Thompson of the University of Leeds (Curzon & Tipping 1929).

In Appendix II, Weir described the scene that confronted him in the Outer Ward in 1911:

> "*The ruins of the guard house on the south-west of the Keep are shown in drawings made for Sir Joseph Banks in 1790* [i.e., the 1788-89 Nattes illustrations; Figure 8 & Figure 9] *with the southern end fitted up as a barn but only the south gable and a portion of the east wall remained standing in 1911. A large opening had been cut through the south wall at the ground level to form an entrance, which destroyed the fireplace which existed at that end of the room. The gable above was complete with a two-light window on either side of the projecting chimney which continues to the top of the gable. The recess of the fireplace exists at the first floor level, but the arched head is missing above its springing. At the north end of the building, which is close against the moat, traces could be seen of the walls in the irregular surface of the ground*" (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 192).

He then went on to articulate the interventions which were made:

> "*In dealing with the ruined guard house which stands between the outer and inner moats on the north-west of the Keep the chief work was the strengthening, repairing, and pointing of the walls. Where the lower portion of the south gable had been cut through, to form an entrance when the ruins were used as a farm building, the opening has been built up and the relieving arch rebuilt over the fireplace on the inside. The fireplace above, on the first floor level, has been strengthened in a similar manner but no attempt has been made to replace the arched head of either fireplace. The windows on the west side of the gable at the ground and upper floor levels have been repaired and the missing mullions added to support the tracery. The jambs of the original doorway were found in the east wall close against the gable, and an arch has been built over them for support to the remaining portion of the side wall.*

The foundations of the full extent of the building, which measures 25 ft. 6 in. [7.77 metres] *in width by 90 ft.* [27.43 metres] *in length internally, have been discovered and exposed to view. The length appears to have been divided into two rooms by a cross-wall, at the position of a modern foundation which appears to have been built over the old foundation. There was evidently an outer doorway in the east wall close against the position of the cross-wall, of which the stone threshold and the brick paving through the thickness of the wall have been discovered and exposed. The projecting portion at the north end of the building, of which the foundation remains, appears to have been a tower, and corresponds to the one shown in Buck's drawing* [Figure 18]*, a little to the left of the tower at the junction of the two moats.*

In excavating the ground within the walls a brick channel has been exposed running the full length of the building down its centre. It is possible that its purpose was connected with the warming of the rooms by distributing the heat from the fireplace, at which point the channel appears to start" (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203-04)*.*

Weir's description of the limited architectural interventions is valuable and shows his skill as a conservation architect. However, some of his archaeological observations can questioned. Firstly, his identification of the northern range as being shown by Samuel Buck (Figure 18), in 1726, does not quite fit the perspective of the site. On balance, it seems more likely that the building drawn by Buck may have been part of the Outer Gate (Wright 2021, 39-40; Figure 2). Secondly, the suggestion that the central brick channel, which he incorporated in his 1914 plan of the site (Figure 19), was a method of distributing heat from the fireplace finds no parallel in mediaeval England. It would seem better placed in the Roman world. Thirdly, Weir referred to the building as a "*guard house*" i.e., a structure intended to house the castle's garrison of soldiers (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203; Figure 19). Weir also referred to the roofed building in the Middle Ward (now the National Trust ticket office and shop) as a "*guard house*" (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 202) and the language employed in discussing these buildings, in the 1929 text, is generally quite martial in tone. This fits with the military-focused interpretation of castles, widespread during the early twentieth century, which has been robustly challenged since the late 1970s (Liddiard 2005, 1-11). In particular, the keeping of castle garrisons has been questioned due to the extreme expense of maintaining even a small body of soldiers for a relatively short period of time (Liddiard 2005, 82-83).

Curiously, Weir was at odds with his co-authors over the original function of the building. In Appendix I, Thompson noted that: "*Its purpose is not clear, but it is likely that it formed the lodging of Lord Cromwell's master of the horse"* (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 167). Meanwhile, Curzon himself (as the principal, albeit posthumous, author) took Thompson's cue that this

may have been a building connected to equine provision at the castle but insisted that the iron rings (Figure 20) in the east wall "*gave a clue to its purpose*" as "*the Great Stable*" (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 146).

National Trust

Curzon died in 1925 and left the property to the National Trust in the terms of his will (Wright 2021, 190). The uncertainty about the function of the building filtered through into the first guidebook to the site, written by A. H. Thompson, which stated that it was:

> "…*probably the "marshalsey" of the establishment, including stables and a lodging for the marshal or master of the horse. This, however, is only a conjecture, and it is impossible to decide the purpose of this building, especially as the offices attached to an important house were numerous, and their position in the plan was ruled simply by convenience*" (Thompson 1928, 13).

When the property guidebook was rewritten by Michael Welman Thompson in 1974, the belief that the building was a stable gained some momentum:

> "*Another long brick building lay across the north-west corner of the outer ward. It was two-storeyed with a rectangular projection at its north end. A central drain ran down its middle (now filled in) and it may have provided stables on the ground floor with servants' quarters above. The south gable wall contained fireplaces at both floors, and possibly this end was partitioned off as accommodation for minor officers"* (Thompson 1974, 13).

The accompanying site plan, revised by Philip Dixon of the University of Nottingham from Weir's 1914 drawing, confidently asserted that the building was a stable (Figure 21). The graphics of this plan were slightly amended for the third guidebook to the castle, but the building was still captioned as a stable even though there was a note of caution in the text: "*The derelict two-storeyed building dominating the Outer Ward may have included stables on the ground floor and living quarters above*" (Avery 1997, 8).

There has been very little comment on the building in the scholarly literature. Most authors operating in the sphere of castle studies have chosen to concentrate wholly on the great tower when referring to Tattershall (see for example: Goodall 2011, 354-56; Johnson 2002, 55-62; Platt 1982, 164-73). However, one notable outlier was Anthony Emery (2000, 308) who noted the presence of "*a stable range*" in his text and incorporated a complementary caption in his ground plan of the castle (Figure 22). Emery's confidence in identifying the building as a stable was matched by the conservation management plan (Munby 2008, 111-12)) and the on-site

interpretation panel that, until recently, was located adjacent to the east elevation which identified the building as the "*Stable Block*" (Figure 23). This panel was removed by the National Trust in the light of the recent doctoral research on the castle, by the author of this report, which has questioned the identification of the building as a mediaeval stable (Wright 2021, 40-44).

Results of the Survey

Introduction

The group of roofless brick and stone buildings, considered in the present document, stand in the north-west corner of the Outer Ward and are orientated north-south (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4 & Figure 5). They comprise the fragmentary standing remains of the south elevation and part of the east elevation of the south range (Figure 5). The north end of the east elevation and all the west elevation of the south range, plus the north range are defined only by their excavated foundations (Figure 4).

The south range measures 27.28 by 7.47 metres internally. It is divided by a transverse stone foundation into two spaces measuring 13.95 x 7.47 metres internally (south) and 12.23 x 7.47 metres internally (north). The wall thickness of the south range varies between 0.84 and 0.88 metres. The dimensions of the south range brickwork vary between 105-125mm (breadth) x 50-60mm (thickness) x 210-225mm (length), with four courses measuring 251-255mm. The north range abuts that of the south range, is orientated east-west and measures approximately 10.02 x 6.8m externally. Its walls are c 0.7 metres in thickness. It was not possible to gauge the brickwork dimensions of the northern build as only the upper face of the excavated remains was visible.

South Range: South Elevation

The upstanding masonry at the south end of the south range represents a relatively intact gable end (Figure 5, Figure 24 & Figure 25). At ground floor level it features a centrally located fireplace flanked by two recesses with pointed drop-arch heads. There is a low plinth, 0.2m above ground level, to the east of the fireplace but not to the west. Above are two stone, square-headed windows with Y-tracery and two-light trefoil heads. Internally, the segmental rear-arch and embrasure are of moulded brick. Externally the stone reveal has a moulding comprised of a chamfer, scotia and shallow cavetto underneath a four-centred arch with a flat head (Figure 26). The window mullions were all replaced by Weir (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203). Overall, the design is akin to a simplified version of the mid-fifteenth century windows of the Middle Ward lodgings at Tattershall – the windows of the Outer Ward building lack relieving arches, label moulds and pierced spandrels (Figure 27).

The timberwork of the first-floor framing was originally supported on a ledge associated with 11 joist holes. The first floor has an off-centre fireplace that fed smoke into a three-tier, brick-corbelled projecting chimney stack. The first-floor window to the west of the fireplace is of different design to those at ground floor (compare Figure 26 to Figure 28). The embrasure

arrangement is the same – moulded brick segmental rear-arch and jambs – however the external reveal has two-light tracery with a perpendicular central mullion flanked by cinquefoil cusps beneath a four-centred arch with a flat head.

The two segmental arched fireplaces were restored under Weir in 1912-14 (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203). The ground floor example had been almost destroyed when a hole was punched through the middle of the south elevation chimney stack at a point between 1727 and 1788-89 (Figure 8). Only six courses of the springers survive on each jamb, but the remaining impression is of a very flat arch like those in the Middle Ward lodgings (Figure 29). The entire fireback was rebuilt with brick and two courses of end-on herringbone tile. The first-floor fireplace has also been restored with only one brick of the eastern springer surviving in situ. A single course of bricks supported a hearthstone of which just a fragment remains beneath the eastern jamb.

In common with the Middle Ward lodging (Figure 27) and great tower (Figure 3), the fenestration of the south elevation (Figure 26 & Figure 28) features a mix of contemporary Perpendicular Gothic tracery elements (such as the central mullion rising from cill to head) with anachronistic motifs drawn from the period of earlier fourteenth century Decorated Gothic (such as the Y-tracery). Hart (2010, 128) has noted that, during the early phase of Perpendicular, a natural conservatism led to the survival of older styles but that a later reaction took place in the fifteenth century against the strict austerity of the style which "*prompted reintroduction of some of the old, curved forms*." Harvey (1978, 150-1) pointed out that the Decorated form persisted in buildings of the Lancastrian Court Style and those within its orbit. Cromwell was very much a member of that community and either he or his master builders (or of course both) may have had a particular penchant for such a deliberately anachronistic Decorated Gothic design (Wright 2021, 144-46). The decision to do so may have been part of a wider scheme of atavism which saw the use of antiquated tracery, mouldings, armorials and even the form of the great tower at Cromwell's houses at Tattershall and Wingfield Manor. The function of this anachronism may have been intended to promote Cromwell's ancient lineage at a time when he was vying to promote his political rise to power at Lord Treasurer of England (Wright 2021, 125-26).

The southern gable once projected above the ridgeline as depicted in the post-mediaeval illustrations of the building dating from 1727, 1788-89 and 1857 (Figure 7, Figure 9 & Figure 12). There is no indication of how the roof structure was fixed to the gable as no slots for purlins or chasing for trusses now remains in the masonry. Neither is there any corresponding features in the southern corner of the east elevation. It is likely that Weir's work has removed all trace of this arrangement. The historic illustrations make it clear that the southern end of

the building had a tiled roof which was in situ by at least 1727 (Figure 7) but was absent by c 1870 (Figure 13).

To the east of the south elevation is an un-bonded stub wall with a clear straight joint (Figure 23 & Figure 30). It has a chamfered stone plinth quite unlike the surviving plinths of the rest of the structure. The plinth appears to be related to another stub wall (dimension) to the east which returns west from the moat wall. These two fragments probably divided off the northern and southern sections of the Outer Court and it is a possible that a gate or door was located at this point. Nicholson appears to show such an arrangement in his 1842 plan (Figure 11). The straight joint in the masonry indicates that this wall must have been inserted after the construction of the south range. However, assessment of the brickwork fabric indicates that this may still have occurred during the mid-fifteenth century so it may have been the result of a modification in design rather than an altogether different phase of construction much later in time.

The 1727 and 1788-89 illustrations (Figure 7 & Figure 8) show a small single storey building standing against the south-eastern corner of the south elevation, which was absent by the time of the 1818 drawing (Figure 10). This had a lean to roof and door in the western elevation. No archaeological trace of this remains and its function remains unknown, but it is suspected to have been a post-mediaeval addition.

South Range: East Elevation

The eastern elevation is in a variable state of preservation (Figure 23 & Figure 31). Although much of the masonry survives for approximately 14.53 metres at the southern end almost to eaves height, only the foundations remain in situ for the remaining 12.75 metres at the north end. The south end of the east elevation has a high plinth 1.02-1.05 metres above present ground level. This contrasts with the remaining stub wall of the western elevation which has two plinths 0.25 above ground level with another 0.78m above that (Figure 5). The doorway at the south end was almost entirely rebuilt during the 1912-14 conservation works, although there are traces of earlier brick jambs in situ (as noted by Weir: Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203). This historic opening is confirmed on the 1788-89 Nattes drawing (Figure 9) and 1857 photograph (Figure 12).

To the north of the door are the traces of two high-level rectilinear openings (Figure 5, Figure 23 & Figure 31). The southern example was probably a window and is shown as being blocked in the 1857 photograph. Part of this brick blocking is still in situ and its southern jamb has been rebuilt creating a straight joint in the masonry. The northern opening is much less well-

preserved but was shown as probably containing double-leafed loading doors suspended on strap hinges in the 1857 photograph.

There are four rectangular blocks of Ancaster stone, measuring approximately 0.28 by 0.13 metres, which have been let into the easting facing elevation. The northernmost is in association with an iron stud which restrains an iron ring (Figure 20). The two southernmost blocks also have evidence of iron studs, but only the northernmost has its ring still in situ.

Internally, three vertical rebates in the brickwork, located between the windows, were probably originally chases to receive the posts and bracing which supported the bridging beams of the upper floor structure (Figure 5 & Figure 31). This arrangement survives intact at the Middle Ward lodging. Here the posts are coupled with knee braces which support bridging beams of the floor-frame, and the structure has been dated by dendrochronology to a felling range of 1446-51 (Wright 2021, 48; Figure 32).

At the north end of the eastern elevation are clear traces of a bonded brick return in the masonry suggesting that a transverse wall divided the south range internally (Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 31 & Figure 33). This seems to correspond to an in situ 1.1 metre wide stone foundation which can be traced for 4.57 metres in length (Figure 4, Figure 5 & Figure 34). Weir noted the presence of this stone wall and confirmed that it was built directly on top of an earlier foundation, which is presumed to have been constructed in brick (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203). The transverse wall was probably originally constructed in brick and divided the fifteenth century south range into two near-equal spaces. Millicent's 1727 illustration (Figure 7) can be compared to that of Nattes in 1788-89 (Figure 9) and it seems that a high gable was probably introduced during the mid-eighteenth century. It is presumed that the transverse wall was rebuilt at this time with a stone groundwall. The 1857 photograph illustrates that the high gable end was built of stone at ground level and brick from just below the head of a centrally placed door (Figure 12).

South Range: Foundations

Immediately to the north of the stub of the transverse wall is a threshold featuring an external stone step and brick paving internally (Figure 34 & Figure 33). This threshold is rebated into the wall line and a weathered fragment of a stone door jamb can still be seen in the masonry to the south. This stone is bonded into the brickwork and was therefore an integral part of the design.

The masonry to the north of the threshold survives only as an excavated foundation, 12.75 metres in length, which was probably capped with modern render during the 1910s

conservation project. The foundations of the west elevation of the south range survive in a similar state for their entire length apart from a very short stub at the south end. A small rectilinear parch mark, measuring approximately 2.5 by 3.5 metres, was also noted towards the south end of the west elevation which may correspond with the outline of a lean-to structure on the 1788-89 Nattes drawing (Figure 8). Weir also indicated the presence of a feature in this location on his plan of 1914 (Figure 19). Given that this was located close to the Outer Moat it is conceivable that it might be a vestige of a garderobe block similar to the one which projects from the east elevation of the Middle Ward lodging (Wright 2021, 47-48; Figure 36).

The masonry foundations of the north elevation of the south range are abutted by that of the north range, suggesting two phases of near-contemporary construction.

Although the surface of the ground was not disturbed within the remit of this building recording project, we must consider Weir's reference to a brick channel running centrally down the entire length of the south range (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203). This feature was represented in his site plan of 1914 which shows that the southern end of the channel intersected with the ground floor fireplace in the south elevation and the northern end culminated adjacent to the west jamb of the north range doorway (Figure 19). Weir proposed the rather convoluted explanation that the channel was intended to distribute heat through the building but, as no parallel can be found, this seems highly unlikely. The close relationship with the north range door also seems to make this theory improbable. Unfortunately, Weir did not articulate exactly what the relationship of the channel was with the transverse wall of the south range (Figure 4 & Figure 34). Latterly, M. W. Thompson alluded that the channel might have been a feature connected to stabling at the castle. This point will be discussed below.

North Range

There is rather less brickwork available to inform interpretations of the north range and what is visible is very weathered and covered in moss and lichen (Figure 35). Despite this a measurement of 105mm (breadth) x 45-55mm (thickness) x 150-200mm, with four courses at 250mm, does hint that the bricks may be from a separate batch to those of the south range. A brick-paved threshold survives in the masonry of the south elevation indicating direct communication with the south range (Figure 37). Little more can be stated regarding this structure except that there is evidence for a blocked drainage hole at ground level in the foundations of the west elevation (Figure 38). This appears to be a secondary feature as the much-degraded stone hood seems to have been inserted into the surrounding brickwork.

Weir's suggestion that this building may be the same represented by Buck in 1726 as a tower (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203-4) has been discounted in the Historic Background section. It

should also be noted that the wall thickness of c 0.7 metres seems rather thin for supporting a multi-storeyed brick tower.

Discussion and Conclusions

There has been some debate in how to interpret the partially standing building in the Outer Ward of Tattershall Castle. Nicholson (1842, 9) and Weir (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203) thought that the structure was a guard house for the castle garrison. A. H. Thompson (Curzon & Weir 1929, 167; Thompson 1928, 13) proposed that it might have been the lodging of Cromwell's master of the horse. Meanwhile, Curzon favoured the identification of a stable (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 146). With some equivocation, most subsequent authors have tended to incline towards cautiously agreeing with Curzon (Thompson 1974, 13; Avery 1997, 8; Emery 2000, 308) and the National Trust were formerly outright in the identification of the building as a stable on an interpretation panel.

The evidence for identifying the building as a mediaeval stable is thin and hangs on three pieces of questionable evidence. Firstly, the location: immediately to the south-west of the Outer Gate of the castle. This could be a likely practical location for equine provision and its presence might be hinted at in the 1472 description of the stable as being close to "*the great bridge*" which could be taken as the crossing of the Outer Moat (Simpson 1960, 78). Secondly, Curzon positively identified the existence of the iron rings let into the east elevation as being evidence for stabling (Curzon & Tipping 1946, 146). Although he did not outline his reasoning further it seems reasonable that Curzon assumed that these were tether rings for supporting a chain or rope to which horse bridles could be tied. Finally, although Weir thought that the internal brick channel was a heat distributor linked to the fire (Curzon & Tipping 1929, 203), M. W. Thompson (1974, 13) alluded towards the feature being related to stabling facilities. Thompson did not make his point explicit, but he could possibly have been referring to the use of the channel as a spine drain for removing effluent from stables, as noted elsewhere from excavations at Minster Lovell Hall and Maidstone Palace (Steane 2001, 268).

It is granted that the building is in the approximate location where it might be reasonable to expect the presence of a stable at a mediaeval castle. However, it should be noted that this was not necessarily the function of the structure and both the archival and archaeological record call this function into question. The stables which were described in the building accounts had detailing of the windows in brick rather than in stone (Simpson 1960, 25, 65). The surviving threshold in the east elevation suggests a relatively narrow doorway which would not be practical for leading horses in or out of the building. The presence of fireplaces at ground and first floor point towards a two-storey residential capacity at the south end of the building. This might also be supported if the parch mark in the south-west corner is the remains of a garderobe. The status of the north end of the building is open to question but there is evidence from the stub wall, immediately to the south of the threshold in the east elevation,

that the building was subdivided to create two roughly equal sections. Notably, neither of these areas is particularly sizable and if the building were a stable then only a very limited number of horses could have been housed. It seems more likely that the building may have contained heated domestic lodgings with chambers on both floors at the south end, with unheated offices or stores to the north.

It is acknowledged that the building may have been converted into a stable in a secondary phase of use. The central brick channel, excavated by Weir, appears to have been added to the building with a disregard for the presence of the ground floor fireplace. Additionally, it seems to have been laid along the entire length of the structure which hints that the central transverse mediaeval wall may have been remodelled or removed. The channel could have fulfilled the function of a spine drain to remove equine effluent from the building. The iron rings, on the external east elevation, are fitted into rectangular stone blocks which appear to have been added into the brickwork as the surrounding masonry shows evidence of having been artificially truncated to allow for the insertions. It is therefore possible that a mediaeval lodging range may have been converted into a stable. The date of this reorganisation is unclear. It may have happened during the Cromwellian period, but it could also have occurred at any time leading up to the abandonment of the castle as a residence in 1693.

The original use of this building appears to have been residential rather than as a stable. Such residential chamber blocks are common within the outer enclosures of late mediaeval great houses such as the Outer Court at Wingfield Manor (c 1439-50), Green Court at Knole, Kent (c 1470s) and Lower Courtyard at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire (1520s). If the building was converted into a stable during the post-mediaeval period, then it fits a pattern of new equine provision at castles during the period also seen at Kenilworth, Warwickshire (1553) and Goodrich, Herefordshire (c 1650).

The third phase of usage took place after the castle became part of a farm complex. Millicent depicted only the southern end of the building as roofed in 1727, an impression generally confirmed in the Nattes drawing of 1788-89 and early photograph of 1857. The latter makes it clear that the north elevation of the building had a stone groundwall and a brick gable – a sequence which is confirmed by the archaeology. Nattes showed the ground floor fireplace had been punched through to create a rudimentary doorway. Nicholson's description of the site in 1842 noted that the building was in use as a barn. However, by c 1870 the structure was shown as a ruin in the form found by Weir in 1912.

The phasing of the building is summarised below:

1. Mid-fifteenth century construction of two residential chambers with an abutting annex of different brickwork
2. Conversion of the main range for possible use as a stable.
3. By 1727 the decline of the two northerly structures and use of just the southern space as an agricultural building.
4. By 1790 the insertion of a doorway through the southern elevation.
5. By 1870 the remaining structures were a roofless ruin.
6. 1912 Weir's conservation.

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Author Credentials

Dr James Wright FSA is a buildings archaeologist and architectural historian with both undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in Archaeology from the University of Nottingham. He has specialised in the recording and analysis of historic buildings for over twenty years. He has operated as a consultant at Triskele Heritage since 2016.

Formerly, he worked as a Field Archaeologist at Trent & Peak Archaeology, Conservation Stonemason at Nottingham City Council / Mark Stafford Stonemasonry, Archaeological and Historic Buildings Assistant at Nottinghamshire County Council and Senior Archaeologist (Built Heritage) at Museum of London Archaeology.

He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, affiliate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and serves on several heritage committees including the Council of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire. In 2018, he was recognised for his work at the National Trust property Knole (Sevenoaks, Kent) with an award for Best Archaeological Project at the British Archaeological Awards.

Recent relevant projects on mediaeval castles and great houses include work at Knole (Kent), Nottingham Castle (Nottinghamshire) and Greasley Castle (Nottinghamshire).

Statement of Indemnity

The evidence, statements and opinions contained within the text of this report are based entirely on the works undertaken for the project and are produced according to professional industry guidelines (Historic England 2016). No responsibility can be accepted by the author for any errors of fact or opinion arising because of data supplied by third parties.

Illustrations

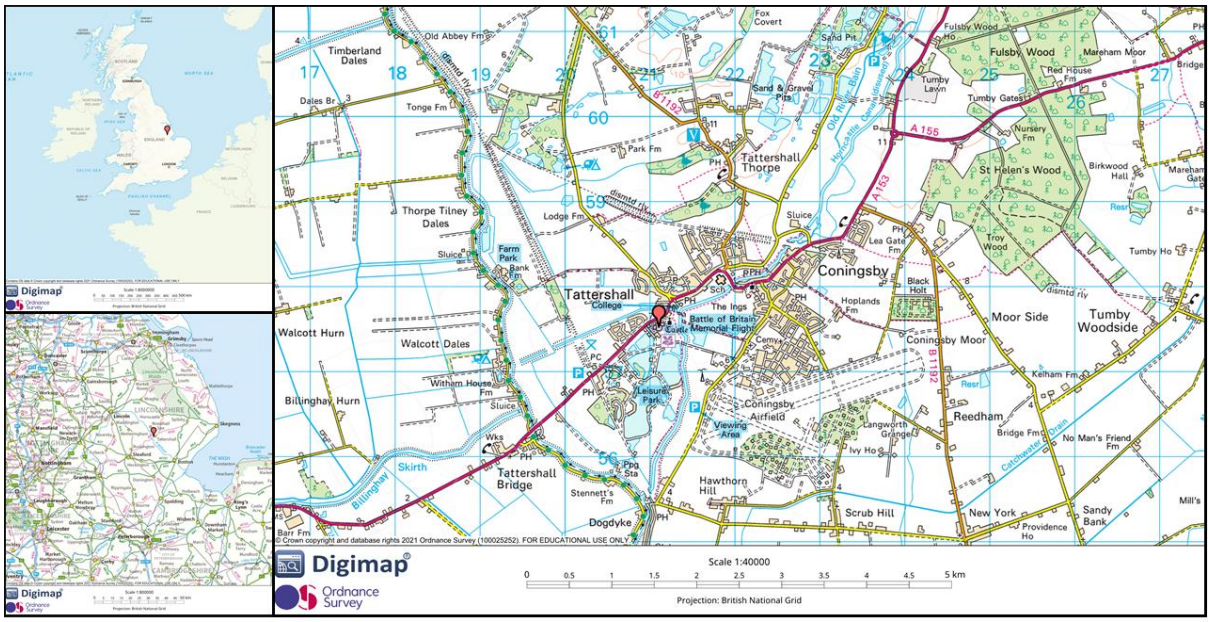

Figure 1 Site location (Picture Sources: Edina Digimap / Ordnance Survey)

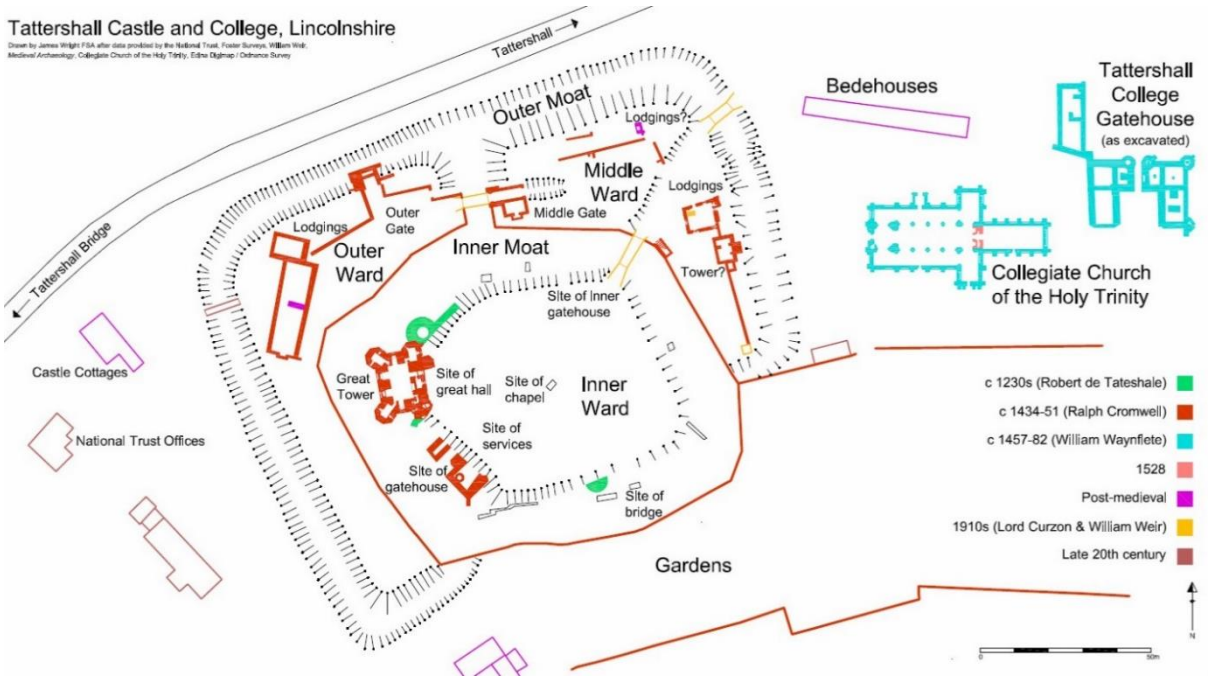

Figure 2 Phased site plan of Tattershall Castle and College (Picture Source: Wright 2021)

Figure 3 Tattershall Castle, looking east. Note the Guardhouse and collegiate church (left), great tower (middle ground) and the building known as the stables (foreground)

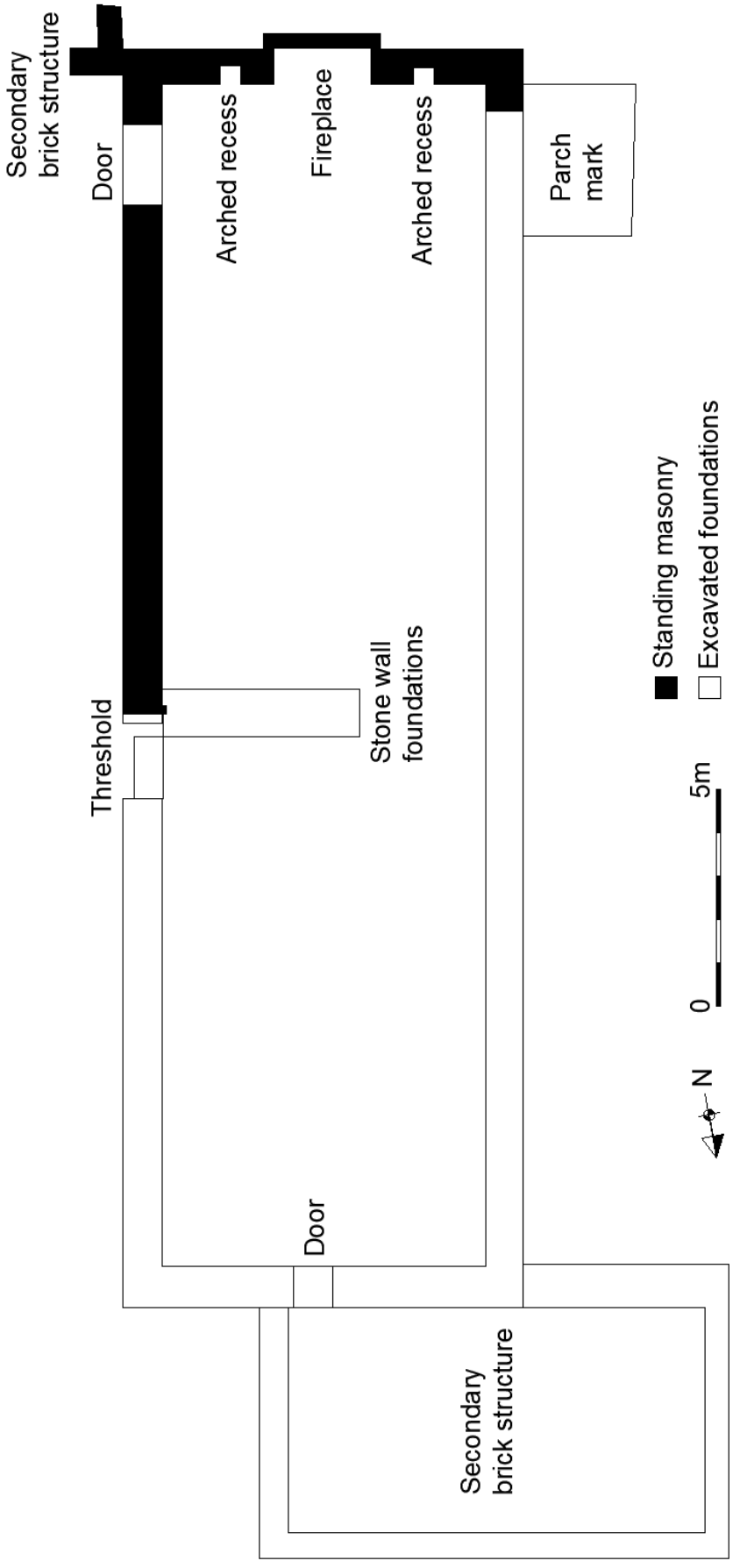

Figure 4 Plan of the building known as the stables

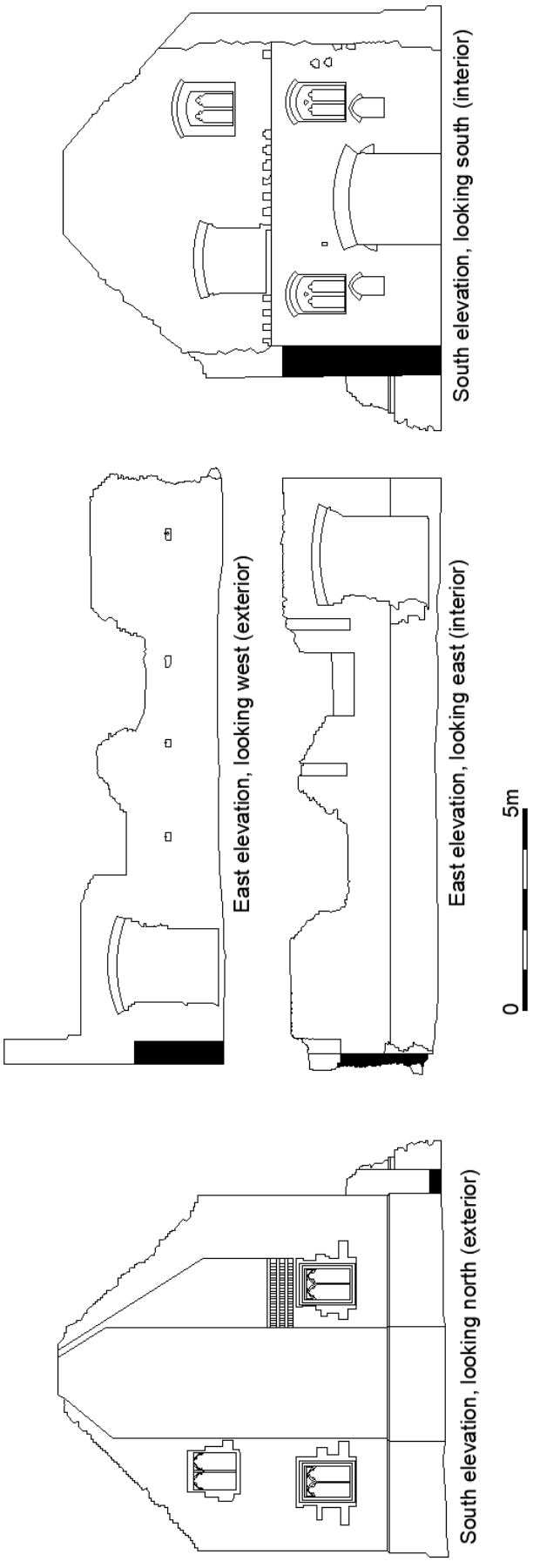

Figure 5 Elevations of the upstanding elements of the building known as the stables

Figure 6 William Millicent illustration of Tattershall Castle, looking east, 1727 (Picture Source: Society of Antiquaries of London)

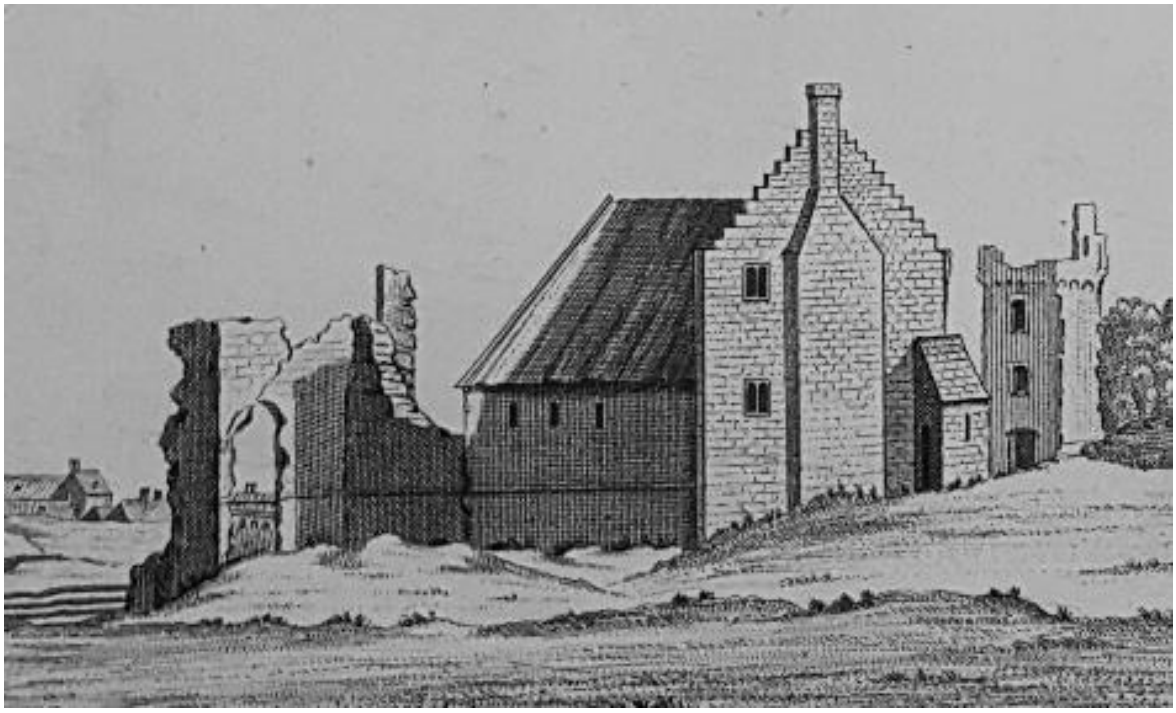

Figure 7 Detail from the 1727 Millicent drawing showing the building known as the stables, looking east (Picture Source: Society of Antiquaries of London)

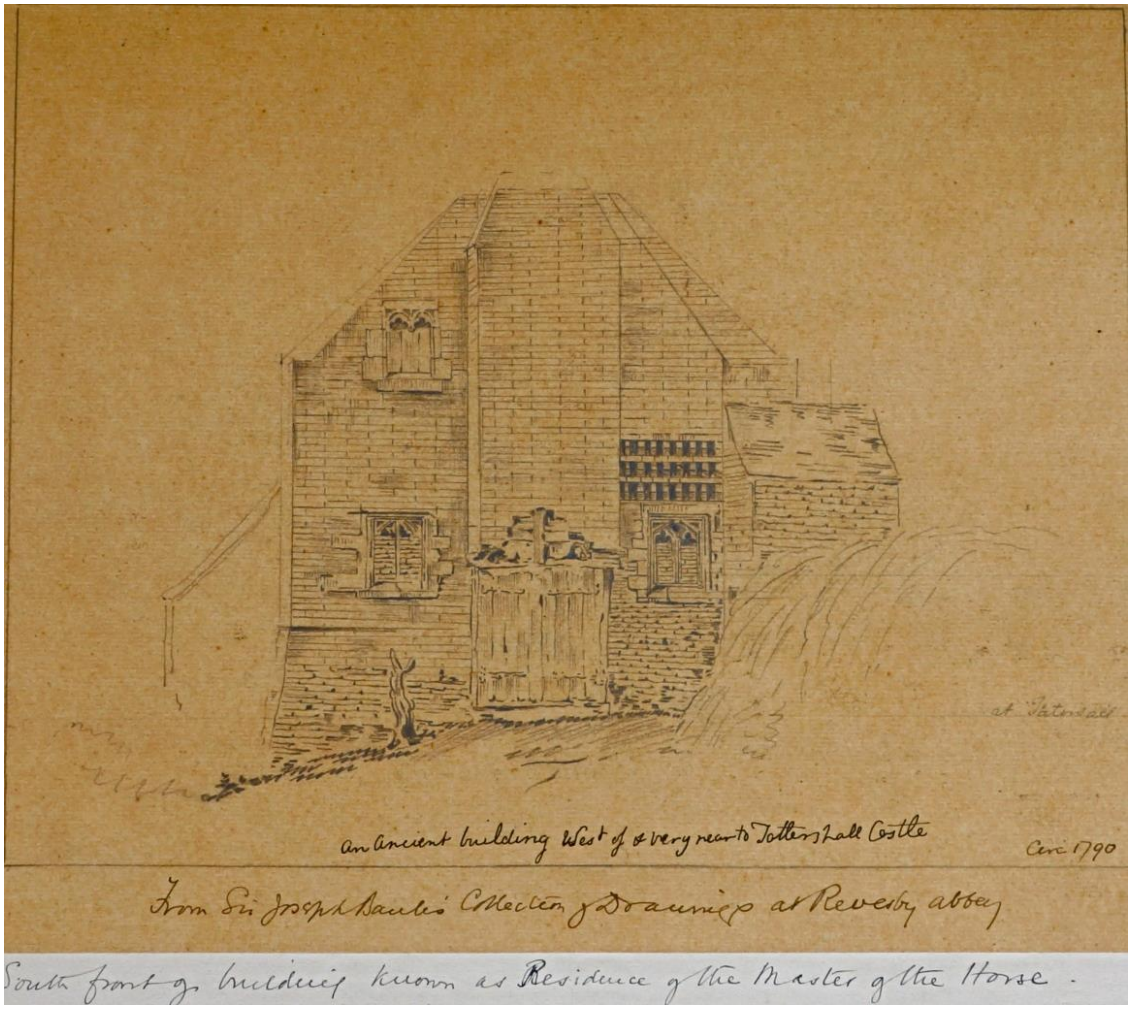

Figure 8 Nattes drawing, 1788-89, south-west elevation of "Stables" (Picture Source: National Trust 1282697)

Figure 9 Detail of the Nattes drawing, 1788-89, showing the building, looking west (Picture Source: National Trust 1282693)

Figure 10 A copy of a drawing in the collection of William Brand of Boston, published in 1818 looking north (Picture Source: Trustees of the British Museum 19520211.37)

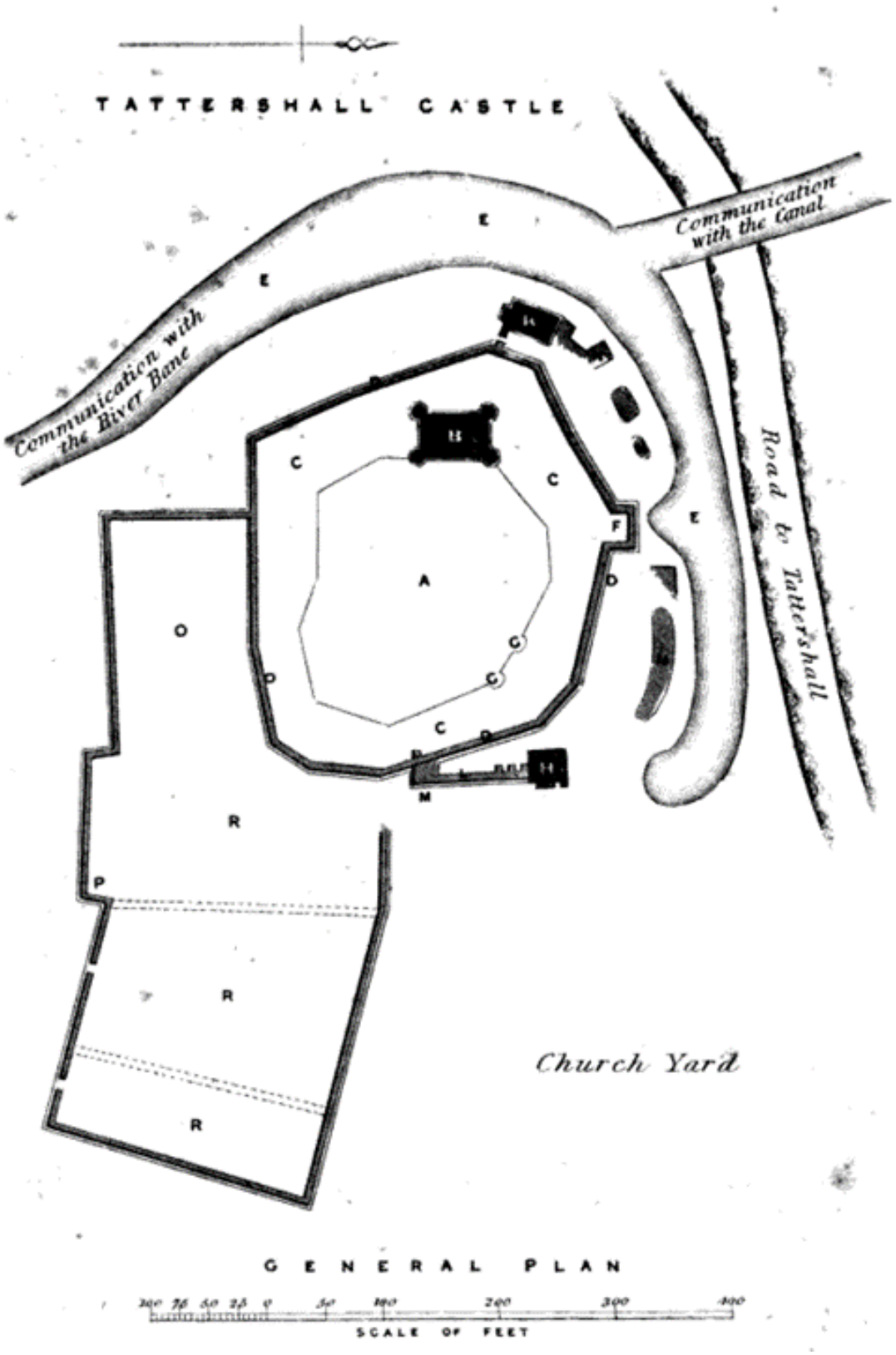

Figure 11 Plan of the site published in 1842 (Picture Source: Nicholson 1842)

Figure 12 1857 photograph of Great Tower and "Stables", looking south-west (Picture Source: English Heritage DD67_000011)

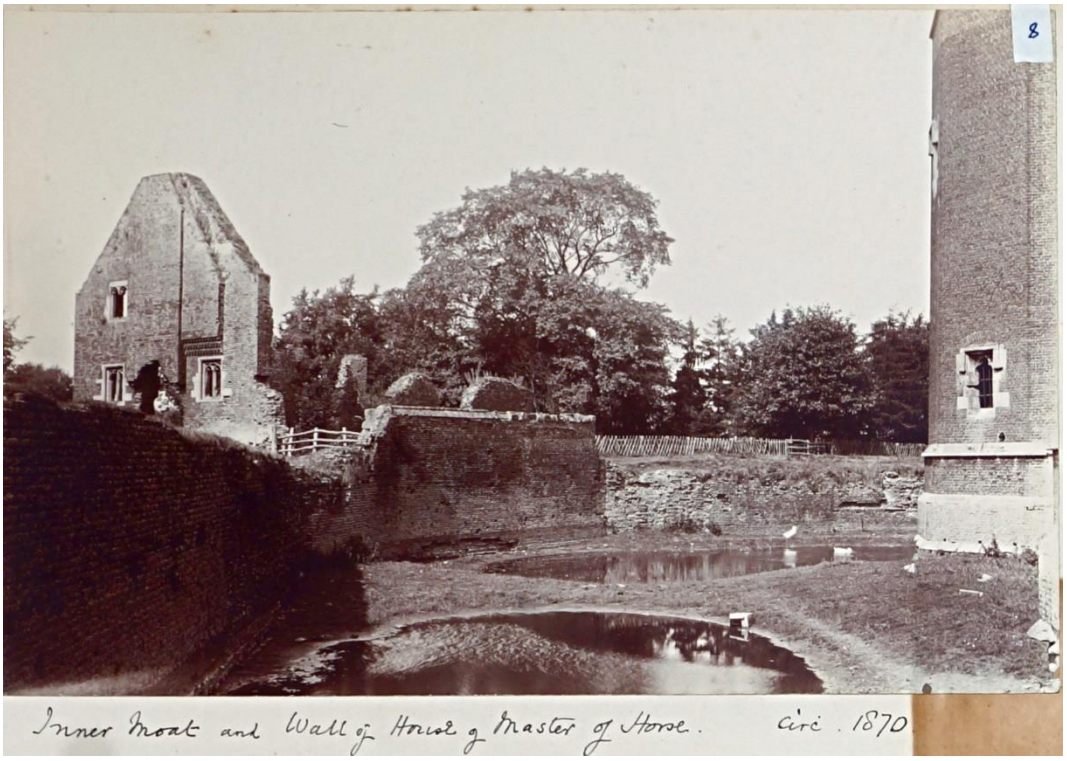

Figure 13 Photograph of the building taken c 1870, looking north-west (Picture Source: National Trust 1282713)

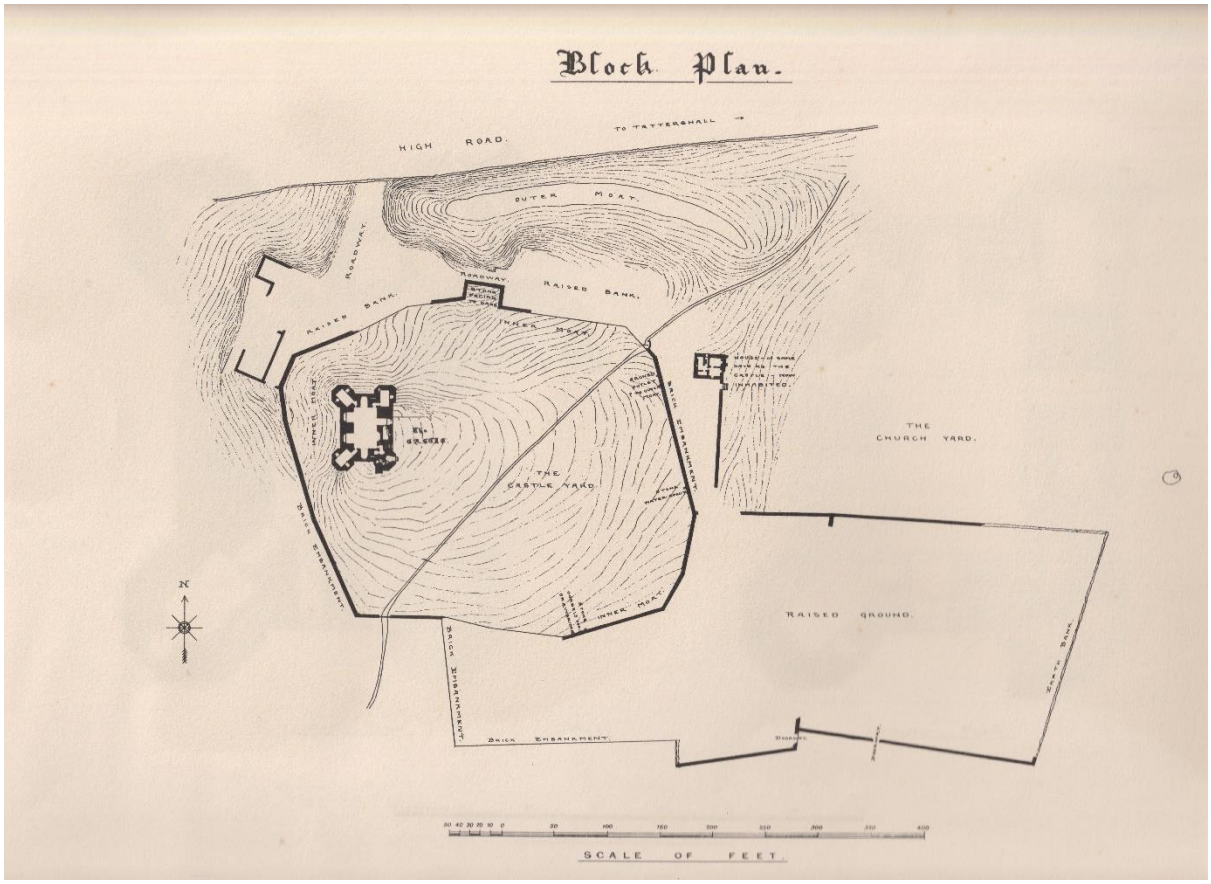

Figure 14 Plan of the castle published in 1872 (Picture Source: Reed 1872)

Figure 15 Photograph of the great tower and "stables" taken c 1880, looking south-west (Picture Source: National Trust 579441)

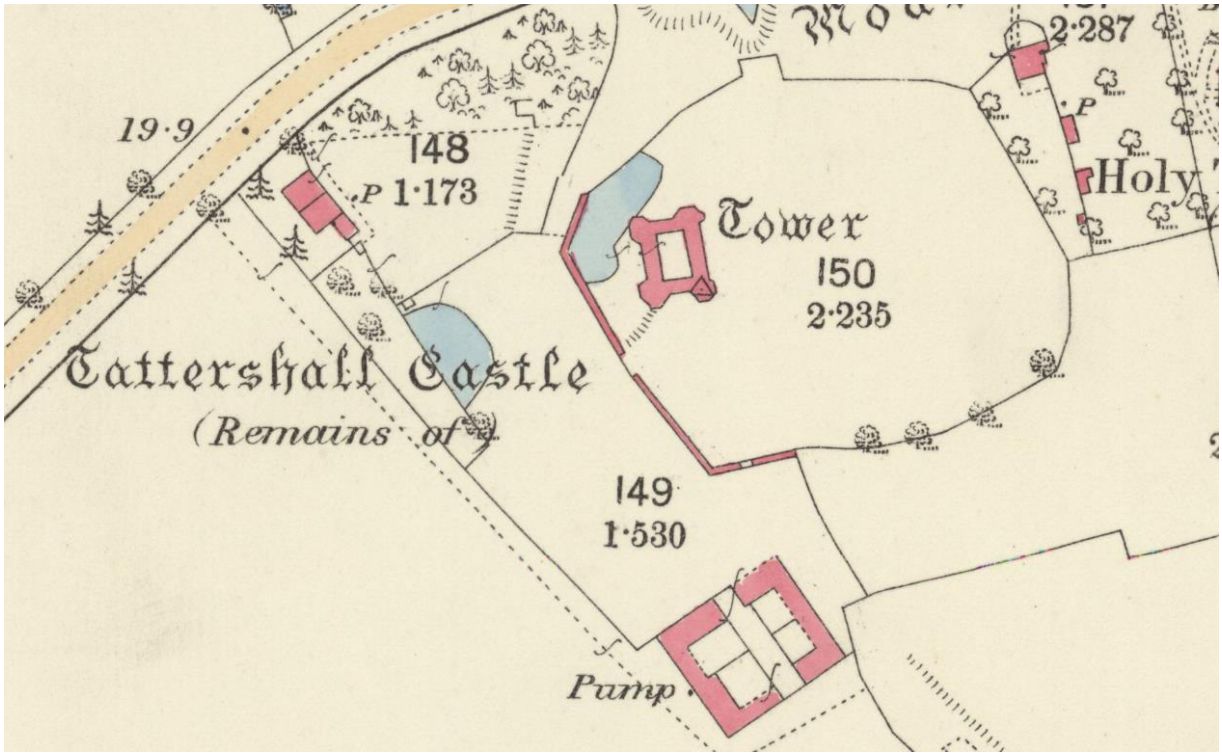

Figure 16 1889 Ordnance Survey mapping showing the castle (Picture Source: Ordnance Survey)

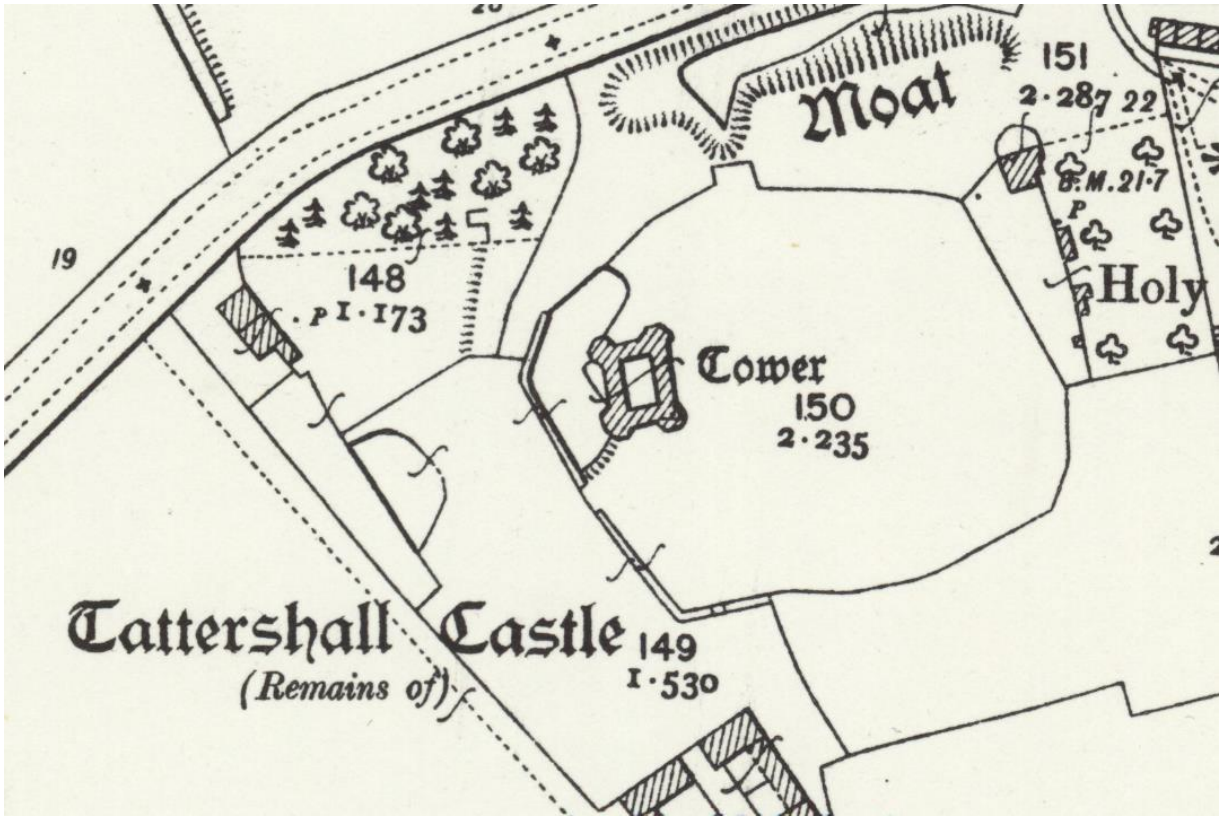

Figure 17 1905 Ordnance Survey mapping showing the castle (Picture Source: Ordnance Survey)

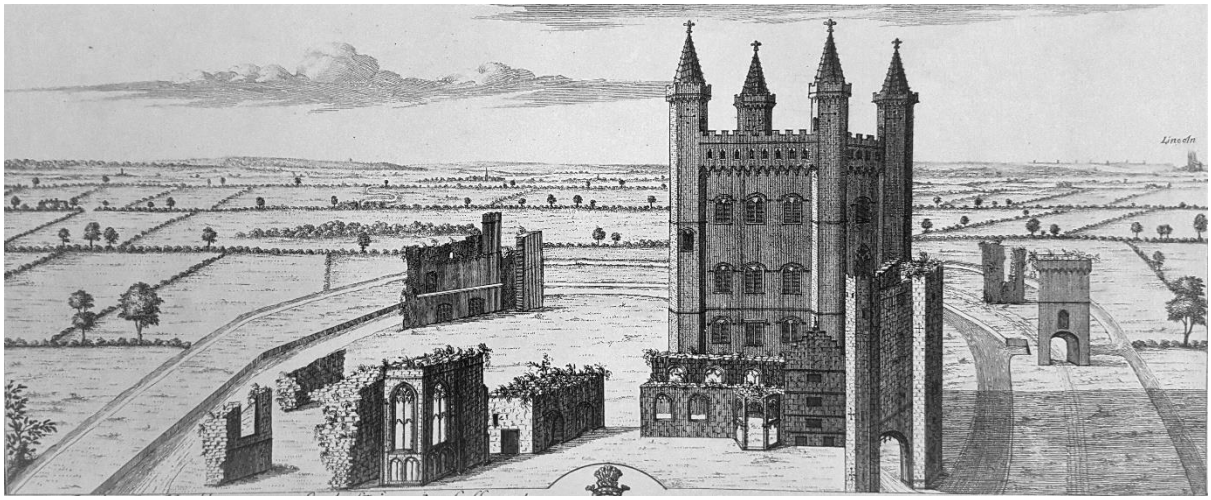

Figure 18 Samuel Buck illustration of Tattershall Castle, looking west, 1726. Note the fragment of masonry located to the right of the great tower and to the left of the gatehouse in the middle ground (Picture Source: Society of Antiquaries of London)

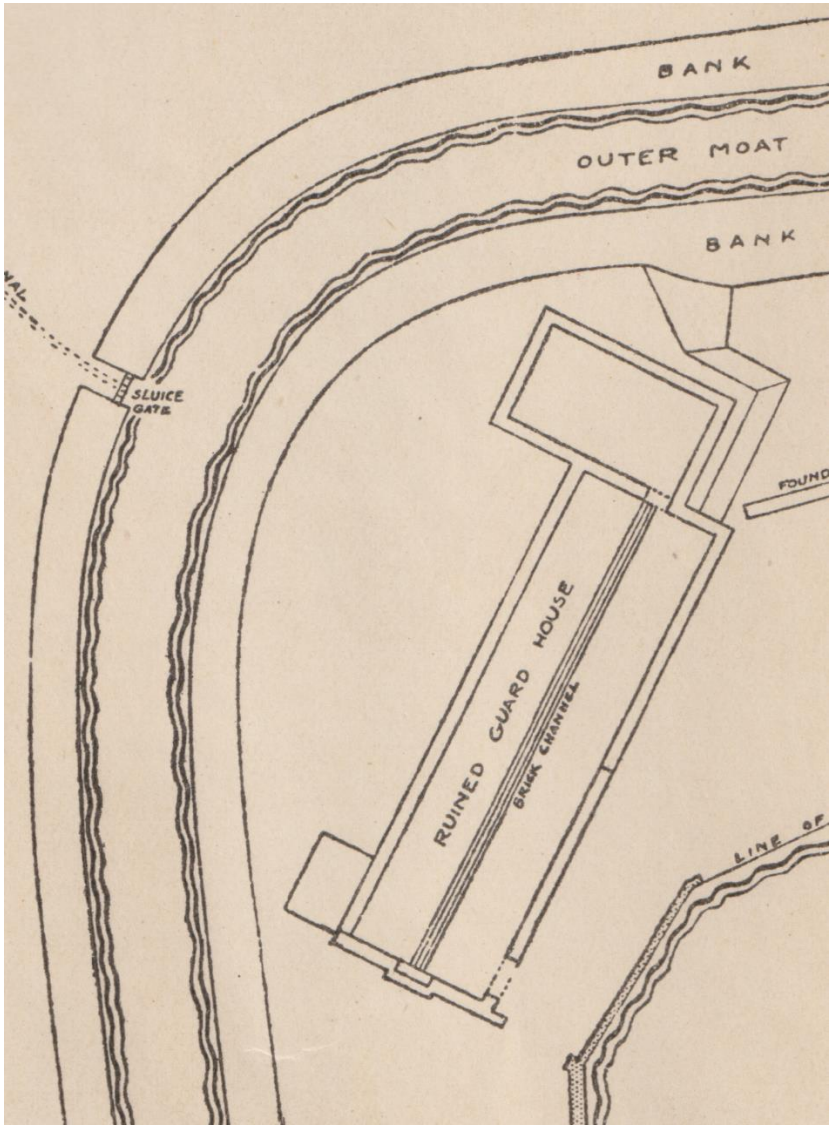

Figure 19 Detail of Weir's 1914 plan showing the excavated remains of the building. Note the central brick channel (Picture Source: Curzon & Tipping 1929)

Figure 20 The northernmost of four stones originally associated with iron rings in the east elevation of the building, looking west

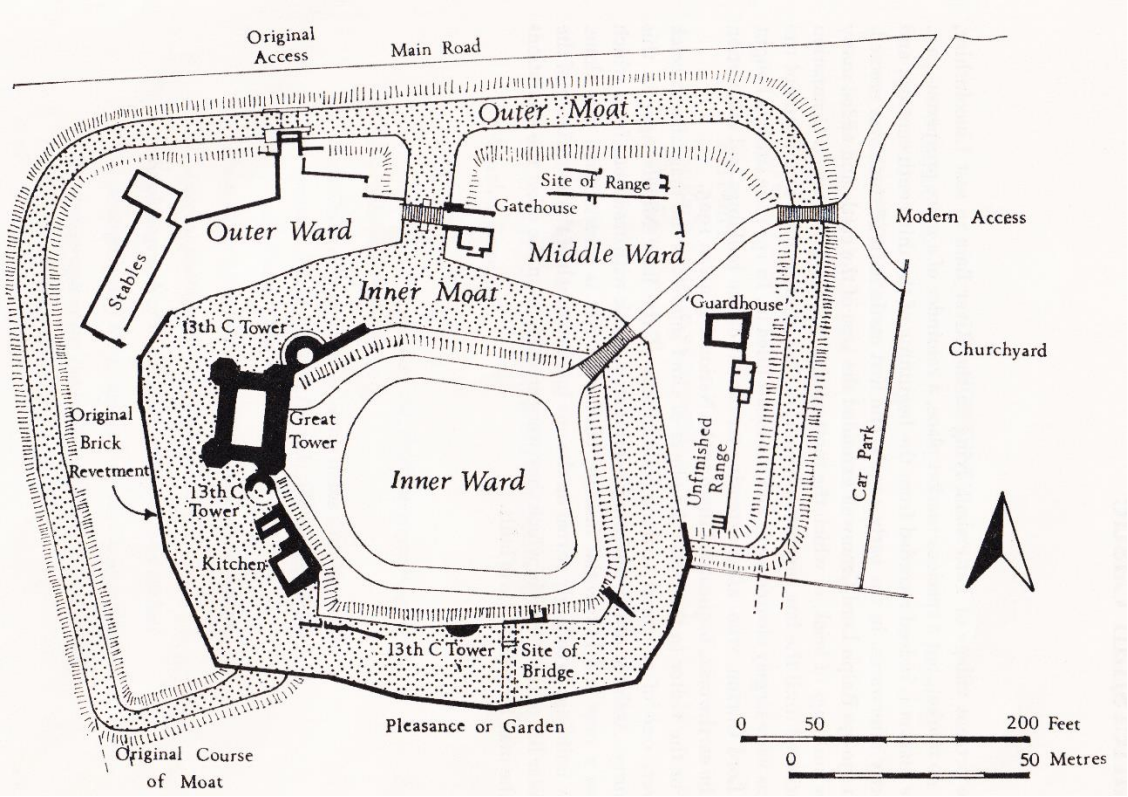

Figure 21 Plan of the site from the 1974 guidebook to the site (Picture Source: Thompson 1974)

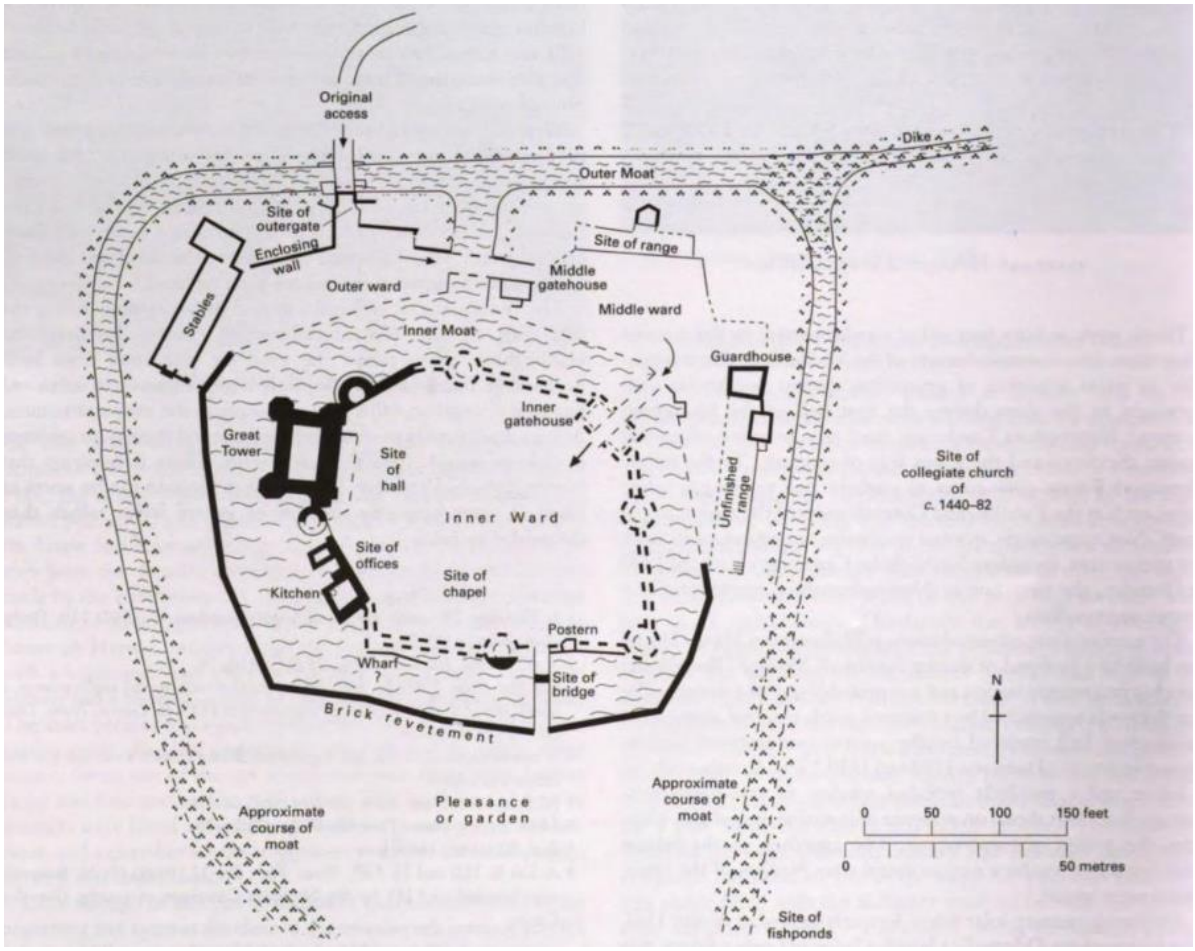

Figure 22 Plan of the castle by Anthony Emery (Picture Source: Emery 2000)

Figure 23 The east elevation of the building, looking south-west. Note the interpretation panel identifying the building as the "Stable Block". Image taken in February 2017.

Figure 24 South elevation of the south range, looking north

Figure 25 South elevation of the south range, looking south

Figure 26 Ground floor window in the south elevation of the south range, looking north

Figure 27 First floor window in the west elevation of the Middle Ward lodgings at Tattershall, looking east

Figure 28 Ground floor window in the south elevation of the south range, looking north

Figure 29 Detail of the rebuilt ground floor fireplace in the south elevation, looking south. Note the springers for the original arched head in the jambs below the current lintel.

Figure 30 Possible gateway between the building (right) and Inner Moat wall (left), looking south

Figure 31 East elevation of the south range, looking east

Figure 32 Ground floor of the Middle Ward lodging, looking south-east. Note the posts and knee braces supporting the bridging beams

Figure 33 North end of the surviving east elevation wall, looking south-east. Note the stub of the projecting transverse wall and the base of the stone door jamb

Figure 34 Threshold to the north of the surviving east elevation wall, looking west. Note the partially buried stone foundation of the transverse wall

Figure 35 The site, looking south. Note the foundations of the north range (foreground) and south range (midground)

Figure 36 East elevation of the Middle Ward lodging, looking west. Note the projecting latrine block to the right

Figure 37 Threshold between the south and north ranges, looking north

Figure 38 Blocked drain in the foundations of the west elevation of the north range, looking east

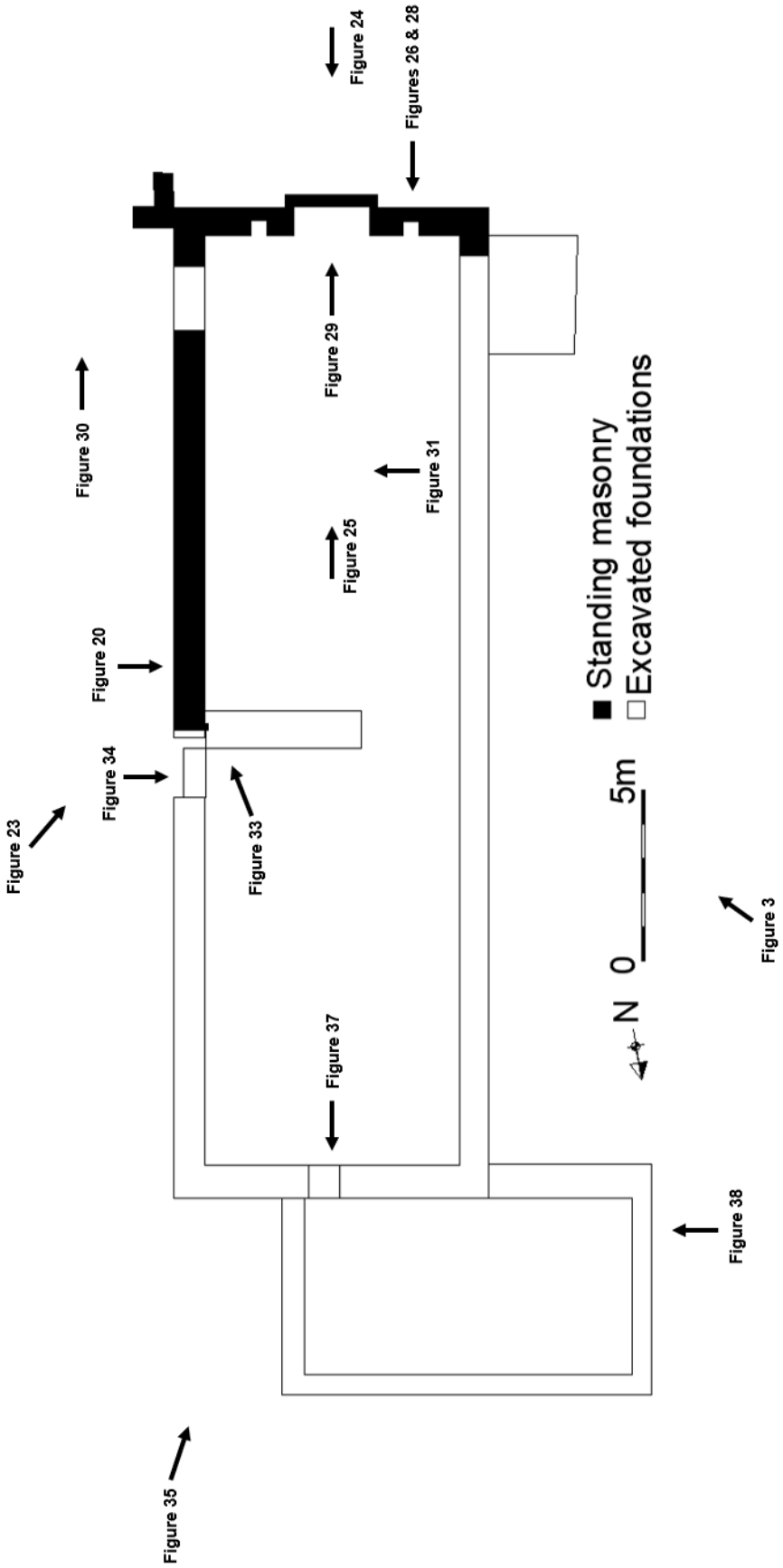

Figure 39 Plan of the photographs incorporated into this report